

# politics

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## THE BOMB

**W**HAT first appalled us was its blast. "TNT is barely twice as strong as black powder was six centuries ago. World WAR II developed explosives up to 60% more powerful than TNT. The atomic bomb is more than 12,000 times as strong as the best improvement on TNT. One hundred and twenty-three planes, each bearing a single atomic bomb, would carry as much destructive power as all the bombs (2,453,595 tons) dropped by the Allies on Europe during the war."\*

It has slowly become evident, however, that the real horror of The Bomb is not blast but radioactivity. Splitting the atom sets free all kinds of radioactive substances, whose power is suggested by the fact that at the Hanford bomb plant, the water used for cooling the "pile" (the structure of uranium and other substances whose atomic interaction produces the explosive) carried off enough radiation to "heat the Columbia River appreciably." *Time* added: "Even the wind blowing over the chemical plant picked up another load of peril, for the stacks gave off a radioactive gas." And Smyth notes: "The fission products produced in one day's run of a 100,000-kilowatt chain-reacting pile of uranium might be sufficient to make a large area uninhabitable."

There is thus no question as to the potential horror of The Bomb's radioactivity. The two bombs actually used were apparently designed as explosive and not gas bombs, perhaps from humanitarian considerations, perhaps to protect the American troops who will later have to occupy Japan. But intentions are one thing, results another. So feared was radioactivity at Hanford that the most elaborate precautions were taken in the way of shields, clothes, etc. No such precautions were taken, obviously, on behalf of the inhabitants of Hiroshima; the plane dropped its cargo of half-understood poisons and sped away. What happened? The very sensitivity of the Army and the scientists on the subject is ominous. When one of the lesser experts who had worked on the bomb, a Dr. Harold Jacobson of New York, stated publicly that Hiroshima would be "uninhabitable" for



(c) National Geographic Society

seventy years, he was at once questioned by FBI agents, after which, "ill and upset," he issued another statement emphasizing that this was merely his own personal opinion, and that his colleagues disagreed with him.

But recent news from Japan indicates that perhaps Dr. Jacobson was right and his eminent colleagues wrong. After stating that 70,000 persons were killed outright in the two explosions and 120,000 wounded, Radio Tokyo on August 22 continued: "Many persons are dying daily from burns sustained during the raids. Many of those who received burns cannot survive the wounds because of the uncanny effects which the atomic bomb produces on the human body. Even those who received minor burns, and looked quite healthy at first, weakened after a few days for some unknown reason." Howard W. Blakeslee, the A.P. Science Editor, commented that these "probably were victims of a phenomenon that is well-known in the great radiation labor-

\**Time*, August 20. *Time's* special "Atomic Age" section is the best general survey I have seen. The most authoritative published scientific account of The Bomb is the 30,000 word report to the War Department by Professor H. D. Smyth of Princeton (summarized by Waldemar Kaempfert in *N. Y. Times* of August 16).



atories of the United States." Two kinds of burns are produced by the rays from an atomic explosion: the gamma, or X-ray type, which is always delayed and which finally produces on the skin the same effect as an ordinary burn, and which also produces *internal* burns; and burns made by streams of released neutrons. The latter, in laboratory tests made on animals (in Japan, we used human beings), produced no apparent effect at first, but resulted in death a few days later because the neutron rays had destroyed so many white corpuscles. The first wave of neutrons released by the bomb may have struck the earth, releasing more neutrons, and so on; the poisonous effects may persist indefinitely.

Now all this may be mere propaganda (though it will be interesting to see if Hiroshima and Nagasaki are put out of bounds for American troops). But the point is that none of those who produced and employed this monstrosity really knew just how deadly or prolonged these radioactive poisons would be.\* Which did not prevent them from completing their assignment, nor the Army from dropping the bombs. Perhaps only among men like soldiers and scientists, trained to think "objectively"—i.e., in terms of means, not ends—could such irresponsibility and moral callousness be found. In any case, it was undoubtedly the most magnificent scientific experiment in history, with cities as the laboratories and people as the guinea pigs.

THE official platitude about Atomic Fission is that it can be a Force for Good (production) or a Force for Evil (war), and that the problem is simply how to use its Good rather than its Bad potentialities. This is "just common sense." But, as Engels once remarked, Common Sense has some very strange adventures when it leaves its cozy bourgeois fireside and ventures out into the real world. For, given our present institutions—and the official apologists, from Max Lerner to President Conant of Harvard, envisage at most only a little face-lifting on these—how can The Bomb be "controlled," how can it be "internationalized"? Already the great imperialisms are jockeying for position in World War III. How can we expect them to give up the enormous advantage offered by The Bomb? May we hope that the destructive possibilities are so staggering that, for simple self-preservation, they will agree to "out-law" The Bomb? Or that they will forswear war itself because an "atomic" war would probably mean the mutual ruin of all contestants? The same reasons were advanced before World War I to demonstrate its "impossibility"; also before World War II. The devastation of these wars was as terrible as had been predicted—yet they took place. Like all the great advances in technology of the past century, Atomic Fission is something in which Good and Evil are so closely intertwined that it is hard to see how the Good can be extracted and the Evil thrown away. A century of effort has failed to separate the Good of capitalism (more production) from the Evil (exploitation, wars, cultural barbarism). *This* atom has never been split, and perhaps never will be.

\*Some one who should know tells me, as this goes to press, that early in September the War Department rushed Dr. Shields Warren, of the Harvard Medical School, a leading authority on radium poisoning, to Japan to study the effects of The Bomb. The Department is evidently less certain of the precise effects of The Bomb than its propaganda would indicate.

The Marxian socialists, both revolutionary and reformist, also accept the potentialities-for-Good-or-for-Evil platitude, since this platitude is based on a faith in Science and Progress which is shared by Marxists as well as conservatives, and is indeed still the basic assumption of Western thought. (In this respect, Marxism appears to be simply the most profound and consistent intellectual expression of this faith.) Since the Marxists make as a precondition of the beneficial use of Atomic Fission a basic change in present institutions, their position is not open to the objections noted just above. But if one looks deeper than the political level, the Marxist version of the platitude seems at the very least inadequate. I don't want to go into this here; I shall try to deal with it in "The Root Is Man." Let me just indicate that (1) it blunts our reaction to the present horror by reducing it to an episode in an historical schema which will "come out all right" in the end, and thus makes us morally callous (with resulting ineffectuality in our actions against the *present* horror) and too optimistic about the problem of evil; (2) it ignores the fact that such atrocities as The Bomb and the Nazi death camps are *right now* brutalizing, warping, deadening the human beings who are expected to change the world for the better; that modern technology has its own anti-human dynamics which has proved so far much more powerful than the liberating effects the Marxist schema expects from it.

THE BOMB produced two widespread and, from the standpoint of The Authorities, undesirable emotional reactions in this country: a feeling of guilt at "our" having done this to "them," and anxiety lest some future "they" do this to "us." Both feelings were heightened by the super-human *scale* of The Bomb. The Authorities have therefore made valiant attempts to reduce the thing to a human context, where such concepts as Justice, Reason, Progress could be employed. Such moral defenses are offered as: the war was shortened and many lives, Japanese as well as American, saved; "we" had to invent and use The Bomb against "them" lest "they" invent and use it against "us"; the Japanese deserved it because they started the war, treated prisoners barbarously, etc., or because they refused to surrender. The flimsiness of these justifications is apparent; *any* atrocious action, absolutely *any* one, could be excused on such grounds. For there is really only one possible

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answer to the problem posed by Dostoevsky's Grand Inquisitor: if all mankind could realize eternal and complete happiness by torturing to death a single child, would this act be morally justified?

Somewhat subtler is the strategy by which The Authorities—by which term I mean not only the political leaders but also the scientists, intellectuals, trade-unionists and businessmen who function on the top levels of our society—tried to ease the deep fears aroused in every one by The Bomb. From President Truman down, they emphasized that The Bomb has been produced in the normal, orderly course of scientific experiment, that it is thus simply the latest step in man's long struggle to control the forces of nature, in a word that it is Progress. But this is a knife that cuts both ways: the effect on me, at least, was to intensify some growing doubts about the "Scientific Progress" which had whelped this monstrosity. Last April, I noted that in our movies "the white coat of the scientist is as blood-chilling a sight as Dracula's black cape. . . . If the scientist's laboratory has acquired in Popular Culture a ghastly atmosphere, is this not perhaps one of those deep intuitions of the masses? From Frankenstein's laboratory to Maidanek [or, now, to Hanford and Oak Ridge] is not a long journey. Was there a popular suspicion, perhaps only half conscious, that the 19th century trust in science was mistaken . . . ?"

These questions seem more and more relevant. I doubt if we shall get satisfactory answers from the scientists (who, indeed, seem professionally incapable even of asking, let alone answering, them). The greatest of them all, who in 1905 constructed the equation which provided the theoretical basis for Atomic Fission, could think of nothing better to tell us after the bombings than: "No one in the world should have any fear or apprehension about atomic energy being a supernatural product. In developing atomic energy, science merely imitated the reaction of the sun's rays. ["Merely" is good!—DM] Atomic power is no more unnatural than when I sail my boat on Saranac Lake." Thus, Albert Einstein. As though it were not precisely the natural, the perfectly rational and scientifically demonstrable that is now chilling our blood! How human, intimate, friendly by comparison are ghosts, witches, spells, werewolves and poltergeists! Indeed, all of us except a few specialists know as much about witches as we do about atom-splitting; and all of us with no exceptions are even less able to defend ourselves against The Bomb than against witchcraft. No silver bullet, no crossed sticks will help us there. As though to demonstrate this, Einstein himself, when asked about the unknown radioactive poisons which were beginning to alarm even editorial writers, replied "emphatically": "I will not discuss that." Such emphasis is not reassuring.

**N**OR was President Truman reassuring when he pointed out: "This development, which was carried forward by the many thousand participants with the utmost energy and the very highest sense of national duty . . . probably represents the greatest achievement of the combined efforts of science, industry, labor and the military in all history." Nor Professor Smyth: "The weapon has been created not by the devilish inspiration of some warped genius but by the arduous labor of thousands of normal men and women

working for the safety of their country." Again, the effort to "humanize" The Bomb by showing how it fits into our normal, everyday life also cuts the other way: it reveals how inhuman our normal life has become.

The pulp writers could imagine things like the atom bomb; in fact, life is becoming more and more like a Science Fiction story, and the arrival on earth of a few six-legged Martians with Death Rays would hardly make the front page. But the pulp writers' imaginations were limited; *their* atom-bombs were created by "devilish" and "warped" geniuses, not by "thousands of normal men and women"—including some of the most eminent scientists of our time, the labor movement (the Army "warmly" thanked the AFL and the CIO for achieving "what at times seemed impossible provision of adequate manpower"), various great corporations (DuPont, Eastman, Union Carbon & Carbide), and the president of Harvard University.

Only a handful, of course, knew what they were creating. None of the 125,000 construction and factory workers knew. Only three of the plane crew that dropped the first bomb knew what they were letting loose. It hardly needs to be stressed that there is something askew with a society in which vast numbers of citizens can be organized to create a horror like The Bomb without even knowing they are doing it. What real content, in such a case, can be assigned to notions like "democracy" and "government of, by and for the people"? The good Professor Smyth expresses the opinion that "the people of this country" should decide for themselves about the future development of The Bomb. To be sure, no vote was taken on the creation and employment of the weapon. However, says the Professor reassuringly, these questions "have been seriously considered by all concerned [i.e., by the handful of citizens who were permitted to know what was going on] and vigorously debated among the scientists, and the conclusions reached have been passed along to the highest authorities.

"These questions are not technical questions; they are political and social questions, and the answers given to them may affect all mankind for generations. In thinking about them, the men on the project have been thinking as citizens of the United States vitally interested in the welfare of the human race. It has been their duty and that of the responsible high Government officials who were informed to look beyond the limits of the present war and its weapons to the ultimate implications of these discoveries. This was a heavy responsibility.

"In a free country like ours, such questions should be debated by the people and decisions must be made by the people through their representatives."

It would be unkind to subject the above to critical analysis beyond noting that every statement of what-is contradicts every statement of what-should-be.

**A**TOMIC FISSION makes me sympathize, for the first time, with the old Greek notion of *Hubris*, that lack of restraint in success which invited the punishment of the gods. Some scientist remarked the other day that it was fortunate that the only atom we as yet know how to split is that of uranium, a rare substance; for if we should learn how to split the atom of iron or some other common ore, the chain reaction might flash through vast areas and the



molten interior of the globe come flooding out to put an end to us and our Progress. It is *Hubris* when President Truman declares: "The force from which the sun draws its powers has been loosed against those who brought war to the Far East." Or when the *Times* editorialist echoes: "The American answer to Japan's contemptuous rejection of the Allied surrender ultimatum of July 26 has now been delivered upon Japanese soil in the shape of a new weapon which unleashes against it the forces of the universe." Invoking the Forces of the Universe to back up the ultimatum of July 26 is rather like getting in God to tidy up the living room.

IT seems fitting that The Bomb was not developed by any of the totalitarian powers, where the political atmosphere might at first glance seem to be more suited to it, but by the two "democracies," the last major powers to continue to pay at least ideological respect to the humanitarian-democratic tradition. It also seems fitting that the heads of these governments, by the time The Bomb exploded, were not Roosevelt and Churchill, figures of a certain historical and personal stature, but Attlee and Truman, both colorless mediocrities, Average Men elevated to their positions by the mechanics of the system. All this emphasizes that perfect automatism, that absolute lack of human consciousness or aims which our society is rapidly achieving. As an uranium "pile," once the elements have been brought together, inexorably runs through a series of "chain reactions" until the final explosion takes place, so the elements of our society act and react, regardless of ideologies or personalities, until The Bomb explodes over Hiroshima. The more commonplace the personalities and senseless the institutions, the more grandiose the destruction. It is *Gottterdammerung* without the gods.

The scientists themselves whose brain-work produced The Bomb appear not as creators but as raw material, to be hauled about and exploited like uranium ore. Thus, Dr. Otto Hahn, the German scientist who in 1939 first split the uranium atom and who did his best to present Hitler with an atom bomb, has been brought over to this country to pool his knowledge with our own atomic "team" (which includes several Jewish refugees who were kicked out of Germany by Hitler). Thus Professor Kaputza, Russia's leading experimenter with uranium, was decoyed from Cambridge University in the thirties back to his native land, and, once there, refused permission to return. Thus a recent report from Yugoslavia tells of some eminent native atom-splitter being highjacked by the Red Army (just like a valuable machine tool) and rushed by plane to Moscow.

INsofar as there is any moral responsibility assignable for The Bomb, it rests with those scientists who developed it and those political and military leaders who employed it. Since the rest of us Americans did not even know what was being done in our name—let alone have the slightest possibility of stopping it—The Bomb becomes the most dramatic illustration to date of that fallacy of collective responsibility which I analyzed in "The Responsibility of Peoples."

Yet how can even those immediately concerned be held

responsible? A general's function is to win wars, a president's or prime minister's to defend the interests of the ruling class he represents, a scientist's to extend the frontiers of knowledge; how can any of them, then, draw the line at the atom bomb, or indeed anywhere, regardless of their "personal feelings"? The dilemma is absolute, when posed in these terms. The social order is an impersonal mechanism, the war is an impersonal process, and they grind along automatically; if some of the human parts rebel at their function, they will be replaced by more amenable ones; and their rebellion will mean that they are simply thrust aside, without changing anything. The Marxists say this must be so until there is a revolutionary change; but such a change never seemed farther away. What, then, can a man do *now*? How can he escape playing his part in the ghastly process?

Quite simply by not playing it. Many eminent scientists, for example, worked on The Bomb: Fermi of Italy, Bohr of Denmark, Chadwick of England, Oppenheimer, Urey and Compton of USA. It is fair to expect such men, of great knowledge and intelligence, to be aware of the consequences of their actions. And they seem to have been so. Dr. Smyth observes: "Initially, many scientists could and did hope that some principle would emerge which would prove that atomic bombs were inherently impossible. The hope has faded gradually. . . ." Yet they all accepted the "assignment," and produced The Bomb. Why? Because they thought of themselves as specialists, technicians, and not as complete men. Specialists in the sense that the process of scientific discovery is considered to be morally neutral, so that the scientist may deplore the uses to which his discoveries are put by the generals and politicians but may not refuse to make them for that reason; and specialists also in that they reacted to the war as partisans of one side, whose function was the narrow one of defeating the Axis governments even if it meant sacrificing their broader responsibilities as human beings.

But, fortunately for the honor of science, a number of scientists refused to take part in the project. I have heard of several individual cases over here, and Sir James Chadwick has revealed "that some of his colleagues refused to work on the atomic bomb for fear they might be creating a planet-destroying monster." These scientists reacted as whole men, not as special-ists or part-isans. Today the tendency is to think of peoples as responsible and individuals as irresponsible. The reversal of both these conceptions is the first condition of escaping the present decline to barbarism. The more each individual thinks and behaves as a whole Man (hence responsibly) rather than as a specialized part of some nation or profession (hence irresponsibly), the better hope for the future. To insist on acting as a responsible individual in a society which reduces the individual to importance may be foolish, reckless, and ineffectual; or it may be wise, prudent and effective. But whichever it is, only thus is there a chance of changing our present tragic destiny. All honor then to the as yet anonymous British and American scientists—Men I would rather say—who were so wisely foolish as to refuse their cooperation on The Bomb! This is "resistance," this is "negativism," and in it lies our best hope.



## THE BOMB (2): Birthplace

**I**N the Pacific Northwest, at Hanford Engineer Works, Washington, is a totalitarian microcosm wherein an aggregation of workers nearly equal to the population of Lansing, Michigan, labors on a war project whose purposes are a military secret.\* Nearly an entire county in the Columbia River valley has been turned into a military reservation under the ostensible control of the U.S. Army Engineers, but actually administered by the prime contractor, E. I. DuPont de Nemours and Co.

The first impression of Hanford is that of an immense concentration camp, for the entire barracks area, as well as each group of barracks within the area, are surrounded by substantial barbed wire fences. "Reminds me of the bullpens in the old Wobbly days," remarked one old-timer. Hanford swarms with armed police, all wearing badges ornamented with the familiar DuPont trade mark. "Law and order" on this so-called military reservation is enforced by this privately-owned police force, which also inspects the baggage of every person entering or leaving Hanford. The only brick building in Hanford is the DuPont jail.

"White-only" signs are everywhere. The superior race has its exclusion warning on so many of the Hanford toilets that one might wonder where a Negro worker defecates. Negroes are segregated the minute the DuPont receptionist meets them at the Pasco train station. In Hanford they find "colored" barracks, a "colored" theatre, a "colored" trailer camp, a "colored" recreation hall, "colored" beer taverns, a "colored" church, a "colored" athletic field, a "colored" dance hall, a "colored" mess hall, and a "colored" swimming hole. The accommodations are not only separate, but in most cases, unequal.

In the entire camp not one office, clerical, or supervisory position is held by a Negro. "We let the niggers do the hard work," a Texan commented. One might marvel at their patience as he watched the colored sanitation squads removing the depositories from under the latrine seats, in order to empty the Aryan excrement into waiting trucks for removal to the desert.

Negro talent, however, supplies the major portion of entertainment at Hanford's community hall. Negro dancers, bands, and singers, both men and women, after their days work — often performed under a 120 degree sun in the summer time — entertain without pay on many a night before exclusive white audiences.

Hanford's white manual workers are 100% organized, thanks to DuPont's recognition of the value to them of conservative unionism. Joining the union is part of the hiring process at DuPont. The workers pay dues to safe, reliable A.F.L. craft organizations. Fortunes now roll into the coffers of the Spokane labor skates in return for the working permits they issue through barred windows in

\*The secret is now out: Hanford manufactured atom bombs. (This report was written last Spring.) The disregard of human comfort, convenience and freedom; the reduction of the fifty-thousand odd workers to well-paid peons, without rights and without dignity; the racial segregation enforced by the U.S. Government itself; the role of the trade unions as parasitic disciplinarians of their "members" — all these features of what might laughingly be called "life" at Hanford now appear as the fit setting for the manufacture of the new super-destroyer. The almost unbelievable alienation of the modern American industrial worker from the products of his labor reached some kind of a climax at Hanford, where some fifty thousand workers didn't even know what they were making.

their Pasco branch offices. No bother about meetings or elections. No one seems to care.

