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21 November 1955

STAFF MEMORANDUM NO. 79-55

SUBJECT: Probable International Communist Tactics during the Period of the "Detente" ^{1/}

Scope and Thesis of this Memorandum

1. This is a paper on the tactical aspects of International Communism within the framework of the relaxation-of-tension campaign. It is submitted as an informal supplement to recent estimates which concluded that the Soviet leaders are unlikely to abandon their long-range objective of achieving global victory for Communism, but that they have "adopted the new policy as more than a short term tactical shift."^{2/} However, in these estimates no special consideration was given to the question of how the various Communist Parties would pursue its objectives through the period of the "detente".

2. At the outset, the thesis is suggested that the use of the term "detente" in connection with International Communism is a misnomer. There is no place for a "detente" in Communism. There are only tactical accommodations designed (a) to support the present Soviet policy of relaxing international relations to permit the Bloc to strengthen itself internally and externally, (b) to undermine the Free World's will to resist and to foster neutralism in "uncommitted" nations by obscuring the real dangers of Communism, and (c) to maintain the readiness of Communist Parties and front organizations to take advantage of any opening that might occur.

Theory and Practice of Communist Opportunism.

3. The opportunist character of Leninist methodology has never ceased to guide the leaders of World Communism. Lenin wrote in 1920 that "the strictest loyalty to the ideas of Communism must be combined with ability to make all the necessary compromises, to make agreements, zigzags, retreats and so on...." If you are not able to adapt yourself, if you are not inclined to crawl in the mud on your belly, you are not a revolutionary but a chatter-box.... Also significant is the position taken in the Thesis and Resolutions of the VI Congress of the Comintern, held in 1928, in which it is stated: "The peace policy of the proletarian state certainly does not imply that the Soviet State has become reconciled with capitalism.... It is merely

^{1/} This memorandum has been discussed with CCI and the International Communism Branch, DDP

^{2/} NIE 11-13-55, Page 2, Para. 4.

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another and, under present conditions, a more advantageous form of fighting capitalism, a form which the USSR has constantly employed since the October Revolution! In 1923 Stalin wrote: "The strategy of the Party is not something permanent, it changes with the passing of the revolution from one stage to another.... It changes to meet historical shifts and turns...."

4. Recent policies employed by Bloc leaders clearly follow the above principles. The recent outbreak of Soviet "amicability" and the lessening of Communist vituperation against Free World governments is only a tactical maneuver on a large scale. Khrushchev himself stated that "if anyone expects us to forget the doctrines of Marx, Engels, Lenin, and Stalin he is making a tremendous mistake. Those who wait for this will have to wait until Easter and Whitsun fall on the same day." (Or, as some translations had it, "until the shrimp whistles".) Other Soviet leaders have also reaffirmed their faith in the eventual victory of Communism. Kaganovich, speaking on the occasion of the 38th anniversary of the Bolshevik Revolution, declared that Communism would be victorious the world over in this century. Schirdewan, the East German deputy to SED Party leader Ulbricht, said "Soviet coexistence policy will prevent war, but does not preclude the fight of the working people for the eventual downfall of the capitalistic nations."^{2/}

5. The Communist Parties outside the Bloc have clearly accepted these principles of opportunism as a guide for their own tactics. For example, Italian Party chief Togliatti warned that "reactionary groups have begun to say that the day a true relaxation of international tension has been achieved will necessarily mark the end of the Communist and Socialist movements.... Then, presumably, a new era will begin and there will be no longer any talk about Communists. But how can they imagine that would happen when relaxation of international tension signifies the triumph of that policy of coexistence and peace that none other than the socialist countries have been proclaiming and holding throughout their entire existence."^{3/} Pierre Courtade, authoritative spokesman of the French CP, made it clear that actions of the Party to emancipate the working class or to support colonial peoples have no connection with the issue of peaceful coexistence which he described as a "state of peaceful relations between nations." Courtade's statement is particularly interesting as a possible reflection of Moscow's thinking on domestic Communist actions and colonial revolutions.

^{1/} Statement in a press conference of 17 October at the occasion of the signing of the Soviet -East German Treaty in Moscow

^{2/} Statement of 22 August 1955 to SED groups in East Berlin.

^{3/} Cominform Journal of 7 October 1955.

