gap, which was a euphemism to express the simple fact that they were buying from the dollar world more goods than they could pay for. But what closed the dollar gap was something else, namely: first the Marshall Plan billions that were poured into Europe; and now the enormous American expenditures in Europe for free-world armament.

Now suddenly the planned money experts decide that in 1949 their *too* was wrong. They overdid it. Devaluation went too far. So they think it is time to change the value of Europe's currencies again — in a reverse direction. They must be revalued up. How much? Well, not too much, and yet enough so that what Europe buys from the world will cost less and what it sells to the world will be worth more. Less and more in what? In money, the value of which will be fixed at what the planners think it is worth. Which way are you saying it now — forward or backward? Not that it matters. Great Britain's pound sterling now is "pegged" at $2.08. The only sane reason there could be for "pegging" it higher would be that the planners think it is worth more. But if it is worth more it would rise of itself in a free exchange market, and if it is not worth more, saying that it is will not make it so. Next to war, the manipulation of money is now the most exciting business of governments everywhere in the world, including our own; and the idea that equilibrium and economic welfare may be so achieved is the great popular delusion of our time. That is why there is no such thing in the whole world as a sound piece of money, except gold, and gold is something no American citizen is permitted to own, under pain of confiscation, fine and imprisonment.

In the very gristle of any organ of economic or social control there is a principle of cancerous growth. There is in it also a kind of instinct or vital will that causes it unerringly to seize upon any occasion for the extension of its power, even the temporary occasion, on the ground that when the emergency passes some of its new powers will survive, either as fact or precedent. This is illustrated by the proposed amendments to the Defense Production Act of 1950, when it comes to be extended this year. The amendments are proposed by the executive, and every one of them aims to advance its power over the economic life of the country. One would authorize the government to take immediate possession of private property merely upon filing in court a paper setting forth its intentions; the owner, never having been asked to sell, never having refused to sell, might not even know the government wanted his property until condemnation proceedings were under way. Another would give the government unlimited authority to acquire, condemn or build any kind of plant, factory or facility whatever, provided only that it was deemed necessary to the national defense.

In the original Defense Production Act Congress refused to give the Executive that power. Now it is being asked for it again. In a message to Congress the President defended the request by saying, "At the present time, with some exceptions, whether or not defense plants are built depends finally on the decisions of private businessmen." Why not? When have private businessmen refused? What now is wanting in the way of defense plants? Another amendment would remove all restrictions on the lending power of the government for defense activities. Hitherto it has been limited. Another would give the Executive authority to create new corporations of its own at will, the effect of which would be to leave Congress with even less control than now over defense expenditures. Any government having the powers contemplated in these amendments, the National Association of Manufacturers truly says, could "at any time it so decided substitute government enterprise for private enterprise from one end of the country to another." It will not use them? Then why does it ask for them? It has produced no evidence whatever tending to show that they are necessary, or that our defense exertions are in any way arrested for want of them. The Administration simply wants them in its hand.

Sometimes, in our more phantasmagorical dreams, we have a vision of civilization collapsing under the weight of the paper work that seems necessary these days to run it. The final stage of our recurrent nightmare is always the same: we seem to be drowning in a Niagara flood compounded of inter-office memos, third-class mail, mimeographed statistical releases from foundations, pages of gobbledygook from Washington agencies, and copies of the agenda for the latest international confabulation on how to pervert the homing instinct in pigeons that are born behind the Iron Curtain. The final coup de grace usually comes from a person bearing a suspicious resemblance to Mike DiSalle; we go under for the third — and last — time when Mike opens a spigot and lets out the latest batch of OPS regulations. For a long time we consumed pounds — nay, tons — of nembutal and secconal in a vain attempt to outwit the nightmare by deadening our sleep to the point of dreamless stupor.

But it wasn't until May 25 that we got eight hours of good, solid rest. The reason? In the *New York Times* for that day we came across a story that seemed to indicate a whole coming regeneration of society. The story consisted of the announcement, by Dr. Luther Gulick, that New York City wasn't buying any more steel filing cabinets this year. "Too many carbon copies of unimportant memos are cluttering available filing cabinets right now," said Dr. Gulick. If Dr. Gulick's attitude toward paper work spreads, the worst can be averted. Get rid of those floods of inter-office memos, those innumerable reports typed in triplicate, those crowding sheets of directives, and mankind will at once find itself with the energy to handle such comparatively easy things as the Communists and the atom bomb.

Senator Aiken took the trouble to count the releases received in his office during one forenoon from the Office of Price Stabilization. The number was eighty-six of which six were about meetings of advisory committees from industry, coming to Washington at the taxpayers' expense to confer. One, for example, "the Advisory Committee on Underwear, Lingerie and Negligees," reported that "inventories are heavy and in process of liquidation." Another, the Advisory Committee on the Toilet Tissue Industry, had appointed a subcommittee to develop more facts about its own business. Other releases were about ceiling price regulations, about orders, about the maintenance of regulations and orders, about the interpretation of maintenance of regulations and orders, about the clarification of regulations and orders, and so on and on. It is worse than OPA, says Mr. Aiken. But certainly, Senator. Why shouldn't it be worse? The more it does the worse it is, and that is what it is for. The next one will know how to do still more.

