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Yuri Bezmenov 2,714 words Back in mother USSR, we used to play a game called “hide the thimble.” The interesting thing about that game involved the requirement that the player hide the thimble in plain sight for all to see. — A Look Inside the Playbook, Anthony Napoleon & Yevgeni Yevtushenkov Some ages are lukewarm and complacent, and then it is our business to soothe them yet faster asleep. —The Screwtape Letters, C. S. Lewis When I was a young teenager, like many boys of my generation, I devoured science fiction, and could often be found with my snout inside some garishly-covered paperback by Robert A. Heinlein, Arthur C. Clarke, Ray Bradbury, A. E. Van Vogt, or Philip K. Dick. With this in mind, my mother organized a birthday present when I was 13 which no young boy could have failed to love: two tickets to a London lecture by Isaac Asimov. It was his only London lecture, as a matter of fact, as he only visited Britain once, no doubt due to the fact that his fear of flying made the United Kingdom a distant shore. The doctor arrived in Britain on June 5, 1974 on the SS France and returned to America on the June 16 aboard the famous QE2. The lecture was exciting and wonderful. I was enchanted to see someone whose work I had read and loved. The great man with his mutton-chop sideburns talked of many things and captivated us all. The high spot — and I see it still in my mind’s eye — was when we were invited to ask questions at the end, and he spotted a young lad in garish trousers with his hand in the air, and accepted his question. I asked Dr. Asimov — he was also a scientific historian — if he felt that it was the duty of the sci-fi writer to prepare the rest of us for the future. He praised my question — something I will never forget — and said, yes, partly it was. Asimov was an exponent of what science fiction author Brian W. Aldiss called “hard” science fiction, the type that adheres to conceivable physical laws, rather than the “soft” variety that became so faddish afterwards and segued into some of the dreadful fantasy nonsense one sees nowadays. But, as clairvoyant as sci-fi may on occasion be, the future cannot be framed exclusively in scientific and technological terms. The UK in the ‘70s was still spellbound by the fact that science had emerged from the laboratory and come into the home and workplace as technology, and this was only a decade after then-Labour Prime Minister Harold Wilson’s impassioned speech about the “white heat of technology.” As for literature’s stance towards science, the novel had grown up reflecting social and industrial development, and so in an age of science, science fiction seemed a natural progression. But what was the future of organic, societal, non-mechanical society? Asimov was born in 1920 in Petrovichi, a satellite town to the north of Moscow. His journey to the United States was straightforward and career-driven. Two decades later another man was born in Mystichi, a similar deep suburb of Moscow but this time to the south, and he would also go on to predict the future. He had one advantage over Asimov: He was not working from imagination, but from a model. Yuri Bezmenov is arguably the second-most famous Soviet defector to the West after Alexander Solzhenitsyn. But whereas Solzhenitsyn embodied an older Russia and carried the vestigial traces of Romanticism and Tsarism, Bezmenov gained his experience of Soviet Russia working at the heart of its propaganda machine. After a journalistic posting to India, a country with which he fell in love, Bezmenov defected, was debriefed by the CIA, and settled in Canada. The KGB discovered him, however, and pressured the Canadian government to relieve him of his journalistic post. As much a weasel then as his son is now, Pierre Trudeau sided with the Communists, and Bezmenov relocated to the US. There, until his death in 1993 (a year after Asimov’s death, curiously), Bezmenov sought to warn the West — and America in particular — of what was coming down the pike. He wrote, “No matter how many problems you think the US may have, believe me when I say that they are nothing in comparison to the troubles you will experience if the US continues to agree and sympathize with communist/socialist doctrines.” Written, eerily enough, in 1984, Bezmenov’s essay “Love Letter to America” can be read in full here. (The page is typographically a bit of a dog’s dinner, but the only other file I could find was even worse, being a poorly photographed version of an original copy, although its graininess and curled pages do give an authentic feel of samizdat.) There are several extant interviews from the time, and some overlap. This is possibly the most representative, and recaps much of the “Letter.” Bezmenov wrote other books, but the “Letter” contains his main message to the West. Bezmenov’s first insight is that propaganda was far more important to the Soviets than espionage. He notes that Hollywood’s portrayal of Cold War intelligence is dominated by the secret agent: 007 and Russian spies with poison-tipped umbrellas. In fact, he states, only around 15% of the Soviet intelligence budget went toward spies. The rest went toward media manipulation and academic influence — what Bezmenov famously called “ideological subversion.” This he defines as “the process of changing the perception of reality in the minds of millions of people.” Bezmenov’s past as a journalist gave him a clarity of style made even sharper by the fact that he was inventing facts rather than reporting them. It is far more important for a liar to remember the details of the lie than someone telling the truth. His interviews are also straightforward and clear, and he has a sardonic sense of humor common among people from genuinely oppressed states. Of his journalistic