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WHY RUSSIA PREACHES COEXISTENCE

or, WHAT'S BEHIND SOVIET FOREIGN POLICY?

or, BEHIND SOVIET FOREIGN POLICY

or, SOVIET FOREIGN POLICY SINCE STALIN

by

T. T. Hammond

We all know that during the last three years there has been a dramatic change in Soviet foreign policy. The ending of the wars in Korea and Indo-China, the settlement of the dispute with Tito, the evacuation of Austria, and the establishment of diplomatic relations with Western Germany are only a few of the manifestations of what has come to be called the "New Course," the "New Look," or the "Peace Offensive" of the Soviet Union.

What are the motives behind this change? Is it a result of Soviet weakness? Are the gestures of friendship by Khrushchev, Bulganin and Co. merely parlor tricks designed to mesmerize innocent Americans? Is the famous "spirit of Geneva" merely a drunken stupor imparted by too much vodka? Or has Soviet foreign policy changed fundamentally?

Let us look at some of the possible explanations for the "New Look" in Soviet foreign policy and attempt to assay the validity of each.

1. Economic Weakness. One explanation commonly put forward is the supposed economic weakness of the Soviet Union. Chancellor Adenauer, for example, declared recently that the Soviet Union "has to fulfill such a mass of tremendous tasks in the interior -- ~~and~~ not ~~only~~ political but... economic, social and cultural tasks -- that it would like to devote its entire power to their fulfillment." ^{1/} Secretary Dulles put it more

¹ New York Times, Sept. 17, 1955.

bluntly when he told ~~the Soviet Union is in a dire straits~~ a Congressional committee ~~where he said~~ that the Soviet economic system "is on the point of collapsing." ^{1/}

What are the facts? There can be no doubt that one sector of the Soviet economy -- agriculture -- has failed miserably. Mr. Khrushchev himself admitted that the number of livestock in the USSR was less in 1953 than it had been in 1928. Early this year he confessed that the production of grain had not kept up with the growth of the population. However, there is no evidence that the food situation in the Soviet Union is serious enough to have caused a change in foreign policy. Of the many Western visitors to the Soviet Union in the last two years, none ~~has~~ ^{has} reported that the ~~supply of~~ ^{supply of} food ~~is any worse than it has been for years.~~ ^{is any worse than it has been for years.} ^{2/} Thus it seems dubious that the situation in agriculture is responsible for the "New Look."

Some commentators have argued that the rulers in the Kremlin feel that they must follow foreign policies which permit them to invest more of their resources in consumers goods so as to meet the demands of the Soviet people for a steadily rising standard of living and thus mollify discontent. ~~This~~ This argument is likewise unconvincing. The leaders of the Soviet Union have never put living standards first in their thoughts, and they are not doing so today. Indeed, it is difficult to see why they should be particularly worried about morale. Real wages have risen steadily ever since the war, with the result that Soviet citizens are probably living better today than they have for many years -- perhaps better than in any year ~~in the Soviet Union~~ ~~that of the United States, but the~~ ~~Soviet Union has never observed or enjoyed living conditions like~~

¹ New York Times, July 8, 1955.
² Harry Schwartz, on returning from a trip to the Soviet Union, reported: "No one need starve, for if nothing else there is plenty of bread, and bread is cheap." New York Times, Nov. 8, 1955.

since the revolution.^{1/}

Another variety of the argument regarding Soviet economic weakness has to do with the high cost of armaments. The Soviet economy, it is said, might somehow be able to hobble along and avoid complete collapse if it were not for the fact that the armaments race, and particularly the competition in atomic weapons, absorbs so much of its economic resources. For example, according to Harry Schwartz in the New York Times, "high Soviet leaders are reported to have told Austrian negotiators that the Soviet economy...could not stand the high cost of modern armaments because of the drain this put on resources needed for other areas of production."^{2/}

But when all of these economic arguments are added together, they still do not constitute reasons sufficient to have forced the Soviet Union to adopt a more conciliatory foreign policy. The overall picture of the Soviet economy is one of impressive strength, and of strength which is increasing at a rate more rapid than ours. The postwar years have seen a steady rise in industrial production and in the standard of living, despite the high cost of armaments. It is doubtless true that the Soviet leaders would like to have peace and a relaxation of international tensions for several years so as to be able to ameliorate their various economic problems, improve

¹ See the article by Janet Chapman, "Real Wages in the Soviet Union, 1928-1952," in The Review of Economics and Statistics (May, 1954). She concludes that real wages in 1952 were lower than in 1928, higher than in 1937, and much higher than in 1948.