The State Department has issued a directive to its employees. It goes: "Every employee of the Department and the Foreign Service has a responsibility in addition to his regular work of helping to formulate and carry out United States foreign policy. That responsibility is to contribute to an understanding of foreign policy by other Americans who do not have as constant access to information about developments in the field of international relations as department employees." In other words, every State Department man is supposed to be a propagandist not only abroad in contact with other people, but at home, in contact with his own fellow citizens. We're glad to get that straight: what it means is that no State Department employee is permitted to criticize his boss or his boss's ideas in public. But what we can not fathom is a further question: How can anyone "contribute to an understanding" of a policy that passeth understanding?

Representative Cox of Georgia is perturbed by people who want to hang Dean Acheson. On the floor of the House the other day he quoted a scholar and a seer, an ex-Senator of the U. S. who is well acquainted with the history of Mexico. Said Representative Cox's scholarly ex-Senator friend: "I recall that in 1914, when Villa captured General Carranza, who, as you recall, wore a great beard, friends of the old general, who feared for his life, influenced a number of Senators, of whom I was one, to send a telegram to Villa not to hang General Carranza, to which we received the classic reply: 'Hang General Carranza? Why, no! I am not going to hang him. I am going to shave the old rascal and show the world what a fraud he is.' "

If you are confronted with a record of acts and decisions that have turned out to be progressively and cumulatively disastrous, you are bound to ask: "Was it the blundering of stupidity or was it a sinister design?" As an American you are loath to entertain the suspicion of sinister design. On the other hand, your reason tells you that stupidity can not be consistent. Blunders are not all of one kind; it is infinitely contrary to the law of averages that they shall fall in a line or form a definite pattern. What, then, will you do with the fact that as concerning Soviet Russia, from Yalta to this day, every blunder in American foreign policy has turned out to be what the Kremlin might have wished this country to do? All you can say is that if there had been a sinister design it would look like this.

The Kremlin must have been reading the tales of the Arkansas Traveler, especially the one about the man accused of stealing a pot, whose defense was that he never stole it and anyhow it was no good because it was cracked. Soviet Russia owes this country 672 lend-lease vessels, and our government has been trying to get them back. The Kremlin's answer is, first, that it thought we were going to sell it the ships; second, that we don't need them, and third, that they are all worn out and not fit to go to sea. There is a fourth reason, but that one is a matter of face, with no humor in it, and the Russians couldn't state it. They expected a postwar loan of five billion American dollars and didn't get it.

A new British organization called the Council for the New Era in Emigration has come into being. Its members include William Beveridge, author of Britain's "cradle-to-grave" security legislation; Frank Whittle, inventor of the jet engine, and other prominent Britishers from both major political parties. The object of the Council is to move at least twenty million of Britain's present population of fifty million to Australia, Canada, South Africa and the "Point Four" areas of the globe. The twenty million are considered by the Council to be "excess" population. . . . What this amounts to is a confession by prominent Britishers that where capitalism could support five people, socialism can support only three.

Professor Henry Steele Commager, speaking at the graduation ceremonies of Sarah Lawrence College, has come up with the idea that final control of education should be vested in the university faculties. Certainly the faculties must have some say in educational policy. Nevertheless, Professor Commager's idea, if pushed to its ultimate conclusion, turns out to be one of those specious half-truths that arise to bemuse us at least once every generation. What it amounts to is a suggestion that policy decisions in education should be divorced from the wishes of the paying customer, whether he be the student's parent or the trustee charged with raising the money for scholarships or endowment. Were Professor Commager to advocate a compulsion on Macy's patrons to take whatever goods a hierarchy of managers and sales clerks saw fit to dispense, he would rightly be accused of being a "reactionary." But for urging a similar thing in his own world the professor is proclaimed a "liberal." Well, all we can say of the Commager line on control of educational policy is: "*Caveat emptor* — let the buyer beware." The unsuspecting buyer might conceivably discover that Professor Commager's attitude springs from a theory long propounded in certain "intellectual" circles, the rather undemocratic theory that the customer is never — well, *hardly* ever — right.

Query to the American Civil Liberties Union: Where is the Merle Miller report on blacklisting, inspired by the publication of "Red Channels"? And is it true that Mr. Miller found there was good reason to believe that the Communists have all along had a blacklist of anti-Communists?

FAIR DEAL SENATOR: Isn't that right, General?
CHIEF OF STAFF: YessirYessirYessirYessirYessir.
FAIR DEAL SENATOR: Isn't that as you understand it, General?
CHIEF OF STAFF: YessirYessirYessirYessirYessir.
FAIR DEAL SENATOR: Don't you agree with that, General?
CHIEF OF STAFF: YessirYessirYessirYessirYessir.