

**AMERICAN AFFAIRS PAMPHLETS**

# **One Year After**

*By*

VIRGIL JORDAN

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**NUMBER THREE**

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247 Park Avenue, New York 17, N. Y.

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July, 1946

# \*One Year After

*By Virgil Jordan*

**A**NYONE who considers the condition of this country and the world today, a year after the war was ended or suspended in Europe, and looks with open and honest eye down the road ahead, may well find these moving lines of Ralph Chaplin's coming to his mind:

Pity the strong and pity the weak  
Pity the arrogant, pity the meek  
Pity the master and pity the drudge  
Pity the prisoner and pity the judge  
Pity the slayer and pity the slain  
One is their destiny, one is their pain  
Pity the greedy who thrive on despair  
And pity a public too callous to care  
Pity the rich and pity the poor  
Pity the illness and pity the cure  
Curse if you must and love if you can  
But pity the terrible fortune of Man  
Pity the great and pity the small  
Pity them, pity them, pity them all.

It may be hard for some of us to remember that a year ago the bloody struggle on Okinawa still continued in the tropic night, that the atomic bomb and the Pandora's box of trouble it opened upon the world was still to fall on Hiroshima, that the Conference of the United Nations at San Francisco was assembling to write the charter of eternal peace. Today it is hard for anyone to forget the want, waste and woe, and the wreckage of the world's hope of reconstruction, reconversion and peace that have come with the ruthless struggle for power and plunder abroad and at home which has followed the end of the war only a few months ago. And it will be harder, I feel sure, two weeks from now, to forget the sacrifice of those million American sons and brothers who fell or suffered for something other than all this on the battlefields of that war.

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*\*The address delivered by Dr. Jordan at the Thirtieth Annual Meeting of the National Industrial Conference Board, May 16, 1946.*

Whatever we may say to those sons and brothers of ours on Memorial Day, if we are candid with ourselves we must admit that in the deepest sense we have lost this war more utterly than we lost the last one, in terms of the moral and economic issues by which we justified it. The American people gained a glorious victory on the field of battle and on the production front, but they must know in their hearts today that they have suffered humiliating defeat in the field of ideas and ideals, and now stand in greater danger of losing their freedom than they did five years ago. It is not merely that, having frustrated the Nazi-Fascist-Shinto effort to rule the world, they are now faced with the Communist attempt to do the same thing. They have still to come to grips with the more fundamental and universal problem of our time, which is whether and how they can control the expansion and limit the power of government at home as well as of governments abroad. Upon what they decide to do about that problem will depend not only the peace of the world, but the kind of world and the kind of country they will live in, and the kind of people they will be.

**W**AR, which we profess to fear or hate, is only one expression of the growth of the power of the State over men's life and work, which in recent years so many have come to accept, encourage or support as progressive and desirable. Economic warfare, class and labor conflict, inflation, bureaucratic despotism, all forms of compulsory collectivism, national and international "planning," conspiracy and espionage, and the movement toward a world Super-state—all these and many other features of the economic and political panorama on the road ahead at home and abroad today are merely manifestations of the mania for unlimited government power which is evident everywhere in our time.

Though we fought and won this war in high hope of securing peace, plenty and freedom for ourselves and other peoples everywhere, the plain truth is that today there is less of all

these things, less hope of them, and indeed less aspiration for them, anywhere in the world than there was before—even in America. She emerged from the war the strongest nation in the world, at a peak of economic, military and moral power without precedent in the historical record; yet long before the last shot was fired, and the first atomic bomb was dropped on the helpless enemy, we had already surrendered, perhaps unconsciously, but unconditionally, to his ideas and ideals. Never before, I suppose, has a people with such power, purpose and prestige in its hands yielded them so suddenly and freely and fallen so swiftly to a condition in which they are almost helpless to defend themselves at home or abroad. A few months after it had crushed the most formidable foes the world ever faced, the mightiest armed force in history had melted away like the snows of yesteryear, its members inspired to protest almost to the point of mutiny against continued assignment to a task their instinct told them had become meaningless, futile or false through the stupidity, cowardice or treachery of their political leaders; while at home, where they hoped to find the peace, plenty and freedom they had failed to bring to the world they had conquered, the most productive industrial organization ever created was crippled or paralyzed by the same forces of error and evil, confusion and conflict, emanating from the same source, or stimulated and nourished by it.

