

Decentralize Aid

To the Editor:

As a Soviet citizen, I appreciate the help the Soviet Union is receiving from other countries, including the United States. But this help might be more effectively directed. All of it now goes to the central government, which will certainly mix it into the Soviet budget, whence it will go undiscernibly to all the usual destinations.

Is there any sense in thrusting help on those who do not want it (the K.G.B., for example)? Since both you and we are not rich enough to waste resources, it is essential to concentrate them on those really in need.

In the United States, some people are officially classified as "poor", hence, if this country received foreign help, it would be ready to use it properly. But as far as I know, there is no phrase "poor Soviet people" in the language of Soviet officials. So the central Soviet authorities cannot properly direct help. On the other hand, local authorities (at least some of them) can do this kind of social work successfully.

In domestic matters, you Americans understand the importance of decentralization: only part of your taxes go to the Federal budget, with considerable parts going to states, towns and counties. Banks typically operate in one, at most, two states.

Why don't you understand the necessity of decentralization when providing foreign help?

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Boston, Dec. 23, 1990

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