

CHAPTER 3

TOTALITARIANISM AND ANTI-COMMUNISM

AS MUCH AS I enjoyed being at Harvard, teaching and doing research as well as administrative chores, my appointment there was not on a tenure track. In other words, I would sooner or later have to leave. I was therefore happy to be invited by the University of Washington to come for a year to substitute for one of their professors who would be on a year's leave of absence. Bill Ballis was going to spend that year in Munich with a research and propaganda institute he had helped set up some years earlier, with CIA financing.

I had met Ballis five or six years earlier. At that time I had felt some dissatisfaction with graduate studies and had inquired at the State Department whether they might have use for someone with my qualifications. I was invited to come to Washington for an interview with Dr. Ballis, who at that time was Chief of the Soviet Union branch of the Office of Research and Intelligence. We had a nice and lengthy chat, and then he told me that indeed he could use me, but that I might be well advised to get my Ph.D. degree first. That was good and friendly advice. He then suggested we pay a visit to his colleagues in the Central European Research and Intelligence office.

That is how I first met its chief, Herbert Marcuse, and his deputy, Otto Kirchheimer. In the 1960's and 1970's, Marcuse became the favorite guru of the New Left, the student counterculture. When I would tell my radical students how and where I had met their hero, they would be amazed and bewildered—even more so when I would add that Marcuse had transferred to the State Department from OSS, the precursor of the CIA.

To get to Seattle, we bought a Jeep station wagon and started on a long camping trip. Stefan was four years old. Vera was three. It would be the first of several trips from coast to coast that they were to take with us. The one I remember most vividly took place in the fall of 1955. I had just accepted a job in New York and had agreed to report for work on a certain day in early September. On the way, I hoped to attend the annual meeting of the American Political Science Association, which in that year was held in Boulder, Colorado. We had spent the summer on the Olympic peninsula, about 150 miles west of Seattle. Now, as we approached Seattle, Eva suggested we stop at her physician's office for a shot of penicillin, since she thought she was developing a throat infection. We did this, but by the time we were in Eastern Oregon, she had a fully developed strep throat. By the time we arrived in Boulder, Vera was sick also. I left them to sleep it off in our motel room, while I attended the Political Science convention, and then

we moved on. We stopped in Bloomington, Indiana, where her Uncle Willi taught musicology, and by that time, Stefan was sick, too. After a night in Bloomington, I drove on, with three feverish patients in the car, and I did not stop until we arrived in Bridgeport, Connecticut. A terrible trip!

In Seattle, we rented a unit in a junior faculty housing project with barracks-like structures that had probably housed military personnel during the war. The project was a lively and very cooperative community of young professors from many fields. Our next-door neighbor was studying in the fisheries department. Across from us lived the biologist Ed Fischer, who recently won a Nobel Prize for his work on enzymes. Our best friends were in mathematics and physics, in English and sociology. Many of us belonged to a baby-sitting pool, which made going out for an evening easy, for there always was some colleague who was available to sit with the kids.

Seattle was beautiful. On clear days—and there *were* some occasionally—we had dramatic views of snow-capped craggy mountains from the city's many hills. The climate was mild, and the roses seemed to be in bloom for thirteen months a year. Lakes and an oceanfront surrounded the city and cut it into different areas. Fish, wild berries and wild mushrooms abounded for those who know where to look for them. In no more than an hour's drive, we could reach the nearest pass in the Cascade Mountains, and skiing was possible the entire year.

On weekends, we would explore the beauties of this area. In order to spend the entire summer of 1954 there, I followed the suggestion of friends who had several times worked as fire lookouts in the wilderness of the Pacific Northwest. I applied to the U.S. Forest Service for a summer job and was hired as a fire lookout.

We spent that summer in a little ranger hut on the Northeast slope of Mount Hood. Before moving into the hut, I received a few days' training, and then, in early July, was sent up the mountain to begin my job. The road was still so muddy from spring thaw, however, and at about 4,000 feet elevation there still was so much snow, that our jeep did not make it all the way up. A few days later we succeeded.

During the summer, I issued camp fire permits, dug garbage pits, constructed an outhouse, patrolled lonely trails in the National Forest, and occasionally walked cross-country to chase suspicious smoke that had been spotted by the lookout above us. It was always a campfire, which some irresponsible campers had abandoned.

In the lake behind our ranger hut, Eva taught the kids how to swim. Across the lake, I gave occasional talks about forest fire prevention to the kids in a Campfire Girls camp. When I raised the flag in the morning and took it down at dusk, Stefan and Vera assisted me. Sometimes, deer would come to eat out of our hands. In a tree close by the hut, we saw a hummingbird nest, with tiny eggs in it that soon hatched tiny little birds. In

my off-duty hours, by the light of a kerosene lamp, I re-wrote my doctoral dissertation so it could be published.

As a visiting professor of Political Science at the University of Washington, I taught various courses on Soviet politics and Marxist ideology. I had little interaction with my departmental colleagues. Most of them did not seem interesting or stimulating to me. In contrast, the scholars in the Center for Far Eastern and Russian studies were a group of very bright, learned, and cosmopolitan people, from whom one could learn a lot.

Some of them also were personally charming, and the social life of this group was lively, informal, and attractive. The parties in their homes were one of the pleasures of our stay at the University of Washington. Unfortunately, most of them were so bitterly anti-Communist that this sentiment tended to smother their general liberal tendencies. My aversion to anti-Communism prevented me from fitting in as much as I would have liked. That became apparent at the end of the year: The political science professor whom I was replacing was about to return, but a professor of Russian history was going to be away for a year. I applied for that temporary vacancy, but was turned down, since the historian preferred to hire one of his own graduate students. At the last minute, the graduate student decided not to take the offer, and, willy-nilly, they hired me. Yet one year later, the political science professor moved to another university, and again I applied for the vacant position. I was considered seriously for it, but, in the end, the answer was no. I was later told that the historian whom I had replaced vetoed my appointment for political reasons.

Anti-communism made many people behave strangely. While I was teaching at the University of Washington, the Physics Department hired Robert Oppenheimer to visit the campus for two weeks as distinguished visiting lecturer of some kind. Oppenheimer had been the scientific director of the United States program to develop the atom bomb. Since then, he had been denied security clearance because of his alleged involvement with people on the Left. Because of this, the President of the University vetoed the appointment. For weeks after that, he did not dare show his face in the faculty club, where he would have been booed.

