

CONFIDENTIAL

13 May 1958

MEMORANDUM FOR: Deputy Director/Intelligence

THROUGH: Chief, SRS/DDI *RMW*

SUBJECT: The Role of Ideology in Communist Affairs

1. Ever since I have been in CIA, that is, since 1947, I have taken considerable pains to emphasize the vital role of Communist ideology. This ideology, which is developed in the writings of Marx, Engels, Lenin, Stalin and some minor luminaries, must be understood by all who are striving to analyze Communist actions and reactions and to predict Soviet intentions.

2. I have found very little sympathy for this point of view. The great majority of our crystal ball gazers and analysts, Western-minded as they are, refuse to recognize anything but a pragmatic approach to the problem. They maintain that if Communist ideology is not indeed mere window dressing, its importance in determining course of action is minor and its effect has decreased to a vanishing point. When I was still in ONE I tried in vain to convince the Board that an estimative study concerned primarily with Communist doctrine was necessary; however, the difficulties of coordinating such a "controversial" paper with the other IAC agencies were considered to be forbidding.

3. Recent events have again brought this problem into focus. It should be easier, even for those who do not believe in the power of ideology, to recognize the conquests of this secular religion. In the first place, the new campaign against "revisionism" is clearly an attempt to scuttle deviations and "misinterpretations" of the theses of the 20th CPSU Congress in order to achieve, once again, a monolithic adherence to the doctrine as interpreted and applied by the USSR. The heat of this campaign has been intensified by the increase of the power of the leading Party, the CPSU, since Stalin's death. Reducing the power of the governmental

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machinery, the CPSU has regained its Leninist position under Khrushchev. It is committed to uncompromising implementation of the doctrine. It is flexible in tactical matters but remains adamant when the fundamentals of the gospel are threatened. If it allowed for changes of the "basic structure," it would no longer be Leninist. And it is the Leninist brand of Marxism that is responsible for the most dangerous features of contemporary Communism.

4. The second recent event of ideological significance is the new conflict between Yugoslavia and the Bloc countries, arising out of the draft program of the union of Yugoslav Communists. This controversy is strictly ideological. In stirring up trouble with Yugoslavia, the USSR and the entire Communist world can only stand to lose that sympathy which they had gained through the thesis of the "different roads to Socialism," promulgated at the XXth CPSU Congress. A new break or near-break between Belgrade and the Bloc would undo the effects of the Congress and revive those objections that were raised during Stalin's lifetime, particularly by the newly liberated and underdeveloped countries against the threat of Soviet overlordship. Evidently the world Communist leaders feel very strongly that ideological unity is paramount. Regardless of all disadvantages which are bound to arise from a new struggle between Belgrade and the Bloc, they would rather lose some of the gains accumulated since Khrushchev's visit to Belgrade, than allow the basic structure of their doctrine to be tampered with. The ideology is their lifeblood, their reason for existence, and as surely as the medieval Christians longed to go to heaven, so do the Communists look forward to entering their own materialistic paradise. So far as they are concerned, nobody is going to undermine the fundamentalist faith.

5. The lesson to be drawn from these facts is simple. If we want to assess Soviet Communist intentions correctly, we can not limit our probing to purely political, economic, or military matters, using Western yardsticks or modes of interpretation. We must attempt to place ourselves in the frame of Marxist reasoning. We must become familiar with and consult the basic

Communist classics and in reading them we must discard the notion that their ideological impact is decreasing. In Communist countries, even the masses of the people, although not highly trained in dialectical materialism, have been conditioned by indoctrination and have acquired certain psychological characteristics which tend to set them apart from Western reason. The Sino-Soviet Bloc is an ideological empire, and if we ignore this proposition, we shall find ourselves confronted with a never-ending series of "riddles" which cannot be solved since the key to understanding them is missing.

6. What can we, what should we do about this problem that so deeply involves US security? We are dealing with a deeply ingrained Western prejudice against ideological determinism, which we cannot overcome by fiat. We can only try, if given the opportunity, to demonstrate, clarify and seek to convince. This is obviously a task to which SRS can continue to contribute provided its standing in CIA and the intelligence community is sufficiently enhanced. SRS has maintained its intellectual continuity since it was set up, and has never given way to violent or over-compensating reactions. As a result of our understanding of Communist continuity, the essential lines of reasoning and prediction in our major publications are generally as valid today as they were at the time of their writing in 1956 and 1957.

7. In addition to influencing intelligence analysis in the Community, we could perhaps establish closer cooperation with the

25X1 [redacted] work out certain lines of approach to overcome the pragmatic antagonism against ideological factors which is so prevalent among analysts. Members of SRS have had occasion to lecture on this and related subjects and have found the audience strikingly receptive to our arguments.

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