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As a young academic teaching at New York University, James Burnham (1905–1987) became an enthusiastic Trotskyist. While his infatuation with left-wing radicalism had passed by the beginning of World War II, during which Burnham served in the Office of Strategic Services (OSS), the tendency toward portentousness persisted. Soon enough, he became a stalwart Cold Warrior, using the pages of William F. Buckley's *National Review* to sound the alert at any signs of backsliding in the face of evil. In that sense, Burnham was a forerunner of the neoconservatism that came to prominence around the turn of the twenty-first century.

FROM *The Struggle for the World*

THE MAIN LINE OF WORLD POLITICS

THE GREAT captains of military history, varied as they have been in every other respect, have all been noted for their grasp of what military writers call "the key to the situation." At each level of military struggle, from a brief skirmish to the grand strategy of a war or series of wars, they have understood that there is one crucial element which is this key to the situation. The key may be almost anything: a ford across a river, or a hill like Cemetery Ridge at Gettysburg; a swift blow at the enemy reserve, or the smashing of the enemy fleet as at Trafalgar or Salamis; stiff discipline on the flanks as at Cannae, or a slow strangling blockade for an entire war; a long defensive delay to train an army or win an ally, or a surprise attack on a capital; control of the seas, the destruction of supplies, or the capture of a hero.

The great captain concentrates on the key to the situation. He simplifies, even over-simplifies, knowing that, though the key alone is not enough, without it he will never open the door. He may, if that is his temperament, concern himself also with a thousand details. He never allows details to distract his attention, to divert him from the key. Often he turns the details, which in quantitative bulk total much larger than the key, over to his subordinates. That is why the genius of the great captain is often not apparent to others. He may seem a mere figurehead, indolent, lethargic, letting the real work be done by those around him. They fail to comprehend that the secret of his genius is to know the key, to have it always in mind, and to reserve his supreme exertion for the key, for what decides the issue.

The principles of political struggle are identical with those of military struggle. Success in both political knowledge and political practice depends finally, as in military affairs, upon the grasp of the key to the situation. The exact moment for the insurrection, the one issue upon which the election will in reality revolve, the most vulnerable figure in the opposition's leadership, the deeply felt complaint that will rouse the masses, the particular concession that will clinch a coalition, the guarded silence that will permit an exposure to be forgotten, the exact bribe that will open up a new Middle Eastern sphere of influence, the precise hour for a great speech: at each stage and level of the political process there is just one element, or at most a very small number of elements, which determines, which decides.

The great political leader (who is often also a great captain)—Pericles or the elder Cato or Mohammed or Caesar or Henry of Navarre or Bismarck or Hamilton or Lenin or Innocent III or the younger Pitt—focuses on the key. He feels whether it is a time for expansion or recovery, whether the opposition will be dismayed or stimulated by a vigorous attack, whether internal problems or external affairs are taking political precedence. He knows, in each political phase, what is the central challenge.

During the late 12th and for most of the 13th centuries, the Papacy struggled with the Hohenstaufen Empire, and concluded by destroying the Hohenstaufen. For all of Italy that struggle was in those times the key to the general political situation, no matter how it appeared to those whose political sense was distracted by temporary and episodic

details. For the first generation of the 5th century B.C., the political key in the Aegean was the attempt of Persia to conquer the Hellenic world. All of the contests among the Greek states, and all their internal city squabbles, were in reality subordinate to the relation with Persia. For a generation in America, until it was decided by the Civil War, the key was the struggle for a united nation. Everything else in politics, foreign or domestic, was secondary. For Western Civilization as a whole at the turn of the 19th century, the key was the contest between England and France. England won, perhaps, because her governing class concentrated on the key, whereas Napoleon, only vaguely glimpsing the key with its shaft of sea power, dissipated his energies.