I would have liked to stay in Seattle permanently. We liked the city and its spectacular environs. We had made friends with splendid people there. When my teaching duties at the University of Washington had come to an end in the spring of 1955, we spent the entire summer at a hot springs resort on the northern edge of the Olympic National Park, one of the most beautiful spots in the United States. Eva worked in the resort as a lifeguard and swimming instructor, a job for which she had prepared herself during the previous months through a water safety instructor course taught in the ice-cold waters of Lake Washington in Seattle.

At the resort, our children roamed freely and found playmates among the children of some of the guests. I had taken plenty of reading along, mostly books about United States history and politics. A Park Ranger had his station near the resort, and once during that summer he and I took a three- or four- day hike to Bogachiel Peak on the northern slope of Mt. Olympus, trudging through lots of melting snow. Two mules carried our sleeping bags, cooking equipment and other gear, including the ranger's fishing rods, with which he caught plenty of trout for our suppers. Eva and I had time to explore other sections of Olympic National Park, including the fantastic northern rain forest on its western edge and a village of Native American salmon fishers, where we observed a large school of whales swimming by.

Among themselves, specialists in the study of the former USSR and its allies called themselves Sovietologists. This designation continued in use even after the Soviet Union ceased to exist. Sovietologist of the post-Soviet era became engaged in a somewhat abrasive post-mortem. Those who predicted that all communist systems would come to a bad end, and who now could say "We told you so," criticized those who made no such predictions for having failed to recognize the fundamental flaws, weaknesses, brittleness, and indeed evil of the Soviet system. Why, the critics often asked, did these people reject the image of the Soviet Union as a totalitarian system? Indeed, the debate among Sovietologists has for a long time been over the meaningfulness and adequacy of the totalitarian model.

Hitler and Mussolini first proudly used the term 'totalitarianism' to describe their governments, just as with equal pride they boasted that they were waging 'total' war. American scholarship after World War II adapted the term to distinguish communist and fascist regimes from democratic ones. One of the two courses I taught at Harvard in 1952 or 1953 was a survey of totalitarian ideologies and governments. I taught it together with Hans Rogger, then a graduate student, who became a highly respected specialist in Russian and German history.

In the 1950's, a number of attempts were made to define the term and thus establish a theoretical model of totalitarian systems. At the risk of oversimplification, let me summarize what most of these models looked like. Totalitarian systems were thought to be institutionalization of utopian ideologies—attempts to change the world on the basis of some mad image of the future, an image so unrealistic that desperate, cruel, inhuman efforts were required. These ideologies were qualitatively different from ideologies reigning in non-totalitarian countries. Brzezinski and Huntington, therefore, in a book comparing the Soviet Union to the United States, referred to the prevalent political ideas in America as a "belief system," not an ideology.

In order to change the world, the political system, and indeed human nature itself, totalitarian governments, according to the model, applied force and coercion in arbitrary fashion, in disregard of all laws and constitutions.

They employed a political police and a wide network of informers and thus terrorized their populations. They punished people, not for having committed any crimes, but for having the potential to commit some crime in the future. Some scholars referred to this as prophylactic justice, and the uncommitted crimes punished most harshly as political ones as tantamount to heresy. More generally, in pursuit of all its aims, the totalitarian regime did not hesitate to impose the harshest possible conditions, including starvation rations and slave labor, on millions of its citizens.

From early on, advocates of the totalitarian model suggested that totalitarian regimes should be considered outlaw regimes, with which humane states could not deal, either in rational fashion or through normal diplomatic channels. In the 1930's, European conservatives had been criticized for 'appeasing' fascist and national-socialist regimes. Now those who advocated normal relations with the Soviet Union or China were told that would be a similar appeasement of a ruthless and cunning foe.

George Kennan, in his famous "Mr. X." article, argued that aggressiveness was built into the Soviet system, so that one could not negotiate with it, but could only contain it. Once it was contained within its present borders, it would collapse. Similarly, Nathan Leites, in a highly influential book, declared the collective personality of the Soviet communist leadership to be paranoid, and he suggested that one could not relate rationally with so deluded a group. One could deal with them only by force.

Those who elaborated the theory of totalitarianism argued that it was a novel phenomenon, which had originated only in modern times. They forgot or overlooked that the entire syndrome has occurred many times in past ages. The Holy Inquisition in Spain committed all the crimes attributable to communist and fascist regimes. The Hussite revolution, the Jesuit regime in Paraguay, the Anabaptist regime in Munster, the Puritan dictatorship in Massachusetts, the bloody rule of the Duke of Alba in the Netherlands controlled and abused their subjects with no less cruelty, murderous intent, thought control, and police surveillance than modern totalitarian systems. The Roman Empire under Constantine and many later emperors, as described by Gibbon, was a totalitarian system.

Moreover, the totalitarian model deliberately exempted the criminal regimes that the United States happened to support from inclusion in this model. The thieves and murderers whom we helped into power and kept in power for decades were given the label 'authoritarian' rather than 'totalitarian' by ideologists of the cold war—again in the attempt to make German National-Socialism and Soviet communism look uniquely heinous.

While the totalitarian model correctly characterized many features of Soviet politics, it failed to include many others and therefore was fundamentally flawed. The model paid little or no attention to continual debate and dissent within the top leadership of all communist parties, just as

in the 1930's and 1940's it had been unaware of the deep cleavages within the Nazi leadership and of the remarkable disorder within Hitler's government. The model failed to take note of the many manifestations of silent resistance, deviation, disobedience, and citizens' initiative. It tended to deny the existence of any kind of social structure underneath the harsh dictatorship or the gradual formation of interest groups and pluralism.

After Stalin's death, the totalitarian model took no account of changes in ruling patterns that suggested the first beginnings of some sort of constitutionalism in the USSR. Harold Berman's observation that in some respects the Soviet Union was becoming a government according to law (he used the German term, *Rechtssicherheit*) made little impact. Few, if any, of the advocates of the totalitarian model were interested in the many benefits that Soviet rule had brought to the population. These included rapid upward social mobility for millions, free medical services (however inadequate), free education, social security, subsidized housing (however primitive), slowly rising living standards, and successes in war and in foreign policy of which the citizens could be proud.

