

# The PROGRESSIVE

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# What's The Matter With America?

By **MORRIS H. RUBIN**  
(Editor Of The Progressive)

**WHAT'S** happened to the conscience of America?

Has it been so battered and bashed by nearly 4 years of total war that we have lost all feeling for freedom, all sensitivity to injustice and oppression?

Last week there occurred in the American occupation zone of Germany the greatest Gestapo raid in history—conducted by American boys acting under orders of a power-drunk, revenge-minded military bureaucracy—and there was hardly a peep of protest in this land of the free and home of the brave.

Five hundred thousand American boys, who were once told that they were being conscripted to fight a war for freedom, were ordered out one night last week to search and ransack every home and person—15,000,000 men, women, and children—in the area of conquered Germany that we police and occupy.

And what were the results of this Himmler-like terror raid? The front-page headlines here at home screamed that 80,000 had been arrested, but far, far down in the story was the cold fact that the overwhelming majority were released immediately after establishing their identification.

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**BRIG. GEN. Edwin Sibert**, Chief of Intelligence in occupied Germany, jubilantly proclaimed the "operation" as "very successful," but admitted, according to a wireless dispatch to the New York Times:

"The search uncovered no evidence of organized resistance. All weapons and other illegal property appeared to be in the hands of persons who individually were just stupid or criminal. On the whole, the investigation showed less lawlessness than you probably would find in a similar area in the United States.

"But the raids apparently did upset the civilian population quite a bit—which is a good thing."

Americans who hadn't realized the extent to which Hitler's ideas have engulfed our own leaders

must rub their eyes in amazement at this fantastic statement by a ranking American officer.

American boys who never bargained for a contemptible Gestapo assignment when they were drafted to fight for the Four Freedoms must have been ashamed of their night-riding, Ku Klux-style raid on the homes of 15,000,000 Germans.

But perhaps most pitiful of all was the silence of the American press—and the continuing "see no evil, hear no evil, and speak no evil" attitude of American liberals.

Of all the great dailies which come to this office, only one—believe it or not, the arch reactionary Chicago Tribune—had the courage to speak up of America's shame.

The rest were miserably and contemptibly silent—yes, even those which profess to progressivism and load their mastheads with high-sounding humbuggy about their role as guardians of light and liberty.

What IS the matter with America?

Where is the nation's conscience? Where is the liberal's love of liberty? Where is America's contempt for those who rub noses in the dirt? Where is our loathing of arrogance and our wrathful indignation for the Hitler doctrine of total hate and total intolerance?

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**HAVE** we been fighting Hitler so long that we have taken on his image? Are we—after all these bitter, bloody months, with a million casualties thus far—to prove Goebbels a great prophet when he taunted us with the prediction that "Nazism cannot be defeated for even if we lose on the field of battle, our ideas will in the end engulf the victors"?

Isn't the conscience of America disturbed at all when we learn that the name of democratic America is becoming a symbol of hate and bigotry and arrogance in the zone of Germany we patrol? Aren't we just a little bit ashamed to read that non-

## The American Way



**WITH** malice toward none; with charity for all; with firmness in the right, as God gives us to see the right, — let us strive on to finish the work we are in: to bind up the nation's wounds; to care for him who shall have borne the battle, and for his widow and his orphan; to do all which may achieve and cherish a just and lasting peace among ourselves, and with all nations.

*Abraham Lincoln in his Second Inaugural Address, March 4, 1865.*

Nazi Germans in our zone are beginning to talk wistfully of life in the zone occupied by dictatorial Russia, the Russia they feared and hated so much? Isn't there in this fantastic contradiction the kind of challenge that a free America ought to grasp with daring and courage and a crusading zeal to spread democracy, and not a negative counsel of brutality and vigilantism and bigotry?

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**A**MERICANS, more than any other people on earth, should understand the harvest of hate that comes from this type of treatment of a conquered people. The immortal Lincoln, towering far above the petty lust for revenge of his day, dared to stand up to the hatemongers with his noble doctrine of "malice toward none and charity for all." The memory of this man and his great understanding shine ever brighter through the years—while the small spirits and midget minds who clamored for—and got—their revenge are forgotten or marked in our history as blundering asses.

Today, we in America have the example of that period and the counsel of a great man to guide us. But our memory falters and our conscience sleeps.

We have talked of a war for freedom, and we now agree to the trading of peoples and the extension of totalitarianism.

