

"EVOLUTION IN THE COMMUNIST WORLD"

ADDRESS GIVEN BY ALLEN W. DULLES, DIRECTOR OF THE CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY AT THE MASSACHUSETTS INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY MID-AMERICA CONFERENCE HELD IN CHICAGO, ILLINOIS, ON 16 FEBRUARY 1957

It is a great pleasure to have this opportunity to meet with the Mid-America Conference. Its sponsor, the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, is playing a central role in the shaping and maintaining of America's scientific genius. Like our country which it serves so well, MIT has made important and dramatic forward strides in the past half century.

Winston Churchill, at a convocation of this institute eight years ago, spoke admiringly of MIT's resolution to maintain a faculty of the humanities. Your fruitful contacts with so many foreign students and scholars and your launching of a Center for International Studies are further examples of a broad and imaginative approach to the place of technology in the modern world.

There have indeed been many changes since those earlier days when MIT was a small institution on Boylston Street, Boston. America then was a young nation relatively free of the troublesome concerns of world politics. But times do change; and we in this country have never shrunk from the challenge of changing conditions.

In fact, having generally accepted the idea that we live in a world of change, it is perhaps rather surprising that we have been

This document has been
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the Central Intelligence Agency.

Date 3/30/92

HRP 89-2

HS/HC-164

somewhat slow to recognize that this principle also applies to political and social life in the Communist world.

We ascribed to Hitlerite Germany a political solidity which it never had though it took a World War to prove this. Today many of the experts on Soviet and Satellite problems have been forced to revise their calculations and pay closer attention to new forces within the Communist world which have been dramatically revealed during the year 1956.

When Khrushchev denounced Stalin a year ago, he said those fatal words which destroy faith and which once said can never be explained away. The flood of self-questioning let loose by the anti-Stalin crusade has plumbed the depths of doubt about the integrity of the Communist political structure.

When history is written the Khrushchev statement of February 1956 may well be described as the Kremlin's admission of the general crisis of Communism.

Stalin's Legacy

Stalin died in March 1953, leaving one of the most reactionary, despotic police states the world has ever known. He had given himself a name which meant steel. He expressed his views in a journal named "truth." He had concentrated more power in his own hands than had been commanded even by his own great historical idol, Ivan the Terrible. For nearly thirty years he had exercised arbitrary rule over his own and many other peoples. He had killed most of his friends, and transplanted or annihilated innumerable people.

The prospect of ruling this leviathan without Stalin awed his successors. Indeed the official announcement of his death spoke of the need to "prevent any kind of disorder or panic." This defensive note on the part of the heirs to a seemingly all-powerful state may have been the first of the many hints we were to get of the complexity of the problems faced by Russia's new rulers.

The evolution of the USSR over the last four years can be explained in terms of the new Soviet leaders' response to three main problems: problems with themselves, problems with their own and subject peoples, and problems with the outside world.

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A Problem within the Leadership

The first problem that the new leaders faced was an elementary one: that of clearly re-establishing their ultimate authority. This is no simple problem in a revolutionary regime with no roots in either historical traditions or popular consent. Dictatorships are rarely transferrable or inheritable, and Stalin like most dictators made no provision for the succession. He had been busy playing his lieutenants off against one another; he appears to have had no real number 2 man -- just a group of number 3 men.

This group set up an uneasy oligarchy, the so-called "collective leadership." Shortly they agreed to get rid of Stalin's Police Chief, Beria, and mitigated some of the worst excesses of his secret police system.

But these very changes were only to help bring to the surface internal problems that had been artificially suppressed during the Stalin era.

A Problem with their Peoples

One of these problems was that of restoring initiative and enterprise to a people numbed by long years of discipline and fear. Little Stalins had set themselves up at the local level throughout Russia, and the Satellites, and people everywhere in the Soviet sphere had decided to play it safe.

Thus, while the "system" may have been functioning satisfactorily in terms of the relative increase in industrial production, it was slowly running out of steam.

Having let up a little on the stick of the secret police, the oligarchy tried to budge the populace with a carrot.