The totalitarian model also tended to make numerous false assertions, positing a system that could not change, and in which the visible changes that did occur were a source of embarrassment. According to this model, the system would be able to accommodate the pressure for upward social mobility only by recurrent bloody purges. The bloody purges of political rivals were abolished under Khrushchev, however, and never reintroduced. The model attributed a compulsive aggressiveness to the Soviet Union, whereas in reality its leadership tended to conduct a defensive foreign policy, rather than an aggressive or expansionist one.

Perhaps the most serious error in the totalitarian model was its underlying theory of ideological determinism: the notion that all the actions of the Kremlin were dictated by plans for ultimate world domination formulated by Marx, Engels, and Lenin. The fact was that the Bolsheviks had come to power under the illusion that they were the cutting edge of an incipient world revolution that would bring communism to power throughout the civilized world. They quickly abandoned that illusion, however, and with it, the notion that in an isolated Soviet Russia the ideals vaguely formulated by Engels and Marx could be put into practice. Their aims became much more modest and, in a sense, realistic, and the ideology of the revolution slowly but surely turned into a highly conservative doctrine that sought to justify the rule of the Party and the postponement of all utopian goals into the infinite future. From a revolutionary utopia, Soviet political doctrine turned into a conservative ideology. Instead of prescribing action to the Kremlin leadership, it served only to justify whatever they were doing. The advocates of the totalitarian model seemed unwilling to note this change and its implications for assessing the nature of the system.

In my own writings on the Soviet Union and other governments run by people who called themselves communists I stressed some of these points. I argued that these people had long ago abandoned any shred of a commitment to Marxism and Leninism in favor of unprincipled pragmatism; hence a study of their ideological pronouncements was no more than a study of public relations utterances. Instead of representing a conspiracy to achieve a world revolution, the Soviet Union was intensely preoccupied with its own problems: attaining economic growth, controlling a potentially unruly population, and securing the country from a world of hostile powers.

Nor could the sum-total of communist states be considered, as such, a conspiracy, because the antagonisms between these states and the cleavages within the ruling parties were too obvious. Instead of regarding the Kremlin rulers as a criminal gang of sadists or madmen, I made the outrageous assumption that they were human beings who, having risen to the top in a governmental apparatus coping with overwhelmingly difficult problems, wished to solve these problems to the best of their ability. Granting them this much, I was, of course, aware that political leaders everywhere are easily corrupted by the power that is given them and that, indeed, anyone who pursues high office anywhere is likely to harbor tendencies toward arrogance, paranoia, and cruelty.

In my writings I pointed out that there had been a succession of Soviet political systems, each devoting its energies to the solution of whatever problems seemed most urgent to the party leadership. In the first years of the revolution, the regime fought for sheer survival. In the next phase, it placed priority on the restoration of the economy and the healing of the wounds struck by the civil war. Both efforts were crowned with success: the regime survived, and then it managed to restore the economy more or less to its pre-war levels.

Each time, success also brought with it new problems, however, because nothing fails like success. Having won the civil war, the regime had alienated its population, and having restored the economy, it became aware that this was altogether insufficient as a basis from which to modernize Soviet Russia. This realization led to a fierce debate about policy alternatives within the communist party. The debate was also a struggle among different personalities over assuming leadership in the party. In the course of these discussions and personal conflicts, Joseph Stalin rose to power and then ruled the country for about twenty-five years.

That Stalin was a thug and a mass murderer, sneaky and vindictive beyond belief—a thoroughly despicable tyrant—there was no doubt. That political historians should equate him with Hitler, however, was much less clear. Hitler's aim really was to conquer the world, to enslave all non-Germans, and to exterminate like vermin all those whom he classified as sub-

human: Jews and Gypsies, homosexuals, mental patients and people with genetic birth defects. These were the aims of a madman or a criminal.

Stalin's aims, compared to Hitler's, were much more 'rational'. He wanted to promote the modernization of the Soviet Union. He wished to mobilize his country for a heroic effort to overcome its economic, scientific, education, and cultural backwardness. Like millions of other Russians for the last several centuries, he felt this backwardness to threaten the very existence of the country. At the same time, he obviously was aware of the tremendous obstacles in the way of modernizing it. These included centuries of Czarist misgovernment, a wall of hostility from European powers and the United States, and a nation of peasants deeply committed to a way of life that left them unsuited for industrial work and urban living.

Stalinism was entrepreneurship on a giant scale, and Stalin himself could be compared to some of the legendary captains of industry of Western countries—Krupp or Carnegie, Rockefeller and Ford. All these men built huge industrial enterprises, with ruthlessness, determination, and cunning, and ran these mammoth organizations with an iron hand, unwilling to let go, until some of them became a menace to their own organization. The difference between the Soviet dictator and these many Stalins of Western industry was that they operated within the framework of countries that restricted at least some of their ruthlessness, whereas Stalin, having the entire vast country as his corporation, was subject to no such restraints. Moreover, the style of government under his leadership bore a strong resemblance to the tyranny practiced by Czarist regimes for about three hundred years, which made liberal-minded people in Europe and North America regard Russia as an evil empire long before the revolution of 1917.

In order to convert the USSR into a modern industrial country, Stalin and his lieutenants imposed strictest austerity on Soviet consumers. They reintroduced feudal bondage for the peasantry and virtually enslaved the working class. The performance goals they set for all their subjects were arbitrary and unrealistic, but failure to achieve them was treated as deliberate sabotage, a capital crime. I always described Stalinism as a 'crash program' of modernization: it was haphazardly conceived and implemented in chaotic fashion. Millions of lives were destroyed in the process, millions of people imprisoned, spied upon and terrorized. Stalin's method of modernizing the country was barbaric—which does not mean that it was necessarily self-defeating. Most countries that are considered modern and civilized have gone through barbaric periods. Still, for decades, a debate raged both in communist parties and among Western economists and historians whether, given Russian conditions and the difficulties caused by hostile Western countries, methods that were more benign might have been available to the Soviet leadership.

