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Schlesinger Predicts the Future of Socialism

SPEECH

OF

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OF CALIFORNIA

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Mr. ROUSSELOT. Mr. Speaker, in my research on the trend of socialism in the United States, I came across an interesting periodical called the Partisan Review, which contained a remarkable article in the issue dated May-June 1947.

The Partisan Review, while available to all readers, is actually read only by professional intellectual Socialists of all shades, from the out-and-out pro-Communist to the Fabian-Keynesian Socialist. It is just as much a trade magazine as the American Medical Journal or the Law Review. It is, like the Medical Journal and Law Review, boring beyond words to any outside of the profession it serves. Therefore the Partisan Review is almost unknown outside the professional leftist group and they use it to inform each other of their plans and projects.

The remarkable article I spoke of—the lead article in the issue of the Partisan Review, dated May-June 1947—was written by Arthur Schlesinger, Jr., former professor of history at Harvard, and now high in the councils of the Kennedy administration.

It is a blueprint of the plan for turning the people of the United States over to a monolithic Socialist-Fascist-Marxist type of tyranny. It was written in 1947. I urge everyone to read it. You will see how far this country has advanced under the guidance of such men as this former Harvard professor, and you can see how much further it will advance, if we do not guard ourselves against and become aware of the machinations of such people as Mr. Schlesinger and his prototypes.

The text of the article follows:

THE FUTURE OF SOCIALISM, III—THE PERSPECTIVE NOW

(By Arthur M. Schlesinger, Jr.)

The Soviet experience has put the century-old debate between capitalism and socialism in a useful new perspective. Before the First World War, the case against socialism was generally made in terms of efficiency, the case against capitalism in terms of morality: that is, socialism was conceded to be good in principle but not to work; capitalism was

conceded to work but not to be good in principle. After the Second War we see a reverse tendency a disposition to admit the inefficiency of capitalism and justify it as providing the margin on which liberty and democracy may subsist; a disposition to believe that the very efficiency of socialist management necessarily squeezes out freedom. After all which system has more successfully dehumanized the worker, fettered the working class, and extinguished personal and political liberty?

The very shift in polemics suggests that both arguments have indulged in what Whitehead has called the fallacy of misplaced concreteness—the error of mistaking abstractions for concrete realities. The fact probably is that a great many of the criticisms urged against the abstractions "capitalism" and "socialism" alike are actually the defects, not of a particular system of ownership, but of industrial organization and the postindustrial state whatever the system of ownership. Industry and government are the basic evils; they institutionalize the pride and the greed, the sadism and the masochism, the ecstasy in power and the ecstasy in submission, which are the abiding causes of the troubles of the world.

In this light anarchism becomes the only faith for a moral man. Organization is man's solution to his sense of guilt. The very fact of organization attenuates personal moral responsibility; and, as organization becomes more elaborate and comprehensive, it becomes increasingly the instrumentality through which moral man indulges his natural desire to commit immoral deeds. "A crime which would press heavily on the conscience of one man, becomes quite endurable when divided among many." The state is only the climax of secular organizations—that "semihuman tiger or ox, stalking over the earth," Thoreau called it, "with its heart taken out and the top of its brain shot away"—and the totalitarian state concentrates in itself all the evil of organization by annihilating all the gaps and rivalries which make for freedom in a more loosely organized society.

The Socialist state is thus worse than the capitalist state because it is more inclusive in its coverage and more unlimited in its power. Organization corrupts; total organization corrupts totally. The Socialist state justifies itself on the ground that the concentration of power is necessary to do good; but it has never solved the problem of how you insure that power bestowed to do good will not be employed to do harm, especially when you remove all obstacles to its exercise. Soviet socialism has the added disadvantage that it was born in violence. The emotions of revolution in an industrial age can no more be localized than the emotions of modern war itself. Violence breeds its special hatreds and aggressions, which twist the nor-

mal hatreds of society into new and ugly forms. The habit of violence is hard to abandon, especially when it has worked in the past. A revolutionary elite always has the wistful conviction, based on experience, that it is easier to dispose of opposition by firing squads than by arguments.