For a given nation, the political key is located sometimes among internal, sometimes among foreign affairs. For the United States, the key during most of its independent history has been internal: union or slavery or the opening of the West or industrialization or monopoly. For England, quite naturally, it has been more ordinarily, though by no means always, an external relation. It may be the church or the army or the peasant problem, or, for a brief period, a spectacular scandal like the Dreyfus affair or the South Sea Bubble or Teapot Dome.

We have entered a period of history in which world politics take precedence over national and internal politics, and in which world politics literally involve the entire world. During this period, now and until this period ends with the settlement, one way or another, of the problems which determine the nature of the period, all of world politics, and all of what is most important in the internal politics of each nation, are oriented around the struggle for world power between Soviet-based communism and the United States. This is now the key to the political situation. Everything else is secondary, subordinate.

The key is, much of the time, hidden. The determining struggle is not apparent in the form of individual political issues, as they arise week by week. The deceptive surface is the cause of the political disorientation and futility of so many of the observers and actors, which so particularly infect the citizens and leaders of the United States. They base their ideas and actions on the temporary form of political events, not on the controlling reality.

Yugoslavia disputes with Italy over Trieste. Chiang Kai-shek fights with Chou En-lai over North China. Armenians begin to clamor for an independent Armenia. The new Philippine government confronts a

revolt of the Hukbalahaps. Poland argues with Mexico in the Security Council. The French Cabinet calls for an immediate break with Franco. Harry Lundberg and the communists fight for control of the United States waterfront. The American Labor Party and the Liberal Party jockey for position in New York State. The British Communists apply for admission to the Labour Party. The World Federation of Trade Unions demands an official voice in the United Nations. The International Harvester Company objects to sending tractors to the Balkans. Japanese printers' unions refuse to set up editorials they don't like. Sweden signs a commercial agreement with Moscow. The United States asks for bases in Iceland or the Azores. Bulgaria, Yugoslavia and Albania arm and succor Macedonian partisans. Joseph Clark Baldwin, ousted by the New York Republicans, is endorsed by Vito Marcantonio. Australia objects to the veto power.

The eyes of the public become entangled in the many-colored surface. The exact ethnic complexion of Venezia Giulia is debated with ponderous statistics. Owen Lattimore proves at length that Chiang is not quite democratic and that many peasants support Yen-an. Arthur Upham Pope explains that there are reactionary landlords in Iran. Henry Wallace describes the geography of Siberia. *The Nation* catalogues the villainies of Franco. *PM* sturdily denounces the crimes of Greek Royalists. *The New Republic* gives the history of agricultural oppression in the Philippines. The innocent bystanders send in their dollars, join committees, and sign open letters.

The statistics and records and swarms of historical facts are admirable enough to have at hand. But by themselves they are shadows, ashes. If we do not look through them to the living body, the focal fire, we know nothing. If we do not grasp that Trieste and Thrace, and Armenia and Iran and North China and Sweden and Greece are the border marches between the communist power and the American power, and that all the statistics and records are filigree work on the historical structure, then we know nothing. We know less than nothing, and we fall into the trap which those who do know deliberately bait with all the statistics and records. It is their purpose to deceive us with the shadows and to prevent us from seeing the body. If we do not know that the American Labor Party has nothing to do with America or with Labor or with any of the issues stated in its program and speeches, but is simply a disguised colony of the communist

power planted within the enemy territory, then, politically, we know nothing. If we do not understand that the World Federation of Trade Unions is merely a device manipulated by the N.K.V.D. to further the communist objective of infiltrating and demoralizing the opponents in the Third World War, then we have not begun to realize what is at issue in the world. The central point is not whether Chiang is a democrat—though that too is an important point—but that he is, in his own fashion, a shield of the United States against the thrust of communist power out of the Heartland. The debates in the Security Council are not really over the absurd procedural ritual that appears on the surface of the minutes. The ritual is like a stylized formal dance reflecting in art the battle of the Titans.