Harry Schwartz, in the article mentioned above, declared: "For all the poverty seen everywhere in the Soviet Union, it is clear that conditions have improved sharply over the last ten years." New York Times, Nov. 8, 1955. Mr. Schwartz also reports considerable grumbling over the standard of living, but such complaining has been going on for thirty years or more without forcing any noticeable change in the regime's policy of placing primary emphasis on producers goods.

² New York Times, June 10, 1955.

living conditions, and develop the economies of the other countries of the Soviet bloc, particularly China. But this is far from saying that the Soviet Union is forced to seek peace because of the overwhelming pressure of economic weakness.

2. Restoration of East-West Trade. Occasionally the argument is put forward that one of the chief objectives of the "New Look" in Soviet foreign policy is the restoration of East-West trade. It is said, rather ^{that} hopefully, American-imposed bans on the shipment of strategic goods to the Communist bloc are putting a serious strain on the Communist economies and are thereby forcing the Communist nations to become more conciliatory.

This argument reflects wishful thinking of two types: first, the desire to believe that ~~such~~ ^{such} legislation as the Battle Act has ~~seriously~~ ^{seriously} hurt the Soviet bloc, and second, the hope that the removal of restrictions will open up a huge market for Western goods. ~~Both suppositions seem overly optimistic.~~ ^{Both suppositions seem overly optimistic.} ~~The Soviet Union~~ ^{itself} is almost completely self-sufficient, and autarchy has long been one of its objectives. Foreign trade has never loomed large in the Soviet economy except during brief emergency periods. The other Communist states probably have been hurt more by the restrictions. However, ~~the great decline in trade between the Communist and non-Communist worlds is due not only to American legislation, but also to a deliberate Communist policy of consolidating the Eastern bloc and cutting it off from dependence upon the West.~~ ~~It is both strategic and non-strategic goods.~~

Since the war the Soviet Union has occasionally dangled the prospect of large orders before the eyes of West European manufacturers, in an effort to convince them that the supposed "subordination" of their countries to the United States is losing them business. But the big orders usually fail to materialize, ~~and the fact that the Soviet Union is not interested in the goods~~ indicating that the Soviet leaders are more interested in propaganda than in goods.

~~_____~~

The expansion of East-West trade is viewed by the Soviet Union as a means rather than an end. Khrushchev was probably speaking the truth when he told a group of American senators: "We value trade least for economic reasons and most for political purposes, as a means of promoting better relations between our countries." ^{1/} There doubtless are some special items which the Soviet Union would be pleased to purchase, but the need for these commodities is hardly great enough to have caused a major change in foreign policy.

3. The Struggle for Power. It is sometimes maintained that the "New Look" in Soviet foreign policy is a reflection of the struggle for power among Stalin's successors. ~~_____~~ But no one has shown just how a struggle for power automatically produces a foreign policy of conciliation. If the death of Stalin had been followed by a policy of increased belligerency and intractability, we may be sure that this also would have been explained by some com-
inside the Kremlin.
mentators as a reflection of the struggle for power/~~_____~~
~~_____~~

It is difficult to see just how a struggle for power is necessarily connected with any particular foreign policy. Isn't it just as logical to assume that one of the contestants or one of the competing factions could gain support by advocating a "get tough" policy? ^{2/} Isn't the ability to make concessions to foreign powers without fear of domestic difficulties a sign of a strong government rather than a weak one? No doubt a struggle for power has been in progress ~~_____~~ since the death of Stalin. But there is little

¹ New York Times, Sept. 13, 1955.