career in the USSR, he writes: I did absolutely no writing or news coverage at all. After several months I was formally recruited by the KGB as an informer, while still maintaining my position as a Novosti [‘news’] journalist. Compare and contrast that with the modern Western media, whose job is less to report the news than to slant and doctor it for consumption, thereby maintaining the pretense of impartiality while in actuality being devoted to propaganda. During the Trump presidency, CNN was effectively the opposition party. Bezmenov was given a post in India — he spoke Hindi and Urdu — ostensibly to forge links with Communist sympathizers but in reality to gather information on them, and he made a sudden connection there which chilled him and should have the same effect on us. You can buy Mark Gullick’s Vanikin in the Underworld here. Bezmenov soon realized that his job revolved around the collection of information on leading figures and “influential people” in the community on which he was effectively spying. He recalled a piece he had come across professionally in an archive detailing how, in the Vietnamese War, the Viet Cong had descended on a village and rounded up all the dissidents for execution in just one night. How could they have known their targets in advance? Because the Viet Cong had planted informers to gain information from the village, and this they got by talking to a network of those people who knew everyone: barbers, shop owners, rickshaw drivers. Bezmenov realized that, with a change in social scale, that was exactly what he was doing in India. Hence his defection — although not from India, as Indira Gandhi had seen to it that this could not happen, under pressure from the Soviets after Stalin’s daughter Svetlana defected from there. As we have seen, Bezmenov ended up in the US, to whom he wrote a love letter. Bezmenov does not suggest that the USSR, ideological upstart crow that it undoubtedly was, cut its propaganda techniques from whole cloth. He begins the “Letter” by going back to the Chinese philosopher Sun Tzu (circa 500 BC): All warfare is based primarily on deception of an enemy. Fighting on a battlefield is the most primitive way of making war. There is no art higher than to destroy your enemy without a fight, by subverting anything of value in your enemies’ country. There are four stages of successful ideological subversion for Breznevov: demoralisation, destabilisation, crisis, and normalization. I will not track all of their modern analogues, and I would recommend reading the whole “Letter” for context, but examples should show that the techniques Bezmenov both describes and was familiar with from personal experience are being replicated in the US today, and across Europe, with the usual time lag. Demoralization takes about 20 years, as this is the amount of time needed to brainwash an entire generation. For our convenience, and on Bezmenov’s timescale, our period of demoralization began with 9/11. This seems appropriate, as I remember how I felt when the proposal was made to build a mosque at Ground Zero, a proposal which was only denied after massive outcry. Bezmenov suggests that what he calls the “subverter . . . study the areas where your nation’s ideas could be eroded and substituted.” Demoralization involves taking every aspect of life and turning it against ordinary people (today, that means white people). An example concerning law and order: “. . . the method of demoralization is to promote and enforce the prevalence of the ‘legalistic’ approach over the ‘moral’ one . . . whereby ‘underprivileged’ criminals are treated as ‘victims’ of the ‘cruel American society’ . . .” This is exactly what is happening throughout the West, as custodial sentences become rarer and more lenient for violent crime, whereas online “hate crime” increasingly carries jail time. The corrosive American Left wishes fewer blacks to be arrested, and calls this “retributive justice.” Consider the weapons in the globalist armory of demoralization today: Critical Race Theory, Islam, cancel culture, “wokeness,” black crime, opioid addiction, transgenderism, Black Lives Matter, the legacy of “slavery,” unfettered immigration, Antifa, COVID, climate change. Each of these is a separate front in the Kulturkampf the Left is winning almost without resistance. Next, destabilization takes from two to five years, and its primary aims are to subvert the target country’s foreign relations, its economy, and its “social fiber.” With Biden apparently deliberately inserted to cause mayhem on the world stage, inflation already here, and hyperinflation possibly in a taxi on its way here, and with Western nations bitterly and internally divided over, among other things, race and vaccination, we could be forgiven for thinking that Bezmenov is on to something. Destabilization requires a distracted, fragmented attention in the public: By concentrating the attention of a nation on short-term solutions and “improvements” . . . politicians simply procrastinate on facing “the moment of truth,” when the nation will have to pay a much higher price for the main and basic problem — bringing the country back to stability and restoring the moral fiber. The COVID “crisis” has lasted almost two years, and the UK government’s constant change of policy on the virus is an example of “short-term solutions and improvements” intended to destabilize an already demoralized public. The crisis stage takes around six weeks, and it looks very much as though it is being stage-managed as I write. An entirely avoidable supply-chain breakdown may be a smokescreen for the inflation which has seemed inevitable for some time — in the time-honored tradition of what happens when you print money to get out of debt — but they both exist and are not healing themselves. COVID, or rather