Walter Lippmann, after a tour of Europe in the Spring of 1946, told us in a widely publicized series of articles that the main issue of world politics was the contest between England and the Soviet Union, which was coming to a head in the struggle over Germany. The United States he found to be in the comfortable position of an impartial umpire who could generously intervene to mediate and settle the dispute. Mr. Lippmann was right in insisting on the crucial present role of the fight for Germany. But one look at the political map of Europe, with a side-glance at the state of India and the British colonies, should be enough to demonstrate that England could not possibly stand up as principal in a challenge to the communist power. England in Germany, whatever her intentions, functions as a detachment of the greater power which is the only existing rival in the championship class. If it were really England, and if the pressure of the United States were withdrawn from the European arena, the decision over Germany would long since have been announced.

The determining facts are merely these: Western Civilization has reached the stage in its development that calls for the creation of its Universal Empire. The technological and institutional character of Western Civilization is such that a Universal Empire of Western Civilization would necessarily at the same time be a World Empire. In the world there are only two power centers adequate to make a serious attempt to meet this challenge. The simultaneous existence of these two centers, and only these two, introduces into world political relationships an intolerable disequilibrium. The whole problem is made incomparably sharper and more immediate by the discovery

of atomic weapons, and by the race between the two power centers for atomic supremacy, which, independently of all other historical considerations, could likewise be secured only through World Empire.

One of the two power centers is itself a child, a border area, of Western Civilization. For this reason, the United States, crude, awkward, semi-barbarian, nevertheless enters this irreconcilable conflict as the representative of Western culture. The other center, though it has already subdued great areas and populations of the West, and though it has adapted for its own use many technological and organizational devices of the West, is alien to the West in origin and fundamental nature. Its victory would, therefore, signify the reduction of all Western society to the status of a subject colony. Once again, the settled peoples of the Plains would bow to the yoke of the erupting Nomads of the Steppes. This time the Nomads have taken care to equip themselves from the arsenal of the intended slaves. The horses and dogs have been transformed into tanks and bombs. And this time the Plains are the entire Earth.

Between the two great antagonists there is this other difference, that may decide. The communist power moves toward the climax self-consciously, deliberately. Its leaders understand what is at stake. They have made their choice. All their energies, their resources, their determination, are fixed on the goal. But the Western power gropes and lurches. Few of its leaders even want to understand. Like an adolescent plunged into his first great moral problem, it wishes, above all, to avoid the responsibility for choice. Genuine moral problems are, however, inescapable, and the refusal to make a choice is also a moral decision. If a child is drowning at our feet, to turn away is to decide, as fully as to save him or to push him under. It is not our individual minds or desires, but the condition of world society, that today poses for the Soviet Union, as representative of communism, and for the United States, as representative of Western Civilization, the issue of world leadership. No wish or thought of ours can charm this issue away.

This issue will be decided, and in our day. In the course of the decision, both of the present antagonists may, if it is true, be destroyed. But one of them must be.

WORLD EMPIRE AND THE BALANCE OF POWER

A world federation initiated and led by the United States would be, we have recognized, a World Empire. In this imperial federation, the United States, with a monopoly of atomic weapons, would hold a preponderance of decisive material power over all the rest of the world. In world politics, that is to say, there would not be a "balance of power."

To those commentators who feel that they are displaying a badge of political virtue when they denounce the "balance of power," the prospect of its elimination ought to seem a prime asset of the policy here under discussion. Those who are not impressed with the rhetorical surface of politics will be less pleased.

At whatever level of social life, from a small community to the world at large, a balance of power is the only sure protection of individual or group liberties. Since we cannot get rid of power, the real political choice is between a balance of diverse powers and a monopoly of power. Either one power outweighs all the rest, or separately located powers check and countercheck each other. If one power outweighs all the rest, there is no effective guarantee against the abuse of that power by the group which wields it. It will seem desirable and necessary to buttress still further the power dominance, to take measures against any future threat to the power relations, to cut off at the source any trickle of potential opposition. It will seem right that those with the over-weening power should also receive material privilege commensurate with their power ranking. Only power can be counted on to check power and to hinder its abuse. Liberty, always precarious, arises out of the unstable equilibrium that results from the conflict of competing powers.

