

Morris K. Udall -- Selected Articles:

Khrushchev Could have Said It by Morris K. Udall

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"The John Birch Society is Communism's greatest ally. With its help we will divide and confuse the American people until they have lost faith in their Government, their nation has ceased to be a major world power, and their country is ripe for revolution." - Nikita Khrushchev, 3-1/2 years after his visit to the US.

Now there is a quotation for you. It would go well on postcards, envelope stickers and, in abbreviated form, on bumper strips and airplane streamers.

Of course, Khrushchev never said it, but apparently that doesn't matter, judging by some of the mail I have been receiving. The Russian premier is becoming one of this country's favorite authors. And a favorite in Congress too. It has become standard practice, whenever a legislative proposal nears decision, for someone to drop the "ultimate weapon" -- the hundred megaton argument: first, a charge that the measure is "socialism" and, second, a quotation "proving" that an affirmative vote will actually be a vote for ultimate Soviet domination. One of the most popular blockbusters is the following: *"We cannot expect the Americans to jump from capitalism to Communism, but we can assist their elected leaders in giving Americans small doses of socialism, until they suddenly awake to find they have Communism."*

Those citing this remarkable statement invariably inform us that Khrushchev made it "three and a half months before his visit to the United States." They are, strangely enough, the same people who are always reminding us that Communists are devious and not to be trusted (who can deny it?), that Communists say one thing when they really intend the opposite (how true), and that anyone who believes what Khrushchev says about anything is a dupe or a fool, "or worse." Well, consistency, as we all know, is the hobgoblin of brittle minds, and so in this instance we are to accept Khrushchev's words as true gospel.

About a year ago, an Ohio State University professor looked askance at an advertisement run by a major American manufacturer which quoted Lenin as saying: *"We shall force the United States to spend itself to destruction."*

Incredulous, the professor doggedly pursued the matter until the company was forced to acknowledge that Lenin really didn't make such a statement.

Remembering this, I decided to check on the more recent "quotes" of Khrushchev. I asked the Library of Congress where and when Khrushchev made his "small doses" statement. The Library reported:

"We have searched the Legislative Reference Service files, checked all the standard reference works on quotations by Khrushchev, and consulted with the Slavic division of the Library of Congress, the Department of State, and the US Information Agency, in an attempt to determine the authenticity of this quotation. From none of these sources were we able to produce evidence that Khrushchev actually made such a statement."

The Library of Congress notwithstanding, this statement continued to pop up. For instance, it was featured on page one of *Common Sense*, an angry little publication which bills itself as "America's Newspaper Against Communism," in its January, 1962, issue.

Mr. Conde McGinley, editor, replied to a letter of inquiry: "As I remember, we took this from a very reliable publication, but I do not remember that it gave the date that Khrushchev stated this. Ordinarily, we like to have the date, *but this was so good, that we were tempted to run it.*" [Italics mine]

Then some slick, plasticized cards came to my office from Coast Federal Savings in Los Angeles, "distributed as a public service." Mr. Khrushchev's remark about "small doses of socialism," beginning to acquire fame, was emblazoned in (what else?) red, along with the usual comment about "three and a half months before his visit to the US." According to the cards, additional copies were available from the Curt Advertising Agency, Los Angeles. A letter to Curt produced a reply from S. A. Adair, "acting director, economics and education " of Coast Federal Savings. Said Mr. Adair:

"As to the source of the statement: we are told that it was included in a speech he delivered to a workmen's group in one of the satellite countries, approximately three and one-half months before his visit to the United States, in 1959. We are still searching for the exact date, but translations of the USSR news agencies are not always easily obtainable. When we do pinpoint the statement, we shall be glad to let you know."

"Meanwhile," added Adair, "I am sending you a copy of a *Time Magazine* article, which contains a very similar statement by the Communist leader."

Mr. Adair's sense of comparison seems a little liberal. The statement in *Time* he marks as being "very similar" to the "small doses" quotation reads: "Society cannot leap into Communism from capitalism without going through a socialist stage of development." This "socialist" stage, of course, is what Khrushchev says the Soviet Union has been in since 1917.

However, unlike *Common Sense*, Coast Federal Savings could provide a source -- none other than the *Congressional Record*. Mr. Adair said the quotation appears on page 12622 of the issue of July 26, 1961. I turned quickly to that page and found it. It was used as one of the mainstays in the famous assault by Sen. J. Strom Thurmond on the Defense Department for "muzzling the military." The point was that the public-speaking talents of our military men "might well" be needed to make America aware that social legislation is socialism, and socialism is Communism.

Feeling certain that at last I would be able to verify the statement I wrote Senator Thurmond, asking him for his source. To date I have not received a reply.

But let us assume, for purposes of this discussion, that Khrushchev did say what he is said to have said. What follows? Either:

1. He truly hopes we will enact what some people call "little doses of socialism," thereby paving the way for Communism in this country, or
2. He hopes by this statement to frighten us from instituting those programs which will strengthen our society and make the onset of Communism more difficult or impossible.

Either conclusion is plausible.

Once we have settled on a preferred interpretation, we once again are presented with two possibilities:

- a. that Khrushchev's prediction of the ultimate effect will prove correct, or
- b. that it will prove incorrect.

Those who regard Khrushchev as a superman (and it is surprising how many "100 percent Americans" take this view) will choose (a); the rest of us will probably divide up about 50-50 behind (a) and (b).

There is one further complication. Since Khrushchev nowhere defines for us what he might mean by "little doses of socialism," we're at a loss to know what the measures are we should avoid or enact (depending on which decision we made earlier).

One of these days, when we're in the midst of a serious flu epidemic, Khrushchev is liable to say that Americans ought to be given "small doses of penicillin." Then where will we be?

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URL: <http://dizzy.library.arizona.edu/branches/spc/udall/khrushch.pdf>