formally, only a few days before. I told Hurley what Mao had said, briefing him as I thought an American reporter must brief any major American in high place when asked. I told him that Mao had said there was no way of "untying the knot," no way of negotiating a peaceful end of the embryonic civil war, unless America recognized the existence of a de facto Communist government, and saw it as an independent ally in the great war against Japan.

For this briefing I was to suffer in two ways, because then, in my naïveté, I did not realize how potent, yet how vulnerable, was the calling of journalism. I did not know, when I told Hurley that his unannounced and unbriefed mission was probably futile, how much it would enrage him. But twenty years later, when the documents were published, I read that the next morning, November 8, Hurley had sent a dispatch to the State Department concerning my disruptive presence: "Theodore White," wrote Hurley in his classified message, ". . . told me that he had just talked to Chairman Mao and Mao had told him that there was not any possible chance of an agreement between him and Chiang K'ai-shek. White told me many reasons why Mao should not agree with the National Government. White's whole conversation was definitely against the mission with which I am charged."

That report would remain filed in the dossiers of American intelligence for years, and would return to plague my life many years later, when I was accused of being one of those who "lost China to the Reds."

More importantly, and immediately, Hurley quoted me directly to Mao Tse-tung in a gambit of their conversations; and Mao's wrath was roused.

In the only open yelling argument I ever had with a Chinese Communist, I was accosted by Mao's interpreter, a young Chinese named Huang Hua, now Foreign Minister of China. Furiously, he denounced me for repeating to Hurley what Mao had said to me. "But we trusted you," said Huang Hua in anger. "Mao trusted you; we thought you were a friend."

It was an impossible situation, but highly educational. Neither Hurley of the American government, nor Mao, the Chinese sage, understood the code of American journalism. Hurley expected an American reporter abroad to be an arm of American purpose; and thus I had betrayed him. (Our relationship ended six months later, when, in a blaring face-to-face argument, he denounced me as "un-American" and called me "you goddamn seditious little son of a bitch," and we

parted forever.) If Hurley distrusted me, so now did the Communist high command, for revealing their thoughts to the American government; and the three days of Hurley's conversations in Yenan, from which I was excluded at the threshold, were of transcendent importance.

Once all the documents were published, years later, the story of Hurley's three days made the dimensions of tragedy clear. Hurley had come for a simple American purpose: to work out some truce or agreement between Chinese Nationalists and Chinese Communists so that, in alliance, they might multiply rather than divide their strength against the Japanese, our common enemy.

Hurley began the morning after his arrival (his sergeant stenographer attending to make the report), in a conference with Mao and his leaders, by presenting the terms Hurley and Chiang K'ai-shek had previously worked out together: a five-point program. By this program, both parties would pledge themselves to unity, the Communist party would be recognized as legal, all would work to establish at some future date a government pledged to progress—and in return, the Chinese Communists would disband their armies, give up their "liberated area" governments (which already governed ninety million people); and their troops would be "reorganized" in obedience to the National Military Council.

In the afternoon, Mao responded—explosively. He denounced the Nationalist regime from top to bottom, pointed out that one seat for the Communist armies on the National Military Council, which met rarely and only as a cosmetic convocation of castrated warlords and provincial generals, was not enough for him to give up the most effective army in China and its largest effective government. The agreement will give you a foot in the door, said Hurley. It does no good to enter a door if you have your hands tied behind your back, said Mao. They suspended that afternoon on Hurley's wise negotiating suggestion that he would be glad to entertain a description of what the Communists thought would be adequate terms for a settlement.*

They met again the next day, Thursday, November 9, in the afternoon; the Communists had worded their proposals in language smooth enough to conceal from Hurley their stubborn meaning. Expansively, Hurley declared that the Communist proposals were

*The full history of these vital and watershed conversations can be reconstructed from two State Department volumes (*Foreign Relations of the United States, China 1944, 1945*). But the best account, the most vivid and the truest in spirit, is that of David D. Barrett in *Dixie Mission*, an authentic contribution to scholarship, published, alas, too late, in 1970.

indeed fair, but that they did not go far enough. He wanted another day to reword them.

So that evening and into the next morning, Hurley reworked and reworded the Communist proposals. I linger over his rewording of the proposals because it concerns meanings, idioms and the sorrow-burdened attempt of men of different cultures to understand each other's ideas in translation.

Our most hallowed word is "liberty." But translated into Chinese, the concept requires the words *tsu-yu-chu-i,* whose written characters mean "the idea of self-will" and connote "selfishness," or every man for himself. "Democracy" in Chinese translation goes back to the original Greek, coming out in ideographs as *min-tsu-chi-i,* "the idea of the people" as governing imperative. In American idiom, democracy is a process; translated into Chinese, it becomes theology. Of these linguistic difficulties Hurley had no perception whatsoever. He was no intellectual; he was a cartoon character out of American folklore. But in the cave quarters of Dixie Mission that night, he rewrote the Communist proposals in the finest American tradition—and to the Communists, the rewording of their proposals must have been dazzling when they met on the morning of the tenth.

First, in the Hurley draft, came unity: the "Government of China," the "Kuomintang of China," the "Communist Party of China," would all agree, as three equals, to fight together against Japan. Then came an almost inadvertent phrase—startling in concept—which indicated that the National Government of China (Chiang's dictatorship) would be reorganized into a "Coalition National Government" in which all parties were equal. There would be a new "United National Military Council" under this Coalition Government, representing all armies fighting against Japan, and "*supplies acquired from foreign powers will be equitably distributed,*" meaning that America would arm both Chinese armies simultaneously. But coloring the entire document as it came from Hurley's American retouching was a glowing, untranslatable synoptic echo of the American Constitution and political faith. This new Coalition National Government, wrote Hurley, would "establish justice, freedom of conscience, freedom of the press, freedom of speech, freedom of assembly and association, the right to petition to the government for the redress of grievances, the right of writ of *habeas corpus,* and the right of residence." Hurley was committing the United States to underwrite a new China, an Oriental society which would accept the American Bill of Rights, the binding faith by which James Madison

and George Mason had sealed the original American revolution to its people. For good measure, Hurley threw in Franklin D. Roosevelt's revolution, too: "The Coalition National Government will also pursue policies intended to make effective those two rights defined as freedom from fear and freedom from want."

It must have appeared to these Oriental gun-slinging revolutionaries as too good to be true, because it *was* too good to be true. Yet if Franklin Roosevelt's personal emissary would guarantee it as a basis of negotiations, how could they say no? They were about to be recognized; the Americans were promising to abolish Chiang's government and replace it with a coalition government in which their armies, their government, would qualify for the guns they wanted. The Bill of Rights, on which Hurley insisted, must have seemed to them in translation as both incomprehensible and irrelevant, as it would certainly seem to Chiang. But if the Americans could compel Chiang to sign this curious document, certainly the Communists would sign it.

Nor did they have to wait for this important ceremony. It was Hurley who insisted they sign. On a flat rock, in the crisp sunshine of a perfect fall day, the document was laid down. Hurley signed. Then Mao, rather than placing his chop on the document, which was a formality, signed his personal name, his signature—far more important. And a blank space was left for Chiang K'ai-shek's signature, which Hurley undertook to try and get. Marvelous; transporting; history being made. Mao did not want to fly down to Chungking on Hurley's plane leaving that afternoon; he was still cautious. But Chou En-lai would fly with Hurley to conclude the negotiations in Chungking.

Chou En-lai kissed his wife at the airport—one of the rare moments when I have seen a proud Chinese display private emotion in public. But he was probably disturbed; Chiang, as I have said, had been indulging his execution frenzy that fall, and though Hurley would try to protect Chou as a negotiator, who knew whether Chou would return alive?

I joined the plane trip back with Hurley and Barrett, Chou En-lai and his secretary, Ch'en Chia-k'ang. I remember it as a bumpy ride, with turbulence in the air, and Chou En-lai being cold to me. He was either angry because I had told Hurley of what Mao had said to me; or he was worried, disturbed, knowing himself on a hopeless mission. We landed in Chungking; and I raced to type my dispatch, a rhapsodic dispatch, an emotional dispatch, about how peace had come to China at last and how we stood on the threshold of heavenly harmony.

Time magazine did not publish my dispatch, the filter of distance removing the desk editors from my emotional writing, which was in truth winged with a hope and passion that were entirely unreal.

Negotiations proved purposeless. Both sides were unmalleable. They had killed each other for too long. They would go on killing; and the only instantly meaningful question was who could best persuade the Americans to give them guns with which to kill each other. In less than a month, Chou En-lai, claiming his safe-conduct under the American flag, requested a plane to fly back to Yenan. Hurley, with honor, granted it. Barrett flew back with Chou and spoke with Mao Tse-tung once more, on which occasion Mao broke into temper. He had been betrayed by Hurley, he said. Mao had been betrayed so often by white men—both Russians and Americans—that this episode must have been demonstration of his doctrine that revolutions in Asia can only be conducted by Asians. All whites were untrustworthy. Mao twitted Barrett, whom he liked, and indicated that he might make public this American betrayal by exposing to the world both his signature *and* Hurley's signature on the secret document of coalition peace. When Barrett reported this astute political reaction back to Hurley, Hurley roared. According to Barrett, "I was afraid for a moment he [Hurley] might burst a blood vessel. 'The mother f———,' he yelled, 'he tricked me.' "

This was in December of 1944, and I had seen it all: I had seen famine and rout; I had been there with Stilwell as he was relieved; been there as Davies tried to explore the revolution; been there to see Hurley arrive, been there with Hurley and Chou and left with them for Chungking. I knew at least as much as any other journalist about the nature of the struggle in China, and knew I knew so. The Communists, I knew, no longer trusted me. The American government no longer trusted me—or at least Pat Hurley, the President's man in Chungking, considered me an enemy. The Kuomintang distrusted me, and had since my talk with Chiang on the Honan famine. But I was confident, even arrogant, knowing that I wrote for *Time*, for *Life*, and was Harry Luce's man in Chungking.

And then Luce, too, repudiated me. I was no sooner back from Yenan than Chungking intelligence services intercepted a dispatch of the Japanese news agency, Domei, which reported *Time* magazine's story on Stilwell's relief from command, with Stilwell on the cover. I read the Japanese summary, stunned. I could not believe it. I had smuggled back to Luce on the plane carrying Stilwell from Chungking a thirteen-page personal letter giving a blow-by-blow, fact-by-fact

account of the events that led up to Stilwell's relief, which I knew to be a genuine scoop. *Time* must have received it, discarded it, and then apparently turned it upside down in a story so fanciful, so violently pro-Chiang K'ai-shek that it could only mislead American opinion—which it was Luce's duty, and mine, to guard against.

My quarrel with Harry Luce in the winter and spring of 1945, as the war pushed to its close, was, I think, somewhat more important than the usual reporters' quarrels with their editors.

First, the subject was China. An event was swelling there that was more than a military defeat, more than a conspiracy. A revolution was changing the landscape of politics forever, but America was bound to a decaying system and regime on which rested all its hopes for postwar Asia. To try to halt or threaten this revolution was impossible, and would cost America incalculable lives in the future. That was clear even then. But between this revolution in Asia and its perception in America was a screen.

Second, the most inflexible guardians of this screen, the most distorting of the lenses through which Americans saw China, were the publications I worked for—and their editor-proprietor was my friend Harry Luce, one of the grandest of the great press barons of American history.

To try to break through the screen meant that I had to accept Henry R. Luce as an adversary.

Luce was a formidable man. Even were he not so important to the China story, he would rank in his own right as one of the giants in the history of American journalism. And it is useful to pause over the personality and thinking of Harry Luce if only as a study in power—the power of the press to shape public policy, and the autocratic power of the proprietor in those days to shape policy unchallenged within the portion of the press he controlled. The power of the press has since grown; but within that press the power of the proprietor over what he publishes has dwindled. Luce is a crossroads figure in both developments.

Luce was conscious of his power as few press lords are today. He was responsible to his balance sheet and conscience alone, thumbing his nose at advertisers, politicians, correspondents, critics, anyone who stood between him and the view of reality he expected his magazines to deliver. He knew instinctively what has since become a public cliché: the power of the press to set the agenda of public discussion. Luce introduced the personality of the week, the man of the year,

"*Life* Goes to the Movies," and half a dozen other agenda-setting dockets which are now taken as commonplace. In his time, in his great period, Luce made and unmade men, elevating nonentities to national leadership, destroying careers with the snap of his whip. And Luce brooked no nonsense about who controlled his magazines and what they said: he did. His reporters assembled facts from all around the world. The facts were important; provocative, quotable, salable, they were the raw stuff of the magazines. Luce knew, as few editors know, how much depends on the quality of raw reporting. And he paid generously for reporting. But in New York, those facts were assembled by his editors to his design. Freedom of the press, he held, ran two ways: His reporters were free to report what they wished; but he was free to reject what they reported, or have it rewritten as he wished.

It was his attitude to China that had first brought us close. He loved America; he loved China; with his power and his influence he meant to cement the two together forevermore. Luce was a surprisingly learned man, a true intellectual as well as a great business executive; but he was, above all, a Christian, and Christianity was the cement by which he meant to bind China and America together.

In these days of watered-down religion, of mouthed pieties and social fashions that masquerade as new faith, Luce's Christianity would seem anachronistic. But faith was his motive force, a muscular, thoughtful Christianity, infused as much by gospel folklore as by theology. When he summoned a cowering editor and remarked that he had thought all night about that boy who came home, the editor scoured his mind, wondering what story he had missed in the papers—but it would turn out that Luce was thinking of the prodigal son in the Gospel according to Luke. Luce, along with DeWitt Wallace of the *Reader's Digest*, who came of an equally clerical background, was probably among the last of the great editors who was moved by the generative dynamic force of believing Christianity. Luce might stray from the Christian past and teachings in personal dalliance and romance, or in cruel executive decisions as a great publisher must. But Christianity guided the best of his editing, leading him to his bold championing of black liberties in America, and to his denunciation of Senator Joseph McCarthy. At the moment of our breach, however, Luce's Christianity had impaled itself on the figure of Chiang K'ai-shek. Luce's missionary forebears had helped to plant Christianity in China. Chiang was their creation, and bore their message. With the Stilwell crisis, Luce felt, rightly or wrongly, by his morality, that he must take his stand: support Chiang, or else godless Communism

would take over. The lesser facts of events must be suppressed for what he considered the greater truth; and his magazines were his instruments.

With this view I violently disagreed.

