

## POLITICS &amp; GOVERNMENT

"was made possible by a strong chief of staff and ambitious White House aides who were more powerful than members of the Cabinet." While it has been argued that the American cabinet system is obsolete, Hoxie believes that its very adaptability argues for its survival.

### *Business and Labor Look at Moscow*

"Business, Labor, and the Anti-communist Struggle" by Arch Puddington, in *National Review* (Jan. 27, 1984), 150 East 35th St., New York, N.Y. 10016.

It is no surprise when Big Business and Big Labor wind up on opposite sides of the political fence. But in foreign policy, the two groups defy all expectations: Corporate leaders favor détente with the Soviet "workers' state." Most labor unions oppose it.

Puddington, executive director of the League for Industrial Democracy, says that Big Business's attitude is nothing new. A 1944 opinion survey by *Fortune* found business leaders to be the "most friendly" toward the USSR of all American groups.

Big Business has an obvious economic interest in nurturing East-West trade. Toward that end, key corporate executives have balked at U.S. economic sanctions against Moscow after the 1979 invasion of Afghanistan and at Reagan administration plans to block construction of the Soviet natural-gas pipeline to Western Europe. In 1982, they insisted that Poland be spared a damaging declaration that it had defaulted on loans from the West. (U.S. exports to the Soviet Union, mostly wheat, totaled \$2 billion in 1982; Western Europe's exports were \$8.8 billion.) But many businessmen also argue that cutting trade with the Soviet bloc reduces Washington's leverage in Moscow, or that it is ineffective because the Soviets buy the goods elsewhere.

Often, Puddington believes, businessmen are politically naive; they have "little understanding of the [communist] threat to the capitalist system and its attendant freedoms." Citibank executive Thomas C. Theobald asked during the Polish crisis, "Who knows what political system works best? All we can ask is: Can they pay their bills?"

American labor unions are far more skeptical about dealings with the Soviet Union. As a result of the struggle with American Communists for control of many unions during the 1930s, labor leaders are staunchly anticommunist. Unlike its Western European counterparts, the 13.8-million strong American Federation of Labor-Congress of Industrial Organizations (AFL-CIO) regularly supports economic sanctions against the Soviets.

Yet the AFL-CIO is under increasing pressure from the Left to abandon its anticommunist policy because it stands in the way of a closer alliance with environmentalists, nuclear freeze advocates, and other dovish elements of the Democratic Party. Puddington notes that "nothing in the nature of trade unionism" demands an anticommunist stance. It is possible, he says, that organized labor could abandon "raw common sense" and support Big Business in fulfilling the prophecy that capitalists will sell Russia the rope with which to hang themselves.