

politics

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1947

The German Catastrophe



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The German Catastrophe

I. We Are Responsible

FOR A year and a half now, the German people have been slowly and unsystematically starved by their conquerors. Nothing sudden or openly brutal: just a policy, compounded of indifference, malice and, above all, stupidity, which neither imports enough food to feed them decently nor lets them reconstruct their shattered economy enough to produce their own food. In every other European country, the food situation is better this year than last; in Germany and Austria, it is worse—and it is getting worse all the time. The Germans accumulated reserves of food (and body fat) during the war; by last summer, these reserves were exhausted; people have been living on the official rations, which never go above 1500 calories a day and are in most places actually far below that level. The effects of a protracted diet of 1500 calories a day on the human body and mind are not pretty; how long even physical existence can be sustained on such a diet—which is about what the Nazis gave the inmates of their concentration camps—is a question. This “cold” pogrom is applied by the Allies to *all* Germans, indiscriminately: Brown Shirt veterans and five-year old kids, ex-Nazis and lifelong Socialists, former guards in concentration camps and the political prisoners they tortured there. Nor does this horrible vengeance even serve the selfish interests of the victors. It is a catastrophe any way you look at it. And the nation most responsible for this catastrophe is our own.

Potsdam: Made in U. S. A.

Within 48 hours in the summer of 1945, two things happened which, more than any other events of World War II, lighted the fuse of World War III: the atomic bomb was dropped on Hiroshima, and the terms of the Potsdam Agreement were published. For the first, the U. S. Government was solely responsible; for the second, it was mostly responsible. The two individuals whose proposals were most influential in drawing up the Potsdam terms were both Americans: Henry Morgenthau, Roosevelt's Secretary of the Treasury, and

Bernard Baruch, the good gray “peace-planner.” The document on which Potsdam was modelled was Directive 1067 of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, U. S. Army, issued earlier that year. This is not to say that the Russians, British and French did not of their own free will agree with American proposals at Potsdam—and, if American leadership had been lacking, would perhaps have come up with equally stupid and vindictive policies of their own. But in fact it was the Americans who were the architects of Potsdam, and this fact should be insisted on especially in a magazine published in the USA.

It is not necessary here to criticise Potsdam in detail. The contradictions and general unworkability of the Agreement were so patent that from the moment it was published critics—journalistic and official—began to expose them; and the course of events has amply confirmed the critics.* Its principal inconsistency was that it disavowed any intention of exterminating the German people and indeed proclaimed its intention of “re-educating” them toward democracy, while it set up an economic structure which, it could easily be shown, would frustrate both these aims—and which in fact has done so. Specifically, it proposed to reduce Germany from the leading industrial nation of Europe to a nation of farmers and toy-makers, and to do this in two years through the destruction or removal as reparations of most of such industrial plants as had survived the bombings; while at the same time, it gave Germany's greatest farming region, the Eastern provinces, to Poland, and provided that the 12 million inhabitants of those provinces be resettled within the shrunken boundaries of the new Germany. That is, it added 12 million inhabitants to an area already thickly populated, and removed

* See, for example, the London *Economist* for Aug. 11, 1945, and afterward, for the most sustained and acute critique of Potsdam; also: F. A. Hermens' “The Economics of Potsdam” (*Review of Politics*, Fall, 1946), A. B. Rimer's “The Industrial Counter-Revolution in the Reich” (*Left News*, April 1946), and Louis Clair's articles in *Politics* for Aug. and Sept., 1945. See also the report of the Colmer Committee of the House of Representatives in the fall of 1945, and the report by the economic advisers to A.M.G. (*N. Y. Times*, Oct. 8, 1945).

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from that area most of the industry which had kept alive the former, smaller population.

Nor was this all. Even this hysterical project of Carthaginian vengeance, since it was drawn up not by madmen but only by stupid and frightened politicians, contained some safeguards to prevent complete catastrophe. But the victors proved unwilling or unable to enforce these safeguards. The transfer of Germans from the East was to be effected "in an orderly and humane manner"; it was, to say the least, not. Reparations were not to be taken out of current production; the Russians have consistently done just this. "During the period of occupation, Germany shall be treated as a single economic unit;" the French and Russians have refused to go along with this, and the result is waste and chaos.

The New 3 Year Plan

Potsdam has by now proved to be so unworkable and so destructive to our own interests, just as the critics said from the first, that it is being junked in fact, if not in theory. In the British and American zones, the military have reversed the "hate Germans" policy and are indoctrinating the troops with more humane and sensible ideas; the dismantling of industry is being slackened, and plans are being made to increase Germany's exports so she may become self-supporting. It took a long time for the U. S. State Department and the allegedly "shrewd" and "farsighted" Byrnes to reach this conclusion. Thus in his first post-Potsdam policy statement on Germany, on December 11, 1945, Byrnes carried on the Morgenthau-Baruch-Directive 1067 line, siding more with the Russians than the British on the key question of how much steel production per year should be allowed.* Two considerations caused a change in American policy: (1) the tardy realization that America's own imperialistic interests demanded an aggressive fight against Russian imperialism, instead of the appeasement tactics of Teheran, Yalta and the 1945 Moscow Conference, and the coincident grasp of the strategic uses, in such a struggle, of a Germany oriented towards the Anglo-American bloc; (2) the apparently endless economic drain on the U. S. Treasury of a Potsdamized Germany. The first consideration finally produced Byrnes's Stuttgart speech (Sept. 7, 1946), which reversed the Potsdam policy, and openly bid against Russia for the goodwill of the Germans. The second consideration caused Byrnes to propose the economic unification of the American zone (largely agricultural) and the British zone (largely industry).

These policy shifts, however, excellent though they are in principle, have as yet not been translated into much action. (The slowness with which statesmen yield to the pressure of reality is notorious; in the case of a people wholly dependent for mere survival on the policies of foreign governments, this

* The British have all along been the most humane—and perspicacious—in their policy toward Germany. Thus in the fall of 1945 the Russians proposed that the ceiling on German steel production be set at 3 million tons a year, while the British held out for 10,500,000 tons. (Production in 1938: 23,240,000 tons.) No doubt a policy of building up Germany, and especially the Ruhr, which is in the British zone, as a counterweight to Russia was mostly responsible. But I think there is evidence that the British are more civilized and decent in these matters than either we or the Russians; for example, there is no counterpart in U. S. liberal-labor circles to the splendid campaign for feeding the German people which was put on by British liberals under the leadership of Victor Gollancz; nor did our own liberal press, unlike the *Manchester Guardian* and *The Economist*, take a clear stand against the Potsdam infamy.

lethargy means suffering and even death.) Although Bevin and Byrnes agreed last August "in principle" on the unification of the two zones, a specific agreement was not signed until December 3 last, a half year later. And the cumbrous machinery has hardly started moving as yet to implement this agreement. A "Three Year Plan" has been drawn up to make the Anglo-American zone self-supporting. At present the deficit in the British zone (arrived at by deducting exports from the cost of relief supplies and maintenance of the occupation forces) is running at about \$1 billion a year, and that in the American zone at about \$700 millions a year. (Potsdam is thus not only immoral but also damned expensive.) General Clay, the American commander in Germany, estimates that a further investment, over the next three years, of \$1 billion in the unified zone (for relief and for industrial raw materials, but not counting occupation costs) will make the area self-supporting. The only way the Three Year Plan can work is by a tremendous rise in exports, regardless of the Potsdam Agreement: in the American zone, for example, 1946 exports were \$25 millions; in 1947 the Plan calls for their quadrupling, to \$100 million; and in 1948 they must double again, to \$200 million. The success of the Plan depends on the raising of the ration level from the present 1500 calories a day to 2,000 calories, since workers must be at least badly fed (as against starved) if they are to produce anything. And, finally, it all depends on the willingness of the new Republican Congress to appropriate the \$500 millions which is to be the U. S. share of the cost of the program. This last factor seems dubious, to say the least, the Republicans being vociferous on behalf of the poor starving Germans when it is a question of making political capital against the Democrats but lapsing into Hooverian quietude when it comes to spending Federal funds.

Hunger is Increasing

Two things should be made clear at once:

(1) Nutrition experts agree that the minimum healthful diet must contain at least 2,000 calories per day, assuming it is properly balanced—i.e., that it includes a certain proportion of high-protein foods such as meats and fats. Rations in occupied Germany have never risen above 1550 calories, and have often sunk far below that level; further, almost no high-protein foods are included. Government experiments conducted at the University of Minnesota (with C. O.'s as volunteer "guinea pigs") showed that people living for any length of time on 1500 calories deteriorated rapidly both physically and psychologically, and that they did not return to mental or physical health even after a protracted diet at a 2,000-2,500 level (the most the Germans can hope for *at best* in the next year or two). Only after they were fed on 4,000 calories "for a considerable time" did they begin to respond. The implications of this for the future democratization and reconstruction of Germany are obvious.

(2) It is true that, for some time after the occupation began, the Germans were able to supplement the official ration with reserve stocks and black market purchases. But, as the Essen Report printed later on in this issue shows, and as recent Allied surveys confirm, these reserves have long been exhausted, and the black market is correspondingly reduced as a last resource. *The official ration thus becomes more and*

more the total food supply of most Germans. And even this ration, as I shall show, is usually not actually delivered to the people by the occupation authorities.

The story of the past year may be summarized as follows:

April 1, 1946: AMG announces a cut in rations from 1550 calories to 1200.* It had promised, in the fall of 1945, a permanent level of 1550 calories (and the Germans had consumed their own reserve stocks counting on this promise) but now finds itself unable to deliver because of failure of wheat imports from the USA.

April 13: Gen. Clay admits a "serious" food crisis in the American zone. States that supplies on hand plus expected imports will sustain an "actual" ration level of only 915 calories until the fall harvest. (The "actual" ration is the one really distributed; it is always lower than the "official" figure.)

May 16: AMG reduces the official ration to 1180 calories. Gen. McNarney anticipates "trouble"—which unfortunately does not materialize.

August 31: The three-zone (French-American-English) Nutrition Committee makes its fifth survey of German health, finds that hunger edema and vitamin deficiencies are more prevalent than they were three months ago, because of low ration level. Children suffer the most; in Cologne, half the children have rickets.

September 24: Rations are to be raised at once to 1550 in the American and British zones—an increase of 400 in the latter and 300 in the former. This is higher than the level in the Russian zone. Note: the Berlin elections will take place next month.

December 7: It is revealed that the higher rations have been more "official" than "actual." Emergency shipment of 300,000 tons of grain from the USA is planned during December to prevent a collapse in the Anglo-American zones. (The food shortage in the British zone is the worst since the beginning of the occupation—so bad that, according to private information reaching us, Germans living in the American zone began sending relief packages to friends in the British zone.) "Food is the key to our entire problem," says Gen. Clay. Shortage is caused partly by the U.S. maritime strike, but mostly by the failure of the Truman Administration to requisition freight cars to transport grain to the seaboard; result is that relief grain has to compete for freight space with heavy commercial shipments for the Christmas trade.

December 12: An official survey of health conditions in the British zone reveals some 300,000 cases of TB and "hundreds of thousands of cases of hunger edema." The working capacity of the population is 50% below normal, and infant mortality has risen 100% in some districts.

December 27: The three-power Nutrition Committee issues its sixth report: "No starvation but severe undernourishment"; the lowering of rations last spring prevented people from accumulating "bodily reserves" for the coming winter; "household food reserves and articles available for barter are largely exhausted, with the result that a large part of the population must live this winter on the official ration." Report recommends the ration be raised to 2,000 calories. Also reveals that the "actual" ration in early December in Düssel-

BOOKS

For more than a decade, the Nazis cut off Germany from Western culture—especially from its socialist and democratic manifestations. And now we—that is, the governments of the four so-called "democratic" powers—are continuing the embargo. It is forbidden to mail books, magazine, or any printed matter to addresses in Germany. That the Russian totalitarians should enforce this rule is understandable. But what possible advantage—leaving aside all questions of ethics—is it to the British, French and American governments to keep out of Germany all books and magazines indiscriminately? How are the Germans supposed to free themselves from Nazi ideas if they are not allowed to get information and ideas from the non-totalitarian cultures?

There are TWO hungers in Germany today; a hunger for food and a hunger for information and ideas. Most of the letters we get from Germans emphasize the second almost as much as the first. The writers don't need to be "re-educated" or "democratized"; they were as much opposed to the Nazis as anyone over here, and for the most part took considerably greater risks in fighting Nazism. They simply want to know what democrats and socialists in America and France and England have been thinking since 1933, and—even more simple and important—they want information on what has happened in the world since 1933. (Don't forget: the Germans know nothing about Russia, about the U.S. labor movement, about international events, except what the Goebbels apparatus chose to tell them.) There are many veteran anti-Nazis in Germany today, just as there are many Nazis; most of the population seems to be confused and apathetic on all political issues; but how can our anti-Nazi friends in Germany carry on an effective struggle against totalitarian influences among their fellow-countrymen if the Western powers deny them the most elementary tools for the fight: the books and magazines which present a true—or at any rate, a non-Nazi—picture of events since 1933?

The Allied statesmen talk about "re-educating the German people in the ways of democracy", but the "re-education program" in the British and American zones is a notorious failure. This is hardly surprising, since the imagination of the bureaucrats and military men in charge hardly goes beyond the negative (and alarmingly Nazi-like) destruction of "all books glorifying Nazism or militarism." That the best way to arouse sympathy for and interest in a book is to ban it, that the most effective way to "re-educate" people is to let them have free access to information and draw their own conclusions for themselves—these platitudes have apparently not occurred to our statesmen.

WHAT YOU CAN DO ABOUT IT: (1) A pressure and publicity campaign should be started at once to get the mails opened to books and magazines for Germany. You can (a) write to your Congressman and Senator urging this; (b) write to the literary editors of the liberal weeklies suggesting they raise the issue (George Mayberry, "The New Republic, 40 East 49 St., New York 17, N. Y.; Randall Jarrell, "The Nation", 20 Vesey St., New York 7, N. Y.); (c) write to Secretary of State Marshall asking what is the sense in this embargo. (2) You can also send to "Politics" any books and magazines you want to contribute for mailing to Germany. We will hold them until it is possible to send them to persons in Germany.

* 1200 calories is the equivalent of six nickel chocolate bars.

dorf (British zone) and in Stuttgart (American zone) was 1200 calories.

December 29: AMG food survey for September-October paints a "gloomy picture"; food imports were only half of what was needed to maintain official ration level; potato crop last fall was lowest since 1937. Survey frankly admits that raising of official ration in September was politically inspired, and terms the 1550 official level a "target" to shoot for rather than a reality.

Business is Business

Such is the record. It is all the more shabby because the U. S. Government could have shipped enough food into the British and American zones to provide a minimum healthful diet without making the slightest sacrifice of the famous "American standard of living." The 1946 food production in this country broke all previous records, even topping by 2% the peak wartime year of 1942 and exceeding the 1923-1932 average by no less than 26%. The corn and wheat harvests were especially large. And only the other day the U. S. Department of Agriculture estimated that the 1947 winter wheat crop (winter wheat accounts for 70% of the total crop) would total 946 million bushels. If the Department of Agriculture's forecast is accurate, and it generally is, this will be the biggest winter wheat crop in American history. (The annual total wheat crop—winter plus spring wheat—has averaged over the past ten years only 844 million bushels.)

Thus the actual production of American foodstuffs is enough to greatly increase the present starvation-level rations of the German people.* The obstacles to such a decent and farsighted policy are of a commercial and psychological nature. No large number of Americans seem to give a damn whether the people of Germany—or of Europe and Asia for that matter—are starving or not. The fact that it has taken CARE over a year—despite a big newspaper advertising campaign—to dispose of a few million food parcels is one indication. Another is the fact that only 3,065,000 food parcels were mailed from the USA to people in Germany between June of last year, when the mails were opened to packages, and December 27; I hazard a guess that more than three million Americans have relatives now living in Germany, which would work out to one package per German-American in six months, assuming that no packages at all were sent by Americans without relatives in Germany! The farmers don't give a damn: they forced the Government to give them a bonus last spring before they would deliver wheat for export, and even then they held back for higher prices. (In mid-December, 1946, wheat prices were higher than they have ever been, except in the Civil War and in World War I.) The trade unions are indifferent: great suffering was caused

* And not only, of course, the Germans. This article is confined to the German situation. But many other countries of Europe and Asia—especially India, China and the nations of Eastern Europe—are only slightly better off for food than Germany and Austria. American food shipments could make the difference between terrible suffering and a minimum subsistence level for the peoples of those countries. Yet our State Department has killed UNRRA without providing any alternative, has rejected the Orr Plan (in the U. N. Food & Agricultural Organization) for feeding hungry areas from surplus areas, also without providing any alternative—and has in general served notice on the rest of the world that the USA will provide relief in the future only on a purely business basis. In the blunt phrase of Undersecretary of State Clayton, the State Department official in charge of American food policy: "Gentlemen, the gravy train has gone around for the last time."

in Europe by first the maritime strike and then the coal strike but, so far as the labor and liberal press reports at least, there was no consciousness of this among the strikers. The businessmen, and their Republican allies, have been the most callous and selfish of all: the chief reason for the low ration level in Germany is the abolition of domestic price controls by the Truman Administration under the pressure of businessmen and speculators. The budget of AMG in Germany, for example, was fixed last July; since then wheat prices for export to Germany have risen from \$65 a ton (July) to \$106 a ton (November); the result was that last November, AMG estimated that it would need to spend \$130 millions for the rest of the fiscal year on food relief alone in order to maintain even the inadequate 1500-calorie ration level, but found that it had left of its 1946-1947 appropriation only \$80 millions for food and all other relief supplies.

We may conclude this survey with a report from *Time* of July 15, 1946, which epitomizes the profit-and-loss spirit in which the American public—business, labor, and politicians as well as farmers—approach the question of feeding the hungry.

A *Time* reporter interviewed a prosperous Kansas wheat farmer and asked him why he and his neighbors were refusing to sell their grain to the Government for export, despite the high market prices then prevailing. "Last year," writes the reporter, "Frank Anderson made a clear profit of \$10,000. So far this year he has sold \$15,000 worth of wheat and cattle. Said he: 'I know there are people starving in Europe, and I'd like to help them. But this is a business. If I sell even half of \$13,600 worth of wheat, I'll get into a higher income

HUNGER

"We are convinced that the working population in the cities has finally reached the end of its strength and that its physical and moral collapse is close at hand should a change not occur soon." (Report of a panel of doctors who examined 1,000 workers at the Krupp plant in Essen last summer.)

"Many hearty thanks for the CARE package. Oh, you can imagine our happiness! My children jumped about around the room. They could not remember to have ever eaten such things!" (Letter to "Politics" from a Jewish woman living in Cologne.)

"Yesterday a friend told me of a letter he got from a German comrade, saying that without the parcels from this country they would be unable to do their daily work and could not even think of the very necessary political activity. You see, you are really doing a great job." (Letter to "Politics" from Paul Froelich, old comrade of Rosa Luxemburg and author of her biography.)

WHAT YOU CAN DO ABOUT IT: (1) Write in to us for the address of a German family and undertake to send them regular packages. (2) Send us a check with which to send one or more CARE packages to a German family; these packages are an extraordinary bargain: for \$10 CARE delivers to any address in Germany (except the Russian zone) a 49-pound package of meat, cereal, butter, sugar, etc. These are surplus Army field rations and each package provides 40 full meals (25c a meal). Price includes packing, postage, and insurance.

bracket and my tax will go sky-high. [The report notes that in 1945 Internal Revenue agents checked over the income-tax returns of Kansas farmers and collected an *additional* \$1 million dollars in undeclared taxes.] I've got to stay in business.'"

Frank Anderson is a kindly-looking fellow, and he'd "like

to help" the "people starving in Europe." So are most of our farmers, businessmen, workers, and politicians kindly folk, and they would no doubt also "like to help." But business is business.