In the economic sphere, this "carrot" took the form of the so-called "new course" announced by Malenkov in the summer of 1953. This policy promised to give greater attention to the manufacture of consumer goods, which had long been subordinated to the basic Soviet emphasis on heavy industry.

In the intellectual sphere, a prominent Soviet writer called for a new turn to "sincerity" in literature. Writers and artists began to speak of a "thaw" as arrests ceased within their ranks and long-imprisoned artistic and literary figures trickled back from Siberia. The leaven of mass education was beginning to work; and while this

paid off handsomely in the field of technology, it had other consequences which proved most unwelcome to the worried men in the Kremlin.

The regime soon found that use of the carrot had to be checked. In the months leading up to the Writers' Congress of December 1954, attempts were made to reassert the Communist Party's right to regulate art and literature; and Khrushchev reasserted the primacy of heavy industry at the time of Malenkov's demotion early in 1955.

However, the Soviet leaders discovered that they could not go back all the way to conditions as they had prevailed under Stalin; for they found themselves faced with the most serious of all challenges to a totalitarian regime, the revolution of rising hope and expectations.

When a tyrant gives real hope to the oppressed, then, in the long run, the position of tyranny as a system tends to become hopeless.

Rising expectations were most serious and hardest for the USSR to control on the periphery of Stalin's empire in the East European satellites. The new economic course was taken farthest in Hungary under Imre Nagy in 1953 - 1955; Hungary went considerably beyond the Soviet Union in playing down heavy industry in favor of consumer goods, and even de-emphasized one of the most hated of all Stalinist exports, the forced collective farm.

Meanwhile, writers in Poland as well as Hungary were going farther than their Soviet counterparts in voicing the pent-up feelings of their countrymen.

Of special importance was a poem which became a cause célèbre behind the iron curtain, "A Poem for Adults", by the Polish poet, Adam Wazyk, which was published in Poland in August 1955. Wazyk spoke with the scourging hate that both writers and ordinary people were coming to feel toward the hypocrisy of their Communist overlords.

He recalled how a forerunner of Marx:

"...charmingly foretold
that lemonade would flow in seas.
Does it not flow?
They drink sea-water,
crying
'lemonade'
returning home secretly
to vomit."

These were ominous rumblings. They can be read in retrospect as harbingers of the great upheavals in Poland and Hungary. However, the problem of rising expectations was a common problem throughout all the lands which Stalin had ruled. Indeed, popular expectations proved far in front of the policies of the reactionary regimes administering Stalin's colonial empire.

A Problem with the Outside World

Throughout all their troubles, Communist politicians have to continue believing that they are riding the wave of the future. The expectation of the Communists continues to be, as Khrushchev recently

put it, that "we will bury you," - the "you" being the Free World. Nevertheless, Khrushchev appears to have concluded that Stalin's policies had ceased to be profitable; that, so to speak, our "burial", the predicted doom of capitalistic society, was being unnecessarily delayed.

To shift the metaphor a little, Stalin had been piled up on the line of scrimmage in Korea, as he had been earlier in Greece and Berlin. The new quarterback was deciding that instead of continuing to run line-bucks, he should try a few end runs, reverses, and forward passes to test the enemy's secondary. Accordingly, the Soviet leaders finally agreed to a truce in Korea and took a compromise settlement in Indo-China.

When menacing threats of the Stalinist variety failed to prevent a continued growth in free world unity -- evidenced by the further consolidation of NATO and the adherence of West Germany -- the pressure increased for drastically new tactics.

The Smiles Campaign of 1955

Thus, beginning in the late Spring of 1955, the Soviet leaders launched their famous "smiles" campaign. In a remarkable series of policy reversals, they sought to dispel the evil image that the world had acquired of the USSR and to win new friends and the ability to influence people abroad.

They agreed to an Austrian peace treaty; began to court Tito with an elite pilgrimage to Belgrade; relinquished their Porkkala base

in Finland; and struck friendly poses - with Molotov waving a cowboy hat to American photographers and Khrushchev and Bulganin posing smilingly at the Summit Conference at Geneva.

In a second round of activity later in the year, the Soviet leaders began to deliver economic and military aid to non-Communist states; stepped up their public relations campaign with a trip to India and Burma; and stopped their monotonous vetoing of new members' applications to the United Nations.