Our quarrel had not been overnight in developing. I had been one of his favorites for several years because both he and I thought it was evil of the Japanese to reduce China from a great nation to a territory owned by Japan. We had begun to differ when China became our ally, and in the spring of 1944 I had flown back to New York to persuade him that we must now, finally, tell the truth about China, for Chiang K'ai-shek was doomed unless he could be shocked into reform by America. From our colloquy emerged a major article, "*Life* Looks at China," in which I pushed Luce as far as he would go (publishing that Chiang's Kuomintang combined "the worse features of Tammany Hall and the Spanish Inquisition"), and he restrained my angers, still heated by the Honan famine, as far as I could let myself be restrained. What we were arguing about was the soul and purpose of Chiang K'ai-shek, whether redemption was possible for the sinner or whether America (meaning Time-Life-Fortune) must cast him out. He published my piece much as I wrote it—after a remarkable intellectual volleying between us.*

*The quality of Henry Luce's mind and learning is so often distorted by the more colorful and bumptious qualities of his conduct that it is perhaps appropriate to quote from our colloquy to show why so many of us served him so loyally for so long. Luce and I exchanged multipage memos frequently. As we argued that spring about whether to do a skin-flaying exposé of Chiang's government, or a sorrowful, hopeful story, he responded in a two-thousand-word memo to this reporter, from which I quote him, at his best, thus:

> Different policies and different leadership might have led to different results under the same physical conditions—that is at the core of any belief in God and man. . . .
>
> But there is something here that needs to be sympathetically understood—and that is the effort of Chinese to discover the moral basis of their Reconstruction not in the morality of the West, but in their own, as they think, indigenous morality. (Perhaps the hardest thing for men to understand . . . is that true morality springs not from here or there, but is, as Emerson said, at the "center of the universe," over which citadel flies the flag neither of Britain nor of Jerusalem nor of Mecca nor of Confucius.)
>
> Now I find it very strange to be defending the cause of Confucius. But I do. . . . It is necessary to see this matter steadily and see it whole. . . . What happened [in China], to over-simplify, was . . . a great spill-over of evangelical zeal from a nineteenth century West which profoundly believed in a paradox: Christianity and Progress. . . . The people of the West, misled by their shoddy intellectuals and bewitched by a spawn of technological toys, have done precisely what Chen Li-fu does. For the people of the West, as the nineteenth century marched on to Verdun and Dunkirk, they too, voted Christianity irrelevant and Progress the thing. This schizophrenia of the West hit China. Christianity in its various guises (including Science as Reason) overthrew the idols of superstition . . . and reinvoked the moral law. . . . [But] Progress . . . in its various guises (including Science as Materialism) exploited China . . . challenged China and shamed China.
>
> China's reaction was slow, painful and confused. But it was clear that China must some

But then, on returning to China in the summer of 1944, I found that decay had moved faster than even I had anticipated, that the Japanese were destroying what remained of the East China front, and that Stilwell was to be sacrificed. Luce had my full report of the Stilwell crisis in hand when he let the story of the crisis be edited into a lie, an entirely dishonorable story.

And, thereafter, the breach between us widened to anger. Luce's court favorite at that moment in New York was Whittaker Chambers, a former Communist *apparatchik* of remarkable literary gifts who had become foreign editor of *Time*. Chambers edited the Stilwell story of the chaos, decay, misery, sadness and dissolution in China simply. Admitting that Chiang K'ai-shek was governing "high-handedly," *Time* declared that Chiang was doing so

> in order to safeguard the last vestiges of democratic principles in China . . . engaged in an undeclared civil war with Yenan, a dictatorship whose purpose was the spread of totalitarian Communism in China . . . If Chiang K'ai-shek were compelled to collaborate with Yenan on Yenan's terms, or if he were forced to lift his military blockade of the Chinese Communist area, a Communist China might soon replace Chungking. And unlike Chungking, a Communist China (with its 450 million people) would turn to Russia (with its 200 million people) rather than to the U.S. (with its 130 million) as an international collaborator.

America must choose, was the message of the story—to support Chiang or yield China to Russia. The story had the tone of apocalypse and, as usual with apocalyptical stories, had the forces and the future all wrong.

When I had first read the Domei summary of the story, I had exploded and cabled Luce: "If what Domei said is true, I shall probably have to resign as have no other way of preserving my

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day take her reformation in her own hands—a development devoutly wished for by the representatives of Christianity. . . .

The memo ran on page after page; few editors today would take the time to expose a whole philosophy to a correspondent at such length. I responded in a memorandum of equal length, invoking Alfred North Whitehead and Science and Reason, against Christ and Confucius. It was exhilarating to be working for a man who could discuss, all at the same time, the Bible, Confucius and the itchy gossip and color which sells readers on a magazine. But Luce's quotient was the same as my quotient at that time—that though Chiang's government was wicked, it was less wicked than the Japanese or than Stalin's Communism; and that in Chiang lay our hope. Thus, jointly, Luce and I excoriated Chiang's government and praised Chiang. Only when I returned to China, after the colloquy, was I persuaded by facts, murder, execution and incompetence that Chiang was no longer a useful vessel either of American or of Christian purpose. I was more pragmatic than Luce. I could not ignore what I saw; and he would not print it, for it destroyed his philosophy of the world.

integrity. . . ." Luce had cabled back: "Keep your shirt on until you have full text of Stilwell cover story. . . . Your views have always been respected here but I do not think it becomes you to get angry if for once your editor does not instantly follow your instructions. . . ."

The published story, when it arrived in Chungking, proved worse than the Domei summary. I drafted a forty-five-page letter to Luce, arguing my case that neither Nationalists nor Communists were democratic in the American sense and that our immediate interest was to support the ones who could help us most against the Japanese. But to aid Chiang against Mao, I said, was to commit us to a disastrous "meddling" in a civil war in which we could only lose. Luce cabled back that his support of Chiang was no more a "meddling" in other people's politics than American support of Churchill in England.

Our argument rose in intensity. I threatened by cable to resign three times more in the next few months. Luce raised my salary, but would not change *Time*'s policy. I was sad. This man, Luce, had plucked me out of nothing and given me eminence; he and his wife, Clare, had fostered me, sheltered me in their home, introduced me to the famous. Now he was repudiating me, and it was as if my father had denied me in public.

I would have done anything I could to keep or regain his affection. But he had trained me in the importance of the news, and the by-line he had given me bore a responsibility with it—to the by-line, not to *Time*. I was in China, seeing this great revolution scream for simple reporting. But he was in New York and felt it must be crushed. I *could* not yield from what I saw. He *would* not yield from how he saw it. I still insist, and know, that I was right and he was wrong in the telling of the story of China. But we could never be friends again so long as I worked in his house—and so I used him for the next two years and he used me, warily, suspiciously, until we broke; and we would not become friends again for another twelve years, when our affection surmounted the anger of old disputes.

The beginning of our final breach came in February of 1945. The Communists had consented to another round of negotiations with the Nationalists in Chungking, and these had broken down. I wired a cable warning of what would follow, which began thus: "This was New Year's week in China, the time for the giving of presents. And the leaders of China took the occasion to send their people a cruel and bitter gift . . . future civil war to bequeath to their children." The tone of the dispatch, chastened as I now was, was scrupulously neutral, predicting only tragedy.

Not a word of my dispatch was used, as Chambers edited my story thus:

> In Chungking another parley between the central government and the Communists ended in deadlock. Encouraged by jovial U.S. Ambassador Patrick J. Hurley, the Communists' ace negotiator, smart, suave General Chou En-lai, had flown down from Yenan for one more try. . . . For two weeks he had talked long and earnestly with Chungking's ace negotiator, scholarly, liberal . . . Wang Shih-chieh. . . . Chungking was ready to give the Communists legal status and minority posts in the national defense council. . . . but when Chungking asked Yenan to put the Communist army under Generalissimo Chiang's control, General Chou balked. . . . When would Chou En-lai return to Chungking? Darkly he answered: "Not so soon."

The cables between myself and my editors sputtered for weeks thereafter and then in April came one like this: "After consultation with Luce here's what he (and most emphatically he) would like you to do: stay in and near Chungking for at least four or five weeks to report not political China . . . [but] mainly small indigenous colorful yarns." There followed then a sample of the kind of reporting he expected of me, an excerpt from a London bureau cable on England's two thousandth day of the war,". . . yellow crocuses bloomed, daffodils sold for dollar and half per bunch, Commons passing bill making rear lights compulsory on bicycles." The cable went on to tell me: "in other words, good-fashioned Time news. . . . This assignment interesting but not taxing . . . so you've good chance getting stories in magazine. . . . Maybe you should consider coming here for brief refresher. What say?"

I said no to the "refresher" and put myself to reporting what "good-fashioned" news I could find. But though the azaleas and plum blossoms of Chungking made spring as colorful as did daffodils in London, in England victory was at hand—and in China, the Communists had launched an all-out offensive behind Japanese lines which was giving them control of the Yangtze valley. I could not report that, and did not want to report daffodils. Yet I wanted to stay in China and the price had to be the filing of light, sun-filled copy in an arena of despair and absurdity.

At this light, sun-filled reportage my partner in the China bureau, my then beloved Annalee Jacoby, was a masterly craftswoman. Though she hated Luce, Chambers and their policy more than I did, her touch at the typewriter preserved both our jobs. She discovered that in the spring season, Chinese could, traditionally, make eggs stand on end. Indeed, in spring a properly chilled egg can be made to stand

on its oval bottom anywhere in the world, for reasons I still cannot understand. At her dispatch, feature editors of the war-drugged Western press came alert. Someone interviewed Albert Einstein, who declared the feat to be impossible. Annalee arranged for photographs for *Life* magazine to show that Einstein was wrong, Chinese were right, eggs did stand on end. It was microcosmically sensational, and Annalee was congratulated for her "eggstraordinary story." I tried to emulate her but I was, in that season, unable to write "happy" copy.

I could score, when I tried, with a story, say of Dr. Chiang Chien-tsai, the most famous herb doctor in China, whose clientele included most of the Westernized cabinet of Chiang as well as the Generalissimo himself. Dr. Chiang diagnosed all diseases on the basis of the four "winds" that might invade the body, and blended his prescriptions of gallstones taken from horses, powdered snakes, ground goat horns, ripened child's urine, musk from the navels of Tibetan musk deer, and dried testicles of little animals; he was also a master at acupuncture. That story was published.

But for the politics of China and their hidden convulsion I could find no outlet, and remembering Chicken Little squawking, "The sky is falling, the sky is falling," I wondered whether it was I or my proprietor who was mad. It seemed to me that this was the history I had come to seek out—a revolution, with myself at the observation post, and a story so immense that no overdramatization could exaggerate it.

Since I had to see it through for myself, whether *Time* wanted to tell the story or not, I had to keep my job with *Time* to hold on to my credentials as war correspondent. Thus, from the beginning of 1945 on, I realized that my only insurance against dismissal would be combat reporting. We were a patriotic magazine, and our American men in action were splendid. So, as often as I could, I left political surveillance of the capital to Annalee, and for weeks and months on end I followed the American forces in the field.

Combat reporting was an escape from politics and I took it lightly. I gave myself over to reporting soldiers, charges, tanks, artillery, the sound of guns.

I did not realize then that this story was equal in importance to that of Yenan—and just as political. For the story of the American forces as the war drew to a close was a story of valor victorious. And the courage and spirit of American men at war flowed from a fostering politics as compelling as the politics of Mao's guerrillas. The American forces in 1945 were magnificent—as magnificent in Asia

and the Pacific as they were in Europe—and no book on modern politics or history would be complete without recalling how truly impressive and effective were America's fighting men who brought the Pacific war to a close.

CHAPTER SIX

THE POLITICS OF VICTORY: ASIA

It was easy to make clear the politics of the Chinese Communists and their peasant boys, who so willingly died and so skillfully killed for their cause. It was and is equally easy to make clear the grand strategy of the United States at war, as historians reconstruct day by date the landings and armored breakthroughs, the bombardments and air strategy, the convoys menaced and victories at sea, technology mastered and triumphs in laboratories.

But to make clear the underlying politics of the American men who fought the war, and died, is more difficult. Those unspoken politics were too simple. They were so taken for granted that only now do I realize how critically important those politics were: the millions of nameless Americans who fought the war loved their country with a mute and unquestioning loyalty and died when they had to, if not willingly, with full heart and devotion.

The mood and temper of those times is now so far away, in the afterlight of America's disaster in Vietnam, that the valor of the Americans at arms seems vaguely and disturbingly anachronistic. Perhaps it was F. Scott Fitzgerald who, after the earlier world war, caught best the spirit that was to move an innocent America. In *Tender Is the Night,* Fitzgerald's hero, Dick Diver, and a group of Americans visit the British battlefield of the Somme, seven years after that war ended, and gape at the hills, the relics of slaughter, the stupidities of generalship. Diver insists that the thrust came from the past. "See that little stream," he says, "we could walk it in two minutes. It took the British a month to walk it—a whole empire walking very slowly, dying in front and pushing forward behind. . . . leaving the dead like a million bloody rugs." Someone disagrees, and Diver continues: "You had to have a whole-souled sentimental equip-

ment going back further than you could remember. You had to remember Christmas, and postcards of the Crown Prince and his fiancée, and little cafés in Valence and beer gardens in Unter den Linden and weddings at the *mairie,* and going to the Derby, and your grandfather's whiskers." Fitzgerald wrote in 1934 of a scene revisited in 1925. But the spirit that moved the men to fight in 1918 was the same as still propelled Americans to action in 1941, and was as potent a political force as any other I then observed and reported. All my combat reporting from 1942 to 1945 was a reporting only of the vivid outer expression of that spirit.

I had begun reporting Americans in action only in 1942, but in the next three years one could sense the rising pulse of American power better in Asia, at the tail end of the effort, than in Europe. In Asia it flickered first faintly, then rose, then throbbed, then, in its last exertion, surpassed anything war had ever known before. But the dynamics of the pulse came, I am sure, in Europe and in the Pacific, as it came in China, from that spirit of valor which rests on faith—and which is the essence of politics in war.

The spirit is difficult to describe, for no American soldier would admit aloud that he loved his country; that was for politicians. No one admits his devotion to the general or the President when he is at war. Except that, as it turned out, in World War II that love was there. The men I lived and flew with groused constantly—at the food, at the "Slopies" (our Chinese allies), at the mud, at the sergeant, at the general (whether Chennault or Stilwell), at Franklin Roosevelt. Yet I saw several cry like children when Roosevelt died. They had no songs except pop melodies: "You Are My Sunshine, My Only Sunshine" was our favorite in 1942; and in 1943, "Pistol Packin' Mama"; then "Blues in the Night." Some of us tried to sing, one drunken night, "John Brown's body lies a-mouldering in the grave," but that stopped when a Southern lieutenant tightened his lips and said, "We ain't going to sing that song anymore, and I'll bust the next son of a bitch who sings it in the mouth." He had a century of other memories and songs worked into his spirit. So we sang that no more. But we sang "Lili Marlene," taken from the Germans; and "There's a Troopship Just Leaving Bombay," taken from the British; and "Waltzing Matilda," taken from the Australians. There was no great American war song; Americans needed none; nor did "Mom and Apple Pie" stir them—the spirit came from the sentimental equipment of a century past, wordless but powerful.

The thread by which to lead into the valor of the Americans is,

perhaps, the Eleventh Bombardment Squadron, which I unashamedly wish to celebrate. The squadron counted sixteen B-25s and until 1943 was the only striking instrument of American power on the mainland of Asia. It had been put together as a unit before the war, and was thus largely volunteer in its manpower. The squadron specialized in hit-and-run strikes, for it was, in function, an airborne guerrilla unit. It struck Hong Kong for the first time, Hanoi for the first time, Haiphong for the first time, on all of which strikes it permitted me to go along. But after playing red dog, or poker, or after a good raid in which no one was killed, or after getting drunk in the wildest drunken bashes I have ever enjoyed, the men would grouse about the command. They would grouse aggressively—about what we should be doing that we were not doing.

Combat morale actually outran command.

On Christmas Eve of 1942, I recall, the squadron disagreed with General Chennault, who had ordered a stand-down for the holiday, because most American generals hate to order troops to attack on Christmas Eve. But any number of the flying men in the squadron felt that Christmas Eve was just the proper time to jump the Jap, because they would not be expecting us. Thus, after the party in the barracks, they recruited themselves into scratch crews, found enough men to get four B-25s off the ground, and unauthorized, all of them volunteers, took off in the night to bomb the Japanese across the Salween River. Most of us were slightly alcoholized when we took off, but the raid was performed splendidly. We coursed up and down the gorge of the Salween, locked in tight formation, the moon lighting the walled Chinese villages below like fossil rectangles. We located our target, Tengyueh, and as we strung our bombs down the main street, where the Japanese depots were located, Japanese answered back, their pink and yellow tracers scratching for us; then we turned, locked on the flight leader as he turned, as if this raggle-taggle band had practiced such a formation maneuver for years, and heeling over, our planes delivered a broadside of our own, our red, blue and white tracers flaring until we had extinguished those of the Japanese. Then, as we lifted and gained height, we adjusted our earphones and the pilot tuned in the armed forces shortwave broadcast out of San Francisco; they were playing Christmas carols for the men overseas, and we joined the broadcast, caroling "Oh Come, All Ye Faithful" as we homed on Kunming. We expected to be court-martialed for violating orders, but Chennault only chuckled at the idea of his men exceeding command.

