

# Cold War and Anti-Communism

By **JEAN-PAUL SARTRE**

**V**IENNA has borne its fruits: at the Helsinki Congress all sections, all opinions, all parties are represented. It is an excellent thing that certain speeches have underlined our differences. They have made it easier to see the diversity of the Assembly and the complete freedom of the speakers.

On the other hand, if we wish to avoid any lack of cohesion in our efforts it seems to me that some of us, rather than putting over their own policies or emphasizing what separates us, should use this platform to try and show what unites us. Because our unity does exist. . . .

**W**E ALL heard with joy the message which Bertrand Russell so kindly sent to the Congress, and we have all been appreciative of the valuable suggestions it makes. If, however, I allow myself to criticize him it is because Bertrand Russell came to a stop somewhere between London and Helsinki and that his message enables us to realize how much more meaningful is the simple fact of being here, in Finland, than the letter of a great philosopher.

It seems to me indeed that Bertrand Russell takes into consideration only the elite of specialists known as scientists and that other political elite, members of governments. When he urges the scientists to raise a cry of alarm, one can only approve, but what is troubling is that he seems to consider public opinion as passive; and in the scepticism which he shows as regards the obligations which Governments may assume, he seems to take these states for those "cold monsters" of which Valery, and recently Louis Vallon, spoke, which are entirely separated from the peoples who elect, criticize and control their administration.



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On the contrary, all the groups who have sent delegates to Helsinki have stressed one essential aspect of the peace which we are trying to create: it is a peace desired *by the peoples*. Not in the first instance by elites, but foremost by the masses. Of course, there are delegates amongst us from peace loving peoples who are in agreement with their governments and others who oppose the official policy of their country. But that only serves to underline the popular character of the movement which has brought us here.

The disastrous effects of the Hydrogen bomb had at least one happy result: they have united men. The wars of 1914 and 1939 had already shown that the localization of a conflict was today impossible. The Hydrogen bomb has shown that it would be impossible to localize the effects of weapons used in the course of a future conflict: we know today that radio-active particles thrown up to a high altitude by the explosion of a thermonuclear weapon can resettle anywhere and that from now on nobody is safe.

The H-bomb possesses a sort of *negative* universality; there is *nobody* whom even its distant effects cannot reach.

This negative universality has provided the direct stimulus to a movement of positive universality: the permanent, universal danger has given a concrete and precise sense to this otherwise vague term: the human species. The human species

The progressive deterioration of relations between America and the USSR, together with the impoverishment of Europe after the second world war, has stimulated the integration of nations into each of the two blocs, the Marshall Plan and its consequences, the Atlantic Pact and the Paris Agreements have gradually



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caused countries like France, Italy and many others to abandon part of their sovereignty. In every important circumstance, the particular interests of each country have yielded to the interests of the bloc, that is to the interests of war: the conflict between France and Vietnam which, at the beginning at least, could have been settled easily by negotiation, almost unleashed a worldwide conflict as it became an international question.

Economic aid, which in France has chiefly favored the bourgeoisie, rearmament which chiefly impoverished the less favored classes, have helped to create a curious system in certain western countries, a mixture of dictatorship and impotence which we French have experienced for nearly seven years. At the same time, the internal divisions of the western nations reflect the divisions of the world and foreign influence just as the fear of a future war turns opponents into enemies in every country.

*Anti-communism, in particular, is the efforts of certain groups to view their countrymen who are communists and progressives as if they were separated from them by a cordon of fire. This anticipatory image of war runs the risk of provoking war itself. I believe one may describe the result of the cold war, both internally and externally, as terror. Terror is, at the same time, an attitude, a collective sentiment and an action of defense and offense.*

Underlying the accusations that each bloc levels at the other, there is first and foremost the existence of terror.

**I** KNOW the desire for peace of the U.S.S.R. and the Peoples' Democracies; if they had been reproached for austerity, severity even, in their political regimes, it is above all because of the cold war. These countries threatened with encircle-



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ment cannot secure their defense without a tightening up both internally and externally. In the same way if I do not forget that certain capitalist interests are at the bottom of present tension and that certain American groups are interested in maintaining it, neither do I forget that the American people and even its rulers have demonstrated for more than a century and a half a real love of peace and a profound horror of war.