The trouble with anarchism is, not at all that it is wrong, but that it is irrelevant. It may have its values as a mystique, but it is nonsense as a way of meeting the explosive problems of an atomic age. Its overt expressions, such as conscientious objection in times of war, tend to be morally vulgar and intellectually contemptible. Industrial organization and the postindustrial state are here to stay. The problem is not how to escape them but how to master them—or, more probably, how to live with them.

IS DEMOCRATIC SOCIALISM POSSIBLE?

Neither communism, with its despotism, nor capitalism, with its instability, nor fascism, with its combination of the two, provide attractive solutions to the problem of how to live with modern industry and the modern state. Is there another possibility? Has non-Communist, libertarian socialism a future? Abstracting the question for a moment from current political actualities, one must answer that there is no inherent reason why democratic socialism should not be possible.

If socialism (i.e., the ownership by the state of all significant means of production) is to preserve democracy, it must be brought about step by step in a way which will not disrupt the fabric of custom, law, and mutual confidence upon which personal rights depend. That is, the transition must be piecemeal; it must be parliamentary; it must respect civil liberties and due process of law. Socialism by such means used to seem fantastic to the hard-eyed melodramatists of the Leninist persuasion; but even Stalin is reported to have told Harold Laski recently that it might be possible.

The classical argument against gradualism was that the capitalist ruling class would resort to violence rather than surrender its prerogatives. Here, as elsewhere, the Marxists enormously overestimated the political courage and will of the capitalists. In fact, in the countries where capitalism really triumphed, it has yielded with far better grace (that is, displayed far more cowardice) than the Marxist schema predicted. The British experience is illuminating in this respect, and the American experience not unconstructive. There is no sign in either nation that the capitalists are putting up a really determined fight. Liberal alarmists who feel that the clamor of a political campaign or the agitation of hired lobbyists constitutes a determined fight should read the history of Germany. In the United States an industrialist who turned a machinegun on a

picket line would be disowned by the rest of the business community; in Britain he would be sent to an insane asylum. Fascism arises in countries like Germany and Italy, Spain and Argentina, where the bourgeois triumph was never complete enough to eradicate other elements who believe in what the bourgeoisie fears more than anything else—violence, and who then used violence to "protect" the bourgeoisie.

There seems no inherent obstacle to the gradual advance of socialism in the United States through a series of New Deals. In 1933, Frances Perkins has reported, the coal operators pleaded with the Government to nationalize the mines. They offered to sell "to the Government at any price fixed by the Government. Anything so we can get out of it." The Government was not ready to take over the coal mines in 1933, as it was not ready to take over the banks, as it was not ready to keep the railroads in 1919. But the New Deal greatly enlarged the reserves of trained personnel; the mobilization of industry during the war provided more experience; and the next depression will certainly mean a vast expansion in Government ownership and control. The private owners will not only acquiesce in this, in characteristic capitalist panic, they will demand it.

Government ownership and control can take many forms. The independent public corporation, in the manner of TVA, is one; State and municipal ownership can exist alongside Federal ownership; the techniques of the cooperatives can be expanded; even the resources of regulation have not been fully tapped. The more varieties of ownership the better: liberty gets more fresh air and sunlight through the interstices of a diversified society than through the close-knit grip of collectivism. The recipe for retaining liberty is, not rationalization, but muddling through—a secret long known to the British who, as D. W. Brogan has put it, "change anything except the appearance of things."

Socialism, then, appears quite practicable within this frame of reference, as a long-term proposition. Its gradual advance might well preserve order and law, keep enough internal checks and discontinuities to guarantee a measure of freedom, and evolve new and real forms for the expression of democracy. The active agents in effecting the transition will probably be, not the working class, but some combination of lawyers, business and labor managers, politicians, and intellectuals, in the manner of the first New Deal, or of the Labor government in Britain.

But we must return this question to the actualities from which, up to now, it has been abstracted. The process of backing into socialism in the contemporary world is not so simple as it sounds. Too many forces are working, some wittingly, some not, to obstruct that process. They can be discussed under three heads: the death-wish of the capitalists; the betrayal of the intellectuals; and the counterrevolution of the Soviet Union.

