

It takes two to conduct friendly relations, and what is Canada's position vis-à-vis the U.S.S.R.? If the main lines of Soviet policy are formulated by leaders having a world view basically inimical to our own, if peaceful coexistence is a device to immobilize the West while national liberation wars gradually consume the rest of the non-Communist world, would it be short-sighted for us to welcome the opportunity to establish relations on a sane and rational footing with the Communist world?

I have, I think, said enough about our judgment of the Soviet world view to demonstrate why we do not consider it immutable. Inimical to us it may be in its origins, but it is equally inimical to the real interests of those who hold it, and those interests are increasingly making themselves felt.

I am not so naive, of course, as to believe that the growth of contacts, and exchanges, rapid though it is, between East and West, will work any miracles. To quote Kommunist once again:

"As an ardent supporter of useful business contacts with capitalist countries, Lenin invariably warned against forgetting the class approach to these relations. He pointed out that the capitalists would seek in every way to undermine our system, to corrupt our people and to instil capitalist habits in them. It is necessary to watch closely each step of the enemy and to employ all means of control, supervision and persuasion to paralyse bourgeois influence. Peaceful coexistence calls for the intensification of Party ideological work inside the country and decisive struggle against bourgeois ideology in the international arena."

I need not emphasize that these are not idle words and that Soviet officialdom governs contacts with the West accordingly. But this is not the whole story. Those (and they exist both here and in the U.S.S.R.) who believe the old days are gone forever, and nothing serious now stands in the way of eternal goodwill, may have overestimated the pace of change; but change there is.

Canada, like most other Western countries, has participated in these exchanges for a number of years, not only with the U.S.S.R. but with Poland, Czechoslovakia, Hungary and other countries of Eastern Europe. Canada, as everybody but the people who eat it knows, has sold great quantities of wheat to these same countries. The volume of private tourism from Canada to the European Communist countries is rising rapidly, and they have ceased to be entirely remote and mysterious regions. Our inter-governmental relations are reasonably good, always allowing for the gulf between us on fundamental issues.

What, then, can we conclude from this about Canada's role in East-West relations? The examples I have given refer to Canada's own particular relations with the Soviet "East", an area with which we have common geographical and economic problems, and from which we have drawn a substantial part of our population. There is clearly ample room for co-operation with those countries, and there would be a great deal more which it would be in our national interest to develop if the political obstacles were overcome.