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GENERAL MAC ARTHUR

BY

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The stewardship of General MacArthur in Japan, since the close of World War II, is reviewed in an interview with a Collier's correspondent

IF GENERAL DOUGLAS MACARTHUR were a Presidential candidate in Japan his victory would be certain, for not even Hirohito could give him any real competition.

Entering the prostrate country as a dreaded conqueror, he is now hailed as a liberator, the hope of unhappy millions. Common reference to him as "the man behind the bamboo screen" (meaning the source of all light, strength and wisdom) is a tribute formerly paid only to emperors. His rare public appearances are events, and crowds wait before the doors of his office building for a fleeting glimpse. Most high officials are no less admiring than the masses. Prime Minister Ashida, in the course of a long interview, spent most of the time in grateful praise of the general.

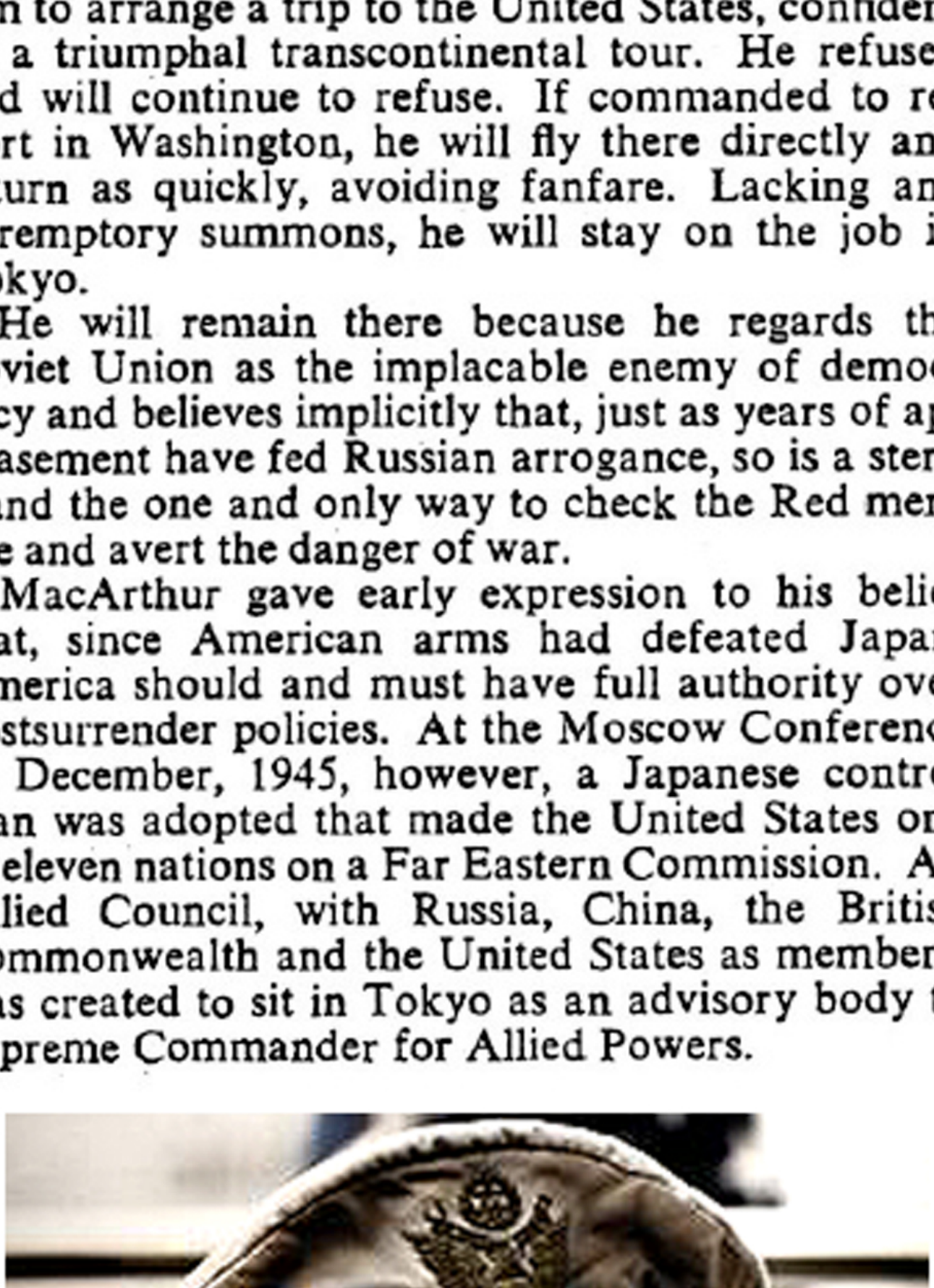
In an afternoon of talk with the leaders of every major political party, only the lone Communist sounded a note of dissent.

