

"A PROPOSAL FOR WESTERN SURVIVAL?"
A Pilgrim's Progress from "Containment"

I am not sure how much weight the adage noblesse oblige carries nowadays, but if it carries any, I believe it may be legitimately construed to justify the need for a critical examination of the ideas propounded by Mr. George Kennan in his article appearing under the above title in The New Leader of November 16, 1959. The views of Mr. X, the author of the doctrine of containment of the Soviet Union, of a former director of the State Department's Policy Planning Staff, and of a professor of history at the Princeton Institute of Advanced Study, to mention only some of his titles to eminence, cannot be disregarded. They can, however, I submit, be challenged.

Mr. Kennan states correctly, in my opinion, that "the road to a more successful foreign policy lies partly through the sanification and invigoration of our own society" - a subject to which I will return later - but it certainly also lies partly in the formulation and execution of a correct policy. For even the soundest society will meet disaster if it follows the wrong policy.

Mr. Kennan's views will be examined in the order he has chosen to follow.

Mr. Kennan starts with Berlin. Everybody will certainly agree that the situation of that city is abnormal and unsatisfactory; but ~~the~~ the further statement that it "is not really soluble except within the framework of a wider agreement on German unification generally, " is only true if "really" is taken to mean "ideally."

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When two parties disagree, a solution may be based on "moral" grounds - in other words, on rights, either moral, juridical, or "natural" - or on the power relationship, in other words, on force. Mr. Kennan makes light of the "moral issue" which even if it were "as clear as (some) people see it . . . has nothing to do with practical politics." What he advocates is a compromise, for "we are not strong enough . . . to have our way without compromise." Only then can we "expect that any progress is going to be made at all."

It is surprising to find a historian denying the importance of moral issues in practical politics, for if that were true, why would all Real-politiker take such pains to prove that right is on their side? In the broader context, the entire Soviet policy is allegedly justified on moral grounds, on the duty, not simply the right,¹ to liberate the proletariat from bourgeois enslavement, and in the narrower context, the Soviet demand for a change in the status of Berlin is based on the allegation that Allied occupation rights, formally conceded by Khrushchev, being now obsolete, the USSR now has a moral right to demand their relinquishment.

Actually, a distinction should be made between two kinds of rights. Strictly speaking, nobody has any rights in Germany or the captive nations of Eastern Europe, for military occupation being achieved by force, the right of occupation simply means the right of force, a plain contradiction in adjecto. In this sense, Mr. Kennan is justified in claiming that the moral issues are

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Duty is, of course, a far handier moral tool than right for the would-be

not as clear as some people see them. But he seems to overlook the fact that rights do arise from agreements. And he cannot deny any more than does Khrushchev himself that the present status of Berlin conforms to the agreements between the Four Powers, or that the Potsdam agreement provided for a united Germany. That obviously means that the German nation as a whole must decide upon its regime by free elections. No objective person can find any ambiguity in these moral issues. Pacta sunt servanda.

Granted that the present situation in Germany is abnormal. But the solution is not for the Western parties to give up their rights, but for the Russians to honor their agreement to permit a free and united Germany - which would solve the Berlin question too.

But let us go along, for argument's sake, with Mr. Kennan's argument that moral issues - which in this case means Western rights - are irrelevant so far as Germany is concerned and that, as a matter of practical politics, we are not and never will be strong enough to "have our way without compromise."

Let us stop to consider what the present situation is. It is, of course, a compromise. Instead of a unified and free Germany, truncated it is true, for the benefit of Poland and Russia, but free to conclude alliances as its interests may dictate, we have a divided Germany, the eastern part of which, with the exception of West Berlin, is effectively under Russian domination.

The present tension does not arise from any Western demands to change the

conqueror. Duties do not have to be rationally proved, they can simply be proclaimed on "higher" grounds. The Crusaders, for example, did not argue the right to dominate the Holy Land, they considered it their duty to liberate it from the Infidels.

status quo, as Mr. Kennan implies, but from a Russian demand. As far as is known, Moscow has never offered a quid pro quo for a change in the status of West Berlin. All it has done is to threaten in case of refusal to conclude a peace treaty with the East Germans, with the clear implication that this would mean trouble. To give up something in exchange for the withdrawal of a threat is obviously not a compromise, but bowing to blackmail.