In place of the plenty which they hoped the promise of peace would bring, we have a planetary epidemic of political compulsion and control called economic planning which everywhere cramps and cripples, or ruthlessly exploits and dissipates the productive powers that have survived the destruction of war.

In place of the lasting peace we hoped our power would bring, we see a progressively more desperate appeasement of a power which has been made to appear to us somehow stronger than our own, more formidable and sinister than the enemy we so recently crushed, while on a planetary scale a martial parade of weapons more immense and menac-

ing than were ever imagined, supported by armament expenditures larger than the world has ever seen, provide the setting for the opening of the diplomatic opera bouffé of peace being staged by the insolvent successor of the League of Nations.

And, worst of all, over most of the two great continents where they fought to safeguard the flame of political freedom and civil liberty for people who had not seen its full light or lived in it long, a curtain of utter darkness and despair has been drawn by a dictatorship more ruthless, a tyranny more total, than any of those people had ever experienced at the hands of their enemies. This iron curtain of ignorance and oppression, as Winston Churchill called it when he was Prime Minister of England, is so securely and subtly fastened down that none within or without dares to lift it; but rising from its folds are those fumes of falsehood and fear, of confusion, conflict and conspiracy that persistently poison the atmosphere and darken the spirits of men in most of the rest of the world where the air of freedom, faith and truth still lingers.

THE process by which this tragic condition of moral insolvency and economic paralysis has been accomplished in which the American people find themselves today in their foreign relations and domestic affairs is subtle and many-sided, and it began long before the war or its end. The first or most important steps in it were those of the fatal hundred days in which the foundations of the form of National Socialism which we call the New Deal were laid. We know now that nothing essential in that New Deal revolution was native or natural to the mind or morals or economics of America, no matter what the emergency of depression that then disguised or excused it. As we witness its outcome today we recognize at last that it was as much and as fundamentally a foreign invasion as though, six years after, an army of Nazi administrators and economists, or Soviet Commissars, had

landed in Chesapeake Bay and occupied the capital.

Every essential economic idea and moral principle which it applied and implied was imported from Europe or Asia, profoundly alien to the spirit, purpose and experience of the American people, even as long ago as 1933, though apparently not so much so today. The doctrines of the disappearance of the frontier, of the onset of economic maturity, of over-saving, of government spending, deficit financing, compensatory fiscal policy, the mixed economy, and of government control and economic planning—to mention some of the successive slogans and semantic catchwords of the New Deal—all these are the Dead Sea fruit of the fatalism and despair of the Old World, with which its academic and political dope-peddlers have drugged and bewildered the American people during that decade, until the emotional unity and the economic stimulus of the war's great crusade saved them, and saved the New Deal itself, from the economic and moral bankruptcy which seemed to be the inescapable outcome of the waste, confusion, conflict, corruption and stagnation it produced. Whatever may have prepared the way for it before, this decade of the New Deal which imported the old delusion of omnipotent government into the mind and spirit of the American people divided them in understanding and aspiration more deeply than anything in their history had before, and the cleavage it produced aligned them unconsciously but inevitably thereafter with the fantasies, futilities, and fatalities of the class struggles of the Old World.

So it is that having emerged from this war for world freedom without really winning it or even ending it, we are living today by an economic organization and under political principles which are in nearly all essentials the same as those that have impoverished, wasted and destroyed the Old World beyond hope of redemption; with a government of unlimited power determining wages, prices, profits, production, employment, consumption, investment, management and ownership of property, for today and the indefinite

future, practically by personal decree, or according to some plan whose meaning is beyond our comprehension and the responsibility for which has passed beyond our control. Many Americans who have the living memory of freedom in their minds fear or hate these things as falsehood or tyranny, but many others who have long forgotten, if they ever knew it in the alien climate which once shaped their spirits, hail them with hope or support them with passion as the promise of prosperity and security to come; and in the eroded soil of dissension and misunderstanding that fills this chasm in our American consciousness, the dragon's teeth of domestic and international conflict are being sown and our power at home and abroad is being weakened and dissipated.