Not that the workers don't have any gripes. They grumble about many things, some of which can't be helped, and some which can. They talk of the heat in summer and the cold in winter, the perpetual dust storms, the food, the congestion which makes it necessary to stand in line a half hour for a postage stamp, the abominable transportation, bad living conditions, bad foremen, the high cost of many goods and services, when available, getting docked one-fifth hours overtime pay for five seconds tardiness, and travelling long distances without pay to and from the work areas.

The workers however do not think much of their unions as fighting instruments, partly because many of them are simply floaters or ex-sharecroppers who are not union-conscious anyway, partly because their only contact with the union is as a dues-payer. Dissatisfied workers therefore, take the simple way out: termination of employment. The average duration of employment at one time was said to be 17 days. The termination office is jammed every day in the week from dawn to dusk. Every bus-load of new workers coming into Hanford sees a bus-load of terminated workers heading out. There are of course occasional spontaneous sitdown strikes, on a small scale. The men participating in them are sometimes arrested, then involuntarily terminated. There is no leadership, apparently, for any widespread organized protest.

There is one group of workers on the project however, who do not strike and do not terminate. These are the state prison inmates farmed out to DuPont by the State of Washington, who are housed at the Columbia Prison Camp, several miles from Hanford.

In Hanford's bleak trailer camp are the only provisions for workers' families, and the workers must provide their own trailers. Here swarms of children play in the dirt, often while both parents work. From time to time one of these kids starts a fire in a trailer and gets roasted to death, or killed in some other way. One single elementary school, run on a shift basis, is provided for the children's educational needs. For the children of the trailer camps which line the road outside the reservation, there is no such good fortune. Here even elementary sanitary conveniences are often lacking, and the native citizenry of Pasco and Kennewick are in constant dread of an epidemic stemming from these camps.

The executives and white-collar workers of Hanford fare much better. DuPont has built for them a special town, at Richland. Here they have furnished apartments, green lawns, trees, a high school, and less crowded conditions. Those single men of Hanford's privileged caste who prefer to live on the reservation have the choicest barracks, and their own mess halls where they may listen to music and news reports while they eat in air cooled comfort.

Hanford's shopping district would be adequate for a town of a thousand or two, instead of the fifty thousand and up who reside there. Workers seeking a haircut wait an hour in line at two barber shops. There is but one shoe repair shop, one dentist, one cleaner, one optometrist, two drug stores, one beauty parlor, one grocery store, one bank, one small department store, and one jewelry and repair shop. One waits two or three weeks for services such as shoe repair, laundry, or cleaning, and pays 50% above normal prices. There is no place else to go, as the private concessionaires know.

Hanford was once a little community of a few hundred in the center of a quiet fruit farming region, with shady streets alongside the river. Now all the little farm houses



are demolished, many of the trees cut down, the natives driven out, their cherry, plum, and apricot orchards forcibly sold at give-away prices. Today Hanford is the fourth largest town in the state of Washington.

None of Hanford's new residents have anything to say about its administration. There is no mayor, no council, no elections. Hanford is a newer and more efficient edition of the American "company town" than has heretofore been seen. The workers at Hanford are there for one reason, and one reason only: the lure of higher pay than they have ever earned before. Even clerks and laborers get \$1 an hour and up, plus overtime pay for a 54 hour week. They pay \$14 a week board, and much of the remainder is saved. The strongest liquor allowed in Hanford is beer, and those who get away to Pasco or Yakima on week-ends find liquor rationed by the state.

Workers at Hanford are not especially patriotic. When management imagined that Hanford's workers might like to donate one day's pay to buy a B-29 bomber for the Army air force, they found a few workers willing to give this proposition the appearance of spontaneity from below. But when the collections were counted, it became necessary to compromise on a smaller, B-17 bomber. A rumor that the management was still \$100,000 in the red was given some credence when entertainments were scheduled to meet the deficit.

Oddly enough, little has been heard of the enormous enterprise at Hanford. Rare is the person who knows of its existence. Hanford's staff shuns publicity, and it is forbidden to take or mail from the reservation a copy of Hanford's paper, the *Sage Sentinel*. Workers are warned not to speak or write about any phase whatever of Hanford or its conditions, lest they be arrested for espionage. These threats have apparently been successful in preventing the airing of conditions there, the revelation of which could have no conceivable value to Japanese Intelligence, but a great deal of importance to those who live in Hanford.

But Hanford needs to be exposed, as an example of the kind of regimented existence which is growing in America. That is why this report has been written.

VIRGIL J. VOGEL

## THE BOMB (3): Observations from an Asylum

I AM an anthropology student in the daytime and an attendant in an insane asylum at nights. How I came to such a situation is irrelevant to what follows, though offering of itself a wry comment on our times.

Here, I wish to discuss the effects of atomic power on the life of man. Aside from the magnitude of the invention, the need for such discussion rises from imperative psychological factors. The disruption of *Weltanschauung* can be likened to that caused by the Copernican or Darwinian formulations, enhanced by a physical confirmation so absolute that it cannot be ignored or denied and will return again and again to assault petty emotional adjustments. In *Die psychologische Bedeutung des Schweigens*, Reik pointed out the association of death with silence and the consequent compulsion, in our culture, to talk for the reduction of anxiety. To those whose orientation is toward print, the compulsion is also to read or publish.

The imperious nature of the emotional challenge strikes all sectors of the social structure, top, middle, and bottom. That the atom-wielders themselves are not immune is shown by their behavior at the July 16th experimental explosion

in New Mexico. Lying on the ground "spellbound," scarcely breathing, maintaining an impossible silence, their very bodies assumed an attitude of death. After the explosion, they literally *leaped to life* again, first smiling, then embracing each other "with shouts of glee." President Truman, that little man, displayed a similar need for utterance and companionship, walking all over the warship, *Augusta*, repeating the news personally to many men.

Science's manipulations of nature have previously been on an anthropomorphic scale, tools operating by extension of elementary mechanical principles. Combustion and electricity marked changes in the direction of basic energy utilization, but the devices for their implementation were cumbersome and the quantity of energy obtained was comparatively limited. Now there is no limit but that of primal cosmic law. The consequences of this prospect transcend any in recorded history and render the pout and prance of warring classes as the tinkle of so much glass in an empty room.

Our generation has been twice tested by the insanities of fascism and war. The lethal use of atomic power mounts a more massive assault upon the core of consciousness. Now man is denied the solace of natural decay, and earth itself dissolves into the ceaseless, insensate flow and counterflow of substance and energy. But the very enormity of the accomplishment provides a defense against these psychological dangers, making them only partially perceptible to the individual. The phenomena must be translated into popular terms to be intelligible, and translation weakens the shock; at the same time it increases the feeling of insufficiency, encouraging irrational modes of thought and submissiveness to authority.

For there is no gainsaying the fact that the conquest of atomic power is a tremendous victory for capitalist society, which is immeasurably strengthened (and it will exploit the strength) by the same forces that will eventually transform it. Few Marxists would have thought such an inchoate, profligate, reactionary culture could compass this technological revolution. And yet the exigencies of war, climaxing a rapidly cumulative scientific epoch, conspired to fructify the speculations of physicists.

The real triumph, of course, belongs to these scientists, that strange breed of intellect whom the workings of social law have turned to channels of abstraction, experiment, and computation. They are not the most prized members of bourgeois society. Indeed, the caricature of the professor as an eccentric, absent-minded and impractical character reveals the tolerant scorn with which they are regarded. The patent-bound monopolist structure of American industry has frustrated radical technological departures of human worth while multiplying redundancies and trinkets for the return of so many pieces of coin. It was scientists in university laboratories who cracked the atom, while industrial technicians repackaged old toys.

Despite incandescent future developments, the immediate results of atomic power can only be interpreted in existent cultural patterns. This is apparent from the reaction of the press to the atomic bomb in urging anew that the United Nations organization become the instrumentality for maintaining peace. It is also apparent from every social detail as yet revealed of the manufacturing process, from its patent-



ing by three governments—imagine patenting the law of gravitation or the Einstein equation!—to the choice of gentlemen-scientists with big-business connections (Compton, Conant, Bush) for the directing commission. But its use as a bomb speaks most strongly of all.

Genius would cry reason, and conscience dictate mercy in employing this terrible power. But the small-minded men in high office are irresponsible of human values. In the use of the atomic bomb, American scientists, generals and politicians have tapped an absolute of evil whose quality can not be exceeded. These heathen! Their moral opacity, adolescent hatred, imperial design, and calculated experiment have succeeded in an enterprise where fascist sadism failed.

There was no need for the atrocities of Hiroshima and Nagasaki. The war was already won. If a demonstration were required to encourage surrender, the bombs could just as well have been dropped on an uninhabited forest area. And if peace were desired, it could have been achieved long before by the acceptance of one of many peace offers from the pathetic Japanese. But if peace were desired, the war would never have been begun.

As it is, the bomb makers overreached themselves, precipitating a premature peace with its attendant economic crisis. Our own society, although physically safe, could not long have endured the emotional impact of insane atomic warfare against the enemy. Its stability was threatened by fear of ultimate reprisal in kind (in a later war) and by opposition from within, as well as by ambivalent attitudes among those who favored its use, such as Truman's limp apologies betrayed. Thus Hanson Baldwin, military expert of the *New York Times*, writing on August 7:

"In war—particularly this war—it is almost useless to talk of the 'rules' of war. . . . Yet when this is said, we have sowed the whirlwind. Much of our bombing throughout this war—like the enemy's—has been directed against cities, and hence against civilians. Because our bombing has been more effective and hence more devastating, Americans have become a synonym for destruction. And now we have been the first to introduce a new weapon . . . which will sow the seeds of hate more rapidly than ever. We may yet reap the whirlwind."

What can we expect for the immediate future?

In America, centralization of industry with governmental control and emasculation of personality will be enhanced by the vast enterprise needed to monopolized atomic production. No better description of this age can be given than the War Department account of the Oak Ridge atom plant:

"They are the most remarkable chemical plants ever conceived or designed by man, where enormous quantities of materials are handled through many successive processes with no human eye ever seeing what actually goes on, except through a complicated series of dials. . . . Not only did the workers not know what they were producing in the mammoth plants . . . but the vast majority could not be sure they were actually producing anything. They would see huge quantities of material going into the plants but nothing coming out. This created an atmosphere of unreality, in which giant plants operated feverishly day and night to produce nothing that could be seen or touched."\*

\*The August 6 issue of *Life* describes an underground German bomb factory: "Slave laborers worked 12 hours a day, were fed soup, bread, margarine, ersatz tea. They had no idea what they were building."

How far we have progressed toward the American National State is testified by the secret construction of these enormous plants, with two billion dollars' of public funds. Workers were brought blindly to the artificially manufactured cities with the cooperation of organized labor and the compulsion of the War Manpower Commission.

Direct or indirect conscription will naturally be continued in this peaceful postwar era of rocket planes and atom bombs, nor will the two ocean navy be scrapped, though apparently obviated by the new weapons. Because, of course, regimentation and production necessities rather than rational military requirements will determine large war expenditures.

Well, I am no longer predicting, but merely describing our ingenious civilization. The same paper that brought news of the bombing carried an item on Nijinsky, discovered by Red Army soldiers in Vienna. Hearing his language, he spoke for the first time in twenty-two years. "Then in one breath he leaped out before them as he used to leap out on the stage and started dancing." ("I want to dance the war," he said in 1916, in a last, impassioned performance.) Nijinsky is getting bald and, in common with other Viennese, is skeleton-thin. "He cannot understand why he does not have food, and must always be hungry." He thinks it is because of something he has done.

In this country, there was no visible commotion over the bomb. In New Haven, the trolleys ran as usual, and the fat white post on the Green held its traditional quota of faded court notices. There were no clusters of persons round the newsstands. At the hospital, fellow attendants gossiped about the day's trivia.

As public attention has turned from the implications of atomic power, so will the brief shock subside and the customary relations of pre-atomic culture continue. But a difference should gradually be perceived, perhaps with some rapidity. The conflicts of class and race call more loudly for solution, and the battles will be intensified. I do not presume to know whether a nationalized or a socialist state will ultimately emerge, but it would be false optimism to say the latter. American capitalism has never been so strong (the world is its hinterland), or socialism so weak (the world is its grave) as today. The atomic weapon will be zealously guarded by the armies of reaction and presumably it comes in various sizes. Physical insurrection becomes impossible. But there is no cause for despair, only patience. A society is sapped from within, and falls of its own weight. It will be a long time before this one falls.

HAROLD ORLANSKY

F L A S H ! ! !

we have just been informed

through a usually reliable

source that 84% of the men

who planned the atomic bomb

are subscribers to the New

Republic end of flash &/or

B A N G ! ! !

JAMES LAUGHLIN



# THE SOLDIER REPORTS

## American Zone, Germany

Because I know German, last winter I was transferred from a line company to battalion headquarters, where I have been working of late with AMG. You have no idea of the ignorance of politics and history an AMG officer possesses.

The "All Germans are guilty" line brought rather funny consequences. (Funny, is perhaps the wrong word and tragic might be better.) In one town, the population nearly lynched the Buergermeister for refusing to surrender yet the same man was appointed by us. Displaced persons loot and murder, and the AMG officer, unable to do anything about it asks me to tell the people that they are to blame for it, having starved them (the DP's) etc. and I dutifully translate "Der Leutnant sagt:" . . . Everything that was done or left undone in the realm of AMG depended primarily on the officer holding that position. Once, about ten at night I was called on by the Lt. to go down town as some guards had brought in a suspect. He was accused of having told the people that the SS would return. I questioned him (he was over 60) rather thoroughly and am convinced that it was simply a case of the guards misunderstanding. The lieutenant agreed with this, but, not wishing to bother taking the man home (there was a curfew) put him in jail for the night, and forgot about him for several days. Possession of a weapon is punishable by 15 years imprisonment. . . .

The following incident seems to me to typify Military Govt. We had finished eating (food was served in front of the house) and there was a large amount left over. Children from between 6-10 were standing around hoping to catch a morsel. We then proceeded to dig a hole and bury the food.

I spoke to quite a number of people and was surprised at their utter lack of knowledge of the concentration camp. I remember once I had a letter from an inmate of a camp with me and read it. Two of them started crying.

As interpreter, the task of getting billets also fell to me. It was about the most disgusting, sickening and nauseating thing that had yet happened to me. You knock at the door, and politely inform the tenants that they must have the house cleared within an hour. Once a kid fell on his knees and begged me to leave them stay and there isn't a god-damned thing you can do except tell them that you are very sorry, but that you have your orders "es ist ein befehl." I nearly asked for a transfer back to a line company just to get out of that sort of thing . . . but I knew that if I didn't do it, someone else would do it, and I could at least get concessions for the people (yes, you can take some food with you, etc. . . .)

At present I am in a redeployment camp, working in the motor pool supervising PW's. Their food is meager and poor, but I have been able to get some extra food for the 30 or so working with me. Their attitude towards politics is one of aloofness "I don't want to have to do anything with it."

You probably remember the joke of the Irishman, who, when asked what his politics were said "I'm agin the government." Well, from what I have seen that Irishman wasn't so dumb at all.

## Sudetenland, Czechoslovakia

The population here is 90% German or better. The fellows were all overjoyed when we came here. It seems the Czechs have a strange custom of remaining more or less virgin until they marry, and the boys had a pretty hard time of it in Bohemia. The people were of course very friendly, and they gave dances for us and ceremonies and such, but every time "the Czechs" are mentioned now there's usually an uncomplimentary adjective prefixed. Here in X, the Czechs hate the Germans and vice versa, and each night at curfew time a Czech patrol walks through the town. The girls of course are very much afraid of them. I'm beginning to hear rumors about "the goddam Czechs shooting up a bunch of guys from another division", and already some of my friends are saying the Czechs would just as soon shoot you as a German.

The American soldier is politically about as sophisticated as a Ubangi. As soon as we got here, rumors began to fly about the Russians. Our convoy was escorted by armored recon cars mounting 37's and the crew of the one behind us informed us that we were digging in along the Russian occupational frontier. As a matter of fact, the scout car was on account of SS snipers in some woods, and the "digging in" was the maintaining of sentries on roads on our boundary line. But at the time our truck buzzed with conjecture. One staff-sergeant from Missouri said, "By God, if we start fighting the Russians, that's where I quit!" But he laughed like hell when he said it. If we had been moved immediately into an attack on the Russians, we all would have bitched our heads off — and gone on.

I am now living right spang in the middle of a purge, or persecution, or whatever you want to call it: the liquidation of the Sudeten Germans. From what's going on around here, you'd think the Germans and the Czechs were as different as cats and mice, with the Czechs currently raised to the position of the cat.

All Germans who came here after 1938 have been deported, minus valuables and with a maximum of money set by the Czechs. Those who are left wear arm-bands with a big black "N" (for "Nimetsky," or "German"), have been robbed of their jewelry and radios, and wait in line at places where there are lines, while the Czechs are served immediately. The Czech government's policy is to replace the post-1938 Germans with Czechs; this might be a logical and even just policy, but when it comes down to individual cases, it turns out to be a thing of pettiness and malice. . . .

I am pleased to learn that we now will be able to press a button and disintegrate the entire world whenever we get to feeling blue.

## Somewhere-in-Belgium

Only interesting thing I see going on locally is the conception of Germany which *The Stars & Stripes* and *Yank* are deliberately building up among their soldier-readers. With non-fraternization dropped, the impression given is that Germany is a free whore-house for all and sundry. Prices are quoted at 3 to 5 cigarettes for a fraulein's favors, articles have been run on the "kissing technique" of German girls, etc. All of this is supposed to sound very exciting to the soldiers not yet in Germany, but who will be soon. It is supposed to act as a compensation for not going home. I've talked to soldiers out of Germany, and they tell me that this leg-art is no more true than the exaggerated view we got of French women, prior to D-day, through the same agencies.



Interesting to watch Russia exhort the Germans to organize their own political parties. It's a fine technique of finding out who the potential leaders of Germany are, and also, incidentally, who the potential opposition to Russia might be.

### Steyr, Austria

Right now I'm working on a sanitation detail in a Dispossessed Persons camp here. This evening I went over the "Buchenwald Before the War" piece in your June issue with a German Jew who was in Buchenwald from October, 1938, to November, 1942. He knew all the political figures mentioned in the article. His story wasn't much different, except he said those who helped their comrades the most were not the Reds or political prisoners, but the religious pacifists; and those who suffered the most at the hands of the prisoners and the SS were some 600 homosexuals. The least anti-semitic element among the prisoners seemed to be the common criminals. The bitterest hatred for Jews was expressed not by the SS guards (several ex-prisoners state that many of their SS keepers weren't at all bad people — and that there were fine men among them) but by the Ukrainian and Russian prisoners themselves. Those prisoners who were in both Polish and German camps speak with much more horror of what went on in Lublin, Oświęcim, Treblinka, and Krakow. The Poles have been notorious anti-semites since the 19th century, and they furnished much of the operating personnel of the death camps.

All of the DP's speak with contempt of the easygoing tactics of the American Army with the German people. If you think the press back home is laying it on with a heavy hand, you should listen to some of these DP's. Their hatred is understandable — considering what they have gone through in the past 5-6 years — but there is no one to direct their negativism into positive channels, so they founder in a sea of disillusionment, cynicism and bitterness.

Yesterday I was chatting with a couple of youngsters — one 8 year old girl, and a boy of 9. We got around to talking about the Nazis, and they told me that the man we had just passed standing in a doorway was a former Nazi functionary now working for the AMG. They added that the Nazis are saying they will come back to Austria in two years. They couldn't understand who so many former Nazis are working for AMG.

I showed the pictures of the Parisian truckdriver on the June cover to some former concentration camp prisoners. They said he didn't look at all bad in the second picture. I had to agree. The faces and bodies of the prisoners that I saw at Guzen and Mathausen camps, soon after our tanks had rolled into this country, were less than human. I had to turn away, I felt ashamed of being a human and well fed. The atrocities are true — you can probably believe the weirdest of them — but the shame of it all is that the hypocritical "anti-fascists" are only now shouting from the housetops the crimes of the fascists.