The Soviets seemed to be making some progress with their new policy as 1955 went into history -- even though their stand at the Foreign Ministers Conference in the Autumn of 1955 made it clear that they did not intend to budge on basic international issues.

As it turned out, however, these smiles and concessions may have cost the Soviet leaders dearly; for, if they did mislead some people abroad, these actions continued to feed rising expectations in the far-flung Soviet empire.

The Two Great Events of 1956

Two great events in 1956, deeply affecting the Communist world, followed from the new Soviet domestic and foreign policies. The first was the attempt to persuade the leading communists in the USSR and the Satellites that the Soviet leaders had really broken with the dreadful past of the Stalin regime. The second was the attempt by Poland and Hungary to secure the freedoms which they felt were implicitly being promised them by Moscow.

Although Stalin's heirs had downgraded his importance fairly consistently since his death, Khrushchev's secret revelation of Stalin's crimes at the Twentieth Party Congress in February 1956 represented a real turning point.

These revelations destroyed the myth of infallibility of the Soviet system and its leaders. It was this belief in infallibility, which -- however wrong -- had inspired the faithful and given them the courage to sacrifice everything including common sense and their very lives to advance the cause of Communism.

Many questions - including the obvious one of "where were you, when all this was going on?" -- continue to be asked in the Soviet Union. Stalin's heirs had been morally compromised. The ideological foundations of this secular religion had been seriously shaken.

The circumstances surrounding the Khrushchev secret speech remain a mystery to this day. It was delivered at an unexpectedly summoned meeting of the Twentieth Party Congress attended by the 1400 members from the USSR, but with the exclusion of visitors and delegates from the rest of the Communist world.

Apparently it was felt that it was too heady medicine for the Soviet people, since the secret speech has never been published in the USSR and only small parts of it have been allowed to creep out in the Soviet press, though copies of the speech were distributed among Soviet and Satellite leaders.

It is hard to understand the Kremlin's apparent failure to assess accurately the damage to their position from the publicity which the speech would eventually receive. Some very impelling domestic reason must have made them take the calculated risk they assumed.

Possibly they felt that such a thorough denunciation was required if initiative was to be liberated from the pall of fear at home, and if the image of the USSR abroad was to be brightened.

The second event unsettling the Communist world in 1956 was, of course, the uprising in Hungary and Poland. When the Soviet leaders made their peace with Tito in June 1955, they implicitly recognized, as Stalin never had, that genuinely different national paths were permissible within the Communist world. This idea was given some encouragement at the Twentieth Party Congress, which urged Communist Parties to use different, perhaps peaceful rather than violent means in seeking to gain power in non-Communist states. During the state visit of Tito to Moscow last June, the Soviet leaders formally recognized the validity of different paths of socialist development.

But no sooner had they done this, than the people in Poland and Hungary began to demand the right to determine their own destinies. Hardly had Tito returned home, when the workers in Poznan rose up to demand "bread and freedom".

The contagion spread to Warsaw in spontaneous meetings of workers and others who demanded an end to Soviet rule. In Hungary the people went even further in their assertion of complete independence of Moscow.

Throughout the summer Soviet policy zigged and zagged. When they were confronted with the events of late October, the Soviet leaders acquiesced reluctantly to some important changes in Poland, and temporarily appeared to do the same in Hungary before falling back on cruel repression.

Through it all, the Soviet Union was discredited internationally; and no non-Communist was left to justify the savage slaughter of the heroic Hungarian people. Small nations in Asia, which are special targets for Communist blandishments, recognized the moral of Hungary; and young countries like Burma, Nepal, and Laos voted for condemnation of the Soviet Union.

In the face of these events, the Khrushchev position of trying to take bits and pieces of both a Stalinist and a non-Stalinist policy became increasingly untenable.

If the Soviet leaders want to increase productivity and initiative they have to lift controls still further. If they want to improve their reputation abroad, they cannot continue to act as they are doing in Hungary. But, if they go too far in conciliating the people, they fear for their own positions.

