

THE RUSSIAN MENACE

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The world today stands at the crossroads. Are we to continue steadily along the path of freedom, leading to a better life for all of us? The British Prime Minister, speaking in London on 26th January 1951, described the position in simple, straightforward terms.

I WANT TO EXPLAIN the principles on which we have carried on our foreign policy and to interpret to you the interplay of forces in the modern world.

At the end of the world war Britain took a leading part in establishing the United Nations Organisation. What was its purpose? The maintenance of peace and the extension of prosperity throughout the world.

We have striven loyally to support the principles of the United Nations. We believe in the ideals expressed in its Charter. That is the widest of the associations of nations in which we co-operate with others for peace.

Next, we are members of the British Commonwealth, a smaller but more intimate association embracing, however, peoples in every continent and of many races. In its intimate companionship and in its methods of working together it is a mirror of what we hope the world may become, a family of free and equal nations. Through it a great influence for peace can be wielded.

In this family circle we discuss great questions of common concern, and small matters too, on a basis of freedom, equality and mutual respect. We do not necessarily always agree, but we seek to understand each other's point of view. This is the necessary basis of mutual respect which should be the basis of international relations.

No one of us ever seeks to impose his individual view upon the others. We hold together and are an influence for peace precisely because our relations are based on toleration and honourable compromise.

Now we have a great position in the world, and this means that we accept the responsibilities that greatness brings with it.

We believe that, through our history and traditions, we can be of service to the world. We have much experience on which to draw.

I believe that this country has not failed during the past five years to maintain its principles and to practise them as well; and we shall not fail in the future.

The developments in the Commonwealth whereby three great countries of Asia became full and equal associates with the other members of the Commonwealth illustrate this. We have shown that we know how to meet the new conditions in the world which come from what is known as the awakening of Asia. We have there put our principles into practice.

A second illustration of a service which the people of this country have given to the world is the example of a resolute and successful effort to restore our economic position.

I yield to no one in my gratitude to the United States and Canada for the generous friend-

ship extended to us in time of need, but I think we were all glad when we were able to announce that this direct aid under the Marshall Plan had been suspended. But it is just at this time, when we have overcome a great difficulty, that we now have to face the fact that a new task lies ahead of us which will again demand great exertions and serious sacrifices from our people.

Why is this? When the war against the dictators who sought to enslave the world ended with their utter defeat we were glad to turn back to the paths of peace. The nations of the British Commonwealth and the United States gladly demobilised the immense forces which had been raised at such sacrifice, for there were no enemy forces left. But there was one Power in the great alliance that overthrew Hitler which took another course. It did not turn back to the paths of peace; it went down the roads of conquest and imperialism.

Soviet Russia kept in being a vast military machine, spread out over its neighbours' territories as well as its own. Despite the fact that Soviet Russia was a member of the United Nations Organisation, despite the fact that we and the Americans had reduced our forces, she continued to burden her people and those of her satellites with this huge weight of armaments and she still maintains it today.

The Soviet Union and its satellites occupy an immense continuous land mass, stretching right across Eastern Europe and Northern Asia. It is in a position to threaten the nations that live on the perimeter, outside the iron curtain which it has drawn round the countries it has conquered by force or fraud.

I do not think anyone can deny that our Foreign Secretary, in common with the Foreign Ministers of other Powers, worked long and earnestly to solve the many problems which a great war always leaves behind it. Had he and his colleagues met with only a fraction of the good will and sincerity they displayed, those problems could have been solved long ago. But he did not. He has always been faced with obstruction and lack of co-operation on the part of the rulers of Soviet Russia.

In the United Nations again and again every effort to solve the world's problem has been blocked by the Soviet "No". Inevitably then we have been forced to the conclusion that Soviet Russia does not want the world to solve its problem, does not want things to settle down. Its policy seems rather to be to foment trouble.

