

## Chapter X

### WHO MAKES CONCESSIONS—AND WHAT KIND?

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IN THE MIDST OF THE DIFFICULTIES OF THE PARIS CONferences during 1946, Mr. Byrnes made a curious complaint to the effect that he was being asked to make all the concessions, and that he wanted concessions to come from both sides.

That sounds very nice and fair and practical, the sort of thing that most Americans would immediately and instinctively approve. Mutual concessions, according to the standard American formula, will solve almost any problem.

But the "concessions" that Mr. Byrnes is demanding of the Soviet Union happen to be of a very special character. He is asking the cancellation of the basic agreements arrived at in the Teheran, Yalta, and Potsdam conferences—quite a little "concession," indeed! What it amounts to is the withdrawal of the most important concessions which the United States had made to the Soviet Union under Roosevelt's leadership.

And where is it leading? The first series of deadlocks among the victor powers was about everything but Germany. It is Germany, however, which is the central problem. What kind of "concessions" is Mr. Byrnes preparing to demand from the Soviet Union on this question?

We can obtain an advance view of this problem by finding out what Mr. Byrnes's most zealous backers say about it now. The *Commercial and Financial Chronicle* of New York, most authoritative press organ of the reactionary circles of finance capital, speaks out frankly and boldly what is on Byrnes's mind. Through the pen of its expert on international affairs, Dr. A. Wilfred May, this journal says:

In the definitive settlement of Germany—the genuine settlement of Europe—it must be realized that today Western civilization ends at the Elbe river, which marks the dividing line between the two sections of Europe. It also should be realized that the Russians must be put out of Eastern Germany, and out of Austria, with that country taking its place as a state in a Western union, together with Bavaria, the Rhineland, the Ruhr, and the Saar. As in other sectors, Mr. Byrnes should take a firm stand against the Soviet, and insist on a federation of Western Europe including the whole section of Germany which she is now occupying. [September 5, 1946]

That, and nothing less, is the sort of "concession" which Mr. Byrnes is demanding from the Soviet Union.

The Soviet Union has been put on notice that the policy of Mr. Byrnes is to organize Europe, with Germany as the center, in an anti-Soviet combination of world power headed by Britain and America.

Of course the Soviet Union will not permit this or anything going in the same direction. Mr. Byrnes has gone entirely outside the field of "concessions." He has departed fundamentally from the Roosevelt program. The Soviet Union secured an effective "veto power" over all such schemes by the fact that her armies crushed

the main bulk of the Nazi forces. There can be no world settlement against the will of the Soviet Union. Mr. Byrnes must find a line of policy which includes the vital interests of the Soviet Union as well as of America. That means he must return to the Roosevelt line. Only then is there any sense in talking about "concessions" on either or both sides.

This whole business of concessions requires much clarification among us Americans.

We will have to learn, for example, that in international affairs we cannot arrive at a fundamental agreement with our allies in the midst of war and then, when the fighting is over, demand "concessions" from our allies which cancel out the wartime agreements. The blunt name for those who try such shenanigans is—double-crossers. It not only brands us as morally wrong, it also brings us to defeat and confusion. It will not work.

We need to learn, also, that it does not strengthen our nation's moral position when our representatives take ten positions hostile to the interests of our ally, and then retreat from five of them—making "five concessions"—in order to demand that our ally balance that with five concessions of his own in the form of agreeing to the rest of the list. The trouble with such a system is, that if we insist on following it, we force our ally to make up his own list of ten proposals hostile to our interests in order to reach the "fifty-fifty" mathematical formula between the two sets of proposals, and not by accepting half of ours. And when we begin hurling sets of conflicting demands at each other, we

are not laying the basis for mutual concessions and agreement, but piling up obstacles, perhaps making it impossible to reach the stage of "concessions."

Roosevelt got along smoothly with the Soviet leaders because he never made a proposal to them which did not embody, in advance, a careful consideration of their interests as well as those of America. Thus he gained their confidence and was called upon to make a minimum of "concessions" during negotiations. It is suspicion and lack of good will which cause the demand for "concessions" to pile up until it threatens to break negotiations. The "horse trader," "hard bargainer" type of approach is the most impractical in international relations, because any success it might hope for rests on the slender hope that the other fellow is a "softy." There are no softies left in the world, however. We're all tough guys. It is better to take that as our starting point, and get down to brass tacks from the beginning.