Upon this spirit, this absolutely reckless desire of the young Americans to get the war over, rested, first, our tactics and then our strategy, for bravado gave lift to daring planning and one could see the American reach spreading.

A year later, again on a holiday, Thanksgiving Day, 1943, the reach had spread to Formosa, and again it was the Eleventh Bomb Squadron that led. Formosa lay twelve hundred miles from our main base at Kunming. But Chennault had packed in to a secret coastal field, Lingling, by coolie carrier and truck, enough gasoline to refuel the squadron sufficiently to get from that field to Formosa and return. We hedge-hopped down on the afternoon before Thanksgiving, refueling once at Kweilin; then touched at dusk at Lingling, where we were gathered under the wings of one of the planes and were told that the target for tomorrow was Formosa.

Not only was it Formosa, but it was the Shinchiku air base there; and Shinchiku was the great staging base of the Japanese air force as it flew its bombers and fighters down the island chain from the homeland to the Southwest Pacific, where they were deployed to fight MacArthur. Air intelligence had reported a Japanese force of forty bombers and twenty fighters paused at Shinchiku for relay south.

The men shifted uneasily as they learned that there was just enough gas to reach the Japanese base and get back to refuel at Kweilin. Success, said the briefing officer, depended on three things: surprise above all, for if the Japanese had even five minutes' warning they could rise from their fields to overwhelm us; next, weather—a cold front and clouds were coming down from the north; and last, pinpoint navigation—Shinchiku lay by the shore, and we must make landfall directly on target, for an error of navigation of even one degree would let the Japanese get their fighters aloft. After that, we were told that since the next day was Thanksgiving, Chennault had ordered a special dinner sent down with the squadron, complete with canned turkey and cranberries, which would be waiting for us when we came home from the raid. At which came the only rebellion of the squadron, and it came instantly. Since it was very likely that quite a few would not be returning safely from the raid to eat that dinner, they wanted their Thanksgiving dinner now, before they took off. Our forward commander was Colonel Clinton ("Casey") Vincent, all of twenty-nine years old; and the actual strike commander in combat would be Colonel David ("Tex") Hill, also twenty-nine. They were both young enough and sufficiently combat-blooded to understand the insurrection. They yielded. So we had Thanksgiving dinner the night

before, and on Thanksgiving Day, before dawn, as the rising sun was pinking the hills, we took off.

The Formosa raid was one, I am sure, of hundreds and hundreds the U.S. Air Force executed with perfection all around the world. But this was the first time I had seen a strike go so well. We cleared the coastal mountain range with a few feet to spare, dropped to the ocean so low that our propellers sucked salt spray into the cabin, prayed that our navigator, an earnest Polish-American lad named Ray Mazanowski, would find Shinchiku exactly where he pointed us—and there it was. The Japanese planes were all there, wing tip to wing tip on the ground, the red balls painted on their jungle-green camouflage coloring, waiting for us. Our pursuits, up above, were impatient; one P-38 overflew us by seconds to get at a slow Japanese transport plane in the sky ahead, and as we came in, the transport was already twisting down in smoke and flame. We lifted to fifteen hundred feet so as to clear the fragments of our own bombs, and then we were over them, our frags opening up the parked planes, unfolding in flame, with the characteristic orange-and-black smoke coronas of burning fuel flowing from the tanks. Then our pursuits were strafing what was left, and strafing barracks, and Japanese were running, and the whole operation, by my stopwatch, had taken no more than three minutes, from the sea approach, over the airfield, to the turn, and back out to sea—and only eight minutes from first sight of landfall to the smoke vanishing over the horizon. Then Mazanowski was up in the top turret, counting, counting, and screaming that every single plane was safe, we had not lost a plane, nor a man, and we were on our way home. We destroyed, by the records, some fifty enemy bombers and fighters on the ground and in the air on that strike—and it meant, for the Japanese, that the interior lanes of their empire were now no longer safe, since Formosa was only 750 miles from their homeland. And for the American command it meant that Americans could go anywhere; Japan itself was the next prey.

On such spirit rode the victories; and on this spirit and the vast American investment in education and technology married to the spirit came the power lift; and after that, even if I could not distinguish it then, the "stretch"—the beginning of the obsession with air war that was to delude American strategy thirty years later in Vietnam.

I would mark my first awareness of the stretch that evening in August 1944 when the B-29s took off from China to reach for the homeland of Japan in the first daylight strike at the enemy. The B-29s

belonged to the Twentieth Bomber Command; they were the most advanced airplanes of their time, with a range of well over five thousand miles, and were at the disposal only of General "Hap" Arnold and President Roosevelt in Washington. They had been built specifically to destroy Japan, and the closest safe bases the United States could locate for their design and distance capacity in 1943 had been China. Thus they arrived in Chengtu from over the Hump in the spring of 1944, divorced from all local command and control, either Stilwell's, Chennault's or Chiang's. They were a "pure" strategic instrument, the best the air force could put into the sky—and watching them prepare to hit stretched my horizon along with that of our generals.

The Twentieth Bomber Command briefed its crews the night before the August 19 strike scientifically, not at all in the romantic, football-jargon, happy-go-lucky style of our local China strikes. First on weather and meteorology, with huge charts; then on rescue procedures if they were downed in any given area; then on the topology and layout of the steel mills in Yawata in Japan's homeland, which we were going to hit in broad daylight; then, a matter-of-fact pep talk by Brigadier General Laverne G. ("Blondie") Saunders, who was going to lead the strike. He spoke in the slurred, blurred syllables of common American talk, but his instructions were precise. "Gentlemen, we've got to do better work, we've got to get at our aiming points. . . . You pilots have got to get in there at the altitude set and you've got to keep your speed steady. How do you expect your bombardier to do his work if you're flubbing around back there? This raid is going to be rough, but goddamnit, it's a rough war and you're flying in a good ship, better than anything they ever dreamed of having. You'll have to fight your way through to target, but you're better than they are, you know it, that dirty bunch of yellow-bellies. . . ."

The technology of the first daylight raid on Japan was impressive. So was the long briefing. But most impressive, in retrospect, was the reach and the spirit. In the briefing, they spoke of errors and successes in the early raids the B-29s had already made from the China base: they had hit at Anshan in Manchuria, thirteen hundred miles north; at Palembang, on Sumatra in the Dutch East Indies, over two thousand miles to the south; their arc of destruction was so impressive that my notes recorded for the first time that the spread of American power was now global. A Catholic chaplain, named Adler, closed the briefing by reciting the Lord's Prayer, which all the crews in the briefing room

repeated. Then all of them, Catholics, Protestants, Jews alike, listened as he blessed them "*In nomine Patrius et Filii et Spiritus Sancti,*" and the room mumbled the words after him. It would be very dangerous.

The next morning in the dark the planes took off. They were overloaded, carrying enough gasoline in their fuel tanks to go all the way to Japan and back; the runway at Chengtu was the longest in China, but still perilously short for comfort. I went to the end of the runway to see if the planes could clear with their heavy lift, and found Chaplain Adler there. As the planes one by one rumbled by and the pilots squeezed aloft, he would chant aloud from his prayer book as if trying to give the wings just an extra bit of lift in Christ's name, amen.

All the planes on that raid took off safely. They bloodied the Japanese homeland. But it was far more dangerous than planned and we paid too heavily for American logistics to bear. Fourteen planes, or twenty percent, did not come back—an intolerable loss, which we were forbidden, rightly, to report. Simple geography had compelled the B-29s to return to the Chengtu base across occupied China; on the way back, Japanese fighters rose to hit the laggards as they limped home. China was apparently not a good place to base long-range aircraft in those days; and shortly thereafter, when the Marines moved across the Pacific, the entire B-29 operation was transferred to the Pacific islands, from which the "Superforts" devastated Japan and then dropped the atomic bomb. But the instrumentation was already there; and the power that comes with long-range devastation, which seemed so thrilling that evening, grew later into the blind intoxication in which instruments influenced American decisions more than politics.

The grass-roots politics in those days, however, were very sound. Wherever one touched the dispersion of American force, one found the same kind of men—bitching and drudging, but willing to die, giving that critical extra effort which transforms soldiers into warriors, persuades leadership to boldness, and lights imagination with newly perceived realities.

The Hump, for example. No one knows when the first flight across the Hump was made, not even Don Old, who made that first flight on what he thought might have been the ninth or even the tenth of April, 1942. The men who flew the Hump (including a young lieutenant named Barry Goldwater) did, simply, what they thought they must do. They flew in the beginning against clouds, against the Japanese, who dominated the air in 1942, and against the Himalayas. They flew in old DC-3s, whose service ceiling was so low they must fly

the passes in sunlight, which exposed them to the Japanese; or fly through clouds, where the Himalayas might poke up crags to bring them down. Casualties were so high that the DC-3 was replaced by the C-87; but those four-engine planes could not be maintained. The Hump command then accepted the whale-bellied C-46s, fresh from the factories, not yet test-flown and tried, and they test-flew and tried them in the Asian mountains. They made their own maps of uncharted peaks, bases and landing fields. The charts at the end of the war carried the designation of a landing field called Dumbastapur. All the other bases of the Air Transport Command were named for the points on the British Indian Survey maps, but Dumbastapur was named for an episode during a Japanese raid on an airstrip laid out on a British tea plantation. An American colonel named Gerry Mason saw his men in the open, gazing at the planes overhead, realized they were enemy planes and yelled, "Take cover, you dumb bastards!" After which this airstrip was officially charted on the maps as Dumbastapur, India, and may remain so still, for all I know.

Out of the flights of the Hump, as they rose from eighty tons a month in May 1942 to eighty thousand tons a month by the end of the war, came the entire art of modern air logistics, replayed once more in the Berlin airlift of 1948-1949, and then transmuted to the air-cargo transport practice that is now common in the modern world.

For myself, admiring as I did the valor and technology which took the men over the Himalayas day and night, came a rather long-lasting lesson and understanding in the measurement of human spirit, couched in the first and one of the rarest reasonable explanations of psychiatry to me. By good planning, someone in Washington had been wise enough to send to the Hump command as "Wing Surgeon" a lieutenant colonel named Donald D. Flickinger. Flickinger was an easygoing man, a psychiatrist, and seemed to spend much of his time simply going from base to base and chewing the fat aimlessly with young pilots. I queried him and he explained, as I recall, thus: His was the difficult job of deciding whether a man was a coward, too chicken to fly; or whether the man had been stressed so far he was too sick to fly. Every man, said Flickinger, pulling a teacup over to him, is like a cup. But men come in different sizes, big cups and little cups, each with a different capacity to hold strain. With too much strain, every cup spills over and anything can happen. Then men can crack up their planes, go berserk, make errors in judgment, become reckless in the air. Some men, he said, could take only ten trips across the Hump; some could do thirty; some even sixty—but eventually, sooner or later,

a man would reach his limit of strain and he, Flickinger, had to recognize that point of strain, ground the man, or ship him home, before he harmed himself or his crew. Flickinger was more concerned about men who tried too hard, and pushed themselves too far, than by the occasional coward. His measure of the outreaching spirit was the best index of valor, as well as the best use of psychiatry, that I have come across, before or since. And thus, two years later, I would use what I learned from Flickinger of stress and strain to measure myself.

By then, in early 1945, I had given up on my effort to report esoteric Chinese politics, or the crescent civil war, in the columns of *Time* magazine. I was still under political strain; so I found actual combat a relief from thinking, or trying to force thinking on my editors. And it seemed to me that I could get through to the end of the war only by joining the men in the field in that happy-go-lucky comradeship that comes in the company of men when all goes well.

From January of 1945 until the end of the war, I did my best to stay with the action—but the action always, and ultimately, brought me back to politics and history.

After January 1945, the war went well in the field. Stilwell's training effort was now paying off; the thousands of Americans posted as liaison and training officers with Chinese troops, sleeping in hammocks in the jungle, in mud huts, in old Chinese temples, were now proud of the force they had created.

From the beginning, the object of the American effort had been to cut through the Japanese blockade of China and reopen the Burma Road. The end came in a ten-day period in mid January of 1945, starting with an assault on the last stronghold of the Japanese, atop Mount Huilungshan; and there again came another of those vignettes that mark a turning point. Huilungshan was 7,500 feet high; the American-Chinese command of three Chinese divisions was to stage out of a ridge 6,000 feet high to clear Huilungshan—and once more, perfection of execution. It was a long, hot day of mountain climbing, and it began with American planes circling the peak: a tattoo of three smoke shells from the artillery to mark the Japanese positions on the crest, then American pursuits and bombers peeling off one by one, dropping their napalm, dropping frag bombs, dropping heavy bombs. Then the artillery: three eight-minute salvos every hour, then after each salvo a rush of Chinese infantrymen to the next height through the shell-shredded trees; then another salvo, and one could see the Chinese in their blue-gray uniforms tumbling into trenches or circling

Japanese blockhouses and dropping on them from the top. Then, finally, at four o'clock, in the brilliant sun, the final fusillade from the American-directed artillery and an old-fashioned bayonet charge as the Chinese infantry reached the crest. In a few minutes, from our observation post, we could see them strolling outlined against the sky on the height that commanded the junction of the historic road where Burma meets China. From that height, any Japanese pocket remaining on lesser heights could be pounded under with ease. The blockade, we knew, would be over in days.

What remains most vivid in memory now are two things: the vultures flying over the slopes of the mountain picking away at the Japanese corpses which had been lying in the sun, rotting, for days. And the spirit of the Japanese. None surrendered. They died far from home. My only trophy of the ending of the blockade, which I still have, is the Japanese battle flag that flew over Huilungshan, signed in the dried-out, rusty blood of the Japanese soldiers who chose to die rather than surrender, who must have signed it from their own wounds that last day of battle. They, too, had spirit—and the leaders of their empire had wasted it.

Thus, then, in the closing months of the war, I was almost schizophrenic. What was happening in the field was, simply, so exciting that I could not help but thrill with American pride. But whether or not we wasted the spirit, skills and valor of our men in the field, as the Japanese Empire had wasted its men, would remain for the coming years to decide. My heart was with the men I knew in the field making victory, but my mind told me we were already deep in blunder in the politics of China. The warping of my emotions to a patriotism which is my worst weakness as a professional journalist had begun in Boston, when Miss Fuller taught us of Miles Standish and Elder William Bradford. It had continued through Harvard; but now this sense of the American purpose as Triumph over Evil became unshakable in me, almost maniacal as I began to flick around the map of Asia which was opening to our conquests.

My movements in the last few weeks of the war were frenzied. I forgot about politics, forgot about my quarrels with Luce, and intoxicated with the victory that intoxicated everyone, moved anywhere I wanted. I was into Nanning in June, as soon as the Chinese pierced the cordon in East China and began to unravel the Japanese victories of 1944. I was off by plane to visit MacArthur's command in the Philippines in July, when news reached us that the air force could now make direct flights between the China and Pacific commands. I flew

on to Okinawa for the last days of the mop-up and saw bulldozers pushing the sun-dried bodies of dead Japanese off newly built roadways as if they were garbage. I flew back to Manila and woke to hear that we had dropped an atomic bomb on Japan. The news came on the armed forces radio while I was shaving, on a day of terminal madness and joy. My instinct was to hurry to my post in Chungking, but first I wanted to talk to MacArthur himself. He received me two days after the bomb dropped, the day after he himself had been briefed for the first time on the bomb and its nature by Karl Compton of MIT. After some pleasantries of reacquaintance, he got at once to the bomb, no longer roaring as he used to roar. "White," he said, "White, do you know what this means?" "What, sir?" I asked. It meant, he said, that all wars were over; wars were no longer matters of valor or judgment, but lay in the hands of scholars and scientists. "Men like me are obsolete," he said, pacing back and forth. "There will be no more wars, White, no more wars." With that assurance, I was off again, back to the mainland, up to Chungking to find out how the surrender was being taken, lingered in Chungking for a few days, then decided the story was elsewhere. I flew back to Manila to hedge-hop to Okinawa, whence I hoped our plane could make it to Tokyo Bay, where, apparently, the Japanese were about to surrender.