In 1960, I was invited by the Romanian government to participate in an academic celebration on the 100th anniversary of the University of Iasi. Romania at that time was virtually inaccessible to Americans, and some people in Washington, eager to see an American scholar visit the country, encouraged me to go and paid for my travel.

After the festivities in Iasi, our Romanian hosts took their foreign guests on a tour to some beautiful or interesting places, among them the spectacular Bicaz gorge and the deeply cleft valley of the Bistrica River, where a giant hydroelectric dam was being constructed. One of the foreign guests, the then Rector of the University of Vienna, knew a good deal about construction engineering. He explained to me that dams could be built in two ways. The sophisticated way was to gather all the necessary data to compute the precise curvature the dam should have so that it would withstand all the predictable water pressure, but with a minimum of construction material used. The crude method was to forget about complicated calculations and to just sink a massive, solid hunk of reinforced concrete into the valley. That was wasteful of material, but was quicker, simpler, and risk-free. The colleague from Vienna pointed out to me that the dam project we were being shown was being constructed in a crude and primitive fashion, probably by prison labor.

This could well be seen as a symbol of Stalinism: a crude, wasteful, primitive method of harnessing human energy and material resources for industrial growth. The method may also have been shortsighted. A crudely constructed hunk of concrete would withstand harsh conditions less well than a dam built by state-of-the-art methods. It would therefore degenerate more quickly. When a few years ago we passed through the locks of a power dam built across the Danube River in a joint Romanian-Yugoslav project, we saw many leaks in the concrete walls of the locks.

The fact was that Stalinism was both a spectacular success and a dismal failure. It succeeded in converting Soviet Russia into a major industrial and military power—a power that was able to defeat Hitler's armies, acquire a ring of dependent client states along its vulnerable Western borders, and, after the war, develop an impressive arsenal of modern weaponry. It did this, while also, very slowly, raising the general living standard of the population, providing rapid upward social mobility for millions of citizens and a wide array of social services for all.

Yet, ultimately, Stalinism failed, and the failure was built into the methods that allowed it to succeed. The crudeness of the crash program led to serious imbalance in the allocation, use, and production of resources. The arbitrariness of decision-making and the primitive enforcement methods seriously stifled initiative and inhibited innovation. At the same time, the habit of setting impossible performance targets promoted system-wide evasion of rules, cheating, hoarding, black-market practices, and other

behavior that frustrated the planners and administrators. A swollen bureaucracy and police apparatus created inefficiencies of their own.

In retrospect, the Stalinist system was thus a success in building a vast industrial empire in a formerly backward, agrarian country. The method of creating that empire, however, while obviously effective in what initially it sought to accomplish, became an obstacle to further development, once the groundwork for industrialization had been laid. The talents and character traits useful for building an industrial empire were different from those needed to administer it, once it had been constructed. American industry offered many examples of great captains of industry who, once they had built their corporate enterprises with ruthlessness, cunning, and strict central control, were unable to loosen their reins and became a menace to their own corporations. Henry Ford was a good example of such a Stalinesque figure. The heirs of Stalin also were unable, unwilling, and insufficiently enlightened to relinquish party control over the economy and the society. Their control apparatus became top-heavy and ultimately collapsed.

Of course, the hostility of the Western world contributed to this. World War II had bled the Soviet Union dry, and, at the time of victory, the country was devastated and exhausted. The job of industrializing it had to be started all over again, and the former allies were not going to help. Lend-lease was stopped abruptly once the fighting ended, and Marshall Plan aid was offered in the hope that the Soviet Union would reject it. The task of reconstruction and further industrialization was severely handicapped by the arms race that Western hostility imposed on the Soviet Union. In the final analysis, the ring of American bases all around the USSR, the thousands of missiles, bombers, nuclear warheads, and ultimately Ronald Reagan's Hollywood 'Star Wars' fantasy, may have forced the Soviet Union to divert too many of its human and material resources into military preparedness and political vigilance. That broke the back of their economy.

In the 1960's, I wrote a book on the Soviet political system in which I elaborated on this image of the Stalinist project. I argued that we might understand the Soviet Union best if we regarded it as one giant nationwide corporate enterprise—a General Motors writ large. I compared the Soviet bureaucratic apparatus with overgrown bureaucracies in other countries, pointed at the slow emergence of interest groups and the embryonic development of constitutional processes, and suggested that the Communist Youth Organization had many things in common with Greek Letter fraternities and sororities in the United States. I believed that my overall image made a good deal of sense. But in the United States, hardly any attention was paid to the book (it received more careful attention among German specialists in Soviet studies). My deliberate effort to compare features of the Soviet system with analogous features in Western societies did

not fit in the myths then prevalent in the West—the myths of anti-communism.

This book was written as an afterthought. For years I had taught courses on the subject, and then an opportunity came to write an entire book based on my lecture notes plus some supplementary reading in Soviet newspapers and journals. During a one-month trip to the Soviet Union in 1958, I had met a number of Soviet academicians. All of them naturally regarded themselves as ‘Marxists.’ They included a small number who were beginning to call themselves sociologists. That was a new discipline in the Soviet Union because the Party line considered sociology to be a false bourgeois ideology. When, in the early 1960’s, an exchange program was instituted between the Soviet Academy of Sciences and the American Council of Learned Societies, I applied for inclusion in such an exchange. I suggested that I be allowed to spend a semester or two at the newly created Institute of Sociology in Moscow to learn what Soviet sociologists were doing. My application was successful. Both the American Council of Learned Societies and the Moscow institute of Sociology approved me for this exchange. I obtained a leave of absence from my university and, in the fall of 1963 spent some time in Europe visiting friends before picking up my Soviet visitor’s visa. To my surprise, however, I was informed in the early fall of that year that my Soviet host institution had changed its mind about me, and I would not be allowed in. “Meyer,” the President of the Soviet Academy of Sciences had written, “is not a scholar but only a professional anti-Communist.”

In order to make use of my year of leave, I decided to study communist sociology in Poland, instead. A leading Party ideologist, Adam Schaff, offered to intercede on my behalf, but even he, though a member of the Party Central Committee, failed to get me admitted to Poland. With the greatest reluctance I returned home and read as much as I could to gather more material for my book on Soviet politics.

