

For my files for my new book

1/80

POINTS TO THINK ABOUT IN PREPARING PAPERS ON

"THE ANATOMY OF COMMUNIST TAKEOVERS"

I. Factors Contributing to Communist Success in Taking Over.

a. International factors:

- (1) Intervention (or the threat of intervention) by the Red Army.
- (2) Lack of effective aid to the non-Communists from outside.
- (3) Soviet diplomacy and its role in forestalling intervention by other powers.
- (4) Mistakes of the non-Communist powers.
- (5) International war.
- (6) Fear of powerful neighbors (Czech fear of Germany, etc.)
- (7) Geographic proximity to the USSR or to other Communist states.

b. Local factors:

- (1) Economic, social, and political conditions under the previous regime.
- (2) Support for the Communist Party among the proletariat, the peasantry, the middle class, and the intelligentsia.
- (3) National character; national hatreds and rivalries.
- (4) Leadership -- Lenin, Tito, Mao, Castro, etc.
- (5) The local Communist Party, its strength, organization, and tactics.
- (6) The weaknesses and mistakes of the local non-Communists.
- (7) Resistance movements and the role of Communists in them.
- (8) Civil war.
- (9) Nationalism and Communist exploitation of it.
- (10) Anti-colonialism.
- (11) The appeal of Communism as a method for modernization.
- (12) Ethnic affinity to nationalities living in the USSR.
- (13) Special local circumstances.

II. Factors Contributing to Communist Failures.

- a. The inability or unwillingness of the USSR to occupy the country or to remain in occupation (France, Italy, Finland, Azerbaijan).

- b. Lack of determination on the part of the USSR to Communize the country (Finland, Eastern Austria, Azerbaijan).
- c. Armed intervention by non-Communist powers or fear of it (Hungary in 1919, Greece, South Korea, Guatemala, South Vietnam, Western Germany, Western Austria, France, Italy).
- d. Determined and skillful opposition by local non-Communists (Finland, Austria, China in 1927, Malaya, Indonesia).
- e. Inept tactics by the local Communists and/or the Soviets (Hungary in 1919, Germany in 1918-23, etc.)
- f. Insufficient popular support.
- g. Lack of encouragement and support from Moscow for proposed takeover attempts (Germany in 1923, Greece in 1944 and 1946, France, Italy and China in 1945-47).

III. Stages in the Development of Soviet Policy Regarding the Best Strategy and Tactics for Taking Power

- a. Attempted imitations of the Bolshevik prototype.
- b. The "Popular Front" tactic.
- c. The "People's Democracy" tactic.
- d. Support for Wars of National Liberation, National Democracies, Guided Democracies, and Peaceful Paths to Socialism.

IV. The Role of Stalin in the Communist Takeovers.

- a. Had Stalin decided already during World War II to install Communist regimes in most of Eastern Europe? Or was he determined to do so only in a few key countries (e.g., Poland and Rumania)? Might he have been satisfied with a Finnish-type solution in other countries such as Czechoslovakia? Was he successful in more countries than he had anticipated? Fewer?
- b. Did Stalin have a "master plan" for Eastern Europe and North Korea? Or was the planning done spontaneously and indepently by the native Communists? Did Stalin have alternative plans? Was he feeling his way, playing it by ear?
- c. Were the various takeovers carried out on Moscow's orders or on the initiative of the local Communists?
- d. Did Stalin in some cases tell the local Communists that they could attempt a takeover on their own, but that he would not support them militarily (Czechoslovakia, Finland)?

- e. Why did Stalin want other countries to become Communist?
 - (1) Ideological reasons -- because he thought Communism the best system for these countries?
 - (2) Military reasons -- to surround the USSR with a protective belt of friendly nations?
 - (3) Economic reasons -- to exploit these countries economically?
 - (4) Personal reasons -- lust for power?
- f. Did Stalin refuse to support any prospective Communist takeover which he feared he could not control (e.g., Yugoslavia, China)?

V. Factors Influencing the USSR in Its Decisions Whether to Encourage or Discourage Proposed Communist Takeover Attempts.

- a. The traditional dichotomy in Soviet foreign policy -- Russian national interests vs. world revolution.
- b. The prospects for success of the takeover.
- c. The military situation of the USSR and of opposing powers.
- d. The state of Soviet relations with the existing government of that particular country.
- e. The state of relations with the other Big Powers.
- f. Special opportunities provided by international wars.
- g. The prospects of Moscow being able to control the new Communist regime if the takeover was successful.
- h. Mao vs. Moscow on support for national liberation struggles.
- i. Castro vs. Moscow on support for the revolutionary movement in Latin America.

VI. Factors Influencing the USSR in Its Decision Whether to Annex a Country or Merely to Make it a Satellite:

- a. Location on Russia's frontier.
- b. Historic claims and traditions.
- c. Ethnic claims.
- d. Military considerations.
- e. Economic considerations.
- f. Why is it that the USSR generally has refrained from annexing territories unless they once belonged to Tsarist Russia?
- g. Did Stalin ever consider the possibility of converting the East European satellites into constituent republics of the USSR?