Stirrings in the USSR

There are stirrings in the USSR as well as the Satellites. Pressures for change appear to be coming from industrial managers and professional classes, who seem anxious to gain a greater share in running the economy. These groups appear to have increased their responsibility

at the expense of professional party administrators in the recent reshuffling of the planning apparatus.

Perhaps even more disturbing to the Soviet regime are the rumblings of discontent which involve the very groups which Communism claims to favor: the workers and the students.

From the workers in the USSR there have been growing indications of discontent in the past year, including several strikes and strike attempts and demands to know more about the patterns of worker administration and control which have come into being in the Polish workers councils.

Even more important, perhaps, is the increasing unrest among the students; which has been evidenced in riotous meetings and illegal handbill-type journals. The regime has staked much on its appeal to youth and the "new Soviet intelligentsia" which it hoped years of careful indoctrination would produce. But it has found, that, in educating large numbers of youths to fill the positions required for the administration of a large modern state, it has taught people to think and ask embarrassing questions for themselves.

The youth in the Soviet Union are suffering from boredom with the drabness of their system. This discontent cannot very logically be dismissed as a "holdover from the past"; and the regime cannot dismiss it all as "hooliganism" -- the Soviet version of juvenile delinquency.

Student unrest in the USSR, like recent events in Poland and Hungary, show what many of us seem to have forgotten: that the love of freedom has deep roots.

The bravery of the youth in Budapest, who had known only totalitarian rule, serves as a reminder that modern weapons do not provide the final answer to moral forces.

There are numerous signs in Soviet intellectual life that this human desire for individual integrity and free expression is making itself felt. The major Soviet journals in the fields of history, philosophy and literature have all come under official Communist Party censure recently for deviations from the party line. There has been a revival of interest in long-neglected writers including Dostoyevskii, whose major writings had been taboo under Stalin. Probably the most widely-discussed single book in Russia today is a new novel with the distinctly non-Communist title of "Not by Bread Alone."

The hero of this novel is a persecuted inventor who succeeds not because, but in spite of, the system. A true individualist, he refuses to be bought off at the end by the very men who had sent him to Siberia on trumped-up charges. He hangs on them the label of "meshchanski (middle class, philistine) communist", thus bringing back to the Russian vocabulary a traditional adjective of abuse from Tsarist times.

There is no pattern to tell us precisely how this intellectual ferment may affect the political development of a modern totalitarian

and technocratic state. But it is doubtful indeed that these pressures for change can be satisfied merely by Khrushchev's combination of limited reforms and exhortations to observe party discipline.

In particular, the disaffection of thinking youth - their restless desire for real integrity and honesty in their society - must deeply concern a régime which needs their services and shapes its claims to allegiance on an ideology.

The General Crisis of Communism

For many years now that ideology has predicted the doom of capitalism -- recently with a little less assurance as to the date of Doomsday. The Communist leaders have not, however, given up the dogma that World War I marked the beginning of a new epoch which would witness the general crisis of capitalism. According to all good Communists, this general crisis would embrace many individual crises caused by wars over markets and colonies, by workers' revolutions in protest against economic depressions, and by capitalist greed. These "inner contradictions", the doctrine preached, would inevitably lead to the collapse of capitalism and the triumph of the Communist system.

Today, with a great deal more assurance, we can advance the thesis that it is they rather than we who face a general crisis. A Yugoslavian Communist, Milovan Djilas, alerted the world to this crisis of Communism in his famous article of last November. He said this: "Despite the Soviet repression in Hungary, Moscow can only slow down the processes of change; it cannot stop them in the long run. The crisis is not only

between the USSR and its neighbors, but within the Communist system as such. National Communism is itself a product of the crisis, but it is only a phase in the evolution and withering away of contemporary Communism... World Communism now faces stormy days and insurmountable difficulties."

With the flood of self-questioning loosed by the anti-Stalin crusade and by the events in Hungary and Poland, the Soviet system certainly evidences inner contradictions that are harder to cope with than anything now facing the non-Communist world.