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6. The difficulties confronting International Communism as a result of any prolonged relaxation of tensions are of two general kinds. First, and probably of greater immediacy, is the need to smooth over the apparent conflict (at least in non-Communist eyes) between the Bloc promotion of international goodwill and continued, though less publicized, determination to achieve Communist control of the world. To achieve this, the Communists are probably depending largely upon the basic desire of the peoples of the Free World for some kind of peaceful stability in the world situation. Second, is the problem of maintaining internal discipline and maximum readiness in the international apparatus particularly if the "detente" is planned for a lengthy period. Since, for reasons of diplomacy and peace propaganda, the "war-and-hate mongers" must become anonymous while the relaxation lasts, the maintenance of revolutionary dynamics may become difficult. While attacks against "imperialism" are soft-pedalled, while some members of Western governments are praised and others temporarily shelved as targets of hate, internal Communist vigilance may decrease. Since totalitarianism thrives on tensions, the lack of them may impair, or at least slacken, alertness of many Party members. In the words of Polish Party functionary who had just heard of Adenauer's invitation to Moscow: "These days nothing is sacred, not even hatred."

7. However, far from embarrassing the Communist Parties all over the world, the new brand of peaceful coexistence offers some distinct tactical advantages. It can be assumed that, after the initial confusion which followed the first dramatic Soviet gestures of amicability, Party leaders recognized these advantages, and that this realization occurred some months before the Summit meeting. During the height of the cold war, the Parties in non-Communist countries, particularly those in Western Europe, had found themselves in an awkward position. In supporting the Soviet line against their own governments, they were regarded by many of their fellow citizens as traitors. But now in the new context of "peace and relaxation" a more subtle attack on Western preparedness could be mounted with considerable public support. Now the Parties are trying to build up an aura of respectability in order to break out of the political isolation into which their support of Soviet policies during the cold war had inevitably driven them. This desire for respectability is noticeable in European and non-European areas, but it is tempered with warnings by Communist chieftains that the new amicability is neither a reversal of Communist principles nor an attempt to proceed along evolutionary rather than revolutionary lines.

Ideology and Atom

8. Thus the drive for peaceful coexistence and the temporary suspension of the hate campaign remain well within the confines of doctrinal methods. Such strategems have been used before--though admittedly not quite so extensively--whenever the Communist position was not strong enough to incur a risk of general war. Such a risk is even more unacceptable at present

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because of the technological developments of the past decade. Probably the results of these developments have not as yet been fully digested by Communist ideologists. If Stalin had a plausible interpretation—that is, plausible from the Communist point of view—he did not announce it. Apparently his successors have not succeeded in explaining in proper doctrinal terms the relationship of the atom to international Communism. Molotov's attempt to brush aside Malenkov's frankly admitted fear of world destruction was ineffectual and manifestly unrealistic. Communist leaders, both inside and outside the Bloc, almost certainly realize that the results of atomic war would not exempt Communist-held territory. In view of the tendency of these leaders to use the Marxist-Leninist gospel as an unfailing "guide to action", the lack of such guidance in a most vital field must be very disconcerting. It almost certainly has contributed substantially to the decision to inaugurate a sort of political NEP. Only the use of the atom for peaceful purposes seems to have been coordinated into the Communist doctrinal structure: it is merely an application of Lenin's electrification theses.

Communist Competition in International Affairs

9. The tactic of temporary non-violence, which is supported by the Communist belief in the "inevitable logic of history", has been doctrinally underlined in an editorial appearing in the October 1955 issue of the influential theoretical Soviet Party journal KOMMUNIST. This editorial states that "the transition from capitalism to socialism on a world-wide basis means an epoch of prolonged coexistence of and economic competition between the two systems." It also points out that "socialism, like any other new social order, may not be thrust on peoples by force of arms, just as it is impossible to maintain and consolidate the old order by force of arms if it has outlived its century." On the basis of this statement, it appears to be the "profound conviction of Communists that the question of further paths of developments of Communism will be decided in the final analysis not by means of war but by various kinds of peaceful competition."^{1/} This new type of "competition", directed with much aplomb by the USSR's first salesman Khrushchev, is aimed initially at a psychological softening of the free peoples, the division of anti-Communist powers and the expansion of Communist control over more and more non-Communist economies. As a result, Bloc economy would gain, Free World economy would weaken and at last head into the long desired economic disintegration. This approach does not show any demonstrable doctrinal shifts, but aptly fills a methodological vacuum which resulted from the advent of atomic weapons and the improvement of means of their delivery. Thus, in spite of the ideological difficulties created by the atom, it leaves plenty of room for Communist initiative. The recent robust Soviet competition in the Middle East proves this point.

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The Parties in the "detente"

10. The Parties are currently waging a holier-than-thou campaign to implement international Soviet salesmanship and, at the same time, to provide a convenient camouflage for their real work: measures taken to infiltrate governments and labor organizations, i.e. to create United Fronts from above and below. The present world situation, from their point of view, offers an opportunity for the invigoration of the international apparatus by throwing out weak elements and for "educational" activities directed toward establishing new confidence in Communism as a means to world peace. These are the indications that World Communism is getting its second wind for the coming new phase of the struggle to capture the Free World.