The present rulers of Russia are the inheritors of Russian imperialism. The old Russian Empire was essentially expansionist. At intervals she was checked, but when a favourable opportunity occurred the pressure began again. It was thus that she pressed across Asia. It was thus that she pushed out to the Baltic land in the north and to the Balkans in the south. Stalin has been more successful in his imperialism than the Czars ever dreamed of which seeks to impose on the whole world the system of Russian Communism.

I am not going to discourse to you tonight on the doctrines of Soviet Communism, but it is unwise to ignore these doctrines. Hitler wrote a book called "Mein Kampf". It seemed nonsense to many of us, but it proved in fact to contain the actual policy which Hitler sought to carry out. Soviet Communism also has its "Mein Kampf", duller even, but no less dangerous than Hitler's. We should be blind and foolish to ignore them.

The doctrines of Marx-Leninism seem to most of us to offer an arid, unattractive creed, about as far from true socialism as can be. They preach slavery and the negation of human happiness. The trouble is that they are the accepted creed of the rulers of Russia. They act upon the maxims of policy laid down. Their adherents believe this creed, with all its expansionist and imperialistic aims.

We may hope that they will come to think better in time, but if we want to be realist we must recognise that this is the creed held fanatically by many people. In pursuance of this creed the Russians have already absorbed into their system a number of the nations of Central Europe, partly by force and partly by fraud. These countries have been forced, not only to adopt Communism, but also to have no other will, no other mind, than that of their masters in the Kremlin. For when Yugoslavia showed signs of taking a

line of her own in the interests of her own people she was at once excommunicated and

denounced. We, on the other hand, do not believe in forcing our beliefs or our economic or political systems on others. If the Russians like their own system that is their affair. We believe in our free and democratic way of life so strongly that we are quite ready to allow all the nations of the earth the opportunity of judging for themselves whether our system or that of Soviet Russia is the best.

We are sure that we should come off best in any comparison. I fancy that the rulers of Russia think we should too. That is why they do not allow their own people to know what the rest of the world is like and do not allow the rest of the world to see what Russia is like. We do not believe in forcing other people to accept our democratic creed, but we do believe in defending it, and are proud to do so. We believe that an evil idea can best be conquered by propounding and practising a better, but in the meantime we must defend the better, or we shall surely lose it.

There is only one will inside the iron curtain—that of Mr. Stalin and his immediate associates. They are the only people allowed to have minds of their own. But outside the iron curtain Communist parties are engaged everywhere in seeking to weaken or destroy non-Communist governments, and to drag down the standards of life of all men. There is direct political action, sabotage action in the industrial field; but all activities, whatever the tactics adopted in a particular country or for a particular time, are directed to the extension of Communist influence and the destruction of all creeds that believe in freedom.

To this end the Communists ally themselves with any body of discontented people. They will support nationalist movements when it suits them, but they will ruthlessly suppress them when it doesn't. They will ally themselves with any section, Nazi, Fascist, no matter whom, if it seems likely that it may serve their turn.

The Communists, on Soviet orders, have just now an elaborately staged bogus peace campaign. With all their tremendous armaments this plea for peace rings hollow. It is designed only to exploit the natural desires of ordinary people for peace and so to undermine their loyalty to their own governments and countries.

Here there is a danger: the existence of these immense armed forces, under the control of men who reject the moral values on which our civilisation has been built up and profess an intolerant creed which they believe other peoples should be forced to accept.

You all know the efforts which are being made to raise the standard of life in the less developed areas of the world. But you know, all over the world, Communists seek to disrupt existing governments and to hinder economic progress, for they care nothing whatsoever suffering they inflict on the peoples. Economic progress is the enemy they most fear.

Recent events in new and disturbing elements. The aggression by Communist North Korea, condemned by the United Nations, has had the approval of Russia. It has been backed by another Communist power, China. From the Soviet point of view it has an obvious utility in diverting forces to the East and in weakening the forces of the Western Powers in other areas of more immediate interest to Russia.