THE DEATH-WISH OF THE CAPITALISTS

Marxist folklore, we have seen, has always overrated the bourgeoisie. The capitalists have certainly been great organizers of production and, in this process, great exploiters of the downtrodden. But their confidence, intelligence, and ruthlessness have always dwindled as they got farther away from the factory or countinghouse. They have constituted a plutocracy, not an aristocracy. They have never been, in the political sense, an effective governing class.

A plutocracy is trained to think in terms of business dealings and not of war, in terms of security and not of honor, in terms of class and not of nation. With their power dependent on the continued convertibility of pieces of paper, they dread anything which

might upset the fragile conventions of economic society. They lack the instinct, energy, and courage to govern. The shift which saved Britain in 1940 suggests some of the contrasts. Chamberlain reflected the sentiments of the business community—the longing for quiet, the hatred of violence, the terror of social upheaval. Churchill's instincts were those of an imperial aristocracy—bold, vigorous, somewhat contemptuous of trade, with power founded, not on finance, but on land, tradition, and sense of nationality. "There is something to be said for government by a great aristocracy which has furnished leaders to the nation in peace and war for generations," Theodore Roosevelt once observed; "even a democrat like myself must admit this. But there is absolutely nothing to be said for government by a plutocracy, for government by men very powerful in certain lines and gifted with the money touch, but with ideals which in their essence are merely those of so many glorified pawnbrokers."

The bourgeoisie consequently has always had to turn for protection to some non-bourgeois group. Without such protection, as Schumpeter puts it, it is "unable not only to lead its nation but even to take care of its particular class interest. Which amounts to saying that it needs a master." In England the business classes have had the aristocracy, and now the Socialists, to protect them. In America when the chips were down the businessmen have always been bailed out by the radical democracy, often under aristocratic leadership; the Jeffersons, Jacksons, Lincolns, Wilsons, Roosevelts.

This normal political incompetence of the capitalists has recently been exaggerated by a gradual disappearance of the capitalist energies themselves: it is this combination which justifies the term "death-wish." Not only does the bourgeoisie lack the skill to protect itself; it is increasingly lacking in the will to protect itself. The capitalist system, in effect, has killed its own interest in survival. The rise of big business, the development of mass protection and mass organization, have slowly taken the guts out of the idea of property. The spread of rationalism has set in motion a skepticism which holds no social authority sacred. Capitalism at once has strengthened the economic centralization and loosened the moral bonds of society. The result is a profound instability which invites collectivism as a means of restoring social discipline. As Schumpeter puts it, capitalism "socializes the bourgeois mind." Eventually the roots of capitalist motivation will wither away.

Even in America, the capitalist fatherland, the death-wish of the business community appears to go beyond the normal limits of political incompetence and geographical security. After the First World War, Trotsky predicted that American capitalism would now make its stunning debut on the world stage. Instead, American capitalism crept back into bed and pulled the covers over its face. It responded to the challenge of nazism by founding the America First Committee. It responded to the opportunities opened up by the Second World War by rushing to dismantle the instrumentalities of American military and economic influence in the name of balancing the budget.

The foreign policy of the business community is characteristically one of cowardice rationalized in terms of high morality. The great refusal to take on the Russians today is perfectly typical. That doyen of American capitalists, Joseph P. Kennedy, recently argued that the United States should not seek to resist the spread of communism. Indeed, it should "permit communism to have its trial outside the Soviet Union if that shall be the fate or will of certain peoples. In most of these countries a few years will

demonstrate the inability of communism to achieve its promises, while through this period the disillusioned experimenters will be observing the benefits of the American way of life, and most of them will seek to emulate it." On this ground, Kennedy has opposed all foreign loans from the British loan on.

We are confronted today with the picture of New Dealers trying to launch a positive foreign policy over the vigorous protests of the business groups which that policy will protect. Fearing change, fearing swift action because it might portend change, lacking confidence and resolution, subject to spasms of panic and hysteria, the American business community is too irresponsible to work steadily for the national interest, or even for its narrow class interests. At least the English business community has been persuaded by experience that it should accede to the political leadership of the aristocracy or, more recently, of the Socialists—of any group which will govern. But the American business community continues to resist the radical democracy, like a drowning man thrashing out at his rescuer.