As a solution for the present crisis, might it not therefore seem that there is little objective reason to prefer a world federation under United States leadership to a communist World Empire? Of course, we might, not altogether cynically, reflect that even if our choice is only between jailers to preside over our common prison, that is still not an occasion for indifference. But is anything more at stake? Would not the United States also, if it became world leader, turn out in the end to be world tyrant?

We must begin by replying, as we have so often: it might be so. There can be no certainty against it. We must say even more than this.

There is in American life a strain of callow brutality. This betrays itself no less in the lynching and gangsterism at home than in the arrogance and hoodiganism of soldiers or tourists abroad. The provincialism of the American mind expresses itself in a lack of sensitivity toward other peoples and other cultures. There is in many Americans an ignorant contempt for ideas and tradition and history, a complacency with the trifles of merely material triumph. Who, listening a few hours to the American radio, could repress a shudder if he thought that the price of survival would be the Americanization of the world?

2

We have already observed that the idea of "empire" carries with it a confused set of associations that is only remotely related to historical experience. There have been many empires, of many kinds, differing in almost every imaginable way in their social and political content. The only constant, the factor that leads us to call the given political aggregate an "empire," is the predominance—perhaps only to a very small degree—of a part over the whole.

It is by no means true that all empires are tyrannies. The Athenian Empire of the 5th century B. C. was for most of its history little more than a strengthened federation. Within the imperial state, Athens itself, there flourished the most vigorous political democracy of the ancient world, and in some respects of all time. Though Athens controlled the foreign policy of the federated cities and islands, in many instances she used her influence to promote democratic changes of their internal regimes.

The hand of England has been heavy on India, Malaysia, Ceylon, but she can hardly be accused of destroying there a liberty which never existed. And in what independent states has there been found more liberty than in her loosely dependent Dominions?

The imperial rule of Rome, especially if compared to the preexisting regimes of the areas to which it was gradually extended, was far from an unmixed despotism. For hundreds of years it was centered in an imperial state which was itself a Republic. Many of the cities and states which were added by force or maneuver were, upon affiliation, cemented by the grant not of slavery but of Roman citizenship. It

would be hard to prove that Roman power meant less liberty for the inhabitants of Egypt or Thrace or Parthia.

Even the Ottoman Empire, which, entering from outside, took over the rule of the enfeebled Byzantine states in Asia Minor, the Balkans, and parts of Africa, is hardly responsible for the end of liberties which had never grown on Byzantine soil. Under the Ottoman Turks, the Christians, permitted the free practice of their religion, and eligible through the peculiar device of the slave household of the capital to the highest military and administrative positions, were more free than had been heathens or heterodox Christian sects under the Byzantine power.

I am not, certainly, trying to suggest that building an empire is the best way to protect freedom. The empires of the Mongols, of the Egyptians, the Incaic and Aztec and Babylonian and Hittite empires will scarcely be included among the friends of liberty. It does, however, seem to be the case that there is no very close causal relation between empire and liberty. The lack of liberty among the Andean or Mexican Indians, the Egyptians or Mongolians or Hittites, cannot be blamed on the imperial structures into which their societies were, at various periods, politically articulated. Within their cultures, social and political liberties, as we understand them, did not exist at any time, whether or not they were organized as empires. The degree of liberty which exists within an empire seems to be relatively independent of the mere fact of the imperial political superstructure.

The extension of an empire does, by its very nature, mean at least some reduction in the independence, or sovereignty, of whatever nations or peoples become part of the empire. This is sometimes felt as a grievous loss by these nations or peoples, almost always so felt by the governing class which has previously been their unrestricted rulers—perhaps their tyrants. But this partial loss of independence need not at all mean a loss of concrete liberties for the population, may even mean their considerable development, and may bring also a great gain to civilization and world political order. Untrammled national independence is a dubious blessing, consistent with complete despotism inside the given nation, and premise of an international anarchy that derives precisely from separatist independence.