I also decided to do some exploring of Cuba, whose President had only recently declared himself a communist. Like all U.S. citizens who had a passport, I had a notice stamped in that document forbidding me to travel to Cuba. I therefore wrote to the State Department asking them to waive that restriction for me. The State Department did not answer my request, and then I asked the then Vice President Hubert H. Humphrey to intervene on my behalf. I had once testified on certain aspects of Soviet foreign policy before one of his Senate subcommittees. Humphrey intervened, and I received a very apologetic letter from the Passport Office lifting the travel restriction. Then the Cubans turned down my request for a tourist visa. Word must have got around among communist officials that I should not be welcomed. While American anti-Communists thought me too lenient in my

judgment of socialist countries, officials in those countries considered me an enemy. I had offended the orthodoxies of both these ideologies.

I got it in the neck from both sides more than once. For instance, in 1970 I was invited to participate in an international conference that UNESCO had organized to commemorate Lenin's 100th birthday. The conference was to meet in the historic city hall in Tampere (Finland), where Lenin and Stalin had met for the first time. I gladly accepted the invitation and found that I was the only Westerner participating in it; all the other participants were colleagues from the USSR and Eastern Europe. They all presented papers with titles like "Lenin, the greatest philosopher of all times," "Lenin, the greatest pedagogue of all times," "Lenin, the greatest historian of all times," and similar nonsense. After a few days of this my patience snapped; I asked for the floor and gave a reply in which I told the Comrades that Lenin had been a modest man who hated saints and icons and stubbornly resisted attempts to make him into a saint. If he were here today, I told my communist colleagues, he would leave the room and slam the door as he had done in April 1920 when the members of the Party Central Committee organized a surprise birthday party for him. I reminded my colleagues living behind the Iron Curtain of the fury with which Lenin had reacted to this party, and I told them that he was not at all a philosopher, historian or pedagogue; he was a very skillful and successful political leader, nothing else.

After I had delivered my reply, a number of younger colleagues from the USSR and some East European countries thanked me for saying what they wished they had had the courage to say. Other participants, including the Editor of *Pravda*, no longer talked to me. A garbled account of what I had said was reported in the Finnish press and made its way into the pages of *Le Monde*. On the basis of this garbled account the editor of the CIA-financed cold-war journal *Encounter*, Leopold Labedz, blasted me for attending a Lenin conference in the first place, and for allegedly 'praising' Lenin as an astute political leader.

Ideologists typically see exactly what the high priests of their faith tell them to see. If they are crusaders against some satanic force as defined by the high priests, they will see Satan wherever they look. They are subject to the not-so-well-known proverb, "Believing is seeing." In my books dealing with Marx and Lenin, I never hesitated to criticize some of the basic attitudes. I always tried to understand exactly what they wanted to convey, however, to let them speak for themselves; I gave them the benefit of doubt if their intent or meaning were not obvious. That method of approaching them was not greatly appreciated by true believers on both sides. These two books, one on Marx, the other on Lenin, appeared in translations—the former in Spanish and Korean, the latter in French and Italian.

The Spanish and Korean translations of my book, *Marxism*, were commissioned by the U.S. Information Agency. Why, one might wonder. Undoubtedly because some cold warrior in this propaganda ministry, having read the book, decided that it was an anti-Marxist tract suitable to wean Latin American or Korean students away from their infatuation with Marxism. Why was the Korean translation unavailable in South Korean bookstores, however? Presumably, because the South Korean dictatorship so feared and loathed Marxism that it did not wish to even hear it mentioned in public, so that even a book presumably critical of it had to be suppressed. Why, too, was the Spanish translation of the same book offered for sale in *Fidelista* (left-wing) bookstores throughout Latin America in the early 1960s? Because Latin American rebels and revolutionaries, having read the book, believed it confirmed their own ideology. Which one was correct—the cold warriors in the USIA, the Korean censors, or the South American revolutionaries?

Anti-communism was a collective madness that gripped the United States, its political leaders, its media of mass communications, and its public, for many decades, with disastrous effects. Those who subscribed to the ideology of anti-communism accepted the totalitarian model dogmatically, often against all evidence, and denounced those who challenged it for being ‘soft on communism’ or ‘soft on the Soviet Union.’

Anti-Communists took communist public relations seriously. I was told that John Foster Dulles kept two books on his night table—the Bible and Stalin’s collected works. If that was true, it showed the extent to which this Secretary of State allowed himself to be taken in by Soviet propaganda, for everything Stalin wrote and had published was pure public relations without much relevance concerning actual policies he wished to pursue. Anti-Communists, in fact, were selective in what they did and what they did not believe of Soviet ideological statements. They accepted only the militant pronouncements and paid no attention to arguments that indicated willingness to compromise or to retreat from utopian goals. Nor did they take note of the recurrent conflicts within the Kremlin or between different communist parties and communist states.

When anti-Communists were confronted with evidence of such conflicts or of communist leaders’ intentions to effect reforms rather than violent revolution, they dismissed them as sneaky efforts to deceive us. Anti-communism was a form of paranoia, which assumed that the enemy was everywhere and that he was implacable. Given such a preconceived notion, anything that communist leaders said confirmed their evil intentions: if they offered to negotiate, that was automatically assumed to be a trap and a confirmation of their hostility. If they made hostile statements, that, too, confirmed the anti-Communist’s assumptions.

In 1960, Milton Rokeach published his study of dogmatism, *The Open and Closed Mind*. The book was based on psychological survey work that had

been inspired by his dissatisfaction with another famous book, *The Authoritarian Personality*. In that work, the authors had developed a survey instrument to discover various attitudes and beliefs that constituted an authoritarian mindset. They had called this instrument the F scale. The 'F' stood for fascism.

Rokeach set out to develop some alternative survey methods that would reveal the authoritarian tendencies not only among people on the far Right, but also of people on the Far Left. His dogmatism scale sought to do that, and Rokeach decided to apply this instrument of measurement to an opinion survey of some communists. Professor Rokeach therefore composed a questionnaire that he could ask some communists to fill out for purposes of this survey.