In so doing, it may destroy the possibility of a peaceful transition to socialism. In its panic it may yield to the most ruthless blackmailer—externally to the Soviet Union, internally to any political gangster promising security—and thereby dissipate the Nation's capacity to control its process of change. "Experience shows that the middle classes allow themselves to be plundered quite easily," Sorel wrote, "provided a little pressure is brought to bear, and that they are intimidated by the fear of revolution." This growing capitalist irresponsibility is the symptom of the death-wish: it is Samson in the temple.

THE BETRAYAL OF THE INTELLECTUALS

Official liberalism was the product of the enlightenment, cross-fertilized with such things as unitarianism, science, bourgeois complacency, and a belief in progress. It dispensed with the absurd Christian myths of sin and damnation and believed that what shortcomings man might have were to be redeemed, not by Jesus on the cross, but by the benevolent unfolding of history. Tolerance, free inquiry, and technology, operating in the framework of human perfectibility, would in the end create a heaven on earth, a goal accounted much more sensible and wholesome than a heaven in heaven.

This rejection of the dark and subterranean forces in human nature acquired a kind of protective coloration in a century of peace and prosperity, like the nineteenth. Insight into evil became the property of a few disreputable aesthetes and a few obstinate Christians. But the rationalists were betrayed by their own god in the twentieth century when history went back on them and unleashed the terror. Freud, Kierkegaard, Sorel, Nietzsche had charted patterns of depravity while the sun of optimism was high in the sky. As it sank, practical men, like Hitler, Stalin, Mussolini, transformed depravity into a way of life.

Much more than a generation divides the liberals who denied evil from those who accept it. The word "evil" is here a designation, not an explanation; but, whether you use the vocabulary of religion or psychoanalysis or antirationalism, whether you invoke Augustine or Freud or Pareto, there are moody and destructive impulses in man of which official liberalism has taken no serious account. Louis Jaffe recently wrote of Justice Brandeis, "One felt that nothing in his system prepared Brandeis for Hitler." Brandeis was among the more realistic of his generation: how much more unprepared were the readers of the liberal weeklies, the great thinkers who sought to combat nazism

by peace strikes, the Oxford oath, and unilateral disarmament.

The type of the official liberal today is the fellow traveler or the fellow traveler of the fellow traveler: see the columns of the New Republic and the Nation. For the most chivalrous reasons they cannot believe that ugly facts underlie fair words: however they look at it, for example, the U.S.S.R. keeps coming through as a kind of enlarged Brook Farm community. Nothing in their system has prepared them for Stalin. The official liberal differs from the Communist, who knows what he is doing. He differs from the New Dealer, who has learned some of the facts of life from the exercise of responsibility and is consequently deeply hostile to the Communist. The official liberal runs interference for the Communist with a system of intellectual evasion and subterfuge that results directly from a desperate attempt to square a superficial and optimistic creed with a bitter century.

Many contemporary radicals have rejected these sunny meditations. Silone, Koestler, Malraux, Niebuhr, Orwell, Dos Passos, Hemingway, Macdonald; the very names suggest a range of perceptions and anxieties unknown to the columns of the New Republic. In this new version, man becomes at once greater and more pitiable, more aspiring, and more frustrated, more hallowed, and more doomed. This image stands up better in the century of Buchenwald. But the men who are possessed by it are still under official malediction as tired liberals, Judases, and apostles of disillusion.

If you believe man to be essentially good, you commit yourself to the endless task of explaining why he does not always behave that way. A simple way out is to affirm that, in spite of appearances to the contrary, he really is performing the good. In the course of this solution the liberal intellectual generates myths which he comes to prefer to actualities, especially if the actualities are uncomfortable (as they usually are). The addiction to myth is of course increased by the fact that the liberal has denied himself such traditional outlets for credulity as religion.

The susceptibility to wishfulness, the need for the sustaining myth, the disbelief in man's urge to destroy—all combine to reduce the capacity for critical judgment which the intellectual's detachment from social loyalties should confer upon him. This is the real trahison des clercs. Instead of contributing clarity, logic, and rigorous insistence on facts, the liberal intellectual has been more and more devoting his ingenuity to laminating his favorite myths. He has failed wretchedly to live up to his obligation to provide intellectual leadership.