Reading again the dispatches I kept cabling back from my wild circuit about the rim of the shrinking Japanese Empire, I can see once more the contradiction between events and decision. The world was fluid and about to be remade. An empire had vanished; a half-dozen victors raced for the spoils. Boundaries were to be drawn fresh, armies disarmed, entire states abolished. And once more, as always, as news of events flowed into the seat of command, Washington, the events must have been sorted out there not by their own nature but by the shapes and categories ready in men's minds to receive them. I was following only the crash and sound of events on the rim, waiting for decision at the center in Washington to give them coherence and meaning.

The decision in Washington was to give all priority to the orderly opening and occupation of Japan. The Japanese had formalized their surrender on August 14; had sent their first personal emissaries to Manila on August 19 and 20; and agreed to accept MacArthur's General Order No. 1, outlining the terms of surrender. But was this surrender real? Or a trap? We had designated Atsugi airfield outside Yokohama as our first touchdown point of occupation. The Japanese argued: Atsugi was a training base for Kamikaze pilots, it was too dangerous; the suicide pilots had mutinied on first news of the

surrender, invaded the Emperor's palace to protest, killing the general of the Imperial Guard Division. Another 300,000 soldiers of veteran divisions had been assembled in the Tokyo plain before the surrender to fight off American invasion; the Japanese were unsure of the control of their command structure in the vicinity.

But MacArthur insisted: we would penetrate Japan at Atsugi.

Thus, then, I found myself on a hot night in Okinawa waiting to fly to Japan and Tokyo Bay—where the Japanese were supposed to surrender, and the war was supposed to come to an end.

Ceremonies are little more than punctuation marks in history, to be ignored except by schoolchildren, who must learn their dates. But the ceremony of the last great American victory was of an order so important and colorful that I shall tell it here, before I touch on the real history of the disaster in Asia which happened, almost instantly thereafter, unnoticed.

It was the night of August 31, 1945, that we moved on Japan.

The negotiation of surrender had taken a little more than two weeks, and we had been gathering planes, from the Hump run, from the North Atlantic run, from the mid-Pacific and mid-Africa runs—and they were jammed together here in the night on the airfields of Okinawa. Ten beacon ships were strung north over the sea from Okinawa to Sagami-Wan, to blink the air train on its way.

The planes went off into the night, spitting back blue flame from their nacelles, tightly timetabled. I was scheduled out of Kadena airfield, on a plane of the Eleventh Airborne Division, combat-packed and combat-ready, departing in sections at two-minute intervals. The plane I rode took off about an hour after the first echelon, before anyone had yet landed at Atsugi airfield, which would be the first pinpoint of occupation. This would give us enough time to turn back if trouble developed at Atsugi—but enough honor to say that we were in on the first landing, at least two hours before MacArthur himself.

It was a short flight from Okinawa to Japan, three hours on bucket seats. The sentiment of the men was simple: "Don't trust the sons of bitches"; and no one slept, the men fingering and plucking at their guns, opening them, cleaning them again and again as combat troops always do before action. We were flying under an overcast and dawn seeped in at six. Below we could pick out the tips of the volcanic islands that lead to Tokyo Bay. Our plane rocked in a rain squall, bobbed about, then slipped into a patch of sun. And there in the morning sun, stretching as far as we could see in the inner arms of

Tokyo Bay, was Halsey's Third Fleet—flattops and battleships, cruisers and destroyers, more ships than anyone had ever seen before in one place, or is ever likely to see again. Then to the left, in the distance, a gray, unmistakably perfect mountain cone, Fujiyama, so lovely one's eyes had to caress its slopes and flanks. Then the surf breaking on sand shores below, the green rice fields, nothing moving on any road, and down to the landing at Atsugi, which is twenty-two miles southwest of the Imperial Palace in Tokyo and perhaps twelve miles from Yokohama.

The first touchdown could have preceded us by little more than an hour, but it had softened the sharp edge of confrontation. Off at one end of the field, crowded together, wings crazy-cocked to the sky, were the camouflaged green planes of the Japanese air force, their propellers stripped. What I had feared for so long was now stacked as junk. The Stars and Stripes were flying from the control tower. Our planes were coming down in unbroken sequence. The troops unloaded, their guns cradled ready; and then they slung up the guns when American jeeps rolled up to lead the Japanese trucks that would take them to the perimeter points. As we watched, the perimeter of American presence swelled, men hammering up their assigned rendezvous signs: FEAF. THIRD BATTALION. SEVENTH AACS. ATC. And more signs, and more, as the web grew, and Americans clustered in their units about the expanding perimeter of the field, the power of one civilization pressing on, and about to squeeze out another.

It was ten in the morning before we felt the field secure, and our own strength large enough to test beyond. I joined the point, the Third Battalion of the Eleventh Airborne, as it pushed off in a column of Japanese trucks, led by the jeep of Brigadier General Frank Dorn. Dorn was an old friend of China days, an artist of watercolors, a creative gourmet, a skilled troop commander—a man competent either to fight the Japanese or to perform the tea ceremony if required.

Yellow and red tapes marked off our route. Japanese gendarmes and troops lined the roads, their backs to us, rifles slung across shoulders, scanning the countryside for possible troublemakers. The fields were empty, no farmers in sight, straw flats of grain drying in the sun, wash hanging on the line near the shuttered wooden bungalows; but almost everyone indoors—except for the few curious teenage girls, who would peek around corners to watch the invaders pass, and then dart away when they saw they were observed by the American soldiers. Their men had raped their way through China; we

would not, but they did not know it. It was silent all the way into Yokohama, paddies rising in crescents beyond the shrublike trees, but no one there. We came into Yokohama by the Sakuragicho station; and our battalion, the spearhead of the occupation, made for the Grand Hotel on the Bund.

It might have been make-believe, it went so fast. Two American infantrymen, grenades at the belt, guns ready, took over the door. A few minutes later, an American sergeant and a captain, assisted by a Japanese girl with thick-lensed eyeglasses, were ready to billet arrivals. Then the assistant manager, in frock coat and striped trousers, made his appearance in the lounge—a huge room, wood-paneled, with overstuffed pink furniture—and, wringing his hands, he tried to find out from us what General MacArthur would like to eat for dinner.

We went out shortly to look around. Perhaps a quarter of a mile of the Bund was still intact, and from the Bund we could see Yokohama's harbor—empty. On the waterfront: burned-out fishing boats, abandoned lighters, decaying launches rising and falling with the lapping of the waves; a single Japanese warship, one turret blown half overside, its guns poking askew like broken pipestems. Beyond in the distance one clean American battleship and two escorts, guns leveled at the city.

There was no need to level any guns at Yokohama. It was cinder. We had told each other for years that the wood-and-paper houses of the Japanese would burn at the first touch of fire-bombing. So they had. The city was flat—acre after acre of rubble, above which three features repeated themselves over and over again, signatures of desolation against the sky: the speckling of big iron safes, iron cubes intact on plots where shops, offices, factories had been burned out; the stubble of brick smokestacks rising high across the horizon; and a crust of corrugated-iron shacks, all rusting, where people still tried to live. Dreary, beshawled figures trudged about in these ruins.

The city was dead. So apparently was Japan. It had needed no atom bomb to crush Japan; the B-29s had already done it with their fire bombs, killing more, by far, than both atom bombs did. The atom bombs had been essential only as a pretext for the Japanese to give up an idea—of their eternal invincibility. But the fire bombs had already wiped out the vitality of the nation. I felt no shame at that moment over the slaughter of Japanese, either by fire bomb or by nuclear fission: I had cowered under their bombs, under their machine guns, seen the victims they had savaged with knife, bayonet and club. And they had bombed my country first. Revenge is a dry form of

satisfaction; but the dryness was clean to my taste, even though I could not bring myself to hate the stooped and forlorn people of the street.

Friday night and all day Saturday, as we waited for the ceremony, I probed about in a jeep, in the rain and mist; and the fog made all outlines in the beaten country soft and blurred, as in Oriental paintings. Then on Sunday, the day of ceremony, all came sharp.

A destroyer picked our group of China-based reporters off the Bund in Yokohama in early morning, and we climbed aboard the U.S.S. *Missouri* in the bay. The U.S.S. *Iowa* lay to one side, the *South Dakota* to the other. An old flag with thirty-one stars hung from one of the *Missouri* turrets, the same flag that Commodore Perry had brought to Tokyo Bay when he opened Japan to the West ninety-two years earlier. At the very top of the mainmast was the same flag, we were told, that flew over the Capitol on December 7, 1941.

This was to be no cloistered surrender, as had been the surrender of the Germans at Reims, three months earlier. MacArthur wanted everyone there, and the world to watch. The *Missouri*'s veranda deck bristled with high command: five full four-star generals (Stilwell, Krueger, Spaatz, Kenney, Hodges); eleven three-star generals backing up the four-stars, followed by twenty two-star generals and fifteen one-stars. The Navy had equivalents in admirals; the Marines had their delegation of Leatherneck generals. Then were grouped, in their various splendid and many-hued uniforms, clusters of Russians, Chinese, Britons, Australians, French, Dutch. A space was taped off for eleven Japanese, sternly limited by our orders to "3 Army, 3 Navy, 3 Government, 2 Representatives of the Press." Then came the American press pack. The Marines, the Navy, the various Army commands had all insisted on having *their* war correspondents present to report the war as *their* victory. The crush held everyone erect, each of us allotted two square feet of tiptoe space from which we could watch. The enlisted men who had fought the war, the sailors and the marines, found what space they could, and very few of the *Missouri*'s crew could have remained below. Sailors in dress whites sat with their feet dangling over the long gray barrels of the sixteen-inch guns on which they perched; they hung from every line and rope. This would be a sight to remember, to tell their children, to tell their grandchildren. None of us knew then that this was the last war America would cleanly, conclusively win. We thought it was the last war ever.

A shrill piping announced the arrival of the Japanese. The first aboard was Mamoru Shigemitsu, the new Japanese Foreign Minister, in silk hat, morning coat and striped trousers. Limping on his wooden

leg and a cane, he pulled himself up the catwalk, clutching for a grip. He had lost his leg in an assassination attempt before the war; the young radicals of prewar Japan, believing he was soft on Japan's destiny, had tried to kill him because he wanted peace with America. But that had been long ago; none of us knew it, so none of us offered a hand to the crippled old man as he dragged himself to the veranda deck where he would seal the surrender in the war he had once sought to avoid.

Then came Japan's Chief of Staff, Yoshijiro Umezu. He was a sturdy man, with a face easy to hate, stolid, stiff, blank of expression. I could imagine him giving orders to loot, rape, burn, devastate. His uniform was crisp; ribbons on his chest, gold braid over his shoulder. I recall brown pocks on his cheeks, and his teeth must have been tight-clenched, for as his face muscles flexed, the brown pocks went in and out. He seemed a mean man—but he had the honor to commit suicide, I was told, shortly thereafter.

The other Japanese followed. When they were all there, at eight minutes past nine on September 2, 1945, Douglas MacArthur emerged from a cabin and took the curse off the savage moment. MacArthur could always savor a moment and this one was worth savoring. If television had been available then, he would have delighted in displaying himself to it. He was master of the Pacific. He had spent some time composing his remarks, and what emerged was a mixture of Abraham Lincoln's Gettysburg Address with phrases plucked from the William McKinley school of American rhetoric. Out of respect, I shall quote the Lincolnian phrases, not the McKinley purple.

His hands quivered as he read his text and we listened. "We are gathered here . . . to conclude a solemn agreement whereby Peace may be restored. . . . Nor is it for us here to meet . . . in a spirit of distrust, malice or hatred. But rather it is for us, both victors and vanquished, to rise to that higher dignity which alone befits the sacred purposes we are about to serve. . . . It is my earnest hope . . . that from this solemn occasion a better world shall emerge out of the blood and carnage of the past—a world founded upon faith and understanding—a world dedicated to the dignity of man and the fulfillment of his most cherished wish—for freedom, tolerance and justice. . . . As Supreme Commander for the Allied Powers, I announce it my firm purpose . . . to proceed in the discharge of my responsibilities with justice and tolerance, while taking all necessary dispositions to insure that the terms of surrender are fully, promptly and faithfully complied with."

Here MacArthur looked directly at the Japanese and intoned: "I

now invite the representatives of the Emperor of Japan and the Japanese Government, and the Japanese Imperial General Headquarters to sign the instrument of surrender at the places indicated."

Shigemitsu took off his silk hat and limped forward to sign the document. Someone finally took pity and gave him a chair to sit on. He signed, withdrew. Umezu followed. Umezu took off his white gloves, and refused the chair. He bent from the hips, like a folding rule. His stocky frame was rigid for a moment, then he took the pen and signed.

It was as Umezu straightened again that the last thing happened—and happened to the split second in the perfect timing of the victorious forces we then commanded. The rain of Saturday had ended, the skies were lightening, and now the clouds above the ship were breaking with sun patches when a drone sounded. It began as a light buzzing in the distance, then a roar, then the deafening tone of countless planes converging. Four hundred B-29s, the fire bombers that had leveled Japan, had taken off from Guam and Saipan hours before; the fleet carriers had coordinated their planes. They were to appear over the *Missouri* all at once. And they did. The four hundred B-29s came low, low over the *Missouri,* and fifteen hundred fleet planes rose above and around their wings. There they were, speckling the sky in flecks of scudding gray; it was American power at zenith. They dipped over the *Missouri,* passed on over Yokohama, inland over Tokyo to brandish the threat, then back out to sea again.

They had laid waste this country, its empire, its sea lanes; they had blasted open not only its cities but its mind. Ours had been Victory Through Air Power, and the planes paraded their triumph over Tokyo Bay as Caesar's legionnaires had paraded theirs in Rome when the short sword was queen of the battlefield. It was the supreme moment of Air Power.

And so, after gaping, as we all did, at the planes, and shivering slightly, I was overside on a destroyer taking correspondents to shore to file their dispatches; and I remember debasing the moment to beat my rival, the *Newsweek* correspondent, with the quickest story on how the Japanese had surrendered. And then, after filing, I strolled at dusk the Bund of Yokohama with my old friend "Pepper" Martin, and we sat down on the wharfside looking out over the Pacific. The surrender was then no more than eight hours old. We knew the First Cavalry Division was coming ashore somewhere in the vicinity, and Martin pointed to the dirty water lapping the pier. There, bobbing in the water, was a freshly opened, but empty, wax package which clearly

said "Cracker Jack." He, from Seattle, and I, from Boston, had both grown up eating candy-coated Cracker Jacks. Now the Americanization of Japan would begin.

Frenzy seized me again the next morning. *Time* and *Life* had an entire platoon of writers and photographers and reporters already ashore; but I was the China correspondent, and must get back to base.

But why Chungking? I asked myself. I had control of a plane that would go where I wanted. General Wedemeyer, commander of the China theater, had put at the disposal of the correspondents who covered his command a C-54, loaded with mountain rations and staffed by two full crews. I was by then senior among the correspondents and responsible for the flight. MacArthur could not give Wedemeyer's press corps orders; we could fly as we wished; and the plane's crew, all younger than I, were ready to frolic through the open skies that belonged to the white-winged stars of the American air force. So, too, were the other correspondents of the China command—if we could agree on the story. The story, all of us knew, was probably in Shanghai. So we plotted our route in skip-hops, as tourists through a victory, to move in leisurely return to Chungking: Shanghai, Nanking, then Chungking.

