

HENRY GEORGE NEWS

VOL. 14—No. 4

FEBRUARY, 1951

10¢ A COPY—\$1.00 A YEAR

Can Military Strength Defeat Communism?

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ON A recent visit to Minneapolis General Lucius Clay warned against the idea that another world war, waged to "rid the world of communism" could accomplish that purpose. He believes that a new world war would be more likely to spread communism than to exterminate it, even though we smashed Moscow's power completely, because another war would spread and intensify destruction, hunger and hopelessness, on which the Communist philosophy feeds.

No one can seriously question the soundness of this statement, and it should be a solemn warning to those "trigger-happy" individuals who are eagerly looking forward to the day when our bombers will wing their way to Moscow, loaded with atom bombs. That will be a catastrophic event for the world in general, and even more so for the United States in particular. We have far more to lose.

In a broadcast from Lucknow, where he opened the 11th session of the Institute of Pacific Relations, Prime Minister Nehru said he did not think the military outlook or military methods could solve any world problem. "If any nation develops the military mentality," he stated, "there is little hope for that nation." History bears ample testimony to the correctness of that assertion.

Obviously, the only sane course to pursue is an all-out effort to avert a full scale war which will, for a certainty, accelerate the spread of communism over the globe. According to the majority opinion of those entrusted with the guiding of our nation's destiny, the best way to achieve this is to build up a military machine so vast and powerful that no potential aggressor will dare to attack us or any one of our increasing number of protectorates constituting the far-flung trouble spots of the world. In this way it is asserted war can be prevented, or at most be limited to relatively minor campaigns, as in Korea, and communism will thereby be confined to its present boundary.

That, unfortunately, is a false hope and an extremely dangerous illusion. If history teaches anything, it is that an intensive armament race between two powerful groups of nations always ends in war. Justification must be forthcoming for the tremendous expenditure of resources and energy and for the steadily decreasing standard of living. And so the opportune "incident" appears on the scene. It has never failed to show up at the psychological moment.

But even if, contrary to all reasonable expectations, we should be fortunate enough to escape war, what will be the result of an all-out armament program, lasting indefinitely? In April, 1937, Franklin D. Roosevelt said:

"It is a matter of common knowledge that the principal danger to modern civilization lies in those nations which, largely because of an armament race, are headed directly toward bankruptcy. In proportion to the national bud-



gets, the United States is spending a far smaller proportion of government income for armaments than the nations to which I refer. It behooves us, therefore, to continue our efforts to make both ends of our economy meet."

In the thirteen years following Roosevelt's statement, expenditures for military preparedness have increased enormously, both in amount and in proportion to the total budget, and we are definitely on the road he warned against. Furthermore, temporary powers granted to the executive branch of the government to meet emergencies have the disconcerting habit of hardening into permanent institutions.

Earl Browder, former head of the Communist party in America, is one man who should know the recent trends that have been instrumental in promoting the cause of stateism. He lists twenty-two features of American governmental policy which in general tend to pave the way for communism. Among them are: government guarantees of various kinds, price wage and hour controls, price support for farm products and agricultural credits; RFC loans to business corporations and public housing; various benefits to veterans and social security for workers; public works to provide employment and the Employment Act; government-organized foreign loans and the President's economic committee.

Thus we are confronted with the strange paradox that the more we spend to fight communism, the faster we accelerate the movement toward communism. Some may labor under the delusion that the American brand of communism will be a higher type than the Russian kind, but history shows that benevolent dictatorship always winds up as the common everyday variety.

The outlook is bleak and there is justification for the pronouncement made by the Con-

gressional Aviation Policy Board a few years ago when it said: "It is folly to pretend the world does not live under a sense of impending tragedy."

Our adventures into internationalism have brought many headaches but no salutary results.

Is there a way out of the dilemma? Yes, but it entails a radical change in our thinking. In planning for defense the tremendous emphasis placed on *military* power must be subordinated and precedence must be given to moral force. In Isaiah 31:1 we read:

"Woe to them that go down to Egypt for help; and stay on horses and trust in chariots, because they are many; and in horsemen, because they are very strong; but they look not unto the Holy One of Israel, neither seek the Lord."

Paraphrased to meet modern conditions, this might read:

"Woe to them that go to the United Nations for help; and trust in tanks because they are many; and in atom bombs because they are very strong; but they look not unto the Lord nor seek to establish justice on earth."

There are many Biblical exhortations stressing reliance on divine power rather than armed might. However, we cannot in fairness seek to invoke this divine protection in the face of flagrant violations of other Biblical admonitions. To borrow a phrase from the legal profession, we must come into court with clean hands. Unfortunately, a time-honored institution, prevalent in all countries, is precisely such a transgression of divine command. We are all familiar with Leviticus 25:23: "The land shall not be sold forever: for the land is mine . . ."

