

domestic position of the regimes its basic aim was to consolidate their existing alignment, and this because the ultimate endurance of those regimes depends upon the support of the Soviet Union. All the signs point to precisely this strengthening -- the substitution of an elastic and therefore resilient form of unity for a rigid and therefore brittle discipline. The Russians' own term "socialist commonwealth" may perhaps be taking on substance.

It is worth examining at this point the question of ideology and its importance in the Communist world. This is not purely an academic question but is close to the heart of most of the problems with which the rest of the world must cope in its dealings with the Communist countries. Ideology is a motive, an instrument and a justification of the policy of Communist governments, but it is not the only one. At various times it may be more or less flexible, and its flexibility, the extent to which it will be adapted or revised, will be determined by a whole series of other factors, ranging from the psychological to the political, economic and geographical circumstances in which a particular group of Communist leaders find themselves.

How does this relate to the external policy of Communist states? Among Communist states, the pluralism of which I have spoken is obvious evidence of the capacity of Communist ideology to adapt itself to changing circumstances. The acknowledgement that there is more than one road to socialism has been extracted from the Soviet leadership by difficult stages and, until recent years, only painfully. Yugoslavia in 1948 and, even more, Hungary in 1956, show just how painfully. The acknowledgement once made, however, its consequences have multiplied. The old conception of one universal truth good for all times and all places has had to be abandoned where it can neither be maintained nor even, as in most of Africa and Asia, imposed in the first place.

But this policy does not represent a non-ideological or anti-ideological departure as a result of some putative conflict between ideology and the national interest of the U.S.S.R. I shall not go except indirectly into the ideological justification for it. It is more instructive to look at the motivation, and the extent to which it may be adjudged ideological.

The West in general is well content if countries in Africa and Asia remain independent and non-aligned. After a few disastrous experiences, the U.S.S.R. has decided that nothing is to be gained by direct attempts at Communization. Its policy has evolved in at least three distinct phases during the post-Stalin era. In the first four or five years up to 1959 the major thrust was toward the exploitation of anti-colonialism by direct external support of the new governments, without much concern about their domestic policies, in the belief that aid would have a decisive effect on their policies.

Anti-Communist measures taken in 1958-59 both in the U.A.R. and in India were a clear demonstration that this would not work, and the sudden emergence of large numbers of independent African states in 1960-61 made it imperative to devise a new approach. This was that of the "national democracy", wherein the "most advanced section of the working class", i.e. the Communists, where they existed, should ally themselves and co-operate with the nationalist ruling party in order to press on with the revolution which had only begun with the achievement of political independence.