Mr. Kennan sidesteps this unpalatable conclusion by his above-quoted statement that "the Berlin situation is not really soluble except within the framework of a wider agreement on German unification generally." While it is perfectly true that such an agreement would be the ideal solution, it is not true that this is the only solution, for the compromise offered by the Foreign Ministers in Geneva was certainly a possible - and very generous - solution. But the trouble is that even if the Berlin controversy were insoluble, one cannot solve this insoluble minor problem by linking it to a major problem which is equally insoluble - otherwise than by unconditional surrender on the part of the Western Powers. What Mr. Kennan has to say on the subject of mutual "concessions" is too long to be quoted and too involved to be adequately summarized, but the gist is sufficiently clear from the final sentences: "Moscow, in short, could abandon its military position in Central and Eastern Europe; we would still not be prepared to abandon our position in Western Europe . . . This means . . . we would not be willing to pay any serious price to the Russians to achieve (German unification.)"

Since we know, although Mr. Kennan does not mention it, that the Russian pre-conditions for German unification include the perpetuation of the "social gains" of East Germany - meaning its communist regime - and the disfranchisement of all "anti-democratic" elements in West Germany, one needs no special gift of clairvoyance to visualize a completely "socialized" Germany within three years, judging by precedents in the people's democracies."

The price we would therefore be paying would be West Germany and a military fallback of roughly 200 miles. On their part, the Russian forces would fall back some 350 miles (the distance between Kaliningrad and Wittenberg). In other words, we would trade all the resources of West Germany for an additional 150 miles to be covered by Soviet tanks and jets over territory already under their control.

If we accepted such a "compromise," Esau would appear by comparison to have been a shrewd bargainer.

Another thing Mr. Kennan seems to have overlooked is the reason why the "underlying negotiating positions on the Western side have tended to be

stilted, cramped, and inflexible, " although it should be obvious enough. The situation at the end of the war being itself the result of earlier compromise - control of East Central Europe in return for Germany's unconditional surrender - it left the Western Powers with their backs so close to the precipice, that Mr. Kennan himself was moved to call a halt. His advice was followed, but did not prevent a further fallback in Czechoslovakia. When he now advises another step backward - for what else can paying a serious price for German unification mean? - it is hardly sensible to expect graceful acrobatics from men in so precarious a position. They would be not only dangerous, but entirely futile, for Mr. Kennan should know as well as everybody else that the West cannot give up West Germany to the Russians, and that the Russians are not going to agree to a free united Germany. Or if they do, it will only be at a price which will cripple the West in one way or another.

Inasmuch as there does not seem to be any conceivable reason why moral considerations should be accorded any greater weight after than before this particular compromise agreement, there would be nothing to prevent the Russians from making further demands as soon as they chose to. Appetite comes with the eating. And "practical politics" would then force the West to pay an even higher price for the next "compromise" with a more powerful Russia. And so on ad libitum.

This would indeed seem to be unexpected advice from the spiritual father of the containment policy.

But Mr. Kennan is pessimistic with regard to the chances of acceptance of his advice. So he expects, at best, that the forthcoming summit meeting will reach an agreement on a new interim status for Berlin "involving no new basic changes." To many in the West, such a solution of the crisis provoked by Khrushchev's ultimatum of November 1958 might seem an important, even if rather unspectacular result - certainly far preferable to the "compromise" outlined above. If, on the other hand, the summit meeting is unable to reach an agreement "even on this limited question," what reason is there to expect agreement later on? For if it cannot reach agreement on Berlin, this would be conclusive evidence that it likewise could not do so "on more final and momentous occasions." Surely it should be obvious that the Berlin controversy is but a minor episode in the East-West conflict, raised chiefly by Khrushchev to enforce acceptance of the summit meeting. The solution of this particular problem of Berlin depends on the shape relations between the two blocs will take and there can be no doubt that it is this fundamental issue that Khrushchev wants to discuss. Obviously, under present conditions, negotiations on concrete matters can only be fruitfully held once agreement on principles has been reached. And only a summit meeting can possibly throw any light on that subject.