Strangely enough, especially in view of the agitation of various Presidential aspirants, the Supreme Commander has never considered himself a candidate. As he sees it, all that his announcement did was to make clear his readiness for continuous public service.

Ardent supporters, fearful that eleven years of absence have made him a legendary figure, urged him to arrange a trip to the United States, confident of a triumphal transcontinental tour. He refused and will continue to refuse. If commanded to report in Washington, he will fly there directly and return as quickly, avoiding fanfare. Lacking any peremptory summons, he will stay on the job in Tokyo.

He will remain there because he regards the Soviet Union as the implacable enemy of democracy and believes implicitly that, just as years of appeasement have fed Russian arrogance, so is a stern stand the one and only way to check the Red menace and avert the danger of war.

MacArthur gave early expression to his belief that, since American arms had defeated Japan, America should and must have full authority over postsurrender policies. At the Moscow Conference in December, 1945, however, a Japanese control plan was adopted that made the United States one of eleven nations on a Far Eastern Commission. An Allied Council, with Russia, China, the British Commonwealth and the United States as members, was created to sit in Tokyo as an advisory body to Supreme Commander for Allied Powers.



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The Supreme Commander States His Case

In a sharp statement, MacArthur let it be known that he had never received any communication or information from the conference during its session and did not know that Japan was being discussed until so informed by the daily press. Still more curtly, he stated that he had no iota of responsibility for the decisions made there. Nor was that the end of it, for when Russia demanded the island of Hokkaido as an independent occupational zone, SCAP turned down the request with icy finality. Out of this and various linked happenings, there comes the conviction that a major motive behind the MacArthur announcements is a supreme belief in his competence to handle Russian relations.

Aside from the implications with respect to the Soviet Union and his uncompromising insistence that Communism is no less totalitarian than Nazism and Fascism, nothing definite is known as to MacArthur's views on either foreign or domestic policy.

His determination to maintain silence proceeds in some degree from the War Department's prohibition against political activity but even more from a belief that his record in Japan affords full opportunity for the American people to judge him both as to capacity and ideology.

For two and a half years, he has been rebuilding a defeated, demoralized and disorganized nation, uprooting ancient traditions and directing the lives and thoughts of 80,000,000 persons along new lines. Every step in the process has called for the disclosure of his concepts of government and complete expression of his political, social and economic philosophy. What need for words when deeds are submitted for judgment?

Not even MacArthur's severest critics minimize the magnitude of the task that faced him when he set up his government in Tokyo after the formal surrender of September 2, 1945. The mere business of ground clearing was a gigantic undertaking in itself, involving the disarming, demobilizing and disposing of 4,000,000 Japanese soldiers in the home islands and 2,500,000 abroad, the return of 2,000,000 Japanese civilians from overseas and the repatriation of 1,000,000 Allied nationals. Then came the disarmament and demilitarization of Japan and the 100 per cent permanent destruction of the country's war potential.

All of these things were done in less than a year and without the firing of a shot. Moreover, the record of the army of occupation has been almost entirely unshamed by scandal. As a result of fair treatment for a defeated people, fully expectant of brutality and terrorism, it has been possible to reduce the occupying force to 140,000 from a high of 400,000.

Undesirable Elements Are Eliminated

Under explicit directives from Washington, SCAP's next order of business was to purge from public office, public life, industry, commerce, finance and agriculture, all persons who had been active exponents of militant nationalism and aggression, to suppress all ultranationalistic, terroristic or secret patriotic societies, to dissolve immediately and permanently all industrial and financial monopolies and other large concentrations of private business control, to close if necessary all laboratories and research institutes, to rid both religion and education of feudal characteristics.

Here were powers that gave MacArthur the right to turn the land into one vast prison cell. Instead of that, he has chosen to put all emphasis on the preventative rather than the punitive. Of the millions screened, only some 250,000 have been arraigned, and in every case the accused was acquainted with the charges and given the right to present counter-evidence and file appeals. At this writing, the purge has been virtually completed, and the number either removed or barred is 223,373.

