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The Breeding Ground of Communism

Why 'Preventive' War Would Defeat the Cause of Freedom

By FRANCIS NEILSON

The Crusade Against Communism

THERE IS NO POLITICAL or social reason why any intelligent man should blink the fact that America and, perhaps, Western Europe are engaged in a crusade to overcome what is called communism. Therein lies a danger which may threaten to destroy that objective. A Third World War, we should know by now, cannot possibly be waged by a free community. If the power to be conquered is completely totalitarian, the power that opposes it must be totalitarian too. The conduct of World War II should be sufficient lesson for us to realize, before we enter upon another, that the strict disciplines of the enemy, exercised for many years before the conflict took place, brought speedy results, to the discomfiture of the democracies.

Therefore, it behooves us to ask ourselves whether piecemeal preparations for a third war will save us from the immense power of our enemy. It may seem strange to the ordinary man that the free and easy methods of the democracies in days of peace should be sacrificed before war is declared, and that the United States and Great Britain should institute, even in a cold war, disciplines that are different from those of Soviet Russia only in the label it is convenient for us to put upon them.

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Already serious thinkers are reminding us of the suffering we have had to endure for over thirty years. It is well that this should be pointed out, but whether it will have any effect on politicians or their electorates is a matter that cannot be determined. There is no Gallup poll that might help us to ascertain the thought of the people on this subject. Moreover, it must be conceded that public opinion today is made, to a great extent, by the last message broadcast over the radio.

There seems to be a feeling abroad that the majority do not look for a Third World War. We may have a few officials and laymen who think that the best way out of the mess is to have what is called "a preventive war," but this is an idea that is quite foreign to the mass of people. However, it is an extremely dangerous view to hold, particularly when it is advocated by a prominent member of a cabinet.

The Political Aspects of War

THERE ARE FACTORS in the present phase of affairs which should be pondered deeply before we commit ourselves to an ideological crusade in which we should have to adopt the strict disciplines of the enemy. One factor is the political significance of war as an industry. He would be a short-sighted man who was blind to the fact that the rumors of war alone are almost sufficient to accelerate the wheels of industry and to mop up the remnants of the unemployed. The draft, mobilization, and training of men for the various fighting services demand more and more munitions. Industry is speeded up to fill the maw of the devouring monster, war.

Another factor is the political situation of the parties: the call to arms neutralizes the opposition forces, and draws everyone into the net of political patriotism, in favor of the ruling administration. This means that the dividing line between political democracy and communism, so thinly drawn by particularists, vanishes when Congress or Parliament determines the hour for the start of the conflict.

The most precious thing that remains for us to cherish in our system of government is the power of the electorate to petition legislators to make reforms for its benefit. But this can only be exercised during a period of peace. Once the declaration to fight has been made, there is no opportunity whatever to ameliorate the sufferings that are now endured, even in the freest political democracy that can be imagined. Under totalitarian disciplines, which would have to be adopted, one thing and one thing only would be of importance, and that would be the general

exertion to wage the war to a successful military issue. "Victory!" would be the insistent slogan all round the clock, and those who would attempt to put forward claims that Congress should deal with reforms long held in abeyance would be looked upon as shirkers or defeatists. It was so during the First World War and the Second, and such would be the case in a Third World War. This precious power of the electors would disappear, with no hope of its being regained.

There is still another matter to be considered, and that is the objective of such a conflict. It is held by many that, if it begins, it will be for the purpose of protecting ourselves from communism of the Soviet brand. Whether this be a reasonable excuse for bringing more suffering upon the world or not must be left to the intelligence of those who are asked to fight and support the forces. For twenty years after the Treaty of Versailles, communism was as firm a doctrine in Russia as it is now. But no one suggested that it was a danger to democracy. At least, no one thought of committing any nation to an ideological crusade against it.

It may be pointed out that in the days of Napoleon Bonaparte, republicanism was regarded with much of the same horror as communism is today. Yet, after the ravages of Europe—long after Napoleon was sent to St. Helena—republicanism had not been killed in France. Before Pitt began his crusade against Napoleon, a form of republicanism in the American colonies was looked upon with loathing by George III and his ministers. And after all the fighting, republicanism lived on, and today any man who desires may read the Declaration of Independence and learn what it was all about.

The Failure of War Aims

SURELY THESE EXAMPLES show that you cannot shoot holes into an idea. Whether it be right or wrong is not the chief question, but it does mean that untold suffering was brought to the people and that the crusades failed. The objectives of makers of war are seldom reached. World War II began for the purpose of protecting the sovereignty of Poland against Hitler's assault. But very soon after Poland was overthrown, other aims had to be invented.