### Darmstadt, Germany

"Listen to me, *bitte*, for only a moment," he began. "You are a young man, an American of perhaps 25. You have been a soldier perhaps for three or four years and perhaps have gone through much . . . But know this: there is no unhappier soul, no more hopeless and unfortunate human being, in all the world than the German . . . I was a young boy when the war broke in 1914. My life was just begin-

ning. During those four years I lost my father and I lost a brother. After the war the inflation wiped out what was left of my family. We lost our money and our home. I grew up in a war and tried to make my way in the hard years of a depression. Then came political crises and one lived in uncertainty and tension, and then more and more in fear. For a while under Hitler material things became a little better. But we were trapped in a dictatorship. Our hands and feet were shackled, our mouth was sealed. And then another war came. My little business was gone. My wife died in the bombings, from anxiety and broken nerves. And now in this ghost of a city I live and work and hope again for a few years of peace . . . What has become of my life? I am now almost fifty, almost an old man! All my days have fled, and when have I known even an hour of calm and happiness? It is almost too late for anything but to finish up . . . This is what has become of our lives. And this is the story of our Germany too."

(1)

### LESSER CHURCHILL VICTORY FORESEEN

—Headline in N. Y. Times, July 26.

(2)

### CHURCHILL IS DEFEATED IN LABOR LANDSLIDE

—Headline in N. Y. Times, July 27.

### WITH THE HEAVY THINKERS

Rio de Janeiro: The flying bomb is an unlawful weapon but the atomic bomb is lawful, according to the Interamerican Juridical Commission meeting here. The commission reached its decision after hearing an address by Prof. Charles Fenwick, American delegate.

Professor Fenwick stressed that the flying bomb's blast could not be directed to any given point, but the atomic bomb could be guided so as not to hit undefended areas. — N. Y. Times, August 11.

### THE MILITARY MIND (Cont'd.)

Text of a mimeographed questionnaire circulated by the commanding officer of Camp Wolters, Texas, among his troops to ascertain their views on the "Negro Question":

The question of whether or not the Negro should be permitted to vote has become something of a public issue.

	Yes	No.
1. Do you believe this so-called "Negro Question" is related in any way to the issues involved in the war between Germany, Japan and the United States?	—	—
2. Do you believe that solving this "Negro Question" in any way would help the war effort (bring about the defeat of Germany and Japan)?	—	—
3. Is there any reason why those of us here in Camp Wolters should concern ourselves with this "Negro Question" as part of our job in fighting the war?	—	—
4. Is there anything being done in Camp Wolters that you know about to help the Negro solve this so-called problem?	—	—
5. Is there any reason for helping the Negro at this particular time?	—	—



# Koestler, or Tragedy Made Futile

By Nicola Chiaromonte

## 1

**D**IALOGUE with *Death* (1938) and *Scum of the Earth* (1941) were good examples of independent journalism, journalism in the first person. The person was sensitive and clever. He had gone through experiences that were typical of the brutal absurdity of the contemporary world. His account had a peculiar quality of resentful truthfulness: "Whatever may be their relation to any ideology or generality, these are the facts. And maybe the truth is that between facts and ideologies there is no relation at all any more, and this is what we are up against, we who still have ideas about man and a better world." Since this was implied rather than stated, it was a matter for reflection, and to that extent one found Koestler significant. He seemed to belong to a certain company of leftist intellectuals whose point of honor was to fight their way from the night of brutal realities to some kind of intellectual clarity, and not the other way round, from a number of intellectual postulates to the nullification of hard facts by preconceived generalities.

*Darkness at Noon* (1940) was a brilliant dramatization of a hypothetical Old Bolshevik's miserable end. But nothing more. Certainly not revealing, in the sense in which a real work of art reveals an unsuspected truth. Its "explanation" of the Moscow trials consisted in developing one out of the two or three current hypotheses about that sinister enigma. Koestler's cleverness was spent in arranging Marxist motives so as to serve the purpose of the logical tension in a mystery-story. As for the rest, Rubashev's character is described with stock-in-trade devices. The assumption that his debasement is a purely dialectical drama is artistically and historically absurd. Rubashev is a hardened State official, not a lofty intellectual, a man who has consented for many years to serve as a tool and to manipulate his convictions, and of whose moral degradation Koestler gives a number of examples. To explain him simply in intellectual terms is pleading for him, not understanding him. Shall we say that with *Darkness at Noon* Koestler succeeded in providing a popular formula of The Bolshevik, one of those formulas that are so successful because they do not say anything true, but only give people the illusion of understanding what they do not understand, and wouldn't bother to understand anyway, being, as they are, no more than curious about them?

*Arrival and Departure* (1943), however, was something far worse. There, Arthur Koestler had given up any but the most equivocal relation to facts, and had definitely taken to muddled generalities and laborious unauthenticity. That underground hero whose ideas are shattered by a series of exorcisms, or psychoanalytical seances, and to whom, after he has reached the bottom of the Unconscious, psychoanalysis is proved wrong for no reason at all, could

be the main character in a more or less fashionable story about the Lisbon refugee lore in 1940, but certainly can not be taken in any way as embodying a serious moral drama. The pointlessness of his adventures and inner tortures is perfectly symbolized in the scene where this political fighter is terror-stricken by the streamlined logic of the triumphant young Nazi expounding to him a New Order which is the exact replica of the Socialdemocratic utopia of the 1880's. If such was the stamina of this man's convictions, one is forced to conclude that no Freud is needed to explain why they have gone to pieces. On the other hand, if the key to the situation is not an intellectual but a psychological one, then the only assumption that makes the political aspect of the story intelligible is that the man is upset not by any ideological doubt but simply by the tremendous success of the Nazis, theoretically so baffling and personally so frightening. In order to admit this we have also to assume that there is somewhere in this man's psyche the notion that the final test of his beliefs is success or failure. His side has been defeated, hence shown wrong; the other side has won, hence it is fundamentally right. Result: a great panic. Without a logical pattern of this kind, Koestler's story remains indeed incomprehensible. The motive of failure and success is not, however, the one Koestler chose to develop. Fascination with success is an important contemporary motive, and one which is far from foreign to many current modes of thought, including Marxism. An interesting story could have been written on it. But in *Arrival and Departure* it remains hidden and, so to speak, repressed. Koestler preferred to it the description of a meaningless Revolution of the Unconscious, ending with the collapsed revolutionist's parachuting into Germany from a British plane (Intelligence Service, apparently). Some people have objected to this finale as being inconsistent with the rest of the story. But, really, such a hero could have ended in a number of ways without becoming either more or less improbable than he is.

## 2

The key to such failures, some might say, is pretentiousness, wanting to be the Dostoevski of the fallen Left. But Koestler under pressure, in the Spanish jails or the concentration camp of Le Vernet, had no pretense. He was a decent and perceptive fellow with a small amount of literary affectation. Can it be that, having lost contact with actual personal suffering, he also lost the ground under his feet? It is possible. But the main reason, I think, for Koestler's losing his intellectual bearings, was 1940, and the way he took it.

This was already apparent in *Scum of the Earth* where, besides a perfectly legitimate denunciation of the bestiality of the French police, there was a definite misunder-



standing of the attitude of the French people toward Hitler, toward the war and toward the defeat of their country. In observing and in judging them, Koestler never forgets the categorical imperative which has taken exclusive possession of his mind: "Fight Hitler!" Whoever is less pervaded than he is by this supreme historical duty is a *minus habens* (a "mere individual", a Hegelian would say), and a potential or actual traitor to Humanity, Civilization and Socialism. When he has a talk with a good Parisian dairy-woman who explains to him that she feels rather confused about the war, he simply thinks that these Frenchmen are hopeless. Instead of bothering to ask himself what might be the reasons for such an obviously genuine state of perplexity, and if by any chance it is not justified, he dismisses it as a disquieting case of "bad morale", and of the famous French shopkeeper mentality. He does not realize that by having accepted certain notions (Force against Appeasement, Democratic Order against Fascist Banditry, War against Surrender to Evil) he has placed himself on an "official" level: a level on which questions are decided by Strong Measures, Efficiency, Good Generalship. What people really are and feel does not count at all.

"Disintegration", and the *Panzer* approaching, plus some minor human details, is all Koestler was able to see in the French ruin. Those days of 1940, which were a tragedy for anybody who went through them thinking of the actual humanity that was being crushed, of the only too mortal triumph that had been France, of human destiny and failure, and feeling that no second-hand reasons could be invoked for such a sorrow—those days eventually become for Koestler less than a comedy: a puppet show with the Fifth Column on one side, and a people softened by too much pacifism and too much petty-bourgeoisie on the other. The official level so eagerly reached by Koestler could produce only wearisome truisms. At the root of which truisms there is again the assumption of failure and success as the final judgment on events. No "official" truth can function without it. The French national organization had failed miserably, hence the French people must have been guilty and wrong in some essential way.

I for one think that the causes of 1940 have to be sought among the same reasons that gave the French their great victories over absurdity and injustice. Precisely because clear ideas and purposes have an irresistible power over them, they can resist stubbornly half-truths and cloudy ends when it comes to issues more general than personal interest. For several years before 1940 they had been like a man who knows that he should do something, but cannot decide what, because no alternative seems convincing and, as the French very well say, "le coeur n'y est pas". In 1940, all the reasons why the French heart should not "be in it", starting with the complete divorce between the language of the people and that of the parties and statesmen, were legitimate. Of course that spelt disaster. Of course the vultures profited. Of course the French paid the price. They paid not only for their weaknesses and faults, but also for their virtues and vigor. Of course many people paid with the French and for them. But this only means that it was a real tragedy, not a sorry historical incident.

This is an opinion and might be wrong, naturally. In

the way of historical explanations, Koestler himself preferred, and still prefers, Appeasement, the Weakness of the Democracies, the Hitler-Stalin Pact, and Not Having Heeded the Warning of the Antifascists.

The trouble with this kind of causes is that they can always be countered by some more "realistic" evaluation, like for example: "What if the French had had 3,000 tanks on the Belgian border?" When weighed, one by one or all together, against the scope and the complexity of the event, such explanations become ludicrous. They can be used, of course. It all depends on what kind of history one is interested in, a history of formulas for the movies and the propaganda bureaus or a history of men for men.

I have dwelt on 1940 and Koestler in 1940 because I am convinced that it was a year of crucial decisions for everybody who went through it in Europe, and wasn't simply concerned with matters of personal safety and daily routine. The choice seemed to be between going to the bottom of one's despair, and seeing what (if anything) was left, or succumbing to psychological panic and trying to patch up in a hurry some kind of explanation, some kind of hope, some kind of normal view of things.

In the first case, the alternatives were several. It was clear that the final outcome of the historical drama depended on factors which had nothing in common with reasonable human hopes or ideas. Hence, among other things, it appeared legitimate not to let the question of the final outcome be an element of one's personal decision.

In the second case, one could decide that Hitler would become tame, that Britain would eventually win, that Stalin's tanks would finally cut the Gordian knot. And since the choice led to actions of a very dissimilar nature, it certainly made a difference which one of these hopes one grabbed at. The point however was that this kind of decision was reached on the level of makeshifts, not on that of intellectual rigor. I am not saying that it wasn't human, only that the real issue was somehow shunned.

The real issue was the conscious acceptance of a genuine experience of Fate. In the face of reality, one felt completely helpless. It was however left to one's free choice not to surrender to confusion, mystification and evil. One could doubt. One could despair. But doubt and despair could not be stopped half-way without becoming empty and frivolous attitudes.

Of all possible courses, it was apparent from *Arrival and Departure* (and from various articles published after this book) that Koestler had chosen the worst: a middle-of-the-road path between despair and provisional hopes. Despair was thrown on the psychoanalytical Super-Ego and the dullness of the Left, provisional hopes on the Lesser Evil, British Democracy, the War for Eventual Antifascism (if not the Antifascist War), without forgetting the manifold possibilities offered by the use of intellectual doubt in small doses. A true makeshift. Whatever appearance of life there was left came from the galvanizing presence of Adolph Hitler.

From the world of torture, suffering and possible awareness, Koestler had succeeded in going all the way back



to the world of chatter. Tragedy had given him nothing but futility. It was the typical futility of an intellectual who hasn't been able to face the facts, and therefore can never reach the level where questions become real. Which is what makes Koestler's case generally significant.

We had, in January 1943, the article "Knights in Rusty Armor", where Koestler told the readers of the Sunday *New York Times* about his sudden discovery that "this war turns out to be a more complicated affair than it looked at the beginning". One wondered. Who were the people to whom "the beginning", 1939 and 1940, had appeared simple? Not the European millions, at any rate. Not the conservatives and the politicians, who were full of apprehensions. In fact, "the beginning" had appeared simple only to two kinds of people: the Fascists, who thought of it in terms of young nations against old plutocracies, and the Antifascists (with whom Koestler belonged), who decided it was an inevitable Crusade. Hence Koestler's discovery that "this war is not . . . the ultimate showdown between the forces of darkness and light" could startle only a very limited number of people. Many of the readers of the Sunday *New York Times*, however, must have been pleased by this representative of the Left announcing a "conservative victory" and confessing not so much the defeat as the inanity and grotesqueness of his own side.

By now, with Major Attlee's armor suddenly shining, Koestler might write something on the coming era of Limited Socialism. It will be less significant than the consistent hold on him of the failure and success pattern. What was indeed the reason given in 1943 for the war not having developed into a Crusade? It was the fact that "the Crusaders . . . had been too often defeated to be trusted by the people". And what was the consolation and hope for a better future he offered himself and the other Knights? That "for the first time it seems that we shall be on the winning side". Onward Christian Soldiers.

Later in 1943, came another article, "The Fraternity of Pessimists", which showed a somewhat stronger dose of doubt and despair. It began with the blunt statement: "In this war we are fighting a total lie in the name of a half-truth". It went on explaining that the bad state of our affairs was due to "the collapse of all horizontal structures", i.e. the Churches, the League of Nations and the Internationals, while the "vertical giants" (i.e., the States) were very powerful. In 1943, that was no news. It wasn't untrue, either. It was rather one of those half-truths that lead nowhere except to generalizations. The Churches, the League of Nations, the Internationals are structures of a totally different kind, and by pasting on them the adjective "horizontal" nothing is gained but the conclusion that what we need is some new "horizontal" affair. That was Koestler's conclusion. He called on "an active fraternity of pessimists" to foster the "horizontal ferment" which he felt was coming. "Not a new party or sect"—he wrote—"but . . . a spiritual springtide like early Christianity or the Renaissance" (this assimilation of early Christianity to the Renaissance is another example of what can be done with a word like "horizontal", if one is lucky enough to hit on it).

Radical disillusion with parties and sects, and the need

for more consistent and more genuine forms of human solidarity and action, are moods characteristic of the moral atmosphere of today. The idea of a new "fraternity" has been popularized by Silone's rather sugary mixture of Christianity and socialism. In itself, it is a very serious idea, especially if accompanied by some attempt to put it into practice. Taken in earnest, it may or may not imply pessimism as to the destiny of man and the universe, but it certainly implies unalloyed pessimism regarding the whole framework of the present society, not only parties and sects but all current intellectual, moral and political institutions and values. Essentially, it requires the sternest of all human decisions, that of a rejection of the world as a means of giving human society a new birth. In order to withstand the pressure of history, it has to be founded on a conviction that does not depend on historical vicissitudes for its confirmation or disproof. In such a context, any preoccupation with failure or success becomes fairly irrelevant.

Koestler is journalistic enough to reach this kind of dangerous ground. But not sad enough to remain there for more than a sentence. He has hardly finished writing "pessimists" when he feels the horrible sting, and the defeatist implications of the word. He rushes on to a delightful parenthesis: "I mean short-term pessimists". Of course, of course. A long-term pessimist would be a most unwelcome guest, in this fundamentally healthy and cheerful world of ours. What we need is oases. "Let us build oases . . ." is Koestler's peroration to his fellow pessimists (short-term). In fact, he has in store for them some possibilities of a fruitful career. In a later essay, coming back to his fraternity, he outlines its constitution in a few revealing words: "a new fraternity . . . whose leaders are tied by a vow of poverty to share the life of the masses, and debarred by the laws of the fraternity from attaining *unchecked* power" (*italics mine*). It would seem as if Koestler's monks were strictly forbidden to become dictators, but not Cabinet Ministers. Quite a concession to the spirit of brotherhood.

#### 4

After which came the theory of the Yogi and the Commissar, developed in two long chapters of Koestler's latest book.\*

The Commissar, it appears, believes in "logical reasoning", in science and technology, in the end that justifies the means, and that "all pests of humanity, including constipation and the Oedipus complex, can and will be cured by revolution".

This gives us the confusing image of a mixture of Aristotle, Descartes, a number of university professors and engineers, a Jesuit, all the statesmen, diplomats, kings and potentates in the history of humanity, plus an idiot that never existed.

The Yogi, on the other hand, is, as we suspected, a mystic who believes that "the debt-servitude upon the peasants of India . . . should be abolished not by financial legislation but by spiritual means". He also lives in a perpetual worry about the "invisible umbilical cord" that

\*"The Yogi and the Commissar"; Macmillan; \$2.75.



connects him to the Universe and which he does not want to be broken.

This is evidently a mixture of the most tiresome of all marxist commonplaces about Gandhi, and (we learn a little later) of Gerald Heard as understood by Koestler.

The essential point, however, seems to be that the Commissar believes in Change from Without, while the Yogi is convinced that only Change from Within can be effective. The one represents the Revolutionary, the other the Saint.

If this is so, it follows that Koestler's Commissar can be a general, a Soviet bureaucrat, a technocrat, but hardly a revolutionist, except in the crassest Marxist stereotype. Because there is no serious revolutionist one can think of who believed that society can be changed from without, that is by purely technical means. Even for a superficial Marxist, changes come from somewhere within social processes and consciousness, and can never be operated artificially from without. On the other hand, it is hard to think of one single philosopher, mystic or saint in history who, if he thought of change at all, intended to achieve it through mere contemplation, without external activity and practical means. Even the ineffectual contemporary talk about a "change of heart" aims after all at a change of behaviour, not of mood. As for Gandhi, one can legitimately refuse to discuss him with Koestler, who thinks that Gandhi sank to his lowest when he preached "non-resistance to Japanese conquest".

Anyway, what light does it shed on anything to transform an antinomy between action and thought into an antithesis between a crazy Bolshevik and a half-witted Fakir? None, except that it permits Koestler to evade the real issue and go on chatting inconclusively.

It would be only too easy, although tedious and possibly ungenerous, to go through the maze of other Koestlerian lucubrations, and prove that they show the same superficiality, the same bad taste, the same incapacity to come to grips with real questions that he reveals on these important points. One could underline, for example, in the essay on "The Intelligentsia" (where the antics of Freudian and Marxist commonplaces are complicated by a number of "revisionistic" hints), the illuminating notion that the member of the Intelligentsia is somebody who "aspires to independent thought" while at the same time yearning for some kind of class or group to "pick him up" ("This picking up . . . is the function of a special type of people", writes Koestler. Example: "The Jacobins picked up the Encyclopedists"). Since he anticipates, the intellectual is kept waiting. The clue to this waiting is given by a Koestlerian law which says that "Social behaviour has a much greater inertia than thought". This is why "neurosis is inherent in the structure of the intelligentsias". If the waiting lasts too long, the neurosis becomes chronic. The intellectual should not be blamed for it, thinks Koestler, and treated as a petty bourgeois. If only he could have "a certain amount of frustration—not too much and not too little", just enough to stimulate his thought, he would be quite content. The only thing left, after fifteen pages of such a talk, is to imagine Diderot and Tolstoi, Marx and Kropotkin, being fed the right amount of frustration.

## 5

There are two chapters, in *The Yogi and the Commissar*, which would have deserved not to be confused with so much nonsense.

One is the essay "In Memory of Richard Hillary". Koestler's comments on excerpts from the letters of this young British aviator and writer who preferred death to a life that had become to him a sort of horrible secret, are often inflated, but at least free from lofty speculations. It is however significant that he chooses to see in his dead friend the "myth" of all the young men who fought in this war without believing in it, and almost *because* they didn't believe in it. "Desperate crusaders in search of a cross", Koestler calls them. He doesn't realize, apparently, that such metaphors cannot but serve to mask the frightful reality whose glassy meaning Hillary himself seems to have thought he could not communicate to anybody: the reality of a young life completely shut off from the world, void of all crosses and of all crusades, pervaded only by the consciousness of complete dehumanization.

