

also use some very oily language about the religious interest of Christendom in Palestine to justify interfering with such schemes as the Jordan Valley Authority.

Prime Minister Attlee's statement in the Commons makes the whole affair seem a kind of cruel tease. That the British government should want the assurance of American help in implementing the recommendations is thoroughly understandable. To establish a second condition, an impossible condition rejected by the committee, is to bring the good faith of the British government into question. What Mr. Attlee wants in effect is American help in disarming the Jews of Palestine. Why he wants to disarm the Jews at a time when Britain declares itself

fearful of an Arab uprising is a question the reader will have to answer for himself. Mr. Truman, to whose insistence we owe the recommendation on the 100,000, may yet save the day by pressing for admission of the 100,000 while offering American aid in settling them and in making it clear to the Arabs that America stands firmly behind Britain. I still think the key to the future lies in rehabilitation of the whole Middle Eastern area, including the Jordan Valley, in a way which will benefit both Jews and Arabs. America has the capital if Britain has the vision. All the fine words and constructive possibilities in this new report will go down the drain of history unless Mr. Truman and Mr. Attlee get together.

Leftism in the Atomic Age

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IN THE discussions of the atomic bomb the most fundamental considerations seem to get the least attention. Little consideration, for instance, seems to have been given in this context to the truth that men, particularly in political matters, are not guided by the facts but by their opinions about the facts, opinions which can so readily, by common emotional processes, become the kind held by millions of educated Germans who were passionately convinced that the war was caused by Jews, or by the tens of millions of intelligent Americans who believed after the First World War that it had been caused by armament makers or by bankers used as tools by British capitalists bent on swollen profits (like those, presumably, which British capitalists are now enjoying)—ideas voiced by all Communists and some Socialists during the first two years of the war just ended.

The history of every revolution which devours its children, of every religion which sets up inquisitions to rack and burn the heretic for the greater glory of God, should warn us that we are far more likely to throw the bomb at each other quarreling over rival doctrines than quarreling over conflicting interests. Interests we can compromise with no sense of sin; ideologies must be held inviolate, and passionate conviction, or fanaticism, becomes a virtue.

But it is a virtue which in the atomic age may destroy us. We know from repeated experience that two men of differing social doctrine might travel together over Russia, witness exactly the same things, and return with conflicting accounts and diametrically opposed conclusions. Access to the facts, though indispensable, is not enough. With it must go a realization of the need to discipline doctrinal prepossessions which distort inter-

pretation of the facts. If in 1920 the American public rejected Wilson and his policy, embraced isolationism, and after a decade and a half of discussion sanctioned the Neutrality Act—which had its part in bringing on World War II—it was not because in all those years the facts were unavailable. The trouble, as in the British acceptance of appeasement as the road to peace, was the mood and temper in which the facts were selected and interpreted. The temper of nationalism has heretofore been the main mischief. That has now been largely replaced, or perhaps reinforced, by the rancorous partisanship of social and economic doctrine, which can be just as intolerant and blinding, and even more dangerous.

WORLD AUTHORITY FOR WHAT PURPOSE?

Assuming such habits of the human mind are encouraged, what chance has a world parliament of agreeing upon the ultimate purpose of power in the international society of the future? Yet that is the purpose upon which we must agree if world authority is both to control the bomb and to preserve the freedoms we fought for in two world wars. If "peace" alone, whatever its price in freedom, is our aim, we could have had it by submission to Hitler or the Japanese.

Whether or not we achieve freedom as well as peace will depend upon our answer to this question: Is the purpose of the future world authority to uphold the true doctrine in matters of political, economic, and social faith, or is it to uphold the right to challenge the doctrine laid down by authority, to criticize and discuss it and reject it? More and more of late the left has drifted away from this latter position of freedom toward the position that power must be used to enforce the true

doctrine. This tendency endangers the basic principle upon which modern free societies have grown up.

