

March 3, 2013

When I organized the Hope and Spirit program and exhibit, here in Chicago, the primary intent was to inform and educate the general public of the atrocities that Stalin had committed. He was responsible for many times more deaths than what Hitler was able to accomplish, in the same general time period, in the same general geographic locations.

In the public lectures that I gave about this program in 2011 and 2012, I emphasized that forgetting the past leads to past events recurring. I noted that Stalin's gulag system of prison camps was in very extensive use in North Korea, as it continues currently. I noted that the rise to super-stardom of Mr. Bo Xilai in China was due to his reverence of Maoist (a.k.a. Stalinist) Cultural Revolution mass murder. It was only when his wife's murder of a British businessman, an investigation initiated by the British secret service agency MI-6 (not by the Chinese authorities), that he faced his downfall.

Above all, I emphasized that the greatest risk of recurrent Stalinism was exactly where it originated, in the lands known as the Soviet Union.

I emphasized the results of the Russian presidential election on March 2, 2012. Although Vladimir Putin won 64% of the vote, fully 24% of the adult population voted for Stalinist political parties. Of course, many who voted for Putin harbored pro-Stalinist attitudes.

Now, of considerable importance, is a report issued on March 1, 2013, by the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, called The Stalin Puzzle. This is a 75 page report based on extensive surveys conducted in October and November of 2012 in the previous Soviet republics: Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia and Russia. The surveys were conducted by the Levada Center in Moscow, and the Caucasus Research Resource Center (CRRRC) in Yerevan, Baku and Tbilisi. The results are very disturbing.

The reverence of Stalin has been progressively growing since the fall of the Soviet Union. The greatest increase in reverence coincides with the presidency of Vladimir Putin. Please see the report for a detailed explanation of this correlation.

In the four countries surveyed, approximately 70% of the population credits Stalin with defeating Hitler, and bringing World War II to an end. The fact that Stalin and Hitler made a secret pact, the Ribbentrop-Molotov pact of August 23, 1939, that led to the start of WWII on September 1, 1939, by Hitler's invasion of Poland, is an entirely unknown fact. Stalin started WWII, but in these Soviet lands, he is now being credit with having ended it! The US and allied forces appear to have played merely a supportive role!

In Russia, when listing the greatest Russian leaders in world history, in 1989 only 12% mentioned Stalin. In 2012 the percentage had increased to 49%. Stalin is now felt to be

the most important Russian historical figure, and is rated more important than Lenin or even Peter the Great.

In these four countries approximately 30% agree with the statement that "our people need a leader like Stalin to come and restore order."

In Georgia and Russia, fully 45% have a positive attitude towards Stalin!

In the final paragraph of the summary of this report, the authors wrote:

"Carnegie's survey unfortunately confirms that in post-Soviet space, Stalin is still a figure of the present, not the past."

With five of my blood relatives have been killed by Stalin's genocidal forces, with seven other blood relatives deported to prison camps in Siberia for no rational reason, with sincere regrets,

Audrius V. Plioplys MD, FRCPC