

ist" or "imperialist" world as other than an enemy, and when such a revision is used for indoctrination as widely and as intensively as the present version, the Western countries will have won the cold war. Khrushchev himself is authority for the fact that the Communist Party considers that that will be when shrimps have learned to whistle.

Leslie C. Stevens

GRASPING THE INITIATIVE

SINCE my knowledge of Russian Communism is limited to book-reading and I have never even visited the Soviet Union, it would be silly for me to pontificate about events since the death of Stalin, and even sillier to predict what is going to happen in Russia as the result of the Twentieth Congress. But there is one question to which it is the duty of British Socialists to find an answer. What should be the attitude of the Western Labour Movements to the new men in the Kremlin and the peace initiative they have launched with such spectacular success?

Some of my colleagues are suggesting that it is too early to formulate a new policy. If their advice is taken, we shall once again remain inactive and irresolute until the moment for decision has passed. Those who advise us to wait developments in Russia are not, as they imagine, postponing a decision, but making a bad decision. They are deciding to adopt the kind of neutral, wait-and-see policy which has so often in the past left the initiative to the Russians.

The one clear, indisputable fact about the year 1956 is that it provides the opportunity for new initiatives to those who will seize them. For ten years we have been waging political trench-warfare, in which the chances of manœuvre by either side were strictly limited. Now, as the result of the nuclear stalemate and the death of Stalin, the cold-war battlefield has been transformed into a field of diplomatic manœuvre. Here victory will go to those who decide their policies

without waiting to see what the other side will do.

A Western initiative, however, must be based on *some* assumptions about the Communist bloc. Here are the assumptions I believe that Socialists should make. (1) If nuclear war is successfully avoided for the next twenty-five years, the balance of power will continue to shift—as it has been shifting since 1945—towards the Soviet Union and the Chinese People's Republic. (2) Nothing except general war could preserve to the North Atlantic nations the virtual monopoly of power they have enjoyed since the Industrial Revolution—and have wasted on internecine wars. Now that, for reasons of self-preservation, general war has been excluded from Western policy, we must recognise that we shall never again be able to "negotiate from strength," i.e. to achieve our political ends by the diplomatic use of military superiority. (3) Because the new men in the Kremlin are aware of this shift of the balance of power and rightly credit it to Communist technological achievement, they are much more confident than the old Bolsheviks ever were that the future belongs to Communism. (4) Stalinism, by the brutality of its external policies and the insanity of its internal purges, weakened the Communist challenge. By forcing the world into competitive rearmament, it made the task of "containing" Communism relatively simple. Any liberalisation, therefore, which takes place inside the Communist states will increase both their internal strength and their chances of success if the cold war is resumed.

These assumptions will seem gloomy to anyone who believes that world peace can only be achieved by "defeating" or by "containing" Communism. I have never understood how a Socialist with any historical perspective can believe either. Communism, which began as a heresy inside the Labour Movements of the highly industrialised North Atlantic nations, has achieved power among the backward, non-European peoples and provided their small, educated élites with a ruthless method of telescoping into a generation the industrial development which

took hundreds of years in the West. As a democratic Socialist, I would, of course, vastly prefer the industrialisation of a backward nation to take place under democratic forms of government. But if the alternatives are a Chiang Kai-shek régime or a Mao Tse-tung régime, I would certainly not be prepared to defend the use of military force to sustain the former, far less to restore it to power.

FROM these general reflections I draw five political conclusions.

(1) *Cold War*. Only when there is a clear threat of military aggression by the Communist powers can a Socialist accept as the basis of his policy the concept of Cold War—which ranges the Communist and non-Communist worlds against one another in a competitive test of strength. Such a clear threat may have existed in 1950. Since the death of Stalin and the nuclear stalemate, the threat has become remote, and the Socialist should therefore revert to his traditional opposition to an arms race and to the division of the world into strategic power blocs.

(2) *Armaments*. The military risk to the democracies inherent in agreed disarmament is now far less than the political and social penalties of a continued arms race. Socialists, therefore, should demand that the Western powers outbid the Russians in their proposals for disarmament, in particular in the field of conventional weapons, whose production prevents us from using our skilled manpower and plant to aid the underdeveloped territories. If there is no far-reaching disarmament agreement, Socialists should accept the need for a NATO “trip-rope” but urge drastic cuts in the size of NATO forces including the proposed German Army.

(3) *Europe*. We should seize the initiative by proposing the phased de-militarisation not only of Germany but of Western and Eastern Europe. We should, for instance, make it clear that we are prepared to see France and Western Germany withdraw from NATO if Poland, Czechoslovakia, and Hungary are conceded the kind of independence Tito has obtained for Yugoslavia. Our long-term aim

should be a United States of Europe, whose independence is guaranteed under a United Nations security pact by both Great Powers. Within this framework the unification of Germany and the drawing of its Eastern frontier should not present an insoluble problem.