Our C-54 left early from Atsugi. We had already decided that we would make our trip, in this new plane, the first nonstop flight between Tokyo and Shanghai. But on the way we circled over Hiroshima because all of us wanted to see where that bomb had hit four weeks earlier. Hiroshima was not at all impressive from the air. There was nothing to describe, not even the smokestacks that I had seen poking up from the barrens of Yokohama. Hiroshima was bare, only the rivers running through brown flats below. The center was so neatly clean it could not be reported—as if the bomb had swept out the heart of the town in a single stroke.

Thus at dusk into an airdrome near Shanghai. It was a tight moment. We landed unannounced on the field, and when we pulled our door open, there stood Japanese soldiers, bayoneted guns pointed directly at us. They did not seem about to shoot, yet there was none of the obsequious bowing to Americans I had just seen for three days in Japan. A young Japanese officer came up the stairs, very angry. He could speak no English, I no Japanese, so we tried to make ourselves understood in the Chinese we both spoke. I did my best to explain to him that Japan had surrendered, that I, personally, had just seen it in Tokyo. He said he had heard this on the radio, but that he had no

orders from his chain of command to let American planes land here at this field. But the heart had gone out of him; he did not want to shoot or seize us, only wanted us to fly on our way elsewhere. I insisted he give us trucks to take us into the city and place his guards around our plane. Finally, he gave in, but only because he had to: he was of the defeated, I of the victors, and his sullen confusion at the disorder was the story of the grand tragedy written in minuscule.

The tragedy of the victory revolved around one great question: To whom the fruits of victory? The answer was blurred by ignorance and events jostling decision. To whom, in occupied China, should the Japanese yield? Mao, in one of his flaring metaphors, described the political dilemma in peasant terms: Who collects the fallen pears? If the landlord has run away from the bandits and abandoned the orchard, asked Mao, and the tenants have remained to tend the pear trees, fertilize them and guard them—who, then, at harvest time has the right to collect the falling pears? The runaway landlord or the peasants who tended the orchard? He, Mao and his Communists, had occupied the coastal zones of China which Chiang had yielded to the Japanese. Who now should harvest the pears of victory in the areas that Mao's troops controlled?

From the neatness of the surrender ceremony in Japan, which our arms and logistics alone controlled, I was thrust into the confusion that determined Asia's fate.

I can best put a frame about this confusion by citing from three sets of now yellowing documents which I collected in those last six weeks of ecstasy and tumult, documents which I read, stripped for news and filed to *Time* magazine (which did not print them). I was filing convulsively, as all correspondents do when speed and action seem more important than reflection.

The first set were Communist documents—orders to the Communist armies which I had snatched from Communist headquarters in Chungking in early August. These Communist orders were signed by General Chu Teh, Commander in Chief of all Chinese Red Army regulars, partisans and guerrillas. Their dating is striking testimony of historic decision-making. Chu Teh, and his Communists, were quickest off the mark.

The Japanese had first sued for peace to the Allies on August 10—an open message crackling over the wireless of the world, intercepted by the Communist listening posts in Yenan. The Communists must have gathered instantly at that old gray, sprawling, adobe-and-brick

headquarters which I remembered so fondly from my visit a year earlier. And they must have reacted at once, for General Chu Teh's General Order No. 1, over his signature, is dated the same day: August 10.

"Japan has surrendered unconditionally," read General Chu Teh's Order No. 1. ". . . I hereby issue the following orders to all the armed forces in the liberated areas: (1) Any anti-Japanese armed force in the liberated areas should, on the basis of the Potsdam Proclamation, deliver an ultimatum to the enemy troops . . . ordering them to hand over their arms within a certain limit of time. . . . (2) If they do not surrender over a certain limit of time, they will be disarmed. . . . (3) If the enemy or puppet forces refuse to surrender or to be disarmed, the anti-Japanese armed force in the liberated areas should determinedly annihilate them. . . ."

Then, the next morning, came a tattoo of further orders from Chu Teh, radioed area by area. At eight o'clock on the morning of August 11, by Order No. 2, Communist armies in Shansi and Suiyuan were to move on Chahar and Jehol, the troops in Hopei to move toward Liaoning in Manchuria; the details outlined a northern thrust whose ultimate objective was still obscure. At 8:00 A.M. also came Order No. 3, simultaneous with No. 2, an order coordinating the main Chinese Red Army forces with the Mongolian Communist army. At 10:30, Order No. 4: all forces in Shansi to move to take over the railway from the Japanese, and seize the provincial capital of Taiyuan. At 11:00 A.M.: orders to all commands down through Central China to South China, to seize all railways from the Japanese instantly, and again: "If resistance is encountered we should determinedly annihilate our enemies." At noon, Order No. 6: to move to cooperate with the Soviet Red Army coming into Manchuria. At six in the evening—obviously after consultation with Mao—Order No. 7: a sweeping full-scale order of insurrection to "control all . . . depots, factories, schools, barracks and forts. . . . Control all ships, trains, military trucks, wharfs and piers, post offices, telephone and telegraph companies and radio stations. . . ."

The reaction of the Nationalist government followed the next day. It came in a personal telegram from Chiang K'ai-shek to Chu Teh: ". . . The government of China has made all necessary preparations to deal with Japanese collapse and re-establishment of order and administration. Let Communists be warned: to maintain dignity of government mandates and to abide faithfully by decisions of Allies. . . ." More specifically, I was told by the Generalissimo's head-

quarters: "In the past when military orders have been disobeyed, military action has been taken. The Generalissimo's orders *must* be obeyed. Those who disobey them are to be considered as a common enemy."

It was clear, then—the Communists were moving in the field, relying on muscle and gun. The Generalissimo was relying on the decisions of the "Allies," which meant the United States. Chiang still held the American franchise. The United States recognized only the Republic of China, Chiang's republic. The United States had the power, the planes, and command over Japan if it wanted to exercise it. Which meant that MacArthur was in total command.

A week later I was again in Manila, and on August 20 had come Douglas MacArthur's General Order No. 1. That order was backed with the world's mightiest army, navy and air force—and the threat of nuclear devastation. It was directed sternly to the conquered Japanese and their Emperor, and it was a prescription of what the Japanese Emperor must say to his scattered and hopeless troops, of whom two million still stood in arms on Chinese soil, encircled by both Communists and Nationalists.

"The Imperial General Headquarters," read Douglas MacArthur's draft of what the Emperor must say, "by direction of the Emperor, and pursuant to the surrender to the Supreme Commander for the Allied Powers . . . hereby orders all of its Commanders in Japan and abroad to cease hostilities at once . . . to remain in their present locations and to surrender unconditionally to Commanders . . . as indicated hereafter or as may be further directed by the Supreme Commander. . . ." Then General Order No. 1 ran on for four and a half pages of detail.

We Americans would decide, so ran the burden of the message, who would harvest the fruits of victory on the mainland of China. We had driven the Japanese from the orchard; thus we would decide who should harvest the fallen pears that Mao disputed with Chiang.

The surly confusion of the young Japanese officer who now met me at the airport in Shanghai was thus only a reflection of the larger confusion of the beaten Japanese in those weeks. They still occupied China's cities. But to whom should they yield? To Mao or to Chiang? They knew they were defeated; they wanted only to go home again. And in those three weeks, while they still held the great cities of China, they did not care to which Chinese they yielded, so long as MacArthur would spare their homeland. Among the many messages coming into our signal centers from the Japanese several now stand out

stiffest in the sheaf of our harvest of their melancholy. "The situation in China," began one of their humble messages to MacArthur, "following the cessation of hostilities is as follows: (1) Various military authorities of Chungking and Yenan and troops under their command are rushing unwarrantedly and without discipline into the area under Japanese control and separately demanding the Japanese to disarm. (2) Meanwhile the Japanese troops are executing their best effort for the protection of the people as well as their own nationals, scarcely succeeding in preventing further aggravation of the confused situation. . . ."

Each day the Japanese messages to MacArthur reflected the growing confusion of their defeated garrisons caught between American power at the top and the conflict between Chinese Communists and Nationalists in the field. As, for example, on August 23: "In Manchuria, Inner Mongolia and North Korea, the disarming of our forces is making progress. However, in certain localities, disarmed Japanese forces and civilians are being made victims of illegitimate firing, looting, acts of violence, rape and other outrages. . . . The situation is certain to get out of control in the very near future. . . ." On August 24: "The Communist troops and the Chungking troops around Psinian are plotting activities and likely to cause local engagements. . . ." August 25: "Japanese first front troops on the continent find themselves under complicated circumstances, and the situation is so peculiar that the delivery of their arms may occasionally be made to the Allied Commander [i.e. Communists] in direct contact, who may not be designated in your General Order No. 1. Your agreement is requested."

It was up to the United States, therefore, to decide to whom Japan must surrender China. I was writing all this in the brief half hours a newsman takes to file a dispatch, but I had lost the frame of the story. Journalism is a profession whose imperative is "now," and I was intent on the "now" story, the "today" story, as I bobbed and weaved about the collapse and the insurrection to come. I knew I could make copy for *Time* by writing about the "today" story, and as I flew back from the Tokyo surrender to Shanghai, the "today" story of liberation was too enticing and vivid not to file.

Shanghai cried for visual, anecdotal, color reporting. In the sky were American planes; the air rescue missions of the air force had preceded us by a few days; and they were guiding the planes above dropping parachute packs of food and medicine into the prisoner

compounds where wasted American prisoners of war and internees were still held. The Chinese in the street clapped and cheered when American planes came low. And if a parachute pack opened and fell into a zone outside the prisoner compounds, the Chinese raced to open and loot it, and instant carnivals burst out. It was carnival all over town. As our truck from the airport came down Bubbling Well Road, Chinese clogged our path, cheering, waving little American and Nationalist flags. I noticed at the waterfront, where peddlers normally sold dried fish, that they were already selling silk-screen portraits of Chiang K'ai-shek, the Liberator.

The international settlement in Shanghai had had an exemption from war. Its polyglot population had survived under Japanese occupation, and the black-market underground was now furnishing luxuries to us that we had not seen in China for years. Good Scotch was being poured, steaks were an inch thick, champagne and French wines were on sale. Four currencies circulated simultaneously—the Japanese yen, the American military dollar, the Nationalist currency, puppet-government banknotes. One could have made a fortune by trading in currencies whose values fluctuated almost hourly. Leicas, Rolleiflexes, all German cameras, could be bought for twenty dollars in American money if one caught the exchange rates right. Silks and artworks were equally cheap; and few Chinese merchants haggled with the victorious Americans. Even the whoremasters and cabaret owners welcomed the first Americans. On our first evening in the liberated city our group went out through cheering crowds to a cabaret. The White Russian owner was so delighted to see Americans in uniform that drinks and meals were free—and to cap it, he offered us our choice of any woman in the house, any race, any color, any size—and he had them all.

I tried to make contact the next morning with politics; and because I had learned how the Communist underground worked, and could drop the names of Chou and Mao, I was in touch with the Communists within twenty-four hours. But I found their underground paralyzed. They had moved immediately on General Chu Teh's orders No. 1 and 7. The "Red Workers" had seized ten factories, and were holding out against the "Yellow Workers," who supported Chiang K'ai-shek. Their New Fourth Army had closed in on Shanghai and now ringed the city within ten miles round. The students wanted to go out on full strike; so did the General Union of Red Workers. They explained how they still controlled any number of districts in Shanghai city, and named which districts. But ten days earlier, on August 25,

Yenan had suspended its call for an insurrection. Now, said their orders, everyone must hold still. It was, they said, because even at this moment Mao Tse-tung himself was in Chungking negotiating with Chiang K'ai-shek, and discipline held them firm while Mao tried to work out a peaceful solution.

In Shanghai, the Communists might have moved irresistibly to take power from the Japanese in the first two weeks after their surrender—but American power lay off the coast, and they would, almost certainly, have been forced to disgorge. The Americans in Chungking and Washington would decide how and to whom to hand over power. And since Mao and Chou were both in Chungking talking with Chiang K'ai-shek and Hurley, the harvest of victory would be decided there. So I must be off back to Chungking at once, without pausing to enjoy the revels of Shanghai.

Mao and Chou, I found when I reached Chungking, had arrived on August 28, while we were preparing for the ceremony in Tokyo Bay. General Hurley had flown to Yenan to offer them safe-conduct to come and negotiate with Chiang. It was the first airplane trip ever for Mao Tse-tung, a landbound man. He had hugged his little girl and said good-bye to his wife openly at the airport, as throngs in Yenan cheered him off: "like a man going to his execution," said one of the Americans who was there. Mao had boarded nervously, but when he alighted in Chungking, dressed in his baggy blues and wearing an incongruous Indian sun helmet, he had been cheered again. Then he had been whisked away to the Generalissimo's compound in the hills above the city and installed in a mansion of his own, with a flush toilet in a modern bathroom. Mao refused all guards, even American military guards. For several days, before serious negotiations began, he and the Generalissimo, murderers of each other's men and families for so long, had paid each other visits, and strolled through the gardens together—the Generalissimo wearing his neat Sun Yat-sen suit or, occasionally, a black silk mandarin gown, Mao Tse-tung invariably dressed in the baggy blue cotton paddings of Yenan.

Then, the very day of the surrender in Tokyo Bay, serious negotiations had begun—Chou En-lai negotiating with Chiang's government at the practical level, while Mao and Chiang talked of the future of China in terms of history.

The conversations had already broken down when I came back to Chungking late in the first week of September. What lay at issue beyond all the large words of China's unity and purpose and independence was the territorial imperative of power: Who would control

what provinces of China? Whose armies, whose guns, whose police, would control what the Japanese were surrendering? Chiang's promise and premise were the same as ever—that China was a unity, that Mao and his Communists would have a place in the government if they put their troops under his discipline as the warlords had done. But Mao and Chou were adamant. They would yield all the Yangtze valley and South China to Chiang. But they would not yield nor accept orders from Chiang in the provinces of the Yellow River basin in the north. And as for Manchuria—there, Chu Teh's troops under Lin Piao's command were already reaching for contact with the Russian Red Army, racing for occupation, on foot; there they would not yield either. In effect, they declared themselves willing to accept two Chinas; Chiang would settle for only one China—his.

There come moments in history when all is confusion. To be caught in such a moment is bewilderment. One hopes that somewhere, at some distant center of command, someone can make sense of all the contrary fragments which the daily reporter collects at random. Where, or who, or at what level Washington was collecting the fragments, we in the field could not tell.

But some of the fragments in my notebooks give the feel of the chaos.

Item: Our own intelligence reports in Chungking, relayed from Moscow, indicated that Stalin distrusted Mao, considered him too much a nationalist to be a loyal Communist, and would probably purge him if the Russians took over North China and disciplined the Communist Party there, as they had disciplined the Communist parties in Eastern Europe. Washington must have had the same information. Would Mao choose to throw in with the Americans or with Stalin?

Item: Reports were received of the first contact between the Russian Red Army and the Chinese Red Army near Kalgan, the gateway to Mongolia. The Chinese Reds had been rebuffed by the Russian Reds; some had even been disarmed; in Manchuria, the Russians were looting and holding cities to hand over to Chiang's troops, not to the Communists.

Item: The Sino-Soviet treaty had just been signed. It shocked the Chinese Communists. Did it mean that Stalin, as the words indicated, was recognizing Chiang K'ai-shek, not themselves, in return for Chiang's concession of special rights in Manchuria to the Soviets? Was there a fissure there we should explore for friendship with Mao?

Contrariwise:

Item: A young American captain in air force intelligence had just

been killed by the Communists. He was John Birch, a blue-eyed, red-haired, peppery, hot-tempered young Georgian ex-missionary who spoke excellent Chinese. I had known and liked him and regretted his killing. But the story of his death was obscure even then. Birch had become military adviser to a Nationalist unit behind the lines; they had clashed with a rival Communist force. Whether Birch was killed by the Communists in cold blood as a prisoner, or in the heat of combat, we did not then know. But his memory would be the seed of the John Birch Society, which I was to meet in American politics twenty years later. More importantly, however, he was the first American killed by Communists in a civil war we did not understand.