The other essay, which could with some advantage be published as a separate pamphlet, is the one on *Soviet Myth and Reality*, written by Koestler in collaboration with Mrs. Margaret Dewar. But in its first pages, we are suddenly confronted with the following statement: "all the political isms might as well not have existed, and the grouping of the belligerent powers would have been much the same." One cannot help wondering why such an interesting discovery is made by the author in connection only with Stalin's war, and not also with the war of the (democratic) "half-truth" against the (nazi) "total lie".

As for the Soviet myth, the facts adduced are crushing and the argument cogent. Still, the essay is based on the usual assumption that all evils started after Lenin's death, which is highly questionable, to say the least. Moreover, one can ask what will be the reaction of the Soviet-worshipper who, after feeling his faith waver under the weight of so many facts, comes across the sentence where Koestler states that Stalin's empire is "progressive in its economic aspects and regressive in every other aspect". It is true that Koestler qualifies his statement as much as he can. Nevertheless, the reader who believes in marxist formulas and who for all we know might even be a rigid Trotskyist, can regain ground. Because in marxist terms the proposition sounds rather equivocal. If the economic structure is really progressive, then the regressive aspects will at most be mere incidents, if not fugitive appearances. The worn-out question of the Socialist State is back again. The trouble might be the magic circle of terminology. Words like "progressive" and "regressive" do not mean much, and could advantageously be dropped.

\* \* \*

Why has Koestler become, in the eyes of so many people, the conscious representative of the crisis of radical thought? Is it because of the present intellectual panic? of the moral indecisiveness characteristic of him and of so many other people today? Certainly. But there is also a more malignant fact. In his own unacceptable way, Koestler raises questions of which more sensible persons seem to be unaware (at least to the extent that they keep



silent about them) and which, on the other hand, sound real enough to others who seem unable to discuss them more clearly than Koestler himself. It is a dangerous situation. Because when questions are not answered straight, it simply means that they are abandoned to chance, muddling, and worse. But in order to start realizing the true nature of the problems of today, one has to get away from Koestlerian jumble and its motives.

At that moment, Koestler will be left at a safe distance, in the company of those nondescript pink intellectuals of whom he writes: "They never seriously attempted to sail against the wind; they abandoned themselves to its first breeze, which broke them gently from their stem, and whirled them round and dropped them gently at the other end; that is perhaps why when you hear their whisper, it sounds so much like the rattling of dead leaves."

Too metaphorical, as usual. But not inappropriate.

## THE NATIONAL SCENE

DETROIT IS THREATENED with becoming a ghost city if the reported plans of the big automobile manufacturers are carried out. General Motors, Chrysler and Ford intend to build tremendous new automobile assembly plants in scattered localities throughout the country, especially in areas where a strong labor movement does not exist. Tentative plans call for large auto plants in Wilmington, Atlanta, Kansas City, Denver — even Arizona. The ostensible reason for this huge investment in new plant capacity is the desire to bring more automobiles to the hinterland. Actually, the basic reason is the desire of the Big Three to smash the UAW.

Technically, the project would seem to be feasible. War-time experience has demonstrated that assembly into a finished end-item can still be economical at almost any location. The strategy of the automobile manufacturers therefore appears to be to produce the cars that are now permitted under quota authorization — 241,000 in 1945 and 449,000 in the first quarter of 1946 — at existing plants, but gradually to switch to the new plants once all controls are removed and production approaches prewar volumes. Naturally, there is no place in these plans for the war-expanded facilities of the automobile industry. They are not "economical."

THE UAW IS not unaware of the plans of the automobile manufacturers, but so far has been unable to formulate any counter-policy. For one thing, the union has an extremely small treasury and will not be able to maintain its membership through any lengthy period of unemployment, especially in view of the sharp factional dissention in its ranks. For another, it is already engaged in severe jurisdictional conflict with the AFL Building Trades over maintenance work and may easily find itself in conflict with other unions as well. There is some talk that the UAW will lend its support to the two new financial blocs that appear to be emerging in the automobile industry, in order to weaken the stranglehold of the Big Three. There is, first, the bloc representing the interest of Graham Paige in the Middle West and the Kaiser interest on the West Coast. While this new grouping in the auto industry seems to be short of funds, it does have considerable technical

advantages over the Big Three and may well turn out a superior low-priced car. There is also in prospect a merger that may comprise the Reo, Packard and Studebaker interests with the added possibility that such a combine would be directed by the Fisher Brothers who have sold out their interest in General Motors.

If these two new groupings take shape in the automobile industry, there will then be five powerful blocs, against which the remaining independents such as Nash, Hudson and Willys will find themselves powerless. The prospect is one of real cut-throat competition, albeit of a monopolistic character. There is little likelihood that competition will take the form of attempting to increase sales through lowering prices. Rather, as has for years been the practice within the industry, efforts will be made to increase sales through the addition of various minor gadgets designed to provide better performance. It is possible that in such a situation the UAW will be able to throw some of its strength behind the two new and smaller combines. Should these two smaller groups establish genuine collective bargaining and refuse to join in the anti-union campaign spearheaded above all by Chrysler, it is possible that the Big Three will find it extremely difficult to carry out its plan to scuttle the union by removing a large portion of automobile production from the Detroit area.

\* \* \*

THE FULL EMPLOYMENT Act of 1945, known as S. 380, introduced by Senators Murray, Wagner, Thomas of Utah, and O'Mahoney, has occasioned considerable discussion. The violence of the debate testifies to the importance of the issue. In part, however, much acrimony has been generated by the fact that the late President Roosevelt, in one of his campaign utterances, sloganized the desire of the masses for full employment by speaking of the necessity for 60 million jobs. The Act itself, however, does not mention any figure as a desirable level of employment. The Act, in fact, mentions no figures at all, but simply enunciates a general policy and vaguely suggests means of achieving it.

The key objective, in the words of the Act, is: "All Americans able to work and seeking work have the right to useful, remunerative, regular and full-time employment and it is the policy of the United States to assure the existence at all times of sufficient employment opportunities to enable all Americans who have finished their schooling and who do not have full-time housekeeping responsibilities freely to exercise this right." To make sure that no one accuses them of a radical departure from traditional American thinking, the authors also state that the policy of the Act is designed to "promote the general welfare of the Nation, foster and protect the American home and the American family, raise the standard of living, provide adequate employment opportunities for returning veterans, develop trade and commerce, strengthen the national defense and security, and preserve and strengthen competitive private enterprise, particularly small business enterprise." Thus, the Act promises all things to all men.

The means provided to achieve these notable objectives are interesting. A National Production and Employment Budget is to be established. This would require the President to submit to Congress a forecast of the estimated size of the labor force and the estimated aggregate volume of investment and expenditure by private enterprise, consumers, State and local governments, and the Federal Government. The Government would thus have to predict accurately probable future trends in the gross national product and its components — a difficult if not impossible task under capitalism. So long as it was felt that private in-



vestment would be sufficient to attain the desired volume of "full" employment, the Government would do nothing except to encourage such investment. "When there is a prospective deficiency in the National Budget . . . the President shall set forth . . . a general program for encouraging such increased non-Federal investment and expenditure . . . as will prevent such deficiency to the greatest possible extent." If, however, private investment and Government encouragement thereof are not sufficient to maintain "a full employment volume of production," then it is incumbent upon the Federal Government "to bring the aggregate volume of investment and expenditure . . . up to the level required."

Here we have the full flowering of the Keynesian thesis that depressions are caused by a lack of investment or an insufficient volume of offsets to savings. If private enterprise does not find it sufficiently attractive, i.e. profitable, to invest the necessary funds required to produce full employment, then the Government will make up the deficiency and everything will be hunky-dory. This, of course, simplifies the workings of the capitalist mechanism to an absurd point. It overlooks the reasons why private enterprise fails to invest, i.e. reasons why the average rate of profits tends to decline. It also ignores the obvious fact that if Government investment competes with private investment, it will meet with determined resistance from the capitalist class. Government expenditure will be welcomed by the bourgeoisie only in such areas as non-competing public

works, certain types of public services and, above all, armaments — all areas where there are no profitable opportunities for private business that may be destroyed through Government intervention.

In short, the Full Employment Act provides merely another panacea intended to save a dying capitalist order. It is perhaps most significant, not because of its concrete measures, but because it is symptomatic of the times. The Full Employment Act cannot by itself solve the moral crisis of capitalism or produce full employment. It can, however, strengthen the tendencies toward a resolution of the basic problems of capitalism within the framework of a State-directed and controlled capitalist system. This, it should be clear, has nothing in common with a progressive solution of society's basic problems. The bill, however, can serve as a sort of transitional demand where, by pointing the way to a desirable objective that cannot be achieved within the framework of capitalism, it would lead the masses from what appears to be an immediate demand beyond the confines of capitalism. To serve this function, which would warrant complete labor and trade union support, the bill should be amended to provide for adequate trade union representation in the construction of the National Budget, as well as empowering expenditure of Government funds on measures designed to improve the standard of living regardless of their impact on profits.

WALTER J. OAKES

# The Big 3 Against Europe

By Louis Clair

**S**HORTLY after the outbreak of the war in Europe, Mr. Clement Attlee, then leader of His Majesty's Opposition, stated in the House: "Europe must federate or perish". Shortly after the end of the war in Europe, Mr. Clement Attlee, now leader of His Majesty's Government, signed a document at Potsdam that definitely consecrated not only the division of Europe, but pushed her a great step "forward" toward her decline.

During the war, from Churchill to Attlee, from *The London Times* to *The New Statesman and Nation*, and by all sorts of responsible and irresponsible spokesmen in the United States it was proclaimed that one of the aims of this war was some measure of unification of Europe. The schemes for union are legendary—yet it now emerges that what has been achieved is the Balkanization of Europe rather than its unity. With the exception of revolutionary socialists, few dared to say, or to think, with Lin Yutang: "To prevent European unity is one of our unconfessed war aims."

The number of leading imperialist nations has been reduced sharply in the course of this war. Germany, Italy, Japan, and also France have been eliminated as powerful factors. Of the *Big Seven* only the *Big Three* remain. These three, in spite of all internal quarrels and rivalries, have one overriding aim in common: that there appear no fourth one.

Modern wars and modern power politics are waged with tremendous industrial and manpower resources. Since not

one of the eliminated imperialist nations was able to gather enough resources, they all perished. Only a united Europe could become a powerful rival in the immediate future; this is why it must not be.

America has waged this war to prevent any power from dominating the European shores of the Atlantic, so she can neither permit Russia to take the place of Germany, nor can she allow a federated Europe.

Russia cannot permit a united Europe to be her neighbor, because this would be a check to any further expansion to the West. Such a united Europe could achieve, in relatively short time, a much higher standard of living than Russia's, and would constitute a most powerful pole of attraction for the Russian masses. *L'Europe, voilà l'ennemi!*

England, the least strong of the Big Three, toys with the idea of using Europe as a supplement to the waning resources of her Empire. She toys with ideas of a Western Bloc, i.e., with a partial federation of Western European countries closely allied to England. But a really united Europe would be a perpetual danger for the small island lying so near the European coastline. England also, as long as she wants to remain one of the Big Three, must be opposed to a strong and unified continent.

The Nazis came very near to complete mastery over Europe. Theirs was not simply a military conquest: they



made tremendous strides toward an economic integration of the continent. It was a gigantic exploitation of a whole continent by its most powerful part and yet for the first time it demonstrated the immense potentiality of Europe's forces banded together under a common direction.

The spectacle of the power of Europe under the Nazis more than anything else made the statesmen of the Big Three realize the potential danger of economic unity. Here was a rival that could become extremely dangerous. Many liberals believed that, since the Nazis had destroyed so many outworn frontiers, had so closely interwoven industries which for generations had been separated by nothing else than variously colored borderline poles, it was only rational and normal not to return to pre-war conditions. Albert Guérard, in his stimulating *Europe Free and United*, puts the case: "I do not believe in bombardment as a method of slum clearance; but, once the slums are cleared, who in his senses would restore them as slums?"

But those who today decide the destinies of the world are quite in their senses, and yet desire nothing more than to "restore the slums"; not only to restore the old, but even to create new ones. The logic of the powerful is different from the logic of the powerless.

We spoke of Germany in the last issue of this magazine. Details which have become known since, as well as the results of the Potsdam conference, only confirm that Germany, the heartland of industrial Europe, will definitely be turned into a huge slum, stripped of its industries, with millions and millions of uprooted, homeless people living in a wilderness. But German industries supported a great part of Europe. Thus the destruction of Germany alone will mean a tremendous impoverishment of the whole of Europe, a catastrophic decline in its standard of living. It will have the same effect on Europe as would the destruction of Pennsylvania, Illinois and Michigan on the United States: Germany produces about 60 per cent of Europe's coal, about half of the pig iron and steel, over half of the aluminum, 40 per cent of the cement and one-third of the sulphuric acid, and dominates European production in all kinds of engineering.

But more: wherever the Russian armies have descended like a swarm of locusts over the European plains, they devour whatever exists of European industry. From Sofia to Vienna, the Red Army removes industrial equipment, destroys the factories and deports the skilled workers. Enough is known by now about the methods of Russian stripping of these countries to make it unnecessary to repeat it here. Suffice it to say that all European lands over which the waves of Russian invasion have passed will emerge ruined economically, more devastated than an Egyptian cotton field after the passage of the deadly insects. Just one example: German prisoners of war are used by the Red army for "reconstruction work" in Rumania. They have the job of removing all telephone wires and insulators . . . ; about three million yard of telephone wires have been cut off and shipped to Russia. Industrial cities like Vienna or Berlin, after a few months of Russian occupation, remain only hollow shells, gigantic agglomerations of stone buildings with millions of people without work. The economy of these countries slowly reverts to pre-industrial patterns.

## 2

Not long ago, leading members of the Czechoslovak National Socialist Party (the party of Benes), published a manifesto courageously attacking Stalin's efforts to dominate their country: "Without discussion and free political life," they said, "there can be no democracy. The authority and monopoly of one party does not abolish the shortcomings and faults of the party system; on the contrary, it intensifies and perpetuates them." But in this same manifesto they also call for the rapid mass expulsion of the German and Hungarian minorities numbering several millions. They thus claim rights for themselves which they emphatically deny to millions that for centuries have lived in their midst. They do this, even though it is obvious that the removal of the German minority, who settled in the most industrialized part of the country, will mean a great decline in industrial production because of lack of manpower. They thus weaken Europe while at the same time trying to defend themselves against Europe's enemies.

The Polish Socialists waged a courageous fight for the independence of their homeland from Russian domination, but they didn't object to the annexation by Poland of vast chunks of German lands in the West. They looked on with evident glee when millions and millions of Germans were chased from Silesia, Eastern Prussia, Pomerania. They thus not only weakened their case morally, but above all they helped to impede the creation of the only type of organization that could guarantee a free Poland — a European Federation—and thus played into Russia's hands.

So all over Europe. The French object to Anglo-Saxon direct and indirect interference in their affairs. They are afraid of becoming slaves to their powerful protectors from both sides of the Atlantic. But in the meantime they stage ridiculous claims for a few villages and fortified posts on the Franco-Italian frontier, they ask for chunks of the Rhineland so that they may remove its machinery and resources. Even in Holland and Denmark, demands for annexation of German lands have been raised.

Thus Europe wages a fratricidal war. Hardly anybody realizes that these provincial quarrels can lead only to the destruction of the whole. The resurgence of nationalism on a mass scale in the Europe of today has a two-fold aspect: it represents on the one hand the hatred for the foreign oppressor or the foreign "friend" (see "Letters from France" elsewhere in this issue), but it also is a profoundly reactionary phenomenon. In the days of imperialistic blocs, provincial nationalisms are playthings in the hands of the big: thus economic and power-political divisions are given a coating of ideological dignity. Every new exacerbation of national hatreds over the Aosta valley, over Teschen or Silesia, over Saloniki or Klagenfurth, can but serve the interests of those who thrive on the Balkanization of Europe.

## 3

Europe today is becoming a new China. After the fall of the Manchu dynasty, China became the prey of all the big powers of the day. War lords, sponsored by one or



other of the powers, fought their battles on the bleeding Chinese soil. The whole societal structure gradually collapsed, chunks of Chinese territory were annexed, other parts became protectorates. Thus so-called civil wars followed one another, but almost all of them actually were foreign wars fought on Chinese soil with Chinese lives. China ceased to exist as an independent power. Whatever the outcome of the Pacific war, she will continue to be a pawn in history and not an active part of it. Her destiny—short of a radical revolution—will be decided upon in Washington and in Moscow, not in Chungking.

China was a feudal country for centuries, outside the mainstreams of Western Civilization, but Europe is the center of our civilization. What will happen if she too reverts into a period without history?

With Europe will be destroyed the whole culture of Western Man from which the Americas today are still feeding. A Europe in limbo is a world in limbo—we can scarcely wait till some day a new culture emerges behind the Urals.

#### 4

If the Big Three remain united, there is no hope for any European Federation, since one of the main objects of their unity would be to hold Europe in a state of common subjection. Yet all indications from Potsdam as from San Francisco point the other way. Imperialist rivalries are sharper today than a year ago, and these rivalries present the only chance for Europe.

Britain plays with the idea of a Western Bloc. Powerful organs, like *The Economist*, advocate a close trade and military alliance between the United Kingdom, France, Belgium, Holland, Denmark and Norway. This is not advanced for any benevolent motives. The City feels that England no longer is strong enough to fight the two others with her own forces alone. Nevertheless, this move may open new vistas for the first steps toward a European Federation.

Shortly before the British elections, *The Economist* soothed the apprehensions of the City over the effects of a possible Labor victory: "In the main the country will be ruled in exactly the same way, by the Civil Service, whichever side wins." Yet, in spite of what many Laborites may wish, Labor's victory may have tremendous repercussions all over Europe. All Western European and Mediterranean nations, with the exception of Spain, today tend toward the Left. Most of the militant socialist and resistance movements leaned toward Russia among other reasons because Churchillian England as well as America seemed clearly hostile to any further moves toward the Left. The victory of Labor in Britain may provoke a definite orientation toward Britain among the progressive elements of all these countries. If a Labor England were to take the lead toward a closer association of Western and Mediterranean Europe, such a movement soon could assume startling proportions. As was stated above, there is no reason to believe that British imperialism really wishes a unification of Europe, but it desperately needs help, above all against Russia. "Western Association", to the minds of General Smuts and the Foreign Office, only means the preparation of more advantageous posi-

tions for the coming world war against Russia, but the outcome need not necessarily be the one wished for. The Foreign Office has miscalculated before.

Any association in the West and South would have tremendous repercussions in the rest of Europe. An alliance between a Left France and Italy for example, would almost certainly entail the fall of Franco and the advent of a Left government in Spain. Such an association could, moreover, have a tremendous force of attraction in the whole of Russian-dominated Eastern Europe. The Balkan peasant leaders, who now wage a courageous but losing battle against Russian domination could then find definite support; they could point to the advantages of an association with the industrial countries of the West, sure markets for Balkan products.

A European Federation, however, is impossible without the inclusion of Germany. "Round Germany as a central support the rest of the European economic system grouped itself, and on the prosperity and enterprise of Germany the prosperity of the rest of the continent mainly depended." (Lord Keynes, in *Economic Consequences of the Peace*). In every sphere, from transport to supplies of raw materials, the needs of Western and Southern Europe can be met only if they are considered jointly. European economy can be reconstructed only as a joint undertaking, for no European industry can be rebuilt if it is not assured of wide and stable markets and an economic Hinterland. Any attempt to exclude Germany dooms all plans in advance: without her, such an association not only would be too weak, but also would have to allocate permanently a great part of its resources to the perpetual keeping down of the "German threat"—it would be an association of prison wardens.

What is envisioned here is far from a revolutionary program. Yet it seems that today the task is above all to prepare the soil on which a new movement can thrive again. On a dilapidated continent, torn by strife and hunger, with nationalist waves stirring the passions to a white hot pitch, there is little chance for revolutionary socialist movements, only for colonial revolts and putsches, heroic but fruitless insurrection. Any step today that leads away from nationalism, provided it is not imposed from the outside, is a step forward. As long as nationalism is the only force that stands against Big-Three oppression, there is no hope for the salvation of Europe. If France attempts to band together all energies to build a strong army, as long as she attempts to loot Western Germany to rebuild her own industry, Europe must go down in defeat. No single European nation alone has any chance of successfully fighting for her independence.

