

Number

11/6/87

58

WHAT GORBACHEV IS SAYING ABOUT THE U.S.

(Updating *Backgrounder* No. 338, "Moscow's Hot War of Words," March 15, 1984.)

On the eve of what is billed by many as a "historic visit" to the United States of a Soviet leader of "a new type," Moscow continues its old type vilification of the United States. The tone of this campaign, moreover, has been set by General Secretary Mikhail Gorbachev. So far he has not exhibited any "new thinking" with respect to his view of the U.S. By the sharpness and scale of his invective, for example, Gorbachev in February 1986 turned the first Party Congress over which he presided into the most brazenly anti-American party forum since the 19th Party Congress in 1952, when the Cold War was raging and Stalin was alive.

Under Soviet practice, this speech is considered the most authoritative statement of Soviet political doctrine and is required reading in compulsory "political education" classes. Here is how Gorbachev portrayed the U.S.:

The American Political System

"Trade unions are subjected to harassment and economic blackmail. Anti-labor laws are being enacted. The Left and progressive movements in general are being persecuted. Control, or to be more exact, prying into people's minds and behavior has become the norm. Conscious cultivation of individualism, the right of the strong in the fight for survival, immorality and hatred of everything democratic are being practiced on an unprecedented scale."

American Foreign Policy

"Because of its social nature [U.S.] imperialism constantly generates aggressive, adventurist policies. A whole range of motives can be identified: predatory appetites of weapon manufacturers and influential military-bureaucratic groupings, selfish interests of monopolies in sources of raw materials and markets, bourgeoisie's fear of current changes and, finally, attempts to solve ever deepening problems at the expense of socialism...."

"The ruling circles of the United States are clearly losing touch with reality....Their aggressive international behavior, growing militarization of politics and thinking, contempt for the interests of others lead inexorably to a moral and political isolation of the American imperialism, to a widening of the abyss between it and the rest of the humankind."

Capitalism in General

"Wealth and power [in the West and especially the U.S.] are increasingly concentrated in the hands of a few. Militarism expands boundlessly and strives to gradually seize the levers of political power as well. It becomes the ugliest and most dangerous monster of the 20th century."

To be sure, almost two years have passed since that Party Congress where Gorbachev expressed these views. But they were echoed just a few months ago. The official and authoritative *Pravda* published the following:

"Almost every day [in the U.S.] participants of anti-war marches and demonstrations are thrown behind bars. At the same time, the members of the Ku Klux Klan feel very comfortable there and the police terror in the Negro ghettos has more than once exceeded any imaginable boundaries. Such are only a few examples of 'human rights' in the United States of America.

"In the United States there flourish unrestrained mercantilism and the thirst for profits; preaching of immorality and pornography becomes a tool of spiritual aggression against the truly human, civilized rules of behavior; imposed upon the people are the cult of money, the right of the strong in the merciless fight for survival." (Editorial, June 12)

"In today's America they most often shoot at those who protest against violence, who fight for one's rights. The crime syndicate Mafia and the government agency CIA...do not just co-exist but closely cooperate. They are united in their mutual hatred of those who do not agree with the omnipotence of violence in the country, of those who would like to see America genuinely democratic and free." (August 5)

Similarly, *Izvestia*, second only to *Pravda* in authority and circulation, claimed recently that:

"Coming to power [the Reagan Administration] did everything in order to give back freedom of action to the organs of repression....The secret political police¹ has been legally empowered to eavesdrop on the Americans and to watch them, as well as to inform on them. As before, blacklisting was introduced.

1. The actual Russian terms are "sysk" and "okhranka"--the vernacular for the tsarist political police.

"Thus, what 'Mad Joe' McCarthy failed to achieve, today, according to *The New York Times* [sic] is largely accomplished by R. Reagan through his 'soft manners,' a 'nice guy' image, and 'freshly made-up patriotism.'" (October 4)

"Hundreds, perhaps thousands of American scientists--both in universities and private labs--are conducting research directly bearing on the creation of biological weapons. The international convention which prohibits production of such weapons has been signed by the United States, but this signature does not mean a break for the research. The research is conducted with micro organisms so dangerous that one ten-millionth of a gram is enough to kill a human being." (October 23)

Ominous Updates. U.S. foreign policy continues to be presented in the most menacing tones. Everyday updates on the Persian Gulf acquire an increasingly ominous slant:

"Having deployed in the Persian Gulf its battle and support ships, Washington intends to continue to dictate the countries of the region American 'rules of the game.'" ("Playing With Fire," *Pravda*, October 10)

"The leaders of the United States and Israel are striving to fan the flames of the Iran-Iraq conflict at the same time as there appears a possibility of their peaceful settlement." (*Izvestia*, October 27)

"A piece of news has just come from the U.S. It says that some of the American ships in the region have nuclear weapons. The coordinator of the national security program in the Washington Institute for [Policy?] Studies said...that the military conflict in the region can easily develop into a nuclear war." ("At a Dangerous Crossroad," *Pravda*, October 31)

Day in and day out, such "news" cannot but affect the captive Soviet audience, which has no other sources of information except the official media. A recent letter from an *Izvestia* reader typifies the effect that this relentless propaganda assault on the U.S. has on millions of Soviet citizens. The author protests against "unilateral" Soviet measures of "good will" toward the U.S. at the time when "as our scholars are not allowed into the United States (and Alexandrov² has been kidnapped and his fate is unknown), our journalists are not allowed to attend press conferences in the State Department, and our performing artists are subjected to bandit assaults." (*Izvestia*, October 24)

Real progress toward better U.S.-Soviet relations depends not only upon counting, recounting, or even destroying missiles. It depends too on Moscow calling a cease-fire in its rhetorical warfare by which it tries to turn Soviet citizens against the U.S.

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2. A Soviet scientist alleged by the Soviet media to have been kidnapped by the CIA.

