

## STATEMENTS AND SPEECHES

INFORMATION DIVISION  
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An address by Mr. L.B. Pearson, Secretary of State  
for External Affairs, to the Montreal Reform Club,  
on April 29, 1950

The central political problem of our time is the relationship between the free Western world and the U.S.S.R. This question is under constant public discussion, in the press, on platforms and at unofficial conferences, open and private. You may be sure that the government is giving full and continual attention to this problem, anxious on the one hand to support any reasonable move towards a settlement and on the other to avoid any action that serves no other purpose than appeasement.

At the end of the war we had some reason to believe that our relations with the Russians might develop along normal friendly channels. We were all heartened by the magnificent achievements of the war-time alliance, and the tremendous co-operative effort from East and West alike which had crushed the Germans led us to believe that we could enjoy equally spectacular but more constructive efforts in peacetime co-operation. There is a moving and eloquent expression of this hope in a paragraph from Robert Sherwood's book on Roosevelt and Hopkins, a paragraph which in the light of what has happened has a grim poignancy.

"We really believed in our hearts that this was the dawn of the new day we had all been praying for and talking about for so many years. We were absolutely certain that we had won the first great victory of the peace - and, by 'we', I mean all of us, the whole civilized human race. The Russians had proved that they could be reasonable and far-seeing and there wasn't any doubt in the minds of the President or any of us that we could live with them and get along with them peacefully for as far into the future as any of us could imagine."

This hope has had to be deferred - and I use the term deliberately because I do not think we have had to abandon it because the U.S.S.R. in a most deliberate and calculating manner rejected the co-operation of the war-time period and set out upon a new course of action.

I think the Russians made their deliberate choice to reject co-operation with the West for a number of reasons. One of them springs from the Communist theory upon which their state is based. Their leaders have taught them that the Russian revolution is merely the beginning of a world revolution and that for this reason conflict between the Soviet State and the rest of the world is inevitable. They therefore set their people to work preparing for this conflict. At the same time, I think that they were influenced by expansionist traditions which go far back in the history of Soviet

policy. They had a choice to make in 1945 between co-operating with the rest of us in rebuilding the world or alternatively seizing control of as great an area as possible. They made the latter choice. They drew the line of their influence as far away from Moscow as they could manage, and ever since they have been vigorously engaged trying on the one hand to extend that line and on the other hand to shut the rest of us out from behind it. They have been influenced also by a third motive - the fear that co-operation with the West might mean the gradual infiltration of Western ideas and news through to their own people. This would be a development which the Soviet dictatorship could not easily contemplate.

The political results of this decision by the U.S.S.R. are too familiar. They are to be seen on every hand in the great political problems of the post-war period which remain unsettled. They are to be seen in the Soviet Union's attempt to frustrate all common efforts for the restoration of peace and prosperity. It is only with the greatest difficulty, for example, that we have been able to make use of the United Nations, and in any circumstances where the interests of the U.S.S.R. are involved and where the Russians can make their veto effective, we are not able to make use of the United Nations at all. Similar efforts have been made to forestall the economic revival of Western Europe by aid from this continent. The attempt to organize that aid through United Nations machinery was almost completely defeated. When an alternative plan - the Marshall Plan - was developed by the Government of the United States in a very far-seeing, statesmanlike policy, the U.S.S.R. did its best to prevent that policy having effect. On every political front, therefore, we have to deal not only with the complex problem of the post-war period but also with the deliberate efforts of the Russian Communist government to prevent us from solving these problems.

The cultural and social consequences of Soviet policy in foreign affairs since the war are equally dangerous. We have seen the Russians, for example, engaged upon the task of whipping up the ideological war between Communism and capitalism; one of the most vicious forms of war mongering. If we have any doubt as to the intent to which this policy is deliberate, we have only to read the writings of Soviet leaders themselves. A recent statement of Soviet aims was made, for example, in a special article in PRAVDA by Lavrenti Beria, the head of Russia's vast internal security organization. On the occasion of Stalin's 70th birthday, he wrote as follows:

"Stalin has laid down a programme of action for Communists. They must (1) exploit all differences and contradictions in the bourgeois camp; (2) take concrete action to unite the working classes of the economically advanced countries with the national liberation movement in the colonies and dependent nations; (3) complete the struggle for unity of the trade union movement; (4) take active measures to bring together the proletariat and the small peasants; (5) support Soviet rule and disrupt the interventionist machinations of imperialism against the Soviet Union, bearing in mind that the Soviet Union is the base of revolutionary movement in all countries."