THE fact that so many in America have accepted the superstition of omnipotent government and become dependent upon its apparatus during the past decade which culminated in the war means much more than an idle drift down the tides of mass ignorance, indifference or indolence on which the traditional demagogue of the Old World or the new has so often floated his craft and fished in troubled waters. In our time and in this place it is an expression of a deliberate, carefully designed and continuously directed world-wide conspiracy to capture and maintain permanent political power over the masses of men everywhere, by crippling, paralyzing and capturing for its purpose the sole remaining source and center of that power, which rests today in the prodigious productive power of a free America. Its technique today employs on a planetary scale all the subtle arts and stratagems of trickery and terrorism practiced on the steppes of Asia for centuries past; but its purpose has no precedent or parallel in history. It is not merely to make sure that the ideas and ideals of the Old World shall conquer and reoccupy America, but to prevent those of America, and the power they imply, from liberating the Old World from *its* bondage; for those who seek to rule it today know that they can do so only if they can make and keep America economi-



cally and morally impotent at this historic moment, when the secret of atomic energy both as productive agent and a political weapon rests in her hands, and as she prepares and hopes to release for the purposes of peace, plenty and freedom the colossal economic power which she acquired through the war.

When we consider the source of such a conspiracy to sterilize the strength and paralyze the purpose of America, the alarming image of Communist Russia and its manners, morals and economic institutions comes automatically to our minds these days; but the fact is a paradox significant chiefly because it shows how far the effort to foster confusion and conflict, which is the chief weapon of that conspiracy, has been successful. Soviet Russia may, and probably does, serve today as its psychological and strategic center, but she could not support or implement it alone. Russia is a primitive, impoverished, predatory Asiatic despotism, the most complete the modern world has ever known, as Franklin Roosevelt said in 1939. It has lived and ruled for three decades by plunder and by exploitation of an immense mass of human capital in the form of political prisoners, war captives, and slave citizens, and its effective power in peace or war rests today almost as literally as it did in the time of Tamerlane and Attila on a vast pyramid of human skulls, built as the monument and symbol of the unbounded ambition of its rulers. Though this massive totalitarian structure is framed in meaningless economic dogmas which none of its people understand, and is decorated or disguised with borrowed or stolen devices of modern technology which they have not the temperament, intelligence or training to master, it is empty of any real capacity, power or purpose except those of oppression and plunder. Soviet Russia is insolvent in everything but the resources of insolence, intrigue, treachery and terrorism, bankrupt of all assets but brutality and bluff, which since the war she has capitalized to the utmost in the forced march of Communist imperialism through Europe, Asia and the Arctic, almost to the shores of Alaska.

If this were the only enemy we had to fear, it would always have been easy for Uncle Samson to face it, if he had been armed with something more than the jawbone of an ass when he sent his statesmen to meet the Soviet Commissars and bargain with them about peace and the spoils of war in the Oriental bazaars they have been running in Teheran and Yalta, San Francisco and Potsdam, Moscow, London and the Bronx.

**I**T SEEMS to me much more important to understand the total situation out of which this conspiracy has arisen and the kind of dilemma it presents, if we are to make any honest, wise and courageous decisions upon the problems of domestic and foreign policy that face us for the future. The course of events abroad as well as conditions at home bring us closer day by day to the time when we shall have to decide as a nation whether we are determined to use our power promptly to liberate ourselves and the rest of the world from the peril of unlimited government anywhere in it, or will make unconditional surrender to the system of ideas about the Absolute State which we set out five years ago to destroy in Europe and Asia and which have invaded and conquered us while we were doing it abroad.

