

the U.S.S.R. has multiplied the formal legal obstacles in the paths along which it should be moving according to Marxist doctrine. This may not be inconsistent with the classical Marxist ethic, but is it practical policy on the part of a government which entertains unlimited ambitions?

This tentative appraisal of some of the evidence available to throw light on Soviet intentions suggests to my mind that we must enquire how far actual Soviet policy has been a response to concrete problems, as these have appeared to Moscow, rather than simply a manifestation of a Marxist initiative, how far the interplay of power politics has monopolized Soviet energies, how far Soviet attention has really been directed downward to what H.A.L. Fisher has called the urgent, the contingent and the unique, rather than upward toward a distant and ambitious future, how far the unlimited ambitions of 1917 have been adjusted to reality? It would seem that the Soviet regime has found that its domestic political formula has been too crude to control a developing population. In a parallel field, we must ask how far a nation which began life by destroying, exiling and renouncing all of the slender experience in foreign affairs which had been painfully accumulated under the Czars has begun to recognize the inadequacy of its political formula abroad, and to learn the lessons of practical politics on a global scale.

One possible interpretation would seem to be that the present Soviet leadership is a group of men who have learned that they must modify the implications of their inherited hostility to the West, but who cannot formally deny the faith and yet preserve the present political structure of the U.S.S.R., and who having harped incessantly on the contradictions they claim to be inherent in Western society, now find themselves involved in plentiful contradiction of their own.

As the U.S.S.R. has acquired power, it has tried to emerge from isolation. In so doing, it has found that hostility to the West, which was relatively facile in isolation, is vastly more difficult in the complexity of world politics. It has also found that the contradictions between the logic of power and Marxist theory have increased. Moscow cannot indefinitely stifle nationalism within the bloc and support it in Asia. A nation with thirty million Moslems cannot encourage an Arab renaissance without complicating her position in the Middle East, if not without incurring risks to her national security. Moscow cannot export commodity surpluses without impoverishing those whom she is trying to woo, and without forcing the West to close markets which she needs to penetrate. Moscow cannot maintain an arms race and still grant its people the long-delayed promise of a decent life. Moscow cannot seek long-term commercial links with the external world and still isolate her economy from the depressions in other countries which her ideology commands her