I did not attempt to deduce the totalitarian tyranny of a communist World Empire from the mere fact that it would be an empire. This

conclusion was based upon the analysis of the nature of communism, as revealed in ideology, organization, and historical practice. Though it must be granted that an imperial world federation led by the United States might also develop into a tyranny, the fact of empire does not, in this case either, make the conclusion necessary.

3

The development of an industrial economy world-wide in scope, the breakdown of the international political order, and the existence of atomic weapons are, we observed at the beginning of our discussion, the elements of the world crisis as well as the occasion for the attempt to construct a world imperial federation. This world federation is made possible by the material and social conditions, is demanded by the catastrophic acuteness of the crisis, and at the same time is a means for solving the crisis. The nature of the federation cannot be deduced from definition, but must be understood in relation to the historical circumstances out of which it may arise.

From the point of view of the United States, and of the non-communist world generally, the world federation is required in order to perform two inter-related tasks, which cannot be performed without the federation: to control atomic weapons, and to prevent mass, total, world war. With United States leadership, and only with its leadership, a federation able to perform these tasks could be built, and built in time. With the performance of these tasks, the federation would be accomplishing what might be called its "historical purpose"; it would be fulfilling the requirements which prompted its creation. The minimum content of the "American world empire" would thus be no more than that of a protective association of nations and peoples in which, for a restricted special purpose, a special power—the power of atomic weapons—would be guarded in the beginning by one member of the association.

At first there would be, perhaps, little more to the federation than this minimum content—which, after all, would not be such an unmitigated blow to the liberties of mankind. It is not, however, to be expected that the federation would remain long at this bare level. It would develop; the content would deepen. How it would develop is

a question not decided in advance. If the direction might be toward a tyrannous despotism on the part of the initially favored nation, there is no reason to rule out a development in a quite opposite direction, toward the fuller freedoms and humanity of a genuine world state and world society.

The danger to liberties would be the power predominance of the United States in the beginning of the federation. Fortunately for liberty, there are objective factors of very great weight that would operate against any attempt by the United States to institute a totalitarian world tyranny.

Not unimportant among these factors is the historical tradition which is the past of the United States social present. I have mentioned the brutality, provincialism, and cultural insensitivity which are not infrequent in United States behavior. These are, however, characteristics to be expected in a young and "semi-barbarian superstate of the cultural periphery" (I use, again, Toynbee's phrase). There is nothing totalitarian about them. Their rather anarchic, somewhat lawless, disruptive manifestations are on the whole anti-totalitarian in effect. Americans do, most of them, have a contempt for ideas; but that very contempt gives them a certain immunity to mental capture by an integral ideology of the totalitarian kind. It is less easy for a nation to escape from its past than many optimists, and pessimists, imagine. The past can be a millstone around the neck, but it can also be an anchor bringing safety. The United States may become totalitarian. It seems to me unlikely, however, that this will come about through a natural internal evolution. Totalitarianism would have to be brought from without, as it would have been by a world-victorious Nazi Germany, as it will be by the communists, if they are allowed to continue.

A second factor on the side of liberty is the inadequate power of the United States. The United States has today very great power, greater than its own spokesmen realize, great enough to build a world federation, to defeat communism, and to ensure control of atomic weapons. It does not have enough power to impose a totalitarian rule on the rest of the world. Even if the United States could concentrate enough in the form of purely military power, it lacks sufficient manpower and sufficient political experience.

What this means is that the United States can lead only by accepting others as partners, only by combining the methods of conciliation and concession with the methods of power, only by guarding the rights of others as jealously as its own privileges. If the United States refuses this mode of leadership, if it should try instead to be world despot, it might still, for a short while, subdue the world beneath an atomic terror. But the end would be swift and certain. Mankind would be avenged, and the United States destroyed. The only question would be whether all civilization would be brought down in the process.

