

impractical, has been possible as long as there was ignorance, weakness, and poverty; but fanaticism cannot survive as a more educated and experienced body politic turns its attention from the power-security equation to a broader conception of national welfare. A survey of Soviet policy shows how an apocalyptic vision, as Kennan prophesied in 1947, has begun, in the hands of an intelligent people, to adjust to the impact of reality and of experience, and to come down to earth, how the goals of Soviet policy have tended to become more discrete, more precise, more limited, and more conventional, how the limits of Soviet ambition have been reduced, as the Soviet leadership has begun to learn what it takes to secure and to maintain the recognized status of a great power, let alone to convert or to dominate the world.

Such a survey suggests an answer to the residual question as to whether the Soviet body politic has really begun to take a more reasonable view of its own ideology, or is merely executing a tactical retreat. If the U.S.S.R. is to move beyond the achievement of security, and either to convert or to dominate the world, it must yet develop tremendous economic and military capacity. In that it will need to sustain its past pace of development for at least another quarter of a century, even to catch up with the West, the task is enormous. Meanwhile, there is absolutely no evidence that the masses who must serve a statist machine in any way equate their national self-interest with world dominion, either spiritual or political. On the contrary, a minority party must maintain a prodigious programme of homiletics to sustain the faith of its own converts. Similarly, the leadership of a body politic which entertains maximal ambitions must dispose of a quiet and enduring confidence in its own capacity to achieve that ambition. The larger posture of the Soviet leaders at home and abroad has never betrayed such confidence. On this point our summary raises a basic question. Can a leadership ignore the experience of forty years? Can a leadership which has not violated the lines of containment in eight years, which has not dared to transform satellites into constituent republics, which has found itself incapable of successfully controlling even Yugoslavia, East Germany, Poland, Hungary and China, which, however fatuous the faith it has proclaimed, has always been remarkably cautious and conservative in the use of its blood and treasure, which has frankly feared to permit free elections in Eastern Europe, and which has never managed to find a positive policy for Germany, can such a leadership actually entertain concrete hopes of ruling Europe or the Middle East, can such a leadership, which has found that twelve communist states, of which ten are small, make up a far from harmonious community, actually equate a communist world, or even a communist Germany, not to mention a communist U.S.A., with the national welfare of the Soviet state? The Soviet leadership must now resemble Dostoyevskiy's Stavrogin — when they believe, they do not believe that they believe, and when they do not believe, do not believe that they do not believe.

A survey of actual Soviet policy suggests the probable state of mind of the Soviet leadership today. It is a group of men who have inherited an ideology which for forty years has implied implacable hostility to the Western world; it is a group who have recognized the need, in the interests of the Soviet state, to modify the implications of this hostility, but who cannot formally abjure the faith and retain power in the U.S.S.R.; who think that they have done everything possible, short of this, to persuade the West that their larger intentions are unobjectionable and conventional. By calling for a summit meeting, the recognition of the *status quo*, and the stabilization of East-West war potentials at their present level, they have sought to imply their recognition of the fact that containment has set a limit to their solution of their security problem in Europe, to imply their vague recognition of the legitimate defence interests of the West. It is a group of men who have just made their biggest effort to secure a settlement with the capitalist West, who have persuaded