
A War to Communize America

We are again being told to be afraid. As it was before the two world wars so it is now: politicians talk in frightening terms, journalists invent scare lines, and even next-door neighbors are taking up the cry: the enemy is at the city gates; we must gird for battle. In case you don't know, the enemy this time is the USSR.

There is no question about the sincerity of these good Americans. And I admit that the evidence they adduce to support their fears cannot be easily dismissed. As a matter of fact, the history of nations is a continuous story of enemies at the city gates, and it can be conceded without further argument that a rich country like ours would be a tempting morsel for any gang that thought itself strong enough to make a try for it. Perhaps it would be good for us to "keep our powder dry."

But how? What is "defense"? There is a wide divergence of opinion in this area, probably because it involves an understanding of strategy and defense, and who is there that has the

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right answers in either field? Some say that the way to get rid of the Red menace is to knock it off wherever it shows its head. Others would avoid the sideshow and get to the big top, in Moscow. Even the experts are in disagreement on tactics: some say the foot soldier will win the war, others maintain that air power has made the infantry obsolete, while the navy presses its claim to preeminence. Nuclear physics has confounded the confusion, while the reliability of presumed allies blurs the picture still more.

The ordinary citizen, the fellow who will do the fighting and paying, is certainly scared by all these arguments over "defense," all of which are based on the assumption that the war is inevitable, which alone frightens him. Before he goes berserk, he might review the whole situation in the light of experience, and maybe the common sense of it will give him some light.

In the first place, as these articulate fearers readily admit, the war being talked about will have to be fought with conscripts. That is taken for granted, is not even argued, because it is inconceivable that enough Americans would volunteer to fight a war with Russia on foreign soil. I am sure that if Americans were convinced that their country were in imminent danger of being invaded, they would rush to the ramparts. If I am wrong, then the whole question is meaningless; for a people that will not defend its homeland is of no account. But if conscription has to be resorted to, is that not evidence that the proposed war with Russia is not wanted?

NO ARMY WITHOUT CONSCRIPTION

Let's belabor this matter of conscription, for I believe it points to the heart of the question. In all probability we would

not have been able to raise a volunteer army to send to Europe in 1917; the fact that it was not even tried indicates that the politicians knew it would not work. In 1942, the armies sent to Europe and Japan were also conscript armies. I don't think a single division could have been raised by the volunteer system for the Korean adventure.

That raises the pertinent question: If Americans did not want these wars, should they have been compelled to fight them? Perhaps the people were wrong in their lack of enthusiasm for these wars, but their right to be wrong cannot be questioned in what we call a democratic system. Those who presume to compel people to be "right," against their will, are taking unto themselves a mandate for which there is no warrant other than their own conceit. Did God select them to do the coercing?

I could go into the results of these wars to show that the instinct of the people was sounder than the judgment of the politicians; a good case could be made for the thesis that if we had not been forced into these wars we would not be facing another one now. But that is not the present point. We are told that we must fear the Russians. I am more afraid of those who, like their forebears, would compel us against our will to fight the Russians. They have the dictator complex.

The conscript wars were all fought on foreign soil. And each was preceded by a campaign of fear such as we are now experiencing. The kaiser and Hitler each planned to invade the United States, it was said, and there are some who maintain that if we had not fought the communists in Korea we would have had them on our hands in California. That is, the rationale of these wars was invasion, which was another way of admitting that the soldiers would not have even reluctantly accepted involuntary servitude if they had not been convinced that their homeland was threatened. Postwar research reveals that neither

the kaiser nor Hitler even contemplated the impossible task of crossing the Atlantic with an army, suggesting that the fear campaigns were manufactured out of whole cloth. What reason have we to believe otherwise of the present campaign of fear?

This time, we are told, things are "different." The kaiser and Hitler were only partly deranged: now we are dealing with a crowd of honest-to-goodness maniacs. I might accept that designation of the Moscow communists simply because I have met Americans of like persuasion and have found them to be off base. Also, I am acquainted with the literature of the communists in which they proclaim their intention to conquer the world. But I am not frightened because I am not convinced of the world-conquering potential of the Moscow gang, or of its ability to invade my country. If I were, or rather, if the youth of my country were, we could dispense with the "selective service" bunkum.

There is only one difference in the present urgency for war and that which preceded the others, and it is a frightening difference. The proponents frankly admit that if this war eventuates, Americans will be rushed into a condition of involuntary servitude not unlike that which obtains in the Soviet Union. Such soothing syrup as the "war to end all wars" will not go down this time. Even the most gullible American cannot be fooled by moral platitudes. Too many Americans now realize that war adds power to the state, at the expense of liberty, and there is a strong suspicion that the next war will just about wipe out whatever liberty we have. That is, we will be infected by the same virus that we set out to exterminate.

EITHER WAY, IT'S SLAVERY

Admitting all this, the fearers come up with a "clincher"—the argument that is supposed to leave no escape for the pro-

spective buyer. "Would you not prefer to give up your freedom temporarily to an American than to a Russian dictator?" Let's examine this either-or gimmick.

The "clincher" only seems to suggest a choice. But there is none. In either case, the chooser has only one choice: a condition of slavery. The selection is limited to the nationality of the master, or between Tweedledee and Tweedledum. Why go to war for that privilege? (Parenthetically, it is easier to stir up a revolution against a foreign invader than a native dictator.) The suggestion that the American dictatorship would be "temporary" makes this whole argument suspect, for no dictatorship has ever set a limit on its term of office; it is by nature precluded from so doing.