One myth, to which the liberal has clung in the face of experience with the imperturbable ardor of an early Christian, is the mystique of the proletariat. This myth, given its classical form by Marx, himself so characteristically a bourgeois intellectual, states that the action of the working class will overthrow capitalist tyranny and establish by temporary dictatorship a classless society. Its appeal lies partly in the intellectual's sense of guilt over living pleasantly by his wits instead of unpleasantly by his hands, partly in the intellectual's somewhat feminine fascination with the rude and muscular power of the proletariat, partly in the intellectual's desire to compensate for his own sense of alienation by immersing himself in the broad maternal expanse of the masses. Worship of the proletariat becomes a perfect fulfillment for the frustrations of the intellectual.

Of course, this is not the whole story. There was considerable prima facie support for the myth. The beginnings of trade union organization at one time may have

promised a serious future for an organized proletariat. But there is no point in keeping up the pretense a century later. The trade union movement is as clearly indigent to the capitalist system as the corporation itself, and it has no particular meaning apart from that system. In a Socialist society its functions are radically transformed: it becomes, not a free labor movement, but a labor front. Even in England, as Sir Walter Citrine remarked on joining the Coal Board, strikes can no longer be trade union instruments in a nationalized industry. Unions inevitably become organs for disciplining the workers, not for representing them.

Indeed, the whole conception of the proletariat as an agency of change is meaningless. The technical necessity for organization instantly sets in motion a tendency toward oligarchy; separate interests arise between leadership and rank and file; and a working class committee after a short time will stand for, not the working class, but its own bureaucratic instinct for survival.

Moreover, workers as a mass have rarely had the impulses attributed to them by Marxism. They too often believe in patriotism or religion, or read comic strips, go to movies, play slot machines and patronize taxi dance halls; in one way or another, they try to cure their discontent by narcotics rather than by surgery. Thus they are rarely swept by the proper mass emotions. The general strike is, in principle, the most potent weapon in the world, but it always remains potent in principle. The great moment for the general strike was perhaps 1914; but, even had Jaurès survived, the working classes would have succumbed to the bugle, the flag, and the military parade. Marx recognized that many workers were not Marxists and so invented a classification called the Lumpenproletariat in which were dumped those who did not live up to theory. Lenin recognized this too and so invented a disciplined party which, announcing itself the only true representative of the proletariat, ruthlessly shot down dissenters. No country has more spectacularly abandoned a belief in the working class than the U.S.S.R.

For these various reasons, the mystique of the working class has faded somewhat since the First World War. In its place has arisen a new mystique, more radiant and palpable, and exercising the same fascinations of power and guilt: the mystique of the U.S.S.R. Each success of the Soviet Union has conferred new delights on those possessed of the need for prostration and frightened of the responsibilities of decision. In a world which makes very little sense, these emotions are natural enough, but surrender to them destroys the capacity for clear intellectual leadership which ought to be the liberal's function in the world. In an exact sense, Soviet Russia has become the opiate of the intellectuals.

THE COUNTERREVOLUTION OF THE SOVIET UNION

The capitalist death-wish and the liberal treachery are more or less unconscious obstacles to a tranquil passage to socialism. The role of the Soviet Union, on the other hand, is highly intelligent, purposeful, and determined. The U.S.S.R. perceives clearly that the most deadly foe of communism is not the reactionary, whose blind folly will only speed the disintegration of his own society, the serious enemy is really the radical democrat who proposes to solve the problems of unemployment and want without enslaving the masses and setting up a police state.

So long as Churchill lived in Downing Street, Moscow knew that Britain offered no competition in the struggle for Europe. But the victory of the Labor Party in the summer of 1945 brought new hope to all the people of Europe who still had freedom of

political expression. It signaled an alternative to Moscow which promised the same economic advantages—and with political liberty in place of the NKVD. It was at this point that the U.S.S.R. stepped up its attack on the Socialist parties and began its concerted policy of hammering at the weak points, strategic and ideological, of the already crumbling British Empire.