A new Chinese Wall now runs through Europe from Luebeck to Trieste, but West of it another attempt—maybe the last one—can be made to stave off disaster.

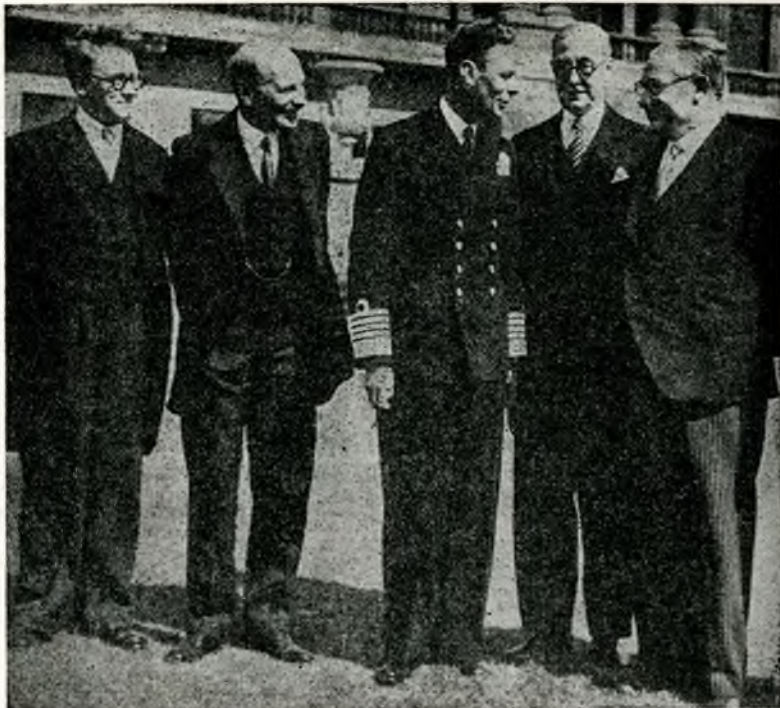
British Labor faces a tremendous challenge and a tremendous responsibility. Attlee started his governmental career by underwriting the Potsdam destruction document. However, the victory of British Labor can contribute to unleash popular movements both on the continent and in Britain that far transcend the timid schemes carefully hatched in Transport House.



# LABOR

## IMPERIALISM

Left to Right: Herbert Morrison, Lord President of the Council; Prime Minister Clement Attlee; the King; Arthur Greenwood, Lord Privy Seal; Ernest Bevin, Foreign Secretary.



(c) Press Association

ON August 20 an event took place which in the political world was as shattering to outworn concepts as the first atomic bombing had been two weeks earlier. On that date, Ernest Bevin, Foreign Secretary of the new Labor Government of Great Britain, made his first speech in Parliament. This speech, which was a detailed statement of the foreign policy of the new Labor Government, was built around two concepts: "order" (mentioned six times) and "stability" (five times). The *N. Y. Times* correspondent observed: "There is no better way of summing up his speech than to say that if Winston Churchill had made it, there would have been no surprises." After the speech, not only was there no debate, but Anthony Eden arose and "heartily congratulated Bevin on every detail . . . and pointed out that during their four years in the Coalition Government, there was not a single occasion when he and Mr. Bevin disagreed on important issues of foreign policy."

### 1.

When the results of the British election were announced on July 26, with the sensational and unexpected Labor landslide of 390 seats to 195 for the Tories, the reaction in American left-of-center circles was one of practically unanimous jubilation. In stirring headlines and impassioned editorials the liberal weeklies, the *Socialist Call*, and the Social-Democratic *New Leader* hailed the Advent of Socialism, the Triumph of Labor, the Victory of the Common Man over the Forces of Reaction, etc. Even the Trotskyists were swept off their feet: "BRITISH LABOR GOES LEFT!" headlined the August 6 issue of *Labor Action*.\*

\*The lead article, by Max Shachtman, was a particularly striking example of present-day Marxist schizophrenia. Its first half celebrated in ringing accents the Triumph of the Workers; its second denounced these same Workers' chosen leaders as reformists, traitors, and reactionaries. It reminded me of Mr. Dooley's description of Teddy Roosevelt's trust-busting. (I quote from memory.) "On the wan hand," sez he, 'the thrusts are heejous monsther an' we must stamp thim under fuht. On the ither hand, not so fast.'"

These rejoicings now appear somewhat premature, in the wan light of Bevin's speech. The *tone* of the speech was almost more revealing than its specific political content. Labor's Foreign Secretary, for example, reacted thus to the complex and passionate and tragic drama of European politics today:

"Possibly the worst situation of all has arisen in the occupied countries which have now been liberated. Here you have two great difficulties.

"One is that all people in these countries have been taught to disobey, to oppose the authority of the occupying forces. Resistance has been the watchword. The result has been lawlessness and . . . it is extremely difficult to bring back a general acceptance of law and order.

"Secondly, there have been constant appeals to the people to produce as little as they could . . . and now suddenly they are asked to acquire the habits of work, energy and discipline."

This night-watchman's psychology also pervades the long passage devoted to Greece. What great expectations the liblabs had on Greece, when the news of the Labor landslide came through, what visions of an old wrong righted! Now, however, the bubble has been pricked:

"The Government adheres to the policy which we publicly supported when Greece was liberated . . . the establishment of a stable and democratic government. . . . Unfortunately, this process was interrupted by an outbreak of violence. We then supported the restoration of law and order. . . . It is therefore our view that the Voulgaris government should carry on pending the decision of the Greek people. Greece will never recover while her leaders spend their time in continuously, week by week, trying to change their government. They had better take an example from us. . . .

"Then there is the gendarmerie. A country which has been overrun and where the organization for enforcing law and order has been almost completely disrupted must have a civil police force. To assist in that work, it was agreed to



lend the services of a police mission. I have taken every step to speed up both transport and equipment."

This Foreign Secretary of the first all-Socialist government to take power in England, this architect of the Century of the Common Man, this powerful trade union leader offers to his class brothers in Greece . . . a boatload of cops.

In other parts of the globe, similar precepts. Not a word on the Palestine question, not a word against the Italian monarchy, several paragraphs on Siam but not a syllable about India. (The new Secretary of State for India and Burma is the 73-year-old Pethick-Lawrence, whom Aneurin Bevin once asked why he was not a Tory.) On Franco Spain: "His Majesty's Government is not prepared to take any step which would permit or encourage civil war." On Hong Kong: "I am sure that in agreement with our Chinese and American allies our territory will be returned to us." On the Empire: "One of the most vital areas that affects the British Empire and Commonwealth . . . is the Mediterranean and Middle East. With regard to the Far East . . . we would assure all British subjects . . . of our watchful care for their interests, for the re-creation of their industry, and the restoration of their normal life throughout all these territories." The one whiff of liberalism (let alone socialism) in the whole speech was the criticism of the Russian puppet governments in the Balkans: "One kind of totalitarianism is being replaced by another." But this, like the rest of the speech, was a mere echo of Churchill's first speech as Opposition leader three days earlier, and proceeded from precisely the same motivation as Churchill's crocodile tears over the sufferings of the Poles and the GPU terror in the Balkans: the ominously increasing conflict between Russian and British imperialism. Even here the liblabs' expectations have been disappointed. The continuity of foreign policy between Tories and Labor is unbroken: that closer cooperation between Russia and England which the liblabs predicted shows no signs of materializing. Empire not ideology is the mainspring of Labor's foreign policy.

When Bevin entered the House during Churchill's foreign policy speech of August 17, the new leader of His Majesty's Loyal Opposition paused, smiled broadly, and interjected: "I am very glad to see the new Foreign Secretary sitting on the front bench opposite. I would like to say with what gratification I have learned that the right honorable gentleman has taken on this high office." Churchill's confidence was not misplaced; the Empire is in safe hands.

It is only fair to say, however, that there is a difference between the two men. As the *N. Y. Times* observed editorially, Churchill calls it "Empire" while Bevin prefers "Commonwealth." That about sums it up.

## 2.

If ever there was a mass workingclass party, the British Labor Party is it. The great trade unions control its policies; one-third of the new Labor MP's are union officials; since 1918, its program (though hardly its practice) has been Marxian socialist. Its electoral victory, furthermore, was so decisive that it can be sure of holding power for the next five years without having to seek the support of any other party. Never before, except in Russia in 1917, has a socialist party established itself so firmly at the controls of a great nation. Yet, as Bevin's speech already indicates (and I venture to predict this is by no means the last such indication), the chorus of jubilation which greeted Labor's victory was hardly justified. All the rejoicers were, in their own various ways, Marxists and all accepted two assumptions of Marxism (if not of Marx): that there is some special virtue in the modern workingclass which makes a labor

party behave differently from a bourgeois party; and that the supersession of private capitalism by state socialism (or state capitalism—the difference is rather mystical) is in itself progressive.

This is not the place to explore the reasons why these two Marxist commonplaces are fallacious today (if they ever were true): I hope to do this soon. Enough here to present the Labor Party's foreign policy as empirical proof of their falsity; and to examine the political campaign which led to Labor's victory. For in that campaign, a most peculiar one, the real nature of the Labor Party emerged.

The odd thing about it was that, although it was the first general election in ten years, there were no major issues. Every one (except Churchill) agreed that to survive in the postwar world, Britain would need a large measure of state control of her economy and trade; every one (except Churchill) agreed the state would have to provide social security and full employment—and that for imperialist and military as well as humanitarian reasons. Such concrete plans as had been put forward for these ends bore neither the Tory nor the Labor stamp, but were the product of non-political experts like Beveridge and found support in both parties. Even *The New Republic* admitted "a surprising amount of agreement between Labor and Conservatives" on domestic issues, but plumped for Labor because of its allegedly superior foreign policy. We have just seen what *that* comes to, and it should have been apparent in the campaign. The Labor Party had shared power with the Tories for five years; it agreed on the war itself, on India (the Cripps Mission), on Greece (the Citrine Report). Its leaders did sound a little more sympathetic to Russia (and its ranks undoubtedly were). But only a party with some positive internationalist vision, some powerful *mystique* of the fraternity of the common people against their rulers, only such a party could withstand the dynamic of imperialistic politics, could oppose the spread of Stalinism not by power-measures which are setting the stage for World War III but by offering superior satisfactions to the human needs of the masses of Europe and Asia. That the British Labor Party is not such a party is evident.

This large measure of agreement on domestic and foreign policy was widely understood in England. It caused such influential journals as the *London Times* and *The Economist* to remain editorially neutral during the campaign. And it created a mood of indifference among the voters which was noted by almost every observer. The editors of *Tribune* (who, as leftish intellectuals, felt compelled to pump some meaning into the contest—and rather made fools of themselves in the process) tried to explain this apathy: "The mood of the country is not dissimilar from that with which it went into the war—and the stakes are hardly less momentous." I would entirely agree: the stolid resignation with which the masses entered World War II (as against the enthusiastic illusions of 1914) now seems amply justified by the war's results. The British electorate showed an equally correct instinct about the election. (How much profounder a sense of historical reality—as Rosa Luxemburg often observed—the inarticulate masses often show than the intellectuals who presume to enlighten them!)

## 3.

Why, then, the Labor landslide? For the same reason that Roosevelt was regularly reelected, that the Communists swept the recent French elections, that all over Europe the Communist and Socialist forces are still in the ascendant, despite the best efforts of England and America: because capitalist ideology has lost its dynamism and the masses



are turning to the state for economic planning and social security. So far they have been offered (and perhaps only desire) these husks of socialism, which are compatible with nationalism, imperialism and militarism. It is the tragedy of our times that no mass movement exists anywhere which offers the life-giving kernel of socialism: a more humane morality based on fraternity and a respect for the individual human being. But even socialist husks are more attractive to the masses than capitalism, and the British electorate simply made a "lesser evil" choice between the Tories and Labor.

Since there was no basic disagreement between the two parties, the Tories might have attempted to outbid Labor as to social security and planning. Their left wing, the Young Tories, wanted to do precisely that. Churchill, however, made defeat certain by choosing just the opposite line. With his close adviser, Beaverbrook, he fabricated the one big issue of the campaign, a false one: Socialism v. Freedom. Depicting Labor's leaders as so many potential Robespierres and Lenins, he predicted Red Ruin, Totalitarianism, and a GPU agent in every British home as the consequence of a Labor victory. To this synthetic nightmare, he counterposed a Hayekian paradise of Free Enterprise. Labor's campaigners had only to show their stolid, respectable householders' persons to give Churchill the lie. His strategy was just 20 years out of date. In 1924, the Tories won with the forged "Zinoviev Letter" connecting Labor's leaders with the Bolsheviks. In 1945, Churchill's attempt to create a Red scare around the harmless Professor Laski fizzled as badly as the analogous "Clear-It-With Sidney" canard of the Republicans had fizzled over here last fall. Indeed, in England at least, to the extent that Churchill's tactics had any effect, they probably convinced some voters that the Labor Party was not so conservative as it had seemed, and hence worth supporting.

Thus the Tories appeared as the irresponsible crackpots and dreamers, campaigning for a romantic lost cause, favoring a revolutionary overturn of the *status quo* in favor of Free Enterprise: while Labor's campaign, which a sympathetic observer termed "dignified and constructive," was a conservative defense of the kind of stateified economy that then existed and that everyone (except Churchill) knew would be necessary in the future. The final irony was that Labor's leaders were alarmed (and the Tories were encouraged) by the apathy of the electorate, both sides falsely assuming that the Labor party's brand of socialism was revolutionary and hence needed an aroused and passionate mass mood to put it over. That the reverse turned out to be the case should induce profounder thought about concepts like "workingclass" and "socialism" than it seems to have induced so far. But the British Labor Party has five more years in office. We may hope for further educational results.

#### O BRAVE NEW WORLD!

Oak Ridge, Tenn. — Although the war has ended, Oak Ridge workers stayed at their jobs today instead of celebrating. News of the Japanese surrender was greeted with unrestrained jubilation yesterday by most of the residents of this city of 75,000, who only eight days ago had learned that they were makers of the devastating weapon. After the first victory enthusiasm, however, workers were told by Col. Kenneth D. Nichols, district engineer, that they had no time to lose.

—N. Y. Times, August 16.

#### ANTICLIMAX DEPT.

#### HEROES OF BATAAN LEARN OF TRUMAN

—Headline in N. Y. Times, August 27.

## Letters from France

May 19, 1945

SOME time ago, a certain disgust with all political parties —a tendency to turn away from politics in general —became noticeable in working-class circles. The secretary of the Federation of Building Workers of a large city told me: "The workers have enough. They don't want to be dupes any more. They want to take things into their own hands through their unions. The parties use them only for their political aims."

This current of distrust of political parties was felt everywhere. Thus *Esprit*, the magazine of Social-Catholicism, wrote in February, 1945: "After one of the big Communist meetings, several listeners expressed their indignation over the fact that little was said of working class interests and much of 'duties' and 'sacrifice'."

In a number of regions, the workers do not show any haste to join the unions, because they say that they first want to find out why they are supposed to "enlist" and who will profit from their affiliation. And I have even heard people say that—against the Communists, Socialists and Christians—they want to remain Marxists (sic!) and don't give a damn about the 'national idea'."

This undercurrent of opposition to the working-class parties and sometimes even the unions became especially noticeable after the Right turn of the CP, when Thorez stated in his famous speech in January that his organization was "a governmental party" and that the role of the Committees of Liberation was to "help the government in its administrative task." After this speech, *L'Humanité* lost 20,000 readers, and the opposition to the new line was so strong that the CP, quite apart from any considerations of foreign policy, was forced to abandon the new line and to state again that nationalization and the program of the Resistance remained among the main demands of the party. But the Communists always are under the twofold pressure of the necessities of foreign policy and the demands of the masses, and soon international developments also imposed another turn to the Left. Thus the CP again has become—in the eyes of the workers—"the great party for the defense of the interests of the laboring masses."

The result of the elections surprised the country. One had not been prepared for such a clearcut Communist victory. The atmosphere in the pre-election meetings did not indicate such a decided trend nor such an active participation in the elections. Everybody expected that the masses—in view of the impression outlined above—would show political indifference.

The accumulated discontent and the electrical victory of the Left made May Day into an enormous demonstration against government policies. All Resistance organizations took part, but it was above all the great day of the Communists (who had all through April opposed the celebration of May Day, and had changed only at the last moment).

Soon after, the strike wave set in. First among the Northern miners and at Lyons. The first Lyons strike of civil servants and municipal employees was followed by a general strike two days later. There was a tumultuous demonstration in front of the prefecture, the doors were broken open, and the masses rushed into the offices and presented their grievances to the prefect: adjustment of Lyons wages to the Paris level, improvement of food supplies, action against the scandalous increase in prices, purge, application of the Resistance program. While the workers



were talking to the prefect, the *Commissaire de la République* was telephoning to Paris to ask for an immediate amelioration of food conditions.

The next day, cheese was suddenly sold without points and one could get as much as one wanted. The same with regard to potatoes. But this happened on one beautiful morning only, and those who didn't take advantage of the occasion couldn't get any cheese later, even with points.

The influence of the Communists, especially in working class circles is increasing steadily. In certain big factories, there are 50 Communists to every Socialist. There are plants where the Socialists have nobody at all. In a plant where, before the war, the Socialists had 150 members, they have 10 today. Nevertheless, the Socialist Party gains in very many places. But while the CP attracts industrial workers, the SFIO recruits from the ranks of the lower middle classes, among civil servants, municipal employees, white-collar workers, shopkeepers, teachers, etc. The Socialist workers are very well aware of this change in the composition of their party. An auto mechanic told me: "I really sometimes ask myself why I still belong to the party". This man has belonged to the SFIO for the last 20 years.

The situation is different in the Northern departments. There, the textile workers have remained faithful to the Socialist Party, whereas the miners draw away from it.

In general, the Socialist Party rank-and-file opposes the leadership of the party and stands against participation in the government. This is especially true for the Lyons and Toulouse areas. Because of this pressure from below, the party leadership has declared several times that if the government would not adopt certain measures, the Socialist ministers would resign. The return of Leon Blum to the leadership of the SFIO has been welcomed by party officials, but the rank and file has been much less enthusiastic. One hears very often: "He is only a sad reminder of 1936".

With regard to Russia, the attitude of the press has changed considerably in recent months. While Russia was taboo in the first period after liberation, a number of Catholic, Conservative and Left Resistance papers recently have begun to talk openly of Russian authoritarianism and imperialism. The *Populaire* opposes Soviet policies. *Combat* speaks of "certain Russian methods that help to remind us that Russia lives under an authoritarian system". And *Figaro* on May 17 even said: "The three main elements of Prussian ideology, authoritarianism, militarism and statism, are in no way contrary to Soviet ideology".

## May 26, 1945

THE strike wave that swept over the country reached its height at the end of May. The whole economic life of the country was threatened just at a time when government and labor organizations jointly called on the people to work at full blast. The *Confédération Générale du Travail* (CGT) nevertheless was forced to take into account the growing discontent in its ranks. Since discontent had been spreading for quite some time, by officially calling the strikes the CGT forestalled the threat of wild-cat strikes springing up in a number of localities. Just as in the Northern mines the unions couldn't do anything but "solidarize themselves with the striking workers", so everywhere the CGT attempted to channelize the agitation. "Warning strikes", strictly limited to two or 24 hours, were supposed to prevent more extended movements. Absenteeism occurs more and more frequently. More often than not, the Northern miners work three or four days a week only, on the other days either working in their gardens or

visiting the countryside to exchange their coal rations against food.

The Left-wing Socialist Resistance paper *Libertés* (May 25) comments rightly: "The working class is tired of all the sufferings thru war and occupation, tired above all of always being the only one to be called upon to make sacrifices. It is tired of seeing that, just as in the war, 'the same people always get killed'. This is a spontaneous revolt of the workers who had hoped that the departure of the Germans would bring about a change in their condition. For a time thereafter, they showed much patience when they were told that the war against Nazism was not ended and that therefore they had to make special efforts. But now, after V-Day, they would like to see something else than the daily lowering of their living standards."