After six years of terrible suffering, it was admitted that the only objective that had been gained was a military victory, which placed Stalin so far west in Europe that he has ever since been a menace to the democracies. As for the defeat of dangerous ideologies, the war settled nothing. Indeed, it made matters worse for the politicians of the west, and now we are reaping the deadly fruits of their blunders and those of their unen-

lightened supporters. Our lot during the phase of the cold war has been bad enough.

The destruction to life and property in Europe, to say nothing of what it was in the rest of the world, was so enormous that the expenditure reached the amazing figure of a trillion and many billions of dollars. Today there are sad reports of homeless people suffering in lands to which we promised to bring peace and happiness. We are now informed that northern Africa, from Casablanca to the Nile, is seething with discontent, and that the distress of many of the natives is woeful in the extreme.

It may be asked what we have accomplished, when we are called upon to defray the cost of rehabilitating the peoples of countries that fought with us in the crusade of the Second World War. Surely, there is no more effective way of turning hungry men's minds to such a doctrine as communism than a devastating war. War gave Lenin and Trotsky the opportunity to enter Russia and overthrow the Czarist regime. It also gave the opportunity to French communists to gather strength in their country.

But the doctrine of the Soviets was rife in many countries before Neville Chamberlain gave the pledge of support of arms to Poland in March, 1939. War enlarges the field for the dissemination of the ideas of communism. The doctrine of the Kremlin feeds upon suffering, material stint, "the slings and arrows of outrageous fortune" that hit the impoverished day by day and make the hope of a better morrow a thing of gloom.

Debating the Doctrine of Communism

WHAT, THEN, MIGHT BE DONE to protect the millions from the virus we all dread? Is it not a better way to rid ourselves of this menace by answering doctrine with doctrine? Have we not learned that it is not sufficient to tell the people what Stalin's communism is in practice—an enslavement of the workers, a restriction of thought, and a deprivation of all spiritual attributes—in short, a slave system under the will of a bureau?

The intelligent workingman of a generation ago desired a clearer idea of what communism really is in theory than his fellow of today demands of our instructors. When discussions were held at the Cooper Union in New York over fifty years ago, the practice of debating doctrine against doctrine brought enlightenment to the audiences that attended the meetings. And that was at a time when there was little or no danger of communists overturning the government of the United States and setting up a regime in Washington.

The proposals and conceptions of communism were then analyzed by some of the shrewdest thinkers who lived in New York. And so convincing were the method and clarity of the exposition that the communists made little or no progress. If some of those thinkers were here today, they would be amazed to know that people indulge in such nonsense as to believe that theoretical communism is practiced in Soviet Russia.

It is difficult to understand the reasons for the fear of Soviet communism (or what goes by that name) which has been implanted in the minds of our political mentors. There is no earthly chance of Russians in Moscow changing our system of government. If it is to be done, it will be effected by the so-called communists in the United States.

Lenin, in "State and Revolution," says:

The essence of revolution is not that a new class shall govern by means of the old governmental machinery, but that it shall smash up this machinery and govern by means of a new machine. This is a fundamental idea of Marxism.

This seems to me to be clear enough. If the machinery of our government is to be smashed, it will be done by the electorate of the United States. No one knew that better than Lenin himself, for revolutions spring out of the dire distress of the people in the State to which they belong. Therefore, the first step that should be taken to avoid such a catastrophe is to enlighten the people, so that they may force their legislators to redress their grievances.

Two years after the "Communist Manifesto" was published there appeared in France a pamphlet called "The Law." It was written by Frederic Bastiat, an economist and a deputy to the legislative assembly. A version of this famous work has recently been published by the Foundation for Economic Education. Every member of a legislative body in this country should get a copy of this booklet. Bastiat tells us that "The present-day delusion is an attempt to enrich everyone at the expense of everyone else; to make plunder universal under the pretense of organizing it." (p. 21)

He then goes on to show the labyrinths of the plunder system of government, and, strangely enough, they are those that we know only too well here in the United States. For he points out that tariffs, subsidies, progressive taxation, guaranteed jobs, minimum wages, the "right" to relief, and many other such fiscal by-ways into the pockets of the producer are all part of legal plunder and constitute socialism.

