

Chapter VII

MOSCOW'S FIGHT FOR THE ROOSEVELT PROGRAM

IT IS NOTEWORTHY THAT WHILE THE UNITED STATES has largely abandoned the Roosevelt attitude of co-operation toward the Soviet Union, the leaders of that country have not given up hope for its reinstatement. Not only does the Soviet Union keep the door open, but it actively struggles for the application of F.D.R.'s policies, whereas the U.S. opposes them.

This is supremely important when we consider the prospects for a durable peace. If the policy of the Soviet Union were as changeable and inconsistent as that of the United States, then the difficulties of peacemaking would be multiplied. Fortunately for the world, and for America, there are a stability and consistency in Soviet policy which preserve the foundation of international co-operation in the face of all difficulties.

What is more provocative, for example, than the constant charge from America that the Soviet Union is engaged in "sovietizing" Europe, and the consequent withdrawal of American support from the new regimes in Poland, Rumania, Bulgaria, and Yugoslavia? What would be more "natural," as the saying goes, than for the Soviet leaders to conclude that if America insists upon giving them the name they should also have the

game? If they are to be dealt with as "sovietizers," why not have some Soviets? Since America withdraws the co-operation practiced and promised by Roosevelt, why guard the bases of that co-operation further? Why not proceed toward the real sovietization of Europe as the answer to America's apparent determination to "anti-sovietize" that continent? And yet, despite all this, it is an outstanding feature of postwar Europe that, in contrast to the period following the end of World War I, there have been no new Soviet governments; nor is there any evidence that efforts have been made to establish them.

One may similarly examine the situation in China and Asia. President Truman specifically reaffirmed the Roosevelt policy directed toward a democratic coalition government in China, based on peace between the Kuomintang and the Communist-Democratic League forces, and this was again embodied in a joint policy declaration with the Soviet Union. But the utmost efforts of our envoy, General Marshall, conceded by everyone to be sincere and energetic, are inexplicably defeated at every turn. Chiang Kai-shek finds this situation very profitable, for he receives billions in American surplus property, turned over to him without condition at the very moment when he has wrecked Marshall's efforts and reneged on his own commitments for a coalition. And yet while America follows this ambiguous, two-faced policy in China, the Soviet Union clings without deviation to its support of the original program for the unity and democratization of China. It does not answer in kind by stimulating a military showdown in China and by giv-

ing material support to the Chinese Communists and Democratic League.

In similar fashion, when we come to Germany, the United States has proceeded as though the Potsdam agreement were merely the starting point for an American reorganization of Germany as an anti-Soviet bastion in the heart of Europe. There has not been a sign that this country expects to reach a joint policy that will combine the vital interests of both the Soviet Union and America; there is a mounting flood of signs that America is determined to preserve and mobilize all the anti-Soviet forces in Germany, including the remnants of Nazism. Still the Soviet Union has not taken a single step which would close the door to a possible future realization of the full spirit of the Potsdam agreement.

The same is true of Japan. There the American course has been so crudely and violently anti-Soviet, under the guidance of General MacArthur, that it is a phenomenal exhibition of long-suffering patience that the Soviet representative has not been withdrawn from the farcical "Allied Council" in Tokyo, which is treated with open contempt by MacArthur. But the Soviet leaders put up with the situation and continue to hold open the door to the eventual formation of a joint policy with the United States.

In all disagreements and deadlocks, whether in the preparation of peace treaties or in the councils of the United Nations, the Soviet position has in all cases been based on the conception of fighting for the application of agreements reached with Roosevelt. On issues not settled before Roosevelt's death the policy has called for

the continuance of the same general approach, always scrupulously keeping in mind American interests and proposing nothing that would cut across those interests. It is America which has departed from this basis by openly espousing measures known to be directly hostile to the Soviet Union—flagrantly so, for example, in the Iran incident.

It would be wrong of course to interpret the long-suffering patience of the Soviet leaders as an exhibition of old-fashioned Christian meekness and humility, or as a sign of material or moral weakness. If they stubbornly and in the face of discouragement cling to the bases of Soviet-American co-operation, it can only have one meaning: they still have confidence that co-operation can eventually be achieved.

Soviet confidence is based upon an understanding of what moves men, nations, and history. Soviet leaders think they know America's real and long-term interests, and they have no intention of challenging them. They consider peace to be an American interest, just as it is a Soviet interest. They are sure that America's departure from the Roosevelt policies will quickly be revealed as unprofitable and harmful to the position of America.

In the meantime when America talks tough to them, they talk tough in return. When America begins to act tough, the Russians and their friends give a little demonstration of the fact that they are not softies themselves. But it's in no wise a departure from the basic foundations of friendship and co-operation. The Russians are merely talking to us in the language we seem to understand best at the moment. They are ready to meet

America halfway—in anything. It is for America to decide which it shall be—hostility or friendship.