² History provides many examples of leaders embarking on foreign adventures as a means of increasing prestige at home and diverting attention from domestic problems. E.g., Nicholas II and the Russo-Japanese War, Napoleon III, Bismarck, and so on.

evidence to show that this has affected foreign policy one way or the other. Although the personnel at the Soviet summit has changed, in the years since the death of Stalin, the foreign policies have remained much the same. The fall of Beria and the demotion of Malenkov seem to have been due primarily to conflicts between persons rather than disputes over policies. At least there is no clear indication that these events were connected with disagreements over foreign policy.

4. Military Factors. The evidence seems to indicate that the "New Look" in Soviet foreign policy is not due primarily to economic weaknesses or to any other internal problems. What, then, is the explanation? Isn't it reasonable to suppose that the preponderant motive is the urgent desire to avoid at this time a big war, especially a thermonuclear war? Cannot we logically assume that the leaders in Russia/~~are~~ are worried above all by the knowledge that a war fought under present conditions, with atom and hydrogen bombs, could mean the death of tens of millions of Soviet citizens and the obliteration of all the major cities in the USSR?

The Soviet Union is aware that we have large stockpiles of atom and hydrogen bombs, and they/^{now} know from their own experiments the destructive capacity of those bombs. They are painfully conscious of our air bases in Greenland, Iceland, Alaska, Western Europe, North Africa, and the Middle East. They know that we have long-range bombers capable at a moment's notice of setting off for the interior of the Soviet Union. The Strategic Air Command is like a loaded gun pointed at the ^{vitals}/~~heart~~ of Russia, and the rulers in the Kremlin must be desperately eager not to pull the trigger.

The recent Soviet moves to reduce international tension have probably been inspired by a number of considerations, but two objectives stand out.

One is to reduce the danger of war by effecting a relaxation in the diplomatic atmosphere, to eliminate the possibility that the advocates of so-called "preventive" war will come to dominate American policy, to bring an end to the war-like atmosphere in which some accident could serve as the Sarajevo of an atomic war, and, if possible, to devise some method of preventing the use of atomic weapons. ~~With this objective we should have the greatest sympathy for our civil which would not be long that the use of atomic~~

~~Weapons~~

But a second objective of the present Soviet "peace" policy may be to lull us into a false feeling of security, to get us to relax our guard, and thus make it possible for the Soviets to inflict ^{an} ~~atomic~~ atomic Pearl Harbor. The present talk of peaceful coexistence ^{is} ~~a~~ a siren song intended to lure the free nations off their course and wreck them on the shoals of disunity, disarmament, pacifism and neutralism. It would be foolhardy for us to assume that the Soviet Union will refrain from using atomic weapons if our defenses should become so vulnerable or our retaliatory power so weak that they could ^e destroy us in a surprise attack. Regardless of the number of diplomatic receptions Khrushchev, Bulganin and Co. may attend, this does not change the fact that we are probably in for an extended race for scientific and technological supremacy. To lag behind in the development of new weapons, and new methods of defense against new weapons, will only invite attack.

no ff → This is not to say that we should refuse to take part in agreements for disarmament, but only that we should not reduce our strength in any manner unless we are certain that Communist strength is correspondingly reduced.

Atomic armaments, however, are not the only ones which concern the Soviet leaders. The wars in Korea and Indo-China provided ample evidence that the A-bomb and H-bomb have not made other weapons obsolete. In fact, just the opposite may be the case. The super-bombs, like poison gas, may never be used, now that both sides possess them. Consequently, the Soviet leaders are also interested in the strength of the West in traditional weapons.

What are their objectives in this field? Obviously the "New Look" is intended to bring about a reduction in Western armaments, the closing of American overseas air bases, the weakening of such defensive arrangements as NATO and SEATO and the prevention of West German rearmament. ^{The Kremlin wishes,} ~~through which~~ moreover, to reduce the widespread fear of the Soviet Union, thereby removing the cement which has united the free world, and thus to create an atmosphere in which conflicts ^{among} ~~between~~ "capitalist" states can flourish. That this policy promises to have considerable success is shown by Britain's decision to reduce its armed forces one-eighth, ^{1/} by the Cyprus dispute, and by the weakening of Yugoslavia's ties to the West -- to ^{cite} ~~name~~ only a few examples.