What Mr. Kennan and others with him again seem to overlook is that conflicts between powers over sovereignty, occupation, protection and

similar local rights can be either cause or effect of international tensions. History shows numerous examples of conflicting claims being adjusted at lower levels when no broader issues were involved, as, for example, the Italo-Jugoslav conflict over Venezia Giulia, the Greek-Turkish conflict over Cyprus, etc., but none being adjusted, except after previous agreement at the highest levels, when fundamental power rivalries clashed, as, for example, those over their respective spheres of influence in Asia and Africa between France and England, ^{and} Russia and England, at the turn of the century.

Clearly, the present tension between the USSR and the West has not arisen because of any developments in the situation in Berlin. It has arisen because Khrushchev wants a showdown in Europe under the protection of the nuclear stalemate and Berlin seems to him the most suitable irritant. And that is hardly a matter for low-level discussions.

It might have been long since obvious that if Moscow was determined to have a showdown, it would find some way to make it unavoidable, and in that case it might have been wiser to accept gracefully what one could not escape. The moral status of the West could hardly be enhanced by refusing to talk, and whether the propagandistic disadvantage was outweighed by the gains in time, is very questionable. Anyway the question seems now to be settled, and I for one see no reason to regret it. After all, a conference, even at the summit, does not commit us to anything. Since Khrushchev is the one who has asked for the meeting, he will not very well be able just to talk

about the weather or crack jokes, and if he does, there is no harm in our harassed chiefs of state relaxing a little. It will be up to him to put his cards on the table, and that would be all to the good. If his proposals are unacceptable and if our case is as strong as we believe it to be, we should at least have obtained a complete clarification of our repective^s points of view - invariably represented as a valuable achievement after any international meeting - and, it is to be hoped, we would have taken advantage of this unique opportunity at last to state our case authoritatively, forcefully, and aggressively before a world-wide audience. Surely, we cannot admit that our case is weaker than that of our opponents or that the best brains of the West are no match for Russian brains. If we do not have that much confidence in ourselves, we might as well give up.

Mr. Kennan is afraid that failure to agree at a summit meeting would change the recent "unstable relaxation of tensions" into something worse than before. But if, as has been proved, the lower level negotiating process did not - and could not - lead to agreement, does he seriously believe that persistent rejection of the summit meeting would improve the situation? Khrushchev has merely agreed to postpone the showdown, he has not given it up.

Since Mr. Kennan himself has fortunately given up his advocacy of disengagement, there is no need to dwell on that subject. That leaves, as he says, the armed forces of the adversaries "engaged" in "glaring at each other

over a line through the middle of Germany, " ^{some} for/time to come. Indeed, one can only share Mr. Kennan's lack of confidence in the speedy elimination of the foot soldier from the picture, in other words, in the success of Khrushchev's proposal for a total abolition of all national armaments. One can also agree with him that it would be an excellent thing if nuclear weapons at least were abolished, provided of course that, as he says, our conventional armaments were greatly strengthened and adequate inspection facilities were established. However, Mr. Kennan appears once more to overlook two major obstacles:

What is actually even more important than a strengthening of American conventional forces, vitally important as it would be, is a strengthening of European conventional forces to the point where they would be more than a match for Soviet armed power. That the 280 million highly industrialized people of Western Europe should be militarily inferior to the 210 million Russians - the satellites would hardly be an asset in the foreseeable future - is well nigh incredible. They can easily reverse the situation and there is no excuse for not doing so. But whether they will do so, with or without excuse, is another matter, and there is nothing the US can do to force them to take that step.

Nobody expects the NATO forces as at present constituted to be able to offer more than token resistance to a Russian offensive, and the most powerful American army would be of little use on the other side of the

Atlantic - or even in Europe if it had to be supplied from America.

But let us assume that the NATO powers did decide to increase their conventional forces to a level at least equal to the Russian. One can easily imagine the violence of Communist propaganda - both within and without the Bloc - and its effect on the uncommitted nations, especially while the Western delegates were solemnly expatiating on the virtues of disarmament in the United Nations Disarmament Commission. The temptation for Moscow to do something more than just threatening as it did after the Suez operation and to nip the development in the bud by armed intervention, for which Khrushchev could as easily find a pretext in West Germany as he did in Hungary, would be irresistible - but for one thing: The quasi certainty of starting a nuclear war. Granted everything Mr. Kennan says so eloquently about the horrors and drawbacks of nuclear warfare, it still remains true that its abolition is out of the question for the West so long as the NATO forces have not been considerably increased. If the Russians are at all sincere about disarmament, it is they who should offer to reduce their conventional forces to the level of Western European forces - or even somewhat lower to compensate for the advantage of unity of direction. After that, abolition of nuclear weapons could properly be tackled. But it goes without saying that acceptance by the Russians of even the most far reaching controls and inspection of all aspects of disarmament must be a sine qua non, provided only they are also accepted by the other side. Russian reluctance

to match Western offers of effective inspection facilities is certainly most suspicious. Indeed the more the Russians quibble, the more indispensable are these facilities made to appear.