Item again, and overwhelmingly important: The Republic of China was our recognized ally, and Chiang K'ai-shek was its president. We had entered this war, invited the Jap attack on Pearl Harbor, to save Chiang K'ai-shek's "Free China." He was the talisman of the accident that had brought us into this war. The British had been brought into the war to save Poland, only to see it seized by the Communists seven years later. Were we to see "Free China," for whose sake we were drawn to war, also taken over by the Communists?

All things were fluid, the world map to be redrawn, Asia to be reshaped. But how? By standing with Chiang? By recognizing Mao? By standing apart totally and letting the Chinese armies settle the issue?

One last fragment of my last few days in Chungking seems particularly pertinent. The talks of Mao and Chiang were deadlocked. We had already begun to fly Chiang's troops, in our planes, to the cities of the coast and north. General Wedemeyer had flown to Washington for command consultation on the takeover, but the lesser generals on his staff were already having second thoughts about the giant troop airlift just getting under way. Thus I was called in to a staff session during the absence of Wedemeyer. I was only a war correspondent, but I had enough acquaintance with Chinese politics and Chinese battlegrounds to cause one or two of the staff to think my opinion might be worthwhile. I was invited by then Brigadier General George Olmsted, a West Point graduate, but a civilian in peacetime life and a politician to his fingertips, who later ran for governor of Iowa. Olmsted knew the politics of the American move were more important than the logistics of airlift capacity. He wanted me to come, I am sure, to make his point that the airlift of Chiang's troops to the big cities in Communist-controlled regions was political folly, a par-

ticipation in a civil war which was neither our obligation nor our commitment.

Olmsted had asked me to speak to the generals. I pointed out that airlifting Chiang's men into Manchuria and North China, where the Communists held the countryside about the cities, was terribly risky. We would be airlifting these men into garrisons and pockets that could be resupplied only by American airlift capacity—and if the Americans withdrew, as I felt we would, we would have deflowered Chiang's army of its best troops, to replant them where they could not be nourished. The other generals were exasperated at my presence; my statements were only political judgments, not measurable military certainties. My sole participation in American policy-making thus ended. As the conference broke up, one brigadier general yelled at me, in a fore-echo of all the denunciations of the press I would hear later: "They aren't there, those Communist guerrillas you say are there. They're a fiction of the American press." He went on: "They haven't got the guns and manpower to keep those railways closed. Their only strength is what American newspapermen tell Americans about them. Guys like you and Edgar Snow, who talk about the Communist guerrillas and their areas—you guys are what makes their strength. They aren't there, I tell you; they exist only on paper."

Unfortunately, the Communist guerrillas *were* there. Just as our planes and airlift capacity were there. And the planes, the capacity, the surplus crews, all now unneeded for our own purposes, were too tempting to ignore. Logistically, that huge, now unneeded, capacity could be used at the snap of command to help China if we wanted to—and Chiang's influence in Washington was overwhelming. There, in Washington, the airlift of Chiang's troops into Communist-controlled areas seemed mechanical, a geographical and logistical decision on a map of the world which we dominated. And it would be politically palatable at home, too—an errand of mercy, an act of generosity, helping the Free Chinese back to their homelands.

No one explained, nor could I publish, that at the moment when Mao had to choose between the Russians and the Americans, we forced his choice back on the Russians, where he would rest uneasily for the next twenty years.

Nor was it understood that we were involving America in an Asian civil war for the first time.

So the airlift began, our thinking trapped by our airpower, moving us and China toward inevitable disaster.

And I had reached the end of the war at odds with my

government's policy and at sword's point with my boss at *Time*. Luce decided that for its first two postwar issues, *Time*'s cover would show two great heroes, Douglas MacArthur one week and Chiang K'ai-shek the next. The Chiang story was assigned to me. I felt it would be most unwise for *Time*, with its customary panegyrics, thus to legitimize China's somber tyrant yet once again. I cabled a rude refusal of the assignment directly to Harry Luce. He answered immediately, accusing me of political partisanship. I cabled back: "This office is working flat out under enormous conditions of strain. . . . I resent being called an avowed partisan . . . only a compromise this week can avert civil strife and the resultant total triumph of one side or another . . . here in the field I am in touch with the facts. . . . Every major treatment of the China problem [in *Time*] in the past year has displayed our divergence of views." This time I offered to come home and explain; and this time there was no temporizing. He ordered me home forthwith.

A few days before I left Chungking, I felt I must say good-bye and that night climbed my favorite hill. High on this topmost point in Chungking was a patch of grassy land from which one could look down on the valley of the Chialing River as it flows to join the Yangtze. From the summit, I could see both the winding course of the river and the spiraling chains of light that now twisted, in full illumination and without fear, about the ridges of Chungking. A full moon shone. I thought I would be alone. But the grassy patch was huddled with little groups of people—Chinese, who were looking down on what had been a city of hope, Chinese who had fled seven years earlier from the Japanese occupation, who had grown older and bred children in this city of exile. They had believed in Chiang K'ai-shek and in China, and now, I assumed, they would be going home again to rebuild, in Shanghai, or Tientsin, or whatever city they had fled, the China they had dreamed of. They were silent, utterly silent, under the moon, looking down on the river, and looking forward to going home. But the past to which they hoped to return could never be recaptured.

I, too, was going home. And like them, I would find there was no way to go back. I had first come here as a boy who hoped to be a professor of history; but I had seen too much to want a professorship in history ever again. I would now, and for the rest of my life, be a journalist; and if I could get home fast enough to be first with the story of China, I might stretch journalism into a book.

Contacts are the only bankable capital on which a journalist can

ever draw. I had contacts in headquarters, and could wangle a No. 2 priority—an air-flight category that could get me out of China to New York in a week. So on Tuesday, September 18, two weeks after the end of the great war, at the beginning of another war, I was off to New York. The great airlift of Chiang's troops to the disaster which would engulf them in the east had already begun. The airlift loaded Chiang's troops in planes going east. I boarded a plane going west. Across the Hump for the last time; across India; across Africa; a delay in Casablanca; then across the Atlantic and in to Floyd Bennett Field, just outside New York. Miraculously, there I could hire and pay for a taxi into Manhattan without army travel orders. I was still in uniform, but I was once more a civilian, free and uncommitted.

New York was a city I would come to love more than any other in the world. I drove into the city and checked in at the old New Weston Hotel; the very next morning, I was off to buy a suit. I had left America with cast-off clothes and one new suit, which my mother had picked out for me. Now, seven years later, almost to the week, I was buying an American suit myself. Not a uniform, but a real suit. Because I was still in uniform, the salesman gave me a cut rate, or so he claimed, on the brown pin stripe that made me a civilian again. I could no longer go home to Boston; nor would China be home again either, though I did not know it then.

My immediate task was clear: to write a book that explained what was happening in China. The book must say it not only first and best, but quickly. "Quickly" was of the essence, for, if information is to guide public understanding, it must be delivered in time to press its way through the people up to government, where decisions are made in response to such pressures. My information was important. It was news, not history. Over the years, I was to learn how much more dangerous news is than history—both for the reporter and those he reports. At that moment, returning from war, I was determined to be first with the story of the inevitable collapse of Chiang K'ai-shek—even if it meant full clash with *Time* and Harry Luce. Annalee would be following home from China within weeks to join me in the enterprise. All of us in those days entertained the illusion that we could make events march in the direction we pointed, if we pointed clearly enough.

PART THREE

EUROPE

1948-1953

REPORTER IN TRANSITION

The story-teller was locked in his purpose when, six days after leaving China, his plane touched down in New York.

China filled his mind, as it had for ten full years. The China war had taught him his trade, and in the past year, as that war rolled on to victory and revolution, China had opened his eyes to the way daily events fall together in clusters that make natural stories. He had learned further that each such story is a step in a zigzag march that takes on a discoverable direction only later, when men look back and see it as history. But he thought he already knew how stories in China fit together; and he wanted to tell them instantly, as he saw them, not processed through the editorial mastications of a news-magazine. He would tell the story in a book, and then be off to China again to witness the climax of the revolution.

But he was not to return to China for almost thirty years, for New York was to ensnare him, then remold him. Not, of course, all at once. *Time* had granted him a six-month postwar leave of absence, and until his book was finished, he cloistered himself with his notes. Within two weeks of homecoming, he settled into a sunless apartment on East Twenty-ninth Street, where, working with Annalee Jacoby, he began to pound away furiously at the typewriter. They were joined in passionate purpose—not just to be first with the true, hitherto censored story of China at war, but to spread the message: America should get out of China, *now,* should let China find its own way into the future, by itself.

New York, however, could not be completely shut out of awareness. The city glowed with its postwar phosphorescence. When at night, that first fall, the lights came on in the skyscrapers and stood out in shafts against the dark, streaked and holed with

golden-yellow light, it was indeed the imperial city. Washington might rival New York in the claim to be capital of the Western world, but New York was more exciting. Ballet was there, theater was there, music was there. The culture of New York, high and low, was part of what the war had been fought to preserve, and it now stood on the threshold of its postwar exuberance. The city was still mostly law-abiding, the girls mostly pretty, the streets and parks safe and inviting. A subway ride cost only a nickel, the best seats on Broadway four dollars and eighty cents, the food was cheap and excellent.

New York has always been that city of the Western world which gives wayfarers and wanderers the quickest chance to better themselves. But never more so than in the winter of 1945–1946.

He felt lucky. He had a place, a job, a niche into which he could fit when his leave was up. About him swirled the story of the great homecoming, which he could not see as a story because he himself was a digit in the numbers. In those postwar months thirteen million young Americans released from the military were returning to seek the place into which they could best fit back. All across the country, young men were asking the same questions: Where to come to rest? Where to seek one's fortune? Where to find one's friends and place? For millions of men, now, if ever, was the time to change jobs, styles of life, homes, ambitions.

For the China reporter, locked into his book, the question of where *he* himself fit in did not pose itself immediately. He was a born organization man, most comfortable when he had a place in a collective body that would pay him regularly and fairly and offer a dash of honor and dignity as well. Ten thousand dollars was a large salary in those years, the cutoff point between the men and the clerks, between the potato-sack bodies and the executives who pushed the sacks around. Already, overseas, *Time* had raised his salary to ten thousand dollars, and as soon as the book was finished, he knew he would go back to work for more money.

For he knew he was going back to work for *Time.* True, he had threatened to resign again and again during the last year of anger in China. But because he liked Harry Luce so much, he believed that the justice of his rebellion would be recognized once the book was published, and he would return to some new and glamorous post on the field-correspondent staff. He believed, in all naïveté, he could have it both ways—that he could say what he wanted to say, and yet enjoy the comfort and benefits of the parent organization that disagreed. With boy scout simplicity he believed that organizations

are as loyal to their employees as they expect those employees to be to them. He did not yet know that organizations and corporations have an internal loyalty only to the thrust that drives them forward and that individuals are sacrificed to that momentum. Of his own loyalty to *Time* he had no doubt. He disagreed with it, denounced it, made speeches about its journalistic distortions; but he belonged to *Time.* Years after he had left, when a telephone ringing by his bed would awaken him from sound sleep, he would, by reflex, snap into the mouthpiece: "Teddy White here, Teddy White of *Time* magazine."

The China book rolled off the partners' typewriters almost by itself, and when it was finished he sent the manuscript to Harry Luce—not for censorship, but for courtesy's sake—and without breaking stride reported for reassignment as foreign correspondent at the *Time* magazine offices.

Luce took some weeks to respond. The maximum editor and his one-time China favorite had seen each other socially several times over that first winter; and the reporter had needled the editor severely, believing the editor was smothered by sycophants. But now there came a terminal session in their relations. It took place in Luce's sunlit thirty-third-floor offices in New York's Rockefeller Center, a room with an intoxicating view of the lesser piles and summits of Manhattan's executive range.

The session was highly emotional, a cross-conflict of paternal and professional relations, more personal than political. Luce, the master and proprietor of the house in which the reporter worked, was terribly angry. He felt that all too many of his bright young men had used *Time* as a personal mount, had galloped to fame on the magazine's back. Young John Hersey, for one. He was breaking with Hersey; it was unclear from Luce's words whether he had fired Hersey or Hersey had quit. But Hersey had told Luce to his face that there was as much truthful reporting in *Pravda* as in *Time* magazine. White later learned there was an even more substantial reason for Luce's anger. Luce had sent Hersey back to postwar China for *Life* magazine at *Life's* expense and Hersey had written several superlative reports for *Life.* But on his way back from China, Hersey had paused at Hiroshima, and then, on his own time, written that masterpiece of modern reporting, *Hiroshima,* which he had then submitted to *The New Yorker,* not *Life.* Luce summarized, his eyes glowering under the dark brows: White and Hersey were ingrates!

Therefore, said Luce, he now had a yes-or-no question for White. He himself was going off on vacation; White could reflect on his answer, but Luce wanted the answer as soon as he came back. Now his voice lacked any affection; it was the voice of the organization, examining an eccentric cog which no longer fit into the machinery. Luce asked: Would the reporter accept, or would he not, any assignment Luce chose to give him in the future—even if it meant drudgery in the ranks, even if it meant serving on the rewrite desk in New York for a year or two? In short: Did White *belong* to *Time* magazine, or was he using *Time* only to advance his personal interests? The reporter quailed, but demurred. He pointed out that he was now trained as a foreign correspondent; he was an outdoor reporter; he could not possibly be useful to *Time* except as a man in the field. The reporter flailed wildly, insisted that he had proved his loyalty to *Time* by risking his life in action for *Time* to get the stories that made him useful. Luce froze at this point. He refused to tell the reporter what his next assignment would be. The reporter wanted to go to Moscow; but that could be discussed, said Luce, only after the reporter first answered the publisher's question: whether he would prove his loyalty by accepting any assignment offered for the good of the magazine. The voice was inflexible.

The reporter was given a week to reply and pondered whether he must be an organization man, at Harry Luce's command, in Harry Luce's generous court—or dared venture out to find his own place. He wanted desperately to remain a foreign correspondent; such an assignment combines the best of adventure with the base of security, and he would have been content to go along all his life as a foreign correspondent. But on the other hand, dignity had invaded his personality, for now his by-line, he felt, must be a certificate of some honor. And he could not write with honor for *Time* magazine at its desk.

Thus, on Friday, July 12, 1946, with Luce himself away on vacation, he gave his answer precisely at noon to one of Luce's deputies. No. He could not continue on Luce's terms, he would not accept just any assignment unless it was agreed on in advance. Luce's deputy listened and replied that Harry had expected that answer and left word that if the answer was as expected, the reply must be that Luce felt White had no place in the organization—as of now, and for as long as White persisted in his obstinacy. Although, so ran the reply, at some future time, when they saw the world alike again, Luce would be glad to consider White's return.

Thus, not knowing whether he had quit or been fired, he went to lunch with a war companion, *Life* photographer Carl Mydans, one of his dearest friends; and together the two gloomily considered his future and where he could find another job, and whether free-lancing was possible; or whether he had made a mistake.

Carl, having seen so many departures from *Time,* had advised making a clean break: when one is fired, get out as fast as possible, don't let them be sorry for you, don't linger, don't mourn. So White went back to his office to clean out files, memos, papers, and decided he would write his letters of farewell to office companions from home. He had to do what he had done; but it was still difficult explaining why.

Then the world somersaulted.

The judges of the Book-of-the-Month Club had just risen from their lunch; and his publisher reported that the book on China was to be a Book-of-the-Month Club selection! White was too astonished to ask more than what that meant—and the answer was that it meant at least $80,000 for the two authors. He had been desperate before lunch, abandoned and cast off; now he was free and, in his own terms, rich, rich, rich! So instead of sneaking out quietly with his packages of papers and notes, he made the rounds of the floors where he had earlier hoped to spend his life, and rather than announcing that he had just been fired, he reported modestly that he was leaving that afternoon—and that by the way, the Book-of-the-Month Club had just chosen the book as a fall selection. It was better to leave with a posture of pride—but he was now on his own again, belonging to no one; and he was acutely, inescapably faced with the problem of finding out where he fit in.