5. Why Wasn't Soviet Policy Changed Earlier? There are of course many who believe that fear of an atomic war has not been a major factor in bringing about the change in Soviet foreign policy. They argue that the United States had the atom bomb as long ago as 1945, while the Soviet Union did not produce one until 1949.² If fear of atomic attack is the chief cause of the "New Look," then why wasn't this policy adopted much earlier, when the United States had a monopoly of atom bombs?

¹ New York Times, Oct. 9, 1955.

² President Truman revealed the first known/"atomic explosion" on Sept. 23, 1949. Soviet

A number of answers can be made to this criticism. In the first place, there is considerable difference between the early-type atom bombs, about twenty equal to thousands of tons of TNT, and a Bikini-type hydrogen bomb, equal to or more ~~ten~~ and spreading deadly dust over ten ~~thousands~~ millions of tons of TNT, / ~~thousands~~ thousands of square miles.

~~It may be that during the first years after the war, Stalin, along with many others, looked upon the atom bomb as just another~~ ^{1/} ~~more powerful~~ ^{weapon,} one which did not require a change in Soviet foreign policy.

Furthermore, it should be remembered that the years when America had a monopoly of the A-bomb were also the years in which we were disarming and withdrawing most of our forces from overseas. It was not until after the start of the Korean war that western rearmament began in earnest, and it was some years later before we had built up the military might of NATO, obtained agreement on the arming of Western Germany, constructed air bases in Spain, and produced large quantities of bombers capable of reaching far into the ~~the~~ Soviet Union. This process of Western rearmament, combined with Soviet awareness of the increasingly horrible potentialities of atomic warfare, seem to have been the compelling reasons for the Soviet shift in policy.

¹ On Sept. 24, 1946, in an interview with Alexander Werth, correspondent of the London Sunday Times, Stalin expressed the following view: "I do not believe the atom bomb to be as serious a force as certain politicians are inclined to think. Atomic bombs are intended for intimidating the weak-nerved, but they cannot decide the outcome of war, since atom bombs are by no means sufficient for this purpose. Certainly, monopolistic possession of the secret of the atom bomb does create a threat, but at least two remedies exist against it: (a) Monopolist possession of the atom bomb cannot last long; (b) use of the atom bomb will be prohibited." Quoted in: Joseph Stalin, For Peaceful Coexistence (New York: International Publishers, 1951), p. 22.

The ~~change~~ change in Soviet attitude regarding the destructive possibilities of war is well illustrated by two quotations from speeches by Malenkov. In November, 1949, he said:

...if the imperialists unleash a third world war, this war will be the grave, not only for individual capitalist states, but for the whole of world capitalism.^{1/}

There was a significant change in what Malenkov had to say five years later, in March 1954:

...the Soviet government is resolutely opposed to the policy of Cold War, for this is a policy of preparation for a new world war, which, with modern methods of warfare, means the destruction of world civilization.^{2/}

In the interval between these two statements, the Soviet Union developed and tested its first hydrogen bomb.³ This confirmation of the destructiveness of the new weapon ~~is a~~

~~is a~~
must have shown the Soviet leaders that today the only alternative to coexistence is coextermination.

¹Speech at a meeting of the Moscow Soviet, Pravda, Nov. 7, 1949; quoted in Current Digest of the Soviet Press, Nov. 22, 1949, p. 7. (Italics added, T.T.H.)

²Speech at a meeting of voters in Moscow, Pravda, March 13, 1954; also in Current Digest of the Soviet Press, April 28, 1954, p. 8. (Italics added, T.T.H.) The author is indebted to Mr. Earl ~~W.~~ Packer for pointing out these two statements by Malenkov.

³Malenkov announced on August 8, 1953, that ~~the~~ the United States no longer had a monopoly of the hydrogen bomb. Lewis L. Straus confirmed on March 31, 1954, that in August of the previous year a fission-type bomb had been exploded in the Soviet Union.

One factor delaying the shift may have been the personality of aging master the ~~the~~ himself, dictator Stalin. Old, irascible, and set in his ways, he probably found it difficult to change his methods or his policies. His successors, on the other hand, were happy to bring a halt to a policy which had succeeded in uniting much of the world in opposition to the Soviet Union.