The cleansing of Japan's public life went hand in hand with the dissolution of the industrial and financial oligarchy that permitted oppression and exploitation at home and promoted aggression and spoilation abroad. For years the economic life of the country had been controlled by the corporate and personal interests of 14 great families, working closely with the militarists. To destroy the structure in its entirety meant chaos, and so SCAP broke up the monopolistic combines into competing units, bringing into existence widespread ownership of the instruments of production and trade.

With the purges in smooth operation, MacArthur turned to an inspection of the Japanese government. What he saw was a highly centralized police state without even pretense of local rule. A thought-control system had its spies in every home. Every prison was crowded with political offenders and, while the Diet was bicameral, the veto powers of the peers made the House of Representatives a joke.

On October 4, 1945, therefore, the Supreme Com-

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mander took the bold step of proclaiming a civil-liberties bill that ended totalitarianism, giving Japanese the right of free speech, free press, freedom of religion and free assembly. Shinto was divorced from the state and, after being cleansed of its ultranationalistic and militaristic dogma, allowed to take its place with other religious sects. Some 5,000 political prisoners were released, many of them Communists; equal suffrage was declared and the voting age reduced from 25 to 20. The right of labor to organize and bargain collectively was recognized, and an end was put to licensed prostitution and the binding of girls to brothels by contract.

If there had been any doubt as to MacArthur's intent to work for the democratization of Japan and the development of civil authorities that would lessen the need of military controls, it would have been removed by his next step. Rather than use fiat to get rid of the reactionary Diet, a carry-over from the Tojo regime, he called an election for April 10, 1946. Few voices were raised in approval, majority opinion protesting it as premature and unwise, opening the doors to a return of the propertied gangs or else to the Communists.

The election was duly held and when the ballots were counted it was found that out of 36,000,000 registrants, 27,000,000 had voted, and approximately one million more women than men. The Communists, who had expected to win a sizable number of seats in the Diet, elected only one. The freedom and honesty of the election were generally admitted.

MacArthur then pressed for a new constitution, and November witnessed its adoption—a remarkable and well-nigh incredible document, for, in the preamble, war is renounced as a sovereign right, force is disavowed as a means of settling international disputes, and the nation pledges itself never to retain a war potential.

Barging ahead, peers and the peerage are wiped out, with only the emperor and his immediate household permitted to retain titles. A bicameral legislature is maintained, consisting of House of Councilors and a House of Representatives, but the Upper Chamber is that in name only and action of the councilors can be overruled by a two-thirds vote of the representatives. If the lower body passes a resolution of no confidence, the Cabinet falls. An independent judiciary is set up, with a Supreme Court and various inferior courts and the guarantee of trial by jury.

Greatest change of all, however, is with respect to the status of the emperor, for the constitution does away with his traditional divinity, setting him down merely as the symbol of the state and the unity of the people, deriving his position from the will of the people with whom resides sovereign power. Under pressure from SCAP, a second election was held in April, 1947, and again more than 72 per cent of the population went to the polls, the women making an equal showing with men. As before, the Communists made a pitiful showing.

MacArthur proceeded to press for the speedier rehabilitation of Japan's economic life, although Washington's directive *(Continued on page 56)* stated explicitly that he was to assume no obligation to retain or have retained any particular standard of living. What faced him was a rapid increase in want and misery, with the country deprived of raw materials by the loss of overseas possessions, and industry and agriculture in a state of collapse. Some measure of recovery was imperative.

For years some 35,000,000 farmers had worked 15,000,000 acres, an arable area equal to that of California, and under conditions of oppressive tenancy. Sixteen families of the Homma clan, for example, owned 4,000 acres, tilled by 5,142 renters. Compelled to build their own homes, furnish their own tools and fertilizers and made to pay in kind rather than cash, the average tenant was lucky to end up the year with 40 per cent of his crop yield. A land-reform bill is now enabling 2,000,000 tenants to buy 5,000,000 acres under the supervision of land commissions. The acreage is purchased by the government at legally established prices and paid for with 24-year annuity bonds bearing interest at 3.65 per cent.

What follows is resale to the tenant on easy payments stretched over a long term. To date more than 4,000,000 acres have been bought up and the distribution ranges from one-acre parcels to 2½ acres.

With the help of SCAP's natural re-

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sources section, large-scale restoration and reclamation projects are also under way. Some 700,000 acres used for military and industrial purposes during the war have been returned to agriculture, and the drainage of bays, marshes and swamplands is expected to add another million acres by 1950. Out of the Garioa dollar (government and relief in occupied areas) 43.3 cents have been going for food to relieve this drain on the American taxpayer and at the same time provide the Japanese with some approach to an adequate diet.