DWIGHT MACDONALD

2. A Report on Germany

(The following article is reprinted from the London "New Statesman and Nation" for Nov. 30 last. Its author, who travelled extensively in Germany last fall, is now writing a book on the German question, conditions there, and the Allied policies responsible for them.)

MR. HYND'S recent speech in the House about Germany displayed a mixture of complacency and misinformation that is really beyond belief. This winter, he suggested, will be better than last. Of all the people I met during my six weeks' visit, I cannot think of a single one who would not laugh bitterly at such a suggestion. Here are a few of the reasons:

1. *The Germans face this winter with physical and moral resistance lowered by a ration-card diet, ever since last March, of 1,000 calories. As everyone now knows, the recent "increase" was a myth.* Perhaps 20 per cent. of the town population actually lives on this diet—and you can see what some of them look like in the hospitals and holes. The majority get just enough extra from the black market or otherwise to keep wretched body and despairing soul together. Apart from calories the diet, whether supplemented or not, is horribly deficient in fats and animal protein. The result has been a catastrophic increase during the year, in district after district, of all the evils associated with gross malnutrition—underweight, lassitude, hunger oedema and tuberculosis.

2. The appalling housing situation has been progressively worsened by the influx of vast numbers of "expellees"—and to a lesser extent by the incursion of British Army on the Rhine wives and by such iniquities as the Hamburg Project (a sort of Garden City for the C.C.G.). I have seen nine people, including six children, sleeping and living in one small room; I have seen a cell in an underground air-raid shelter, with two beds of a sort, and apart from them only 21 square feet of space—and "living" there a man of 66 and his daughter of 39. "In former days anything so indecent would have been impossible," he muttered to me. Four or five in one small room is common form. *Meanwhile, when I was in Hamburg, a net force of 10,425 labourers, many of them imported from other ruined districts, was employed on the Project, while the number employed in making habitable the dwellings of Hamburg citizens was 1,700.* As to B.A.O.R. wives, Mr. Hynd's statement that Germans are never evicted until suitable alternative accommodation has been found was furiously denied to me, not only by Germans but also by the British housing officer in one of the most seriously affected centres. In Düsseldorf the average living space per person is 3.2 square metres: if on top of that you proceed to turn out a lot of Germans to house a few British, where could the Almighty Himself find "suitable alternative accommodation"?

3. People have been wearing out their last personal and household possessions; and the supply of new articles to replace them has been hopelessly inadequate. I saw dreadful footwear on 50 per cent. of the children in the Düsseldorf schools—shoes with gaping holes, bits of dirty rag, older boys hobbling painfully in younger boys' shoes, and so on. Since then I have been given official figures. The requirements for

children's shoes from July to December were, on the most "Spartan" plan, 6,200,000: the number of coupons issued from May to December (actual figure till November, estimate for December) amounted to no more than 1,771,000. I should explain that you can buy practically no consumer goods except against a coupon, which you may or may not receive on proof of need. Or take diapers. *In Düsseldorf in October, 520 babies were born, but not a single coupon was issued for the purchase of a diaper.*

4. The commercial and industrial machine, such as it has been, is visibly running down. Coal is, of course, the crux. Mr. Hynd mentioned the recent increase in coal production; but he omitted to mention, not only that it was a "pick up" to only a little over the figure of output before the March ration cut, but also that the 6¾ million tons of coal and coke in stock at the end of the war were down to half a million tons by November, over and above an essential working reserve. Nor did he mention that raw steel production, which was 250,000 tons a month in August, was expected to be only 190,000 in October, on account of the coal cut. But shortage of coal is not the whole explanation. In addition (a) Stocks of all raw materials have become progressively exhausted. (b) Owing to this, as well as to the resulting necessity for inferior substitutes, the poor productivity of labour, the small percentage of capacity worked, and so on, it would be difficult enough to avoid huge losses even if there were a rational price and wages policy. But there is none: the general principle being to hold prices and wages at pre-occupation level, while discontinuing subsidies on the one hand and increasing working-class burdens by way of direct and indirect taxation on the other . . . (c) Even such goods as are produced are to a large extent hidden, as producers, uncertain about the future of the currency and their own businesses, prefer goods to marks. Experts put this hoarding at as high as 50 per cent. (d) An indispensable condition, not for revival but for preventing a final breakdown, is a vigorous import-export programme. Nothing of the sort exists. *I shall hardly be believed when I say that even to-day no German is allowed to send a business letter of any kind abroad.*

5. The uncertainty of life—no one knows what may happen to him next week or month or year—grows increasingly desperate. There are two main causes: the first is "Potsdam." It might reasonably have been expected that Mr. Bevin's recent speech in the House would be followed by a "go slow" in the reparations procedure. The reverse happened. Up till then only four firms in North Rhine-Westphalia had actually been, or were in the process of being, dismantled. But on October 30th the Regional Commissioner thought fit to announce, apparently without the knowledge of Berlin, that "orders were awaited for dismantling" ten other factories, which he named; and the following day the German press added the names of two further firms which he had omitted to mention, but which had been officially informed by the responsible German body that they were to be closed down very shortly. Every German knows that there are hundreds

of firms on the reparations list, but nobody knows for certain what will be the final fate of his own. How can anyone plan or work, with even a modicum of efficiency, in such a situation? . . .

6. The other source of uncertainty is denazification; and here again things are getting not better but worse. Is it realised just what denazification means? Already there have been at least three changes in procedure; and now, if you please, vast numbers of Germans are to be placed in one or other of five categories, with appropriate penalties in the case of four. Not only will this idiocy apply to anyone who from now on may put in for any job of the smallest importance, or may be denounced or reported by somebody, or—if we follow the quadripartite directive—may have been foolish enough to obey orders and register as a “militarist.” In addition, every one of the 1,368,739 questionnaires already filled up is to be re-examined with a view to categorisation. This means that people at present in jobs for which they were “passed” at a previous denazification may now be subjected to “sanctions.” These questionnaires have to be seen to be believed. There are 133 questions—and among them the following: “Have you any relatives who have held office . . . in any of the organisations listed from 41 to 95 above?” “List on a separate sheet the titles and publishers of any publications from 1923 to the present, which were written in whole or in part by you and all the public addresses made by you giving subject, date and circulation or audience.” “List all journeys . . . outside Germany . . . persons visited.” The German wits add a final question: “Did you play with toy soldiers as a child? If so, what regiment?” How dare we betray our liberal tradition by such shameful nonsense?

7. *As a result of all this and much more, we have lost—I pray for the time being only—the game of “re-education.”* A

year ago we had one of those rare opportunities which history never repeats. Now the Germans are increasingly hostile, contemptuous of “democracy,” scornful of British efficiency, and filled with that cynicism and despair which is the breeding-ground of totalitarianism. In particular, we have all but lost the German youth. I know of what I speak, for I had conferences with young people of every kind at Kiel and Hamburg and Düsseldorf. The worst of all my experiences was when a university student at Hamburg said in an agonised voice “For God’s sake don’t make us Nazis.”

What then to do? (1) Send a Resident Minister of Cabinet rank to the British Zone. (2) Do at least what we can to ease the food situation at the cost of some national sacrifice. (3) Stop the export of coal for at least six months. (4) Unless we come to an agreement with Russia within a month, denounce Potsdam, and publish a final list of factories to be dismantled. (5) Put a term, and a very early one, to denazification. (6) Reform the financial structure without a moment’s unnecessary delay. (7) Press on with a five-year plan for the rehabilitation of German industry, on the broad basis of public ownership and with an adequate import-export programme. Something of the kind is contemplated under the new Anglo-American set-up now being discussed; but any plan will have to be most carefully examined, especially since, according to rumour, it is to be based on the March “level of industry,” and is to provide, even officially, no more than 1500, calories for another year. Moreover the fight will be on in the matter of nationalism; and forces working for a ruinous economic separatism in the Länder will be greatly strengthened by American Zone influence. (8) Stop behaving like inefficient totalitarians, and try a little liberalism or democracy or Christianity instead . . .

VICTOR GOLLANCZ

3. Travel Notes; Fall of 1946

Never has a major civilized nation suffered such destruction. Germany was thrown back 200 years in her development. It took that long before she reached again the economic level she had attained at the beginning of the Thirty Years’ War.

—Franz Mehring: “History of Germany”

I.

AFTER the Thirty Years’ War Germany’s disaster could not prevent other European countries from developing. Under the economic conditions of the 17th century, England, France, and the Netherlands could flourish independent of Germany’s fate. Yet even this 17th century catastrophe took its revenge later. Two hundred years of backwardness and poverty bred the German ideology which helped to make Nazism possible. Today, however, there is not one country in Europe which does not already suffer from the destruction of Germany’s economic life. And yet of the greatest danger we are not yet fully aware. The cultural, political and economic dissolution of all of Europe may result from the progressing disintegration of a nation of sixty million people.

The present catastrophe in Germany exceeds not only our personal but also our historical experience, and we can hardly foresee what will happen if we cannot stop it. At my arrival in a German port I met a rather bewildered looking Dutch official who said: “If one cannot kill sixty million Germans something must be done. If this goes on, we are all lost.” When I left Germany, I understood what he meant.

II.

When I came to Germany this fall I knew very well that many people there had died from starvation, but death from starvation became something quite real only when I heard about the end of the people I had well known.

The suffering of starving human beings is the same whoever they are and yet for a nation and its future development which groups of people die and which ones survive might mean very much. In Germany, a certain type of intellectual over 50 years of age and too honest and noble or (if you like) not robust enough to fight or to bargain for a piece of bread seems to die first. The type of people whom I had expected to hand down the message of honest scientific work and humanism to a youth which has been deprived of this better part of the German heritage.

III.

I have met hunger before. I was a prisoner of the Nazis, I was in France after the Nazi occupation but the mass starvation of total city populations is something different.

The large cities, Berlin, Hamburg, or Hanover, look like a strange landscape in the moon, the endless streets of empty shells of houses seem to belong to a world which died long ago. The appearance of people in these streets does not wipe out this impression. These pale shadows seem to be the inhabitants of a ghost city.

Some children still look healthy—after I had seen their parents I knew why.

IV.

The ideological difference between the working class and the petty bourgeoisie is nowhere else so great as in Germany. The average worker has always held democratic and progressive ideas, the average petty bourgeois has always been authoritarian and conservative. Everything that has happened to Germany now has weakened the working class and reduced its weight as a social force. Millions of workers are slaving abroad. Factories which have not been destroyed are being dismantled or not permitted to work. The Potsdam agreement has destroyed the industrial basis of German society and with it the basis of its democratic and progressive element.

Moreover, it is the working class which lives in ruins and goes hungry. The small cities and villages have been little damaged, food is less scarce there and the conservative way of thinking has hardly been touched.

V.

Young men between 20 and 40 are rare in the cities as well as on the fields at harvest time. Millions of them are dead. Seven hundred thousand are slave laborers in France and from one to three million—nobody knows the figure—in Russia. There are no young men. Villages and farm houses are overcrowded with refugees from the East—women, children, old men; the young men were held back. Where work is to be done, people complain about the lack of strong and skilled labor.

Political friends especially complain. The younger group of those who became socialists, before Hitler strangled political life in Germany, are not at hand. There is no bridge between the old men and the very young.

VI.

National life in Germany is disintegrating. Political blood does not pulsate through the arteries of the nation. The zonal boundaries are the main hindrance, but there are many others. Travelling has become a difficult task. Newspapers (if you can get one outside Berlin) report some world events and local news but almost nothing on what is happening elsewhere in Germany. Everywhere the political life of the community is mostly shaped by local contingencies and nowhere can one draw general conclusions.

The Socialdemocratic Party tries to form some movement on a national scale. Germany has now a colonial status and it seems as if this party is going to play the role of the Indian Congress Party in Germany, some people call Dr. Schumacher, its leader, the German Gandhi. Left-wing socialists are impressed by his dynamic personality and approve his slogan: *fight for democracy in the Russian Zone, fight for socialism in the Western zones*. They see, however, the danger that the party because of its vigorous opposition to Russian oppression might become a tool of the Western powers. The party's executive committee relieved the left-wingers when it stated in its resolution at the end of September that there is no democracy in either zone and that the party will no longer take administrative responsibilities unless the occupying powers give it certain definite assurances. Some of the "old-timers" have criticised Schumacher's line because they are afraid it will lose them their political jobs. There is a saying in the party that some people can't bear to see an empty office chair.

The lack of young people and the weight of the party's "Weimar" past bring its negative qualities mainly to the fore in small cities. Two examples: The city of K. has an area of grassland which was leased to some large estate owners. During the war the Nazi mayor ordered that potatoes for the city be grown on this land. The new (old) Socialdemocratic mayor has abolished the "illegal" Nazi order and restored the "right" of the estate owners.

In the city of G. the old Socialdemocratic officials who have taken over the city administration after an absence of 13 years from office, have preferred to keep a number of Nazis in their position instead of appointing former inmates of concentration camps who might have too radical ideas. Even the chief of the city's personnel office is a Nazi. Already now these Nazis organize sabotage in a cautious way which the venerable city fathers do not even notice.

VII.

In Berlin, the belief in Russian infallibility has been shaken even among old believers. The Socialist Unity Party is not a reliable Stalinist party. Some of their members only joined to get a position, some are disgusted and would like to quit but are afraid to do so. Old-time Communist workers also have still the idea that the party—good or bad—is *their* party. Shortly before the fall elections in Berlin, one of them, a member of the Party's district committee, declared that after the election he would demand that Pieck and all Party members in the city administration should be put in jail! Reality and the human mind are more complex than one imagines behind one's desk in New York. It is easy to condemn Stalinism in America. In Europe, one has also to convince the Communist workers who still are a potential socialist force that their party cannot any longer serve their purpose.

VIII.

When I sat down with old friends of mine—all of them had been in jails or concentration camps for some time—to discuss the political situation of the world and especially the Russian problem I became fully aware of what it meant that these people had been cut off from the world for many years. Nobody could suspect them of not being interested in political events but for many years only mutilated news had reached them. They knew that there had been a civil war in Spain but they did not know the role the Stalinists had played there. They had heard only through the Nazi press about the Moscow trials and did not know what was truth or lie. They had heard about Kravchenko's book, about Peter Meyer's articles in *POLITICS*, about Koestler's *Darkness At Noon* and were eager to read everything which could give them a key to the understanding of Russia's current history. But only the Stalinists are publishing political literature in Germany, only they have paper and printer's ink. For 12 years the whole German nation has been shut in a kind of jail. This isolation continues!

This is a special chapter of our famous policy of "democratic reeducation": The import of democratic literature into Germany is not permitted! You cannot send any printed matter from USA to Germany, no books, no periodicals, no newspapers. The intellectual starvation of Germany which Hitler started organizing in 1933 is being continued.

Most of the people I talked to complained about their isolation from intellectual developments abroad and asked for literature. A famous youth psychologist, a liberal in the best sense of the word, who had to be silent for 12 years, whose son was hanged as one of the conspirators of the 20th of July, whose wife has died of starvation and who himself is in an advanced stage of undernourishment talked primarily about the need for him to know about the recent development of youth psychology and psychiatry in the U.S.

The (very) few political-minded people who got hold of some American periodicals have translated interesting articles and circulate typewritten copies. I found articles from *POLITICS*, *The Call*, *Partisan Review*, and *Commentary* going the rounds. But even this kind of information service cannot be kept up for lack of paper, of typewriter ribbons, and of carbon paper.

Wherever I went, people said, please, send us books, and asked why are we not permitted to learn what is happening in the USA?

4. Hunger: the Essen Survey

(The following summary of a health survey of one thousand Krupp workers in Essen is translated from the Sept. 26, 1946, issue of the German newspaper, "Handelsblatt." The reader should bear in mind that this survey was made six months ago, and that the food situation in Germany has been deteriorating since then. The Krupp doctors' final sentence is of ironic interest today: "We are convinced that the working population in the cities has finally reached the end of its strength and that its physical and moral collapse is close at hand should a change not occur soon." A change has indeed occurred—for the worse.)

IN the period from July 8 to July 17, 1946, 1059 workers and employees from several branches of the Krupp Works were examined by a group of doctors at the Krupp Health Centers in Essen. The result is now available in a medical report which can be considered a picture of the working population in the cities of the Ruhr.

Typical Health Defects

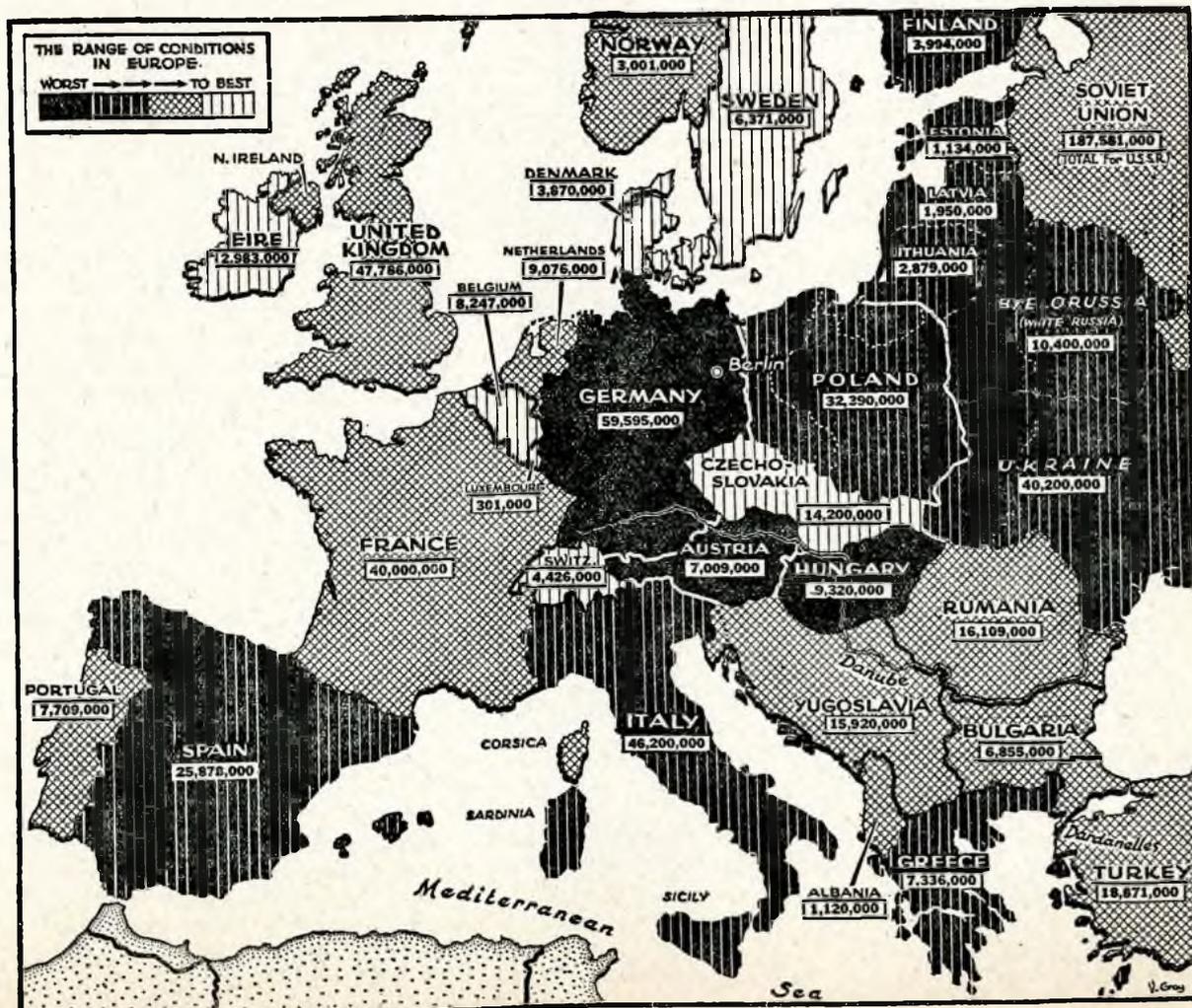
The patients showed as a rule the signs of chronic malnutrition and a large percentage showed typical symptoms of disease. They had a colorless flabby skin, the eyes were deeply sunken. As a result of the great decrease of fat under the skin, the muscles, reduced in volume stood out with anatomical precision. Remarkable was the sagging posture and the lack of

tonus in the skin. As a result of the general weakness, we found 134 cases of hernia (12.3%) as compared to about 1% in normal times. The poor physical condition was also reflected in a psychic lack of energy. The examinations showed that the general condition gets worse with increasing age. In relatively good shape we found the adolescents between 14 and 20 years of age, as the parents apparently gave up some of their food for the growing generation. The experience made during the first World War—that girls and women can on the average get along with less food than men has been repeated.