We Americans would find it much easier to understand the Soviet Union if we employed the simple process of imagining ourselves in their position and asking what we would do. It is a wonderfully illuminating exercise. It reveals that the Russians are consistently fighting for the Roosevelt policy.

Of course they approach that policy from their own angle. Americans should be able to understand that, since our approach is also from our own angle—or should be; sometimes it looks more like the British angle. There is nothing strange here. In essence the Roosevelt policy assumes two approaches, American and Russian; and a meeting on grounds that preserve the basic values of each. And of course if we substitute the British angle for the American, the whole thing goes cockeyed. It is Soviet and American interests that must first be harmonized.

Whenever the Russians hear their American friends begin to talk the British language they know at once that no constructive result can come from the conversation. America cannot reach an understanding with the Soviet Union through the mediation of the British. No matter how much we may consider the English language common to America and Britain, in international relations the languages of the two countries must be quite distinct. When America talks British our own country has lost its tongue. The Russians want us to talk American. They will know then that an understanding will be real and lasting. It is America with whom

they wish first of all to arrive at an understanding. The British are secondary.

Why should America, for example, talk the British language about the Dardanelles? That waterway has something of the same significance to the Soviet Union that the Panama Canal has for the United States. Would America permit the Panama Canal to be in the hands of a government which had demonstrated its hostility to us in the course of a deadly war, in which the Canal had been used against us? Do we apply one set of principles to the Dardanelles and an entirely different set to Panama? Or are we ready to agree that all international waterways, Dardanelles, Suez, and Panama, should be subject to the agreement of all the Great Powers? Just what is our position, then? Are we adopting the traditional British imperialist attitude which has no relation to American interest? These are questions that arise insistently in Soviet minds. These are questions we must be prepared to answer with some consistency.

Moscow's fight for the Roosevelt program (and she must, since America has for the time abandoned it) is in the main directed toward demonstrating that because it is in the interests of both the Great Powers, and of the small nations, it is the only practical road to peace. It is a fight to impress the Roosevelt program upon the minds of men everywhere. The Russians do not call it the Roosevelt program, because for them it is a joint policy; but for Americans it is best identified by the name of the great American whose leadership gave our country this policy in the most critical moment of our history.

Roosevelt was America's greatest propagandist, in the

original sense of that much-abused word. He made his policies widely known and set himself the task of winning men's minds and hearts to his cause. In the sense that Roosevelt was a propagandist, so also are the Russians propagandists in their fight for the reinstatement of the Roosevelt program as the norm of their relations with America.

Since Roosevelt's death America's propaganda to the world has been singularly ineffective. There is a simple explanation. No one has been sure what America stands for, least of all Americans themselves. We have been pointing all ways at once, galloping off furiously in all directions, so far as words are concerned. But the underlying trend of all our confusion has been to substitute the policy of Churchill for that of Roosevelt in the field of action. Whatever that may accomplish, it is doomed to certain failure in winning the minds and hearts of men. America, which gained a world-wide popularity in the person of Roosevelt, has reaped a world-wide suspicion and animosity among the masses of the peoples, by our course since Roosevelt's death. We have won the approval only of those who formerly found much to admire in Hitler.

Certain American interests—newspapers, reactionary industrialists, and their representatives in the Administration—have been conducting a world-wide propaganda campaign against the Soviet Union. The net result has been more damaging for us than for that country. For America has been unable to explain itself and its own intentions to the world. This nation has become the world's big question mark, the riddle within

an enigma wrapped in mystery; and therefore the more we rail against the Soviet Union the more suspect become American motives in the eyes of most people.

The Soviet counterpropaganda is very simple. It is only necessary to make a request in the Security Council of the United Nations for a report on the number and location of the armed forces of each country which are outside its own borders and not occupying enemy territory. America does the rest by becoming indignant and protesting that never, never, never, will we agree to such an outrageous proposal.

What have we to hide behind our curtain, whether it be iron or velvet? The world has become curious—and uneasy.

Perhaps our newspapers have educated most Americans to take it as a matter of course that the U.S.A. refuses to support an investigation of British troops in Indonesia and Greece, but becomes adamant on the question of Soviet troops in Iran, even though Soviet troops were soon out of Iran while British troops remain from one year to another in Greece and Indonesia. Perhaps we see no inconsistency in getting excited because Soviet troops were a month or two behind schedule in evacuating Manchuria, while we take it as a matter of course that American troops stay indefinitely in China and participate in civil war there. But such things, though taken as a matter of course in America, are to the rest of the world flaming signs that America has one rule for itself and its associates and another rule for the Soviet Union—that is, that America has forgotten the principle of equality of nations.

Why should America seek such a duel as this with the Soviet Union? After all, we got along better with the Roosevelt program, in peace and in war, for several years, than we have fared with any alternative. What compelling reason have we to abandon that program? All that is required to restore friendship and collaboration with the other Great Power is the simple return to the principles and practices of Roosevelt. That is all the Soviet Union would ask of us.