Probable Communist Tactics

A. Motives and Plans

11. The leaders of international Communism, although confronted with serious obstacles, are already adapting their thinking and techniques to the new world situation. They realize that the new war technology has rendered much of their tactical doctrine obsolete. They see themselves militarily blocked in Europe, and to a degree in the Far East, by the Western consolidation of anti-Communist forces, West Germany included. They do not find the desired evidence of a major economic collapse in capitalist countries. They may even have realized the changing nature of capitalism since the times of Marx and they may also be aware of the gradual recognition by many former Communist sympathizers of the real nature of proletarian dictatorship. Finally, they have probably come to the conclusion that their own system, particularly in the economic field, is not strong enough to allow them to undertake any greater risk of armed conflict with an aroused West. Thus, the question now is how International Communism can be furthered against prevailing odds, and how, in a period of better international relations, the breathing spell can best be used to prepare against the day when present limitations may no longer exist.

12. It is almost certain that the Communist leaders, in launching the amicability campaign, took precautions lest their new methods cause a serious weakening of discipline in the international apparatus. Perhaps the best explanation of how International Communism's quest for peaceful coexistence should be used for local purposes came from Italian Communist Party head Togliatti who demanded that the coexistence principle be applied to domestic politics. There should be, he said, "equal rights for all citizens", "elimination of (anti-Communist) discrimination", and an "end of the cold war". By these Togliatti meant the toleration of subversive activities

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and the unsavory financial practices of the Parties, and permission for Communists and fellow-travelers to take over key positions in the government, the economy, and the armed forces of their respective countries.

B. Main Strategies: United Front Tactics

13. It is to be expected that during the period of the "detente," united front tactics will more and more become one of the main instruments of Communist tactics. Efforts to infiltrate government and labor organizations probably will proceed in a less violent, more respectable atmosphere. "Peaceful" seizure of power or influence has almost certainly taken the place of violent revolutionary activism, for the time being. From the Communist point of view, united front governments can be used to (a) foster neutralism, (b) retain the initiative for international disarmament (including control of atomic weapons), (c) promote a Pax Sovietica on the basis of a security pact which would end the Western security organizations, and (d) strengthen Party influence through its overt or covert representation in governmental, economic, social and cultural key posts as a precondition to "legal" seizure of power. At the same time, special efforts will be made to consolidate the international labor movement under Communist leadership. The slogan of Labor Unity is again on the propaganda forefront. National campaigns for a "union of equals for the advancement of socialism and unity against the common enemy--capitalist employers" goes on unabated while international relaxation is preached. Between the pincers of the united fronts from above and below, the extinction of capitalism is aimed for. The "Spirit of Geneva", or whatever remains of Western expectations has in no way deterred or diminished this campaign. On the contrary: the "detente" has furnished the Communist apparatus good opportunities for refurbishing their somewhat shopworn cold war activities.

14. Moreover, there is evidence that the ostensible restraint of some Parties is not being followed all over the globe. The attitude of the Brazilian Party, for example, has remained aggressive; the extremists in the Indian Party are still influential; the Southeast Asian Communists do not seem to be eager to contribute to a relaxation of tension; and the weak Parties in the Middle East probably will be greatly encouraged to foment violence by the oil the USSR is pouring on the smoldering Arab-Israel conflict. In the meantime, special efforts probably will not be made to recruit mass Parties; rather, much emphasis will be placed on keeping existing membership in trim. Moreover, there will be increasing recognition on the part of the Soviet leaders that ideological squabbles have been impairing the cause of World Communism. The new Soviet thesis that socialism can be achieved in a variety of ways, according to prevailing conditions in a given country, probably will be used to strengthen the international movement and to increase its loyalty to Moscow.

1/ Definition by Palme Dutt, British Communist leader.

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Conclusion

15. In view of the foregoing, the conclusions of Staff Memorandum 33-55 of 29 June 1955 would appear to be still valid, namely, that:

"Communism has remained an essentially conspiratorial secular religion. Its international organizations will almost certainly continue to hew to the Party line and to help to advance Moscow's objectives; more peaceful methods in international relations are not a reflection of an ideological change but a purely tactical maneuver on a grand scale.... There is no evidence that the USSR will permit its ideological framework to be dismantled. It is still the base of International Communism.... The foundations of Marxism-Leninism apparently remain firmly established but it is possible that greater latitude will be employed in developing new methods to achieve the ultimate objectives of Communism...."

These methods almost certainly will aim (a) to promote international relaxation designed to reduce Western awareness of the Communist threat and (b) to exploit local conditions by national Parties and front organizations designed to reduce Western determination and capabilities vis-a-vis Communism. Such policies are far more realistic than those employed by Stalin, and capable of far more subtle variation. For these reasons, and because of the probable repercussions of these methods among non-Communist peoples of the world, they will be far more difficult for the West to counter.

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