its manipulation by the globalists, has helped to bring the economy to its knees, particularly the private sector, which lacks the individual security of tenure of the public sector. Bezmenov writes of “the reduction of the private sector . . . to the bare minimum, the redistribution of wealth and a massive propaganda campaign by the newly ‘elected’ government to ‘explain’ and justify the reforms.” After all this socially-engineered carnage, “normalization” sounds welcome, like the cessation of pain after the pulling of a tooth — and it is designed to be. As Bezmenov drily notes, Brezhnev described the tanks rolling into Czechoslovakia in 1968 as “normalization.” But Bezmenov is also a child of his time, and tends to see the normalization period in terms of gulags and Kalashnikovs. In today’s technocratic West, however, there is a more pacific package already prepared. Ask the people of Australia whether they would exchange their country’s COVID rules — currently being expanded to include the freezing of COVID transgressors’ bank accounts — for the Great Reset. And the elites have not made any secret of this; far from it. Bezmenov emphasizes the openness of the Soviet techniques of misinformation. Like Edgar Allen Poe’s purloined letter, this is evidence hidden in plain sight. It is a curiosity of ideological subversion that it need not be covert, and can be carried out in the open and put into place by the countrymen — and women — of the herd to be subjugated: “. . . the process of subversion is such a long-term process that an average individual, due to the short time-span of his historical memory, is unable to perceive the process of subversion as a consistent and willful effort. That is exactly how it is intended to be: like the small hand of your watch. You know it moves, but you cannot see it moving. The way that Western attention has been manipulated and shortened, in particular by advertising, is thus yoked to a failure to perceive a huge transaction taking place over time. Western consciousness is no longer equipped for anything other than momentary, snack-size time: TV time, episodic and miniaturized. And, of course, entertainment looms large in the Western psyche, as religion once did, and with the same power to mesmerize. Now, bread and circuses are nothing new — even if they have evolved into Domino’s Pizza and Netflix — and the phrase is attributed to Juvenal, who also writes in the Satires of the state of man which the political ploy of panem et circenses — bread and circuses — is intended precisely to prevent: mens sana in corpore sano. A healthy mind in a healthy body. That is not what the elites want, be they the Supreme Soviet of Bezmenov’s time or the Davos guest list of today. Bezmenov has the following to say concerning diet: Demoralization in the area of food consumption patterns is also effective in the introduction of “junk foods.” No, KGB agents do not put chemicals into American food and drink. It is done by some American mega-monopolies who operate along the same principles as Soviet ‘Obschepit’ (Public Food Service) . . . Just as is happening now. Bezmenov writes of the intentional destruction of small food companies in favor of corporate giants easily controlled by the state and in a position to create tasty but enervating anti-diets for ordinary people. As an addendum —and Bezmenov could not have seen this coming — the same outsourcing of unwholesome content to “mega-monopolies” is playing a huge part in today’s subversion, only it is not only fast food injecting the poison but Big Tech. The central question for this millennium has been and remains: Is the decline of Western civilization happening by mistake or by design? If the latter, Bezmenov has provided as close to a blueprint as we have for the willful destruction of the West. If the former, one assumes the elites have followed the same blueprint by chance. Despite the American Left’s attempts to demonize Russia and appease China, it is not the old USSR against whom Bezmenov warned that control ideological subversion today, but globalists and Bilderbergers. Putin is as crafty as they come — famously an ex-KGB man himself — but it is as though the Soviet Union, Mother Russia, has trained her own replacement like an outgoing office worker, because the playbook is essentially the same. In photographs of the young Bezmenov in India, gradually going through the epiphany that told him he was not there to help and encourage Indian intellectuals but to betray them, he often wears a smile he describes as “a typical smile of the KGB.” It is a bland and casual smile, but it is not difficult to read cynicism there. It is a weary smile of disdain with just a trace element of admiration for his handlers, however disgusted he was by them. If he were to return now and look at the West, he would no doubt smile in the same way. * * * Counter-Currents has extended special privileges to those who donate \$120 or more per year. First, donor comments will appear immediately instead of waiting in a moderation queue. (People who abuse this privilege will lose it.) Second, donors will have immediate access to all Counter-Currents posts. Non-donors will find that one post a day, five posts a week will be behind a “paywall” and will be available to the general public after 30 days. To get full access to all content behind the paywall, sign up here: Paywall Gift Subscriptions If you are already behind the paywall and want to share the benefits, Counter-Currents also offers paywall gift subscriptions. We need just five things from you: your payment the recipient’s name the recipient’s email address your name your email address To register, just fill out this form and we will walk you through the payment and registration process. 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