6. "Legal" and "Illegal" Soviet Foreign Policies. ~~XXXXXXXXXX~~

~~XXXXXXXXXX~~ The leaders of international Communism can perhaps best be compared (and I mean this seriously) with a group of organized racketeers engaged in a variety of both legal and illegal enterprises. On the one hand the racketeers operate a network of restaurants, night clubs, and liquor stores, just as the Soviet government has embassies, consulates, and trade commissions. But on the other hand, these legal organizations and activities are used by the racketeering gang as "fronts" for their illegal operations -- gambling houses, bootlegging, dope peddling, gang wars, robberies, murders, and the like -- just as the Soviet government uses its official agencies as "fronts" for their revolutionary activities -- subversion, civil wars, theft of territory, assassinations, and peddling of the opiate of Stalinism.

On occasion the Soviet racketeers feel themselves so powerful that they can openly flout the laws of international society and carry on their illegal activities almost without fear of punishment. But after they have done so for a while, the international community becomes aroused to the danger, and respectable law-abiding citizens unite in demanding that the criminals be brought under control. The international community then strengthens its police force (as with the creation of NATO). The police "crack down" on the illegal activities, stop the theft of territory, and even threaten the racketeers with the possibility of their being put out of business. In

underworld lingo "the heat is on."

Today the Soviet racketeers seem to consider it necessary to "lay low" for a while by curtailing their illegal operations and pretending that they have decided to "go straight." They try to create the impression that whereas the old boss, "Two-Gun Joe," was an incorrigible crook, the new bosses are honest, law-abiding citizens who wish to "peacefully coexist" with their neighbors. This being the case, say the new bosses, it is no longer necessary for the community to maintain such a large and powerful police force, with so many expensive weapons.

The international community would be foolish, however, to take them at their word. We may be sure that as soon as the police force is weakened, the racketeers will be operating at full swing once again. In fact, their illegal activities are still going on, although not as openly as before. The present bosses were all trained by "Two-Gun Joe" and share his lack of principle. They have not renounced their aims but are hoping that some day they can seize control of the whole town and set up their own system of governing society.

Similarly, Soviet foreign policy has always been conducted on two and the other the unofficial, "illegal" level; different levels -- one the official, "legal" level, ~~one~~ carried on by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and the other by the Comintern and similar organizations. This is just as true today as it was under Stalin. Although Soviet diplomats talk of peaceful coexistence with "capitalist" states, Soviet agents continue their attempts to undermine these states from within. ^{1/} Moscow is still supporting and manipulating its fifth column Communist parties

¹The continuation of Communist revolutionary tactics is particularly evident today in Asia, in such countries as Laos and Vietnam. See editorial in New York Times, Nov. 14, 1955.

throughout the world. It ^{directs} ~~is~~ a gigantic propaganda campaign, using all media of communication. It finances and controls the World Peace Council, the World Federation of Trade Unions, and countless other Communist "front" organizations. It is engaged in sabotage, provocation, kidnapping, and assassination. In doing so, it is simply carrying out the injunction of Stalin that a Communist Party must do "the utmost possible...for the development, support and awakening of revolution in all countries."¹

This is not to say that the "New Look" had brought no diminution in overt Soviet efforts to promote Communist wars and revolutions. The wars in Korea and Indo-China have been suspended. The status quo in the Formosa straits has been temporarily accepted. It is even possible that an order has gone out from the Kremlin to all Communist parties that, for the time being, no coups d'état or similar aggressive acts should be attempted. But this does not mean that the world-wide conflict between Communism and freedom has ended. Whether the people of America realize it or not, we are ^{involved} ~~involved~~ in a massive struggle for the loyalties of the peoples in every country of the globe.

Although the Soviets know that they might lose in military warfare, they are convinced that they are bound to win in the other varieties of warfare. One advantage on their side is the fact that they have had thirty-eight years or more of experience in this kind of political warfare, whereas Americans are comparative amateurs and are inclined to think that such activities are a dirty business which democracies should eschew. Or, like Senator Malone of Nevada, we look upon our propaganda program as an extravagance which can be curtailed on the strength of a few Soviet smiles. Communists have

¹ "The Political Strategy and Tactics of the Russian Communists" (July, 1921), Works, V, 82.