It is neither the American people, nor its institutions which must be held responsible for McCarthyism, it is the cold war and the terror which it engenders. For the cold war is a complete entity, a political and social regime. . . .

**B**UT, many speakers have emphasized, the peaceful conversion of industries of war and, above all, of atomic industries runs the risk of provoking a crisis. It is not our task to evaluate this risk and to work out means for anticipating it. But the American experts are quite aware of it and we must be grateful to President Eisenhower for having proposed to convert the productive capacities at present absorbed by armaments for the benefit of under-developed countries.

Thus, beyond the great division of social systems, a new economic fact must appear: peace and peaceful coexistence are bound up with economic stability and the latter in the period of reconversion is bound up with a sort of gift economy. But aid to under-developed countries cannot be fruitful and remain peaceful unless we give up enslaving the country we wish to aid. This renunciation does not depend upon the good will of this or that party: if the aid is unilateral, it runs the risk itself of leading to slavery.

The independence of nations who



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are to profit from this aid cannot be guaranteed unless they are aided by both the two great atomic powers at the same time. This observation clearly shows the sense of the word "co-existence": we should have gained nothing if the U.S.S.R. and the U.S.A. remained inert, having no relations with each other, in a sort of indifference which could at any time turn into hostility. To the extent to which each of these two great powers is in duty bound to aid economically backward countries *with the help of one another*, co-existence means co-operation. . . .

The task of our countries then, is rather than remaining neutral in war to prevent war by recovering their sovereignty. Enslaved by aid which she was not able to refuse, France can believe today that it is in her interests to support American policy; she could be dragged into war *indirectly* and just for this artificial interest which unilateral aid secured for her. But if we believe that our countries of Europe should recover their true sovereignty, I put the question what substantial and direct interest could drag them into a war against the U.S.S.R. or against the United States in which they would have everything to lose and nothing to gain.

It is in this framework that the problem of re-unification of Germany should be formulated: instead of the monstrous and feeble Germany of Bonn where false interests have been engendered by its very mutilation and which can make it bellicose we must substitute the only kind of Germany which can be peaceful, that is a reunited Germany. What we want, what we all want here, what we call peace, is then positive construction, the inauguration of new bonds between the nations. . . .



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**I**T WAS the Afro-Asian Conference which posed the five principles defining peaceful co-existence. This fact is extremely important and Mr. Kuo Mo Jo was right to emphasize: "In the past, countries of Asia and Africa under colonial domination were unable to meet to discuss their own problems; now they are able to hold such a Conference without the colonial powers." That means, does it not, that the colonial era is coming to its end. All of us who are here, whatever our opinion on the concrete problems of the colonies, are agreed that this awareness of the African and Asian nations is a factor for peace.

The danger of war will persist if, against the evidence and against history, the colonialist nations resist this awareness by force, but the solidarity which the members of the Bandung Conference have demonstrated, in spite of differences of view and interest, is happily such as to make them think again. . . .

As to the general direction, the orientation of this change, I think it can be defined in a word. When I arrived at Helsinki, a journalist put this question to me: "What would you do if you had to choose between peace and liberty?" I replied that the question had no meaning today for a member of the Peace Congress. Certainly there have been—and there will again be—occasions when one will have to choose between slavery and war. But we know that the preparation of war today, this war which we want to avert, implies integration with one of the two blocs and limitation of national sovereignty.

We know that an atomic war, even if it did not destroy the human race, would destroy so many lives and so much wealth that there would be nothing but misery for the survivors. And misery makes terrible demands: how to emerge from it without years,



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maybe a century, of dictatorship.

The Peoples Democracies and the Soviet Union would lose the fruits of the admirable efforts of which they are justly proud; the bourgeois democracies would lose that political liberty of which they so often boast. Since peace, on the contrary, demands the return of every nation to independence, mutual respect and co-existence in the West as in the East, *our* Peace can only have one meaning: it is possible for all nations and all men to muster their own destiny; in a word, it is freedom.

There, it seems to me, is the common meaning of our undertaking: we want to construct peace by freedom and give freedom back to the peoples through peace.

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## *Mainstream*



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