Those groups of workers who are found to work according to a definite scheme and have to produce a set amount (for instance, workers in machine shops), looked worse than those who could decide on their own rest periods according to their own judgment and physical condition, (for instance, maintenance workers and street cleaners).

Results of Poor Nutrition

The major symptom mentioned by the patients was dizziness in various degrees including fainting and collapse. Over 1/2 of those examined mentioned this which is mainly the symptom of poor circulation. Thus the blood pressure was very much lowered and reached only 120 mm Hg at an average of 43 years. Values of 70 and 80 mm Hg were by no means uncommon. The same condition is also demonstrated



by the high percentage of complaints about excessive sweating. An increasing sinking of the blood calcium content was also generally to be seen. This may be the cause of an increase in the incidence of breaking of bones. The basal metabolism is lowered. At the same time, one finds a slowing of the heart beat down to 40-50 beats. The frequency of breathing decreases and the body temperature falls to 35-36 degrees C. Furthermore, the entire glandular activity is reduced. The secretion of the salivary glands and the gastric glands decreases, so that the whole digestive process is functioning poorly. The digestive apparatus is not prepared to digest food as enormously high in cellulose as the present food supply is. Impressive was the impairing of the sex functions. 599 who were questioned felt no sexual desire and were not potent at all, 310 felt that their function was impaired, only 4 were considered normal.

In spite of the malnutrition, the sicklists give a seemingly favorable picture. The explanation is that the workers and employees hate to stay off for external reasons (lack of money, loss of the supplementary rations, etc.).

The degree of malnutrition is shown by the fact that almost 1-3 of those examined lost more than 20% of their expected weight. The additional heavy, half-heavy and very-heavy workers' rations, which 83% of the examined workers received do not suffice by any means to make up for the increased burning of calories as a result of heavier work, the more so since approximately 1-3 of the additional rations allotted in the factory are handed over to the family and thus do not fulfill the intended purpose. The result is that the production has been cut in $\frac{1}{2}$ or more in many of the factories.

The Danger of Epidemics

The report sees a great danger of possible epidemics in view of the extremely crowded living quarters. Frequency of infectious diseases varies in periodic intervals. Since we have had several years that were almost free of epidemics, there is good practical evidence that we are approaching more and more a period in which the epidemiological situation is unfavorable. If epidemics similar to the heavy influenza of 1918 should occur, then we face two dangers:

(1) The epidemic hits a population which is crowded together excessively under poor hygienic conditions, which leaves it wide open to a rapid spread of the disease.

(2) The population has been markedly weakened in its resistance to disease by the long duration of the war and by the psychic and physical difficulties of the post-war period.

Escape Via the Black Market

In order to ascertain how this exceedingly bad health situation has developed, the report compares the amounts of food necessary to the sustenance of life and activity to the actual amount of calories allotted the population. The quiescent, non-working human needs daily about 1800 calories, while caloric needs vary upward to 9000 calories daily depending on the type of work. From spring to summer the population was allotted about 1000 calories, which represents approximately $\frac{1}{2}$ the bare minimum requirements for the maintenance of life.

In order to ascertain what ways had been used to avoid the worst misery, all of the 1000 patients were asked about these, officially somewhat difficult, things. About 85% admitted to have bought on the black market directly or indirectly. Prices were paid which were in no way commensurate with the income of the workers and employees. The result was that savings were used up. The average amount taken from the savings account for providing extra food was 1446 RM per year and per person. The population had hoped that about a year after the end of hostilities the food situation would have improved. This expectation did not come through and now they are left with nothing; for, in recent months, they exchanged for food all of those remaining belongings which they could possibly get along without. This included bartering their wedding rings.

The report computes the caloric value of the foods obtained "on the side" as 200 calories a person daily. The expenses for black market food averaged 1460 RM for the year 1945-1946.

Conclusions

The Krupp doctors realized that some food is acquired in ways that cannot be controlled or would escape questioning. For this amount 100 calories per day per person was figured on. To this should be added the products of small home-gardens. Finally one had to add the extra rations, part of which goes, as shown before, to the family, so that the working men of the families keep about 2-3 thereof. The report reaches the following figures:

- From rations, approximately 1000 calories
- From black market, approximately 220 calories
- From gardens, approximately 100 calories
- From uncontrollable sources, approximately 100 calories
- From extra rations, approximately 80 calories
- TOTAL—approximately 1500 calories per day, per member of a family.

For the working man of the family, 500 calories per day, per person, are added (700 calories from his "heavy work" card less 200 calories for his family). The working individual thus gets a daily supply of approximately 2000 calories. In both groups there remains an approximate deficit of 500 calories. This deficit has been bridged over by:

- (1) Absorption of body substance (fat)
- (2) Lowering of the metabolic rate
- (3) Lowering of the production level

The report reaches the following conclusions: "Several times in the last few months the view has been taken that, because of the extra loads put on the human organism on the one hand and the lack of food on the other hand, no additional strain could be put on the human organism. In spite of that, extraordinary additional burdens have been carried by man. One has to realize clearly that such a course cannot be continued indefinitely. We are convinced that the working population in the cities has finally reached the end of its strength and that its physical and moral collapse is close at hand should a change not occur soon."

5. Some Personal Letters

(We present below extracts from letters recently written from Germany and received by POLITICS and by friends of the magazine. In editing these letters—as in this whole presentation—we have tried only to show faithfully what people are thinking and feeling in Germany today, and how they are living.)

IN haste, a short report on myself in telegraphic style:

- (1) As you see, I'm still alive, but don't ask me how.
- (2) During the war I succeeded in escaping all invitations to join the army, police, labor force and "Volkssturm."
- (3) In 1944 I got under the wheels. i.e., the Gestapo called

me and I gave a guest performance at a number of prisons and camps, to finally land in the Wehlheiden penitentiary near Kassel. Some bigshots intervened for me and I was released. But soon afterwards the Gestapo was after me again so that I had to spend the last seven months of the war illegally and without any food tickets. That was no joke either.

(4) I am without anything now. I was bombed out four times and nothing is left. And finally, in May 1945, a Frenchman stole my suitcase and I remained with one shirt, one collar, and one pair of unended socks. My razor he took too. Furthermore, I had no apartment at the time. But contrary to my expectations, I am still alive. I look like something between Diogenes and Gandhi. The comparison with Diogenes is not quite correct, though. That fellow had absolutely nothing to smoke and I have a little.

(5) It is no use to describe our existence in Germany today. You couldn't imagine it anyhow. So just one story as an illustration; it happened to me yesterday. My shoes are totally run down. For four weeks already, the top leather is completely cracked open. So I went to a shoemaker who works with four apprentices. I asked him just to stitch the leather together. He didn't move a finger and told me that I had to be registered on a waiting list, whereupon I would have a chance to be called after 8 weeks. So I tried to use my "connections." I knew somebody at the postal offices who directed me to a special shoemaker for employees of the postal services,—no luck. There also they had a waiting list. So yesterday I again saw a shoemaker; the man was sitting quietly in his shop, asleep. When I woke him up to tell him about my predicament, pointing to the rain outside, he just made a movement with his hand and told me: "no material, no thread." I swore at him, the war, Hitler and nazism, and furiously lit a cigar butt which I still owned. That woke him up, and he said excitedly: "You have matches? Then I'll make it for you." I had only two matches, which we shared. He didn't ask for money. That is really worse than anything else. One usually has nothing to smoke, and when one has something, one has no light. The second greatest misery is that I now have no socks at all anymore. I won't even speak of all the other things.

It is vain to attempt to describe conditions here. It is impossible to do so. Not even Dostoevsky, Goethe or Shakespeare would be adequate to such a task. In a way, this is not so bad, because the only way to continue living is to attempt to forget these conditions. Furthermore, it doesn't make much difference whether one presents these things from this or that angle; it would be at the same time correct and false. The catastrophe is too tremendous and what appears unbearable and terrible today has become daily routine tomorrow. So just a few sidelights.

How do I live? I eat my fill once a month—the day when new tickets are handed out. I buy 62.5 grams of butter, $\frac{1}{4}$ lb. of sugar, and 6 to 8 rolls. I always wait a whole month for this treat. The total amount of fat one gets for a month is only 200 grams a month. I lose 10 grams through the exchange of the smallest tickets (since nobody can give you 2.5 grams). So, after my monthly feast, I have coupons left for 130 grams for the rest of the month. Once a month, usually the second day, I buy two pieces of cake for 10 grams worth of fat tickets each, so that I must then subsist on 110 grams of fat for the whole month for midday and evening meals. A year-and-a-half ago already I stopped eating breakfast. If I order fried potatoes in a restaurant, I have to surrender a fat ticket for 10 grams, and even for the so-called vegetable casserole I need a 5-gram ticket. All in all, no fat remains after two weeks. Then, there is only bread, a so-called soup which is free of tickets and tastes like it, and once a month 62.5 grams

of cheese. Those who have a home are obviously somewhat better off since the women can still manufacture something. Then there is still meat which we eat in quantities of 25 grams a month. I have taken to eating twice a day during the first two weeks or only once or not at all during the second two weeks. In spite of all this, I don't look too badly; my face has become even a little fuller, but you could count all the ribs. One gets accustomed to everything, but it's going to be very hard in the long run. I don't know any more what a heated room is like and I just stay in bed if it's too cold.

Just a week before the new tickets were to be given out, I received your package. I was indeed in a most terrible situation, not knowing at all what to do, especially since I also had no money left. Everything was wonderful and especially the shoes. They ranked even higher than cigarettes. My shoes were completely gone and I walked almost barefoot in the water and anticipated the snow with joy. I heard enthusiastic cries about the food from my neighbors. The women loved especially the coffee and the children the candies (one shares everything, of course). I had to go across the floor to have the coffee cooked since this isn't possible in my room. For two weeks now a woman lives there who crossed the demarcation line illegally to meet her husband. Both had nothing to eat because their ration cards are only valid at their place of residence. I also visited other people who had helped me before and also sent two packages to Berlin—it's even worse there.* I personally was most happy over the cigarettes and that I had something to eat with the bread. Meat is not as important as other things; we have become accustomed to its lack. What's most important is fat, sugar and cigarettes. Also especially coffee, which is a precious rarity.

—Letter from Kiel, Dec. 2

* All of this, note, from one 11-pound package!—ED.

MANY hearty thanks for the CARE package. Oh, you can imagine our happiness! My children jumped about around the room; they could not remember to have ever eaten such things.

Now I will tell you a little about me and my family, so that you know whom you did help. (I wish I could write better English, but I hope it is to be understood what I write.)

At first in 1933 they did boycott my shop, so that nobody dared to buy there, and in 1935 I must shut it. My husband could not get any position and he learned carpentry. Being Jewish of race, I must pay the "Jewish rudder." Having not enough money, they sold my house and I got nothing. In November 1938 they broked many furnishings, etc. After that, I must come to the Gestapo nearly every month to answer asks, to hear commands. My children must go to school, and the teacher told the others that they were Jewish and that it was allowed to use them badly. It was very hard. In times of aerial alarms, we could not use the shelters and must remain in our flat. Then, I put the children to sleep on a mattress in the middle of the floor; when they awaked, I told them stories. After the doors and windows were broken, that was bad, but the Gestapo-alarm was worse by far! In 1944 they suddenly came to catch us into a camp near Cologne. At first the children cried, but then we thought the war would be lost for the Nazis in a short time—and we were together. Then I was taken away to a work camp, and the children remained behind with the Gestapo. That was the most hard moment. Now we are happy, to have found each other again. But in the meantime our home is destroyed, and my husband in Russian captivity. Three days ago I got the first card from him: being healthy, he fears he must remain there a long time. And I have not yet recovered my health, having lost it in the Gestapo camps. But your help is for me a happiness—once

more, many thanks! Now my boys are 12 and 14 years and are allowed to visit the grammar school.

—*Letter in English from Cologne, Sept. 15.*

YOU may have heard already that hoarding has been forbidden here. Even the smallest bag of potatoes or vegetables is taken away from people. Last week I went with a friend to Fuerstenwalde/an der Spree. Each of us came back with 100 pounds of potatoes. (Nobody can live on the potatoes that are officially distributed, i.e., 8 pounds for ten days, and the 8 pounds includes stones and dirt.) There were police at the railway station of Fuerstenwalde that took away the potatoes from many people. We were lucky. I said to my friend: "I'll make a terrible scandal if they want to take the potatoes from me." In the train we met a man who told us about his experiences on another trip some days before. He had worked in the fields during his vacation and had been given potatoes in compensation. Now he was going regularly to the village to slowly bring his potatoes to Berlin. One day he carried 80 pounds in his rucksack. The police tried to take it away from him. He told the policeman: "If one of you touches my rucksack, I'll kill him." Five policemen were standing around him and nobody dared to touch the rucksack. During the excitement, 20 or 30 people succeeded in passing the police patrol.

—*Letter from Berlin, Nov. 4.*

YOUR letters are always a feast for us—especially now, when the whole world looks on us Germans as if we were all criminals . . . The CARE packages help us over the bad places—as when I come home dead tired from gathering beechnuts in the woods. This fall we have collected 25 pounds of them, for which we will get 5 pounds of margarine in exchange. You should have seen the crowds in the woods! I wonder if ever in our history the German forest-earth has been so stirred up, and the leaves turned over so many times as in this past year.

Byrnes' speech in Stuttgart was quite a surprise for us—a human and reasonable voice compared to the others, who only add to our hopelessness. People are blind in their hatred . . .

Imagine—for six weeks now, even our meager official rations have been unobtainable. Two pounds of bread are announced for this week, but to get them means to win a battle. For hours and hours, one stands in a dense crowd. There is no more orderly standing in line; people storm the stores, yelling, and everybody tries to get in first; a few days ago there was a riot. You can imagine what your packages means to us. Now I can help others, who helped me in the past. In our house there live two old ladies, who for 11 years have shared our joys and sorrows. When I gave them some of the coffee they forgot their usual reserve and kissed me. To another family, where the husband is blind and the woman has to work for their living, I brought some of the bacon, coffee and cigarettes. The woman cried for joy, and the man became silent and pale. When I unwrapped the Swiss package last week and saw the bacon, I just looked at it a long time. When we open the packages, we all feel as if we were black marketeers. That is the bitter aftertaste of our joy: we have these precious things, but others don't and the misery is so immense . . . What I wish most right now is that helping others will make you happy.

There are many things I would like to write you, but there is no time because the sugar beets are cooking on the stove. It makes the whole kitchen damp and sticky. That should be done in a factory and not in a kitchen-living-room. Besides, it is a lot of work. But we are not afraid of that if something eatable comes out of it.

—*Letter from Bonn, Nov. 13.*

THREE days ago, E.K., Maria's brother, came back from a Russian prison camp. This image of human misery—that boy standing before us, breaking into tears, I will never forget. He used to be a husky fellow. Now he is a scarecrow, his legs swollen with dropsy, his body covered with abscesses. The workers' fatherland seems to be populated by beasts. At the morning roll-call the first question was: "How many comrades *kaput* last night?" If the death list was 15 or 20 or more, the guard yelled: "Karosch!", which means "Splendid!" E.K. tells us they almost embraced the first British soldiers they met, at the border, when they were greeted politely with "Good morning, friends" and served cocoa. O, Russia . . .

—*Letter from Cologne, Oct. 28.*

MANY thanks for your line informing me of being included in your parcel campaign. For many years I have not come across anything in writing that contained the words "international solidarity." When I saw it actually typed in your letter, it provoked right away recollections of pre-Nazi days when it was a standard slogan in every radical labor paper in Germany. And today it seems to me as if the world were limited to a small area in Europe, because papers in general are scarce and of poor size, containing only scraps of international news. Not as if we were living in modern times, with modern means of communication, but as if we are slung back to the 18th century. The political ideas current in the labor movement here are an entangled heap of old conceptions, forlorn hopes, desperate individualism and a blindfolded knocking about—as adapted to the present situation as a skysail on an ocean liner . . . Here, for instance, we have no public library that can furnish standard political literature of any importance. Private libraries have either been confiscated by the Gestapo or destroyed by air raids. So, if anything is worth while to be suggested: send literature, even if our material wants crave satisfaction.

—*Letter in English, from Hamburg, Sept. 22.*

PEOPLE here in Berlin no longer sing songs at the end of political meetings, as they used to. (I think this shows integrity.) They leave in silence, as though ashamed. For years I used to dream of mass meetings singing the Internationale; then I realized that it would shatter me, that I couldn't stand it. Shortly after the Red Army arrived, I asked some soldiers, "Please, for once sing the Internationale." They smiled good-humoredly and said, "Such an old fashioned song?" But I *did* hear it—in Berlin-Alexanderplatz, now a vast heap of rubble, smelling of dirt and decay, and the center of the black market. Any one walking through is accosted with shouts: Cigarettes? Dresses? Bread? etc. A beggar was sitting in the wreckage of the subway station, exhibiting the stumps of his legs and playing on his hurdy-gurdy—the Internationale.

But there is a positive side, too, to the picture. For instance, the businessmen ran away when the Russians came. Slowly the workers began to come back to "their" factories. They dug in the rubble, searched for raw materials, pieced machines together part by part, cleaned up the place a little, and began to produce again; they made barter arrangements with neighboring farms and villages. For a while there were many real "workers' plants." Alas, most of them have been dismantled or taken over again by the former owners, who at once notified "their" workers that things were going to be "run in a businesslike way" from then on. But the story doesn't always have an unhappy ending. For instance, a factory council came to see me the other day—all workers—accompanied by their manager. They were planning to give apprentices a 100% raise.

"But can you afford to do it?"

"Yes, we can! It's true that only a quarter of the workers are able to produce efficiently and that conditions are very bad. But we can do it—and without selling above ceiling prices."

"How in the world is it possible?"

"We'll, we're only now finding out what big profits the boss used to make. Even though our machinery is makeshift and is breaking down constantly, and materials are very expensive, we can still pay good wages and make both ends meet. We're amazed ourselves."

Their new manager is a 'leftist' engineer—a wonderful fellow. The workers knew him for years as a very decent and able executive, and they called him in to run the place when there was danger that a businessman might be imposed on them as trustee.

The one thing I see here is how hard it is to understand a social development. It is just as hard for me to make up my mind about the Russians. The S.S. took me to Ravensbruck (a concentration camp for women) at the time the first contingents of Russian women were sent there. I learned Russian in order to understand them, and came to like them very, very much. For all their contradictions, the Russians are a wonderful people—warmhearted, sincere, frank. By now I have lived for a year under Russian occupation; my work brings me into close contact with Russian officers. And yet in spite of all this experience, I have arrived neither at a clearcut "Yea" about the Russians, nor at the usual emphatic "Nay." Reality is ever so much more real, colorful and many sided than we deep theoreticians had thought it to be.

I think the labor movement had a kind of father complex about Russia: they longed to feel secure in the broad lap of a big, strong father, just like little children; and some people on the 'left' have indeed, by an effort of will, managed to feel secure in Papa Russia's lap. The others are disillusioned; they are bitter because Russia is no ideal father (in reality there is no ideal father anywhere), and they behave just as children do when they discover that their father is not God. The Russians—to return to earth—are a people developing under extraordinary difficulties. It is a hard road, and they are a people full of contradictions and shortcomings but also full of talent and goodwill. And I have met with wonderful men, and precisely among politically active Russians.

