

worldview

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THE CONTINUING COMPETITION

Spring, 1958 was for many a time of hope. There was talk of a thaw in the Cold War, of relaxed tensions, of negotiations at the Summit and, possibly, of "disengagement" for the West. But suddenly the winds from Moscow blew very cold indeed. Imre Nagy was murdered, the satellites were warned against deviations from Stalinist orthodoxy, and the game of Soviet bluster, threat and blackmail was generally resumed. The result: Summer, 1958 has become for many a time of despair.

The murder of former Hungarian Premier Nagy and his three associates, particularly, has brought despair—or something close to despair—to some who earlier had been most sanguine about Mr. Khrushchev's intentions. The *New Statesman*, for example, had long been one of Britain's strongest advocates of a new Western approach to the Soviet Union, but in a remarkable June editorial this journal wrote:

"Once more the black shadow of the gallows falls across the Communist world . . . Khrushchev's great asset was his apparently genuine desire to steer the Communist world away from Stalin's crazy course; that fund of confidence has been finally squandered . . . From now on, every non-Communist will do business with the Russians, and with other Communists, only when performance rests on more than promise or temporary expedients . . . That is why the murder of four Hungarians has closed a chapter in world history. With them died the Khrushchev design for a Summit conference—if that meant an East-West settlement on the basis of 'mutual confidence.'"

In short, its current behavior proves that the Soviet Union was not sincere in its sudden "liberalism," and so the hope for a "negotiated" settlement of East-West problems, based on "mutual trust," is ended.

If this be so, we might say amen. The hope was a false one from its beginning. Only those who nourished an illusion can now be so bitterly surprised. Because only an illusion, of a peculiarly

"liberal" kind, could have built its hopes on the "sincerity" of the Soviet leaders. The end of such an illusion was inevitably tragic. (In the Marxist dictionary, after all, "sincerity" is a synonym for sentimentality. One therefore wonders at the limitless capacity of some people for being "surprised" at each new evidence of Soviet treachery.)

But for those who did not hope too easily, there is now no cause for despair. For reasons about which we can only speculate, the Soviet Union has made a sudden, sickening return to Stalinist tactics, but, beyond tactics, the problems we face now are the problems we really faced several months ago. Their solution could never have been found in some miraculous burst of "mutual trust." They were, and are, tortured, long-range problems. The securing of peace depends, finally, on *their* solution and not on shifting signs that Mr. Khrushchev and his friends have become men we can "trust."

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One of these problems is the problem of economic-cultural competition between the Soviet Union and the West. And as history evolves, this has become, probably, the major competition—upon which all else may finally depend. Despite shifts in Soviet tactics, despite alternating smiles and scowls on Mr. Khrushchev's face, East and West remain locked in the terrible security of thermonuclear stalemate. Neither side can destroy the other militarily without, in the process, inviting destruction for itself. This fact moves the Cold War on to other grounds. And here the stakes are as serious, as ultimate, as they are in the arms race itself.

Elsewhere in these pages, Harlan Cleveland, Jack Patterson and Robert Lekachman examine various aspects of this economic-cultural competition. And, as each of them makes clear, something more basic than a *materialistic* competition is involved here. As East and West confront each

other—in their programs of economic assistance to underdeveloped areas, in their exhibitions at the Brussels Fair, in their own economic systems—what is really at issue is a system of values—a world view. More than the fate of rival imperialisms may be decided by economics. What may be decided are the principles by which the world will live.

This is a fact which, somehow, has failed to be realized by many of the American people. But here, surely, is one area where ethics and foreign policy meet—unambiguously. Both the national security *and* moral concern demand, unequivocally, that this nation's programs of economic assistance to the underdeveloped areas of the world be strengthened. And yet, a number of

Americans continue to insist that they should be cut.

Professor John C. Bennett has written: "Within human history we may not see the kingdoms of this world become the Kingdom of God, but we may see among them in many places and at many times . . . corporate acts of justice which truly embody the grace and power of that Kingdom."

Economic assistance to peoples struggling against poverty is one of these corporate acts. It is also a field on which the issues of the Cold War are being pressed most vigorously by the Soviet Union. The United States must here attend most carefully both to its own values and to its own defense.

In the magazines

"To those who have any appreciation of the perils which surround us," writes Dean Acheson in the Summer issue of the *Yale Review*, " . . . a moralistic approach to foreign relations—and by this I mean one which attempts to apply the maxims or ideology of moral teaching—seems ill-adapted to the complexity of the task."

The Acheson article, entitled "Morality, Moralism and Diplomacy," indicates some of the issues which our moral principles (or prejudices) have tended to oversimplify, such as: colonialism and the "right of self-determination," the threat of Communist imperialism, the question of neutrality, the principle of "open covenants openly arrived at," the horror of nuclear warfare, and the use of force. Even if our sentiments on these subjects, as projected in our foreign policy, were more cleanly derived from ethical conviction, "one cannot find in ethics and aesthetics, alone, a complement of tools for dealing with the relations between states. Into these relationships enter factors governed by forces which operate in the physical rather than the metaphysical world. There also enters human conduct, which all too often is neither moral nor ethical nor controllable by exhortation."

Rather than invoke ideal principles to govern our acts, Mr. Acheson recommends that we adopt the moral attitude of Lincoln, which disclosed "what we might call a strategic, as against an ideological approach to great and complicated problems" and which consisted of "stating principles in terms of their purpose and effect without characterizing them as moral or immoral." Mr. Acheson counsels us to improve the methods, by which foreign relations are conducted—"here we can and should aim high"—for it is his belief that "ends of action are not, for the most part, determined by ideals, but the other way around. It has been said that 'Man . . . is born to

act. To act is to affirm the worth of an end, and to persist in affirming the worth of an end is to make an ideal.'"

In the *Review of Politics* for July, Paul Nitze discusses "The Role of the Learned Man in Government." By "learned man," Mr. Nitze means both the trained specialist exempted from political responsibility and the "man of general wisdom" who, if not exempt, may find the process of political responsibility a stimulating challenge or a burdensome frustration.

The learned man in government, Mr. Nitze shows, frequently finds himself—or places himself—in a position of limited contribution. "The learned man, or at least the man whose orientation is primarily analytical or academic, finds it difficult to act resolutely within the limits prescribed by the real situation with which, in the realm of government, he is always faced, and finding it difficult he tends to have a distaste for full political responsibility." Or, "not desiring to accept full political responsibility, he nevertheless strives for a free and controlling hand in the guidance of those matters on which his interest focuses. The result is a tendency toward separating responsibility from power, and power from responsibility." The power of decision rests ultimately with those who are politically accountable. "But learning and wisdom are not the monopoly of those . . . exempted. The hope of the democratic system depends upon the opposite proposition—the proposition that men of general wisdom will in fact be selected to carry political responsibility and accountability." But the fate of "the learned man" in government today is a various one.

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