Let us keep in mind that the advocates of war do not propose to exterminate communism; they only hope to exterminate a communistic regime. No doubt they would like to do both, but they admit, as they must, that the war would not exterminate it but would rather saddle communism, or something very like it, on America. The only way to avoid that consequence is to avoid war, and the question at issue is whether it can be.

Assuming that we do not bring the war to Russia, can the Russians bring it to us? That is, can they invade the United States with an army? I know of no responsible military man who maintains that they can.

If they cannot invade us with an army, can they invade us with hydrogen bombs? It is said that they can; but why should they? The experts agree that it would be a hazardous venture, involving an expenditure of men and material of fantastic proportions; the Soviet leaders are not crazy. Nor are they unaware of the probability of a retaliatory delivery which, because of their reportedly weak productive capacity, might do them more harm than what they did to us. If they started a mutually destructive war of bombs, it could only be as an act of desperation

and an admission that they were licked anyway. Also, some military men hold that a bomb war would not be decisive; there would still be the problem of transporting an army to hold the territory of the destroyed country. (Here I am getting into strategy and tactics, about which I know only what I read; but in that respect I believe I am on a par with the proponents of war.)

REVOLUTION IS IMPROBABLE

Well then, can Moscow foment a successful revolution in this country and take possession through its American agents? That is a possibility. But, if a successful revolution occurs in this country, it will indicate that our security officers have either been asleep or in cahoots with the Kremlin. Either situation seems highly improbable. Anyway, war will not prevent the revolution, if one is in the making, but would rather help it along, for it would divert our soldiers from the job at home.

What then have we to be afraid of? The hysteria of fear. There is no doubt that the warmongers of Moscow are as fearful as our own. Neither group knows what the other is up to, and the misapprehension could trigger a "preventive" war by either side. So the only way to prevent a conflagration is to remove the tinder. The Soviets could do it very easily by simply reversing their position, that is, by moving their troops back to within the borders of their country and indicating an intention to keep the peace. But they are not likely to do that, for ideological reasons, and because a dictatorship is impelled by its inner workings to be on the warpath all the time.

America is not a dictatorship. Presumably, its government has the interests of its people at heart, and their interests in the present instance would best be served by the avoidance of war. That is the only way to preserve whatever freedom we still

have. Therefore—and now I am assuming that our leaders are not imperialistically minded—if we withdrew our troops to the Western Hemisphere and abandoned our global military commitments, the danger that is now threatening us would be minimized, if not removed.

IF WE LEFT EUROPE

To this suggestion that we come home and mind our business the fearmongers pose an objection taken from the graveyard of propaganda. Before World War II we were told that if we did not go to Europe to stop Hitler, he would come to us. "Our frontier is on the Rhine." Now we are told that if we get out of Europe, the communists will overrun the Continent, get hold of its productive machinery, and prepare themselves for an invasion of America. We must stop them before they move an inch farther West.

If the Russians, after we had left, did move into France and Italy, it might be because they were invited or met only token resistance. If I read the newspaper dispatches correctly, I must conclude that large segments of the populations of these two countries are favorably inclined to a regime of communism. In that case, our presence in Europe is an impertinent interference with the internal affairs of these countries; let them go communist if they want to.

On the other hand, if we moved out, and the Muscovites followed on our heels, it could be that the countries of Europe which now show little inclination to defend their national integrity would put up a fight; they would not have to resort to conscription. And even if they could not stop the Russians, their resistance would be an assurance that the invaders would get little production out of them; the vast productive capacity

might be sabotaged and become useless to the invaders. In short, we might have real allies in Europe, which we don't have now.

My history books tell me that the weakness of a conqueror increases in proportion to the extent of his conquest. If that is true, then the overrunning of Europe might be the death-knell of the Soviet regime; it could collapse without any effort on our part. Then again, if communism should solidly establish itself in Western Europe, it would be because it is in fact a sound economic and political system, one under which the people like to live and work; in that case, we ought to take it on ourselves, willingly and without getting it by way of war.

There is a more important reason for our getting out of Europe and abandoning our global military commitments. We would be strengthening ourselves, even as the Soviets were weakening themselves by extending their lines. The vast military equipment which we are sending abroad, and much of which might fall into the hands of the Russians, would be stockpiled here for the ultimate struggle. The manpower which is now going to waste in uniform could be put to the task of building up our war potential. Our economy would be strengthened for the expected shock. We would become a veritable military giant, and because of our strength we would attract real allies, not lukewarm ones.

Of course, it would be hard on the Europeans if they fell into Soviet hands; but not any worse than if we precipitated a war in which their homes became the battlefield. It is bad for the Hungarians, the Czechs, the Latvians and all the other peoples who have to live under the commissars. We are sorry for all of them and wish we could help them. But we are only 160 million people, and we simply cannot fight for all the people in the world. Maybe we could be of more use to them if, while they

carried on an underground movement, with whatever matériel we could get to them, we built ourselves up for the final knock-out blow, provided it became necessary.

The important thing for America now is not to let the fear-mongers (or the imperialists) frighten us into a war which, no matter what the military outcome, is certain to communize our country.