Experts have shown the way to better mining methods so that coal production, down to 20,000 tons a day in 1945, has leaped to 100,000 tons a day. Furthermore, they have discovered new oil fields and developed processes for the manufacture of fertilizers.

Clean Sweeping by a Busy Broom

Japan's whole life, in fact, has felt the sweep of SCAP's busy broom. The public health and welfare action has carried out a campaign of immunization. The educational system has been given a complete overhauling.

Under SCAP's system of tutelage, nothing begun is ever left to take care of itself. Forty-five government teams, made up of soldiers and civilians with special qualifications, roam Japan from island to island, checking up on progress and aiding local communities with expert counsel.

This then in brief (and very sketchily) is the record on which Douglas MacArthur is willing to be judged by the American people.

His critics, and there are many, freely grant that SCAP has done a "magnificent job on the whole" and even where the element of personal dislike enters in there is praise of his "pre-eminent ability and administrative genius." When these admissions are made, however, there is scarcely a private American citizen in Japan who does not let loose a burst of complaint.

These complaints run about as follows:

MacArthur has gone too far and too fast. His vaunted reforms are not even skin-deep, because emperor-worship still continues. As soon as controls are removed all of the new laws will be abrogated and overlordism and monopolies restored to former power. Letting the workers get the bit in their teeth has resulted in wave after wave of strikes. Due to the harshness of his purge of industry, the brains of Japan's entire economic structure have been removed. He has done nothing to reform a tax system that is the last word in muddle and unfairness and has taken no effective steps to stop the growth of a bureaucracy that has loaded the government pay roll to the breaking point. Inflation still mounts in a dizzy spiral and Japan's rationing regulations along with wage and price controls are a failure.

The American correspondents, while echoing some of these outcries, have bitternesses peculiarly their own. MacArthur has been aloof, looking down on ordinary mortals from an inaccessible height.

He has been abnormally sensitive to critical comment and in his insistence on a favorable press has not hesitated to impose a rigid censorship and cast into the outer darkness anyone either accused or suspected of lese majesty.

Some of these complaints stand up under investigation and others fall flat. The fact of inflation stands plain, as does the existence of a black market and the sloppy operation of wage and price controls, and it is all too true that the right of workers to organize has resulted in

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a steady succession of demoralizing strikes.

There can be no question as to the evils of multiple taxation, and the overloading of the government's pay roll may not be denied. Inflation, however, with its inevitable black market cannot be cured by executive fiat but waits on an increased production and this in turn waits on a peace treaty that will permit Japan to revise foreign trade and obtain the loans necessary for pump priming.

With wages failing to keep pace with price leaps, and thus reducing the average worker to a starvation level, the wonder is that there are not more strikes. Although firm in his belief that labor is entitled to freedom of action in the attainment of legitimate objectives, MacArthur has drawn a line across which the unions may not go. In January, 1947, when the workers massed for a general strike it was stopped by his statement that he could not permit the use of so deadly a weapon in the present emaciated and impoverished condition of Japan.

Similar action was taken in March of this year when a strike threatened to tie up the country's entire communications system.

Less Zeal for Emperor-Worship

In view of the centuries during which emperor-worship has been taught, it is highly probable that many Japanese still hold Hirohito in the old reverence. Nevertheless, signs of a change are not lacking. Pictures of MacArthur and Lincoln are almost as numerous as those of the emperor and no longer do street cars come to a dead stop as they pass the Imperial Palace, allowing conductors to alight and bow low. Only recently a fuel-rationing board cut Hirohito's charcoal request in half, and lese majesty has ceased to be a law of the land.

Moreover an American teacher rides herd on the emperor's young son, pounding primer lessons of democracy into his round, hard little head.

The charge that SCAP's purge has removed the brains of Japan's entire industrial structure would seem to be rather farfetched in view of the fact that the number of purgees totals 865 of which 450 were resignations. It is also the case that at no point were executives and technicians involved, but only policy makers.

As far as can be judged public opinions in Japan approves the purge and support even comes from some of the purgees.

For example, Ichoroh Sawada, a famous Olympic runner in his youth, got the boot from his high place in the House of Mitsui and is now the head of a flourishing concern that cans tuna and tangerines. According to Mr. Sawada, the purge has given Japan the first chance to develop a real capitalist system under free enterprise and the replacement of old and reactionary leaders has made for progress.

With respect to the tax muddle a revision of the system is now under way and the Diet is under instructions to report a bill by July. Social Security legislation is also being planned.