In that sense, the fundamental issues of domestic and foreign policy are inseparable, or indeed identical. They come down to the decision whether or not this country is to remain within the international system of compulsory collectivism, and be kept permanently imprisoned in the iron circle of totalitarian socialist states which this war has created throughout the world. Every event in the field of foreign affairs since Teheran makes it evident that this is the underlying aim of all international policy towards the United States, and our government has so far shown no power or even disposition to oppose it. Instead, we have been trying to buy international peace under a kind of global blackmail in which our government has been an accomplice by bargaining away our birthright of freedom here at home.

We must realize by now that totalitarian—and that today means only Communist—imperialism has conquered Europe and Asia even more completely than the Nazi and Jap armies did. It is not merely that the Soviet legions have overrun the Balkans and the Baltic countries and turned out the lights of an entire continent from Calais to Korea, and from the Arctic to the Adriatic, but that in the most of the rest of Europe, in Italy, and France, and England, no Red armies have been needed to destroy economic freedom and civil liberty. It had been done for them long before by the politicians, labor unions and business men of these countries. Though we did not know it, and could not be told it in the early days of the Great Crusade, our armies abroad were fighting for ideas—for a philosophy of life and a conception of government—which, in fact, were dead nearly everywhere in the Old World long before the war began. Every country in the United Nations organization today is a political dictatorship or a more or less totally state-controlled or owned economy or both, and their representatives are all of the fifty-seven varieties of socialist or communist to whom a free market at home or abroad has no meaning.

**W**HAT is more important is that all the ideas for the postwar world which are accepted today in Europe, especially in England, France and Russia, assume it as an imperative condition for their success that this country be brought within the same system permanently, and every device for shaping American thought and feeling to this end is being used today, as they have been during the past decade. European and Asiatic statesmen who are planning and building their postwar world on the foundation ideas of National Socialism with a facade of new names, know that the world cannot live for long part under socialist serfdom and part under economic freedom. This recognition is no more urgent in the long run for Uncle Joe's totalitarian autarchy than it is for a nation under parliamentary government like England, who must live by trade or starve, and who knows that her

socialist economy cannot compete in any free markets of the world with the productive power of a free America.

So the character of American political institutions and her economic system after this war have become as much a crucial concern of the rest of the world as those of Germany were at its beginning, or as those of Russia were after the last war, but this time in reverse fashion, because in a postwar world of socialist states the idea of economic freedom must remain a subversive revolutionary force internationally as well as internally, just as Bolshevism was after the last war. Whether America can be kept within this global structure of compulsory collectivism which has been erected around her political institutions and economic organization during this decade, or whether she is to resume life within the traditional framework of economic freedom and competitive effort where she left off—this is the central issue for the postwar world. It underlies not only the larger issues of international peace and reconstruction, but also the practical domestic problems of reconversion and prosperity for us.

**T**HE essential but unseen truth in the situation I have been describing to you is that in the rest of the world socialist or communist totalitarianism, with all their myths and pretensions of magical power to produce plenty and peace, are economically and morally insolvent today. The dilemma that confronts them is that they must either cripple or prey upon the productive power of America, they must either become our dependents or our destroyers, which in either case must mean the end of political power for those who rose to it in those countries by promising their people the paradise of collectivism as soon as it should become planetary in scope. Isolation has become as impossible in our time for totalitarian socialism or compulsory collectivism as it is for free competitive capitalism.

The brutal fact is that the war left us facing an encircling world of beggars or robbers, whom it has bankrupted of spiritual and material resources for peaceful, self-supporting

life. The global organization in which they pretend to have banded together to safeguard peace and freedom was busted before it began, and today it has plainly become an elaborate apparatus for the purpose either of international parasitism or collectivist conspiracy, or both. To imagine this country surrendering any sort of sovereignty to any kind of world government based upon this or any other organization of nations like it, in view of their character and purposes, under current conditions, and in face of the actual economic and military resources which we command—that is an idea which can be the product only of stupidity or treachery. It could be proposed only by men who are either very blind or very dumb, or who are brazen ambassadors of banditry.