The grievances of the Delloye miners give a good illustration of the feelings outlined by *Libertés*. They demand: (1) a complete purge; (2) nationalization of the mines without indemnities; (3) provision of work shoes and regular shoes, overalls, better and more soap; (4) supply of bicycle tires; (5) suppression of the tax which foreign workers must pay for their identity card (very many mine-workers are Polish); (6) a basic re-evaluation of rates and skills; (7) higher meat rations; (8) return to the 40-hour week; (9) three weeks paid vacation; (10) family allowances for foreign as well as for French miners; (11) condemnation of war criminals; (12) that the conscription status of the miners be abolished.

Today, every issue is dominated by the question of how production can be increased. Everything, literally everything, is lacking. From tooth brushes to medicine: from shoe soles to clothes; from window glass to kitchenware to apartments; from matches to milk, meats and fats. The same holds true for means of production. France lacks fertilizers and ploughs, tires and locomotives, steel and iron as well as machine tools and ships. The whole industrial machinery is worn out, old-fashioned and partly destroyed. The workers are undernourished and the returned prisoners are in pitiable physical shape, so that labor productivity will be lowered for many years to come.

The coal shortage is a central problem. In 1939, 50 million tons were produced, in 1943, 40 million, and this year production will be between 25 and 30 million. In the North, production has further declined since the beginning of the year. Yield per man-hour also declines. The Minister for Industrial Production recently described the effects of the decline in coal production as follows: "The railroads have stocks for 6 days only. Only 12 blast furnaces are in operation as against 110 before the war. The textile industry can put to use only a small part of the raw materials that have recently been sent by England and America. We have had to cut down by 75 per cent the deliveries of coal to certain vital industries. We have not been able to build up any stocks for civilian heating purposes and sugar factories have received only 50 per cent of the promised coal quotas."\*

Labor organizations as well as the government proclaim

\*Cf. front-page story in *N. Y. Times* of July 21, headlined: "ICKES TO GIVE EUROPE COAL TO AVERT WINTER DISORDERS", which stated that America will ship 6 million tons of coal to Europe before the end of the year. Ickes: "The race in Europe today is between coal and anarchy. Europe must have coal without loss of time if serious political and social upheavals are to be prevented." Also cf. *Time*, July 9:

"In France, which normally imported two-fifths of its coal, the shortage is Europe's worst. During the occupation, the Nazis kept the French output at a peak of 42,000,000 tons a year by wooing the miners with double food rations. The French Government tried the same stunt but failed to deliver the food. Result: absenteeism in the mines soared to 25%."



that every effort has to be made to increase production. "There is no higher national duty today than the duty to produce," says DeGaulle. And Thorez echoes: "Unite and produce."

Produce, but what? Consumption goods are necessary to lead Frenchmen back to normal living conditions, but those who want France to become again a world power ask for "means to build modern armaments." The workers who go on strike do not accept their present conditions of existence, but labor and government leaders tell them that "France is forced to concentrate all her effort on investments in basic industries, just as Russia after the first world war", because a country that is unable to forge her arms will inevitably fall under the domination of a foreign power.

And it is quite true, if France is to defend her independence in a world of antagonistic nations, there is no choice left. Under present international conditions, France can avoid becoming a zone of influence of a foreign power only if she becomes a big power herself. Thus, priority would have to go to heavy industry, chemical plants, arms, etc., and, just as in Russia, the ever-increasing investments in basic industries would hardly be translated into an increase of consumption goods.

Today, all important political forces of the country, in spite of many differences between Socialists, Communists, etc., agree on the concentration of production on military needs. They all know very well that this demands political unity (but under whose direction?), and new efforts and sacrifices on the part of the masses. How can the masses be persuaded to make these sacrifices? How can social peace and political unity be achieved? This is the crucial question for all those who stand for the rebirth of France as a big power.

The Socialist Party, in spite of its proclamations in favor of an alliance of the people that would guarantee peace and the end of power politics, nevertheless recognizes that under present conditions France must be able to defend herself. André Philip, an important Socialist Party spokesman, expressed a sentiment widespread in France when he said: "The war has shown that only great industrial states count in the modern world. A country incapable of forging arms for her defense will inevitably become the slave of either a formidable enemy or a protecting friend". The same André Philip had stated already before the liberation that the workers will not accept the sacrifices demanded from them if they don't have the conviction that "they no longer work for a few privileged but for the nation". He also stressed in the same report to the Provisional Government (July, 1944) that "the only way to avoid serious trouble on the part of the working class is to present a precise program that insists not only on the punishment of individuals but on a fundamental modification of the social structure." In other words, the Socialists try to convince De Gaulle that social peace cannot be maintained without structural reforms and nationalization of key industries.

The Communists never tire of stressing: "We need a big army." For example, Marcel Cachin in *L'Humanité*: "The constitution of a great national and united army, and naturally the corresponding production measures, are the bases of French security." The Communists ask for the unity of the nation, but for them this means the union of all decisive forces of the country under their own domination.

There is no doubt that in factories where collaborationist employers have been eliminated and where the trusteeship administration is under Communist influence (like in a number of the nationalized aviation companies and in the Berliet truck works of Lyons), production has considerably

increased. In these plants the workers have agreed to work on the two Whitsuntide holidays, donating their pay to repatriated slave laborers. This is further proof of the influence the CP has over the workers. Contrariwise in the nationalized coal mines of the North where the Communists do not play any role in the administration, the decline of production has not been stopped. And this in spite of the fact that nationalization had been decided because of the pressure of discontented miners and with the aim of increasing productivity by improving morale.

As to the *Confédération Générale du Travail*, the Communists, whose influence is predominant, try to impose their general political line—against opposition on the part of syndicalists and socialists. The policy of the CGT is more and more determined by two goals: (1) to rally the workers for a quick rebuilding of the industrial and military capacities of the country, and (2) to increase the influence of the union bureaucracy on economic planning. This is why the CGT demands "the participation of the working-class in management and in the direction of the national economy in generally." By "working-class participation" it actually means the participation of either the union bureaucracy or shop stewards which are designated and controlled by the bureaucracy.

The *Mouvement Républicain Populaire* today is the third big party of France. Its Left stems from Social-Catholic circles and from the Christian unions, whereas its Right consists of bourgeois elements who, while trying to safeguard their privileges, attempt to adapt themselves to a new social regime. Like the Socialists, the Left proclaims that labor difficulties can be avoided only if one succeeds in interesting the working masses in the life of the nation. The masses must no longer "feel that they are excluded from the direction of affairs and are but passive instruments"; they must on the contrary "feel that they are responsible". They must be convinced that the economy is no longer "guided by the laws of profit but directed in the interest of the people." The Social-Catholics thus agree with the Socialists in regarding nationalization as an indispensable measure for the maintenance of social peace.

De Gaulle's policy is aimed at making himself the rallying center of all political forces and inducing the workers to subordinate their particular interests to the general interest, in accordance with his policy of "national grandeur". He is convinced "that nothing is more important for France than her right and duty to play her part in the world", and that therefore "there is no more important duty today than that of producing".

We are writing only two days after the speech, but the first press reactions show clearly that Socialists, Social-Catholics and Trade Unionists regard the promise of nationalization as an important step toward overcoming present difficulties.

Since the orientation of the whole economy is directed toward "national rebirth", the immediate future will not bring a change in the conditions of the workers. Therefore, the masses can be won for governmental policies only if their national sentiment is fostered. If De Gaulle arrives at a compromise with the Communist Party—a compromise based on nationalizations, which would permit the Communists to re-inforce their influence—then there is a basis for winning the workers. There can be no doubt that the national sentiment is strong among the French workers since the occupation. True, this nationalism is linked to anti-capitalist sentiments. But as long as the masses see no other way out not to become "slaves of a powerful enemy or of a protecting friend", it is not excluded that they can be won for policies of "national grandeur".

As a result of this war, Europe has entered a new era



of nationalism. A nationalism of a novel character, because it is linked to anti-capitalism, but nationalism nevertheless.

## JUNE 25, 1945

WHEN the bureau of the Commission of National Defense of the Consultative Assembly was renewed on June 13, the former president, the Communist Pierre Villon, was not re-elected. A Socialist was elected instead against the Communists and fellow travellers. The same thing happened two weeks later at the election of the president of the Paris municipal council. In spite of the fact that the Communists have 27 members in the council as against 12 of the Socialists, the SFIO received the support of the majority and the CP finally went over to the SFIO candidate. When the CP tried to get one of its members elected for a minor post, the SFIO vote went instead to a candidate of the Right.

These small incidents indicate that Communists and Socialist now are farther from organic unity than at any time since the liberation. The CP knows it as well as anybody else but just because of this carries on a campaign for the "unified party of working France" which it already calls "French Labor Party".

At the end of December last, one of the best informed journalists wrote us from Paris: "The negotiations for unity between the CP and the SFIO seem to be well advanced and some think that the fusion will be accomplished in a few months". In January, one of the propagandists of the Southern section of the SFIO assured us that the amalgamation would take place shortly. Today this same man speaks in his section of "Russian imperialism" and when he is told about "organic fusion" only smiles. The June 19 issue of the *Populaire*, in an article on San Francisco, for the first time openly attacks Russian foreign policies: "Two completely different ideologies face each other here. On the one side justice and democracy as represented by America, on the other side power as represented by Russia".

To appreciate the significance of this change of attitude, we have to remember the atmosphere in the first months after the liberation with regard to Russia. For a long while, only the organs of the Right dared to say a word against Russia or against the CP. Even in private conversation one had to be sure to whom one talked before saying a word against the stalinists. The CP slogans "anti-communism means anti-France" and "those who divide are traitors" lay like a heavy burden on everybody. In the factories, the municipalities, the FFI and the Patriotic Militia, everywhere Communist influence was strong if not preponderant.

The terror which the Communists waged was not a physical but a spiritual one. It was based on sympathies not only on the part of the workers but of layers of the lower middle classes and intellectuals. Therefore the urge for unity also became strong in the SFIO.

For large sections of the middle classes, the CP had become the real defender of the people of France, and Russia the country of peace. But since the events in Poland, Trieste, etc., these groups tend to become more and more hostile to the CP and to Russia. It has become too clear that the CP is, as Blum once said, "a foreign national party". The oppression of smaller states as well as the menace of a future conflict between Russia and the Anglo-Saxon countries tend to alienate the lower middle classes, but this is not so for the workers, for whom the bayonets of the Red Army still are the instruments of revolution and socialism.

The SFIO came out weakened from the period of resistance. Many individual Socialists took leading parts in

a number of resistance organizations but at the moment of liberation it almost looked as if the SFIO couldn't be reconstituted as a national party. Soon, however the party gained new members and became influential. The SFIO leadership thought that the party could play an independent role between the De Gaulle tendency of a regimented economy in an authoritarian framework at the service of French grandeur on the one hand, and the CP policy to make France a strong military power in the Russian orbit on the other hand.

The SFIO tended toward a federation of nations, and more specifically toward a federation of Western Europe. It hoped that England, as well as all Western European countries including Spain, would soon have "socialist" or semi-socialist governments and that it would thus be easy to constitute a bloc which could successfully oppose the Two Big powers in their drive to dominate the world or to fight among themselves for this domination. In domestic policies this meant an orientation toward planned economy in a democratic framework.

On June 7, the National Committee majority of the *Mouvement de Libération Nationale* took an important decision which was a victory for the Socialists and a defeat for the CP. This largest resistance movement decided to band together with a number of more or less socialist resistance movements in the *Union Démocratique de la Résistance*, and declared that in the future it would closely collaborate with the SFIO. This is the first step toward the formation of a party with a predominantly lower-middle-class basis, which would pursue opportunistic policies with regard to state capitalism, just as the SFIO had formerly acted with regard to the bourgeoisie. Such a movement would be clearly anti-Communist. It would stand for a democratic France and for the subordination to the state of big capitalism. The MLN resolution especially stressed the need for new political morality, for decency in political discussions, and for "the independence of political parties from national and international moneyed influences, as well as from the influence of foreign states."

The CP has tried to counter this blow in two ways: (1) a minority of the MLN left the organization and joined the CP-dominated National Front to create the *Mouvement Uni de la Renaissance Française*; and (2) the CP has tried to turn the rank-and-file of the SFIO against the leadership. It's the old policy of "unity from below" which is now used again. All local organizations of the SFIO are swamped with demands for unity with CP locals.

During all these maneuvers, the official unity negotiations between the leadership of both parties continue. It is nevertheless clear that the ambitious maneuver of the CP — initiated during the years of resistance — to win over large lower-middle-class layers through a large organization comprising all forces of the resistance under the domination of the CP, has met with no success. The Communists who have made so many efforts to prove that they not only are a working-class party, but the "party of the people of France", that they are not a foreign party but one which really represents the French nation, that they are not a party advocating dictatorship but the only really democratic party, remain a predominantly working-class party and nobody is fooled anymore about its ties with Russia. The Socialists, on the other hand, have not succeeded in winning significant parts of the working class. They more and more have become a party of the lower middle classes.

GELO AND ANDREA

### LAST WORD ON HITLER

Hitler's maidservant, Gertrude, found at Berchtesgaden, declared of her ex-boss: "He was a nice man, really. Of course he was mad."

—"Time", May 21.



## Books

**HALF A MILLION FORGOTTEN PEOPLE:** The Story of the Cotton Textile Workers. 32 pp. Free. Textile Workers Union (CIO), 15 Union Square, New York 3, N. Y.

**SUBSTANDARD WAGES.** 32 pp. 15c. Congress of Industrial Organizations, 718 Jackson Place N.W., Washington 6, D.C.

These pamphlets remind us that even in the greatest period of prosperity the American masses have ever known — i.e., World War II — a considerable number of families did not get enough income to live on a minimum decency level. Average weekly earnings of the 500,000 textile workers in January 1944, were \$24.82 a week. But to live on what Government agencies define as an "emergency" level would have taken at that date \$33.75 a week. This is the most striking of many similar statistics in *Half a Million Forgotten People*. It can be relied on: to calculate the second figure, the union's Research Department conducted an elaborate survey of prices in five widely located textile towns.

But this is just the cotton textile workers, the lowest paid industrial group in America? By no means. The CIO's new *Substandard Wages* pamphlet shows with a great wealth of data, mostly drawn from recent Congressional hearings, that, although most people think of "substandard" workers in terms of sharecroppers and Okies, the great majority of the ten million definitely "substandard" workers today are waiters, librarians, nurses, bus conductors, teachers, sales clerks, clothing workers and such.

Three rather sensational facts are brought out by the pamphlet:

(1) That in 1943, after two full years of the war boom, one out of every three American families had *family* incomes of less than \$1500 a year, which is \$250 less than an "emergency" standard of living.

(2) "Millions of returning soldiers will find that work in private industry actually yields them *less* income than the Army did. A soldier with a wife and two children now gets \$128 in cash a month for them under the Soldier's Allotment Act — plus, of course, his own board and keep."

(3) Most important economic fact of all is that it is the present high-wage occupations (shipyards, aircraft, munitions, etc.) which will be drastically deflated after the war, while it is the low-wage occupations (white-collar, services, consumer goods) which will take on millions more workers. Almost 75% of those in retail trade, for example, are now getting less than 65c an hour (the "substandard" dividing line) as against only 2% in plane and ship building. Thus the low-wage industries will become relatively more important in the postwar era, which means less mass purchasing power, which means more likely depression.

On July 18 bills were introduced into the House and Senate to amend the Fair Labor Standards Act of 1938, which set 40c an hour as the national minimum wage, so as to (1) broaden its coverage, (2) raise the minimum to 65c. (Both pamphlets give detailed reasons why 65c is the very lowest figure that can be accepted; it is actually a "political" not a "sociological" figure; on the basis of any reasonable interpretation of decent living standards, the minimum hourly wage would have to be set at least

20c higher.) Ten Democrats, led by Pepper of Florida and Mead of New York, sponsored the bill in the Senate; Representative Hook (D.) of Michigan introduced it into the House. It is expected that the White House will support the measure — and that there will be plenty of Congressional opposition. This struggle will be one of the most significant, in human and in economic terms, of the coming year.

Considering the increasing number of CIO-published pamphlets today, some technical criticism of these two may be useful. They are attractive at first glance, using lots of excellent photographs in layouts which are striking if a little "arty." But in their enthusiasm for eye-appeal, the publishers have forgotten that pamphlets are also supposed to be read. *Half a Million Forgotten People*, in particular, has so over-emphatic a layout that it is difficult to follow the text; here is non-functional design at its worst. Similarly, both pamphlets are set entirely in Vogue Bold, which looks well but is wearying to the eye when used in big blocks; its sans-serif letters, with no shadings, give an effect of a monumental inscription. It is a good type for captions and short items — the "fillers" at the end of articles in this magazine are set in Vogue Bold — but I doubt that any professional typographer would set a whole pamphlet in it. One more point: a query rather than a criticism. Both pamphlets use many of those "animated" charts in which little men dance about; this was a big improvement 15 years ago when Neurath first hit on it, but are we not now so used to it that actually a simple line graph sometimes seems more vivid and exciting? I'm not sure, and I certainly have no idea of a better pictorial treatment of statistics, but I think the question needs to be raised.

Finally, it is only fair to say that the design of these pamphlets could have been worse. It is also only fair to say that the text, which as it happens I wrote myself, could have been better.

DWIGHT MACDONALD

(Note: These pamphlets are obtainable from "Politics" at 15c for the two, postpaid.)

**THE REVOLUTIONARY COMMITTEES IN THE DEPARTMENTS OF FRANCE, 1793-1794.** By John Black Sirich. Harvard Historical Studies 52. Harvard University Press. \$2.50.

Factual, theoretically timid, limited largely to the findings of research, this study is valuable as the case history of a revolutionary institution.

Originally set up to register and watch over "foreigners", the committees of surveillance, because of Girondin influence, were weak and practically negligible to begin with. Their employment by the Terror as tools against "suspects" was begun in the fall of 1793. From then until Thermidor, the revolutionary committees functioned as the effective arm of the Terror, growing in power, becoming integrated into the administration of France, and extending their activities beyond the mere surveillance and detention of "the enemies of liberty". Staffed—non-professionally—by *sans-culottes*, they were a very democratic means of actualizing the Jacobin will. (The members of many committees were victims of the Thermidorian reaction.)

Mr. Sirich's one theoretical effort is to deflate the "legend" that "the provinces follow Paris." He certainly demonstrates that the relation of the committees to the Convention was sociological, not mathematical. He shows that the execution in the departments of the laws of the Con-



vention was determined by local conditions, was more dependent on the acts of the representatives-on-mission than on the speeches of deputies. He set out "to depict the actual machinery of the Terror in the departments." And this he does—in all its half-dull variety. But he has pictured *how* the provinces followed Paris, not that they did not do so.

DAVID T. BAZELON

**AXIS RULE IN OCCUPIED EUROPE.** By Raphael Lemkin. Columbia University Press. \$7.50

A huge (674 big pages) volume, over half of which is devoted to reprinting the texts of German and Italian "laws of occupation." The remainder is an exhaustive summary and analysis, unfortunately done in an excessively legalistic and unimaginative way, of German techniques of occupation and of German and Italian occupation policies considered country by country.

Lemkin coins the useful term, "genocide," meaning "the practice of extermination of nations and ethnic groups." He shows that this means not only the physical destruction of conquered peoples, as with the Jews and Poles, but applies also to less direct methods aimed at destroying the political, social, cultural, economic, religious and moral bases of existence of a people.

Considering his massive scholarly apparatus, the author's personal bias seems rather simplistic: he states that Germany "attacked her neighbors five times since 1864" (as simple as that!) and holds the German people morally responsible for Nazism because they benefitted from Hitler's conquests (if Hitler had made no conquests, they would presumably then be guiltless), and because "the vast majority of the German people put Hitler into power through free elections." The most superficial research could have told Dr. Lemkin that the elections were not "free" except in the most formal sense, and that even so, Hitler fell considerably short of even 50% of the votes, let alone a "vast majority." Such a gross error somewhat shakes one's confidence in the fairness and accuracy of the rest of the book.

D. M.

**THE SOCIOLOGY OF LITERARY TASTE.** By Levin L. Schucking. Oxford. \$2.

This unpretentious little book is not a model of what the sociology of literature should be, but it is a welcome contribution to the slight and scattered materials available to the English reader. It contains more suggestions than tested assertions, and a good deal of what it suggests is after all rather well-known. It nevertheless deserves to be read. For if Mr. Schucking is short on fact, he knows at least what facts should be gathered to clinch the points he makes. And his imagination for the concrete linkages of art and society, of artist and taste-upholder, of public and publisher compensate the reader for the under-researched character of his work.

