

"On three previous occasions," he writes, "the American people have come up against new situations which no longer responded to the slogans and political approaches which had been created for an earlier day. . . . Unless I am profoundly mistaken, a similar situation is developing today, out of which a new political and economic liberalism will ultimately take shape. As in 1800, 1861 and 1932, the American people are again starting to blink away their self-complacency and to grope for a more positive role to play in a world that cries for a reassertion of their country's greatness. . . . There are few who will argue seriously that either party as such has yet offered such leadership."

We are living in a revolutionary age, one in which America's role as a great power is seriously threatened. Each national revolution creates a crisis for America, becomes a factor in the intense, full-scale conflict between two social systems, capitalism and communism.

Until World War I capitalism ruled the world unchallenged. The only other social system was a decadent feudal order in the underdeveloped countries, and these nations were firmly held under the boot of imperialism. The great powers dominated the whole planet. After World War I, Soviet communism threatened the capitalist edifice and a wave of revolutions followed for six or seven years—in Germany, Bulgaria, Finland, Austria, Turkey, China, and many other lands. But in the end Soviet Russia remained alone, isolated, relatively weak. Capitalism seemed secure.

Now after World War II all this has changed. Despite the totalitarian character of Soviet rule it has attracted millions of people away from the West; capitalism is no longer unchallenged, it has formidable opposition. The communist world is a great land empire encompassing more than 900 million people. It has broken out of a *cordon sanitaire*. Beyond that, at least twenty noncommunist nations with perhaps a population of 750 million have

achieved independence and are currently in the midst of a combined national and social revolution. This is the greatest social tornado in all history and it poses tasks for America of titanic proportions. Not only is there the heightened tension of international relations and the constant danger of war, but all internal problems in the United States now become *part* of the world conflict. The nation didn't relish its periodic depressions a few decades ago, but it could survive. Today a full-scale depression might be fatal, opening the door to communism in the weaker capitalist nations like France or Italy, and estranging America completely from the uncommitted nations of Asia and Africa. A depression might also revive the Communist party here. Though the party has shrunk to five thousand or fewer members, and has alienated most of its sympathizers, any economic cataclysm could bring it back to life.

In the face of this, American capitalism has been modifying its own character to an extent undreamed of either by the stern advocates of laissez-faire or the liberals of just a generation ago. Our nation is changing drastically in front of our eyes.

The first important change is in the military sphere. For the first time in American history we have become a peace-time military power, spending almost 10 percent of the gross national product—\$40 or \$42 billion a year—on armaments. We are attempting to gain what C. Wright Mills calls "peace through mutual fright." In the process we are transforming the fiber of our own society as well. General Omar Bradley pointed out that in modern warfare it is "nations, not armies, [that] go to war." It is inevitable, therefore, that the nation emphasize the military theme of obedience rather than that of individualism to which we have aspired throughout history. Conformity, loyalty checks, antiradical laws and prosecutions