As a matter of fact what are the "concessions" which America has made to the Soviet Union? We lent-leased them some billions of dollars' worth of supplies America had earmarked for the killing of Nazi soldiers; the Russians did the killing instead of American boys—and suffered the casualties. Do we think we would have been better off if we had kept those supplies and fought our own war entirely by ourselves? No, we don't think that. We know that we were repaid a hundred times for our supplies, and that we gave them, not as a favor or "concession," but in our own interest.

So it will be found in other questions. We gave the Soviet Union our co-operation for ends we held in com-



mon. We agreed to recognize the new position of power of the Soviet Union in world affairs. If that is a "concession," it is at once balanced by a similar "concession" to us by the Soviet Union. We did not withdraw from a single spot on the globe which we had occupied during the war, as in any way a "concession" to the Soviet Union. We did not give up any position of any kind in any place to the Soviet Union.

Roosevelt gave the Soviet Union something it valued very much, although it was very intangible and deprived America of nothing. It was simply understanding and respect. But these American gifts have since been withdrawn.

On the other hand the Soviet Union has made serious and far-reaching concessions to American interests and also to American ideology and prejudices. Some of the most important of these have been set forth in previous chapters in some detail, without much emphasis on the fact that they were concessions. It is true, of course, that these concessions also served Soviet interests—provided they achieved their purpose of facilitating and establishing co-operation with America. But when America disregards these policies, refuses to recognize them as concessions, and withdraws its co-operation from the Soviet Union, then it is our country which is making impossible the adjustment of relations through mutual concessions.

Let us give thoughtful examination to a few concrete cases. The Soviet Union is deeply interested in Bulgaria, a close neighbor, bound by historical and ethnical ties to Russia. The Soviet leaders co-operated with the people's

democratic forces to overthrow the old regime which had brought disaster to Bulgaria by aligning her with Hitler. They wanted a new regime in Bulgaria which would guarantee maintenance of the natural friendship between the two countries.

Did the Soviet leaders proceed to achieve their aim by encouraging a Soviet revolution in Bulgaria? They did not. Instead they gave encouragement and support to the Fatherland Front, a coalition of all groups and parties which helped to overthrow the Hitlerite puppets, and established a democratic republic based upon principles in no wise different from those of the restored French Republic. On the occasion of the national referendum which abolished the throne and established the Republic, the chief Communist leader, Georgi Dimitrov, declared that Bulgaria was not establishing a Soviet Republic nor a socialist economic system. There is no conflict over this issue between Dimitrov and the Soviet leaders. There is no dispute between Bulgaria and the Soviet Union. There is no pressure and no encouragement of the idea of a Soviet socialist political and economic system for Bulgaria emanating from the Soviet Union. There is no interference by the Soviet Union in the internal affairs of Bulgaria, or of any other neighboring country, once the collaborators with the Nazis are disposed of.

Unquestionably among the motives for such a course is the desire not to offend American ideology and prejudices, but on the contrary to facilitate in every way the development of close friendship and economic relations with America as well as with the Soviet Union.

The course in Bulgaria is in harmony with that followed by Soviet influence everywhere. So much so, in fact, that it can be categorically stated that in Europe as a whole the most stabilizing single factor is the policy of the Communists. The Continent is in such a deeply revolutionary situation that there is no doubt that if the Communists took the line everywhere of initiating a struggle for power and for Soviet regimes they could succeed, at least in a few countries, and could make a serious bid for power in most. The fact that they do not do so is the most profound evidence of a desire to avert civil wars within those lands and to secure immediate practical co-operation with America as a part of the stabilization of the whole world through the United Nations.

Is this a serious concession to America? Is it worth anything? Does it merit some practical recognition from this country directed toward making the policy successful? Or does America choose to turn its back on this far-reaching and unprecedented attempt to reach an accommodation between the socialist and capitalist sectors of the world?

If we are to judge by the present attitude of the American government on the problems of peace, then the only answer possible is that America is rejecting this effort, and prefers to face a world showdown between the socialist and capitalist forces looking toward defeating or isolating the Soviet Union, not toward a stable peace based on collaboration.

The basic decision of the Communists of all lands to open the door for a stable peace based on socialist-

capitalist collaboration was taken while the war was at its height. It found its clearest expression in the dissolution of the Communist International in May, 1943.