Of course, in the late 1950's, when the hysteria of McCarthyism had just swept over the country, he could not find communists or people calling themselves communists in the United States. He did, however, find some in Great Britain. Imagine Professor Rokeach's surprise when he discovered that the British communists he surveyed scored lowest of all groups on some aspects of the dogmatism scale. For instance, more than any other group surveyed, they were ready to state that the USA and the USSR had things in common. They said that they would choose happiness over greatness, that they could tolerate disagreement with their views and dissent within their own ranks, and that one should not tolerate present injustices to achieve the future happiness of humanity.

These findings did not fit in with his preconceived image of all communists as inflexible, dogmatic, and full of anxiety. Had Rokeach been a dyed-in-the-wool anti-Communist, he might have explained this surprising finding by arguing that communists are so sneaky that they will lie even on psychological survey questionnaires. By dismissing their open-minded statements as unbelievable, he would thus have confirmed his own prejudices. He did not, however, use this kind of argument. Instead, he expressed his puzzlement and offered tentative explanations of these surprising findings. The notion that a communist might be genuinely open-minded was one that Rokeach was unwilling to accept, however.

Anti-Communists also demonstrated traits that Rokeach identified as symptoms of closed-minded dogmatism. They saw the entire world as divided into friends and enemies—those with us, and all the others against us. Into the camp of the enemy, they placed the Soviet Union and its client states in Eastern Europe, as well as China, North Korea, and North Vietnam, and all governments, leaders, and political movements that tried to remain uninvolved in the cold war. Neutralism was denounced as the cutting edge of communism. Movements of national liberation in former colonies and movements of reform in grossly repressive regimes—whether in Iraq or Iran,

in Guatemala or the Dominican Republic—were all regarded as puppets of Moscow and as secretly led by the worldwide communist conspiracy.

Anti-Communists totally misread the anti-colonial trend that gripped the Third World after World War II and regarded all national liberation movements as communist conspiracies inspired and led by Moscow. Similarly, and against a great deal of evidence, communist parties everywhere were seen as acting in blind obedience to Soviet commands. The bitter conflicts among communist states were dismissed as attempts to throw sands into the eyes of gullible Americans.

Anti-communism was supported by chronic over-estimation of Soviet strength and Soviet capabilities. Some of these over-estimations, we know today, were deliberately and fraudulently concocted in order to persuade the Congress to appropriate more funds to close some alleged missile gap or bomber gap. More generally, the anti-Communist hysteria overlooked that the Soviet Union never was a real threat to the United States; it was too weak, far too preoccupied with its own economic and political problems, and much too conservative and isolationist to support foreign communist parties. As for the American Communist Party, a puny little sect far away from the political mainstream, it never presented any threat to the fabric of American politics, and to consider it dangerous was nothing short of paranoia.

Anti-communism in the 1950's was known as McCarthyism. This was the period in which the junior senator from Wisconsin accused Dwight D. Eisenhower, General George C. Marshall, Harry S. Truman, and many other prominent conservative leaders of being communists, and declared the New Deal and the twenty years of Democratic presidents as “twenty years of treason.”

Joseph McCarthy was a thug—insecure, brash, and reckless—as well as a pathological liar. He seems to have been desperately trying to make up for a severely deprived background, and he made up for his own deficiencies by destroying others. He picked his targets at random and denounced them as communists or crypto-communists. He was helped in this by a group of shady characters—marginal people like the infamous Roy Cohn, and a number of former communists who had become paid informers. All that became clear with hindsight, but the relevant question was why the Congress, the President, the press, and the public fell for their paranoid ranting for five years.

McCarthyism, of course, was not entirely novel. There had been anti-Communist hysteria in the years immediately following the First World War. The vigilance against left-wing subversion was kept alive in various governmental and civic organizations, such as the Americanism Committee of the American Legion, and in the late 1930's, the House of Representatives set up the first House Committee on Un-American Activities under

Congressman Martin Dies. After the war, that Committee became a permanent institution, at least for a number of years. The Democrats—especially Truman and his Secretary of State, Byrnes—used the communist threat to sell the Marshall Plan and other elements of foreign policy, including the intervention in Korea, to the Congress.

The transformation of Eastern Europe into a group of communist states and the victory of the communist armies over those of the *Kuomintang* further encouraged anti-Communist sentiments. At the Yalta conference, Roosevelt and Churchill had agreed with Stalin to divide Europe into spheres of influence. By then, Soviet armies had overrun all or most of Eastern Europe. It would have taken another war to remove them. Besides, the Western generals told their leaders that we would need Soviet aid in defeating Japan. The atom bomb had not yet been tested.

American and British policies immediately after the defeat of Germany—the abrupt ending of Lend-Lease aid, Churchill’s militant “Iron Curtain” speech, Truman’s rude dressing-down of the Soviet foreign minister, Molotov, and many such incidents—were interpreted in Moscow as signs of deep hostility on the part of the West. In return, Soviet occupation forces in Eastern Europe rapidly converted the regimes in these country into governments dominated by communist parties and clearly dependent on the USSR. The iron curtain that Churchill had denounced was at least as much a product of Western policies as of Soviet design.

The American public, however, placed all the blame on the alleged communist master plan to conquer the world. Americans of Polish, Ukrainian, Czechoslovak, German, and other East-European origin were, naturally, very perturbed about developments in their former home countries and thus were receptive to explanations that blamed godless communism.

The transformation of Eastern Europe into communist dictatorships was followed by the victory of Mao’s armies over the government of Chiang Kai-shek. For years, American diplomats and scholars had warned that the Nationalist government of China was corrupt and oppressive, and that millions of people in China were being alienated from it. They also pointed out that, during the war, Mao and his communist armies resisted the Japanese while the *Kuomintang* equivocated on this issue. The United States, such people suggested, would be well advised to dissociate itself from such a self-defeating clique, stop pouring resources into this ‘rat hole,’ and make friends with the revolutionary movement that was attracting overwhelming popular support. They correctly pointed out that the Soviet Union, led by its ruling party, was harshly critical of the movement led by Mao Tse-tung and gave it no support. The fact was that the USSR was the very last country to close its embassy in Chungking after the Nationalist armies had fled from the Chinese mainland.