Letter from Berlin, May 28, 1946.

YOU are probably interested in knowing who we are. My mother, Maria, was born in 1897. She is a factory worker and has been working at a machine for more than 25 years. Since her youth she has been in the workingclass movement. Under Hitler she was sentenced to five years imprisonment for "high treason" and after serving for two years she was freed by American troops.

I was born in 1918 and have been in the socialist movement since my early youth. I learned to be (some kind of) a businessman, but I have not done this work since 1936. In 1937 I was sentenced, together with other comrades, to five years of hard labor for "high treason" by the semi-fascist government. In February 1938, after 18 months, I was granted amnesty together with other political refugees. Soon after Hitler's march on Austria, I went on a political mission to Western Europe (France and Belgium) at the request of my organization. Because my political activities were unknown, I was able to remain there until September 1943 under very difficult conditions—even then I was arrested several times. In 1943 I fell into the hands of the Gestapo, they transferred me to Buchenwald from where I was freed by American

troops. On my return to Austria I accidentally found my mother and for the last three months I have been working as statistician in a labor bureau.

I have said enough about ourselves. You can believe us that this was not an attempt to build ourselves up personally. Our life and our struggles are only a miniature of the life and struggles of many Austrian and German revolutionaries which should serve as proof to you and your friends that only the capitalists and their agents are interested in calling everything that is German, "fascist." These international capitalists helped Hitler sweep the floor with the workingclass and today they say very simply that the German workingclass is responsible for all the atrocities of the Hitler bandits. We hope that you have enough strength not to believe all this. In any case, we will exert all our energy to free the working people from the yoke of international capitalism.

I would be very happy if you would send me interesting political literature in English, French and German.

—Letter from Lindz, Austria, Sept. 30.

FOR several months I have been at work trying to get together a symposium relating to the organisational tasks involved in bringing together and educating comrades of independent thought. You can hardly imagine how difficult it is to do in addition to all my other work. We miss—more than anything else—young people, and also self-confidence among the workers, which is not hard to understand after the terrible defeats the German workers suffered.

The elections and their results have severely upset the blind faith of the Stalinists. If one only felt at home in the S.P. Here there is only one ray of light, that is, Dr. Schumacher. I liked the speech he made here but I am afraid that he is too radical for the little bureaucrats. Even though a reformist, yet he is honest and courageous. He states the facts, even though he doesn't know a way out. But I am afraid he won't last long.

During the election, there was only one party with a clear stand, the C.D.U. (Christian Democratic Union): "Here Christianity, there Marxism." The other parties, including the S.P. and K.P. did their level best to convince the voters that Christianity was just as safe in their hands as in those of the C.D.U. It was disgusting. One article of the SP district secretary ended thus: "Marxism is a private affair which still lives in the heads of a few party comrades, mostly older ones. Christianity is the basis of culture and finds its fullest realization in socialism."

—Letter from the Ruhr, Oct. 25.

Concerning the Stalinists: I will go along with every honest person, regardless of his opinion, but under no conditions with a Stalinist. Our old convictions regarding the Russian system are today confirmed from another side. I work here in an office of the employment service where the prisoners of war returning from Russia present themselves for help. Nearly all suffer from rash, dropsy, dysentery and similar sicknesses of undernourishment. And how do they look? Like beggars! No, nobody can evade this open and clear message from the country of "Communism," from Stalin's country. Yesterday a woman dropped in and told me: A man released from Russia visited me and begged me to inform his mother about his return. He considered it necessary to prepare his mother for the *Wiedersehen*—otherwise she might not have survived the shock.

One of these war-prisoners from Russia told me that he was captured near Berlin by a Seidlitz-officer himself from

Berlin.* This officer and the others had always lied to the prisoners and always said that they were going home. Only when they crossed the Russian frontier did the prisoners understand what was really going on. And only in one point had they been told the truth: that they would live as equals with the Russian civilians. That turned out to be really true: he was sent to Stalino, a former convict-camp, where the civilians had just as little as the war-prisoners. I asked this man what they were given to eat. He said: "¾ of a quart of watery soup with carrot-leaves and 300 grams of black and undone bread (no fire in the world, he added, could make it better done). Then the same bread and soup with other leaves. At other times green tomatoes or green pickles and bread. No fat." Asked about the civilian workers he said: "They, too, had literally no more to eat and worked only for this food."

We asked him why there were other war prisoners who could tell of better experiences they had in Russia. Yes, he answered, he himself had spoken to one of them. That was a sport-teacher from Heiligenstadt (in the Russian zone) who came from a camp not far from Moscow. In this camp the prisoners of war had even received cake. But these model camps are only for selected people, for example people from the "famous" Seidlitz or Paulus Army.

Now I asked him why he had pronounced the names of Seidlitz and Paulus with such bitterness.

"I told you," he said, "that I was taken prisoner by a Seidlitz officer. His first question was: 'Where is your watch?' The second: 'Where are your papers?' Thirdly he gave me a hard blow in the face. Then he took away my watch and the papers. Because I'm not married I could not understand why the officer was so interested in my family-status. I learned this by the treatment another prisoner received, a captain. He was beaten by the officer until he delivered his wedding-ring—the officer had deduced from the family-status in the captain's papers that he must have one.

"On the way to the Russian frontier, we laid plans to escape. The Poles offered to help us with false papers, food, clothes, everything we needed. But a Russian officer came and said to us: 'You all want to go home, but there are among you some young people who have not broken with Nazism. So we must educate them and prevent them from escaping. For every one who runs away, we will shoot 10 fathers of families.' That is why I gave up the idea of escaping."

That is the story the prisoner told us. Now he is here, has lost all his relatives, and lives in an air-raid shelter. He is unfit for work, as are almost all the prisoners sent back from the workers' paradise.

—Letter from Mannheim, Nov. 14.

* Seidlitz is a general who together with Paulus belongs to Moscow's "Free German Committee."

6. An Intellectual Writes

DEAR Nancy and Dwight Macdonald:

I am very grateful for the friendly letter which you sent in care of Professor Jaspers. Above all I was deeply moved by the fellow-feeling it conveyed. But I don't know, really, whether it is possible for anyone outside Germany to grasp what it means to have lived for twelve years as a stranger and outcast amidst one's own people, to have been so alienated from society (except for those few whose fortunes one shared) that one could not but regard the destiny of his nation with alien eyes. Political opposition has been a common, an accepted thing among all nations. But an opposition role under Hitler implied far more: it meant mortal enmity toward everything which other Germans had come to accept as a matter of course. On top of this, those of us who disassociated ourselves from the regime were obliged to bear the hatred of the rest of the world, a hatred directed indiscriminately against every German, who simply by virtue of being German, was submitted to our national fate. Thus, we had to suffer and endure twice over: as outcasts within our nation, as outcasts among the peoples of the world. You must believe me when I say that if, from time to time some expression of understanding, like yours, did not reach us, we should have the feeling, the inner conviction that as enemies of Hitlerism we had fought these last twelve years in vain. And fight we did. We know, as the world does not know, what inner strength, what courage it demanded to fight this brutal, this intolerable system, even at a time when the great powers of the world were coming to terms with this . . . thing. There were Germans who never laid down their arms before it.

You ask to hear something about myself. I must freely own to you that without the warm human sympathy of your letter it would be impossible for me to answer. When one has gone to prison for his own political and cultural universe and risked the dangers of a life outside the law, he is no longer the man to speak for himself.

Allow me, therefore, to speak of only the most essential facts. From 1934 to 1936 I was in prison for high treason.

I was intimately involved with my friends in the preparations for the conspiracy known as the Hitler Death Plot. Of this circle of friends I am the sole survivor. I have published a brochure on the Plot called "The Tragedy of July 2, 1944." I should gladly make this book available to you, but I know no way of doing so. Germans, no matter who they are, are forbidden to send books to America. I do know that a copy is to be found in the Hoover War Library. It is, of course, the first edition. The second edition, considerably amplified, has just appeared. I suppose you know that in those last years, at the moment of greatest danger to the Jews, I was able to warn many of them in time. Frau X. I kept concealed in an outlying room of my house through the crucial weeks. I had just been through an extraordinarily dangerous period myself, at a time when all my friends were being taken into custody.

To put it simply, I was lucky. Through some incredible oversight of the Gestapo, the order for my arrest was never executed. Let this suffice. But perhaps you can thus measure the risk, the suffering, the terror, the constant living with death that such an existence implied. Without the strength conferred by an undeviating moral purpose, by certain deeply-rooted "ideals," it would have been impossible to go on. The struggle against Hitlerism had to be carried on from within, from the wasteland of the Third Reich. It was never given to those *outside* to know the real truth of things. Not even Thomas Mann, whose speeches, welcome as they were, revealed that he no longer understood the reality, the psychic reality of Germany. His voice remained simply a voice, a voice from afar, from *outside* . . . We were at one with him, yet we were aware that, in a sense he had not consciously willed, he had really *emigrated*. While, intellectually, he remained during that forsaken period of our lives a beloved German, he had lost the power to communicate with us. This was a discovery that set the final seal upon our isolation. Believe me, we waited for the voices from outside. But in the end we were forced to conclude that no one "outside" could understand the German reality. In my library I have nearly all of Mann's works,

which, by some happy oversight, the Gestapo never confiscated. This man remained for us the ideal image of the German intellectual, in speech, culture, and character, the exemplar of our being, whether for good or eudaemonic "evil." . . . but on the plane of historical destiny every bond had been snapped.

I do not say these things to you by way of criticism. This man is too significant for that. We do not reproach him, for we have nothing with which to reproach him. Fate, destroying every path that led to us, had simply denied him any real participation. For us this is a melancholy thought, and we entertain a gentle hope that it is equally melancholy for him. No, we do not say these things "against" Thomas Mann. Nor do we say them "for" ourselves. That would not be necessary for us who have shared a common political fate. These things are said only to give an idea of what the spiritual, the political, the human reality was: for us, for our friends who died, for the handful of us who survived.

From one of your subscribers, Mr. Canterbury of Douglas, Wyoming, I have meantime received a cordial, sympathetic letter, reflecting, like yours, a humanity which goes beyond barriers of nationality and hatred. Such letters stir one's heart, quickening it with hope. On the heels of the letter, a package arrived, which had been got together with such care as to make one forget for the moment that our people have become beggars dependent upon the whole world. The innocent and the guilty, without distinction. Even this could be endured if one only knew what the future holds in store for us. Shall we once more be a people united, shall we once again have our own government, shall we be able to provide at least for our barest needs, we who once belonged to the culturally-gifted of history and are still possessed of men of profound human understanding? Will our working people again achieve a standard of living which will enable us to cherish life? And when shall we emerge from under the stifling political burden of a continental occupation, again to breathe the air of a free political life? Of this last there is as yet only the merest beginning. We fought against Hitlerism for freedom, for democracy, for socialism. Yet how far we are removed from all that today! If things continue their present course I am afraid that we are doomed, in the end, to lose the fight for economic democracy for the working masses. A nation which is to travel the road to political democracy dares not allow itself to fall back economically, nor, indeed, in any other sense. A well-nigh hopeless situation.

I well know the world-political relations that brought us to such a pass. Once and for all, a bold and courageous step must be taken. We Germans, especially the enemies of Hitler, know only too well that we have never understood the meaning and uses of power. The English have understood it as a constructive force in cultural and political life, and with it they have ordered their world. Our culture and political institutions we have destroyed by power. Never again must we become a power-state. It is not to the world's interest, nor is it to ours. I say this as an active political man who knows that power is bound up intimately with politics. Judge, therefore, what unsparing self-criticism, what resignation, such a

realization must imply. Above all, help us, as much as lies in your power: humanly, intellectually, and politically. Snatch us back from the abyss. From hunger, from political destruction, from despair. No people can survive a pariah's existence! There are seventy millions of us living in ruined cities, herded together in a small space. Our industry has been largely destroyed, and what remained has been in part dismantled. Any school child will understand that we cannot live on ruins. For a long time to come we shall not enjoy a common cultural life. Necessity rules that out. But when the world has become reasonable and when, emerging completely from a war mentality, it is turned once again, politically and psychologically, to peace, we shall be among the hewers of wood and drawers of water to the world. But only when the world powers truly turn to the ways of peace.

Hatred and unreason are evil counsellors in politics. We place our hopes in the democratic nations. Hunger, however, is anti-democratic. Want and the political disintegration of a people—these too are anti-democratic. At least in their effects, in their upshot. When will such things be finally understood?

I know very well that without America's help we should starve, just as I know that, at its downfall, Hitlerism deliberately brought on a state of want. In keeping with the "metaphysical" evil of his being, Hitler willed it that way. We do not want to live on the world's charity. We want to be fed by the labor of our own hand. We appeal to the West not to close this possibility to us, to dispose of us according to the measure of a broad and far-seeing statesmanship. The time must come when a Germany with its reason recovered may speak to you again.

You cannot conceive what intense despair prevails in the broad masses of those who are politically well-meaning. We are without a goal, without a path, without hope, since we have no way of knowing whether we shall be allowed to exist as a people, a nation, or a cultural community. I frequently speak at political gatherings. I am in a position to observe what moves people, what they have on their minds. And listening to what they have to say, my heart almost stops beating before the spectacle of such hopelessness. Especially at the sight of the most unfortunate of all, the fugitives from the East. They are like old trees transplanted too late. They will not survive.

In our political, economic, intellectual, and human destitution, you have extended a brotherly hand and one of your readers, Mr. Canterbury, has sent me food. Of course we are hungry. But believe me, our intellectual hunger is even greater. For a decade we have been mentally cut off from the world. Books from the outside are absolutely unobtainable. It makes one desperate. Will you help us to throw a bridge across this intellectual chasm? Will you help get books through to us?

What you have undertaken through your periodical is a step toward the mutual understanding of men. May it soon become a step toward the mutual understanding of nations. We look forward to that day and we shall greet it with jubilant hearts!

HEIDELBERG, NOV. 18, 1946.

EMIL HENK

(Translated by Margaret Giovanelli)

7. A Socialist Writes

(The following letters were written to friends in this country by a Berlin socialist who was imprisoned under Hitler for three years on the charge of high treason. Certain names and dates have been changed, but nothing else is altered.)

I RECEIVED your first sign of life after ten years with great rejoicing. It is also my wish and that of the other friends to resume our old friendship. We are an active circle of former members of our underground group, together with

some new friends, who have formed a socialist discussion group. All of them are holding responsible positions in the Berlin Social Democratic Party, and are therefore in a situation of considerable danger. I had to "evacuate" my field of activity in the Russian sector, and I am living now in the American sector. Before I did that, they tried to entice me into remarks that could be interpreted as derogatory of the Russian authorities and the Red Army, in order to be able to drag me before their courts. They did not succeed, even when they got an old friend of mine to make me drunk.

The outcome of the war—conquered, and not liberated—has had severe repercussions in our group. Every material aid would help us to bear the immense pressure on our nerves which is involved in the endeavour to hold Berlin as democratic bridgehead, and to strengthen it. More later.

—Berlin, July 16.

YOUR cordial and warm-hearted lines and H.'s letter have entirely upset my inner balance. All the common ideas, memories, happenings and lost friendships are chasing each other in my head. It is now two or three o'clock in the morning. I had to get up from my bed because of my excitement, in order to write you this letter. In my room in "exile" in the American sector of Berlin, everything still looks like an emigrant's dump. There I have an office table, two chairs, an oil-cloth sofa, a hard couch, a bedside lamp, some cardboard packages with books and manuscripts, everything still packed, and otherwise, the room is bare. But, for the time being, I was able to save my life. At the same time, I have a responsible position in the SPD (Social Democratic Party) of Berlin, and I am in the forefront of the practical struggle of our opposition against the official policy of the authorities.

You cannot imagine what a feeling of sudden happiness came over me to hear that my friends are still living and active. But what are W. and P. doing? Ten years have gone, during which we have always thought of you, have always listened to the London broadcasts, whether we would recognise one of your voices or get another sign of life from you. We resigned ourselves that some of you might have lost your lives in the London "Blitz," other ones drifted out of politics or to other camps. We cherished illusions about the arrival of the English and the Americans—believing that our friends were marching behind them, in order to take over themselves the liberation and reconstruction work,—and now came the question to be answered: What sense has life for us now? Not in the abstract, but simply as a straightforward, practical, realistic problem for the rest of our lives.

Pe. and his wife are very ill; all their longing was for you, and they never stopped inquiring after the friends abroad. R.N. has sunk into indifference, and we don't have any contact with him. F.S. has found his own way, and we separated in friendship after an open and honest discussion. My brother Rue. is still strongly interested in theoretical problems; his hobby-horse is the dialectical method, Engels and Plekhanov. I have to make this clear to you, dear V.,—for some years already, I am living in factual, though not formal, separation from my wife. In spite of this, we are keeping up comradely relations. But my ideal is harmony between people. My sister cannot find her way back into life. Her husband, formerly a high official of the Communist Party, was hanged by the Gestapo towards the end of the war. Besides, she was raped three times by our liberators in the presence of my blind father and my aged mother, and also their cottage was entirely "liberated" of all possessions by our heroic Allies. I had to fight incessantly for five days and five nights for the pro-

tection of my wife and daughter. In this struggle I nearly lost my life; they had already threatened me with cutting my throat. We and our neighbors had barricaded our air raid shelter during the night and defended it jointly. All the attempts of the liberators to break in failed. In the end, we had to give up, and we all fled into an abandoned apartment. After another five days we could not stand any more—the constant hiding, giving evasive answers, crying for help and protection, pretending that we knew a "commissar." We ran away eastward, my daughter in male disguise, and when we arrived at my parents' house, we heard of their and my sister's ordeal and had to help these people who had gone out of their minds, human beings reduced to lunatic ruins in a few days. These are individual destinies, but tens of thousands, hundreds of thousands had to go through the tragedy of unconditional surrender. What a fundamental error of strategy! To be plunged from the authoritarian barbarism of National Socialism into the primitive barbarity of animal nature. To be hunted from the Third Reich into the Fourth Reich. Unintelligible for the people affected by it, and no philosophy will give an explanation. But the facts are speaking for themselves. During the war, we were waiting for the English and American bombers and bombs, recognising them as necessary for the destruction of the Nazis. We were mourning for every single Anglo-American flier whom they shot down as if he had been our brother, when we stood on our observation post at a roof-window. We did not even mind the loss of our own life in the ruins, if that was the only way of redemption from the shackles of mental and material barbarity in a modern dictatorship.—And now: is the atomic war to bring us liberation from life on this earth? Is that the revelation of the "last" judgment day? It is very cruel, to be able to think and act in alternatives, the alternative between socialism and barbarity. But there is hardly an alternative left open; we hardly have the choice whether to be or not to be. But there is a short-cut out of all this—if we are "realistic," we can always, by our own hands, accelerate our own "Decline of the Occident." This would be a way out. The other road is to march on with audacity, with cold reason and with resolution. This way is clear from our old insight into things . . .

In order to give you a short survey of my life since you left us, I enclose a short "career of life" which I had to write for another purpose:

After my release from prison in 1937, the Gestapo summoned me several times for cross-examination. In spite of police supervision, repeated searches and examinations, and the observation by police agents, I was, without interruption, politically active with my former friends—an underground group that had existed from 1933. Naturally, I had to take infinite pains to protect myself and my friends against the surveillance of the police. Because of painstaking precautions, it was possible to go on working without any loss through arrests since 1938. This was only possible because everyone of us took his responsibility extremely seriously.

From 1938, I worked in several industrial undertakings. My (and our) task in these factories was to act as socialists. I evaded, on principle, any overtime or Sunday work; I sabotaged its inception and, where possible, I even opposed it openly for reasons of principle. That was a hard, daily struggle. Whilst working in an armaments works under labour conscription, I succeeded in being allowed to work only eight hours per day, by producing a faked doctor's certificate, when the whole factory was working ten hours per day.