(The Communist International, most frequently called "The Comintern," it may be explained for readers not familiar with its history, was a world-wide association of the Communist Parties of all countries, with the purpose of arriving at a common estimation of world problems and a practical co-ordination of Communist policies in relation to questions of international importance. It was an outgrowth of the Socialist and Labor International, which was also re-established as a rival association of Socialist Parties after World War I. Hitler's basic strategy in the war, which he labeled the *Antikomintern*, assumed that the existence of the Communist International symbolized an irreconcilable split between the U.S.S.R. and America which would prevent the two greatest countries from ever uniting against him.)

The dissolution of the Communist International was an important point in cementing the wartime alliance between America and the Soviet Union.

Today the anti-Soviet campaign in America makes much of the charge that the Communist International was not really dissolved, that it was preserved in some secret form, and that the American public was misinformed and deceived on this question.

This dangerous falsehood is designed to sow suspicion and division among the war allies and hamper the making of peace. It is an attempt to carry out Hitler's



final threat to prevent any peace coming to the world as the result of the defeat of the Nazis.

If Americans wish to understand how the Soviet leaders judge this problem they should reread what Stalin said about the dissolution of the Communist International in 1943. Answering a request for the Soviet view on this event, "and of its bearing on future international relations," Stalin wrote in a letter to Harold King, Reuters press association correspondent in Moscow, on May 28, 1943, as follows:

Dissolution of the Communist International is proper because: (A) It exposes the lie of the Hitlerites to the effect that "Moscow" allegedly intends to interfere in the life of other nations and to "bolshevise" them. The end is now being put to this lie. (B) It exposes the calumny of adversaries of communism within the labor movement to the effect that Communist Parties in various countries are allegedly acting not in the interests of their people, but on orders from outside. The end is now being put to this calumny, too. (C) It facilitates the work of patriots in freedom-loving countries, regardless of party or religious faith, bringing them into a single camp of national liberation, for the unfolding of the struggle against fascism. (D) It facilitates the work of patriots of all countries for the uniting of all freedom-loving peoples into a single international camp for the fight against the menace of world domination by Hitlerism, thus clearing the way to the future organization of the companionship of nations based upon their equality. I think that all these circumstances taken together will result in the further strengthening of the united front of the Allies and other United Nations in their fight for victory over Hitlerite tyranny. [New York Times, May 29, 1943]

It is immediately clear, therefore, that the accusation of the secret continuation of the Communist Interna-

tional is in reality a charge of bad faith against Stalin and the Soviet leaders in their relations with America. It is an attempt to continue Hitler's central policy, which was always to divide the democratic countries on the issue of the Comintern. It is designed to convince the American public either that Stalin deceived them in his statement of May 28, 1943, or that he has since changed his mind and abandoned his hope for "the future organization of the companionship of nations based on their equality." Both these imputations are equally false, are contradicted by the facts, and are damaging the cause of peace. The victory over Hitlerism is not complete until this Nazi policy of dividing the Allies and pitting them against each other is finally defeated and discredited.

As a matter of my own personal knowledge and conviction, having been associated with the Communist International from its foundation until the American Communist Party withdrew its affiliation in November, 1940, and a member of its Executive Committee during the last five years of that period, I declare that the dissolution of the Communist International in May, 1943, was complete and unequivocal. No substitute for it has been since re-established. There is no "ghost" or "shadow" Comintern. Since May, 1943, no center of any kind has existed to co-ordinate or direct the policies of the Communist Parties of the various countries, which are entirely independent and exist on their own national ground. There is no sign that any such center will arise in the predictable future. (This remains true even though, after this was written, an international confer-

ence of some nineteen *Socialist Parties*, rivals of the Communists, was meeting in Bournemouth, England, on the call of the British Labor Party, primarily for the purpose of organizing their struggle against the Communists on an international scale.)

Undoubtedly it was the U.S.A. which was first in Stalin's mind when, in 1943, he said that the dissolution of the Communist International would facilitate the creation of a "future organization of the companionship of nations." For it was chiefly in America that the Hitler *Antikomintern* slogan was effective in hampering the unity of the Allies and influenced not only reactionary groups but also important democratic circles. This influence of the *Antikomintern* of Hitler was one of the most stubborn obstacles which Roosevelt had to overcome in order to establish his policy of co-operation with the Soviet Union which, in the bourgeois public mind, was synonymous with the Comintern. In the act of dissolution of the Communist International there was inherent, therefore, a decision of the Communists of all lands to go a long way in order to reach a firm co-operation with America, even to make concessions to those American prejudices which were without real foundation.