We have denounced the secret connivings of the Axis gangsters hidden away at Berchtesgaden, but today we sanction the secret bartering by our

(Continued on Page 2)

## In This Issue

### *The British Labor Sweep*

By **WILLIAM HENRY CHAMBERLIN**

### *Additional Comment On The British Elections In The War In Review And The Last Column*

**OSWALD GARRISON VILLARD**

*Four Freedoms Under The American Flag*

**RICHARD L. NEUBERGER**

*Protector Of The Nation's Wilderness*

**WATSON B. DAVIS**

*Science And The Peace*

**MARY SHERIDAN**

*Wanted: Prices Tied To Quality*

Book Reviews By **DAVID D. DALLIN, MILTON MAYER, ANTHONY NETBOY**

**FRANK C. HANIGHEN**

*Pattern Of Imperialism In The Far East*

**ERNEST L. MEYER**

*Is There A Doctor In The House?*

**JAMES S. HAMILTON**

*Light On The Movies*

**ISABEL B. LA FOLLETTE**

*A Picture Is Taken*

# THE WAR IN REVIEW

**T**HE growing American demand for abandonment of the sterile doctrine of Unconditional Surrender and the substitution of affirmative Allied objectives in the war against Japan bore fruit last week when the Messrs. Truman, Churchill, and Chiang Kai-shek signed an ultimatum to the Japanese Government which laid down a 13-point proclamation of the terms and conditions which we will impose if the Nipponese lay down their arms.



Hirohito

The Potsdam proclamation, signed by Churchill just before he resigned in the face of an electoral landslide against the Conservative Party, by President Truman, and by the Chinese leader, who was not present in person at Potsdam, offered the Japanese people peaceful, productive lives, ultimate sovereignty in their home islands, the end of costly militarism, the opportunity to develop a prosperous civilian economy, and the democratic way of life if they surrender immediately.

Alternative to surrender, the Japanese were warned, is "prompt and utter destruction." Significantly, the proclamation omitted reference to Emperor Hirohito, leading many a commentator to guess that the Japanese could conclude, if they wished, that the way had been left open for them to save their imperial throne by capitulating now.

Among the important provisions were:  
The complete capitulation of all Japanese armed forces.

Granting the Allies occupation zones at any point in Japanese territory designated by the Allies, but the victors promise to withdraw their occupying forces as soon as possible and "there has been established in accordance with the freely expressed will of the Japanese people a peacefully inclined and responsible government."

Punishment of all war criminals, but a specific pledge that "we do not intend that the Japanese shall be enslaved as a race or destroyed as a nation."

Japanese military forces after being completely disarmed shall be permitted to return to their homes "with the opportunity of leading peaceful and productive lives."

A guarantee of "freedom of speech and religion and thought as well as respect for fundamental human life."

Elimination for all time of Japan's warring classes and leaders.

Japanese sovereignty to be restricted to the 4 main home islands, but the terms of the Cairo Declaration will be observed.

## Murderous Assault Goes On

The ultimatum, of course, was rejected by the Japanese in their first statements, but many a seasoned observer felt that Tokyo was fishing for information on whether we would yield beyond the new conditions. The first official reaction was emphatically and unequivocally against acceptance of the Allied ultimatum, but subsequent statements were less sweeping.

In a press conference this week Premier Kantaro Suzuki of Japan rejected the Potsdam ultimatum, saying "there is no change whatsoever in the fundamental policy of our government in regard to the prosecution of the war. I am fully satisfied and gratified there exists a strong confidence among our fighting forces."

What this "strong confidence" could be based on wasn't very clear, for even as the Japanese premier was speaking, American naval and air forces continued their murderous assault on Nipponese cities. The Japanese Navy seemed to have been dealt a mortal blow by Anglo-American raiders, and it offered virtually no challenge to the high-riding Allied task forces. Certainly the Japanese people were paying a frightful price for the refusal of their leaders to accept the inevitable.

The Potsdam proclamation and the accompanying hope for an early end to the war shared world headlines this week with the great triumph of Great Britain's Labor Party. (See Pages 5 and 12.) Winston Churchill's



Attlee

Churchill

Eden

regime took a tremendous drubbing in its bid for power in peacetime, the great majority deciding that the home front needed far more drastic and progressive action than was likely to be launched by the Conservatives.

Churchill himself was reelected to his old seat in the House of Commons. Under the British parliamentary system, the people do not elect their chief executive, as



Hutton in the Philadelphia Inquirer

## Only That Piece Of Paper Is Indispensable

Americans do, but vote only for a member of Parliament to represent their district. The party electing the majority of the House of Commons is invited by the King (who has no discretion at all, but must pick the dominant party) to form the government. That victorious party, in forming the cabinet, picks its leader for the post of Prime Minister.

Tapped for the position last week was a quiet, colorless British barrister and moderate Socialist—Maj. Clement Attlee—who was deputy prime minister in Churchill's coalition war cabinet. Attlee, leader of the British Labor Party for a number of years, selected Ernest Bevin, hard-boiled union leader and labor minister in the coalition government, as Foreign Secretary, succeeding Anthony Eden, who was reelected to his seat in Parliament, but is now only another of the chamber's 640 members.