In 1943, I was called up for the Army division for politically unreliable persons and men with previous convictions. After four weeks' training in this military concentration camp, it became clear to me that successful underground work

in this Army unit was impossible. I drew my conclusions: after eight weeks, I was discharged from the Army because of "temporary unsuitability for military service."

Thus I can say with some pride: Since my release from prison, I have never done an hour of overtime; I have evaded war-work; I have refused to become the passive subject of the

military spirit of springing to attention and barking: "Ja-wohl!"; I have carried out the tasks of my political underground struggle, and I succeeded in evading the attention of the Gestapo.

Those were my "sacrifices" in the struggle against Fascism!
Berlin, Aug. 7.

8. "What We Want Is to Learn."

(The following article, by a 16-year-old German girl, the daughter of a veteran German socialist, was printed in the German magazine, "Horizont." It comes to us through friends of her father.)

IN our sector of Berlin, we receive the issues of "Horizont" with the feelings of great relief and joy, because they mean to us a greeting from a freer world of the mind which gives us much-needed support. We are groping and searching for a way out of the dark, and what we are missing here and longing for, is really free discussion,—but not great speeches. From my very heart, I should like to support the words spoken by the British commandant at a youth meeting at Hannover: "Indifference is in itself an evil. Resistance to the authorities is not the worst attitude, provided that it springs from honest individual conviction and is not merely imbibed from outside influences; further provided that it is constructive and is thereby rendering possible the free expression of an opinion that helps to arrive at the truth. No, we must not become passive, but we must search for the truth in every problem, even if this is only possible by criticizing what is done; this will lead us to the common goal."

The problem of the "Einheitsschule" (The unified school-type introduced in the Eastern zone at the behest of the Soviet authorities.)

I should be grateful if "Horizont" would re-open the discussion on the "Einheitsschule," as this problem is at present occupying the minds of a large part of our youth. Where is it possible to give expression to our opinions? Our teachers agree largely with us, but no higher authority will ever listen to us. For months, there have been applications to release us from the obligation to "choose" Russian as a "voluntary" subject, because being forced to learn three foreign languages means too heavy a burden in our state of health; and besides, nobody can learn any language decently in this way. Is it not true, that the more differentiated the schooling system is, the better the results? It may be that my views are entirely erroneous; I am open to conviction, if anybody can prove to me that the requirements of school education as well as the results will not deteriorate. I am always trying to listen to a different opinion and to understand it. But up to now, I have not been able to understand the sayings of people who occupy leading positions in the reconstruction of our schools. I can only ascribe it to political short-sightedness if they answer the questions of a young and inquiring person in the following way:

A political leader: "The 'gentlemen' headmasters are my personal enemies."

A youth leader: "It is high time that our workers' children are admitted to secondary schools."

An official for "cultural" questions: (after a very lively discussion): "I believe you come from an extremely bourgeois home?"

Why are young people who do no more than express an opinion branded "bourgeois?" It should be self-understood

that every child, independently of the social position of his parents, can go to secondary school, in the same way as we have been selected at our elementary schools according to our gifts and not according to the purse of our family, as is now very often assumed and used as a reproach against us. Why do they want to drag also us into this class struggle—I should like to say: this cursed class struggle?

Youth and Political Parties

How often do we hear the reproach of the parties that we are not interested in the political development in Germany! Many of us have watched with open eyes the development of the parties, but to-day, it is hardly possible to say what the different parties really want, because during the past year, they have all changed their aims and objects too often. Thus, a few months ago, the Communist Party was still vituperating against all democrats who were against the enforced unification of the Communists and Social Democrats, using those old labels which we remember only too well from the past, calling them "reactionaries," "traitors to the people," or "enemies of the workers." Now, the leaders of the Socialist Unity Party are holding out the hand of reconciliation to the Social Democratic Party which remained unshaken under all the terror. A few months ago, there was no worse enemy who had to be fought tooth and nail—today they call them brothers! I ask, where are the principles that guide such an attitude?

What do we want these grand speeches for, which only spread an impenetrable fog? I know that I shall receive the answer that criticizing is only for him who knows all the problems thoroughly. But what we want, is to clarify and to solve all these difficult questions; we want to be able to talk about them freely in complete truthfulness and liberty, without confusing the issues, in order to arrive at clear results, so that we are not forced to eat our hearts out because we are always refused an answer, and to stand aside as eccentrics. Please, do help us (but not with propaganda phrases) to get clear about all these things; what we want is to learn.

My Attitude Toward the Free German Youth Movement

The Youth Committee has asked us to put our opinions in writing, at school. However, as critical essays have never reached the authorities, I want to repeat the gist of my observations here:

A Youth Movement is being built up; it is intended to be a free association of German youth. I have seen several Youth Groups, and I have gained the following impressions: the time for a really free youth movement has apparently not yet come; a free youth movement ought to be able to represent true freedom without the interference of political parties. It seems improbable that the political parties will leave our youth in peace. On the contrary, it seems that our youth movement is to be established "on a firm basis" within a fixed time, so that the young people may again march through the streets

with their banners (the first time, this was tried again on the Sunday of the "Week of the World's Youth"). Will nobody understand that many of us, after the experiences of the last régime, do not want to take part any more in this show business? Because these mass demonstrations are certainly not born from the spirit of voluntary and whole-hearted interest. My own intentions to work in youth groups is certainly not dogmatically one-sided; during the first months after the debacle, I have volunteered to help the Youth Committee. But very soon I found out that there is only need for people who are prepared to submit to mental uniformity. I had the opportunity to meet young people from the Socialist Unity Party,—oh, what a cold blast was coming from them towards me! Why couldn't they respect us as human beings as we do respect them, only because we do not share their views? Should not in our country now the estimation of individuals' values bridge the gulf between mere opinions?

I cannot agree with the words of the State President of Thuringia who, when addressing the students of Jena univer-

sity on June 1st, 1946, was threatening them in the case of any relapse into the old ways of thinking: ". . . if you should become backsliders, then I tell you, you shall come to know me from another side, because then I shall crush you without fail and without mercy . . .!" Is that the proper method to re-educate, by threats and fierce punishment, an erring youth? Is it not doubly necessary that in such cases understanding and proper care is shown, in order to avoid the production of obstinate resistance?

I should be grateful to "Horizont," if the paper would accept the speculations of a sixteen year-old youth who is trying to inquire, to learn, and who certainly often loses his way in trying to find a way for Youth. I should like to ask you whether it would not be possible to arrange for all the interested young people in Berlin discussion circles where discussion would be really free, and real knowledge would be offered us. In us, there is the will to build a new and peaceful life; we want to become truly free human beings who have shed any and every notion of compulsion and of life under compulsion.

9. "What I Miss Most is the Fuehrer."

I AM twenty-five; I was liberated by the Americans after seven years in the army. I don't know where I am or what I want. I feel a great emptiness inside me—a longing for my regiment and my division, for that fraternity of battle in which I so long existed, fought, and suffered—and which has become another family for me. I feel that I am alone and abandoned, cut off from those who learned to think before the regime of propaganda and from those who came after it and never learned that war is an atrocious business because they never took part in it. I saw my comrades die; I saw what I believed in die—that faith in which I lived heroically for many years. I discovered that while we were living the pure and consecrated life of soldiers at the front our girls had become chippies, ready to give themselves to the first nigger just as they gave themselves to the first S.S. trooper. I don't want to love a woman, because I hate all our girls. Please excuse me if I say that what I miss the most is the Fuehrer—his authority, his sense of responsibility. And I'm not the only one who feels this way.

You will say that this is nihilism. Perhaps you are right. But, after all, I have lived for a great cause which illuminated my whole life, and now everything I see leaves me cold, or disgusts me. Look—the other day, in Ludwigsburg, I went

to a meeting held by the Social Democrats; I went with a few comrades, veterans like me (we keep together and to ourselves). A lot of people were there. They began to talk, to discuss, to argue. Suddenly, we burst out laughing; it was all just politics. We know that talking and arguing is a waste of time, and that you only get somewhere after the Leader has made his decision and given his orders.

Now about your question on communism: I really don't know whether there are any communists in my town. And anyway, whether there are or not, I don't care. I'll never join any political party. And I won't join the Church either, because I'm not looking for any communion except the kind I had in the army. Furthermore, if there are elections, we have all decided in advance not to vote, because we don't give a damn about all that and we won't help a ridiculous and senseless parliamentary system rule over our people.

You say I am drunk with propaganda. That's true; I've never heard anything else, and I'd like to get rid of it. I want someone to cure me, to help me find the truth.

But is there really such a thing as truth?

[Translated from "Esprit" (Paris), March 1946; originally printed in the Swiss newspaper, "Weltwoche."]

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THE SOCIAL FORMAT

Plea For A Hesiod

THE moral judging of technology, the selection of machines on considerations of happiness and personality, is very backward. I am referring to such propositions as that:

People forfeit their freedom by relying on instruments that they do not understand and cannot repair;

complicated social conditions for the maintenance and operation of a machine diminish the likelihood of satisfaction of the user.

Or on the positive side:

The mechanical clarity of a machine, e.g., the dynamo or the bicycle, is a moral advantage to the user;

for reasons of repair, insight, and beauty, industrial design should keep the working parts in evidence.

And so forth. This enquiry obviously extends to the humane critique of jobs, of community layouts, of conventional education.

We have here the subject of many unwritten books. But I should now like to discuss the curious reactions of people when the subject is broached at all. On the one hand, of course, one is called anti-industrial, medieval, petty-bourgeois. This reaction is a misunderstanding and is not interesting. It is typical of Trotskyists in whom it is, I fear, a cultural lag. For although they insist that centralization and rationalization are created for profit and not for efficiency, and that at present the bourgeois system is not interested in maximizing production, yet when it comes to a particular case they refuse the statistics tending to show that a bigger concentration and mass-production might be less socially efficient than a smaller. "Return the tools to the workers" is a revolutionary slogan—until one tries to analyze the method of education and the choice of technology by which this may be accomplished.

More interesting and tragic is the opposite reaction, that I met at a reading to a group of avant-garde artists. The aim was to show how the conditions of modern technology could provide a spontaneous and inventive way of life. The reaction was: "You are trying to adjust men to the machines, or the men and machines to each other as if they had equal claim. Your world is closed and gives us claustrophobia. If people understand the electric wiring, there is no place for dreams."

The reaction of the Trotskyist is Tory: indoctrinated with the technology (and the political techniques) of the Big Money, he assumes that it must be efficient or at least inevitable. But the reaction of the artist is radical and disturbing: it is radical because with ingenuity and courage he has avoided being alienated from his deep nature; he lives in a society where the average have long ago given up to lifeless legal, communal, and technical forms; and he attributes to the innocent machines the cloistral deadness that belongs to the ignorant users. Toward his own art-medium, to be sure, he has no such feeling; the material of art is refractory but it does not inhibit spontaneity, it invites it. The problem is: how to make these machine vehicles of desire?

Vehicles of desire, not living things. For the truth is that to the fearful artist the machines are not bores but monsters. (This was the chief content of expressionism.) In general when one is forced to handle something and cannot do it with pleasure, there are two possible reactions: either the unpleasure spreads to oneself and causes the repression of one's own feelings: this is the average alienation, the people who imitate

a political novel for the politically sophisticated.

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the machines; or the soul fights hard for its feelings and projects its unpleasure into the things, which then become hostile animals.

Now in order to make possible the moral selection of technology, there has to be a change in the general attitude toward these machines. I do not believe that this can be accomplished by cold analyses of morals and of the psychological relations of means and ends. Moreover, I doubt that such analysts can see more than a fraction of the possible beautiful ways of being at home.

What is needed (for one thing!) is a new race of pastoral poets whose scene is urban and technical.

The bother is that for a long time the bourgeois advertisements and the socialist-realist novelists have been giving us full-blown examples of the pseudo-pastoral: the kings who dress as shepherds and the shepherds who dress as kings. The typical image is the hero in overalls holding up a passbook of the Bowery Savings Bank (or working on the Dnieperstroy Dam). No no, what we need is the genuine Hesiod, to tell us in couplets or some other rhythm how to transform to direct current, mixing this in with other pleasant matter. Ethel Rosenberg, in a recent *Commentary*, explains to us how her Uncle Julius takes pleasure in the subway:

"It has to be the BMT, where the seats are arranged for Uncle Julius' convenience. The first thing he does when he walks in, he takes off his jacket, and he hangs it on the window. Of course he dusts the wall with a piece of Kleenex. You think new suits grow on trees? When the jacket is arranged so, he leans over, unlaces his high-top shoes, drops them under the seat. Then he wriggles his toes around in his socks. What do people say? Listen, on

the BMT you could hold an Elks' Convention and nobody would be surprised. Now Uncle Julius is comfortable, he goes to sleep. How he sleeps!"

—She fails to describe the kids playing Subway Tag, timing the stations and taking advantage of the automatic doors. (See *The Grand Piano*, p. 188)

Perhaps I can make clear what I want by a rather close analogy. To the stranger in a big city, and most native adults have become such strangers, there is considerable satisfaction in the facilities for culture and shopping and in the communal soliloquy of the crowds; but there is absolutely no practical pleasure or inventive use of the physical mise-en-scene itself. Contrast this with the behavior of a street-kid. He explores in the gratings for lost objects, not otherwise than a botanist in the fields. He hitches rides on the cross-town 'buses, as a cowboy practices on the bronco. He plays the Subway Tag like a yachtsman, putting to immediate use the investment of millions. The walls are made for ball-playing, the projections that disprove it become the occasions for new rules and clever shots. Like any explorer, he seeks out especially the border-countries, the shore, the railroad-tracks, the warehouses, the basements. His pencil has a reply to the posters.

The physical scene, in the country or the city, in running a farm or in sleeping in one cubicle equipped with switches and working in another, is always the chief object of attention, effort, and expense. If we are lifeless here, there is little hope for any deep communication.

PAUL GOODMAN

Responsibility in Science and Art

NOW that some of the factual data relating to atomic energy are becoming available, it is possible to estimate more accurately its scientific importance, as distinct from the publicity-value of atomic bombs in the competition for power. Apart from the significance of any new light on the nature of matter, which cannot fail to be of value in every scientific field, it is hard to believe that a new source of industrial energy, coming as it does to a civilisation which has already allowed its productive capacity to outstrip its responsibility, is to be regarded as the triumph of human knowledge which its publicists suggest. The appeal of the atomic bomb is dependent on its megalopolitan features: its millions of tons, its thousands of casualties, the sadistic uplift inherent in smashing things and frightening people. Apart from the desire of barbarian powers to intimidate each other, the appeal of the bomb to the public imagination is psychologically identical with the appeal of the arena, of Fascism, or of suicide motor races.

The new work, and the circumstances under which it was done, have provided two serious threats to other and more significant fields of research—the drive towards a new hermetic ideal in science, where the leading concepts are to be nationalism, secrecy, and supervision, and a widespread public indignation against scientists in general—they have shown themselves utterly irresponsible, and science is another of the enemies of the individual, to be classed with power, death, and war, as a destroyer of people's homes and persons. We have heard this view from people who should know better, and it is the product of ignorance of the work which is in progress in other fields, and which, given a few more years,

will be brought to completion as a permanent gift to humanity.

There are only two aspects of present-day Western society which give it any claim to be exempt from the title of barbarism—its responsible art and its progress towards a disease-free life for the individual man. Historical experience teaches that if western megalopolitanism founders, as every sociological pointer indicates that it will, its art and its creative cultural achievement will survive. The art of similar civilisations has remained, in a mutilated form, without the assistance of printing, photography, and the multitude of other technical resources which make the loss of any given work less probable. To my mind, the main danger of such a collapse lies in the indefinite postponement of a number of discoveries which today are well within sight. The return of all Western cultures to the flux which is now enveloping Germany will not destroy scientific achievement, though it will make the medical benefits which we have gained from megalopolitanism less readily available. (A single doctor without laboratory facilities, but equipped with the knowledge which laboratory facilities had gained, was able to keep diphtheria under control throughout the Japanese occupation of Singapore.) Penicillin is fortunately not a substance which depends on industrial synthesis. The knowledge of these things will not be readily destroyed by a dark age, however prolonged, but given a few more years of uninterrupted research the legacy of our civilisation can be made infinitely richer.

The three fields in which work now going on reduces nuclear fission to cultural unimportance are: (1) experimental embryology, (2) the neurophysiology of mind, and (3) chemotherapy. Outside the circle of active research workers, very little is known about these investigations. I would like to suggest some of their implications. (1) Since the foundation by Roux, at the end of the last century, of experimental embryology, this study has been progressing at a very great rate. It starts with the basic problem of how a single fertilised cell is capable of giving rise to the very complicated structure of adult organisms. The facts already available show that in this development, regulation of growth by substances related both to sex hormones and to the agents known to produce cancer is fairly general. We are within measurable distance here of an understanding and a therapy for malignant growths, and beyond that lies a prospect of controlling the process of ageing, and of devising means of regenerating damaged organs. (2) The neurophysiologists are coming closer to an understanding of the physical basis of mind, and in the course of their work are assembling a body of information about the physical agents which benefit psychopaths, especially schizophrenics and depressives. Here again we are within measurable distance of medical and surgical techniques which might quite well place lunacy on the same basis as diabetes—a metabolic disorder requiring a maintenance dosage to maintain normal function. (3) Chemotherapy—the study of substances which destroy bacteria selectively—is nearing the point at which tuberculosis can be tackled, and filtrable viruses are the next problem on the list.

If this work can be brought to a finish before the big-city order explodes, either through its own instability, through war, or through the threat of war, then humanity can approach the formation of the next culture equipped with knowledge which will be capable of halving the physical suffering of man. In a collapse phase the existence and preservation of that knowledge

matters more than its instant application—millions of people in tropical and “backward” areas die annually of preventable disease. The atomic bomb is an insignificant gadget compared with this type of research, a Prince Rupert’s drop to divert junior physics students. As to its contribution to the collapse of big cities, that is an overrated effect. It can do nothing which dynamite or gunpowder could not achieve in a civilisation which carries more explosive material in its social institutions and its way of life than Oak Ridge could produce in a century. Pessimism about the future of megalopolitan-industrial orders does not depend on the atom bomb, but on their inherent blend of militarism and vulnerability. London and New York could be destroyed overnight without any atomic explosions, by the mere threat of atomic bombardment. Our own form of barbarism is far more seriously menaced by infertility and endemic anxiety states than by bombs, which, without the other factors, we would survive exactly as we survived the Blitz or the Great Plague. The main destructive force in the big-city society is the absence of any object which makes survival desirable.

I believe that while the survival of cultures depends upon the will to live and to disobey of their individual citizens, the survival of cultural achievement depends entirely upon the human responsibility of artists and scientists. The scientist who has a clear philosophic basis for his work and the Romantic artist have an ideology in common. They believe that man has no values outside himself, that all the philosophical imperatives to goodness, beauty and so forth take their origin in man, and have no real existence outside him, that the material universe, because it tends to destroy individual life, is the prime enemy of humanity, which he alone among organisms possesses the conscious and rational equipment to defeat by taking thought, and that because of this conflict the prime ethical value is the act of responsibility and deliberately taking the side of humanity, of individual man, against death and against the chief ally of death, power. Responsibility today takes the form of recognising this fact, and irresponsibility, collaboration and obedience are simply the rejection of these human values, the reversion to death, to quietism, to a pre-natal non-intelligent existence. That is the way barbarism is going; that, in essence, is what barbarism is.