(4) *Middle East and North Africa*. Instead of rebuking those Arab leaders who have refused to commit their countries to the Western defence system and are struggling to free their peoples from colonial status, we should encourage the formation of a Federation of Arab States, committed neither to the East nor to the West and free to sell its oil on purely commercial terms. We should make it clear to the Arab leaders that we are determined to guarantee the integrity of an Israel dedicated, like Switzerland, to positive neutrality.

(5) *Colonialism*. The Liberal and Labour Movements of the West have triumphantly falsified the predictions of Karl Marx. They have used the institutions of democracy to begin the job of resolving the inherent contradictions of capitalism, evening out the gross inequalities, and transforming the privileges of the bourgeoisie into rights of every citizen. All this, however, has been achieved within the framework of the highly industrialised nation state, and by a small group of powers with living standards fantastically better than those of Asia and Africa. Western Socialism will degenerate into a polite form of National Socialism unless we recognise the existence of an international class war, in which our white Labour Movements now share the privileges and display some of the prejudices of an exploiting class.

I conclude that our main danger is that we shall be so hypnotised by the growing power and self-confidence of the post-Stalin Communist world that we shall go on thinking in terms of Cold War and so concede the political initiative to the new men in the Kremlin. In that case their victory is certain. The main task of democratic Socialism in the 1950's, therefore, is, first, to challenge the conscience of the Western peoples by exposing the facts of this international class war

and, secondly, to show that, without Socialist planning and public ownership in each of our countries, aid to underdeveloped areas will remain an empty phrase and white ascendancy will be legitimately overthrown by war or Communist revolution.

R. H. S. Crossman

AN ASIAN VIEWPOINT

THE current phase of Soviet dynamics, whether in reality signifying a change or not, intrudes a disturbing element on the democratic horizons of Europe, Asia, and America. Certitude means strength. Because the impact of the new Soviet strategy on the thought of democratic countries and individuals is at the moment incalculable the dangers are intensified rather than diminished.

As far back as 1931 the Soviet theoretician, Dimitri Manuilsky, summed up the motivations behind a strategy such as this. In the light of the new developments in Russia, his comments are illuminating:

“War to the hilt between Communism and Capitalism is inevitable,” writes Manuilsky. “Today, of course, we are not strong enough to attack. Our time will come in twenty or thirty years. The bourgeoisie will have to be put to sleep, so we will begin by launching the most spectacular peace movement on record. There will be electrifying overtones and unheard-of concessions. The capitalist countries, stupid and decadent, will rejoice to co-operate in their own destruction. They will leap at another chance to be friends. As soon as their guard is down we shall smash them with our clenched fist. . . .”

Thus clearly the purpose of the present Soviet strategy is to lull the free world into a false sense of security, taking the edge off the cold war and freezing it into immobility. Inevitably the repercussions on such defence arrangements as NATO, SEATO, and other collective security devices will be considerable. At the same time we can expect an offensive directed at undermining from within the

constitutional structures of democratic countries. From co-existence as between nations to a popular front as between parties inside a country will be posed as a logical process.

Already the Central Committee of the Communist Party of India, in its latest appraisal of the Indian political situation after the 20th Congress of the Soviet Communist Party, has concluded that the Indian economy “is independent of foreign influences and domination.” Modifications to its political thesis were submitted to the Palghat Congress of the Communist Party beginning on April 18th. The present stand constitutes a radical departure from the party’s political policy enunciated only last June, for until a few months ago the Indian Communist Party leaders had held that while Nehru’s foreign policy was “peaceful and progressive,” his internal policies were essentially “reactionary.” The Indian economy was then termed semi-colonial and characterised as not being wholly a “national bourgeois economy.” A spokesman of the Central Committee explained that the immediate consequence of the Party’s changed attitude towards Nehru’s approach to the problem of building up the indigenous economy would be the abandonment of the present tactics of forming anti-Congress democratic fronts. In future Communists would form “democratic” fronts which would seek alignment with the “progressive” sections of the Congress. The local Communist Party of Telengana in Hyderabad, which was the first provincial unit to discuss the new line, concluded its eight-day session recently by giving overwhelming approval to the latest policy of “critical support” to the Nehru Government. Thus the Indian Communists are busy building their own Trojan horse. The historic Lenin-Roy compromise formula for China, adopted by the second Soviet Congress in 1920, finds an echo in the disingenuous Palghat resolution.

BOTH the area and climate of the cold war must intensify and increase. In Asia, as the results of the recent general elections in