In the meantime one of the facts of life is that we must just make the best of a bad job and live under the threat of the nuclear mushroom. After all, the Christian World has been living under the threat of Doomsday for almost 2000 years, which, as visualized by our medieval artists, will be pretty horrible however brought about. On the other hand, if in the last analysis, the certainty of retribution which makes an attack tantamount to suicide keeps a man from committing murder, the nuclear deterrent may not be so bad after all. If the Communist leaders still really believe in the teachings of Marx, they should not provoke the nuclear holocaust, for it would seriously interfere with the realization of the inevitable Communist millennium, which even Khrushchev admits will take some time to achieve. Moreover, according to the laws discovered by Marx, the development of human society is governed by economic factors, not by nuclear explosions. Khrushchev cannot possibly contemplate making a fool of Marx - and of Lenin, too, of course. And I do not think Mr. Kennan suspects the leaders of the Western nations of planning a nuclear aggression against the Communist camp.

When all is said and done, we are back again to the basic question: What do the Soviet leaders want? It ^ccannot be stressed too often, consider-

ing how many people seem to forget it, that after all, the present "tension" was brought about by the Communists, not by the Free World. Beginning in 1848, Marx advocated the violent overthrow of governments, Lenin practiced it, Stalin expanded the Soviet Empire by force of arms, and Khrushchev's avowed long-range objective is to "bury" us, and his avowed short-range objective since November 1958 is to boot the Western Powers out of Berlin. It is true he professes to want to achieve our demise by economic competition. In this he is very possibly quite sincere as of now, but what confidence can one have in the steadfastness of a man or his successors whose moral canon is Marxism-Leninism, the basic principle of which is that the ends justify the means, and which boasts - with full justification - of its flexibility? No greater insult could be levelled at an honest Communist than to insinuate that he is so bourgeois as to allow respect for his word to stand between him and the triumph of the cause.

Khrushchev, who is so fond of quoting Russian sayings, is certainly familiar with the old story of wolf! wolf! which is part of Russian folklore too. He should be reminded of it ad nauseam, every time he repeats such statements as that the Communists have never taken over a country by force, or that they have always respected the Five Principles of peaceful coexistence, among them respect for territorial integrity and sovereignty; non-aggression; non-interference with each other's affairs for economic, political, or ideological reasons. Shades of Finland, of Bessarabia, of East Prussia,

of Eastern Poland, of Carpatho-Ruthenia; of the Baltic States and all the Satellites! And last but not least, of the military intervention in Hungary, of which Khrushchev, unable to put the blame on the "cult of personality," is driven to boast. It was, he claims, a purely internal affair and he only did his communist duty. The pattern is clear: A handful of Quislings set up a "socialist" government, on Soviet soil, as Kadar has now admitted; the rest becomes an internal affair, and force is frowned upon only in international conflicts. Neither is there any question of ruling out class war. Not later than on October 31, Khrushchev reminded the Supreme Soviet that there cannot be "any concessions of principle . . . in matters of our ideology" which would be "a betrayal of the cause of the working class." It is therefore the alleged interests of the "working class" which are decisive for any Soviet action, not the text of any agreement, still less the general principles of international law.

One may well believe that Khrushchev is sincere in his desire for world peace for the next 10 to 12 years, by which time the Soviet Bloc can hope to have become the leading industrial power in the world. But only the very naive can believe that Moscow would have any compunction over changing its policy at any time, if it decided this to be in the interest of the "working class" - as interpreted by the leaders of its vanguard. This does, of course, not necessarily mean war; indeed I am quite willing to agree that the Soviet leaders are and always were against war. But it means that they are very likely to use the threat of overpowering force

in the expectations of achieving their objectives without war, just as Hitler did in the cases of Austria and Czechoslovakia. The only time Soviet Russia has been engaged in aggressive war was with Finland in 1939, but that was by mistake. They never expected tiny Finland to resist. All the other Soviet acquisitions were achieved ~~either~~ by threats of armed attack, open or implied, and domination of the Satellites was, of course, achieved by seizing the opportunity presented by the defensive war against Germany.