His essential aim is to get hold of the "external" factors involved in the diffusion and appraisal of literature. In pursuit of this aim, he lays bare something of the structure of literary fame and of public taste. Because of the lower level of generality on which the book is pitched, Mr. Schucking is able properly to debunk notions of *The Spirit of the Age* and of *The General Social Environment* which fill up so many eminent American "social" interpretations of literature and thought.

C. W. M.

**THE EDUCATION OF FREE MEN.** Herbert Read. Freedom Press, London. One shilling.

A short statement of the author's educational theories discussed in his book, "Education Through Art." The importance of children's art not only as the catharsis of inner conflicts, nor as creative experience, but as "the most exact index" to the child's individuality, which must be preserved and strengthened by the education best suited to the development of its special gifts. A liberated home and classroom will develop a happy, well-adjusted individual; psychoanalysis fails in this task in a disordered civilization.

E. G.

**TOWARDS A CHRISTIAN PEACE. I. A Political Approach,** by Carl Heath. II. **An Economic Approach,** by W. H. Marwick. The Fellowship of Reconciliation, 2929 Broadway, New York 25.

An expression of the "radical Christian point of view. The use of religious phraseology in Part I makes this section less intelligible to the non-believer; but in Part II, the author analyses with a civilized intelligence many immediate and post-war problems. The radical socialist may find his political yardstick especially relevant to the means-end question "to apply ethical principles as an unfailing test to every social institution and policy that the ceaseless change of the world's evolution produces."

E. G.

THOSE AWFUL RESISTERS!

(1)

There is a case for the Partisans of this world, in Yugoslavia and elsewhere, even though they are grim smelly folk who eat with their knives. All the revolutionaries I know of in history and in Europe today fit this uncouth pattern. — Walter Graebner, chief of Time magazine's London office, reporting (Time, July 16) on a tour of Europe made at vast trouble and expense to find out What's Up.

(2)

Success of the San Francisco charter depends upon the people of the world, Mrs. William A. Hastings, president of the National Congress of Parents and Teachers and one of 41 consultants to the U. S. delegation, told the Honolulu Junior Chamber of Commerce today . . . Children, she emphasized, have been the chief casualties of the war, because of the training in destruction and disrespect for authority given them in underground movements.

—Honolulu Star-Bulletin, July 12.

(1)

**NIGHT SESSION LAST. POTSDAM CONFERENCE CONCLUDED WITHOUT A BREAK IN VEIL OF SECRECY**

—Headline in N. Y. Times, August 3.

(2)

**NO SECRET ACCORD MADE AT POTSDAM, TRUMAN DECLARES**

—Headline in N. Y. Times, August 4.

DOWN-TO-EARTH DEPARTMENT:

Question: Suppose we bring this discussion down to earth. Are you [the editors of "Labor and Nation", a new trade union monthly] going to say, for example, what you think of Russia, or of the recent . . .

Answer: Well, just in order that we may stay "down to earth", let us take one ticklish issue at a time, and this may as well be the Russian issue. Russia is a factor of major significance in international life, and the American national scene cannot help taking a realistic cognizance of it. Hence, an intelligently guided publication should be obliged to treat all so-called Russian issues, that is, issues involving relations and dealings with Russia, without the kind of bias which makes soberly conceived policy and action impossible and unproductive of constructive results. The test of a sound editorial attitude is whether or not it serves the best interests of broadly conceived American labor and the American way of life.

—Editorial in "Labor and Nation" for August.



# The Intelligence Office

## "WHO'S LOONEY NOW?"

Sir:

Your brief comments on Halsey and Patton in the August *POLITICS* reminded me of a sentence by Bertrand Russell in *Power* (page 259): "*Certified lunatics are shut up because of their proneness to violence when their pretensions are questioned; the uncertified variety are given the control of powerful armies, and can inflict death and disaster upon all sane men within their reach.*" Russell's observation has been amply verified in the last few years.

GLENDORA, CALIF.

CALVIN KIRBY

## CONSCRIPTION MUST BE RESISTED!

SIR:

The revolution in pacifism towards political relevance has been taking place in England too, largely because of the increase in the following of anarchism. Under Conservative rule the issue was becoming rapidly clearer. But the Tories have been defeated. Not that English anarchist thought nourishes any illusions about the progressive character of a Labour Government, yet however much Transport House collaborationism may dominate the front Bench, and however deeply its leaders may have committed themselves to the Far Eastern war, we have in office a party which is yet more deeply committed to a traditional opposition to conscription. Let me make it perfectly clear that we shall resist and defy conscription by whatever party it is imposed, and for whatever object. The new factor in the situation is not that — it is that even for those of us who distrust parliamentary government most deeply, the back-benchers of the new Government include men who at least speak the same language as ourselves. The Labour party is divided on the conscription issue — the Tories will try to divide it further. It will need to resist Stalinist pressure on the one hand and the danger of being jockeyed into a War of Liberation against Russia on the other. Yet for a few months, until we see the shape of events, the immediate conflict is postponed. Had the Tories been returned, it would have been no more than a matter of weeks before the anti-conscriptionist parties, with an impressive literary and intellectual backing, had moved from public opposition to personal resistance. *That is the position in which I feel that you stand.*

For you, and probably for us in the very near future, objection is not enough. The objector, particularly the religious objector, is politically irrelevant because he is chiefly interested in safeguarding his own conscientious objection to one aspect of state irresponsibility. You do not want objection, you want resistance, personal and national, organized and individual, ready to adopt every means short of violence to destroy and render useless the whole mechanism of conscription. It is not enough to secure the immunity and the support of religious believers and a politically conscious minority. The opposition of the ordinary man to military service must be canalised. He will not stand up against the machinery of governments and penalties, with the knowledge that his wife and children are hostages, unless he has the consciousness of that powerful, if invisible, support which the European resistance movements gave to the unpolitical man in his opposition to the Germans. Men will defy conscription in defence of their own lives and homes against military ad-

venturers if they know that there is someone to support them. They will act out of an intuitive and thoroughly unpatriotic love of freedom, the sentiment which makes conscription necessary in the first place. The answer to conscription in America, and ultimately in England and in every country of the world, is a resistance movement which does not confine itself to anarchists or Quakers, which asks as few political credentials of its members as did the resistance in Europe. It is by taking the offensive that pacifism will become politically relevant. It seems to me that you have been too long intoxicated by the semblance of a democracy which you knew to be unreal. It is weighted and you cannot win, but you tend to continue to pay lip-service to it. The organizers of conscription are as much your enemies as a foreign invader, and deserve no better treatment. Countries which were occupied found the issue clearer, because the hostility which their people felt to Government was not counterpoised by any conditioning of obedience. The brilliant successes of Resistance methods in those countries is surely the key to the destruction of conscription, a valid achievement in itself, and one which is calculated to knock out the cornerstone of the megalopolitan military structure by rendering it unable to consider war as a possible line of action.

You possess a stronger national tradition of direct action than we — the conscription issue needs a new underground express, a new Tin Horn rebellion. It is no good protesting from a CPS camp — men and records must vanish, absentees be assisted, arrests be prevented, dependants supported. The political relevance of pacifism lies in its willingness to substitute resistance for objection, and it seems to me that in America the time for such substitution is riper from one day to the next.

BARNET, ENGLAND

ALEX COMFORT

## DEAR-SIR-YOU-CUR DEPT.

SIR:

You say that Cannon's description of yourself as a political "Alice in Wonderland" is apt. I'm sorry that I cannot say the same for your caterpillar interpretation.

As you point out, Alice was the only reasonable person among fantastic folk; but you forget that they were her own creation — her dream (see Freud). Just as the fantasies of that world existed only in her head and not in real life, so does the Trotsky-Cannon-Rockefeller monster exist only in your head and not in the SWP. Your preoccupation with the terrible SWP is, I believe, a subject for psychoanalytic rather than political study.

LOS ANGELES, CALIF.

BEN MAXSON

P.S. If you print this, it will certainly look strange among your endless letters of praise and criticism from the right. —*Comrade Maxson is evidently a petty-bourgeois gone mad (see Cannon). He forgets that there is some doubt as to who is the dreamer and who the dreamee in ALICE: when Alice comes on the Red King asleep, she is warned not to wake him, since all of them, including herself, are simply figures in his dream. The question thus really is who is dreaming whom, Cannon me, or I Cannon?* —D.M.

SIR:

Your July issue contains what to my mind is a classic example of politics and morals as practised by the school of moralist critics of Bolshevism, among whom you number yourself.

You devote seven columns to quoting and analyzing an article by James P. Cannon, leader of the Socialist Workers Party (self-styled "orthodox" Trotskyists), written in ans-



wer to James T. Farrell. I do not here intend to comment upon the political conclusions to which you come on the basis of Cannon's pompous and pontifical pronouncements, except to say that they are no more impressive than your past attempts to establish that the roots of bureaucratic degeneration are inherent in Lenin's theories of organization. I shall likewise refrain from expressing myself on the tone of your article beyond voicing my annoyance with its "Thank God we are not like them" air which you, together with the other moralist critics, so frequently assume.

What occasioned this letter is not the article on Cannon per se, but rather what immediately followed it. Under the heading of "The Intelligence Office" you print a letter which reports on the underground activities of the French Trotskyists during the Nazi occupation. As one who keeps exceptionally well posted on the left press, including the American Trotskyist press, you most certainly knew that the letter dealt with the French Trotskyist organization. The writer of the letter had omitted this fact for obvious reasons. You state that it was received from "a French comrade for whose reliability we can vouch". You were therefore familiar with his political ties.

Yet you chose to run the letter under the heading of "News of the French Revolutionary Left". You found it a little too much to present Trotskyists as self-sacrificing revolutionists and anti-Nazi heroes so close upon the heels of the views you express in the preceding seven columns. The struggle against Trotskyist "amoralism" was to be better served by hiding their activities under a cloak of anonymity. The end which you sought to serve appeared too important for you to be a stickler over the means.

I recommend this significant episode for the serious reflection of all those who have recently found such a pre-occupation in the question of morals and politics.

NEW YORK CITY

ERNEST ERBER

*—I regret I didn't think to insert the word "Trotskyist" in my French correspondent's letter; it should have been there. That it was an oversight — one of many, no doubt — should go without saying; any one who has read POLITICS knows that, whatever its faults, one of them is not trickery of the kind suggested in the above letter. And even if my editorial methods were as pettifogging as Erber assumes they are, I would not need the intellect of a Marx to realize that undemocratic ideology and heroism are not incompatible, and hence it would not in any way affect the criticisms made in the article to have put the right label on the French Trotskyists. The Stalinist underground, for example, also produced many anti-Nazi heroes.*

*I also regret any tone of moral superiority that may have crept into my article, but I would plead the difficulty of not feeling morally superior to Cannon & Co. Surely such superiority is a modest enough boast! But I should like to ask Erber why he sneers at "pre-occupation in the question of morals and politics." Does he feel, with Cannon, that Bolshevism has nothing to learn from "moralistic critics?" Personally, I consider few problems today so important as that of political morality.*

*These questions are not wholly rhetorical. For the above letter is the most unexpected and sadly significant communication I have as yet received in a year and a half of editing POLITICS.*

*Unexpected because I have been on friendly terms with Erber, politically as well as personally, for years, and have indeed considered him one of the best types in the Trotskyist movement: level-headed, unsectarian, democratic-minded, and concerned about the human aims of socialism. He is, furthermore, a prominent member of the Workers Party, which seems to be making some effort at fresh think-*

*ing and whose press has criticised Cannon in much the same terms as I have.*

*Sadly significant for the above reasons. For here we have a particularly honorable and unsectarian member of the better of the two Trotskyist groups imputing dishonest motives, on no evidence, to a fellow socialist. And doing this, it is clear from his letter, because he feels my criticisms of Bolshevism are intolerable, so that he must attempt, by this far-fetched imputation, to suggest that it is just a case of the pot calling the kettle black. Does not this suggest there is what might be called a "paranoiac potential" in the whole Trotskyist approach to politics, based as it is on the assumption of the possession of Perfect Truth?*

D. M.

## CLASS V. PEOPLE

SIR:

In the course of your arguments against those who object to your holding the German people in any way responsible for Nazism, it seems to me you develop a rather thin notion of *political* (as opposed to *moral*) responsibility. This distinction seems arbitrary, considering that (1) a political attitude implies *a priori* a certain moral background, (2) any morality is itself also a political attitude. It is somewhat as though a psychologist wanted to consider intelligence apart from feeling. For me, the point of your article (with which I wholly agree) is that peoples are never responsible for the fate that overtakes them, regardless of the standpoint from which one judges them.

The confusion in the discussion, I think, comes from the fact that the question is always posed as that of a *people's* moral or political responsibility. But the concept, "people", is a vague one, and a "people" is itself always socially heterogeneous, politically confused, and morally non-existent. A people could only come under the categories of morality or responsibility if had a social consciousness. However, being in no sense an organic entity, being rather an amalgam of diverse communities artificially tied together by politically drawn frontiers—and almost always contrary to the real interests of the given "people" — it has evolved throughout history on the twilight borders of social consciousness, and to this day remains irresponsible both politically and morally.

When you write, "I do accept responsibility, inasmuch as my efforts have been futile . . ." you are identifying yourself not with the American people but with part of it, namely its revolutionary avantgarde, which is to say its most socially conscious part and one therefore capable of assuming responsibility. The discussion loses its metaphysical odor and becomes serious if, as you do at one point, you apply the notion of the responsibility of the *working class*. For social classes, since they have specific interests and pursue definite aims, may be expected to be politically conscious and thus may be held responsible. There is a politics and a morality of classes, not of peoples. To speak of the politics of the French or German people seems nonsensical to me. Peoples, like crowds, do not behave politically, do not hold to any moral or theoretical standards. They submit to social constraint and, at best, also to a kind of inner compulsion which gives an affective character to their behavior.

I am with you when you raise the problem of the responsibility of the German working-class at the time the Nazis took power; it being of course understood that theirs is not the *only* responsibility but one shared with the European and world working-class, which bears some of the responsibility for both Nazism and Stalinism. The proletariat, yes — for to some extent it has "Free Will" and



can "choose." But not a people. ("Choice" and "Free Will" are conceivable only as functions of a more objective reality which encloses them and determines them, being most assuredly not a gift of God in the Christian sense, that is, so that man can "choose" between good and evil.)

In this sense, I think your correspondents were right when they objected to your comparison of the Spanish people's pugnacity with the German's submissiveness. We may, indeed, admire the elan, the headstrong energy of the Spanish people in the battles of Barcelona, Madrid, etc., and contrast this with the flaccid attitude of the Germans—always bearing in mind the social and historical differences between the two countries and periods. But the responsibility lodges not with either of the two *peoples* but with their proletarian class-conscious organizations: FAI, CNT, UGT, POUM — or KAPD and Social-Democrats.

MEXICO CITY

JEAN MALAQUAIS

*—The distinction between the political responsibility of classes (or class organizations) and the political irresponsibility of peoples seems to me an excellent one, and I regret the confusion caused by my not perceiving it myself.—D.M.*

### THERE IS A PROBLEM

SIR:

In my opinion, Dwight Macdonald was completely right to ask the question why the German people passively submitted to Nazi rule. It is one of the most important problems facing international—and especially German—socialists today.

As every reader of his first article can see, Macdonald sharply rejects the idea, that "all Germans are Nazis" or that they should be made morally responsible and punished for Nazi crimes; he does not make any concessions to this chauvinist viewpoint. When the anti-German feeling ran highest, he took the floor to prove that atrocities were not committed by the masses of German people, but by specially selected and drilled SS troops; that the toiling masses did not identify themselves with the regime; that the terrible oppression was the fruit of the fascist social system and not of a mysterious "German soul"; that such things can happen — and actually happen — under similar circumstances anywhere; and that every decent man should fight against analogous tendencies in his own country. Saying this, he fulfilled as an American socialist his internationalist duty.

But one question remained unanswered: if Nazism with all its atrocities was forced upon the German people, how was it possible that the greatest, most numerous, most class-conscious and best organized working-class in Europe did not develop mass resistance against Nazi rule, not even in the last years of war, when this rule was crumbling under defeat? One would have expected, that a German socialist would pose and try to answer this fateful question. It would have been according to the best internationalist tradition: an American socialist defending the German people against chauvinist propaganda, and a German comrade trying to discover the faults which made possible the submission of his people to the iron heel.

But the discussion did not live up to this expectation. To my surprise, most of the critics seem to find that there is no problem at all. Gunther Reiman could not make any points against what Macdonald really wrote; his objections were founded on misunderstandings. But he was angry that Macdonald *quoted* facts about atrocities; it gives, in his opinion, aid and comfort to the enemy. Sebastian Franck, Jim Cork and Louis Clair admit that Macdonald "did a swell job." But they are afraid that the line between his

criticism of the German people's passivity and the class enemy propaganda is not "sharp" and "clear" enough.

All this recalls the arguments used in the Communist Parties in those times when one still tried to discuss with the critics before liquidating them. Do you say, comrade, that the German working class was defeated by Hitler? You may mean well, but don't you see, that you "objectively" help the class enemy, who states the same fact?

Well, I still cling to the old-fashioned opinion that the cause of socialism is best served by truth, even when this truth sometimes tastes bitter.

And in this case the truth is that the German people did not develop any mass resistance against Nazism. This is true not only for the time when Hitler took power. And not only for the years of Nazi top victories, when the difficulties were really tremendous. It holds also and especially for the last years of the war, when every thinking man could clearly see the approaching end, when the military and economic machine of Nazism was disintegrating, and when even German generals and capitalists were revolting in their own typical way, starting palace conspiracies and attempts on the Fuehrer's life.

The factories and workers' homes were being destroyed; food scarce; trains not running; public utilities destroyed; state power in decomposition — the catastrophe approaching before the very eyes of all. It was still dangerous to revolt — but not less dangerous to go on obediently. And the workers did not revolt.

On the fronts, defeat followed defeat. Even generals knew that the war was lost; but the soldiers fought bravely — till the generals surrendered them.

In Italy, it is true, there was not much *active* resistance before the fall of Mussolini. But Italians took it easy, they made fun of their Duce, they worked little or badly, they fought unwillingly, and they surrendered, wherever they could. They voted against fascism with their feet at least; and, once the crisis on top broke out, there was a real, serious mass resistance with strikes, demonstrations, partisans. But the Germans worked and fought bravely to the very end. How many exceptions can we prove?

When the war was on, we still could hope that things were happening in Germany, and we simply did not know, because the leaders of both belligerent camps tried to conceal them. Some people told us that magnificent movements were developing behind the iron curtain and that revolutionary battalions were ready to march, when the hour of Nazi collapse approaches. It was not true. To-day, Germany is full of Allied soldiers, citizens, journalists, and they have a thousand possibilities to report such sensational developments home, even though the authorities should try to conceal them.

Those, who want to escape the question, have one simple answer: the terror. One ought — says Cork — to consider the unparalleled brutality and deadly efficiency of the Gestapo. I do consider it; I know that it is terribly difficult to organize resistance against a totalitarian power machine. Everybody knows that. But is it *impossible*? That's the question.

People who really deem it impossible, cannot stop to think at this point. If it really is impossible to organize resistance under a totalitarian rule, then the peoples under such rule have only one hope left: liberation through a war, lost by their masters. And if the resistance cannot be organized within the country, even when the defeat in such a war is coming, only "liberation" from outside remains. But Hitler's defeat did not bring liberty to the German people; it brought new oppression.

And for the future, there are only three great powers



left. Should we conclude, that their clash is the only remaining hope of the oppressed of today? Should the next war be the only chance of humanity? And when this war ends with a simple victory of one power, is every hope lost for centuries? That's a dreadful question, says Sebastian Franck. It really is.

Fortunately, it is not quite so bad. We have one reason to hope, and a mighty one. If not the Germans, a dozen other European peoples *did* resist the totalitarian regime. They fought in spite of terror, which was, in their occupied countries, even greater than in Germany. There also were SS, Army, Gestapo, state of siege, military courts, and in addition to that, mass deportations, mass executions of hostages, and wholesale murders à la Lidice.