**Y**OU know, and I know, and all the world knows today, that UNO is morally and economically insolvent. It has not only evaded the vital issue of disarmament, which was ruled out at the start, except for the conquered countries; it has evaded even the issue of exercising any effective form of police power to preserve the peace, and it has actually become an instrument for promoting internal revolt and external conflict among its members. It is naive to suppose, as some assume, that it is or will remain a mere debating society. Not only are all its members, except America, today taking full advantage of its camouflage of parliamentary mechanism and strategy to arm themselves to the teeth in feverish haste against the ultimate test of force in which alone they rest their faith. It is being built—and indeed now seems to have been originally designed—as a massive device directed to the end of immobilizing, sterilizing, sapping and dissipating the power of a free America in the determination of world affairs, and all our policies and disposition toward foreign appeasement and philanthropy, as well as our internal difficulties of reconversion, are being promoted and exploited to that end. So deeply has this conspiracy penetrated our political life that, in these years when elections loom large on the calendar

of our days, there are men in public office whom we otherwise assume as sincere and intelligent Americans who willingly or unwittingly, out of blindness or ambition, lend themselves to its purpose, disguise their treachery as liberalism and serve as spokesmen and pleaders for the interest of foreign powers which are enemies of America.

For our part, the grim dilemma that faces us is equally plain and much more painful. For the moment, as we have emerged from the war, we have in our hands, almost alone, the decisive instruments of overwhelming military and industrial strength, which we don't know how to use. If we were to put forth upon the world the full force of our economic and political power, for the only purposes for which we can conceive using it, the whole structure of compulsory collectivism in the rest of the world would collapse like a house of cards and the mirage of unlimited government would vanish into thin air. If we *do not* make the fullest use of our resources for the purposes of peace and plenty, the internal dissension, confusion and conflict upon which the collectivist virus feeds, and which are being fostered among us with feverish speed, will spread and increasingly cripple and paralyze our power and finally destroy us. In the kind of world in which we live today, it is profoundly true that the kind of power America commands is a power that must be used to those purposes of peace, freedom and plenty from which it sprang or it must perish. It is a dynamic force which must unfold itself to the end of its destiny or die.

**N**OW there is pathos as well as pride in the patent fact that the American people have neither the temperament, impulse nor the talent for any form of imperialism. It is something irrelevant and meaningless in the American climate. Whenever in their history they have been drawn or driven—sometimes by the political devices or economic accidents of domestic conditions—into an imperial struggle in the rest of the world, they have done the job of ending

it for the day and then have always abandoned it and gone back to their own. There has never been anything the rest of the world could give them as good as what they have gotten for themselves here at home; there is nothing they have wanted from it except to be let alone. And this is still true; but this war was the last in which they will ever be able to feel that way. The decision they face today is, I submit, fundamentally different from any they have had to make in the past, for this time the world cannot and will not let them alone. They have conquered it in fact; they will now be forced to subdue it in spirit and practice to their purpose of peace and freedom and plenty or it will destroy them. If anyone complains that the dilemma implies or drives us to a type of imperialism which must end as all others have ended, though its purpose be different, let them make the most of it, for this time we have no other choice, and will not have that one much longer unless we make it now. We must ask the world that surrounds us not merely to accept our power, but to accept our purpose of peace and freedom for our own sake as well as its own, and use our power to that end.

SO whatever name you may give it, let us make the only choice we can make and proceed to the inescapable task before us swiftly and in the full confidence that at this crucial moment we still command the power to implement and complete it. Let us without delay have an end to compromise, appeasement and retreat, and dare to repudiate all that has been done to that end and in that name. Let us stop the erosion of our material and moral resources at home and abroad in the hopeless struggle against the pervasive conspiracy to sterilize and waste them, which is reflected in the economic stagnation and paralysis of our domestic situation. Let us offer them freely to the world for a price that is worthy of our power and our purpose. Let us refuse them to anyone who is using them, as every other nation is today, for any other purpose. Let us demand

