

voured competition between the two systems, the 1967 edition defines peaceful coexistence as a specific form of class warfare. Since then, all Communist writing, whether Soviet or East European, has emphasized two basic points. First, *détente* is limited to relations between states. Second, it has nothing to do with ideology; on the contrary, *détente* signifies the intensification of the ideological struggle.

This need to insist on the ideological struggle arises from the Soviet assessment of the international situation during the past decade. As A. Sovietov wrote in the Soviet journal *International Affairs* (September 1972): "The change in the balance of strength between the two systems is decisive. It includes a general strengthening of the international positions of the socialist countries..." One year later, G. A. Arbatov, director of the Institute of the United States of America, Soviet Academy of Sciences, wrote in *Kommunist* (Number 3, 1973) that a shift in the balance of power towards imperialism would bring not relaxation but rather an increase in tension. The ideological struggle thus constitutes an assurance that *détente* will be maintained and, more important, will lead to the triumph of socialism.

Clearly, this is a limiting definition of *détente*. Moreover, while offering very little to the West, it allows the U.S.S.R. and other socialist countries to use any means short of war. In the final analysis *détente*, for the Communists, is the maintenance of contacts and links with the West only so far as there is no interference by the West in the internal affairs of socialist countries. However the Helsinki Final Act, signed by the U.S.S.R. stipulates the free exchange of ideas. It is the Soviet refusal to accept this condition of *détente* that has provoked a large section of public opinion in the West to question the validity of the present policy of *détente*.

Inevitable and necessary

In the West as in the Communist world, the passage from Cold War to *détente* has largely been seen as inevitable and necessary. The Helsinki Conference and the signing of the Final Act confirmed the rejection of nuclear warfare, as well as the advent of new East-West relations. As soon as it was clear, however, that the Soviets had their own conception and interpretation of *détente*, a debate began in the West, not only over the definition of the word but also on the value of East-West relations.

Two factors are basic to this debate. The first is the West's distrust of the U.S.S.R. since the Second World War —

deepened during the Fifties and Sixties by several events in Eastern Europe that involved Soviet intervention in the internal affairs of a socialist state. The second is the promise of the Helsinki Conference for the future of East-West relations.

The confusion felt by many Western observers comes from the fact that the Helsinki Conference did not appear to be endorsing this new policy but rather marking its end. In an article in *Etudes Internationales* (Nos 3 and 4, 1974), Daniel Colard stated that *détente* had passed through two stages: "In the first stage [1963-1968], *détente* was an element of security; it was identified with active peaceful coexistence between the two super-powers, which sanctioned nuclear bipolarity, forbade proliferation and closed the nuclear club.... In its second stage [1968-1973], *détente* spread, but took on a number of different forms. In spreading, it diversified and touched every area: strategy, economics, technology, politics, culture, human rights." Since Helsinki, however, the Soviets, instead of broadening these areas, have narrowed them and by their actions have again brought into question what appeared to be a movement towards greater international stability.

In the West, therefore, the debate hinges on the question of whether the policy of *détente* is not benefiting the Communist countries at the expense of the West. Do not the relations and the trade growing out of *détente* further a system that devotes its existence to the downfall of the Western democratic states?

Transformation seen

Samuel Pisar represents those who think that *détente* will not lead to the destruction of the West but will, on the contrary, through its economic and commercial side effects, bring about the transformation of the Soviet system. In his two books, *Les Armes de la paix: L'ouverture économique vers l'Est* (1970) and *Coexistence and Commerce* (1972), he calls for the creation of a code governing East-West transactions, so that economic relations may realize their full potential for the future. He adds: "When trade between East and West has spread to these sensitive areas [of science and technology], it will not be able to help exercising a liberating influence on the Communist societies and their institutions . . . , for no lasting economic progress is possible while minds are not free."

Pisar's theory of the inevitable liberalization of Communist regimes through East-West relations was the subject of a round-table discussion in the journal

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