The quarrel of the American correspondents with SCAP is a confused business. That some measure of repression has been exercised is admitted for under Washington's directives MacArthur is authorized to establish such minimum control and censorship of civil communications as may be necessary in the interests of military security. It cannot be discovered that outgoing press dispatches have been censored but adverse comment on MacArthur has been barred from Japanese papers, and there are cases where critical correspondents, unwise enough to leave the country, have not been permitted to return.

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Subordinates Did the Muzzling

Where the responsibility would seem to lie however is with subordinates rather than the Supreme Commander himself. Out of a personal devotion that borders on fanaticism, they view any disparagement of their idol as not only an attack on military security but also a kick at the ark of the covenant. MacArthur, on learning that the Japanese press was not allowed to print American attacks on his Presidential candidacy, ended the prohibition at once.

With respect to SCAP's aloofness, the explanation offered has to do with a working schedule that calls for ten hours a day and seven days a week.

From 11:00 A.M. to 2:30 P.M. he sits in his office in the Dai Ichi Building, conferring with section heads passing on every act and policy. The postluncheon period is again devoted to reports and from five to eight o'clock there is a resumption of conferences in his office. This is a reasonable explanation but regrettable for his aloofness, for few men in public life today have a more engaging and persuasive personality than MacArthur.

I first met him in 1917 when he was a young major. He oozed energy, ability and ambition at every pore. Meeting him here in Tokyo 31 years later, amazed me to see how few changes have been worked by time. Still arrow-straight and with the same flash of eye and aquilinity of features, he justified what had been told by Lieutenant Colonel Douglas P. Kendrick, his personal physician.

His reflexes and appearance, declared the Army doctor, are those of a man of fifty. Few members of his staff, even though many years his junior, can match his physical endurance. Years of command and high responsibility with the mastery of life and death over thousands have given him gravity and dignity but there are still evidences of the warmth and enthusiasm that made him one of the most popular men in Washington.

In talk with him, it is plain that he draws his vocabulary from Gibbon and Macaulay, with a strong dash of Samuel Johnson. But a distinct fondness for rounded phrases does not lessen the force and cogency of what he says.

What stands clear as he explains his administration of Japan is his certainties and the directness and realism of his approach to the problems that confronted him.

With the world in flux, and battle lines being drawn between democracy and totalitarianism, what is more hardheaded than winning the support of 80,000,000 people by fair treatment? And with the Japanese our prisoners of war, entitled to our care under international conventions that we have never failed to respect what more intelligent than the relief of the American taxpayer by the earliest possible revival of Japan's industry and agriculture? From complete paralysis and the war's end, the country's output has risen to 40 per cent of prewar levels.

Why democracy? Because (MacArthur believes) it and Christianity are the world's greatest ideas and ideals. Of course, ancient traditions are not uprooted and it is inevitable that old habit of thought should persist, but where is there fairness in the outcry that our program of fundamental reform is a failure because the planting of the seed has not been followed by an immediate harvest?

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Democracy is not an automatic device but the struggle everlasting. After centuries of enslavement it is not easy to make people realize that the power to govern is in their hands and that success depends on development of ability to think and act for themselves. But two free elections bringing out a 72 per cent vote prove that the idea is being grasped.

Why an economy embodying the principle of private capitalism based on free competitive enterprise? Because experience has demonstrated that is the only economy that provides the maximum incentive for the development of individual initiative and individual energy—the two basic requirements for human progress.

Why in the various crises that have beset the Japanese government has MacArthur not intervened more often and directly by virtue of his supreme authority? Because you do not teach an infant to walk by walking for it. The feet of 80,000,000 have been put on the highway to democracy and, short of that which might imperil military security, it is best to let the people learn by their stumbles.

What puzzles Douglas MacArthur is the insistence that he has gone too far and too fast. What reforms could have been deferred? The destruction of the police state and its spy system? The divorce of church and state and the elimination of Shinto from the schools? The right of labor to organize and bargain collectively? The breaking up of an infamous system of private monopolies under which with government protection a dozen great clans controlled over 80 per cent of Japan's commerce, industry and finance? Doing away with the feudal ownership of land and creating a new class of small landowners?

Looking to the future, MacArthur's views are equally definite and forthright He believes that military occupations serve their purpose only for a limited time, at best, after which deterioration is rapid both in the population and the occupying force.

A peace treaty is long past due and if the stubborn hostility of other nations continues to compel postponement, the United States should take unilateral action, if necessary, to restore Japan to a peacetime basis.

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