that whatever else the United Nations organization may do, it must deal with the essential issue of disarmament without further delay or evasion. If we believe, as many in America and England do, that UNO is not and cannot be the kind of international instrument to which the police power for maintaining world peace can safely be entrusted, let us face the fact ourselves and confront the world with it frankly and fearlessly. If we should find that England has so far slipped or been shoved down the slope of collectivist impotence, or is so hopelessly crippled by the problems of her insolvent imperialism that she is unwilling or unable to make more than a sleeping partnership with us in the enterprise, let us prepare to undertake the task of policing the world for peace ourselves alone, till—and I doubt it would be very long—we enlist other willing volunteers. Let us then, alone or together, implement the purpose promptly and plainly in three specific ways:

Let us first offer the utmost capacity of our economic power for reconstruction freely to every people who will undertake to abolish *all* national military expenditure and disarm down to the level of the local constabulary. Let us, secondly, demand the unlimited right of continuous inspection and control of every industrial operation and process or every public policy which may have the most remote relationship to armament and warfare. And, finally, let us keep, improve and make plenty of our best and biggest atomic bombs for this imperative purpose; let us suspend them *in principle* over every place in the world where we have any reason to suspect evasion or conspiracy against this purpose; and let us drop them in fact, promptly and without compunction, wherever it is defied.

**N**OW if you say that this is too daring or idealistic a destiny for any nation, even America, to embrace, I admit it could happen only once in history; for the dreadful fact is that only we could do it at all; and we can do it only now, today, if we have the understanding and the will.



Everything else the American people have—impartiality and purity of moral purpose, and limitless potentials of economic power which will be realized only if we are willing to employ them for this purpose.

Disarmament—the disarmament not merely of men and nations but of governments—is the fundamental and imperative condition not only of peace, but of freedom and abundance in the world today, and it is the most momentous circumstance in human history that at this instant of time—never before and never afterward—America, and only America, has the power to impose such disarmament, and perhaps forever remove for mankind the curse of Mars and its inseparable companions, poverty and tyranny.

Military disarmament is not enough, it is true. The problem goes deeper than that. We must have political disarmament too; we must ultimately deprive governments not only of the power to attack other governments but to oppress, exploit and plunder their own people. Yet militarism is always an expression and a weapon of that gigantic modern engine of jobbery and robbery which is unlimited government, and it will be a long step toward economic freedom and prosperity, as well as peace, if we can compel the unlimited governments of the world to drop their arms and beat their swords into plowshares. Unless we can do that, I must conclude that as we enter the age of atomic alchemy one can see on the road ahead for America little promise of the peace and plenty which our scientific accomplishment and productive power make possible. One sees rather a nation and a world which is deeply divided against itself, a world which through cowardice, stupidity and treachery becomes day by day less and less free and day by day more and more slave to the frustrations and fears which unlimited government imposes upon the life, work and thought of men everywhere at home and abroad.

Freedom from fear and want is a fine phrase, but there are some things I hope we in America will never cease being afraid of, and unlimited government is one of them. There

are some things, too, I hope we will never stop wanting, and escape from its power is one of them. Before we can see any clear road ahead for America, we shall have to recapture and put to use again, here and elsewhere in the world, the essential ideas, attitudes and instincts of American life and thought which have been so deeply submerged if not altogether destroyed by the invasion of the Old World during the past decade. America and all that she signifies in human welfare and progress will ultimately be forever erased if she cannot and does not mobilize, manifest and put forth the full moral and economic power which she can now command to oppose the destructive forces that now seek to undermine and dissipate her purpose and her spirit, and compel acceptance of the ideal of freedom and peace to which we assumed her living sacrifices were dedicated in the war we so recently thought we won.

“It is for us the living, to be dedicated to the unfinished work which they who fought so nobly advanced. It is for us to be dedicated to the great task remaining before us—that from these dead we take increased devotion to that cause for which they gave the last full measure—that we here highly resolve that this nation, under God, shall have a new birth of freedom. . . .”

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