

Some thoughts on the international situation

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Some thoughts on the International Situation

By Willy Bretscher, Editor in Chief, Neue Zürcher Zeitung.

IN his book "Neither War nor Peace," Hugh Seton-Watson, Professor of Russian History in London University, states succinctly:

"The Soviet Union is in permanent state of war, which may or may not become violent, with the West."

If we accept this premise—and we have to accept it in the light of more than forty years of historical experience—it follows that all the shifts and changes of Soviet policy which we have witnessed in recent years are part and parcel of the incessant warfare of communism against the West. "Peaceful coexistence" and "relaxation of tension," personal diplomacy and summit conferences—all these new slogans and new methods have never been regarded by the Kremlin rulers as contributions toward the goal of establishing peace, but as tools of psychological and political warfare against the West. If one remembers the abundance of declarations made by Khrushchev and his mouthpieces in the heyday of the propaganda for "peaceful coexistence," it is all the more surprising that large sections of public opinion in the West have been misled by this propaganda, since the Communists themselves did not bother to hide their intention of pursuing the struggle for the triumph of their ideology with all appropriate means.

"Peaceful Coexistence" and the Cold War

One may contend that the West has not been wrong in the past in trying to find out the exact meaning of "peaceful coexistence" as advocated by the Communists and to test the apparent willingness of the Soviet Union to mitigate international tension. But the trouble is that by adopting the semantics of the Kremlin the statesmen of the West deluded themselves partly, and public opinion to a considerable extent, on the limits of the practical possibilities for a relaxation of tension, and fostered the illusion that the so-called Cold War could be stopped by mutual declarations of peaceful intention. By using constantly and loosely the phrase "peaceful coexistence" coined by the Communists, the West gave to this concept a meaning and a purport wholly out of

proportion with the world of realities. Everybody knows that in view of the present state of armaments and of the technology of war the two opposed systems of East and West have to coexist in some way, because any attempt of one or the other side to destroy the adversary would mean general suicide. But the phrase "peaceful coexistence" implies the possibility that the struggle between the two systems could and would proceed forthwith in peaceful ways, while the Communists themselves are quite aware that what they label as peaceful competition, leading—as they believe—ultimately to the triumph of their doctrine, includes the unabated continuation of their campaign of organised subversion—a campaign moreover which does not shrink from using the atomic arms of the Soviet Union on every occasion as a potent instrument of persuasion. The hard fact is that the Kremlin rulers, in calling for an end of the Cold War, have not the slightest intention to abandon or to mitigate their own congenital aggressiveness, but ask the West to give up for its own part all serious resistance to Soviet expansion.

It is high time for the West to realise that "coexistence"—more or less peaceful—is indeed virtually identical with the Cold War which it was supposed to end. The Cold War could be stopped only in one of two ways. One would be for the Soviet leaders to abjure their aim of world revolution; they have never done this and are unlikely to do it in the foreseeable future. The other would be for the West to abandon resistance of Soviet expansion; this the West can and will not do, although in the last phase of "peaceful coexistence" it has already come perilously close to surrender—surrender in instalments.

The Response of the West: Strength and Unity

The conclusions to be drawn from a sober appraisal of the fundamentals of the situation call for the building-up of the strength and unity of the free peoples. There is no doubt that the "position of strength," which the Communists have succeeded in deriding and in discredit-