The artist speaks for humanity, and the scientist attempts to ensure the physical survival of humanity, without which all values would be extinguished. They are allied to reduce and abolish human suffering. This basic conception of Romanticism, the Gospel according to Prometheus, seems to me to be the only “religion,” if one cares to call it a religion, which can replace the older and untenable view that in some way the structure of the universe is favorable to human ideals. Unfortunately, while the greatness of the artist depends almost wholly on his capacity for responsibility, the scientific worker can produce results, and highly destructive results, without any vestige of insight into the philosophical purposes of science. Scientists are singularly prone to fall into doctrinaire irresponsibility of the Fascist, Marxist, and kitsch-democratic varieties, and the number of contemporary research workers outside medicine, which has a tradition of responsibility dating from Hippocrates, who have any idea of controlling the applications of their work to keep them out of the hands of power-groups is pathetically small. Power and centralisation exercise a fascination over some of them, physicists and biologists alike,

which stands a fair chance of vitiating their whole cultural outlook. Among the possible results of new work which I have described, there is not one which could not be converted into another scourge for the backs of the public. The carcinogenic agents, regeneration designed to make a ruling-class healthier and longer-lived, interference with brain physiology to produce an obedient army (witness military psychiatry today) and synthetic or chemically modified viruses all have possibilities as agents of power. We can thank our stars that megalopolitan orders do tend to collapse spontaneously, that there is no weapon against disobedience, that there are atom bombs and imbeciles to drop them. If science is to be once more hermetic, then let it be responsibly hermetic, as it was over poisons in the time of Hippocrates. If there is to be secrecy, let it be imposed by the individual worker, as it was by the French scientists whom the Germans employed, with a singular and striking lack of practical result. A generation of obedient scientists would be as filthy and as culturally null as a generation of obedient artists. Art and science do not confer any privileges on their practitioners—they are the activity of human beings who realise what humanity implies. Anyone who practises them without this realisation, without the romantic ideology of responsible disobedience, is a traitor to human ideals. The power to denounce megalopolitan barbarism may rest chiefly with the artist—the power to smash it by recalcitrance rests preeminently with the scientist, and if he fails to use that power, he will find himself compassing its downfall against his will, by more catastrophic and less controllable means.

ALEX COMFORT

Commonsense

IF you saw a man, let’s say a believer in martyrdom and resignation—i.e., Christ’s Representative on Earth—fire a battery of naval guns against a poor little mosquito, then invoke the assistance of both Heaven and Earth in a great crusade against that same dead mosquito, and finally summon a crowd of completely indifferent people to his house, to tell them that not he, but THEY are boiling mad against the same dead mosquito, could you keep from laughing? Well, it *has* happened, so don’t hold your laughter, but aim it this time, politely, as it befits the occasion, at the Pope.

It so happens that the Venerable Object of our Discreet Giggles saw fit to let Himself be inspired from Above to do the following things: suppress two very unimportant papers; excommunicate with the loudest Pontifical Thunder not only their publisher but also any living person bold enough to buy or even read the now suppressed sheets, and finally give, through the Courts of the free, democratic, pontifical Italian Republic a two-year jail sentence to the same excommunicated and impeached publisher.

As a form of Christian Revenge for a little bit of frank criticism, this would seem indeed sufficient. But no: he had to gather as many lazy Romans as the Piazza di San Pietro could contain, and tell them: “With sorrow and with indignation *you see* (italics mine, assumption his) the sacred figure of Rome, of this Holy Spot, the See of the Vicar of Christ by Divine Disposition, exposed, by the hands of the wicked negators of God, the profaners of the Divine Church, the idolators of the senses, to stain and ignominy, covered with mud.”

A breath of air, a word of comment: The Romans may see

this and much more, and still they will not care. Kings, Emperors, Popes, and other charlatans without a number after their name, have told them for thousands of years how they felt, and they are still waiting to feel any of those passions so freely ascribed to them for so many centuries. The last one to tell them how indignant they were was Mussolini. And today it's the Pope again. Now: if the sorrow and the indignation were his, why not say so? "Dear Romans, I am (or We are) hurt, indignant, sorry, etc." Everyone would believe it and, as they so untranslatably say in Rome, Viva la faccia. But that would be asking far too much. The Pope, like any Supreme Authority, is so non-committal, so modest, so self-effacing, that he can't even afford to quote himself. It is always YOU THE PEOPLE (or YOU MY BRAVE COMRADES) who feel that way; it is YOU who called me here, it is YOU who ask me to express YOUR feelings.

Let's not ask too many questions. Blessed are the poor in spirit. And listen to the Pope.

"Resist, strong in your faith . . . Awaken, Oh Romans! The hour has sounded for many of you to awaken from a slumber that has been too long—the hour to act with strength and to strongly suffer. This is the order for Romans."

Breath of air, again, and comment. First of all, to tell the Romans that they must awaken, be it from a long slumber or a brief afternoon "pennichetta" or nap, is very, but very tactless indeed and will be met, in all probability, with a snoring protest.

But then again, why not be clear in such appeals? Admitted for a split second that the Romans have a faith, what faith does His Holiness, or in this case His Politicalness, refer to? Faith in the above-mentioned principle of "strongly suffering" and therefore even suffering the stings of criticism, or faith in the police of the democratic republic which, in good fascist style, jails a man for printing what the authorities don't like? The judges of the Republic say the suppressed papers were obscene and unfair. Well, the *Uomo Qualunque*, a very important and very subsidized monarchist sheet is lax, obscene, indecent, slanderous, unfair, and unfit reading for young people. Yet never was its publisher Giannini even forwarned of the remotest possibility of excommunication, let alone imprisonment and suppression of his paper. Could this be coincidental with Giannini's pledge to always bow to the Pope's supreme authority?

And now let's examine the cartoon which brought imprisonment and excommunication on its author. It depicts a priest in the act of strangling a chicken which represents Italy.

In a perfectly unholy but democratic city inhabited by plain men this would be considered a normal political cartoon. But of course in a Holy City inhabited by one man only (there used to be two but the other one is no longer with us), who not only has the privilege of knowing what God wants, but also what men feel and see and think, it is easy to see what a severe blow this cartoon must have dealt to the Lord. Its theological implications are simply breathtaking and it is of course for the democratic republic to punish such errors with severity.

Another cartoon by the same author shows a friar looking at a girl with obvious earthly thoughts in mind. Why, if this is not the portrait of all priests, (and we all know it isn't), should they insist so much in recognizing themselves in it?

In any democratic country, such as Russia, impairing the free flow of information from the Infallible One to the Fallible Many would be a crime against freedom of thought, punishable with death. But the Pope only throws you into jail, and cuts you off from communication with that same Truth which you had basely attempted to deny to your own brethren. A liberal would say: isn't Christianity the Lesser Evil?

AND now, for a change, a little Vox Populi. This item was not only printed in free Democratic Italy, but reprinted in freest America by the Italian Language Daily *Il Progresso* owned and operated by a Mr. Papa (to America, Pope) who every year, as the Grand Marshal of the Columbus Day Parade kneels on the steps of Saint Patrick's and kisses the Pastoral ring of our beloved Cardinal Archbishop. Therefore what he prints in his paper can't be anti-clerical. Here's the news:

His Excellency the Bishop of Ancona, Italy, drove in His car to meet a boat coming from Yugoslavia loaded with Italian war prisoners. "In spite of the impressive display of police force," the "usual hotheads" (that is: the population of Ancona) made it impossible for the Bishop's car to reach the pier. "The Bishop was made the target of the vilest insults and exposed to such derogatory remarks as: 'First you sent them to war and now you are trying to bring gifts to them. Go back, or your car will be overturned.'" Well, what can one say to this? Long live the population of Ancona! This is the counterpart of the Pope's excommunication which rains on the people's heads from above: good clear communication coming from below.

NICCOLO TUCCI

"THE NEW YORKER" FACES UP TO THE FOOD SHORTAGE

There is no doubt about it—the food situation is simply terrible . . . This is certainly the time for making the best of things, a practice which I think of less as a moral obligation than as a sensible way of doing handsomely by what, if anything, you have or can get. Every now and then, fortunately, you can still get something of such excellence that it would seem to me a shame to serve it thoughtlessly. There is, for instance, the wonderfully good smoked salmon that is beginning to come in more or less regularly from Nova Scotia. It has the sort of delicate flavor that can be ruined by the wrong treatment—serving it with a bread that does not bring out all its fine qualities; putting it to unnatural uses, like wrapping it around cream cheese or an olive; or following it with an entree that does not sufficiently contrast with its oily, piquant taste. My idea of dealing humanely with this beautiful Madison Avenue salmon is to alternate slices of it with smoked sturgeon on a platter (the two quite dissimilar flavors complement each other splendidly), grind on an extravagant lot of black pepper, serve it with halved limes and a cruet of olive oil, and eat it with sour rye bread spread with sweet butter and sprinkled lightly with chopped chives.

—"Markets & Menus," in *The New Yorker*, Oct. 19.

KEEPING CALM WITH CANNON

There was rejoicing and high wassail at the banquet tables of the rich and mighty when the news came through that Wallace had been dumped from Truman's cabinet. What was Wallace's crime which had earned him the awful ire of the Wall Street masters? . . . Wallace simply saw how the Plutocracy was dragooning the American people into a new world war; how drunk with power and vision of world empire, the monied masters (etc.) . . . how in their supreme arrogance they were brazenly brandishing the atomic bomb (etc., etc.) . . . No sooner were these words out of Wallace's mouth than the howling wolf-pack of Wall Street timeservers was at his heels. "Wallace must go!" shrieked the reptile press with one voice, all the way from McCormick's Chicago Tribune to the yellow gutter rag of the "left," the *New Leader*.

Why, one must ask, did the paid press grow so hysterical?

—Editorial in "Fourth International" for November.

ECONOMIC PROGRESS DEPT.

MACARTHUR REPORT—ECONOMIC PROGRESS SHOWN . . . increases in most things in Japan, ranging from the cost of living to the death rate . . . index on some commodities jumping from 200 to 700 percent . . . rise in national debt to 220 billion yen . . . 6,800,000 unemployed by the end of the year.

—Headline and partial text of news report in "N. Y. Times," Oct. 21.

WORDS-OF-ONE-SYLLABLE DEPT.

President Truman bestowed the Congressional Medal of Honor on 28 Army men today . . . At the conclusion of the ceremony, the President stepped up to the microphone and said that the men just honored represented a cross-section of America, and were men who loved peace and were able to adjust themselves to the needs of war.

—N. Y. Times, August 24.

Violence and Sociability

by "European"

MY THESIS is that a movement for the achievement of "bread, liberty, peace," the deliverance of society from the coercive apparatus of the State, the ending of competing, hostile "nations," and the abolition of wage-labor and classes—my thesis is that such a movement cannot consider useful, or even possible, the means of organized violence: i.e., (a) armed insurrection, (b) civil war, (c) international war (even if against Hitler—or Stalin), (d) a dictatorial and terroristic regime to consolidate the "new order."

My first argument, based on experience and common sense, is that these means are not effective and seem to lead to the very opposite result from the one aimed at. This argument, a "pragmatic" one, has been developed often enough already, by pacifists and by critics of Bolshevism, and so I shall not go into it here at any length. Instead, I want to develop two other and less familiar lines of argument in favor of a position of principled non-violence: one that looks to the thoughts and feelings which have evolved with striking unanimity ever since man began to reflect on his destiny; the other flowing from the unprecedented situation which contemporary man faces.

Disgust with violence is perhaps as old as the use of violence; enthusiasm for violence is without doubt a product of fairly modern "moods" which there are good reasons to consider artificial and morbid. The integral pacifism of the Buddhists would never have succeeded in winning so many adherents if there had not been an intimate correspondence between its precepts and the sentiment of the people. There are signs that during the neolithic age (which may have lasted more than 10,000 years) peace between the settled communities, and within them, was unbroken and complete. Savage invaders armed with bronze, and later with iron, came on the scene to fill the world with carnage and military glory, and spread that drunkenness the most typical frenzies of which are represented by the Kings of Assyria and the Mongol Khans. During the long last century, from the "conscripts of the Year II" to the SS of Hitler, the Stalinist marshals and generals like the late Patton, Western man (not to mention Japan and China—"new and warlike") has felt this fever of violence in all its forms: patriotic exaltation, revolutionary romanticism, the "white man's burden," striving towards a point "beyond Good and Evil," Sorelian reflections on violence, the various forms of terror; Jacobin, Bolshevik, Fascist.

Before this tidal wave, pacifism, which seemed to have gained ground in the eighteenth century, has not only given way but, even worse, has yielded to a kind of cowardly imitativeness by seeking a solution (providential or "dialectical") on the very road down which its adversaries have marched from triumph to triumph, and from catastrophe to

catastrophe. The rationalistic pacifism of the liberals made too many concessions not only to patriotism, but even to political expediency. The pacifism of Robert Owen, Saint-Simon, and of Proudhon; the evangelism of the Quakers, and later of Leo Tolstoy, could be admired by some people, derided by others; but the implication always was that those men were talking some kind of touching nonsense. The kind of hope that was considered reasonable, and was shared by multitudes, found satisfaction in the image of a "final conflict" subsequent to which humanity would find itself united in the International; or in a "war to end all wars"; or, even more mechanically, in the idea that instruments of destruction so terrifying that nobody would dare use them would be devised. The action of a man like Jaures in defence of peace was radically undermined by his acceptance of "national sovereignty." The antimilitarism of the French anarchists and syndicalists was made morally weak by the fact that, while condemning war between States, they upheld revolutionary violence in the struggle between classes.

Let us look at the source of the "cultivated" man's aversion to violence.

Condorcet was expressing the opinion of a great number of his "enlightened" contemporaries when he wrote: "As civilization spreads over the globe, war and conquest will disappear, and slavery and misery with them." "Civilization" was a new word in the eighteenth century. It is not to be found in a French book before 1765, and Dr. Johnson still refused to include it in his dictionary. The Scot, Millar, in his "Observations on the Beginnings of Society" (French edition, 1773) defined it as "that politeness of *mores* which is the natural consequence of abundance and security." And the French Abbé Girard, in 1780, wrote that politeness "adds to simple civility what devotion adds to the exercise of public worship: the means to a human group more affectionate, *more interested in others*, more refined"; which, in its turn, presupposes "a more consistent culture, and certain natural qualities, or the difficult art of simulating them." From 1736 on, Voltaire stressed the idea that politeness cannot be conceived as "something arbitrary, like what we call civility: it is a law of nature . . . which the French, since the reign of Anne of Austria, have happily cultivated more than other peoples have," becoming, thanks to it, "the *most sociable* people in the world." And Duclos in 1731 pointed out the difference between primitive peoples, among whom "distinction and nobility are based on *force*" and civilized countries, "where the most highly prized distinction is intellectual."

What is in question here is "mores," "culture," "humanity," and not any metaphysical principle or religious precept. From the Athenian who treated his slave "humanely" to the English lady who reprimanded the cabman who beat his horse, refinement and politeness essentially meant refraining from all violence in behaviour. In the name of what? In the name of "self-respect," which is inconceivable without respect for others. It is sociability, naturally spread from one to an-

other, until it includes all living beings. It is, on the surface, good education, cultivated manners; beneath the surface, intellectual awareness of society, as a fact and as a value—hence, inevitably, of *justice*, conceived as an idea more fundamental than any religious or moral dogma. But sociability and justice do not exist without a desire of happiness for all, without which one could not oneself be happy (“this idea of happiness, so new in Europe,” said Saint Just, while he was sending people to the scaffold, so as to hasten the realization of the idea). Let us insist: justice implies equality; happiness excludes all oppression; hence an irremediable opposition exists between aspiration to “sociability” and will to power. All violence is by definition antisocial.

But antisocial barbarity exists in us (lust for possession, rancor, natural cruelty, fear, ignorance, etc.) and around us (since civilisation, politeness, cultivated sociability have remained until now the privilege of a minority of people located in a limited number of places). Hence for thousands of years, barbarism—especially barbarism coated with a varnish of “civility”—has triumphed. Over and over again, for the sake of bare survival, men have sacrificed the reasons for living. For centuries, this compromise has been more or less successful, i.e. because of it a number of sincere adversaries of violence have survived, although not without from time to time either submitting to violent commandments or using violence themselves. But where are we today?

Plato entrusted the defense of his Republic to warriors expressly drilled, “like hounds,” for carnage. But he also insisted that his State should never wage aggressive war, since any aggrandizement would have wrecked the harmony of the ideal commonwealth. Moreover, the armed caste is farther from wisdom, the “essential aim” of the Republic, than are the workers. It is a fair guess that, in Plato’s State, the sociability and the “mores” of the common people would be as “humanized” as possible, while the warriors would be restricted to sheer inhumanity.

The problem to which Plato’s work attempts to give an answer seems to be how to conceive of a society capable of achieving a supreme degree of civilization while at the same time having to protect itself against a barbaric environment. Hence Plato imagines his city: (1) as a lonely island in an ocean of human imperfection, and having only occasional contacts with the external world; (2) as a place where inevitable evil will be granted its share once and for all, by relegating a section of the population to the job of violence, while workers and philosophers will enjoy and cultivate the benefits of peaceful and polite intercourse.

Such a situation, and such a division, are far from being utopian. They have been in fact the conditions under which a number of civilized societies have existed, provided the struggle between the classes did not take a violent form. Which is precisely the danger that Plato believed he had eliminated in his State.

During the eighteenth, and a good part of the nineteenth century, in spite of universal conscription introduced by the French Revolution, violence was an exception, limited in time

as well as in space; its practice mostly the business of professional people. And it was generally thought that such a practice would become rarer and rarer, less and less brutal; in a word, that violence could be “humanized.” It is only since 1914 that man has come to experience the reign of total violence, violence unlimited, unmeasurable, and practically uninterrupted. What has become of civilization, “mores,” politeness, under such a regime, does not have to be described. Whether we believe in some kind of religion—be it the “religion of progress” or the vaguest kind of humanism—or in no religion at all, we are all confronted with the dilemma stated by Dwight Macdonald: either we “get” the machinery of violent coercion which has transformed our lives into one huge fear, or else the machinery will “get” us, and with us the patrimony of culture, politeness, justice, happiness which gives some meaning to our existence.

Can we conquer violence through violence?

This question really conceals two different problems. The first is an empirical one: what probability is there that a group of free men, fully conscious of their aim, will be able to obtain an armament, an equipment, a technical skill that will enable them to fight the present masters of the world with a reasonable chance of success? But the really decisive problem is the second: let’s assume that it is possible to launch a mass action powerful enough to fight a serious battle for the possession of the highly technical engines (from the atom bomb to the superpoisons, and from the superpoisons to the structures of economic and political power) that today threaten the very existence of mankind. Can anyone seriously believe in the probability of avoiding, under circumstances as “revolutionary” as you like, a backsliding into, and in fact a dependence on, the habits of savagery, the impulsion of the will to power, the division of all involved in the struggle into docile hordes and imperious leaders? Are we not to expect these realities when we place our reliance on organized violence? And then again, as after Thermidor in France, as in 1918-1919 throughout Europe, as under Stalin in Russia, will it not be permissible to ask: “Why has so much blood been shed? To what idol have these countless young lives been sacrificed?” And is it possible to answer such questions if one does not regard the exercise of force as sacred, and heroic sacrifice as an end in itself?

Who was more devoted than Robespierre and Saint Just, to the cause of the people, to the aim of enabling the people to govern themselves in “liberty, equality and fraternity?” And surely Lenin and Trotsky fought to their last breath for the union of humanity in a socialist federation. But the French leaders were the very ones to dam every spontaneous surge of the people of Paris, demoralizing them by means of the Terror, reducing the Clubs to official meetings attended by frightened bureaucrats. It was Robespierre and Saint Just who centralized and militarized France (which implied the consolidation of a new ruling caste of bureaucrats, generals and great munition-makers) so that the country was ripe for Napoleonic despotism and a bourgeois oligarchy. And it was the Russian leaders who were responsible for the crushing of the Soviets, the installation of the all-powerful Tcheka, the imposition on the workers of the police regime of State-controlled unions, the multiplication of arbitrary powers, and all sorts of other yokes, economic and political. In short, they prepared the way for the Stalinist autocracy. Neither traitors nor weaklings, the Jacobins and the Bolsheviks achieved these

results by the employment of revolutionary terror; and in the exercise of this terror, as well as in the actions that followed from their course, their essentially *antisocial* mentality is revealed to us: *the French Jacobins and the Russian communists saw society exclusively in terms of certain power-relationships; aiming at governmental organization or controlled economy in the name of the people or the proletariat, while considering as mere by-products the manners, sociability, justice, happiness which constitute the immediate content of real existence and real freedom.*

If we examine the whole sequence of revolutions and counter-revolutions since the revolt of the American colonists against the British Crown, the striking uniformity with which certain circumstances are repeated is enlightening (despite the certainly plausible view that history never teaches anybody anything).