Under leftist influences the clear and simple purpose with which the war began has not merely been changed; it has been reversed, or stands in obvious danger of so being. The war began as the assertion of the right of each nation to be free from external coercion as to the social or political system under which it preferred to live, the assertion of the right of each to his own way of life so long as that did not threaten others. When Britain and France faced what they knew would be the almost annihilating cost of a second war within a quarter-century in order to defend Poland, it was not because they regarded Poland as a model state, or liked its methods, but because the first of all national rights, the right to exist, had to be defended if nations—including the British and French nations—were to retain that right. The right of each to choose its system was implicit in the action of the Western democracies. The effect of America's entrance into the war, for instance, was to make sure that Russia should have the right to remain Communist, just as the effect of Russia's entrance was to help America retain capitalism, or free enterprise. This "right to choose" represents the one completely common interest of all nations, overriding doctrinal or ideological differences—a common purpose upon which peace and freedom may be built. If as a condition precedent to cooperation in the war Russia had had to renounce communism, or America capitalism, there would have been no cooperation, even for war. And cooperation for peace is much more difficult.

Soon after the war began, its original purpose of defending the right of each nation to its own mode of life free of foreign subjugation was repudiated by much of the left. "Mere" national survival was not, we were told, the real purpose of the war. Its purpose was to bring about a revolutionary social and political change the world over. It was to be the midwife of a new social order, as a common expression put it. It was, in other words, to bring in socialism, though there is nothing upon which Socialists differ so bitterly as on what socialism really is and what measures are necessary for its success—as witness the successive changes of party line in Russia, the differences which led to the purges, the fact that Moscow is in much deeper conflict with a Socialist British government than it was with a Tory one, as Molotov himself avowed.

DOES SOCIALISM "MEAN PEACE"?

Professor Harold Laski, discussing the bomb in what he seemed to regard as the appropriate spirit, and speaking in this country while the loan asked for by the Labor government from capitalist America was still undecided, insisted that the danger of atomic war lies, not in the nature of the public mind, not in tendencies within all

of us that have come down from age-old tribal conflict and need discipline, but in the presence in Western society of "the business man." On no account, he said, should there be any compromise with this "capitalist class." Understanding and adjustment are out of the question. The capitalist order must be utterly abolished and a completely new civilization erected. He assured us that Nazism—which happens to be short for National Socialism—was "the culmination of a society built upon the anarchy of free enterprise." He added: "There is no middle way. Free enterprise and the market economy mean war; socialism and the planned economy mean peace. All attempts to find a compromise are a satanic illusion."

Earlier, Laski had assured us in *The Nation* that the present is "no time for half measures," that "liberal democracy has broken down . . . it belongs to an age that has passed." Note the implications. Retention of any vestige of capitalism means war, which means atomic war, which means annihilation. Taken at its face value, the proposition justifies the extreme crusading form of Russian policy, since safety from the utter physical destruction of atomic warfare depends on complete liquidation of capitalism everywhere and the substitution for it of pure, unqualified socialism. But apart from the bitter disagreements among Socialists as to what true socialism is, we know that for a very long time there are likely to remain in the United States and perhaps in England features of economic life which the purist would condemn as belonging to the fatal system of "free enterprise and the market economy"; just as recently some leftist purists have excommunicated Switzerland and Sweden as fascist states.

Our concern at the moment is how to establish with Russia the same sort of confidence about the use of atomic weapons that already exists between Britain and the United States. No one in the United States is really disturbed by the fact that Britain possesses the bomb secret and Canada its raw material. The confidence exists despite much raucous ill-feeling over the loan, Palestine, Greece, Java, Siam, India. Why, then, misgiving in the case of Russia? Hatred of socialism? But success of the British form of socialism is likely to be more disturbing to the American capitalist than anything Russia has produced in the last thirty years. The reason for the greater misgiving concerning Russia's possession of the bomb lies in political facts which so much of the left insists are of secondary importance. To put it bluntly, many in the West fear what might be done with atomic armaments by a dictator—who tomorrow may not be Stalin—or a small committee not subject to free public criticism, lacking the mental and moral discipline which comes from criticism, not subject to parliamentary check or removal, as was even such an able and popular leader as Churchill in the West.