Herbert Morrison, Attlee's principal understudy, was named new lord president of the council. Other cabinet selections were: Hugh Dalton, chancellor of the Exchequer; Arthur Greenwood, Lord Privy Seal; Sir Stafford Cripps, president of the Board of Trade, and William Allen Jowitt, Lord Chancellor.

In stepping down from his fateful and brilliant wartime leadership, Churchill said he regretted that "I have not been permitted to finish the work against Japan. For this, however, all plans and preparations have been made, and the results may come much quicker than we have hitherto been entitled to expect."

"It only remains for me to express to the British peo-

ple, for whom I have acted in these perilous years, my profound gratitude for the unflinching, unswerving support which they have given me during my task, and for the many expressions of kindness which they have shown towards their servants."

The program for which the Labor Party contended is outlined in its pamphlet, *Let Us Face The Future*, in which the following key platform planks are stressed:

1. The Bank of England, foundation of the British banking system, must be nationalized so as to provide full utilization of the country's financial resources for control of unemployment.

2. The rehousing program must be greatly accelerated and present legal barriers to the purchase of private property for purposes of town and country planning will be removed by act of Parliament.

3. The coal mines, electricity and gas supply, the steel industry, and principal domestic transport lines must be nationalized.

4. Surplus military forces will be demobilized promptly, but, the party promised, not at the expense of full prosecution of the war against Japan.

## EUROPEAN MERRY-GO-ROUND

Gen. Charles de Gaulle and his provisional government suffered a major setback last week when the French Consultative Assembly voted 210 to 19 against his proposals for a referendum as a means of obtaining a national decision on constitutional reform. In the debate which preceded the vote, de Gaulle hinted he might resign if the Assembly deserted him on a fundamental point. Opponents charged that de Gaulle was seeking more personal power in wanting to go back to the 1875 constitution. . . .



De Gaulle

In an interview last week in Switzerland, Charles Poletti, head of the Allied Military Government in Italy, predicted that Italy will soon return to a free economy. The country's rebirth, however, is impossible, he said, unless the Italians help themselves and accept any work set before them. . . . Dr. Vladimir Matchek, leader of Yugoslavia's famed Croatian Peasant Party, last week accused Marshal Tito of seeking to establish a complete Communist dictatorship in Yugoslavia.

China's relations with both the United States and Russia were subjected to sharp analysis by Communists in Moscow and Yenan last week. The Kremlin authorized news reports from Moscow that the recent conversations between Stalin and Chinese Premier T. V. Soong "have paved the way for an understanding heretofore never achieved by the 2 nations." Meanwhile, the Chinese Communist radio at Yenan charged that American policy toward China had become "definitely imperialistic" and would reduce China to the status of "a colony or semi-colony of the United States." Washington observers expected a more aggressive Soviet policy in China as a result of this preliminary chatter from Moscow and Yenan. There was another curious development at mid-week. Soong was removed from his position as foreign minister, but he retained his post as premier of China. The significance of this move was not immediately known.

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By MORRIS H. RUBIN

(Continued from Page 1)

leaders in a guarded "compound" at the Prussian palace of Potsdam.

**We have bragged of a war to end imperialism, but now we not only accept the growing imperialism of our Allies, but also prepare to take a new flier in imperialism of our own.**

This, we shouted, was a war against militarism, but our Allies and ourselves are preparing to embark on the greatest armament race of all time.

**This war, we proclaimed, was to be a death-blow against regimentation, but we are moving now toward peacetime conscription for the first time in our history.**

We announced to the world that this was a war against racism, but in our first hour of victory we mass indict a whole people for the crimes and sins of their leaders.

**This, we told the world and assured ourselves, was a war to carry the Four Freedoms "everywhere in the world," but now "freedom from fear" and "freedom from want" are to be denied millions of people in our lust for vengeance.**

Even as we were destroying the Gestapo, we were taking the Gestapo's place; even as we were conquering Nazism on the field of battle, we were borrowing from Nazism in the field of ideas.

\* \* \*

The degrading American exhibition in Germany

last week will cost us dearly in badly needed good will all through Europe. America's great role—to prove to the peoples of Europe by the power of our example that democracy is their best bet in the momentous period just ahead—seems to have been perverted and distorted by an arrogant clique of brass hats—and civilian officials too—into a determination to show the Germans that Hitler had given a system worth imitating and emulating.

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**T**HE people of America have done too magnificent a job in winning the war—on the battlefield and in the factories, farms, and mines—to have the fruits of their sweat and toil and blood and sacrifice squandered away by a new school of cynics and "realists."

We cannot export democracy or tolerance or justice or a way of life, or force these on people at the point of a bayonet. We can build respect and a healthy faith in democracy by our national example of what we Americans do—at home and abroad—to make democracy work.

Nothing short of a complete reversal of our present policies in Europe can do the job the American way. It isn't too late to shake ourselves out of our moral doldrums and face up to the challenge of our time, as Lincoln did in his. But it is later than we think.

What IS the matter with America?