The warnings uttered by the specialists remained unheeded. Mao's victory came as a shock to the American public, and a far-right interest group, the so-called China Lobby—one of the prime movers of the anti-Communist hysteria—laid the blame for our 'losing' China on those who had warned against this very eventuality. One of the results of the China Lobby's activity was a thorough purge of China specialists from the United States Foreign Service, a severe loss of many competent and thoroughly loyal servants. The China Lobby also served as one of the principal sources of financing, political support, and slanderous gossip for Senator McCarthy. John Birch, for whom a notorious far-right organization named itself, was an intelligence agent operating in communist territory in China.

In addition, the senator from Wisconsin tapped some populist rage and anti-intellectualism—sentiments that seemed to be recurrent elements of American democracy. More immediately, McCarthyism can be explained as the Republicans' revenge on the New Deal and on twenty years of Democratic rule in the White House. Their surprising electoral defeat in 1948 when Truman narrowly beat Thomas Dewey further embittered them and made them ready to go for the jugular.

McCarthy, under the cover of senatorial immunity, freely used slander, deliberate distortion of the record, illegal use of classified materials, and similar dirty means to get attention. After watching people like Senators Bridges, Hickenlooper, Wiley, and Henry Cabot Lodge resort to similar slimy tactics or at least abet them, I remained convinced that nothing was too dirty for those who wished to uphold the status quo or wreak political revenge.

Blame for McCarthyism should have been spread evenly, however. Perhaps more despicable than the opportunists on the far right were the spineless public figures considered to be liberals. People to the left of center in American politics played a pitiful role in the rise of anti-communism. They fell all over themselves to prove their loyalty and tried to outdo the McCarthys of the world in dissociating themselves from any socialists or communists, or from anyone who might be suspected to harbor left-wing sympathies.

Whether it was the American Civil Liberties Union or the labor movement, the Democratic Party or the American Veterans Committee, all of them quickly searched for people in their own ranks who might be vulnerable to McCarthyite attacks and threw them out of their organizations. American liberals, in short, joined the pack of red-hunters because of their cowardice. The anti-Communist hysteria had gripped them forcibly, inspired in part by a vast body of confessional literature written by former communists or sympathizers with communism. These now atoned for their political past by reminiscing about the misdeeds they had witnessed, or in which they had participated, and by denouncing the "God that had failed," the ideology that had misled them. Their turning away from supporting

communism had been triggered by various key events, be it the Great Purge and the show trials of 1935-38, the signing of the Hitler-Stalin pact, or the behavior of the communist leadership during the Spanish civil war.

Parallel to this confessional literature, the 1950's saw a spate of influential books by political and religious conservatives—Clinton Rossiter, Waldemar Gurian, Erich Voegelin and others—who attacked the Enlightenment tradition with its materialism, rationalism, and humanism, in short, all the elements that constitute the democratic political culture.

Such denunciations of the Enlightenment tradition were echoed in the call issued by a number of former 'liberals' (David Bell, Raymond Aron, and others) for the end of ideology. This was a slogan that became quite popular among American intellectuals in the 1950's. It expressed the view that American politics since the Great Depression had been a success story: America under the New Deal had managed to create a decent and affluent democratic system that was functioning well. No longer did we need ideologies that depicted alternative futures or utopias. Indeed, utopian dreaming only would lead to totalitarian disasters. Having solved most of its social problems, America needed no ideology, but could or should go on making needed improvements through pragmatic tinkering.

Those who wrote in this vein often were intellectuals who had participated in Roosevelt's New Deal and were proud of what it had achieved. At the same time, they were eager to distance themselves from socialists, communists or Marxists whom many critics of Roosevelt rightly or wrongly associated with the New Deal. By calling for the end of ideology, the reform-minded New Dealers accepted the status quo and gave up their former critical stance. By the same token, they were implicitly joining religious and political conservatives who denounced intellectuals for tending to be excessively negative.

Anti-communism divided the world into two parties—the party of democracy and freedom, and that of a satanic conspiracy trying to destroy democracy and freedom: a set of people devoid of all human values, and a clear and present threat to everything decent. A society convinced that it faced so dire an enemy could resort to two measures to implement a final solution. One of them would be to expose the enemy and to ostracize it. The other would be to exterminate it. This was the response represented by the political witch-hunts of the forties and fifties staged by McCarthy, McCarran, as well as the House committees on un-American activities, the John Birch Society, and other guardians of Americanism. Their activity was designed to ostracize all alleged sympathizers with left-wing causes, to brand them publicly as subversives and to remove them from society by making it impossible for them to pursue their careers.

Meanwhile the United States helped promote the physical extermination of alleged socialists and communists by supporting and

abetting death squad regimes in Central and South America, murderous dictators like Suharto in Indonesia, whose regime massacred hundreds of thousands of alleged communists, and similar practitioners of the final solution.

Those who criticized the anti-Communists, as I did, never claimed that Marxist-Leninist societies were virtuous or benign. What we did assert was that they had problems to solve and were trying to do so under great difficulties, and that in the name of anti-communism, our society, too, was abetting and supporting evil regimes, and losing our democratic soul. We pointed out that anti-communism was based on a ridiculously unfounded fear of the vulnerability and brittleness of the United States, which was a species of paranoia. In many cases, threatening talk, arms build-up, and foreign intervention by communist powers could easily be shown to have been a reaction to the threats, arms build-up, and interventions on the part of the United States.

The damage that anti-communism wrought was enormous. It seduced the United States and its allies into wasting hundreds of billions of our resources in a crazy and needless arms race. Had these resources been used for rational purposes, we would have been a richer and less troubled society. Much of the skewing of resources resulted from the wasteful and corrupt sweetheart arrangements between the Pentagon and American industry—the military-industrial complex against which Eisenhower warned us in his farewell address. Anti-communism also contributed to the ever-deeper penetration of police and intelligence agencies into the social fabric. It engendered witch-hunts that ruined the careers and lives of many decent people. Perhaps, most deplorably, anti-communism broke the spine of any meaningful opposition in American politics.

