

governments are so fully occupied with urgent problems that they can rarely contemplate more distant objectives; that most governments must conduct their foreign policies with reference to immediate questions; and that the ambitions of most governments are limited by the experience of what it takes to achieve and to maintain the status of a great power. It is in the light of such knowledge that our Western mind and our Western conscience freely subject Western policy to devastating analysis. Yet why is it, as an eminent English historian recently asked, that we do not subject Soviet policy to similar examination? Why is it, indeed, that our Western mind tends, on the contrary, to proceed on the pessimistic - and in the light of our knowledge of the practicalities of foreign policy - the remarkable assumption that Soviet policy is at once consistent and successful, and, moreover, is both of these things with reference to a sustained and sinister millennial purpose?

The challenge to our Western mind is then to develop a sensible view of the Soviet achievement and a reasonable assessment of the limits of Soviet ambition as these have been delineated by practical Soviet experience. The challenge is to penetrate beneath the language with which the Soviet Government conducts its external relations, a language which owes its peculiar violence to a unique background and to a peculiar ideology, whose essential poverty seems to be increasingly manifest to the fertile and developing mind of its own people. We must penetrate beneath a sustained attitude of suspicious hostility and mistrust and focus in particular on those decisions which have actually committed blood and treasure to the enterprise in hand. In this way, by shrewd interrogation of the evidence on practicalities, we will be able, I think, to enlarge our understanding of the Soviet challenge to the West. If we are to eliminate misconceptions, we must concentrate neither on the morality nor on the integrity of Soviet conduct, but rather on understanding, for we cannot cope positively with a global antagonist by despising him and sending him to Coventry. What is more, we incur increasing risks if we fail to place a reasonable construction on his probable aims. I therefore suggest that we in the West should re-examine the record of Soviet conduct and ask certain questions of the evidence which, for the most part, we have so far failed to pose.

In the very preliminary and tentative appraisal of Soviet intentions, that I wish to make this evening, I should like to ask you to consider the evidence provided by the use that has been made of Marxist ideology; by the part that has been played by the international communist movement; by Soviet diplomacy; and by Soviet attitudes towards international law.