

believe the report that there are more teachers of English in the USSR than there are students of Russian in the USA. There is a particular interest in American culture and life styles. One of my first theatre experiences in Moscow was a brave attempt to do "Porgy and Bess"; one of the last was a version of the "Rose Tattoo" by Tennessee Williams, a picture of decadence which presumably conformed to official guidelines, despite the risk of the audience drawing the wrong lessons. This is not to say that the Russian classics are out of style, or that contemporary Soviet artists are not popular. Pushkin remains the most popular Russian writer. Tickets for any performance of the Bolshoi are a hotter commodity than tickets for the World Series.

Moreover, there is no great emotional attachment to Western culture. Russian feelings about the West have been described as follows by one of the few Western intellectuals who is at home in both cultures, Isaiah Berlin: "a combination of intellectual inadequacy and emotional superiority, a sense of the West as enviably self-restrained, clever, efficient and successful; but also as being cramped, cold, mean, calculating and fenced in, without capacity for large views or generous emotions, for feeling which must, at times, rise too high and overflow its banks, for heedless self-abandonment in response to some unique historical challenge, and consequently condemned never to know a rich flowering of life."¹

DIFFERENT VALUES

These impressions relate in part to differences of values or value systems in East and West. In a symposium conducted by the Heritage Foundation in 1984, a number of prominent Americans, most of whom hold conservative views, were asked about the nature of the conflict with the USSR. They divided about evenly between those who emphasized a struggle for the survival of democratic values and those who gave importance to a clash of geo-political interests. Many used such terms as "fundamental" or "irreconcilable", to describe the difference, thereby echoing Soviet ideologists who certainly do perceive an irreconcilable conflict of values. However, when asked about American ultimate objectives, few seemed to think that the USA should try to change the nature of the Soviet system, even if this were a feasible matter. They preferred, rather, one version or another of the policy of containment, with a minority advocating a roll-back of Soviet power from Eastern Europe, perhaps expecting that in the end the Soviet system would erode or be overthrown.

It was Tocqueville in 1835 who defined the conflict of values as one of freedom versus servitude

("the Anglo-American relies upon personal interest to accomplish his ends and gives free scope to the unguided strength and common sense of the people; the Russian centers all the authority of society in a single arm"). Tocqueville was writing well before either country had abolished slavery, so the juxtaposition of "freedom" and "servitude" was somewhat misleading. But the contrast between individual freedom and the authority of the state was and remains a central element of the conflict over values. The revolution of 1917 did not, as we often assume, imprison the Russian people in a system of values repugnant to them. It reinforced the old system. The Russian émigré writer, Alexander Zinoviev, for example, dismisses the common view in the West that the people of Russia are yearning for our version of democratic values: that is, "the idea of 'the individual' as an entity that has rights and deserves respect independently from the social context which sustains him."² However, the same might be said of many aspects of Muslim culture, or of Chinese traditions, and yet we do not usually regard these societies or countries as mortal enemies for that reason. There must be reasons for the antagonism over values that go beyond democratic principles.

One explanation lies in the Marxist vision. Isaiah Berlin, this time writing about two types of personalities, whom he called hedgehogs and foxes, said: "Those on the one side who relate everything to a single central vision... a single universal organizing principle in terms of which alone all that they are and say has significance (the hedgehogs) — and on the other side those who pursue many ends often unrelated and even contradictory (the foxes)..."³ Berlin was discussing Tolstoy and concluded that Tolstoy was really a fox but believed he was a hedgehog. I wonder if this insight can be applied to the contemporary leaders of the Soviet Union?

Lenin and Stalin were almost certainly hedgehogs and believed in the single vision they had learned from Marx and Engels. Soviet leaders continue to speak of "objective laws" which govern the world and which only Communists fully understand, except of course for Communist "heretics", the numbers of whom are certainly increasing. These laws suggest that "a new socialist world" is bound to replace the capitalist world, sooner or later, although not any longer, or necessarily, by war and revolution. Moreover, the Soviet aim remains, as Brezhnev put it to the 26th Party Congress in 1981, "to create a society which is not divided into classes", although the date of achievement of this goal has been left deliberately vague in the current draft of the Party programme.

I think we must accept these kinds of statements at face value. They constitute a system of beliefs. But