The timing of the act of dissolution was not accidental. It took place in the midst of the crisis over the delay of the Second Front. Undoubtedly it facilitated the victory of Roosevelt's strategy over Churchill's. This was one of its aims. But there is no evidence to support certain rumors to the effect that Roosevelt asked Stalin to initiate such a step. On the contrary all evi-

dence points to this step having been entirely on the judgment and initiative of the Communists themselves.

What Stalin pointed out as the needs of war still exist as the urgent needs of securing a stable peace. The unity of nations created for the war is equally necessary for the peace. The co-operation of democratic parties and groups within each country needs to be welded ever closer to achieve this objective. The dissolution of the Communist International which served these purposes in war will continue to serve them in making the peace. For these reasons there will be no new Communist International in the predictable future.

This was long my own personal judgment. It has been confirmed by events. It was also confirmed to me as representing the current opinion of the Soviet leaders by Mr. Molotov, Soviet Foreign Minister, when I visited him in May, 1946.

The Communist International belongs to past history. It has no present existence. Only those who wish to divide the war allies and thus prevent a durable peace will today try to revive it in the guise of a "ghost" or "fable" or any other way. This elimination of the Communist International was a voluntary concession of the most far-reaching sort to American prejudice and ideology. It symbolizes innumerable detailed concessions in a similar direction throughout the world.

Has there yet been any comparable American concession to the interests, ideology, or prejudice of the Soviet Union or of those political groupings in other countries led by the Communists? Obviously, there has not. When Mr. Byrnes complained that he was being called



upon to make all the concessions, he was dismissing all these facts, he was engaged in "diplomatic horse trading," he was not operating on the level of high statesmanship which is seeking to adjust world relationships. On this higher plane Mr. Byrnes has been operating not in making concessions but in trying to withdraw those concessions which were made earlier by Roosevelt.

If one is interested not in arriving at agreement, but in building a case for conflict, then it is always possible to use negotiations for that purpose. It is possible to "make the record" that the first party has made a hundred concessions while the other party has made but one, that the first party is a hundred times more conciliatory than the second. To achieve such a mathematical result one has only to divide his concession into a hundred parts which are yielded one part at a time.

This technique of diplomatic conflict was illustrated during the summer of 1946, in the handling of the so-called veto question in the United Nations' Security Council. Americans made a great stir before the public because Mr. A. Gromyko, the Soviet representative, had exercised the veto power *three times in a single day*. Big-time journalists wrote profound articles to explain that the veto power should be used sparingly, and that Mr. Gromyko was certainly not using it "sparingly" when he wielded that weapon three times a day. The public is supposed to overlook the simple fact that the Americans had pressed the same issue to a vote three times in three different forms, and Mr. Gromyko would have been rather foolish to vote differently on the same

question merely because it was put in a different way. The real offenders against international co-operation were those who persisted in forcing issues on which they knew there was no agreement.

Of course the whole world knows that America insists upon the veto power quite as much as the Soviet Union. It is simply the rule of unanimity among the greatest powers to guarantee that policy will actually combine the vital interests of each and all, and that no decisions will be taken which might disrupt the instrumentality of international co-operation. Everyone knows that America itself would not hesitate to wield the veto power ten times a day, if this country felt that its vital interests were threatened by ten proposals (or ten forms of the same proposal) to which a formal majority had been rallied. The only significance of such charges against the Soviet Union is its revelation that a hostile propaganda campaign is being conducted against her. And a hostile atmosphere of this sort is not conducive to bringing forth needed concessions from either side.

It is a basic fact that the working out of a durable peace requires concessions from all sides, and before all between the United States and the Soviet Union. Neither one can dictate the shape of the world, neither can ignore the vital interests of the other. Both must win the support of the vast majority of mankind for any peace settlement that is to succeed.

The weight of evidence sustains the opinion that once the area of common interest between the two greatest powers has been defined with some clarity, there will

remain no differences between America and the Soviet Union which cannot be adjusted through mutual concessions. The failures of Mr. Byrnes arise from the fact that he has not been working from this area of common interest, as the source and foundation of all agreement.