The Soviet leaders have been trying for some time now to cover up the cracks in their ideological plaster by talk of a "return to Leninist norms of party life." They tell their people to avoid the "cult of personality" by going back to Lenin for guidance; but is not this a new "cult of personality"? And who is to say what part of Lenin is to be kept and what rejected? Why should they not follow the advice Lenin gave in May 1917, that: "If Finland, if Poland, if the Ukraine break away from Russia there is nothing bad about that. What is there bad about it? Anyone who says there is, is a chauvinist.... No nation can be free if it oppresses other nations."

The Challenge to the USSR

No regime could stand still in the face of events such as those of the past few years. Sooner or later, the challenge facing the USSR at home and abroad must be met.

A well-known passage in Toynbee's Study of History is relevant to the USSR today: "The unanswered challenge can never be disposed of, and is bound to present itself again and again until it either receives some tardy and imperfect answer or else brings about the destruction of the society which has shown itself inveterately incapable of responding to it effectively."

What is the shape of the society which might develop out of the evolutionary forces presently at work in the USSR if the Kremlin leaders do not blindly seek to reverse them?

Domestically, the USSR would take cognizance of human dignity in its society. Censorship of thought would be eliminated and greater emphasis placed on satisfying the economic wants of the individual. Here it must be noted that the USSR has taken a forward step in doing away, at home, with the special tribunals and some excesses of the secret police.

In the foreign field, such a development would require the USSR to accept a genuine cooperation with other nations as distinct from the tactical, Leninist idea of a temporary truce. It would have to concede to those lands it has occupied the freedom of political choice. It would have to assume a constructive role in the United Nations.

Of course, such an outcome is not yet in sight. The future is still cloudy, and the possibility of an attempted reversion to a hard line remains.

Nevertheless, the reality of pressures for change is undeniable, and they seem unlikely to diminish with the passing of time. An evolutionary accommodation to these forces may even be more likely than the convulsive developments which the history of the ancien régime in France or the Roman Empire might lead one to expect.

Continued Danger

Of course, it would be folly to assume that international communism is on the verge of collapse. It continues to possess and develop increasing physical power; and we face the very real danger that it may bolster up its position in two particularly sensitive areas.

The first of these is, of course, the Middle East where a general policy of aid, infiltration and stirring up troubled waters offers considerable prospects for creating serious mischief.

The second area of danger -- which is perhaps not receiving as much public attention as it deserves these days -- is the Far East. Communist China, during the past few years, has been posing an ever-increasing threat to many nations in the area which are relatively unsophisticated in the ways of Communist subversion. Within the Communist world, the prestige of Communist China has been relatively enhanced by the fact that its leaders have not been so morally compromised by the revelations about Stalin.

Macaulay's Prophecy

While there is no justification for complacency in the Free World, there are some real signs of hope. Sporadic success abroad will not

change the basic problems within the USSR if we correctly assume that the evolutionary process has started. And even in Communist China, as revolutionary fervor dims, the reaction may come as man's reaching for freedom and human dignity asserts itself.

In a prophetic speech in 1833, Macaulay spoke words which might well be pondered by the leaders of the Communist world as they face the problems that lie before them today. Macaulay was urging his countrymen not to shrink back in fear from the possibility that education and modernization would lead the people of India to seek independence.

"What is that power worth," asked Macaulay, "... which we can hold only by violating the most sacred duties, which, as governors, we owe to the governed?... We are civilized to little purpose if we grudge to any portion of the human race an equal measure of freedom and civilization. ... do we think that we can give them knowledge without awakening ambition?...."

And Macaulay concludes: "It may be that the public mind of India may expand under our system till it has outgrown that system; that by good government we may educate our subjects into a capacity for better government, that having become instructed in European knowledge, they may at some future age demand European institutions. Whether such a day will ever come I know not. But never will I attempt to avert or retard it. Whenever it comes it will be the proudest day in English history."

When the day of freedom for Russia and the peoples under Soviet rule may come, no one can prophesy. But when it comes, it will be the proudest day in Russian history.

If that day is to be hastened, we cannot afford to be timid in asserting profound faith in our democratic institutions, and in acting decisively on that faith. I sincerely believe that the time has come when no reasoning, thinking peoples with freedom of choice can continue to believe that Communism is the wave of the future. The lasting, enduring values are in our free way of life.