Looked at somewhat differently, this indicates that in the projected world federation the principle of the balance of power would not in reality be suspended. At the one, narrowly military level, a balance would be replaced by United States preponderance. But military force, especially in the technical sense which is alone at stake in the control of atomic weapons, is by no means the only form of social power. In terms of population, material resources, cultural skills and experience, the United States would not at all outweigh the other members of the federation. Within the framework of the federation, divided powers would continue to interact. Through their mutual checks and balances, they would operate to prevent any totalitarian crystallization of all power.

A third, ironic protection of liberty is the unwillingness of the United States to rule the world. No people, pushed by forces they cannot control, ever entered on the paths of world power with less taste for the journey, with more nostalgic backward glances. This distaste, indeed, is so profound that it is primarily significant not so much as a protection against the abuse of United States power, but rather as a tragic handicap to the sufficient utilization of that power.

There is a fourth major factor which will challenge any despotic presumption on the part of the United States. In the world today there are many millions of men and women who know the meaning of totalitarian tyranny, often through the frightful lessons of direct experience, and who are resolved, if any chance is given them, to fight against it. They are within the United States itself, as within every other nation, not the least firm among them silent for the moment under the stranglehold of the communist power. The loss of liberty teaches best, perhaps, its meaning. Though they are now, after so

many betrayals and vain hopes, close to despair, they are still ready to act again.

They are ready, since there is no other way, to accept and follow the leadership of the United States, but only if they are given reason to believe that United States leadership will bring both power and justice: power so that there will be a chance to win, and justice so that the victory will be worth winning. They will follow not as subjects of the United States, but, in their own minds, as citizens of the world. For them, all governments and all power are suspect. They will be—they are—stern judges of the United States; they are acquainted with the symptoms of tyranny; they will observe and resist every invasion of liberty. If experience should prove to them that their hope in the United States is also empty, then they will abandon the United States.

The United States cannot compete in tyranny with the communists. The communists have cornered that political market. The peoples of the world will reason that if it is to be totalitarianism anyway, then it had might as well be the tried and tested brand. The United States will not win the peoples to her side—and the struggle in the end is for them, is not merely military—unless her leadership is anti-totalitarian, unless she can make herself the instrument of the hope, not the fear, of mankind.

4

In Chapter 3 we reached the conclusion that a genuine world government was not a possible solution of the present world political crisis. At the same time we found no reason for abandoning the ideal of a genuine world government or even the far nobler ideal of a world society in which the coercion and violence which are always part of any government would be replaced by the free, cooperative union of all mankind.

Those men who are dedicated to these ideals, who have rid their hearts forever of the bitter nationalist shell that divides them from their brothers who are all men, cannot remain satisfied with any such perspective as we have been examining. With the best of chances, a world federation led, however generously and discreetly, by the United

States would still retain its gross flaw of imperial inequality. Must they, then, these dedicated men, reject and condemn this perspective?

I think they need not, if their ideal is more than self-indulgence, if they know that their ideal must be realized within and through the harsh, real world of history. For them, this is the means; there is no other way. They cannot want for its own sake a federation of unequals, led by the United States. But they must want it as the necessary step toward their own goal of a world society of equals, in which they will continue to believe, and toward which their influence will try to direct the future of the federation.

5

Let us assume that I am correct in maintaining that world organization under communist leadership and world organization under United States leadership are the only two real alternatives in the present world political situation.

Communism, consistent in itself, is not troubled by any seeming disparities between the various propaganda masks through which it faces the world. From one mouth, it will tell us that all is well within the Soviet Union and among communists everywhere, and that any story of communist villainy is a fascist slander and a counter-revolutionary lie. If we have learned too much to be in this way quite lulled, communism will change mouths, and say: of course communists are now and then guilty of excesses, and there has been some Soviet trouble, but is this not the way of the world? How can the United States, with its own eye so full of beams, object to those Soviet notes? If communists are rather bad, well, at any rate Americans are no better.