His first purchase with the anticipated book club money was an automobile, the first he owned. His next purchase was a complete indulgence: he would spend the time that now belonged to him, between this July weekend and the October publication of his book, simply driving across the country, coast to coast, to see America. There must be stories out there.

He had been living in a cocoon in New York—physically in his cave apartment, emotionally in the small world of China friends and returning war correspondents. The exercise of writing the book about China had kept him sealed up, wrapped him in a war that was now over. What better way of finding out about America than crisscrossing the country visiting his old comrades of the Eleventh

Bomb Squadron and finding out how *they* were fitting in?

So he was off in his secondhand car to see the country whose politics someday would absorb him even more than China's. He plotted his journey: down through the Shenandoah valley, across Tennessee and Georgia, on to Florida, across to Mississippi, up the valley to Iowa, across the plains and mountains through Colorado; then to Utah and Idaho and Washington; then down the coast all the way to San Diego; and east again through Arizona and Texas and Arkansas and Chicago and Ohio and back to Boston.

He filled long notebooks with America as it looked to him on the ten-thousand-mile journey, but it was all written in the war mood of reporting—episode without frame.

The episode that gripped him first and introduced him to American politics was a last whiplash curl of the violence Americans had learned in the war. It happened in Athens, Tennessee, in McMinn County; it was not only unique, but even more perplexing in retrospect for the fact that it *was* the only episode of its kind. It was too small an episode to make history, yet it was the first exposure of the journeyman reporter to American politics at the dirty level.

McMinn County, Tennessee, was a tiny fiefdom on the fringe of the Memphis duchy of Boss Crump. The local county boss governed Athens, the county seat, with thugs; its courts, its police, its structure, all, except for its little daily newspaper, were corrupt. And now in 1946 Athens was holding an election for sheriff and other county officials. But the Tennessee mountain boys who had made such good infantrymen and sharpshooters in the war were just recently home, full of the simple ideas that army indoctrination and motivation sessions had pumped into them. For example: the idea that Germany and Japan were dictatorships, but America was a democracy where men voted freely for their leaders. The mountain boys took that idea seriously, and formed what they called the GI Party, whose single platform promised: "Your vote will be counted as cast." This was a principle not then generally accepted in pockets of the American hinterland, but in Athens, Tennessee, the time had come for the idea to ripen.

The GI's—most of them combat veterans and noncoms—ran their ticket against the Crump machine's ticket, and the afternoon of the election, key ballot boxes were gathered as by prewar custom into the county jailhouse, where the machine would count the ballots without observers. This enraged the GI's. They knew how to shoot; some had been combat engineers who knew about demolition; the local armory, not too far distant, held rifles and machine guns; a local

farmer had a cache of dynamite. And so, as if they were storming Omaha Beach or Aachen, they first raided the arsenal, and then shot and blasted their way into the courthouse, where the potbellied civilian deputies could offer no resistance to the men who had helped to destroy the Wehrmacht. Then the GI ticket counted the votes in the open, to fulfill their promise, and of course, when the ballots were counted as cast they had won—cleanly, fairly, definitely.

The episode made a fine story, a natural, and when the China reporter sent it to New York and learned that *Harper's Magazine* had accepted it for publication, he became excited. It occurred to him, trying to find his place to fit in, that the writing of American politics might become his place; American politics, he mistakenly believed from this first exposure, were so much simpler than Chinese politics!

But it was a false start—the beginning of a chapter that would take shape only much later in his reporting. Looking back, however, from that later American chapter to its beginning in Athens, Tennessee, he would realize how lucky he had been. Simply by wandering the country looking for old buddies in Tennessee, he had seen an era of American politics just beginning to close, an underview of old Southern politics before enlightenment and prosperity changed them forever. Those politics—cruel, corrupt, vicious—were also sometimes murderous. This he learned in the Florida panhandle from an old companion of the Eleventh Bomb Squadron, who had seen his brother-in-law knifed to death on a dance floor—and then, appalled, seen the local sheriff refuse either to arrest or to prosecute the killer because of his connection with the courthouse crowd. The Northern political machines in Chicago, Boston, Philadelphia, New York, were corrupt; but not murderous. In the South, they condoned murder: the killing of blacks casually, the killing of whites only if they were extremely troublesome. All the better Southern politicians who have made their way to center-stage national politics have translated this folklore of Southern corruption and bossism to a call for revolt against the bosses everywhere. From Estes Kefauver of Tennessee, standing in the snows of Bemidji, Minnesota, at seventeen degrees below zero in the primary of 1956, denouncing Boss Crump, to Jimmy Carter of Georgia, denouncing the bosses of labor and the big cities in the campaign of 1976, all progressive Southerners have for a generation campaigned against the hangover of the courthouse gangs and machines.

But the reporter was seeking a larger story than this in his

solitary but not unpleasant journey across America in the first postwar year, before four-lane highways, suburbs and supermarkets changed the face of the land. He wanted to find out what his comrades in China, the men of valor and devastation, were doing to find their way back into America: that would tell whether dreams could become real. He found the fresh veterans puzzling, yet pleasing. These men, who had been accomplished warriors only a year before, were now as ordinary, as peaceful, as comfortable to be with, as if no thought of killing had ever crossed their minds.

By the time White had reached the West Coast, pressing his car up through Idaho and the Camas valley, and over into the Yakima valley of Washington and down through Oregon and the redwoods and the escarpment of the Pacific to California and San Francisco—by that time White knew he had had a good time but knew also he could not weave a story out of the return of the Eleventh Bomb Squadron to civilian life. They were too diverse. The war had unified them in an adventure; peace dispersed them. They had gone back to being teachers, farmers, liquor store dealers, gasoline station operators.

The most talkative, among the men of the Eleventh Bomb Squadron had been an enlisted man, Ed Sullivan. Sullivan had been politically excitable and the two had enjoyed many an argument during the war. But their reunion in San Francisco was flat. Sullivan was hustling a living in advertising, with no politics at all. Several weeks after their meeting, Sullivan sent a letter to White's New York address, which read: "I know I disappointed you. But really, I have to make a living now, and until I have it made, there's no point in talking anymore about the issues we talked about in the war."

Nothing of this lonesome driving around America for three months seemed to make a story except for the battle of Athens, Tennessee. Thus, as so often happens, what seems to the reporter too ordinary or too obvious to report is what causes him to miss the real stuff of history. In those summer and fall months when the story-seeking reporter had been driving through the country, history was venting in the campaign of 1946. But the war reporter was then uninterested in the mechanics of an election campaign in America; its importance was far above his perception.

The election of 1946 was the election that attempted to erase the war. The Republicans won both houses of Congress, overwhelmingly, that fall. But somehow, they accepted their election as a mandate that America stand still, a plea that time stop its clock and reverse the

pointers and bring America back to some unreal memory of how it had been before the war, a retreat through time to, say, 1925, or 1928, or 1936. The men of the Eleventh Bomb Squad probably voted overwhelmingly for the Republicans. They wanted simply to be home and undisturbed, with mothers, new wives, families; they wanted houses, cars, jobs; they had had their bellyful of excitement, and their families too much of concern. America beckoned with what would become the greatest unbroken stretch of prosperity in its history.

Many veterans ran for office that fall, and historically their entry into politics was the undiscerned story of the elections of 1946. The returning veterans, having altered the outline of the world abroad, were preparing to alter the outline of politics in America for the next thirty years. John F. Kennedy and Richard Nixon, both back from navy service in the Pacific, made their first runs in 1946. So, too, did "Tail-Gunner Joe" McCarthy of Wisconsin. So, too, did Jacob Javits, the enduring liberal, and Otto Passman, the enduring reactionary. So, too, did Peter Rodino of Newark, New Jersey, and scores of lesser men, running down from the two future Presidents to ground level with George Smathers and Thruston Morton. Few, if any, young black veterans ran for office that year; blacks had two congressmen, Powell from New York, Dawson from Chicago, and, so it appeared, they must rest content with only two as far into the future as one could see.

The reporter, who was pursuing a war that was fading and friendships that were withering, entirely overlooked this veterans' surge into politics as the youngster-politicians sought their place in the public arena. So he came back to New York without the major story he might have had, had he been able to see it—and came back to find himself something of a public figure. The book, now published, had made its authors eminently controversial, praised or denounced on editorial pages across the nation as the papers' varying politics required.

White enjoyed the public attention enormously.

His luck, it seemed, had continued, and the book crested it. He had been lucky in the publisher, William Sloane, whom he had first met in the war years in Chungking. Sloane had wanted then to found his own publishing house, its first book to be the story of China at war. Sloane put all his effort behind this book and was as thrilled by the success of his first publication as were its two writers,

White and Jacoby. The book was further lucky in that a fatherly gentleman named Harry Scherman, president of the Book-of-the-Month Club, liked it; and though Scherman rarely interfered in the club's editorial policy, he gently suggested as a friend that the book would sell better if its title was changed from the original ("A Point in Time") to something that explained what the book was about, say, "Thunder Out of China." Scherman's suggestion was so obviously appropriate that *Thunder Out of China* it became, and under that title became a best seller.

Bestsellerdom is one of the most ephemeral invitations to public notice that any art holds out. Few Americans buy books; even fewer remember them. But while the author's name is there on the lists, while the book is in the window of the bookshops, the author can entertain delusions of grandeur. This author flew his mother and sister in from Boston to walk them down Fifth Avenue and point to his book in the window of every bookstore. The sight impressed his mother beyond words; his sister, who had become an accomplished librarian over the years, was just as enthusiastic but more realistic. She knew how quickly books rise and then vanish—to be remaindered by publishers, or cut-rated as overstock, or cleaned out of libraries, which try always to catch the swing of public taste.

Thunder Out of China had a wild, quick-blooming, quick-fading existence. It sold, when one included book-club purchases, over 450,000 copies, more than any other book on China until then except for two famous novels, Pearl Buck's *The Good Earth* and Alice Tisdale Hobart's *Oil for the Lamps of China.*

But *Thunder Out of China* was about politics; about revolution—and it was published in 1946, as the country moved in the cycle of its ideas to its most violent anti-Communist stance, toward the internal suppression that climaxed later in the McCarthy era.

White found himself, as an author, discovering the world of the book-reviewing mechanisms, and the literary politics that dominate it. Best sellers were made in two ways: They were made, most easily, by the fashionable critics of New York, from which they spread to the "little old lady in Dubuque," who wished to be up to date with the most advanced thinking. Or else they were made by word of mouth, creeping in from the hinterlands of simple book readers to affront fashionable opinions with their success. The two worlds of American taste used to clash, and this writer, in his time, has had it both ways, denounced or praised by fashionable New York, with

the readers beyond the Alleghenies almost always reacting contrariwise.

On this, his first exposure to the politics of the book world, White found himself denounced by most major newspapers of the Midwest; and praised, on the other hand, by the chorus of liberal journals that take their cue from New York. White now found himself in Manhattan rather enjoyably a figure of dispute; savored the brief notoriety without realizing that its longest-lasting effect would be to list him as a leader among those "who lost China to the Reds"; and was completely unaware that with the publication of his book, the FBI was instantly on his trail, noting his speeches, his actions, the meetings he attended, scrutinizing his private life for detail running back to the war years. That realization would come later. For the moment he was only "controversial," not yet "subversive"—meaning that he spoke, appeared on radio programs, enjoyed his spurious importance.

For more years than a historian can make sense of, China had been an emotional symbol in American thinking: businessmen thought of it in terms of four hundred million customers; missionaries thought of it as a land to be saved for God. By 1946, Chiang K'ai-shek had become a symbol, too, replacing Doctor Fu Manchu in the mythology of China, which intrigues both right and left. As the outside world polarized issues in American politics, one had to be either *for* Chiang and *against* the Communists, or *for* Mao and against the "fascism" of Chiang. White was uncomfortable with either category of thinking, but caught between factions and flattered by invitations to speak out, he unhesitatingly chose the liberal left. If America was to get out of Asia, as White felt necessary, the liberal left was right, the other side wrong.

As sales of *Thunder Out of China* increased for a few months at the end of 1946 and before the new Congress took over, all things seemed possible. He was offered a choice between joining the *Saturday Evening Post* as a correspondent or joining the *New Republic* as an editor. He felt he no longer needed money. The *New Republic* offered little, the *Saturday Evening Post* more than twice as much. But the *New Republic* now had a new editor, Henry Wallace, a hero of his then politics, and White decided to express himself by joining the *New Republic*.

His experience there was brief. White was still groping to find his place to fit in and thought the *New Republic* would become that place—where a new journalism, a liberal journalism, could paint the

nation's postwar portrait free of prejudice. But that was not to be. The *New Republic* was dominated by the grave and heavy presence of ex-Vice President Henry Agard Wallace. Wallace could be fascinating, thoughtful, kindly on occasion. He was at his best when he talked of what he knew: the mysteries of the earth, the farm, the garden. At plant genetics, Wallace was a genius, and was at that time producing giant strawberries at his New York farm. Henry Wallace's giant strawberries and corn hybrids may be his most lasting contribution to the pleasures and vitality of American civilization. But in politics Wallace was a bitter man; eccentric, ambitious, self-righteous; an inspired mystic as his friends saw him, a "bubblehead" as his enemies called him, a guru type as later generations might have described him. He was the first of the evangelical Presidency-seekers White was to meet, in a line that later ran through George Romney and George McGovern to Jimmy Carter. Of all these, however, Wallace was the most devout seeker for the Truth and Peace of God.

Like everyone on the *New Republic* staff, White recognized that the magazine was to be Wallace's campaign organ for his presidential race of 1948. But he was dismayed, when he came to know the man, to discover that Wallace literally loathed Franklin Roosevelt. But for Roosevelt, Wallace, not Harry Truman, would have been renamed the Vice Presidential nominee of 1944 and thus would have been President now in 1947. Moreover, White was to discover, and was to learn again and again in the next twenty years, that "liberalism" in politics does not always extend to personal courtesy or intellectual tolerance. There was less freedom to deviate from the line of the *New Republic* than from the line of *Time* magazine. White, in a few months, was numb with shock: what he wrote at the *New Republic* had to fit that line which supported Henry Wallace's views, just as what he wrote at *Time* magazine had to fit the line of Harry Luce.

Nor was that all. It was inescapable to any observant staff member of the *New Republic* that Wallace not only was running for the Presidency, but was aided by, counseled by, and in his innocence acquiescent to, Communists. These men were quite different from the Communists White had known in China, openly willing to die for their cause. These were American Communists, then, as now, an unpleasant breed of neurotics trying to use the complaisant Wallace as their front to found the Progressive Party of 1948. Wallace was susceptible to flattery; the Communists flattered him,

burned incense in his nostrils, inflated his opinion of himself, wasted his name and honors, and left him beached years later in history as an eccentric, a hissing word in American politics. Had he passed his life in the furrows and never left for politics, he might have ranked with Luther Burbank, Joseph Henry and Eli Whitney as a native American genius.

White had discovered another truth: that a magazine committed to, or dominated by, a single man, as most sectarian magazines are, is as rigidly restricted in opinion as those magazines which depend on the marketplace and profit. Henry Wallace was a handsome man, his light-brown hair just turning silver, his clean, open face and muscled form instantly attractive to men and women alike, his personal kindliness well known. But underneath it all, he was a self-intoxicated man with but two subjects of conversation—botanical genetics and himself, the latter subject complicated by an abnormal suspicion of others. When White told Wallace, as a friend, that he was going to marry a young lady who worked for Harry Luce's *Life*, Wallace said gravely, "Ah . . . conjugal infiltration."