Let us agree to call *society* the ensemble of spontaneous and pleasurable relations among men, insofar as there is at least the appearance of freedom in the act of forming or breaking relations with others (no pressure being exerted except through "moral means"), while utilitarian motives are either really sublimated or camouflaged by politeness and the pleasure of being together. This is to say that *society*, taken in this sense, implies the rejection in principle of any kind of constraint and more especially of every form of violence. It should be fairly clear that the strength, the continuity, and even the partial successes (for the forms of oppression can indeed be crushing) of a human movement for emancipation are directly calculable in terms of the level of "social" life. While no armed body increases the chances for success of such a movement, or contributes to any real progress achieved by it.

The thirteen American States were tightly woven "societies" much more than political or military formations. The Puritan culture was no doubt narrow and tyrannical, but it was to the taste of the vast majority. On the other hand, it is owing to the "anarchy" of the *szlachta*—a form of communal life where extreme sociability was allied to a most punctilious sense of personal independence—that the Poles were able to oppose such astounding resistance to powerful oppressors for so long a period in spite the poverty of the country and of the lamentable policy of the national governments. And it is because they were, as Voltaire said, "the most sociable people in the world," that the French have been until 1871 at the head of the European revolutionary movement. As for Russia, the tremendous scale of the October Revolution cannot be understood without taking into account the parallel action, during a century, of the religious sects (which were communistic and, most of them, stubbornly pacifistic) and, on the other hand, of the humanitarian *Intelligentsia*, accompanied by the flowering of "society" in St. Petersburg, Moscow, etc. The more refined sociability of Vienna as compared to Berlin, and the barrenness of social life in Italy (so bitterly lamented by Leopardi), throw a good deal of light on the vicissitudes of the 1848 revolutions. In Spain, the powerful antisocial forces which dominated the country since the Counter-reformation and Philip II were successfully resisted not by Castilian authoritarianism but by the separatist tendencies developed in Barcelona, and by the forms of anarchist solidarity spread throughout the Peninsula.

Marx's resounding dictum, "Violence is the midwife of history," lacks subtlety. The hemorrhages caused by the historical forceps may be more or less serious, the operation itself may be not at all successful. There are the insurrections caused by despair or fanaticism, and drowned in blood; after the hacking of the foetus, the patient—"civilization"—does not always recover. There are the coups d'état which we are accustomed to call "reactionary" insofar as their aim is to stop or to prevent a popular movement; this sort of enterprise is always preceded by organized violence directed at suppressing social spontaneity in order to establish or reinforce the power of a State, a party, a leader, or an arbitrary "order." And then there are the "revolutions." They are the outcome of a spontaneous agreement between the aspirations nourished for a long time among the people at large, and the ideas developed by smaller groups, the "society." Hence the atmosphere of joy, of radiant hope, of brotherly getting together, which characterizes these "dawns of a new era." The outbursts of violence that mark the triumph of such movements are as sudden as they are short-lived and limited. The storming of the Bastille; July, 1830 in Paris; February and March, 1848, throughout Europe; March, 1917, in Russia; April, 1931, in Spain, were not what we would call bloody battles. With characteristic generosity and humanity, the conquerors have often taken pride in having won freedom without shedding blood.

We know, however, that the dream dreamed during such days can have no future. The first triumph of a popular movement has always been followed by tragedy.

Here two points must be considered.

The first is that the quasi-rationalism born during the Renaissance has not only drained the marshes of superstition; it has also dried up what might be called the "myth-making" side of human nature. Hence, Western man is accustomed to consider institutions, laws, police, everything disciplined and instrumental, as more real, more consistent, more manageable than the spontaneous ways, the unorganized forms of solidarity, the collective mentality, of the social milieu. Hence the barbaric fallacy of considering what is most intimate and vital in man as a by-product of what is most external and crude. Hence the barbaric principle, universally accepted in our days, that what is most delicate and precious in man is also, by definition, what can legitimately be violated and crushed.

Secondly, very few persons are capable of perceiving clearly the evident fact that a revolution is after all only the official consecration of changes (in the distribution of wealth, social and political influence, cultural primacy, etc.) which have already taken place. While, on the other hand, whatever substantial changes still remain to be accomplished (new ways of life, opportunities for new social strata, general "cultivation" of the new forms of social existence) can be realized only gradually, in a period of time extending possibly over several generations. People are at the same time impatient for a total change and eager not to be left for one single day without the apparatus which guarantees the continuity of social order. Hence the disillusionments. Hence the inexperienced hands shaking the social machinery in order to get it started again. Hence also, the preference for a "prompt return to normalcy" over a more farsighted putting up with inconveniences which might well prove healthy in the end.

All this is chaotic, and breeds nothing but chaos. Chaos in turn breeds violence.

Of course, there are always, or nearly always, people unafraid of chaos and ready to exploit it. To my knowledge, the American Revolution is quite exceptional in view of the fact that the leadership remained at the helm until the very end. The American Revolution is unique also in that it was an insurrection with limited aims, and with few social complications. No subsequent revolution was so fortunate. The Jacobins managed to frustrate the plans of royalist reaction; after which came Terror. The Bolsheviks were able to destroy Kornilof; after which came tyranny. In 1848, the Bonapartists, after Blanqui's failure and the June repression, had only the weak-kneed leaders of the Mountain to deal with; again, despotism. Gil Robles first, and Franco after, held cards which neither the FAI nor Negrin could match; once more tyranny. Here we have the third moment of "revolution:" the victory of dictatorial violence addressed either to the "perpetuation" of the conquests of the people, or to the restoration of a more or less mythical "old regime." But in both cases the organs of coercion are strengthened at the expense of "society" and civilization.

Naturally, the supporters of revolutionary violence were always hoping to "do better next time." Today, however, it might well be fatal to engage forces using techniques like those employed during the last six years of total war. And what if once again the enterprise miscarries—as has always happened? And what if in the end we are forced to submit to a monstrously strengthened apparatus of domination, which we cannot pretend would not be equipped with the atom bomb? Evidently, we must seek for means that are more certain, and more congruent with our aims. And, since we said that the present situation is historically unprecedented, surely we are justified in calling for the invention of strategies and tactics never yet resorted to, and of which only suggestions can be found in what has already been experienced.

So then, to the question: "On what principles can one base a struggle against the status quo which would not bring into play organized violence of any sort?" My answer is (A) violence is incompatible with the values of civilisation, of the sociable humanity which we want to save from destruction. In employing violence, we will ourselves be forced to deny the very values we are upholding. (B) The mechanical resources, and massive systems of organization (armies and police forces; Cheka or Gestapo; Dachau, Auschwitz, Siberian camps; Nazi regimes in occupied countries, Russian regime in Poland, etc.), that are now utilized in the violent struggle between human groups, have reached such a degree of horrible efficiency that the complete destruction of civilized society, if not humanity itself, is no longer an idle fancy.

What about the "socialist" parties?

In a recently published book, a French factory worker, Georges Navel, tells the story of his life. "When I was fifteen,"

he says, "I was fed up with the workshop and its discipline. I wanted then and there a more noble, more dignified life, a life in which I would not be a worker any longer, in a country where there would be nothing but space, and no industry." Despair became so overpowering that one day this adolescent jumped over the parapet of a bridge into the Rhone River. All he got was a dirty bath, after which he went back to his conveyor belt. All his subsequent attempts to get away from his misery, or to "have a life *outside* the factory" ended in failure. "Eight hours in a factory exhausts a man's energy. What he gives to work is not only his time but his life, the very flower of his energy. Even if his particular tasks are not miserably boring and exhausting, at the end of the day he is worn out, sick, his imagination completely dulled . . . In the morning, I didn't wake up until I was shaken by the din of the factory, which followed me everywhere after work. I had become for all eternity a bit of the factory." On the last page of his book, Georges Navel has this to say: "There is a sadness of the worker which cannot be healed by anything except political action."

Socialists and communists are enchanted by such a conclusion. To them, it shows the right degree of "proletarian consciousness." As for myself, I cannot help but notice that for a worker to participate in a mass movement in no way implies that he has found a way of fulfilling his life. Fulfillment must be distinguished from a resentment that has found a way to be effective, and so must happiness from the rational clarification of despair. For a man of such sincerity, tried by such suffering, political action cannot be a real answer. Such business as party organisation, mass meetings and parades, propaganda slogans, electoral campaigns, or even conspiracies and armed insurrections, can be to him only an Ersatz for what he really needs. This might, among other things, explain the heart-rending disproportion between the sublime sacrifices of the rank and file and the results that the leaders seek (or are able) to achieve.

Here, politics clearly appears as a substitute—often a derisive one—for the social, i.e. for whatever substantial content might be found in such notions as civilization, human dignity, equality and fraternity, as well as in the ideal of a spontaneous communion between men fully conscious of their human fate.

From its most remote beginnings, in the ideas of the great thinkers and in the feelings of oppressed peoples, the trend which we today call "socialism" has meant nothing if not a special concern with the reality of human relations based on spontaneity, friendliness, politeness, equality. Institutions, governmental activities, factional struggles (which contain—and often stifle—society) have always been considered by true socialists either malignant tumors to be extirpated altogether, or else a set of inevitable evils to be relentlessly restrained and circumscribed.

If Plato was led to conceive of a city where "all would be held in common," it was because of his disgust with politics, not only with the tyrannical politics of the Thirty, but also with that of their "democratic" successors, who put Socrates to death. But another motive also inspired *The Republic*: despair about the fate of that Hellenic civilization which Plato was trying to find a way to preserve. After the ravages of the Peloponnesian Wars and the terroristic regime established in Athens by Critias and his colleagues, the city was visibly going to pieces: social customs, political institutions and

spiritual life were disintegrating; private interests were irreconcilable with public welfare; philosophical speculation was losing contact with popular beliefs. So that finally, in a famous passage in one of his letters, Plato reaches the conclusion that, for the time being, there is no solution; one can only wait for some unpredictable turn of the historical tide. But can one do anything, while waiting? Nobody can be sure whether or not Plato seriously believed that, in the expectation of better (or worse) times, one could preserve the quintessence of Hellenic civilization by the creation of small "model cities" inspired by philosophical wisdom, much in the same way as the monasteries would later preserve ancient culture. Perhaps the philosopher was aware that the nostalgic yearning for a more human society would be kept alive only through the influence exercised by the monuments of Greek culture on sects, cenacles, schools, and, possibly, popular movements. In any case, Plato's example seems to suggest that there are moments in history when it is reasonable and farsighted to give up hope in any kind of immediate, large-scale results.

As for the other representatives of the socialist tradition, surely, even before getting a first-hand knowledge of the business of politics as Chancellor of England, Thomas More put little trust in the governments of his time. He thought of his Island of Utopia as a garden where the faculties of the sociable and peaceful individual would not be interfered with in any way by the hands of authority. Thomas Campanella had the vision of his "City of the Sun" only after the failure of his Calabrian plot, and the imprisonment that followed it, had forced him out of politics. Both More and Campanella put their ideal societies under governments patterned after the classical model. In the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries (as under the Hellenistic monarchies), many reformers were hopeful enough to believe that some "enlightened despot" might protect the flowering of ideal communities. On the other hand, in the Middle Ages, representatives of messianic communism like the Italian Fra Dolcino or the Moravian Brothers took their models from the free cities and the "cantons" of liberated peasants. As for the Quakers and the Anabaptists, they never paid much attention to institutional questions.

In all these cases, the means might be discussed, but the aim is clearly a more human *society*. And the attainment of such an aim is thought to be possible only *outside of* the framework of existing institutions.

In modern times, Saint-Simon's first work (*Letters of an Inhabitant of Geneva*) denounces the mistake of the Revolution in having tried to apply a political remedy to a disorder that was essentially social. Robert Owen did not take any part either in the radical ferment of 1820 or, later, in the Chartist agitation. Proudhon, while going to the barricades in February, 1848, did not believe that the people could obtain any benefit from a political revolution, and considered it futile to "organize the Republic" when the real problem was the "organization of society." Saint-Simon, Robert Owen, and eventually also Proudhon, considered that a truly "liberal" regime would have furnished a fairly good opportunity for their plans of social reorganization. The stress was always on *society*, never on institutions.

On the other hand, Babeuf, Blanqui, Louis Blanc, and, without any doubt, Karl Marx, saw in the Committee of Public Safety a successful first draft of that dictatorship of the proletariat which would ensure the triumph of socialism. Nobody

can say that such means have not been most thoroughly tried.

A last hope remains: the alloy socialism-democracy. It was the ponderous creation of the Second International. What was meant by "democracy" was a strongly centralized administration, formidably armed, supported by a large budget, and animated by the "national spirit." This machinery was under the surveillance of the "representatives of the people." "Public opinion" (identified with the people) had the possibility, nay, the duty, of controlling it, thanks to the complete freedom of the press as well as of assembly; and to the competition between parties. All this of course depended on the hypothesis that the complexity of the machinery itself, and the allowance to be made for the highly specialized functions of civil and military "experts," would not make of democratic control a sheer illusion. In any case, socialism was shrewdly to exploit this powerful means, and eventually scrap what was bad in it, preserving what was good.

What happened to this most cumbersome of all Utopias is ancient history already. Because of their rapid successes among the masses, the socialist parties shifted soon from intransigence to reform, and from reform to effective collaboration with the "bourgeois State." Reform gave the workers many material advantages. But reform, and collaboration, inevitably also meant more power, more resources, more bureaucracy for the State. Not to speak of nationalism. The socialist parties engaged all their forces in "democratic" action. Socialism (i.e., the creation of real communities, the civilization of habits, actual justice in actual society) got only rhetoric. The real talk was about the socialist State, or State socialism. In 1914, the powerful fiction of "social-democracy" collapsed.

Now, in 1914 precisely, the great modern "democracies" took the first steps down the road that leads to the *totalitarian State*, i.e., the *total* suppression of society. The point we have reached today is best exemplified by what happened at Oak Ridge, U.S.A. POLITICS has rightly stressed the ominous significance of the fact that, in the country which seemed the least affected by State omnipotence, it has been possible to employ for over a year 120,000 workers without their having *the faintest idea of what they were making*. And what they were making was a missile able to kill 300,000 people in a few minutes. Yesterday, it was done to "avenge Pearl Harbor." Tomorrow it will be done to obliterate some dangerous example of "anarchy." At this point, democracy clearly needs some mending.

As for social-democracy, the bottom has been officially reached with Leon Blum's declaring, not without coquetry: "I am a Frenchman first, and after that a socialist."

Frankly, it seems to me that the idea of mass action with the slogan "Workers of the World Unite" and the grandiose aim of the "leap from the reign of necessity into the reign of freedom," has worn itself out completely. Where could we summon the courage to start it all over again, from the strictly organized small group to the great and well disciplined mass parties; from the mass parties to the Fourth, or Fifth, International; and from there, where to?

What is left?

A few scattered individuals, and groups, that might find in a resolute pessimism about the immediate future the courage not to despair of the "eternal good cause" of man.

Marx and Engels have written, and Messrs. Thorez and Togliatti are now repeating with devotion, that socialism is identical with humanism. I am afraid that the fathers of

scientific socialism were thinking especially of such things as philosophy and philology, which were being so successfully cultivated in German Universities. Together with science in general, philosophy and philology would enlighten the proletarian, and help him become fully conscious of his historical mission.

But what was most important in the movement called "humanism" was neither the Renaissance of letters and of the arts, nor the "humanities," which, as the Jesuits showed, could well be used to enslave the human mind to conformism and falsehood. From the sixteenth to the nineteenth centuries, the most important manifestation of humanism was the development of a *free sociability*. This meant, first and foremost, that men started choosing their associates freely, above and beyond all barriers of caste, nationality, or religion. Hence, relations based on true politeness, i.e. on equality and mutual trust, replaced the ceremonious and suspicious artifices of "hierarchical respect."

Today, the multiplication of groups of friends, sharing the same anxieties and united by respect for the same values, would have more importance than a huge propaganda machine. Such groups would not need any compulsory rule. They would not rely on collective action, but rather on personal initiative and effective solidarity, such as can be developed only by friends who know each other well.

Christianity made its most astounding conquests when it was divided in a number of autonomous Churches, connected with each other by "communion" in the same faith, but without any well defined hierarchy or "oecumenic" authority of synods or patriarchs. In the eighteenth century, the cenacles of *libertins* and "encyclopaedists"; the small "societies of atheists" to which references can be found in Fielding and Smollett; the masonic lodges and the *salons* where "people conversed," developed an irresistible propaganda, and established contacts between men from one end of Europe to the other. Those people did not need any central organization which would make decisions and issue sanctions in their name. But, because they aimed at changing attitudes rather than things, society rather than institutions, they certainly caused some real change in this world.

(Translated by Nicola Chiaromonte)

THE GRAMMAR OF THE COMMON MAN

With faith in the commonsense of the American people and determined that they be fully informed on all events which tend to strengthen or to destroy the principles of democracy by which our common purposes must be transmuted into constructive national policy, we have organized this coalition of progressive forces for political action.

—Opening sentence of the Preamble and Statement of Principles of the newly launched Progressive Citizens of America, many of whose members are literary people.

THE INSCRUTABLE EAST

Dr. Hu Shih, former Chinese ambassador to Washington . . . asserted that since the recent Political Consultative Conference, the Chinese people had reached a stage of freedom of speech, publication and association a hundredfold greater than during the Japanese war. Dr. Hu's statement coincided with reports of arrests of more than 1,000 suspected Communists or pro-Communists in Canton.

—"N. Y. Times," Dec. 21, 1946.

CF. LIVY—OR PERHAPS FREUD?

The use of the designation "Second World War," was protested in the House of Commons today on the ground that it presupposed there might be another . . . Prime Minister Attlee could not see the logic of the protest: "As far as I know, there was a First and a Second Punic war and not a Third." As several Members remarked later, the Third Punic War was the really important one.

—"N. Y. Times," Oct. 31, 1946.

MADAME RATHENAU'S LETTER

I MET Tessier in February, 1940, soon after I joined the Foreign Legion. He was then adjutant at one of the forts on the Libyan border—tall and thin, with brutal jaws and bold grey eyes. What was most striking about him was his voice, which was high-pitched and soft like a priest's, and his air of ironical courtesy. He spoke both German and French without the slightest accent; he attributed this facility to his Swiss origin. Sometimes he forgot his courteous manner and swore at us in the grossest terms. Afterward, he would apologize for his outburst. There was something strange and baffling about Tessier's personality, and we all racked our brains trying to explain him.

One day Tessier invited in some Jewish refugee Legionnaires for a game of bridge—he was an excellent player. To keep him in a good temper, we let him win a bit. But after several hands, he suddenly threw his cards on the table and, turning to the Jews, said in a low, grave voice, as though he were in the confessional: "I know you think I despise you. But it's not true! I love all Jews. In my opinion, they are the finest and most gifted people in the world!" Then, to our astonishment, he began a lengthy exposition of his ideas on Jewish culture and history, showing more knowledge than any of us had. Nor was that all. When he learned that one of our comrades was Ullmann, who, before the war, had had some reputation as a caricaturist in Paris, he commissioned him to decorate the officers' mess; and our comrade, little Gerson, who had been a professor of Oriental languages, became Tessier's instructor in Hebrew. He was amazed to discover that his pupil already knew the language and merely wanted to perfect his mastery.

The "Tessier case" intrigued us more and more. How in the world had this soldier of fortune, who sometimes swore like a gangster, become a devotee of Judaism?