ing in the minds of many people in the West, is indeed the only means of combating the encroachments of communism and of reducing at the same time the danger of war. Whenever the West shows itself to be meek and irresolute, whenever it displays those internal "contradictions" which are so dear to Communist doctrine and politics, the pressures from Moscow become stronger, the bearing of their leaders more arrogant, the tenor and contents of their claims more radical. The way in which they boast of their present alleged military superiority is significant, and although they prefer the threat of war to the risk of war for the achievement of their goals, one may be sure that they would not have any scruples in resorting to wholesale violence, once they became convinced that they would emerge victorious from an armed conflict. As the bleak record of personal diplomacy shows, the Communists are largely impervious to argument; their calculations are made in terms of power—in terms of missiles and tanks, of steel and oil, of industrial output and technological progress. Therefore, the West should not waste any more time in discussing commonplaces, such as that peace is desirable, or in carrying on academic controversies about Disengagement; also, it should desist from its morbid preoccupation with the ever-recurring shifts and changes of Soviet tactics and give up the forlorn hope that such a change will provide us some day with an easy short cut to security and peace. What the West must do is this: put itself in a position of indisputable strength in which it will be able to safeguard the security of the free peoples and to cope effectively, more effectively than up to now, with all the different aspects and the varying forms and shapes of the Communist menace.

If the West were strong—strong in every field in which the so-called "peaceful competition" takes place—it could also afford to enter into negotiations with the Soviets without facing every time the dismal prospect of landing in Munich or having to yield to the other party the propaganda success of the meeting. Curing itself from the popular superstition that negotiations are some kind of panacea for all the political ills of the world, the West should and could make use of this instrument judiciously whenever it seems likely to produce results. It could use this instrument specifically for the purpose of attempting to put the Cold War—which has come to stay with us for a long time—under some kind of thermostatic control in order to prevent it from becoming too cold or too hot.

In order to be able to meet the Communist challenge, the West needs to realise that it is of paramount importance to hold together those sources of strength which the free world possesses. As Dean Acheson pointed out some time ago in an article in the quarterly *Orbis*, entitled "The Premises of American Policy," these sources of strength, that is the centre of power in the non-Communist world, are in North America and Western Europe. To assert this fact does not mean that one has to overlook or to underrate the important problems involved in the political emancipation of the teeming millions of Asia and Africa, or to ignore the prospect

that some day in the future those masses will affect and determine the balance of power on our globe. But for the present time and for a long time to come the survival of the free world, of the whole free world including the uncommitted people, depends and will continue to depend on the unity and strength of the Atlantic Community. Once this centre of power were dissolved or fragmented, the problems of the world, from our point of view, would become entirely unmanageable and the triumph of communism inevitable. These considerations assume a particular significance at this moment, when the Congo crisis has put a new strain on the Atlantic alliance. While the United Nations' valiant effort to cope with the tremendous problems involved in the chaotic situation on the African continent deserves our wholehearted sympathy and support, the leading Western powers will have to bear in mind that their policies must at all costs avoid a repetition of something like the Suez crisis of 1956.

NEWS OF THE COLONY

HAMILTON-AUCKLAND COMBINED PICNIC

Although the attendance was below expectations, those present had a very enjoyable time. Amongst our visitors we welcomed Martin and Mrs Steiner, Joe Dettling, Louis Kuriger and Mr Keusch from Taranaki, Mrs Whitson from Christchurch, and 94-year-old Mr Amrein from Auckland.

Prizes were won as follows.—

Air Rifle competition: 1st, A. Schuler.

Pistol competition: 1st, Enzler.

Steinstossen competition: 1st, Joe Risi.

Kegeln competition: 1st, John Filliger.

Boccia competition: 1st, Briner.

HAMILTON SWISS CLUB

Our congratulations to Heinz, elder son of Mr and Mrs Heiri Oettli, for gaining the highest marks in the School Certificate examination of the Hamilton Boys' High School.

WELLINGTON SWISS CLUB

The Wellington Swiss Club held its first picnic on January 28th. About 45 adults and children gathered at Waikanae Beach, our favoured spot amongst the sand dunes. There was blue sky and bright sunshine and a breeze from the sea kept the temperature just pleasant. The water was wonderfully warm and most of the party went for several swims during the day, to cool down.

In the afternoon, the men and boys enjoyed a good game of football while the ladies exchanged holiday experiences.

It was nice to see Dr. and Mrs Rossetti and sons and Mr and Mrs Scharer and children amongst us—their first picnic in our club. Too soon a happy day elapsed and it was time to drive back to the city. —R.M.