Bastiat, having made good his case against the *Plunderbund* of govern-

ment called upon the people to refute the pernicious doctrine of Marx and Engels. He said:

Now, since under this definition socialism is a body of doctrine, what attack can be made against it other than a war of doctrine? If you find this socialistic doctrine to be false, absurd, and evil, then refute it. And the more false, the more absurd, and the more evil it is, the easier it will be to refute. Above all, if you wish to be strong, begin by rooting out every particle of socialism that may have crept into your legislation. This will be no light task. (p. 22)

Refute it! That is what we have to do. It was difficult one hundred years ago, notwithstanding men like Bastiat in France, in Germany, and in England. Today it is easy. The only reason it is not done is that men are lazy, and will not take the trouble to study the question. Is it necessary to fight, to try to shoot holes into the idea? The notion is preposterous. Montalembert was accused of desiring to fight socialism by the use of brute force. What was his reply? "The war that we must fight against socialism must be in harmony with law, honor, and justice."

What is required today is enlightenment. Our legislators seem to be no better informed than the people themselves. Neither from pulpit nor from rostrum has a clear statement been presented of what the ideologies are that they hear so much about. Our libraries contain hundreds of volumes by some of the world's keenest thinkers on socialism and communism. It may be doubted whether any well-known book of the past two centuries has been submitted to such closely reasoned analysis as "Das Kapital." And, yet, we have instructors in our institutions of learning who reveal in their writings that they are ignorant of such works. It is not necessary to mention the authors of French and German volumes who have thoroughly dissected Marx's theory of surplus value and labor time. Two books which might be easily obtained in a well-ordered library are Professor Robert Flint's "Socialism" and Max Hirsch's "Democracy Versus Socialism." In them the intelligent reader will find a complete reply to Marx.

But socialists themselves have written many illuminating works that expose the fallacies of the authors of "The Communist Manifesto" and "Das Kapital." These books should now engage the attention of all people who dread a Third World War, for they cover all the vexed questions that have arisen since Marx wrote his chief work.

Fifty years ago the thoroughgoing communist accepted the following statement of the proposals and conceptions of socialism and communism: the State shall control all the means of production, distribution and ex-

change, *for the equal benefit of all*; and the State shall have power over persons, their faculties, and possessions. This was the theory accepted by State socialists and communists, who scorned to enter the political arena. The impossibility of putting such a scheme into practice did not concern them very much, for they were specifically interested in announcing an idea in opposition to the theories of Proudhon and Bakunin, the anarchists. No such theory has been put into practice in any country. Indeed, Stalinism is so far divorced from the original idea of Marx and Engels that it is impossible to understand how anything that is done in Russia can bear the label of communism.

It might be asked how any sensible man could imagine that the proposals and conceptions of socialism, as stated by Max Hirsch and Robert Flint, could be put into practice, once the omnipotent, bureaucratic State was set up. The impossibility of distributing the products of labor, *for the equal benefit of all*, turns the idea into an utter absurdity.

What goes by the name of communism today is nothing more or less than bureaucratic control of the workers. They are slaves of the State, and Franz Oppenheimer, in his work called "The State," proved conclusively that it (the State) "is the organization of the political means to exploit the economic means." Power over producers is the bureaucratic aim.

The fear of the power of Stalin and his associates to spread the doctrine of communism abroad is a recent one. Not so long ago he was a valuable ally, and no one seemed to be much afraid of the system of government he had inaugurated. In this war against ideology, it also should not be forgotten that years before the names of Lenin, Trotsky, and Stalin became current in the press, the doctrines of communism and socialism were preached freely in this country as well as in Great Britain. For at least ten years before the First World War this writer was debating these questions.

As recent, in this generation, as the beginning of the Roosevelt regime, there were coteries in our institutions of learning that advocated a system similar to the one practiced in Russia. Many of our intelligentsia then declared that they were opposed to the capitalistic system and held strong views as to the necessity of inculcating students with the ideas of Fabianism, as expressed by the late Harold Laski. There were, in our midst, hot gossellers of the creed of socialism of sufficient influence to make an impression upon young minds, before anyone thought of starting a violent crusade against Soviet Russia.

All the nostrums of so-called reform, that flutter about in the minds of politicians, are tainted with the desire to perpetuate the system of taxation of wealth, so long as the people will permit them to do so. They will promise reform of it, but even the sincerest finds, once he becomes a member of a legislature, he is hedged about by a thousand and one other claims that crowd in upon his desire for the lifting of burdens. He becomes a victim of the system, and he must either lend himself to the surge of the political tide or resign. How many do so, when they know that there is not the slightest chance of positive reform being brought to the notice of Congress or Parliament? The demands for expenditure on the great services, as sops and doles, are so vast that reform of the system of the taxation of wealth seems an impossible goal to be reached.

