

increasingly Soviet actions, both at home and abroad, suggest that other kinds of objective facts, beginning with nuclear weapons and extending to recognition of the need for new incentives and methods of work on the farm and at the factory, require the reactions of a fox. Henry Kissinger's memoirs reflect the resulting bewilderment of Western statesmen, confronted on the one hand with "conflicts between philosophies" rather than relations between states, and on the other with "ruthless opportunism", which Kissinger describes as the essence of Soviet strategy. In the same vein, Secretary of State George Shultz has wondered aloud whether the USSR is "just another great power", or is "inherently militarist and expansionist"; he prefers the latter interpretation because, in his view, "that's basically the way they have always described themselves and always behaved."⁴

It is a large step from the perception that Soviet values are different from ours to the conclusion that Soviet policy aims to impose these values on everyone else, and that Nicaragua, for example, must suffer the same fate as Poland. But it is a step which many take, sometimes arguing like Mr. Shultz that the USSR is "inherently" expansionist, thus confusing a doctrine about the future postulated by Marx and Engels with Soviet practice a century later.

Confusion is facilitated by the ambiguities of Soviet ideology and Soviet policy, a confusion brought home to me at the Brezhnev funeral, where the order of protocol put the leaders of major Western communist parties ahead of their respective heads of state. Yet we must be careful not to let these ambiguities revive misguided Western assumptions about a grand Soviet strategy to conquer the world, the secret of which remains locked in some recess of the Kremlin. The doctrine of "proletarian internationalism" is kept alive by ideologues on both sides but the actual policies of Soviet leaders reflect a prudence which compares not unfavourably with the record of other great powers, past and present.

A second source of the antagonism over values lies in the common assumption that the USSR has remained a "totalitarian" state in the sense which became popular in the 1950's when writers like Hannah Arendt were investigating the common features of Nazism, Fascism and Stalinism. There is truth in the view that, until recently, Western scholarship has largely failed to make the proper distinctions between Stalinist and post-Stalinist conditions in the USSR, and to come to grips with "the changing, multi-colored complexity of the Soviet experience."⁵

The claim that "communism is a new type of society" is made both by supporters and opponents of Communist régimes, but there is very little empirical research on the USSR which helps to demon-

strate its truth. On the contrary, a good case can be made that Soviet society shows both continuity with Russian history and obvious parallels with contemporary social phenomena in the West. The overwhelming Western media and political attention to "dissent" in the USSR and to the tales of life in the camps recounted by émigré writers, obscures, if it does not stifle, investigation, for example, of popular attitudes to the régime, of elite satisfactions, and of the role of competing interest groups. Public opinion in the USSR is neither monolithic nor apathetic, although it finds different forms of expression than in the West. George Kennan is right to remind his Soviet friend of the dangers of a "state of mind that assumes all forms of authority not under Soviet control to be ... wicked, hostile, and menacing"⁶ but he does not explain what is meant by "Soviet control."

It is my impression, based, it is true, on fragmentary evidence, that debate within the Party is real, that authority fluctuates, and that personality and character are important factors in decision-making. When Andreï Gromyko was Foreign minister in the late Brezhnev years, for example, there was little doubt that his views on questions of foreign policy dominated the Politburo. Today the situation may well be different. But the point is that the Soviet political system is tempered and molded by such factors as personality, interest group competition, and public attitudes, as much as by Party discipline or the powers of the police. One has only to live in other non-Western countries, the vast majority of which are non-democratic by our standards, to be aware of the similarities as well as the differences between authoritarian political systems, whether of the Right or of the Left.

Finally, must we assume that our values are necessarily better? This is a question which most of us in the West automatically answer in terms of political freedoms. If values are judged on the basis of social as well as political outcomes, we may learn something from the comparison. What do we really know, for example, about the incidence of crime in the Soviet Union, or about the upbringing of children, or about the condition of the poor? Is our kind of consumer society a better model or goal for others to imitate? Prejudice and ignorance, as well as deception and secrecy, make it difficult to give greater thought to these questions. Cultural, academic and scientific exchanges must be greatly expanded if we are to begin to answer them.

Both sides in the cold war have exaggerated the conflict over values, in part, because both the USSR and the USA wish to be regarded as lamplighters in a world of darkness. Both justify the possession of power by the vision of salvation, and thus disguise the conflict over interests, which is real, by the use of