In conformity with this pattern, we must expect one of Moscow's objectives to be to achieve such an edge in power over its opponents that it can reasonably expect the target or targets it may select to capitulate without a struggle. This edge can evidently be achieved by Russia in two ways: Either by weakening her opponents' or by increasing her own might, or by both means. Inasmuch as the Satellite peoples constitute almost one-third of the Soviet Bloc population and occupy a strategic location in case of conventional war, it is obviously very important for Moscow that they should give up any hope of liberation and therefore acquiesce in Soviet domination. As, all disappointments notwithstanding, that hope does persist, it must be Moscow's objective to convince them that the West has washed its hands of them and that therefore such hopes are illusory. This is specially important in the case of the East Germans who are bound by so many ties to their Western countrymen, but it is

precisely in East Germany that Free World "presence" is concretely represented and that contacts with the West are least difficult. Since West Berlin is the Free World's most vulnerable outpost while at the same time also a symbol and a thorn in Ulbricht's flesh, it was the logical point of attack. If the West gave way, it would have meant not only a strengthening of the Ulbricht regime, but acceptance of Soviet rule over Eastern Europe and of the partition of Germany, that is the permanent weakening of Russia's only serious eventual rival on the European continent. If the West did not give way, it would at the very least serve as a lever to force the Summit conference. It would, of course, be all the more important for Khrushchev to come to terms with the West and to strengthen the Soviet Bloc to the maximum degree possible, for he is haunted by the spectre of an even more powerful China, refusing some day to bow even to the older brother and to follow the teachings of "foreign devils." Like all ghosts, the reality of this particular one can always be denied, but it exerts its influence all the same. Khrushchev cannot claim to be able to predict China's future actions with any greater degree of certainty than he could predict that of Hungary and Poland in 1956, or Stalin could Yugoslavia's course in 1948.

Nevertheless, as the threat is not imminent, it is very doubtful whether Khrushchev, who seems to be an optimistic soul, will be prepared to offer any concrete concessions to the West so far ahead, in return for acquiescence of Soviet domination of Eastern Europe. As far

as one can judge from his performance so far, he will rely on his charm and on threats.

Needless to say, any concessions in the absence of a quid pro quo would be a fatal blunder. One can only lose, materially and morally, by giving up the substance for the shadow. Anyway, if Khrushchev is sincere in his protestations that all international conflicts must be settled peacefully, he cannot enforce any concessions by threats of force. If he is not sincere, we might as well have the proof now rather than later.

We now come to Mr. Kennan's "final implications," which are, to my mind, astounding, to put it mildly. In the first place, he asserts that "it would be a tremendous mistake on our part to fail to realize the difference between 1952 and 1959 Only people who have learned nothing and forgotten nothing over the years since Stalin's death could make that mistake." Apparently, Mr. Kennan himself has learned nothing from the experience of Mr. Churchill, who in 1944 expatiated in Parliament on the vital differences between the USSR of that time and of 1939, only to swallow his words in Fulton, Missouri, two years later. Moreover, the only differences Mr. Kennan can think of are a "great moderation" of internal terror and the fact that "the Soviet government is now externally represented by a man of whose sincerity, at least when it comes to the desire to see the competition between the two systems carried forward by means other than those of major war we need have no doubt."

To begin with, Mr. Kennan is unfair to Stalin. As has been pointed out above, there is not the slightest evidence for the belief that Stalin planned to win the competition by major war. He relied on exactly the same means as Khrushchev: Industrialization and internal subversion. The role of military power was to deter governments irked by the subversive activities of Soviet fifth columns from attempts to strike at the root of the trouble, as well as to discourage minor powers from defending themselves. Since "minor powers" is obviously only a relative concept, the "major powers" of today can figure out fairly accurately what they would have to expect if and when they drop to the status of minor ones compared to the USSR. This explains also why Khrushchev obviously disapproves of the premature use of force by the Chinese, for this ~~con-~~stitutes the grave error of adventurism, so strongly condemned by Lenin (but which he himself committed in October 1917, when the temptation was too strong to resist).