The Communist war against the Second International has been a brilliant success. The Social Democratic parties of Europe have remained steadfast in their traditions of caution, feebleness, and inactivity. They appear to be doomed today, because the working class does not trust their determination to carry out reforms, and the middle class does not trust their determination to resist communism. When the Communists do succeed in finally absorbing or destroying the Socialists, they will have virtually attained their objective of destroying the center and reducing the alternatives to the red and the black. The crime of the U.S.S.R. against the world is its determination to make experiments in libertarian socialism impossible.

What are the motives of the Soviet campaign against the West? "The trouble with Russia," Schumpeter has observed with considerable truth, "is not that she is Socialist but that she is Russia." If the Romanovs had pushed through industrialization and ridden out its political consequences, Russia would be confronting the world with much the same immediate problems of expansion—with the same thrusts into Western Europe, the Mediterranean, the Middle East, and China. But Czarist Russia would not have been able to multiply its national strength with the tremendous political weapon of communism.

The exception makes a good deal of difference. Imperial Russia could be dealt with like Imperial Germany; its objectives would have been inherently limited by the clash of one nationalism with another. But nazism gave Germany a potent ideological weapon, and communism is infinitely more exportable than nazism. As a social faith, it can penetrate to every corner of the world and rally its fifth columns wherever injustice and poverty exist. Communism gives Russian expansionism its warhead. On a pre-arranged signal, the Russian drive can explode internally in every country on the globe.

Russian national objectives are limited; Communist international objectives are not. Experience has shown that a nation can sustain unlimited objectives for only a limited time. The fervor of a crusade wears a people out; after a time the country relapses from the messiah business into its national routine. The problem is to prevent the Soviet Union from breaking out of the reservation during its period of messianic intoxication.

THE ROLE OF THE ARMED TRUCE

British policy under Chamberlain presents a model of how not to undertake a campaign of containment. The United States is faced with the same situation today, only the geographical margins of tolerance are greater with the U.S.S.R. than they ever were with Germany. Reduced to its fundamentals, the American problem is to arrange the equilibrium of forces in the world so that, at every given moment of decision, the Soviet general staff will decide against aggressions that might provoke a general war on the ground that they present too great a military risk. At the same time, the United States must not succumb to demands for an anti-Soviet crusade nor permit reactionaries in the buffer states to precipitate conflicts in defense of their own obsolete prerogatives. Fascism has receded, but it has not disappeared.

The United States must maintain a precarious balance between a complete readiness

to repel Soviet aggression beyond a certain limit and complete determination to demonstrate within this limit no aggressive U.S. intentions toward the U.S.S.R. It must commit itself, economically, politically, and militarily, to the maintenance of this balance over a long period. Given sufficient time, the Soviet internal tempo will slow down. The ruling class will become less risk-minded, more security-minded. Greater vested interests will develop in the existing order; Russia itself will begin to fear the revolutionary tendencies which modern war trails in its wake. The squabbles between the Gallicans and the ultramontanes will dilute the ardor of national Communist parties; they too will develop stakes in an existing national order, if only in order to hold on to a mass following. At the same time, U.S. backing to the parties of the non-Communist left and U.S. support for vast programs of economic reconstruction may go far toward removing the conditions of want, hunger, and economic insecurity which are constant invitations to Soviet expansion.

Can the United States conceive and initiate so subtle a policy? Though the secret has been kept pretty much from the readers of the liberal press, the State Department has been proceeding for some time somewhat along these lines. Both Byrnes and Marshall have perceived the essential need—to be firm without being rancorous, to check Soviet expansion without making unlimited commitments to an anti-Soviet crusade, to invoke power to counter power without engaging in senseless intimidation, to encourage the growth of the democratic left. The performance has often fallen below the conception; but the direction has been correct. Men like Ben Cohen, Dean Acheson, Charles Bohlen have tried to work out details and whip up support for this admittedly risky program.