It is of interest to observe that a modern scientific philosopher, by logical deductions from first principles, arrived at the same conclusions as the inspired writer of several thousand years ago. In chapter 9 of *Social Statics*, the British philosopher, Herbert Spencer, discussed the right to the use of the earth. The chapter begins with:

"Given a race of beings having like claims to pursue the objects of their desires—given a world adapted to the gratification of those desires—a world into which such beings are similarly born, and it unavoidably follows that they have equal rights to the use of this world. For if each of them has freedom to do all that he wills provided he infringes not the equal freedom of any other, then each of them is free to use the earth for the satisfaction of his wants, provided he allows all others the same liberty. And conversely, it is manifest that no one, or any part of them, may use the earth in such a way as to prevent the rest from similarly using it; seeing that to do this is to assume greater freedom than the rest, and consequently to break the law."

Spencer then proceeded with devastating logic to squash every argument advanced in an at-

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tempt to justify absolute private ownership of land on ethical grounds. His ninth chapter concludes with this pregnant statement:

"And we find lastly that the theory of the co-heirship of all men to the soil is consistent with the highest civilization; and that, however difficult it may be to embody that theory in fact, *Equity sternly commands it to be done.*

The dire consequences of failure to carry out the provisions of this moral dictum are brought out in sharp relief by the mighty drama now unfolding in the Far East. On June 2 of this year S. Y. Wu, recent Chinese Minister of Land, gave a lecture at the San Francisco Public Library on late developments in his country. Attributing the spread of communism in China to the failure of the Nationalists to carry out their promised land reform, Mr. Wu claimed that Sun Yat Sen's promise, "equal rights to the use of land" had become an empty party slogan and land reform a dead letter. "With the people's economic plight becoming more and more acute, and no improvement made to relieve the miserable conditions of life of the common masses, the seed of communism has found China a very fertile field to grow and spread like wild flowers."

Only removal of exploiting, non-producing parasites from the backs of the masses in Asia can raise their standard of living to a permanently higher level. Unfortunately, present indications are that it will not be done, and the impending tremendous expansion of military effort is likely to prove as barren of any beneficial results as our participation in the last two wars has turned out to be. On the other hand, a concerted effort toward true land reforms which would comply with the moral precept annunciated by the philosopher would greatly reduce the need for military preparedness and avert the danger of inflation and national bankruptcy. The penalty for infraction of the moral law of equal freedom to the use of the earth comes high—very high indeed.

While the land question is of utmost importance in the relatively backward agricultural countries of Asia, it is, contrary to popular belief, of even greater importance in highly developed industrial countries. It is here that the increased demand for raw material, and for sites on which to transact business, causes land values to rise to phenomenal figures.

When the value of an acre of city land can rise to more than one hundred thousand times that of an acre of good farm land, the influence it has on a nation's economy becomes apparent. More than half what is called the nation's wealth is not wealth at all, but land values. And the value of land is the untaxed annual rental value capitalized at the current rate of interest. One serious aspect of our system of land tenure is that it engenders land speculation, which greatly intensifies the downward swing of the business cycle.

How can the moral law of equal right to the use of the earth be complied with under these complex modern conditions? It remained for the eminent American economist, Henry George, to supply the answer. In *Progress and Poverty*, he has thoroughly analyzed the problem and arrived at a simple, practical and effective solution. Instead of taking a relatively small portion of the annual rental value of land, Henry George proposed to take substantially all of it

and relieve production and exchange of taxes to that extent. This is shown to be the one method whereby the equal right to the use of the earth can be achieved. It will reduce incentive to land speculation to the vanishing point without disturbing existing land titles.

Elimination of land monopoly, combined with the removal of taxes from production, leads to fair competition and establishment of just equilibrium between suppliers and consumers, employers and employees. It insures full employment at high *real* wages without artificial stimulus of government spending, which inevitably produces inflation. The system proposed by Henry George is surely the only one in which genuine free enterprise can prevail.

During the past hundred years European governments as well as our own, have endeavored to circumvent the moral law of equal freedom. Innumerable palliatives, such as: old age pensions, unemployment insurance, price control, subsidies, socialized medicine, etc., have been tried. The sorry plight of the world today is, however, positive proof of the inadequacy of such measures. *There is no substitute for justice.*

The Western powers, looking to the United States for leadership, stand at the crossroads. One leads through the maze of palliatives—through the welfare state and socialism—to the dead end of communism. The other, by intelligent application of George's proposals, leads to genuine free enterprise and fulfillment of the prophecy: "nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more." (Isaiah 2:4).