As for the moderation of terror, it is certainly nice to know that the Russian masses can now breathe more freely, although I for one would have shed no tears if Molotov, Malenkov, Kaganovich and others had met retribution for the innumerable crimes the guilt for which they shared. But it is hard to see the connection of leniency toward internal opponents with Soviet external aims and policies, or what good it does us.

I might even say, at the risk of appearing callous, that we would have no reason to deplore the repetition of the 1937 and 1938 style purges

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of the upper Soviet political, military, and economic echelons, which Khrushchev condemned solely on the ground that they weakened the Party and the state. The more liquidations of Soviet top men, the less the chances of seeing ourselves liquidated some day. If Mr. Kennan considers the present Soviet leadership less cynical, deceitful and brutal than the preceding ones, he either ignores or condones Soviet activities in Hungary, beginning with November 1956, highlighted by the murder of Imre Nagy and Maleter in 1958, and continuing up to the present day, all of them with Khrushchev's public blessing. Or don't murdered Hungarians count for Mr. Kennan, only Russians? Or are murderers more deserving of solicitude than their victims? And if Hungarians do count, then every liquidated Russian leader would merely be expiating his part in the crime, as he should if there is any justice on earth.

Perhaps Mr. Kennan might profitably save some part of his "voice of honest criticism" for such deeds and himself show "generosity and courage in the effort to solve international problems." Unless, of course, he means we should generously hand over to the Russians the seal of our approval of the vasselage^{cy} of the Eastern European nations and have the courage to give up our strongest weapons. This is not meant sarcastically. Very possibly, he believes that the US, "in the state the country is today" does not have "good chances of competing with a purposeful, serious and disciplined society such as that of the Soviet Union" and he has "little hope of

improvement." In that case, it might indeed be wiser to face the inevitable with as good grace as possible and to shorten the agony.

But the answer is, I believe, that although Mr. Kennan's major stricture* on the present state of the country is justified - "the insufficient social discipline even to keep its major industries functioning without grievous interruptions" - nobody can say that this fault cannot be corrected until we have tried and failed. And so far we have not tried.

There is, it is true, not much time left, but something may still happen before it is too late. We would gain nothing by the premature surrender Mr. Kennan advises, for one small hole in the containing dike, which is none too strong, would seal its fate. Mr. Kennan should be the last man to suggest such a thing. It makes no sense to commit suicide for fear of death, especially if the remedy for our disease, unpalatable as it may be, is at hand. The situation, I agree with Mr. Kennan, is critical. But so was it after Dunkirk, Smolensk, and Pearl Harbor. Why not give ourselves the benefit of the doubt, and not only to the Russians, as he counsels?

* As for the other strictures, it may be true that we have no highly developed sense of national purpose, but would it be wise to adopt the Russian sense of national purpose, which is to dominate the world either directly (which they deny), or indirectly, by means of International Communism (which they admit)? It may be true that our overwhelming accent of life is on personal comfort and amusement, but is that not the ultimate aim of Communist materialism, too, of course with the addition of "culture"? But what kind of culture? It may be true that our transportation system is chaotic, but the dearth of cars on Russian roads is nothing to boast about either, and other means of transportation are even more chaotic than ours. It may be true that in our educational system quality has been sacrificed to quantity, but it is equally true of the Soviet system. And so on.

In the meantime, we, including Mr. Kennan, would be wise to give up any hope that there exists some magical compromise that would remove international tensions in the predictable future. Can we seriously imagine that Moscow would be permanently satisfied if only we disarmed West Germany, recognized their East European empire, and abolished atomic weapons, which is what they are demanding now?

If we are to believe that Moscow would be satisfied, it can only be on the assumption that the Soviet leaders are reformed characters, since no one can deny the fact of the Soviet record of expansion by force in violation of their own professed principles, (a matter on which they themselves are remarkably reticent). But the first thing a reformed character must do to prove his sincerity is to make good the evil he has done. Can a robber demand to be trusted if he asks to be rehabilitated but refuses to make restitution of his loot?

