

Convert the Communists

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IN THIS new year we face what may be the gravest crisis in our history. The very survival of the United States as a free nation, the survival of civilization, may be at stake.

Our predicament is, at least in part, the result of our own slack policies. We allowed our atomic and nuclear secrets to be quickly and easily stolen. We neglected for six irretrievable years the development of long-range ballistic missiles. So we have helped to bring about the alarming rise in neutralism and appeasement sentiment among other NATO members—which has led them, in turn, to put pressure on us not to strengthen the alliance, but to seek negotiations with the Kremlin.

Yet probably the worst thing that could happen to the West would be to *get* a disarmament agreement with Russia. Any sense of security it gave would be illusory. It would bind us, but it would not bind the leaders of the Kremlin. They have shown that they will stop at no crime and at no treachery. They are the same leaders who, a week after announcing that they had ordered withdrawal of their forces from Budapest, returned with armored divisions and bombers to machine-gun and massacre men and women in the streets.

THE NEW MACHIAVELLI

The Soviet leaders have not discovered any brilliant new form of diplomacy. The methods they have followed were described more than four centuries ago by Machiavelli:

"It is much safer to be feared than loved, if one of the two has to be wanting. Men in general are ungrateful dissemblers, anxious to avoid danger, and covetous of gain. As long as you benefit them, they are entirely yours, when the necessity is remote; but when it approaches, they revolt. The friendship that is gained by purchase is bought but not secured. Men have less scruple in offending one who makes himself loved than one who makes himself feared; for love is held by a chain of obligation which, men being selfish, is broken whenever it serves their purpose; but fear is maintained by a dread of punishment which never fails. . . . Men are so simple and so ready to obey present

necessities, that one who deceives will always find those who allow themselves to be deceived."

Our own proper course lies neither in appeasement nor in extending still more foreign aid to undependable allies. Does our sole reliance, then, lie in keeping ahead of Russia in a desperate and endless armament race? We need not come to so grim a conclusion. There is real hope in an additional course. We can try to convert the Communist countries to capitalism and private enterprise.

TEACH CAPITALISM

Such a proposal is likely to be greeted by our pseudoliberals with howls of derision. Yet the tactic has been used successfully enough against us. The Russian Communists, by lies and confusions, are constantly making new converts to Communism. The leaders in one country after another turn to government planning, to socialism, to Communism, because they have been led to think this is the way to economic salvation.

What we must do, if conversion to capitalism is to succeed, is to answer the Communists with truth and clarity on every intellectual level. We must point out that government ownership and operation are grossly inefficient; that socialism does not create wealth but impoverishment; that dialectic materialism is nonsense; that the whole class-struggle argument is false; that workers and managers, employees and employers, are essentially cooperators in production; that the whole system of private capitalism is a marvelous system of social cooperation.

These things can only be taught by those who understand them. Western politicians and official propagandists are certainly not the ideal group to teach them. Most of them lack economic understanding and believe in the welfare state. But the stakes, for survival and civilization, are too enormous to abandon the effort in despair. And the outlook is far from hopeless. The conversion of a Djilas in Yugoslavia, the magnificent revolt in Hungary of a whole population subjected to years of indoctrination and terror, show what might happen, even within Russia or China, with a little intellectual guidance from the West.