Norway has not quite 3 million inhabitants. At the time of surrender, there was a German army of 250,000 men. Add Gestapo, imported German civilians and Norwegian quislings — there was one guard on every ten people. The Nazis ordered young workers to report for labor service — they went into hiding. They ordered sailors to sail for them — the sailors deserted, sometimes with their ships. They ordered teachers to teach in Nazi spirit — the teachers refused; hundreds were arrested and deported to the bleak North, the rest sabotaged anyway. In small towns, where you can see from the church tower into all kitchens, underground newspapers have been issued regularly for years. The industry and transportation were periodically paralyzed by wholesale sabotage, underground armed forces were organized. 300,000 members of the oppression machine against 3 million inhabitants, babies included — the resistance went on.

Denmark — at the very gates of Germany — has 3½ million inhabitants, the most peaceful and phlegmatic people in Europe. Well, they managed to organize a successful general strike in Copenhagen in the midst of war, in spite of all terror: the Germans had to grant some of their demands — and this was long before the German defeat. There also was wholesale sabotage, underground armed forces, underground newspapers flourished, whole fleets of small vessels escaped from the shores . . .

I already see the warning finger: *national* resistance is easier, because the active fighters can rely on the solidarity of the whole population. That is true; but in Germany, there were thousands of industrial suburbs and villages with 90% of working class population, former Socialist and Communist voters, all of them. And in the occupied countries, 10% of the population often were Volksdeutsche or quislings; the ratio is the same.

Should we conclude, that only the fight for *national* liberation against a *foreign* oppressor is able to awake mass enthusiasm and solidarity? I am the last one to underestimate the importance of the national liberation movements today. But I know very well, that the struggle for *social* liberation did and does inspire to mass movements and heroic deeds. The Spanish revolution is a recent proof of it, if we don't want to go back to 1917.

So there must be some special reasons for the German failure. There is a problem to solve. I cannot say that I have a satisfactory explanation. I would be glad, to discuss some aspects of the question, if a discussion develops.

But first of all, I think, we must protest against the assertion that nothing happened, that everything is in the best order, and that there is no problem to worry about. CHICAGO, ILL. PETER MEYER

## DEAD IN FRANCE

SIR:

I have recently learned of the deaths of several of the

best of our circle in Marseille in 1941 — all well-known militants whose passing should be commemorated:

*Charles Wolf*, member of the Socialist Party, former editor of "La Lumiere", music critic. Shot by the Gestapo. (His mother and sister either killed themselves or were murdered in Alsace during the occupation.) . . . *Itkine*, actor, Trotskyist, member of a resistance group, organizer of the "Croquefruit" Cooperative which got work for fugitive comrades. Tortured and shot . . . *Dr. Jean de Botton*, left-socialist militant, a young man of unusual talent. Shot . . . *Jean Salducci*, a leading spirit of the "Ecole Emancipee" movement, who was notable for his courage and honesty. Died at Dachau. (He had refused to emigrate, although well-known to the Nazis.) . . . *Georges Lapiere*, one of the socialist leaders of the "Workers of Education" trade union (CGT). Died in a concentration camp . . . *Augustin Habaru*, Belgian writer ("Monde", "La Lumiere") who was active as an ultra-left militant in the resistance movement. Shot.

Finally, there is one natural death: that of the poet, Marcel Martinet, whose "Temps Maudits" attracted much attention in 1918-20. A contributor to "La Revolution Proletarienne", he held to a firm anti-totalitarian socialist position, which of course cost him an almost complete boycott. He also wrote "Une Feuille de Hêtre" (poems) and "La Maison à l'Abri" (novel).

MEXICO CITY

VICTOR SERGE

## REACTION FROM EUROPE

SIR:

Thank you for "Politics". It gives us a glimpse of that intellectual world to which we have grown unaccustomed but not indifferent. What a gap between our intellectual life and yours! What flatness and sterility in our periodicals! Where you criticise, they applaud. Is it all up with old Europe? Leafing through your magazine, which reflects American intellectual life, one might well think so. I must confess that there were times when we had great doubts about America. Most of the American soldiers we have known talked only of "football" and were bored by the problems that preoccupy us. But "Politics" shows that there is, in America, an elite which discusses freely the burning problems of today, and that it still exists, that spirit of free criticism which we had thought dead.

PARIS, FRANCE

JACQUES X

SIR:

After reading several issues of "Politics", we must admit that nothing like it exists today in France. What especially interests us is that you put in the foreground the real content of socialism: its humanitarian concepts. For we believe that in a world in which the individual is more and more reduced to his social function, we must get back to that vital center of socialist doctrine. Otherwise, we can achieve all kinds of structural reforms without transforming the dominating of man by man and by things into the domination of things by free men.

LYON, FRANCE

FRANCOISE Y

—*Agreeable though it is to have one's efforts appreciated, it seems necessary to point out that our correspondents, unhappily, are much too sanguine about American intellectual life. "P.M.", "Time", and "The Saturday Review of Literature" are much more representative of its quality than "Politics" is. The most I would claim for American intellectuals is that some of them are still sceptics and rebels—and that they are willing to learn. Furthermore, many if not most of the contributors to "Politics" are refugees, so that the magazine is a kind of transplanted spore of European culture growing in an environment that is physically and*



politically more favorable to free thought than that of modern Europe. What this latter atmosphere has been like is movingly suggested in still another European reaction to the magazine, as reported by a soldier-friend stationed in Heidelberg: "I visited old Prof. Karl Jaspers here at the university. I had previously given him the issues of your magazine featuring the Weber controversy and your own 'Responsibility of Peoples.' He was delighted at the opportunity of reading critical and clashing articles, excited to a twinkle (really) at the spirit of independent discussion. 'How long it has been! . . . ' Marianne Weber, Max Weber's widow, was visiting and she borrowed the issues . . ." —D.M.

## DEATH CAMPS KNOWN ABOUT EARLIER

SIR:

In a footnote to your comments in the *Further Discussion of The Responsibility of Peoples*, you state that "the outside world found out about" the death-camps in the summer of 1944, "though there had been rumors before". This is far from true and does nothing but repeat the hypocritical rationalizations of the British and American governments. *The Black Book of Polish Jewry*, published in New York by Roy publishers before the summer of 1944, already contained detailed reports of death-camps, supplied over a year earlier by the Polish underground. The Polish government in exile, the Czech government in exile and the Soviet government had informed the world of the existence of these camps, and the Netherlands Government in exile, at the time of the first deportations of Dutch Jews towards Eastern Europe, in 1942 or earlier, had likewise filed protests, against their extermination, with various Allied governments. Refugees arriving in America from unoccupied France knew of the existence of death-camps in Eastern Europe as early as the beginning of 1942. Only the British and the American governments, it seems, and the more "respectable" newspapers in these two countries, refused to give credence to these reports, many of them factual and far more than rumors. One can only conclude that the British and the American peoples and their governments did not want to know about the death-camps and refused to believe that they existed until they simply could no longer deny their existence. The responsibility for these atrocities, it seems, spreads further and further, the more we analyze the unwillingness of the general public, first in Germany, then in the occupied countries and finally in England and America, to believe the reports of them and to express its moral indignation effectively.

STATEN ISLAND, N. Y.

TERENCE DONAGHUE

P.S. Another problem arises: the information concerning death-camps that reached our governments before the summer of 1944 generally came from the same underground sources as various intelligence reports of considerable strategic value. Why did our governments give credence to this military information, useful in the planning of bombings or commando-raids, but not to the reports on death-camps. Again, for propaganda reasons, we fed back to underground German short-wave listeners a lot of very doubtful information concerning signs of weakness or disorganization inside Germany, but precious little about the death-camps, so that we ourselves failed to inform the Germans about them. Why?

## BIRDS-OF-A-FEATHER DEPT.

Washington:—Representative Rankin of Mississippi proposed today that Gen. George S. Patton, Jr., be appointed Secretary of War.

—N. Y. Times, July 22.

# Comment

**Most Hated People?** In the early stages of the war, the USA was the most popular nation in the world, thought of as a rich and generous benefactor, an idealistic crusader for democracy. As the war ends, it may well be that we Americans are coming to be hated with an intensity formerly reserved for the Germans. First, our government lets loose the atom bomb. And a few weeks later, it suddenly cancels Lend-Lease. No advance notice whatever was given to our "allies"; the cancellation of all Lend-Lease commitments, and the shutting off of the flow of goods into the vast pipe-line took effect as of the time the various governments received their first notice of the cancellation. The \$2 billions of goods under current Lend-Lease contracts are cancelled, and the interested governments are invited either to pay cash or to apply for credit from the Export-Import Bank (which has very little available.) Even if they are able to finance their purchases one way or the other, it will take many weeks just to create a wholly new mechanism for handling the goods (the entire Lend-Lease system, built up over years, was simply scrapped overnight). "The effect of the order," commented the *Times'* Washington office on August 22, "was regarded here as making virtually certain a return to a subsistence diet this winter in Great Britain, France, Belgium and other countries dependent on large Lend-Lease shipments of food, in the opinion of high Government officials."

The official explanation is that Lend-Lease has always been scheduled to end with the war, and that the war is ended. This is a technicality which is not valid even technically, for the war is not formally ended, since no peace treaty has been signed; England, the chief dependent on Lend-Lease, still has huge armies and fleets mobilized; and in any case, it is only reasonable to expect a long advance notice before a shift in economic policy of this magnitude, if we assume (as, of course, cannot be assumed), the slightest loyalty and honor in the American government's dealings with its comrades in the great war for the Four Freedoms.

There appear to have been three possible reasons for the action.

(1) It fits into the pattern of the headlong and wholesale junking of wartime economic controls which has taken place since V-J Day. The Truman Administration has gone back to Free Enterprise faster than the most optimistic business circles dared to hope. Was it, for example, coincidence that two weeks after V-J Day the No. 1 American Keynesian, Alvin Hansen, ceased to function as adviser to the Board of Governors of the Federal Reserve System, a post he had held since 1940? Coincidence or not, there is no question that the shift from wartime state capitalism to private capitalism is going on in Washington at a dizzy and very probably dangerous rate. (At the same time, in England economic controls have become if anything tighter, and the Government has announced it will introduce legislation to extend wartime controls over prices, supplies and labor for another five years. These opposing trends partly reflect conflicting economic ideologies, but chiefly our own favorable economic position and the dismal situation of Britain.)

(2) However, general policy does not explain why Lend-Lease was terminated in a way calculated to do the



maximum damage. The *manner* of Lend-Lease cancellation was dictated by imperialistic calculations. *Time* (September 3) exposes these clearly: "Last week the British speculated on whether their Lend-Leaseless poverty would force immediate withdrawal of military forces from Europe and the Far East to the detriment of Britain's postwar political position. Also directly involved was Britain's basic economic policy of government-controlled foreign trade and foreign exchange; as the price of U. S. credits, the U. S. might demand that Britain relax trade controls. . . . Although the U. S. was incomparably the world's strongest power, the world knew that the atomic bomb, for instance, could not be used unless the U. S. public recognized the objectives as genuinely vital to the nation. To achieve limited, non-vital objectives in Europe and Asia, U. S. economic power seemed the appropriate instrument." A final motive was probably to increase the already great economic problems confronting the new British Labor Government.

(3) The move reflects the provincial contempt for "foreigners" and the isolationist psychology of Truman and his new cabinet (which is drawn much more from West of the Mississippi than Roosevelt's was). Truman's rude and spiteful remarks to the French journalists the other day is another example of this psychology, which is undoubtedly popular with the mass of Americans. "Reaction in the U. S. was almost all in Truman's favor," reports *Time*. "Not a single Senator was publicly critical of the Administration's action; most editorialists praised it." In May, 1944, I wrote that the average American was worried not over the increasing inhumanity of the world the war was creating but simply feared "that his country's national interests will not be sufficiently protected, i.e., that American imperialism has not sufficiently worked out a strategy to get the upper hand over its British and Russian competitors." This fear is being rapidly set at rest.

When the failure of UNRRA to deliver even its own pitiful quotas of food to Europe, when this fraud and scandal is added to the callous overnight termination of Lend-Lease, the picture that emerges is not pretty. Here, the post-war buying spree is under full swing already; our vast factories are straining to produce at top speed electric iceboxes, pleasure cars, radios, luxury foods and clothing—and all this for a people whose living standards rose to new heights during the war. There, a devastated (largely by our armies) continent, its people, battered by a war which reduced them to an almost animal existence, facing with ragged clothes and empty warehouses a winter of semi-starvation at best and real starvation for vast numbers of them. And the reaction of our democratically elected government, with no protest from any significant part of the public *including the labor movement*, is to cancel all Lend-Lease commitments "as of the date of receipt of this notice."

*Not a single Senator was publicly critical of the Administration's action; most editorialists praised it. . . . What price the Responsibility of Peoples?*

**Ciliga Safe** Word has come from a friend in Rome of the recent arrival of Anton Ciliga, author of *The Russian Enigma*. When the war began, Ciliga, who had been living in Paris since getting out of the Soviet Union in the early thirties, felt that his place was in his native land, Yugoslavia. Although as a revolutionary-socialist and an anti-Stalinist he was in danger from both the Germans and Tito's forces, he insisted on making the journey. He disappeared, and his friends gave him up for lost. Now, after some apparently extraordinary adventures, the great good news comes of his safe arrival in Rome—where he hopes

to find the leisure to write a book about his experiences. My correspondent writes: "The story of how Ciliga escaped from a Croat concentration camp (where he spent a year) is too long to go over here. Fortunately, he managed to get released before the entry of Tito into Zagreb. . . . He has an extraordinary vitality and is still in good shape physically. . . . He's extremely pessimistic on the whole European situation, on its human as well as its political aspect. He thinks the vitality of European peoples has been exhausted for a long time, and that the masses are no longer capable of initiating anything new or creative at this stage."

**Greece (5)** The last instalment on the Greek Tragedy was in May. (Previous ones in January, February, and April) Since then, there have been no major changes: the pro-royalist Voulgaris cabinet is still in power, the British bayonets are still propping it up, the Anglo-Russian power clash continues to produce "incidents" and rumors on the Macedonian frontier—and the issues which were supposedly settled by Scobie's tanks and planes are still festering beneath the glazed skin of Law and Order.

If King George is not yet back at the head of a neo-fascist government, it is not the fault of the royalists, who have become the most aggressive group in Greek politics. According to *The Central European Observer* (London) for May 16: "All higher positions in army, police and administration have already been filled with royalists. Indeed, army officers have formed themselves into a radical monarchist organization with authoritarian aims, under the harmless name of *Nomiofrones* (Loyalists). Still more dangerous, perhaps, is an association of police officers under the notorious Maniadakis which, according to the *Times*' correspondent, has been built up on the lines of the SS."

However, there seems to be something lacking: perhaps the trouble is that there aren't enough policemen. The panacea which the Voulgaris government prescribes for all ills is: police measures. The people are starving? Forbid all political meetings! The economy is in ruins? Suppress the EAM press! The trade unions are restive? Arrest their leaders! The repression of EAM goes on mercilessly, monotonously, partly by official actions, partly by lynch mobs which burn and wreck while the police forget their passion for Order.

And yet, despite all this—or perhaps because of it?—the popularity of EAM, and of its chief leaders, the Communists, persists. In the recent trade union elections, held under supervision of a delegation from the British TUC, the EAM-supported slate won in seven out of nine unions (*Common Sense*, July). "Among the working classes and even the poorer peasants," writes L. Graikos in the *London Tribune* for June 29, "the most popular action of the war in Greece was the Athens fight against General Scobie's forces. The credit goes exclusively to the Communist leaders who conducted the struggle. This party, in spite of the severe persecutions against its members, remains extremely popular. . . . It has gained something very nearly approaching the prestige of the Paris Commune. That is the main effect of Scobie's and Churchill's victories." Simpleminded Stalin-haters of *The New Leader* variety, who supported Scobie-Churchill as a "lesser evil" to EAM, might reflect on this classic outcome of an attempt to fight Stalinism *from the right*.

The Greek CP, of course, hardly deserves its revolutionary laurels. Once the Teheran deal had been made, it did its best to blunt the edge of popular demands and to get its followers to accept peacefully whatever Churchill had



in mind for them. According to an interesting article in *Labor Action* for July 23, the Greek CP early this April reorganized itself, dropping three top leaders and confessing its "mistake" in not having "followed a bolder path, more like Marshal Tito in Yugoslavia", to quote the *Daily Worker*. This shift coincided with the similar shift in our own CP, and proceeded from the same causes: the changed relationship between Russian and Anglo-American imperialism. It is the Greek people's misfortune that they had to stand up to Scobie's tanks led by a party which had, between Teheran and the outbreak of fighting, made every possible political preparation for defeat. But then one can't make omelets without breaking eggs, can one? (And what an omelet the CP and the British between them have made in Greece!)

The liblabs now expect that the new Labor government will reverse Churchill's Greek policy and "restore democracy" in Greece. I doubt it. It is true that on August 8, Attlee cabled to Archbishop Damaskinos his concern over "right-wing excesses" and his hope for speedy elections. But it is also true that Damaskinos replied to this the next day by reiterating his refusal to admit Liberals, Communists or EAM leaders into the cabinet (which he proudly stated would remain "non-political") and by saying nothing about elections. Since it is the left which wants to "politicalize" the cabinet and the right which wants to preserve its present purity, it is not hard to see which way the wind is still blowing — even had the Athens police not forbade, three days earlier, a mass meeting which EAM had scheduled "to demand an anti-fascist government." (Inspiring slogan!) What further steps Attlee will take remains to be seen. But we should not forget that the Labor Party voted almost solidly in Parliament for Churchill's Greek policy, that the TUC's Citrine Report whitewashed that policy, and that the Labor Party shows no more signs of wanting to preside over the dissolution of the British Empire (or its "lifeline" in the Mediterranean) than did Churchill. (This was written before Bevin's Speech — See elsewhere in this issue — which bears out these forebodings.)

#### A PRACTICAL SUGGESTION

Sir: I am writing a story about Jap atrocities in their prison camps. I need an adjective to express the idea that the Nips are lower than monkeys. What's the good word?—A. D., Kansas City.

Answer: Use "infrasinian" (below the apes); pronounced IN-fruh-SIM-ee-un. — Letter column in Los Angeles Times, July 7.

#### In Early Issues:

Simone Weil: *The Iliad, Poem of Force* (Translated by Mary McCarthy)

Corporal X: *Military Society*

George Woodcock: *Conscientious Objection in England*

Nancy Macdonald: *Are Hospitals Made for People, or Vice Versa?*

Edwin Seldon: *The Resistance Poetry of Aragon and Eluard*

*The Soldier Reports* (3): *What Kind of People is Russia Producing?* A first-hand study of 500 Red Army men.

C. W. Mills and Patricia Salter: *The Barricade and the Bedroom* (with a reply by Paul Goodman)

Dwight Macdonald: *Culture, Inc., a Memo on Time, Inc.'s projected new magazine.*

Gallicus: *Terror in the Air, a critique of Anglo-American Bombing Strategy*

Our special issue devoted to . . .

#### "NEW ROADS IN POLITICS"

. . . has been postponed to December. Partial list of contents:

*Don Calboun: Non-Violence and Revolution*

*Helen Constat: A Critique of Marxian Ideology*

*Gallicus: The Strange Case of the "Different" War*

*Paul Goodman: Reflections on Drawing the Line*

*Will Herberg: Personalism against Totalitarianism*

*Dwight Macdonald: "The Root Is Man"*

*James Peck: A Note on Direct Action*

*Albert Votaw: Toward a Personalist Socialist Philosophy*

#### CONTRIBUTORS

Virgil J. Vogel, a leader of the Young People's Socialist League, worked for several months at Hanford. . . . Harold Orlansky, a frequent contributor to "Politics", is a C.O. employed in a mental hospital. . . . James Laughlin is a publisher (New Directions). . . . Nicola Chiaromonte, whose "Croce and Italian Liberalism" appeared in our June, 1944, issue, contributes to "Partisan Review", "View", "The New Republic" and "Italia Libera". . . . "Gelo and Andrea" are socialists who took part in the resistance movement and who now live in central France. . . .

Cover Illustration: Gigantic stone head recently discovered in the State of Tabasco, Mexico, by Dr. Matthew Stirling. It weighs 20 tons and is estimated to be 1300 years old.

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