This is a programme for stirring up trouble in this country and elsewhere in the Western World. It is being carried out in many ways - by the Cominform, by Communist parties in all the Western states, and often by secret agents, as we have seen in our own country. The Communist parties of the Western states have now been finally unmasked - indeed have unmasked themselves - as rank and avowed adjuncts of the Soviet Communist parties, and we have witnessed the strange spectacle of political leaders in Western

ates announcing publicly that they would never defend their country against the Russians, that on the contrary they would welcome the arrival of Soviet invaders.

A further social consequence of Soviet policy since the war is that we live in an atmosphere in which facts are continually and systematically distorted and falsified. The leaders of the Russian State feel, for example, that they must continually tell their own people and as many of ours as they can persuade to listen, that the countries of the West are corrupt, semi-feudal societies in which social injustice and inequalities amongst the classes are prevalent. Actually, however, there could be no greater misrepresentation of the facts than this. We know that in all the democracies of the West a general levelling-up process has been going on. To a greater or lesser degree in every Western community the larger inequalities in income and privilege are being removed and systematic efforts are being made to distribute purchasing power as equally as possible in the community; at the same time retaining the economic incentive that lies at the base of our way of life. We do not pretend for a moment that we have achieved or are even trying to achieve a complete equality of economic status - but we are eliminating the extremes of wealth and poverty and we have gone a long way towards creating equality of economic opportunity. As far as we can see from information which we get concerning the U.S.S.R., exactly the opposite process is taking place there. A new class structure is emerging within the Soviet State. There is a new ruling class in Russia which enjoys privileges which you would not for a moment think of conceding to any of your Members of Parliament or Cabinet Ministers or senior civil servants. The Army is a privileged group, and we find that within the Army there is an officer class with a status which we could regard as feudal and old-fashioned. Nowhere are class distinctions so immediately apparent as in conditions of travel. There are for instance four classes on Russian river steamers, and the lowest of these classes, the hard class, has a hardness to which we would not subject even our most humble traveller.

There are signs also that other forms of discrimination have emerged in the Soviet Union. There are evidences, for example, of privilege on the basis of race. The Great Russians are taking the place of leadership in the Soviet State. It is against the law to be a Zionist in the U.S.S.R. In other fields we find the right of higher learning is becoming more and more the privilege of the governing class. It is no longer true that Soviet education is free and compulsory for all. In February, 1947, a number of amendments were made to the Soviet Constitution. Article 121 concerning education decreed that only primary education should be free and compulsory. The grades above that require tuition fees which are relatively high for the average family. Relatively, education in the United Kingdom or Canada is far more democratic today than it is in the U.S.S.R.

It is interesting also to notice the way in which differences in income have gradually appeared and increased. In addition to actual income differences, we must add the perquisites which go with better jobs - automobiles, chauffeurs, good apartments, sea vacations, and so on. The Communists claim this is just a phase of Communism, but in fact the new class is becoming self-perpetuating because it can accumulate wealth, property and privileges and pass them on to their children.

We are continually being misled also about labour in the Soviet State which is supposed to be a state organized primarily for the workers. No trade unions in Canada would for a moment accept the status which has been assigned to trade unions in the U.S.S.R. They have been transformed into an instrument for

transmitting to the workers government decisions of conditions about work and pay. Piece work payment is now the normal condition in the Soviet Union. What our workers denounce as the "speed up" at the factories is glorified in the U.S.S.R. under the name of the Stakhanovite Movement. Piece work and the "speed up" are labour conditions which we regard as completely out of date.

Another example of wilful distortion which we hear from Soviet sources is about colonialism. Anyone who knows anything about the West realizes that a great transformation is taking place in the status of colonial peoples. The colonial empires of the 19th century are rapidly being transformed into free self-governing communities, and a whole new era has been opened in the relationships between industrialized nations and the economically less developed parts of the world. The communists, however, continue to talk about capitalist imperialism, at the same time masking behind the Iron Curtain one of the most vicious imperialist regimes that has ever been known in history. To Moscow, freedom in a foreign communist state can never mean freedom from Russian domination.

Still another aspect of the problems which arise in our cultural relations with the U.S.S.R. is the cynical use which is made by the leaders of the Soviet Union of well-meaning but often misguided people in other lands as instruments of their propaganda. Very often these people act from highly idealistic motives and accept uncritically the account which the Russians themselves give of conditions in their own country. The closest example we have of this sort of activity is, of course, the campaign which is now being carried on by the Canadian Peace Congress. Many of the members of this movement may be inspired by high motives, but I wonder if they ever stop to think of the full implication of the things which they are led to do. Let us take for example the recent visit to the Soviet Union of the leader of the Canadian Peace Congress, Dr. James Endicott. I have before me two excerpts from Soviet newspapers giving quotations of statements about Canada which Dr. Endicott made in Moscow during March. I will read you these statements. They are as follows:

1. "Moscow is peace.....Across the ocean, in our Canada and America, everything is different. Instead of new apartment houses, aerodromes and military bases are built there. The headlines of the newspapers shout about war. Thousands of dirty booklets praise the future war, war looks out from the paintings of painters and from the films." (Pioneerskaya Pravda, March 31, 1950)
2. "If a Canadian invites friends to his home and if moreover he refers in a positive manner to the Soviet Union, noting, for example, that great care is taken of children in the Soviet Union, then the police have the right to declare that this is 'defence of communism' and to drive this Canadian out onto the street and seal off his apartment. He will not even be able to complain about these actions by the police in court." (Report of Press Conference published in all Moscow papers, March 9, 1950)

A man, who, professing honest motives and high ideals, goes amongst strangers and maligns his country with this kind of falsehood is beneath contempt. In a communist society he would also be beneath the ground.

The process of misrepresenting and distorting the facts within the Soviet Union is made more efficient by the systematic prevention of personal contacts across the iron curtain. It is

virtually impossible for a private citizen of the U.S.S.R. to leave his country and we know from experience that the Soviet authorities will even separate man and wife and compel divorce rather than let one of their citizens join the other partner of a marriage outside the Soviet Union.

There are many other examples of this cultural iron curtain and this social savagery. At the last session of the Assembly of the United Nations a delegate of the United States gave a documented account of systematic efforts which had been made by Americans both public and private in the post-war period to arrange contacts between Americans and Russians. Suggestions had been made for exchanges of students, for visits to the United States by prominent scientists and artists. Efforts had been made to induce the Red Army Choir or the Russian ballet to visit this continent. None of these efforts bore fruit. The normal methods by which peoples grow to know each other and trust each other by personal contacts are systematically prevented. In the immediate post-war period, we ourselves tried in a small way to co-operate with the U.S.S.R. by exchanging information about techniques in the North country. We made available some unclassified information about agricultural and other techniques in Canada and received some interesting information in return. But soon after the war, the curtain was rung down in Moscow on our efforts to establish even the minimum contact between civilized states.

Having made this analysis of the situation we must now ask ourselves what we can do about it. We may at first be tempted to think that we should retaliate in kind. I doubt, however, whether this is the proper approach for us. Ours is a free society and even if we wanted to, we would find it difficult to apply adequate restrictions because they would be contrary to the principles by which we live. I am sure that it is in the interests of our society that we should have only those regulations which are necessary for the security of the state and no more.

Since we cannot and will not follow the Russians in their efforts to widen and strengthen the iron curtain, we must look for other more constructive and hopeful courses of action. I do not suggest that any of them will pay immediate dividends, but I am sure there are a number of things which we can do. We can in the first place recall continually to our minds and to our confidence the warm-hearted, lovable, hospitable, courageous Russian people whom we came to know during the war and with whom I am sure we can settle our differences once it is possible to make adequate contacts with them. We must also continue our efforts to resolve the problems that divide the Government of the U.S.S.R. from the governments of the free democracies. We must continue these efforts by every possible method of negotiation, conference, public or private discussion, meetings at any level, low, middle or high. In the meantime however, we must refuse to be led astray by empty words of those who talk of peace but who make no other proposal for safeguarding it except to recommend that we unilaterally disarm. We must not be fooled, ever, by any phony peace overtures.

It is also necessary for us to proceed as rapidly as possible with the development of the North Atlantic Alliance. So far, we have been primarily concerned with the defensive military arrangements under the treaty, and it has been right and proper that our first concern should be with our ability to resist aggression. In the long run, however, we shall have to make the treaty into something a great deal more basic than simply a military alliance. All members of the North Atlantic group are pledged by the Treaty, and especially by Article 2, to broaden the basis of their association, and co-operation in the solution of economic problems. In the long

...n, our ability to stand fast against the attacks of international  
...ommunism will depend on our success in strengthening the economic  
...nd social fabric of the free world. I hope that the North Atlantic  
...reaty will become a powerful instrument for this purpose. I  
...m glad that its members will have the opportunity to consider the  
...rowing responsibilities and commitments of the alliance when the  
...orth Atlantic Council meets in London during May.

Finally, we in the West must be confident in the strength  
...nd validity of our system of government, in the value of our own  
...ociety and in our ability so to develop and adjust our way of life  
...hat we can meet the challenge of our times. We must be confident  
...so in the long-term strength of our position, firmer now than it  
...as in 1945 and growing firmer year by year as the dividends begin  
...o come to hand from such great constructive policies as the  
...arshall Plan and the North Atlantic Treaty.

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