It is risky. It may at any moment tumble over into the ideological crusade. In addition, its proponents must combat the death-wish of the capitalists, as exemplified by Mr. Kennedy, and the befuddlement of the fellow travelers, as exemplified by Mr. Wallace, both of whom unite in opposing a policy of resistance to Soviet expansion. The triumph of either the Kennedy or the Wallace views, if there is much difference between them, would mean the triumph of the radical expansionists in the Politburo, for it would remove all present obstacles to the Soviet conquest of Europe.

But can the United States embark on any program of resistance to Soviet expansion without itself moving toward fascism?

There is certainly a short-run tendency in critical situations toward reliance on reactionaries as counter to Communists, because they are the only people who can match violence with violence. In a divided land like China or Greece the non-Communist left, men who believe in debate and civil liberty, cannot stand up for long against men, whether of the extreme right or of the extreme left, who believe in rifles.

But over the long term the United States cannot develop a dependence on the right, if only because the right is a bad practical investment. A program of containment requires a ring of stable and satisfied countries around Russia—countries whose internal well-being provides a first line of defense against Communist penetration. At this stage in the world's history, the right cannot provide such governments. The very logic of events may force even a right-wing government in this country to support left-wing governments abroad, just as the Truman government is entertaining the thought of giving Greece the New Deal it has driven out of Washington. Far from leading to fascism at home, a program of containment may after a certain period lead to greater power for American labor. Just as it was necessary to bribe the business community to take part in the struggle against fascism, so it may be necessary to bribe the labor movement to take part in a struggle against communism. Whatever else may be said about a "permanent war economy," at least wages are high, employment is full, and the economy is relatively stable and productive.

All this presupposes, of course, that Marshall has not only the ability to develop his policy but also the backing to carry it out. The backing, rather than the policy itself, presents the serious question. A democracy is politically unreliable at best; the American democracy is notoriously unreliable on all questions of maintaining a continuous foreign policy. Between the irresponsibility of the capitalists, the confusion of the intellectuals, and the impotence of the working class, there may arise a state of irresolution which produces a political vacuum; and a political vacuum inevitably attracts activists—gangsters, terrorists, and totalitarians.

At this point the responsibility of the intellectual becomes manifest. Someone must serve as the custodian of honesty and clarity in a turbulent and stricken society. Someone must restore a serious sense of the value of facts, of the integrity of reason, of devotion to truth. Someone must provide intellectual leadership. As capitalism

crumbles through the world, we know that any path which can preserve peace and freedom is narrow and hazardous. Our instruments must be as precise as possible, our analysis as dispassionate, our conclusions as honest and objective as we can make them. One false step may plunge the world into atomic war or deliver it into totalitarian darkness.

The intellectual must not be deflected from his responsibility by inherited dogma. It is clear today that Marx's method was often better than his own application of it. Experience is a better master than any sacred text. The experience of a century has shown that neither the capitalists nor the workers are so tough and purposeful as Marx anticipated; that their mutual bewilderment and inertia leave the way open for some other group to serve as the instrument of change; that when the politician-manager-intellectual type—the New Dealer—is intelligent and decisive, he can get society to move just fast enough for it to escape breaking up under the weight of its own contradictions; but that, when no one provides intellectual leadership within the frame of gradualism, then the professional revolutionist will fill the vacuum and establish a harder and more ruthless regime than the decadent one he displaces; and that the Communist revolutionist is winning out over the Fascist and is today in alliance with an expanding world power which will bring every kind of external pressure to block the movement toward democratic socialism.

These seem to me the actualities of the day. If their acceptance means discarding Marx, let us by all means discard Marx. Too much leftwing political thinking is a form of scholasticism. We must make our own prognosis. If you say that the intellectual is a frail reed upon which to lean, you are probably guilty of understatement. But at least serious thinking is his job. Let him work at it for a time. He is more likely to escape from his confusion than the capitalist from his irresponsibility or the worker from his impotence. Serious intellectual direction may give our politics a cogency and a firmness which will maintain the equilibrium of forces and avert the war with Russia. If we can avoid this war, if we can contain the counterrevolution of the U.S.S.R. within clearly marked limits, we have a good chance to test the possibilities of a peaceful transition into a not undemocratic socialism. But, if our leadership and determination falter, neither democracy, socialism, nor anything else will have any more of a future than Hiroshima or Nagasaki.