For a picture of the tremendous volume and variety of Soviet propaganda during the year 1954, see: F. Bowen Evans (ed.), Worldwide Communist Propaganda Activities (New York, 1955).

always assumed that the conflict between Communism and capitalism is never ending, although the weapons and tactics may vary from time to time. Democracies, on the other hand, still tend to think in terms of total war or total peace, with peace as the "normal" situation. Actually, we are involved in a war whether we like it or not, a war of economic systems, a war for scientific and military supremacy, and above all, a war for personal ^{1/}loyalties.

We should remember that Communists have always looked upon periods of peaceful coexistence as temporary. Peaceful coexistence has been preached only when the Soviet Union was felt to be in great danger, and when the tide of world revolution had momentarily ebbed. At the present time some of the weapons of the Communists have been laid aside, but ~~_____~~
~~_____~~ we can be sure that these weapons are being repaired, improved, and replenished in preparation for future use. We cannot afford to forget that the last period when peaceful coexistence was the dominant theme of Soviet foreign relations -- that is, the period of World War II -- was followed by the years of greatest Soviet expansion.

7. Prospects for the Future.

/ What then of the future? It seems to me that there are four possible courses which future Soviet policy might take; let us call them Hot War, Cold War, Cool War and Peaceful Coexistence.

First, and worst, would be a Hot War. It is reckless to assume that the Soviets would refrain from starting a ^{hot} war if they became convinced that they could attack us successfully without running the risk of a massive counter attack.

Second is the possibility of Cold War. It is certainly not difficult to imagine that in the next few months, as in the past few months, the

¹Communist political warfare, together with proposals for American counter measures, are discussed in: John Scott, Political Warfare (New York, 1955), and David Sarnoff, Program for a Political Offensive Against World Communism (New York, 1955).

famous "spirit of Geneva" will continue to dissipate, polite language will again disappear from Soviet-American intercourse, and we will revert to the former situation of open disputes, openly arrived at. East and West may return to a condition of irreconcilable antagonism, full-scale political warfare, and unrestricted competition for military supremacy.

~~and a return to the Cold War could be brought about by either side, by the United States or the Soviet Union.~~

Third, we may have a continuation of what might be called the Cool War, the situation in which we now find ourselves. Such a relationship differs from the Cold War in such superficial aspects as the exchange of cultural and scientific delegations, the release of Western prisoners from Communist labor camps, and a change in the tone of the propaganda war. More important, the Cool War has brought a willingness of the Soviet Union to bargain and to make concessions on points which, if not crucial to Soviet security, still cannot be brushed aside as insignificant. Here I have in mind such actions as the withdrawal from Austria and from the Porkkala Peninsula. It is perhaps too early to tell whether the Cool War has also brought a willingness on the part of the Soviet Union to make a genuine effort to control the use of atomic weapons; we can only hope that it has.

In a Cool War the struggle between Communism and the Free World continues, but it is carried on within certain limitations. The primitive slug-fest, you might say, has been replaced ^{by} ~~with~~ a boxing match in which padded gloves are worn and certain rules are observed. The Soviet Union may be wearing brass knuckles under its gloves and it may occasionally hit below the belt, but at least it feels constrained to hide these actions and

it no longer openly proclaims the contest to be a fight to the death.

From the point of view of the West, the Cool War has both advantages and dangers. We have as much as the Soviets to gain from the avoidance of further killing and destruction. The chief danger is, of course, that we might relax and become demoralized, ~~and thus lay ourselves open to a Communist knockout.~~ lower our guard, and thus lay ourselves open to a Communist knockout.

While bearing in mind that our Communist opponent is still a dangerous one, perhaps one with murder in mind, we should not ignore the fourth possibility, namely that the Cool War might conceivably lead to the eventual abandonment by the Soviet Union of the goal of exterminating world "capitalism," and to the genuine adoption of a policy of peaceful coexistence. Such an eventuality can hardly be called probable. But we must not permit our policy to become so inflexible as to hinder the very modification of Soviet goals that we so much desire. To do so might only convince the Com-