This readiness to measure political systems by two yardsticks, one for the left, another for the right, also greatly discredited the United States in many parts of the world. Moreover, in propping up those regimes that seemed to be of use to us in ‘containing’ communism, we have bet on many a wrong horse. We built up our chief competitors, supplying funds and weapons to many a regime that later used them against us. In the end, we helped bring about the collapse of the Soviet Union and its European client states, only to be confronted with a much more complex and dangerous world.

The ideologists of anti-communism, just like their counterparts in the communist world, developed a vocabulary of their own—a politically correct language that had to be used by anyone who wished to be taken seriously or wanted to be considered politically loyal and reliable. Together with certain words or concepts, some specific ideas also became politically taboo. Since the repression of concepts and ideas was an obnoxious totalitarian practice, I always rebelled against it, and since ideas that fell under this kind of tacit

editorial censorship often were the most interesting ones, I tended to subscribe to them.

One such idea was that of the mirror image of Soviet and American societies. Both societies subscribed to an official orthodoxy, according to which they understood each other as mortal enemies and menaces. Both armed themselves to the teeth to cope with this menace and accompanied that armament race with plenty of threatening words. The hawks on both sides thus provided arguments for the hawks on the other side in an attitude of mutually reinforcing paranoia.

Ideologists on both sides of the iron curtain denounced the idea of the mirror image because they were offended by the implicit notion that their country in any way resembled the evil empire confronting them. Similarly, cold war ideologists in the U.S. denounced those Sovietologists who, in their analysis of the USSR, applied terms or images usually used to describe Western societies. To interpret politics in the Communist Party as the manifestation of group interest or to argue that the rudiments of a constitutional order might be forming under Nikita Khrushchev did not fit in with the ideological notions about the inflexibility of Soviet totalitarianism. Moreover, my own habit of comparing the USSR with giant Western business corporations or the Communist youth organization with Greek-letter fraternities was an offense against prevailing orthodoxies.

Another offense of which I was guilty was my flirting with the so-called convergence theory. First suggested by Isaac Deutscher, convergence theory predicted that Stalinist systems would mellow and transform themselves into constitutional polities on the basis of a more democratic socialism. Meanwhile, it was foreseen that the West would also become more socialistic, so that both the U.S. and the USSR would one day become socialist democracies. Against such optimistic prospects that doubtless were based on wishful thinking, my own much bleaker expectations posited a different theory of convergence.

From observing the ruthless methods by which Stalinism sought to achieve nearly impossible aims and the top-heavy bureaucracy employed in this effort, I realized that the Party was not up to its task and that the USSR had become ungovernable. I foresaw that the resulting popular dissatisfaction would generate political unrest, and, in response to this, attempts to impose law and order from above. Similarly, I foresaw trends toward bureaucratization in corporate capitalism and political difficulties due to the growing ungovernable nature of the United States. My nightmarish version of convergence theory posited a tendency toward bureaucratic mismanagement and economic distress that would create political crisis and occasional interludes of fascism for both major powers. When, in February 1996, the right-wing Russian politician Zhirinovskiy congratulated Pat

Buchanan on his victory in the Republican presidential primaries, I thought that my gloomy predictions had not been so far off the mark.

In my own field of studies, the Cold War also imposed orthodoxy and thereby affected American political science deeply. The noble tradition in the study of politics and government had been that it should be critical. Politics being the continuation of warfare with other means (to misquote General Clausewitz), the political scientist studied the distribution, use, and abuse of power and then might come up with visions of an alternative future in which power could be distributed and used more acceptably. Under the pressure of the cold war, however, political science in the United States preferred to forego criticism of our own system in favor of celebrating it as the fulfillment of our democratic ideals. The prevalent paradigm for describing U.S. politics in the 50's and 60's was the pluralist theory worked out by David Truman and Robert Dahl. It saw the U.S. as democratic because competing groups in it contended with one another, each representing its own special interest. This open competition supposedly prevented domination by any single dominant group and thus insured democracy.

In the perennial conflict between interest groups, a group's resources, organization, and political skill determined the outcome, but only if these various sources of strength were evenly distributed. Neo-Marxists might identify the various elite groups that the pluralists talk about as the possessors of economic, political, intellectual capital, and then point out that underneath these competing elite groups there were the mass of working people without any property, who did not benefit from the conflicts within the elite. Pluralist theory seemed to acknowledge this, but in a half-hearted manner: Dahl and Truman made it clear that the underclass in the United States had none of the resources of the large interest groups. The unemployed had no money, no organization, no political party, and no political sophistication. They therefore could not make the system respond to their interests. They were excluded. Since democracy implies inclusion of all, to call the pluralist system as they described it democratic was dishonest.

Short of celebrating the American democracy in this fashion, many political scientists preferred to study trivia. At the University of Michigan, one of the topics studied most intensively was voting behavior and the psychic makeup of citizens casting their votes. These studies, based on survey research, doubtless were of interest to political campaign managers who marketed candidates. What studies of voting behavior usually failed to point out, however, was that the major parties offered little meaningful choice between alternatives.

In studying world politics, an analogous change in emphasis was the turn away from a preoccupation with morally inspired thinking about U.S. foreign policy to an attitude called "realism." From the time of Thomas

Jefferson well into the 20th century Americans liked to believe that in interacting with the world at large the task of the United States was to spread the blessings of constitutional government and democracy to the entire globe. In the years of the cold war, political scientists and presidential advisers proposed to abandon such idealism and to opt, instead, for realism in the study and practice of international relations. Realism in this context stood for the Machiavellian belief that world politics had little to do with morality. Instead, it was concerned with power.

For the realist the world was a dangerous place. What mattered in this jungle was to pursue the national interest by keeping one's country strong and one's potential or real enemies weak. Squeamishness about the methods used to these ends was regarded as misplaced. After all, our enemies did not seem to be squeamish about their methods, either. The realists' approach to the study of world politics easily justified a general cynicism and seemed to make political scientists comfortable with the armaments race and the possibility of nuclear warfare. It enabled them to speculate about the 'rationality' of a first strike without noticing the insanity involved in this. The unthinkable had become thinkable. The morality rejected by the self-styled realists eventually returned through the back door as rhetoric to justify Machiavellian power politics. Whatever dirty tricks the CIA and other agencies of the U.S. government played, they were inevitably declared measures aimed at defending or restoring democracy.