On the Russian side there are equally deep fears of the West. For a quarter of a century the Russian people have been indoctrinated with the official theology that peace and capitalism are incompatible, that the West can never be trusted so long as it retains its present economic system, that Western democracy is a sham since power rests in the hands of a capitalist class ready to seize any opportunity to weaken Russia and undermine its security. Much of this has been recently reaffirmed by Stalin himself, who reasserted, undiluted, all the slogans, all the incantations. Obviously so long as such a view is dominant in Russia relations with the West will be extremely difficult. And much of our left is at pains to assure Moscow that the Russian view is entirely sound and Russian suspicions entirely justified—which is hardly a good beginning for understanding, unless it is assumed that the West will accept the Russian system and the Russian way of life. It is the more tragic because if the simple facts of experience instead of abstract doctrine and rival ideologies governed policy, a basis of cooperation for peace could assuredly be found. But, once more, fact and doctrine are in amazing conflict, as events reveal.

LEFTIST THEORY VS. THE FACTS

In the inter-war years the left was insistent that the capitalist West was bent upon alliance with Germany to crush socialist Russia, that the impending war would be along the lines of the Marxist "class conflict." This theory and forecast can now be judged by the event, the facts, which are these: (1) When a Tory-capitalist government in Britain declared war it was not against socialist Russia but against fascist Germany. (2) It was Communist Russia, not the capitalist West, which formed a pact with fascist Germany, a pact which, the probabilities indicate, enabled Germany to begin the war before the Western democracies were ready. (3) Communist parties everywhere for nearly two years aided, not the Western democracies, but Germany, by moral and sometimes material sabotage of the Allied war effort. (4) When Hitler offered Britain peace on the condition that, in return for keeping its empire, it remain neutral while Germany crushed Russia, it was a Tory-imperialist-capitalist Prime Minister of a direly harassed Britain who refused the offer and became instead the ally of socialist Russia. (5) The resources of the greatest capitalist power in the world, America, were freely given to insure the victory of Communist Russia and enable it to become the greatest military power in the world.

These are the facts. They invalidate a great part of the leftist thesis of the last twenty years. If they were faced instead of being systematically distorted they would be recognized as furnishing a basis for peaceful cooperation between Russia and the West.

If the purpose of international cooperation is to enable each nation to live free from outside dictation under

the particular social, political, and economic system which it prefers and for which its background and circumstances fit it, we know that the thing can be done, because we did it during the war. When Churchill, on that fateful Sunday morning of June, 1941, offered Russia Britain's fullest aid in the fight against aggression, he did not exact that in the future Russia must abandon communism. He realized that the two nations had a common interest which transcended ideological or economic differences. No one believed then that the Allies were fighting for some particular kind of socialism not yet defined or agreed upon, some kind which must, presumably, be agreeable to Moscow. Does anyone really believe now that peace or freedom lies along the road of making international power the instrument of some particular economic, or social, or political creed, as once the church so mistakenly attempted to make force the instrument of its religious creed, establishing its Gestapo or N. K. V. D. in the shape of the Inquisition?

The task of a Russian government compelled to ask heavy sacrifices of its people will of course be greatly facilitated if it can paint a picture of a hostile world ready to pounce upon the socialist fatherland and can quote leaders and learned professors of the West in support of that picture. The nationalism to which every government at times appeals is immensely reinforced by the Marxist theology. And any foreign office would rejoice to possess such agents and allies in every country of the world as Russia possesses in the Communist parties of the world and in their fellow-traveling allies. But since power is, for any government or nation, a heady wine, we do not add to the chances of peace by deliberately, through our own action, making the power of one particular nation completely overwhelming, especially a nation persuaded by its government that it is menaced by the very existence of the form of society prevailing outside its borders.

DEMOCRATIC PROCESSES OR VIOLENT CHANGE?

The issue is not one between socialism and capitalism. There is not a capitalist nation in the world which is not accepting increasing degrees of socialism. The issue is whether social development shall be carried out by the democratic processes, with agreement of the groups concerned achieved by open, fair, and decent discussion, or shall be imposed by the "dictatorship of the proletariat," which means the violence, both moral and physical, of small, tightly organized parties forming a new privileged class prepared to abolish the older political freedoms.

The issue is essentially political, not economic; at bottom, like most political issues, it is psychological—the desire of one party or sect to dominate its rivals, a human impulse now rationalized by a pretentious and misleading philosophy of historical necessity.

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