

U.S.S.R in a changing world: questions that arise on détente

By Philip E. Uren

"When destiny has brought up two nations to a future of similar invention and authority, and given to each a different scale of values; when the nations' architects and poets and painters have created for them opposing kingdoms of sound and form and subtlety, the universe knows that destiny wasn't preparing for alternative ways for civilization to flower. It was contriving the Dance of Death, letting loose the brutality and human folly which is all the gods are really contented by." *Tiger at the Gates* was ostensibly concerned with classical times, but Giraudoux was nevertheless speaking of something continuing and universal, seemingly out of date in a nuclear world but with us still.

When *The Communist States and the West* was published some six years ago under the auspices of the Soviet Studies Program at Carleton University, *The Times* of London quoted from it as follows: "... each side, for quite different reasons, developed oversimplified and emotionally coloured stereotypes of the other, which obscured the real nature of the conflict." The reviewer went on to comment that, "when such a sentence can be written and accepted in Russian and Chinese as well as English, the end (of the conflict) will be in sight". It is the theme of these few pages that this devoutly-desired consummation remains at the far end of a receding rainbow.

Arbatov, writing in *Kommunist* in February 1973, had this to say: "The situation in the world in general leaves no room for the idyll of cloudless existence. The struggle going on in the world arena, a struggle not engendered by someone's whim but by clashes between real class interests and by objective laws governing present-day social development, is too acute and too complicated." He quoted Leonid Brezhnev's assertion that the "world views and class goals of socialism and capitalism are opposite and irreconcilable" and referred to his efforts to "shift this historically inevitable struggle into a channel that does not threaten war". Ac-

ording to Arbatov, the obstacles to this happy process are "the intrigues of forces and groupings in the U.S.A. that have a stake in increasing tension and stepping up the arms race—the military-industrial complex, extreme right-wing elements, Zionist circles, etc". There are, needless to say, no such forces in the Soviet Union in spite of the "opposite and irreconcilable" character of "world views and class goals".

In a period of *détente*, it is perhaps bad form, not to say intellectually unfashionable, to point these things out. Yet what can one do with Professor Novikov of the Moscow State Institute of Physical Culture, who has been quoted in an interesting paper by Professor Riordan to the effect that: "... given equivalent socio-economic conditions, the level of sports attainments of the socialist states is considerably higher than that of countries under the capitalist system. This is attributable to the fact that in a socialist society socio-economic factors are an index of the well-being of all members of society, while under capitalism they merely reflect the general socio-economic level with the simultaneous existence within the country of affluence for the few and poverty for the majority". This was put more bluntly by *Pravda*, when it said "the grand victories of the U.S.S.R. and the fraternal states convincingly demonstrate that socialism opens

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