This adroit maneuver, playing as it does so skillfully on all the strings of our own guilt, has a paralyzing effect on the minds and wills of honest men. Is it not true that we oppress a subject race, that we grab military bases, that our soldiers rape and rob, that we have dismal slums, that our propaganda is often false and hypocritical, that much of our press serves rich and wicked men, that we have grafters and absentee landlords and exploiters? What right do we have, then, to criticize communism, to set up our own way against its way? What

choice is there between us? And, above all, what right have we to ask the world to choose?

Because I have not tried to conceal either the present defects in our society or the threats of future danger, but rather to force these out into the open, I feel it necessary to comment on the subtle, pseudo-humility of this attitude.

The truth is this. Our way is not the communist way. There is a difference, and there is a choice, as profound as any that men have in history confronted. We do not ever have, in history, a choice between absolutes, between Good and Evil, God and Satan. Evil, along with good, pervades the fabric of the City of the World; Satan, if not enthroned, is always present at the world's assemblies. Our choice is always between gray mixtures of good and evil; our right choice can never gain more than the lesser evil. What is always relevant, therefore, is the exact composition of the mixture, the degree, the measure.

It is true that we discriminate against the Negro race; but the most oppressed Negro in the United States has ten times more freedom than nine-tenths of the persons subject to the communist power. It is true that there are some frauds in our elections; but the whole electoral system of the Soviet Union is nothing but a gigantic fraud and farce. It is true, and wrong, that our press sometimes distorts news for the sake of selfish owners; but the entire communist press is simply the voice of a total lie. Some of our workers and farmers live in poverty and slums; but all Soviet workers live, under communist rule, in poverty and slums; all are hounded by a secret police and tied to the state by labor passports, and fifteen or twenty million of them are herded into the slave-gangs of the N.K.V.D. Our soldiers, occupying a country, are, some of them, brutal; but the communists, occupying a country, suck it dry, destroy its independent life, ship hundreds of thousands of its inhabitants back to the slave-gangs, and torture and kill every even potential opponent. Our police occasionally knock a striker over the head, or beat up a harmless drunk; but the communist police torture and frame and exile and murder millions of innocent men and women, and by means of spies and provocateurs reach into every factory and farm and home. Our employers and authorities sometimes try to break a strike; under a communist regime the very mention of a strike is punishable by death. We sometimes punish a poor man who in desperation steals, say, a jewel from a rich waster; in

the Soviet Union a starving peasant who takes, to feed his children, a bushel of wheat from the farm he works, can legally be sentenced to exile or death for what, in the pious cant, is called "the theft of socialist property." In communist law and practice, it is a crime not to be a stoolpigeon, and a duty to betray friends and wife and family. Among us, the poor and weak do not have an equal chance against the rich and powerful; under the communists the poor and weak must not only obey, but praise and fawn on their masters.

It is far from my purpose to list these comparisons in order to suggest any complacency on our part. Our evils are still evil, even if there are worse. It is no less our duty to reject and overcome them. Every one of them, every added one, it may be noted, is a weapon contributed to communism. But it is necessary to guard against a false and in reality cynical indifference which escapes the responsibility for choice by the plea that all roads are alike, and alike lead to ruin. It is well to recall that there is something, after all, to lose.

It will be useful to give a name to the supreme policy which I have formulated. It is neither "imperial" nor "American" in any sense that would be ordinarily communicated by these words. The partial leadership which it allots to the United States follows not from any nationalist bias but from the nature and possibilities of existing world power relationships. Because this policy is the only answer to the communist plan for a universal totalitarianism, because it is the only chance for preserving the measure of liberty that is possible for us in our Time of Troubles, and because it proposes the sole route now open toward a free world society, I shall henceforth refer to it as *the policy of democratic world order*.