

Esprit (No 429) in 1973. Only Hélène Carrère d'Encausse dared to suggest that, even if at first they brought about a tightening of control in the U.S.S.R., exchanges between East and West would eventually have to give impetus to liberalization between the governing and the governed, and to economic rationalization as well. The other participants were not greatly disposed to accept this hypothesis and one of them, Hélène Zamoyska, pointed out that it was "dangerous to mistake one's own desires for reality".

Grave doubts

It must be said, however, that a large number of Western observers have expressed grave doubts concerning the possibility of a transformation in the Communist societies. In the policy of *détente* they discern not the conditions for international stability but serious danger to Western society. According to Robert Conquest and the other authors of an article on *détente* in *Survey* (No 2/3, 1974), the Soviets consider the *détente* policy as a change in methods that should lead to a shift in the world balance of power in favour of the Soviet Union and the socialist countries. They add that "this shift... will permit the Soviet Union to achieve further expansion without recourse to general war, largely by the use of methods of internal subversion and external intimidation". Nor do they see why Soviet trade policy should be incompatible with internal conservatism: "Indeed, this double-pronged economic strategy is an alternative to domestic economic reform, which the Soviet leaders feared might jeopardize the stability of existing Soviet institutions and generate political strife." Thus they agree that it is in discussing trade agreements between East and West that the Western arguments most lacking in critical discernment make their appearance. What makes the Soviet attempts at the cultural exploitation of *détente* possible, they emphasize, is the lack of political understanding of the phenomenon in the West. For this reason, their conclusion is clear and distinct: "*Détente* cannot be based on illusions. It must be a two-way street. The Soviet Union must contribute to it by giving some indication that it does not intend cynically to exploit it as an opportunity to improve its ability to subvert and destroy the West. *Détente* will not be genuine as long as 'peaceful coexistence' is for the Soviet leaders only a euphemism for a conflict by all means short of war."

The lack of understanding of the true meaning of *détente* on the part of the West

is also the theme of a collection of articles prepared by Foy D. Kohler and his colleagues at the Center for Advanced International Studies at the University of Miami, published in 1973, entitled *Soviet Strategy for the Seventies*. This work presents more than 300 documents dealing with the Soviet position in the politics of *détente*. The analysis, which is one of the most detailed on the conception and policy of peaceful coexistence, shows to what extent and in what fields the Soviet leadership believes that *détente* has provided it with a limitless strategy for overcoming its mortal enemy the West. The current Soviet definition of peaceful coexistence is, in fact, a reworking of the old Western definition of the Cold War. The Soviets, however, counter this argument by simply using a double standard of evaluation.

Kohler and his colleagues recognize the need for understanding between East and West in order to avoid nuclear war or any conflict that could lead to it. Nevertheless, they emphasize how necessary it is for the United States to adopt a realistic policy that could eventually give *détente* some positive substance: "But, as the first step to this end, it would seem essential that we understand, and make it clear that we understand, the nature and implications of present Soviet interpretations."

Appeal to realism

This appeal to political realism has also appeared in the writings of Lev E. Dobriensky of Georgetown University. Dobriensky, however, is more radical in his analysis than his colleagues; he believes that the Cold War is still going on and he suggests that the West could work out a policy that would thwart Soviet power. In his book *The Vulnerable Russians*, published in 1967, Dobriensky examines the sensitive areas in the Soviet political system and proposes ways for the United States to exploit them successfully to keep the U.S.S.R. in check. In a second book, *The U.S.A. and the Soviet Myth*, published in 1971, he reiterates the appeal. The Soviet system is a system that holds 125 million non-Russians captive; the United States must not miss any opportunity to obtain major concessions from the Soviets towards these nations. It is in the field of trade that the author sees the greatest possibility for achieving such a goal; all trade agreements must be accompanied by a political concession from the Kremlin. According to Dobriensky, Washington, using this kind of policy, could pay the Soviets in their own coinage. In contrast to current American policy, this new

*Détente seen
by Soviets
as a change
in methods*