Can we seriously expect the Russians to allow free elections and genuine independence in all the countries they have seized since 1939, which would be the only way for Moscow to prove that things have really changed since 19⁵42, that freedom means not having to take orders from Moscow, that the use of force means the use or the threat of use of weapons beyond a country's border, and so on? We cannot expect that, and, I feel sure, neither does Mr. Kennan. If that is so, we cannot have any faith in Khrushdhev's sincerity or good intentions. And, even less than no faith, if that were possible, since far

from showing any signs of wanting to atone for Soviet misdeeds, Khrushchev is after further rapine. It may be objected that if all this be true, the possibility of agreement is ruled out. The answer is that there is no such possibility, beyond agreement to disagree, in the foreseeable future at any rate. But that is not our fault and there is nothing we can do about it.

It is too bad if it is true, as Mr. Kennan asserts, that "if we insist^s on viewing the Soviet leaders as wholly inhuman" and act on this hypothesis, "we shall have them precisely that in the end." Ought we to pretend that they are human if they are not? Surely, the question can only be whether they are or not. I wonder whether Mr. Kennan would put his theory to a practical test if he found himself face to face with a man-eating tiger on a safari?

It seems to me that beginning with Lenin, "inhuman capitalist exploiter and colonialist" - or "contemptible traitor" if he was a Social Democrat - have been the standard descriptions of Western leaders in Pravda, and it was only when the Bolsheviks ~~began~~^{started} to liquidate their opponents and "class enemies" wholesale that we on our side began to get increasingly critical of their methods. On the other hand, one may find in the West plenty of writers, who, like Mr. Kennan, seem to consider Mr. Khrushchev and Mr. Mikoyan as humane and honest beings. They would be hard to match in the Soviet press.

While I myself would hardly subscribe to those epithets, I am far from denying Mr. Khrushchev's remarkable qualities. However, I do not believe

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they include the capacity for eating his cake and having it, too. He cannot keep the fruits of Soviet aggression in East Europe and even try to extend them to Berlin, and at the same time (to borrow one of Mr. Kennan's shafts at those who disagree with him) "beat his breast and play the hero by posing as the defender" of international relaxation and renunciation of force. Or he should at least not be allowed to without challenge.

If Khrushchev really wants to "normalize" the situation in Europe, as he avers, it cannot be done by normalizing an abnormality - and the real and glaring abnormality, according to no lesser authorities than Marx and Lenin, and to Khrushchev himself when it comes to backward nations, is the conquest of foreign territories, the subjugation of other peoples, and the splitting of nations. It can be done by the restitutio in statu quo ante, that is by the reestablishment of the situation as of 1937. That is what the West must demand with equal, if not greater, insistence than Khrushchev voices his preposterous claim to ratification of an outrageous situation. It would not be, Mr. Kennan would object, practical politics for the West. But it should be no less, if no more, practical than Khrushchev's, unless we are willing to admit our inferiority. It would give us, if not the initiative, at least the counter-initiative, which would be better than reliance on unlimited resilience.

Mr. Kennan's suggestions certainly point to one road for Western survival. One cannot deny that if followed they would allow Western Europe, at any rate, to survive - just as Eastern Europe survives.

P.S. Although Mr. Kennan's article in the January 1960 issue of Foreign Affairs appears to reveal some progress toward a more critical and thus more realistic attitude toward the Soviet leaders, the gist seems to be advice to them on what they could do to make it easier for the West to swallow the bitter pill of compromise, a proposal he does not withdraw. We can only hope that Mr. Kennan's progress has been merely temporarily arrested and will be resumed until he recaptures the vision which inspired him to write in 1947 with such striking insight and prescience:

" . . . Basically, the antagonism remains. It is postulated. And from it flow many of the phenomena which we find disturbing in the Kremlin's conduct of foreign policy: the secretiveness, the lack of frankness, the duplicity, the wary suspiciousness, and the basic unfriendliness of purpose. These phenomena are there to stay, for the foreseeable future. There can be variations of degree and of emphasis. When there is something the Russians want from us, one or the other of these features of their policy may be thrust temporarily into the background; and when that happens there will always be Americans who will leap forward with gleeful announcements that 'the Russians have changed, . . .'"

- "The Sources of Soviet Conduct" by X, p. 566, Foreign Affairs, July 1947.

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REMARKS:	<p>This comment on George Kennan's New Leader article was completed before the publication of his Foreign Affairs article, which is noted in a Postscript. The comment was written by [REDACTED] In view of the Director's interest in [REDACTED] as well as of the pertinence of the comment, you might wish to show it to the Director. Please return.</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><i>RM</i></p>	
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