Then something happened I shall never forget. I had taken over to Tessier's, to play bridge, an old friend, just arrived at Fort Flatters, who introduced himself: "Legionnaire Rathenau, sir!"

Tessier leaped from his chair.

"Rathenau? Are you by any chance related to the late German statesman?"

"Yes, I am his nephew," answered my friend.

There was a tense silence. Not a muscle moved in Tessier's face. He became deathly pale. At last he said:

"Rathenau, there is something I must tell you: one of the murderers of your uncle stands before you."

"What do you mean?" asked my friend, thinking he had misunderstood.

"I am one of the three men who killed your uncle," said Tessier in German. "It was on June 24, 1922, in the Konigsallee in Berlin. My real name is Ernst-Werner Techow."

We both sat down, overcome with emotion. Memories arose before our eyes . . .

The adjutant ransacked his desk and finally drew out a yellowed letter. It was from Madame Rathenau, written the day after her son's murder, to Techow's mother. "With inexpressible sympathy," she wrote, "I offer my hand to you, the most pitiable of mothers. Tell your son—and this is what my son would have wished me to say—that I forgive him, as God also wishes to forgive him. May he confess honestly before his earthly judges, and may he repent before the heavenly judge. If he had known my son, one of the noblest of men, I know that he would have rather turned his gun on himself. I hope that this note may somewhat restore your peace of mind.—Mathilde Rathenau."

(The two other murderers of Rathenau, Kern and Fischer, committed suicide when they were cornered by the police. Techow, 21 years old, was handed over to justice by his own family.)

Techow proceeded to tell us his story. In 1927 he was released from prison; shortly afterward he entered the Legion, where he rose rapidly, serving in Morocco, Syria, and Indo-China. In 1934, he became a naturalized French citizen; later, he won the *Medaille Militaire*.

"Rathenau," said Techow, "this letter is the most precious thing I own. It opened a new world to me. In prison, I began to study the works of your uncle. Later, in the Legion, I continued to read everything I could get on the Jewish question. In Syria, I learned Hebrew. I found that the Nazis, to excuse their atrocities, had falsified the facts about the Jews. I know very well the power of their barbarous instincts, for I myself was once possessed by them. For eighteen years I have struggled against this evil. Madame Rathenau won a victory over herself when she wrote that letter to my mother, and I have also tried to master myself. I have always hoped for some way to make up for my crime."

The adjutant fell silent. His face, lit up by the candles, seemed to have lost its brutality, appearing suddenly old and tired. There was nothing more to be said. Rathenau grasped the hand of his uncle's murderer, and we went back to our quarters.

In February, 1941, I ran into Techow again, in Marseille. He was dressed like a longshoreman and he asked me to have a drink with him. I had heard that he was doing espionage work for a power that was at war with Germany. "Do you know any Jews who want to escape?" he asked me. "I can get them exit visas, passports for Casablanca, etc. And I know a specially good route through Spain." I said I did but that most of them couldn't pay much. "Don't worry about that. The rich ones can pay. And for every rich one, I can take care of three who can't pay anything at all."

I found that Techow had actually saved more than 700 refugees, and that he was known throughout Marseille as the "One-Man Committee." Every one spoke of him with great respect.

And so Madame Rathenau's letter bore fruit. The first German to murder a Jew because of his race had also become the first to try to atone for his crime.

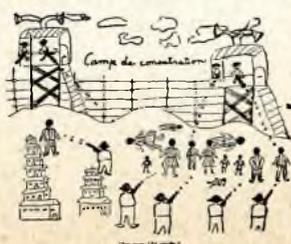
G. W. HERALD

(Translated from "Masses"; Paris, Jan. 25, 1946. Originally printed in the Sept., 1945, issue of the "Judische Wochenschau," Argentina.)

politics

May, 1946

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PERIODICALS

"EUROPE DEBATES NATIONALIZATION,"
by Barbara Ward. *Foreign Affairs Quarterly*,
Fall, 1946.

"SWEDEN, NOT RUSSIA, IS MODEL FOR
EUROPEAN NATIONALIZATION." *World
Report*, December 24, 1946.

These articles discuss the most significant economic tendency in contemporary Europe: the large-scale nationalization of the decisive means of production. The article by Miss Ward, assistant editor of the London *Economist*, is an ambitious theoretical attempt while the dispatch in *World Report* is a factual summary.

Traditionally, socialists expected that nationalization would be one of the immediate results of a proletarian revolution, and that it could come about, except in isolated instances, in no other way; but the fact is that there has been an impressive degree of nationalization of European industry even though the socialist revolution is not yet here.

The most extensive nationalization has taken place in eastern Europe. In the countries under Stalinist Russia's domination—Yugoslavia, Poland, Bulgaria, Rumania and Czechoslovakia—whatever heavy industry exists has largely been nationalized. Czechoslovakia, the only one of these nations except Poland which has a significant industrial plant, has nationalized 2,200 enterprises employing 60 per cent of the country's industrial workers. Yet four fifths of all manufacturing concerns remain in private hands and only 20 per cent of the working population is employed by the state—so dominant in the economy is small scale manufacture and agriculture. Even more extreme proportions hold for the other countries. In Poland between 40 and 50 per cent of the country's industrial workers are employed by the state, but they only constitute 10 per cent of the total working force.

In eastern Germany, the mines and most heavy industries have been nationalized, and in the western zone, the British have just announced the nationalization of most Ruhr industries. In France, mining, public utilities, civil aviation, most of the banks, the Renault and Berliet auto companies, and the Gnome and Rhone aircraft works have been nationalized. Since railroads, telegraph, air lines, matches and tobacco were nationalized before the war the total now stands at 18 per cent of France's industrial workers and 23 per cent of her industrial output nationalized. The tendency has been similar in England.

This is not the usual "normal" situation in which a capitalist state salvages a run-down or too risky industry in order either to help the rest of private industry or to construct a war economy. Nor can this tendency be ascribed exclusively to Russian domination, for it had already made considerable headway before Stalin's entry into Eastern Europe. We are dealing with a new socio-economic development, but one which has its roots in the general tendencies of capitalist economy.

Ward traces the nationalization policy to its origins in the intervention by the state in those countries where capitalism was tardy in its development and feudal remnants persisted; Bismark, for instance, nationalized railways in the 1870's and 1880's. Here Ward strikes at a highly significant fact. Nationalization has usually been most prevalent in economically backward nations where the impulses of an expanding capi-

talist economy were absent. In Czarist Russia, railways, mining, and steel were nationalized. When two other backward European nations, Poland and Turkey, tried to acquire greater military power, they also resorted to large-scale state ownership of basic industries. Nationalization, then, was not characteristic of capitalism at its apex or in its most classically developed manifestations (England, U. S.) but was rather prevalent in semi-capitalist economies striving to make a late entrance on the international market. In such countries, the state took over in instances where weak industries could not compete with the powerful rivals of the major capitalist nations. Now, however, a point is being reached in the descent of certain European capitalist economies which is roughly parallel to that of the backward countries in the early part of the century.

As Ward points out, the reason for the nationalization of the coal mines in England is their technological backwardness. Without modernization, the industry is doomed in the world market; and since the private owners cannot effect modernization, there is no alternative except state ownership—with interest-bearing state bonds as compensation—a more certain source of profit, incidentally, than private corporate stocks.

If, then, we chart the development of capitalist society as roughly a parabola, some of those underprivileged nations tardy in their initial ascent resorted to nationalization, while those nations which now reach a parallel point on the economic descent are also forced to resort to nationalization. The more rotten-ripe capitalist society becomes for lack of a socialist substitute, the more likely does an accelerated tendency towards nationalization become.

In more specific sociological terms, the nationalization tendency in Europe is the result of a social chaos unprecedented in recent history. A political expression of this was the attitude of the European resistance which saw in the private capitalists collaborators with the Nazis; and "if according to Proudhon, *la propriété c'est le vol*, according to the resisters, *la propriété c'est la collaboration*." The Nazis driven out, the native bourgeoisie either murdered by the Nazis or tainted with collaborationism, the socialist revolution not forthcoming—what was left for the teetering European states but nationalization, no matter how keen their loyalty to capitalism? This, writes Ward, "represents a general feeling that, so appalling is the destruction and dislocations caused by the war, only vigorous state intervention can revive the national economy." Only in the United States, most powerful and vigorous of capitalist nations, has there been no sign of a movement towards nationalization.

The above tentative and admittedly incomplete observations on the nationalization tendency are suggested by Ward's

absorbing article, though they are not explicitly found there. Her approach is rather in terms of Keynesian economic theory, which sees two conflicting tendencies in unplanned capitalist economy. "One is a tendency for the investment of capital in heavy industry to be cyclical because the demand for the most important products of heavy industry—capital goods—is not continually self-renewing as is the demand for consumers' goods. The other is the tendency of established industry to become increasingly rigid and stagnant, 'enterprise' taking the form of protecting existing markets and building up monopolies, rather than of experimenting in new demands and creating new capital." The consequences are that the first tendency results in permanent instability and the second in shrinking capital development. The Keynesian analysis—which up to this point is of course not unique; its distinctive features are primarily its alleviatory proposals—sees depressions beginning with unemployment in capital goods industries. How the tendency towards state intervention and in extreme instances outright nationalization follows from this analysis is not difficult to see.

Aside from data, the most valuable aspect of the Ward article is its examination of nationalization in Keynesian terms. But, perhaps because the question is not central to the Keynesians as it is to socialists, Ward does not inquire into the problem of the nature of current European economy. Is capitalism dead in Europe? In the opinion of this writer, capitalism still persists in most of Western and Central Europe, that is in those countries where Russian domination is not decisive. In a nation like Yugoslavia, it seems that the totalitarian collectivism of Russia has pretty much established dominance. What is more important, however, than such assignments of labels is the fact that the nationalization tendency has become so considerable that it at least provokes this suggestion: unless (a) a socialist revolution reverses the entire downward socio-economic trend of Europe, which is at present unlikely and unless (b) U. S. intervention in European economy is large-scale, decisive and backed by arms; then European capitalism may degenerate into a stultified and bureaucratized non-capitalist economy which will have striking social and moral points of similarity with capitalism and be akin to Stalinism. Such a development has not yet occurred, and there are strong counter-forces impeding it. But it is at least a possible realization of what Marx meant by *barbarism*, the alternative he suggested if socialism did not arrive.

"OPERA: MUSIC FOR THE MASSES," by Kurt List. *Commentary*, November 1946.

This reviewer knows very little about opera, which should be enough to disqualify him from discussing List's article—except that it raises questions on which I do feel competent. Kurt List is certainly one of the handful of music critics who eschews the appalling rhetorical fluff which seems to be the stock in trade of most music critics. It is therefore disturbing to note that he succumbs to two critical fallacies, one general to a whole tradition, the other specific to the magazine in which he writes:

(1) List traces the rise of opera contemporaneously with the rise of the bourgeoisie: "the dramatic plot . . . permitted the expression of ideas by which the bourgeoisie justified and ennobled itself . . . Opera in the hands of the burghers had become the vehicle of free and modern thought . . ." This kind of criticism is roughly in the Marxist tradition, or at least the sociological tradition. It increasingly seems to this reviewer a most limited critical method and an almost irresistible temptation to over-simplification. Even if the sociological cor-

Just arrived from England:

"NOW" No. 6

George Orwell: How the Poor Die

Camillo Berneri: Nietzsche as anti-Nietzsche

John Hewetson: Beethoven and Liberty

George Woodcock: Graham Greene

Also poems, paintings, reviews, reportage.

"Now" is a cultural magazine, anarchist in political tendency. It is edited by George Woodcock. Order your copy direct from "Politics". 60c postpaid.

relation is valid, even if it helps explain the *origin* of a work of art, or rather the milieu in which it was created, how important a datum is that? Marxism, in skillful hands, is a powerful weapon of historical analysis: it establishes a line of order, of sequence and hierarchy in the historical maze; that is, it states propositions about events which help us to understand them and to control future events. But the purpose of art is not to state propositions; and ordered simplicity, though a virtue in science or history, is not necessarily a virtue in literature or music or in their criticism. Historical analysis is a method of *reduction*: the statement that such and such events really mean such and such. But why should literary or musical criticism be a method of reduction? The sociological approach to art, however, almost always—whatever the disclaimers of its practitioners—ends up as a reduction, which is why it so often clarifies things *about* literature or art but so seldom illuminates their specific manifestations.

(2) List's article begins with a sociological analysis of opera but quickly is derailed into a discussion of the role of Jewish composers and librettists. This tendency seems general in *Commentary*, a magazine of many virtues but given to the unwarranted attempt to discover a "Jewish angle" in everything. Now there ARE Jewish angles, and there is probably a Jewish angle even in opera; but such a discussion should not pass for a discussion of opera. A magazine like *Commentary*, even though its main interest is—legitimately—Jewish affairs, should not feel the need to drag in Jewishness by the tail the way certain socialist papers "class angle" everything they discuss.

THEODORE DRYDEN

HENRY WALLACE
by Dwight Macdonald

This study of the career, personality and political ideas of America's current No. 1 progressive leader, originally scheduled for the present issue, has had to be postponed because of the urgent necessity of presenting the documents in "The German Catastrophe." It will definitely appear in the next issue, however.

EVERY CLOUD HAS A GOLD LINING

Bank vaults at the site of the atomic bomb impact in Hiroshima survived the blast . . . "In visiting the remains of Hiroshima," writes an Army Lieutenant, "I found in one of the three structures still standing four large vaults built by the Mosler Safe Co. of Hamilton, O. They were entirely intact." . . . These vaults at Hiroshima were above ground level, which made them especially vulnerable to destruction. The storage vaults at Fort Knox, Ky., holding more than \$20 billion in gold, are below ground level.

—"The American Banker," July 13, 1946.

THE PROGRESSIVE MIND (2)

Only the existence of an intelligent planned economy makes it possible for the returning Russian soldier to face the future with more confidence than the ex-G.I. of capitalist America. The rigid dictatorship of the State ensures the suppression of any popular demands which may retard or interfere with long-term planning or military objectives.

—Editorial in *Tribune* (London), Sept. 27.

WHY ONE GETS DISCOURAGED (CONT'D.)

Mme. Agnes' imagination was stimulated by the Bikini experiments. She says that all her trimming is done in bursts and so it is. Bursts of feathers are posed on the front of snug hats . . . "Bikini" is of pale grey felt trimmed with a vaporous smoke-like splash of goose feathers.

—Fashion note from Paris, in *N. Y. Times*, Aug. 26.

THE INTELLIGENCE OFFICE

An Appeal for Action

(Editor's Note: We bring the following letter to the attention of our readers and hope that those who agree with its objective will join in the action.)

Dear Friend:

One of the first acts of the new Congress which convenes in January will be to consider the extension of Selective Service or the introduction of legislation for permanent peacetime conscription. This will be an integral part of a consistent pattern of competitive power developing throughout the world, including the maintenance of huge military machines, the development of atomic and biological weapons, the scramble for colonies and raw materials. It will lead by its own logic to the final world war and the extinction of the human race.

This pattern must not be allowed to develop further. We who recognize the drift toward World War III have the responsibility to take action individually and collectively to try to stop it. We have it within our power to attack one major aspect of this problem—conscription.

Therefore we the undersigned propose to break with conscription now. In January we shall get rid of our draft credentials publicly, by returning them to the President, accompanied by a letter of explanation, or disposing of them in open demonstrations. We hope to see demonstrations organized in our local communities to dramatize the importance of this event. Those of us who have no draft cards, but who wish to have a part in the project, will write a letter to the President, expressing our solidarity and agreement with this action. We understand fully that this is serious, that we are undertaking a program of civil disobedience. But when our country is competing with the rest of the world in the manufacture of weapons of absolute destruction, then, as Thoreau put it, "It is not too soon for an honest man to rebel."

The more who participate in this action, the more effective it will be. If you are ready to break with conscription, if you believe there must never be another war, and want to say so dramatically and fervently, sign with us, and thus indicate your intent to join this action.

(Signed)

- | | |
|-------------------|-----------------------|
| Bent Andresen | Scott Nearing |
| Ernest R. Bromley | Clarence T. R. Nelson |
| Benjamin DeCou | Frank Olmstead |
| David Dellinger | George Reeves |
| Julius Eichel | Edward C. M. Richards |
| Donald Harrington | Bayard Rustin |
| George M. Houser | Paul Schilpp |
| Dwight Macdonald | John M. Swomley |
| Milton Mayer | Ralph Templin |
| A. J. Muste | Theodore D. Walser |

Note: Send your name, address and comments to George M. Houser, 2929 Broadway, New York 25, N. Y. Contributions are urgently needed to defray the cost of printing and mailing. Upon receipt of your letter, further details will be sent you as to date and nature of demonstrations.

Is the Government Holy?

Sir:

Judge T. Alan Goldsborough's ruling that the U. S. government, like the king of England, has absolute sovereignty,

emphasizes the urgency of destroying the government-is-holy myth.

Quoting from the Dollar Savings Bank decision which said: "The rule thus settled respecting the British crown (that the king of England is not bound by any act of parliament) is equally applicable to this government," Judge Goldsborough concluded by quoting Black on Interpretation of Laws: "Generally speaking, therefore, the state is not bound by provisions of any statute."

The justification in so-called democracies for the government-is-holy myth—that the government is the people—was not omitted by Judge Goldsborough. He took the position that in the case against the miners the government represented "society" trying to protect itself against a "public calamity."

Actually the government in the case against the miners was not something abstract such as "society" or "the people." It was a group of reactionary government officials running the coal mines for the operators. It was Clark Clifford, labor-hating attorney who advised President Truman on his army strikebreaking proposal in last spring's railroad strike. It was J. H. Krug and Captain H. N. Collison and George Allen.

In denying a motion to dismiss contempt charges against John L. Lewis and the United Mine Workers, Judge Goldsborough said: "It is notorious that around, I guess, from 1890 on, the federal courts were used by powerful interests for the purpose of defeating attempts on the part of labor to improve their welfare, increase their wages, improve their living conditions, and to help themselves in various ways."

In other words it is deplorable for "powerful interests" to use the federal courts for union-busting. But it is OK for the federal government (operating the mines for the "powerful interests") to use the federal courts for union-busting, because the government is sovereign and can do no wrong.

NEW YORK CITY

JAMES PECK

As One Zombie to Another

Sir:

Having been a reader of *POLITICS* for more than a year, I should like to tell you why I am not renewing my subscription.

I am forced to consider the condition of the world today to be the result of man's past history, which is predicated upon his conceptions and his consequent activities. Of these conceptions the most important is the idea that natural resources can be acquired and owned by private individuals. Next in importance, is the idea that certain individuals have some exceptional quality which renders them fit to govern. Third, is the idea that this universe was created by some intelligent being who has placed his seal of approval upon the first and second ideas. Needless to say, these three ideas are woven into the constitution of the United States.

Inasmuch as this third idea is the corner-stone of Christian Capitalism, its destruction must be the primary objective of any and all who would remove modern man from the fool's paradise created out of the first two ideas.

You stand in the position of defending these religious Zombies whose brains are beclouded with the opium of religion and you welcome them in to help build a better world, whereas, I maintain that anyone who tolerates the idea of God is much too stupid and ignorant to be of any assistance.

You may grow wealthy from the sale of your magazine but you will not contribute to the education of humanity along the line of scientific information which is so essential if we are to extricate ourselves from the horrors of Monopoly Capitalism with its political superstructure of Fascist Totalitarianism which at present has the whole world in its tentacles.

MINNEAPOLIS, MINN.

A SCIENTIFIC MATERIALIST

—I'm pleased to find at least one reader who does not have a good reason for not renewing his subscription.—DM

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FRENCH POLITICAL WRITING. A special issue, to be edited by Lionel Abel. It will contain material by Raymond Aron, Simone de Beauvoir, Albert Camus, André Malraux, David Rousset, Jean Paul, Sartre and others.

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What Was Behind the Coal Strike—Ham Acting or Ham? (a discussion between Peter Meyer and Dwight Macdonald)

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