In all this *mêlée*, we overlook many features that might be lost entirely if a Third World War took place. We should guard closely the political and social opportunities that have not yet been filched from us.

War and the Seeds of Socialism

THE HISTORY OF THE PAST 150 years reveals as clearly as possible the fact that there is no surer way of preparing the field for the seeds of socialistic notions than war. The condition of Europe, from the time of Waterloo to the publication of "The Communist Manifesto"—a full generation—had not recovered from the ravages of the Napoleonic Wars. The year 1848 was one of revolutions and riots in the principal countries of Europe. Communist societies sprang up in all the chief cities. Wherever there was concentrated poverty, there were missionaries who preached the creed of socialism. The literature of the period, from the year 1848 to the outbreak of the Franco-German War, contains hundreds of pages of accounts of outbreaks of disorder, occasioned by the discontent of the people.

After the failure of Louis Blanc's national workshops in Paris, Victor Hugo declared them to have proved a fatal experiment, and he wrote:

. . . The wealthy idler we already know; you have created a person a hundred times more dangerous both to himself and to others—the *pauper* idler. At this very moment England sits smiling by the side of the abyss into which France is falling. (Quoted in C. H. Leibbrand, "This Age of Ours," London, 1896, p. 277.)

During the siege of Paris, the communists turned loose, and the streets ran with blood. Egon Friedell, in "A Cultural History of the Modern Age," tells in brief the story of the Commune in 1870:

. . . Only after two months' fighting did MacMahon succeed in entering

the city at the head of regular troops. The "bloody week," in which he suppressed the insurrection in a savage war of barricades, was the most ghastly butchery of civilians in modern history. It was just at this moment that the Chinese embassy arrived in Paris. Excuses were offered, but the head of the mission replied: "No need for apology. You are young, you Occidentals, you have practically no history. It is always thus: siege and commune, that is the normal history of mankind." (Vol. III, p. 283)

So it goes. War brings discontent and disunion. People made desolate by the loss of their dear ones, the destruction of their property, and the violation of their homes, turn to any creed they think will alleviate their distress. Why there should be any doubt about this, no one pretends to say. The literature on the subject is vast, and most of it can be found in the large public libraries. A work that might help our instructors to enlighten us is "This Age of Ours," published in 1895. The writer of this article has an autographed copy from its author, Dr. Charles Hermann Leibbrand, who was a journalist in Manchester. Many well-known personages of the period, such as Lecky, Herbert Spencer, the Duke of Argyll, John Tyndall, and Professor Froude, read it and corresponded with the author about his views.

It contains a series of essays on the most significant political problems of that time, and in looking at its pages today (notwithstanding its fallacies, exaggerations, and dogmatism), one realizes that a story runs through it all that might be read with intellectual benefit by our mentors. Leibbrand was something of a prophet, but I doubt very much that he would admit, if he were here now, that he ever imagined the communism of which he wrote would assume such a shape as it has taken on and become the dreaded menace of all free-thinking people.

Communism (or socialism) is not a doctrine that has sprung from the minds of the impoverished. They have never been makers of creeds. From the earliest times of discontent and revolt, they have been the prey of those who desire political change and bureaucratic power. Only comparatively few in any period of which we have record have formulated socialistic doctrines or communistic creeds. Literary men have indulged in this recreation and have left us many of their works. The writers in this country who have pursued this avocation are familiar, and it is not necessary to name them. Looking back over my life in America, which extends now to sixty-five years, I cannot remember reading a single book on socialism or communism that was written by an impoverished workingman.

Most of the writing done in England, during a like period, came from the pens of well-known authors—Sidney Webb, George Bernard Shaw, H. G. Wells, and several others who “never wielded a pick or an ax nor pushed mortar in a wheelbarrow.” Their hands are not horny. Ink stains were the only blemish that industry made upon them. Moreover, it is doubtful whether their books on these subjects were read by the people the authors thought should be led into a collectivist Elysium. During my debates in England with socialists and social democrats, I seldom heard of a workingman who read the essays of the Fabian literati. Therefore it cannot be said that knowledge of these creeds is possessed by the mass of workers. It is discontent, not knowledge of these doctrines, that is the chief cause of the revolt of the masses.

Looking over the past century and a half, it is a mighty problem to try to explain how intelligent people today can ignore the fact that war is a breeding ground of communism. Think of what happened in all European countries after the First World War! The imagination need not be overwrought to ascertain the change of ideas in nearly all political parties after the Treaty of Versailles. The Labor Party in Great Britain lost its Radical-Liberal significance and became a Fabian-Socialistic one. We know what happened in Germany and how the gospel of Lenin was changed when Stalin became dictator at the Kremlin.