It shows the danger that at any time, somewhere in the world, trouble might occur which might spread into war. I do not believe that a world war is inevitable, but Russian actions show clearly the danger that the democracies are in if they have insufficient forces.

There are obvious danger spots in many parts of the world. One is Germany, where Russia is doing her utmost to reduce Eastern Germany to the position of a satellite. The Russians have raised many thousands of armed men in Germany in para-military formations, although they protest so violently at any suggestion that Western Germany should not be left absolutely powerless to help defend herself. How hollow and sentimentally dishonest are Communist protests against what they call the rearming of the Nazis! Nazism has been wiped out in Western Germany, but in Eastern Germany its followers are enrolled in Soviet-dominated forces.

In face of these dangers we have been building up by the Atlantic Treaty a force for collective security, and it is partly to enable us to make our contribution to this force that we are increasing our armed strength.

What is the object of building up this force? Not for an offensive. No one suggests that the forces that are being collected will be strong enough for an attack on Russia. They are not being built up for a war, but to prevent war. They are intended to act as a deterrent against a would-be aggressor.

We have to weigh well our actions here. To devote too much of our resources to defence would wreck our national economy and would be playing the Russian game. To devote so little that the forces would be insufficient to deter aggression would be futile. We, and our allies in the North Atlantic Organisation, have to make a wise decision in this, carefully weighing one thing with another.

I believe that another world war would produce such ruin that civilisation would be set back for generations. I believe that if we wish the international situation to improve the democracies must demonstrate beyond any possibility of doubt that they have the will and the means to resist an attack on their way of life. We must have adequate strength so that if there is danger in some part of the world it will be known that we have forces available to meet it.

There is nothing provocative in this any more than it is provocative to have a policeman on the beat.

I hope I have demonstrated to you that there is a danger which must be met. I am sure you will agree that the Government is earnestly seeking the way of peace.

We have shown this in the efforts which we have made to bring to an end the war in Korea and to get a settlement in the Far East. At this very time we are in negotiation to try to get a meeting between the United States, France, ourselves and Russia to deal with outstanding questions. We shall not spare efforts to bring this about.

Nothing would please us more than if we could settle these outstanding problems and if we could get agreement that Russia should cease from stirring up strife and should devote herself to the urgent task of raising the standard of life of her own people, as we have devoted ourselves.

But if we wish to bring these negotiations to a successful conclusion we must have regard to the mentality of those with whom we have to deal. Experience shows that unless we start from a reasonable basis of strength there is not much chance of getting agreement.

I know that all of you believe in freedom and democracy. The British people have shown in two wars that even when they stand alone and the odds seem heavy against them they will fight to the last for what they believe. I know too that you all wish for peace. I am sure that is the desire of the vast majority of peoples everywhere.

We have, to the best of our ability, weighed up all the factors in the situation that faces us today. We have decided that it is our duty to increase our armaments; indeed we could come to no other decision. We have most carefully considered the implications for the life of the nation, and for the individual human beings who compose it, of the programme we shall put before the country.

That programme will not be an easy one to carry out. I must tell you now that it will not only demand sacrifice and effort from the country as a whole, but from individual people in all our varied walks of life. So far as we are able we shall distribute that burden with equity and fairness. I have no fear whatever about the response that we shall get.

Our way of life is in danger, and it is both our privilege and our duty to be ready to defend them if they are attacked. War would bring our standards crashing down; defeat would destroy and obliterate them for ever. Make no mistake about that.

A gentle Swiss philosopher, who loved his fellow-men, summed it all up a good many years ago. He said then:

“What terrible masters these Russians would be if they should ever spread their rule over the countries of the south. They would bring us a Polar despotism—tyranny such as the world has never known, silent as darkness, rigid as ice, insensible as bronze; decked with an outer amiability and glittering with the cold brilliancy of snow; slavery, without compensation or relief; that is what they would bring us.”

That is what he said. The least one of us, the most unfortunate and poor, has something better than that to defend.