After the Second World War, a socialist government was elected in Great Britain. If history does not repeat itself, war after war, it most assuredly takes on similar features. It is the same thing under perhaps a different name, but the cause of the change is discontent and disunion. The aim of the preacher against the system that makes for war never varies, and the choice of audience to whom he preaches his panacea is unalterable.

“Sorrow and Suffering and Pain”

IT IS WELL to be reminded of the dangers inherent in our war policies. Scarcely a day passes when we notice some prominent personage of British or of European origin who warns us to take heed while we have time and opportunity to deal with politicians. Bertrand (Lord) Russell, in an article in *The New York Times Magazine*, September 3, 1950, tells us:

There is only too much reason to fear that Western civilization, if not the whole world, is likely in the near future to go through a period of immense sorrow and suffering and pain—a period during which, if we are not careful to remember them, the things that we are attempting to preserve may be forgotten in bitterness and poverty and disorder. . . .

Russell goes straight to the point—"immense sorrow and suffering and pain" are the penalties of strife. But do our legislatures realize it? Do they know that in fighting communism with deadly weapons, they are, in all likelihood, plowing the field in which the nostrums of socialism and communism will take root? Do the churches know what "immense sorrow and suffering and pain" have done in the past to turn men away from religion? George Savile, the Marquis of Halifax, as far back as the days of William of Orange, said: "Religion is the foundation of Government; without it man is an abandoned creature, one of the worst beasts Nature has produced."

Russell is imbued with "a new hope for mankind." He looks for it in the advancement of science turned to peaceful pursuits, and tells us:

The hope cannot be realized unless the causes of present evils are understood. But it is the hope that needs to be emphasized. Modern man is master of his fate. What he suffers he suffers because he is stupid or wicked, not because it is nature's decree. Happiness is his if he will adopt the means that lie ready to his hands.

Many such expressions could be quoted, but alas, few are to be found in the works recently published by our authors. Professor J. W. Gough of Oriel College, Oxford, who has written a very interesting work, "John Locke's Political Philosophy" (Oxford, 1950), is also conscious of the dangers that we run, and in dealing with the principles of the British Constitution, he advises his countrymen to respect them instead of abandoning them:

Otherwise, although we may profess to eschew totalitarianism, we may, when it is too late, have cause to regret the disappearance of the safeguards against arbitrary power which our ancestors regarded as one of their chief blessings. (p. 119)

Our legislators cannot have it both ways. They cannot destroy communism by fighting those who have adopted it as a political system without creating conditions that will give it a new birth. Belligerent crusades have ever failed to reach their objective. The crusades of Godefroy de Bouillon and Richard I ended disastrously. Dr. Ernest Barker, the historian, tells us: "The crusades may be written down as a failure. They ended not in the occupation of the east by the Christian west, but in the conquest of the west by the Mohammedan east."

This article may have been written in vain. It may be too late to advise another way of dealing with the menace. War is the only subject that precludes the possibility of debate, with the aim of mutual under-

standing. In all channels of man's thought and activity, the most difficult problems can be resolved by the opposing disputants meeting face to face. It is possible, in such crises, for an arbitrator to assist in bringing the parties to agreement.

In war this is not so. The settlement of the dispute is left to the politicians, and the record of their work, so far, deprives us of any hope for the future. In this respect, it is only necessary to refer to the blunders that were made at Versailles and at Potsdam. These have been condemned by the shrewdest minds who have examined them. Small wonder Lord Russell is alarmed! There might be a gleam of hope if the churches would perform the duties incumbent upon them and begin to enlighten their congregations on the real issue, making them understand the advice of Ecclesiastes: "Wisdom is better than weapons of war."

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Economic Development in Japan

FOREIGN INVESTMENT in Japan has been increasing, according to Japanese government sources in Tokyo. Up to May 31, 1950, 315 investments totalling 600,000,000 to 700,000,000 yen were recorded. Laws governing foreign capital investment went into effect the following June. Since then a series of deals have been made between foreign investors and Japanese firms, at the rate of almost one a day. In most cases the deals revolved around the introduction or importation of modern techniques into Japanese industry. Mainly these have taken the form of transferring patents on electrical appliances, plastics and marine engines.

Four reasons are cited for the increase of foreign investments in Japan. One is the encouragement of the process by the United States government. Another is that concern about guarantees against risks has been dissipated. Still another is that special demands have stimulated associated Japanese industries, making them good objects for investment. The fourth, and perhaps the most important, is that the Japanese market has competed against the United States domestic market by offering a higher dividend rate.

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