White soon left the *New Republic*, in the summer of 1947, because in that spring and summer the *New Republic* was as tolerant of the foreign policy of the Soviet Union as *Time* had been tolerant of Chiang K'ai-shek. Henry Wallace's bitterness at Harry Truman was unappeasable; and so White had no place there.

White left the *New Republic* as he had left *Time*—because of a breach in politics that no amount of good will could bridge. He told himself he was going back to the politics of Asia, his own history turf—but two large events led him to postpone his departure.

The first event was a political, personal and historical temptation.

Mrs. Stilwell needed his help. Stilwell himself had died in the fall of 1946. She had been left with his diaries, papers, memoranda, and wanted her husband vindicated in history. White had been as close to "Uncle Joe" as any reporter had been; so he offered to give six months of his time to the chore of editing and ordering the papers. *The Stilwell Papers* were glorious in their frankness and revelations; Stilwell's neat, legible handwriting each day, which White tried to pin against the larger background of the events he had seen, made the Chinese-American entanglement a carnival of personalities. *The Stilwell Papers* were published to acclaim from those he respected most; sold well; but only reduced further White's

chances of joining the Establishment of the time. He was denounced by editors for having distorted, violated, clipped and cut the private thoughts of a great American war hero, to make a left-winger's political point in the debate about China. Thus evaporated all the offerings and jobs he had rejected a year earlier to join the *New Republic*—all the major magazine assignments, all the staff posts, all the opportunities. The McCarthy years were about to close in, and there was nothing but the money from *Thunder Out of China* to fall back on; and money gives no one a function or a purpose in life. Very few people have, or ever get, enough money to be absolutely free and spend their lives in self-contemplation. It was clear, by early 1948, that White would have to find a place and a purpose all over again—and would have to do so propelled by the second event.

The second event rose from the nature of youth and the mood of the time—and climaxed, after considerable anguish, in his marriage.

The anguish came in parting with the past, and with Annalee. He had begun *Thunder Out of China* in love with his China partner, but a collaboration of two such strong-willed persons in a book of such complexity had, rather than drawing them closer, widened differences of temperament. Moreover, he felt it was time for marriage, as did so many war veterans; but she, still deep in widowhood, did not. By the end of 1946, though their book was a success, their partnership had come to an end.

In that swirling turbulence of postwar New York, however, he had already come to know and then fall in love with one of the beautiful researchers at *Life* magazine. She was young, gay and loving, and became more and more necessary to him. He proposed to Nancy Bean; she accepted; and the date was set.

So substantially had the war erased old social differences that it never occurred to him how far behind he was leaving Jewish tradition when he made his choice. To marry out of his faith did not weigh against his conscience at all.

It was natural that his bride, Nancy, did not want to be married in a synagogue, as he would have liked; he understood that. She similarly understood his refusal to be married in a church, as her parents would have liked. They both felt simply American, and decided a civil service would be most appropriate performed by some New York judge. That turned out to be difficult to arrange. There was only one New York white Protestant judge left on the magisterial bench at the time; and as a white Protestant in a

community of ethnics, that judge was exhausted by his appearances at brotherhood dinners. Seeking another judge to marry them, the pledged couple found that no Jewish judge would marry a young Jewish man to a Gentile; that was political suicide in those days. Finally, they found a tolerant Catholic, Justice James B. McNally. When told that the bride was a Protestant, the groom a Jew, that neither one was Catholic—for it would be political suicide for a Catholic judge to marry a Catholic to a Jew—he observed that both were pagans in the eyes of God; therefore he as a civil magistrate could marry them without exposing himself vulnerably in politics. Which he did, recessing his court in a murder trial to come upstairs, read the civil ceremony and pronounce them man and wife.

It was a strange marriage ceremony. Nancy Bean's parents stood on one side of the chamber, glowering. White's mother had come with his younger brother, Robert. White's sister, who loved him, refused to come for such a ceremony. One or two old war-correspondent friends and the court reporters filtered in to the chamber. And so they were married.

It did not seem to White then that he had abandoned any beliefs, or any tiny part of heritage, in marrying this young woman. They hoped for children, but the children would belong to the America that was coming, when all Americans would be free of categories, classifications, and any discrimination or privilege that descended from heritage or origins.

These were, of course, not at all dominant considerations in White's mind as he stood for marriage, upstairs over the Scottorigio trial. What was serious though unrecognized was not difference of religion, tradition or faith. What was serious was the sense of class. She would always assume that as a daughter of the local squirearchy in Connecticut, she would have her place at the head of the table, there to upbraid governor, senator, or chief of staff as she chose. And White would always fear that he would be expelled from the table unless he proved his right to sit there.

So they went off to married life. White was never to meet any man in politics or in letters who was not thoroughly influenced by his wife, if he loved her. Nancy Bean, for the twenty-odd years they were married, influenced all he wrote. They argued more and more violently—but he listened.

She was beautiful—fair-haired, hazel-eyed, round of face. She was full of gaieties; her presence made any gathering a party, and parties became a way of life for them until, too late, he realized he

hated parties almost as much as she loved them. Nancy Bean was, moreover, absolutely fearless. She, too, had been overseas in the war and had come back a flaming liberal. Furthermore, she knew corporate life and despised it: her father was President of his local chamber of commerce; a superlative engineer and executive, author of a textbook on malleable iron, a man of quality. But he had been crucified by his corporation in an executive-suite struggle for the top; at the time she wanted no part of the corporate life, though, ultimately, she would go home to it.

All these qualities in his new bride influenced the reporter in his choices. But the choices were narrowed by larger realities. He had now, in effect, been blacklisted by the mass publications that had only months before sought his copy and his by-line. He could publish, if he wanted to appear in print, only in small left-wing magazines. He could, if he permitted, let himself be made a martyr by those who would see him as a man penalized for writing two books of unpopular political bravado; or be caught in the schismatic groups of literary intellectuals whose lives were, at the time, raddled by their sectarian approach to revolution and the American upheaval. But the sectarians and their quarrels bored him.

Old friendships were dissolving, too; the bonds of war-made comradeship were fraying. His best friends were old China hands, but they enjoyed, and mourned simultaneously, the continuing collapse of Chiang K'ai-shek and the continuing advances of the Chinese Communists as fuzzily reported in the news pages. Endlessly, old China friends chewed the cud of their wisdom and recalled their warnings against American intervention in the China struggle. They lived in the past. His other companions were former war correspondents, but they, too, were dividing as if by some internal law of nature. Some could not give up the war, such as Jack Belden, perhaps the ablest of all war correspondents, who went on forever listening to the echo of the combat sounds that had stirred his heart. Others drifted into the talk world of New York, greeting each other at fashionable drinking places like the Stork Club or "21," which White found exquisitely uncomfortable; or disappeared. And there were yet others, ex-war correspondents, the men White admired, who had found their place and were on their way into the future—Edward R. Murrow and Charles Collingwood, Eric Sevareid and Cornelius Ryan—all of them packing their war laurels away in memory trunks and going on to new endeavors.

White himself was very late in sorting out his choices. His new

wife giggled at his attempts to find a way into publishing or corporate life. She was brave enough, always, to face life on her own. She had become part of White's circle of friends among war and foreign correspondents; their stories enthralled her; she wanted to be moving with the people who were moving, dispersing to Paris, or Tokyo, or Hong Kong, or Vietnam. And that was his own bent, too. Being a foreign correspondent had been the finest part of his life until then. He loved it and his wife loved the promised romance of the trade. So he began in the spring of 1948 to seek a post overseas again.

It was difficult. No large or distinguished magazine or newspaper would hire a known "left-wing" writer. After seeking, telephoning, groveling for openings, he could finally tell his wife in May of 1948 that he had found a place—not a distinguished job, to be sure—with a marginal news-feature service called the Overseas News Agency, a service which was still unafraid of the growing paranoia against liberal journalists. They would name him correspondent in Paris for a year. The salary was not large, but he still had money in the bank from *Thunder Out of China.* Moreover, the story that was offered him was large: the Marshall Plan had been announced, America was to save Europe from Communism. He would report that. White doubted that Americans could do better at saving "Free Europe" than they had at saving "Free China." But the adventure would certainly be exciting—and Paris, where he would be based, was, above all, Paris! That was enticement enough. He could no longer fit in at home; he knew that. He had already been summoned to appear before one Congressional committee; he was devoting too much time to fighting off investigations, charges, allegations. So he would drop China until the controversy died down, then after a year in Europe he and his bride would be off to Asia again. It seemed like the best solution: if he could not fit in in New York and America at that moment, he could still fit somewhere in Paris, plying his trade as a reporter.

Thus they left New York in June of 1948 for Europe, en route, they thought, to China.

But they were to remain in Europe for five and a half years, discovering not only each other but the idea of Europe.

He had no idea of what Europe meant. He would discover that Europe is the parent land of all civilizations. He would discover its wonders, its brilliance, the beauties of the countries that lie on the fertile peninsula which falls steeply, then gently, away from the

crown of the Alps. He would discover how Europeans tormented each other and continued to torment each other, all the while creating the values by which civilized men live. He would discover that this was a civilization at the point of death, hollowed out by the epicentric blasts which Europeans had unleashed in two great wars; and also discover that if it could be saved for civilization, only the Americans, with their Marshall Plan, of which he was so suspicious, could save it.

At that moment, Europe was the best place for him to fit in—professionally, as a reporter; historically, in an arena where America would do as much good as it had done harm in Asia. He accepted himself now as a journeyman reporter. He had no map to follow, but was seeking in the stream of history stories to tell. Best of all, history spun on a turntable that year in Paris.

Paris! Nancy would love Paris, with its grays and copper greens, its florets of chestnut blooming and fragrance of chestnuts roasting. As a journeyman he would have stories to carpenter, and they would have Paris.

CHAPTER SEVEN

THE MARSHALL PLAN: SPRINGTIME IN A NEW WORLD

I came to Europe in the spring of 1948 to see the Marshall Plan unfold. Surly and suspicious, I set out to watch—and for the next five years I was to watch Europe being remade by American power at its most intelligent and benevolent best.

I came by air, still something of an adventure. The nineteen-hour flight from New York to Paris, as well as the six-day sea passage chosen by most visitors, choked down the number of casual sightseers from overseas, while the aftermath of war choked off the bus-borne tourists of Europe. Thus the Paris I prospected in June of 1948 was still, in its green and leafy heart, blessedly French. The old lavender and pewter buildings rose in the familiar *fin de siècle* shades and shapes of gray, the mansard skyline of the Impressionists still unspiked and unspoiled by new skyscrapers, all seemingly unchanged from the city I had passed through ten years before, en route to war.

The Paris I came to was, as always, in transition; yet that spring was something more than a season of the year: it was the beginning of a spring that lasted several years, a romance of politics between France and America, whose common purpose bloomed in Paris. Frenchmen were beginning to feel French again, but with a returning pride that still embraced Americans.

I had come because history momentarily had given America and Western Europe a common purpose: the cold war was under way, Stalin was at his most malicious and the Communist parties of the West at their most aggressive. Paris was not only field headquarters of the cold war, but also one of its chief battlegrounds. The years since the Liberation of 1944 had not soothed France, but snarled it. The occupation, followed by the cold and hunger of 1945 and 1946, and the drought and crop failure of 1947, were capped in the winter of

1947-1948 by the nightmare challenge of Communist uprising—and with it, the end of the alliance of French patriots who had fought the Germans as brothers in the underground. When the break came, as it had to, riots had bloodied a dozen different French towns. In Paris, only the quick dispatch of several hundred navy electricians from coastal bases had frustrated a Communist attempt to put the capital's electric generating plants out of commission in a protest strike. In Lyons, Marseilles, Brest, police and security forces battled Communist-led demonstrators for control of the streets. In the coal mines, Communist-led strikes had escalated quickly to critical sabotage, and police and workers had battled in the pits.

By the spring of 1948, when we arrived, the Fourth Republic of France had shakily but miraculously survived. Though we reporters made its politics a subject of comic journalism because of the flutter of arrival and departure of its coalition governments, one had to recognize in the French leaders an earthy political heroism. Preserving all republican and democratic traditions of decency and freedom, they not only had established themselves as *the* government, but obviously meant to govern. They held forth no dramatic goals; they promised neither glory, nor adventure, nor revolution, nor upheaval—only a healing process, and the slow restoration of the soft *douceurs* that Frenchmen fondly remembered from prewar days. Even for these modest goals, however, they needed vast help to restore the still war-shattered country; and for this kind of help there was only one source—the United States, which had promised a "Marshall Plan." Thus, then, as the winter of 1947 gave way to the transient stability of 1948, and the Americans prepared to unload the goodies of the Marshall Plan in Europe, the atmosphere of Paris and the attitude of the French government to Americans were those of a wedding party.

Americans were welcome, American reporters particularly so. The embossed press card, the tricolored *coup fils* of the accredited correspondent, was a *laissez-passer* anywhere; the French Ministry of Information made tickets to state concerts, festivals, municipal opera and theater available at all times and instantly; cabinet offices were open to all American reporters, down to the lowest crawling order of our species. We enjoyed semidiplomatic privileges—such as participation in the American National Interests Commissary, where we could buy American luxuries which the still-strangled French economy could not provide, as if we were war correspondents at an army outpost in Bavaria. An American reporter did not have to wait for a year to buy an automobile, as did most Frenchmen, who had to put

their names on waiting lists; his passport and his dollars let him buy an automobile in days, fresh off the Citröen factory line in suburban Paris. Gasoline was tightly rationed for Frenchmen; but an American reporter was entitled to 120 liters a month. Down the empty boulevards, down the Champs Élysées, one could sweep at forty miles an hour, parking anywhere, free of traffic regulations, while the police smiled. And the highways beyond Paris, still deserted, beckoned with privilege.

Not only was the government indulgent of Americans; so were the people. I recall going to visit the D-day beaches in Normandy during these spring years of friendship. Coming off Omaha Beach, I pulled out into the main road, speeded up, swerved out from behind a truck, and forced a motorcyclist into a ditch, where he tumbled to the ground. I was horrified, and ran to pick him up. He rose, glaring, brushing himself off, and turned on me, then recognized my accent. Was I an American? he asked. I said yes and began to bumble apologies and offer help. But he smiled, said it was unimportant: all Americans were friends. He remembered when Americans had come ashore five years before on those beaches and so he would make no argument of this accident. He shook my hand, would have no help, told me only to be careful next time.

In this happy Paris we settled down, Nancy and I, in the springtime of our marriage, young, and untroubled by money. We were silly, to be sure, in the way we lived, for within weeks of taking up the post of the Overseas News Agency in Paris, I learned that my new employers were on the verge of bankruptcy, and that part of my job was to finance the operation of the Paris bureau with what I earned by selling the agency's reportage to European newspapers. Within two years the agency had fallen behind by six months in payment of my salary and so I quit; but by then springtime was over in politics, too.

In the beginning, however, there were no worries. We still had the savings of *Thunder Out of China* to live on; and a draft on dollars in New York could be cashed for French francs that summer at the rate of 500 to 1 on the black market. Our particular black marketeer was a jolly old lady full of gossip and good will who became a friend of the family, and Aunt Klavdia to our children. She would bustle in with a large parcel of paper francs, slip us the penciled name of a Swiss bank account to which our New York check must be sent—and disappear. We kept the paper francs in a satchel under our bed; and

into this satchel Nancy and I dipped at will, with no sense of budget or restraint. A fine meal in Paris cost only 1,000 francs, or two dollars at our rate, and we could gorge endlessly and cultivate gourmet appetites; we could buy a second car; we could hire a servant, then a nurse for the first child. Very quickly we moved to a fashionable apartment on the Rue du Boccador, a block from the Champs Élysées; at the black market rate the rent was only one hundred dollars a month. There on the Rue du Boccador we made our base, watching the chestnuts put out their first green fuzz each spring, then their blossoms; then we would wait for the tulips to unfold around them. There we could watch the seasons pass, and French governments come and go, and we could delight, as did the French about us, in the quickening pulse of spring and revival.

We arrived as food rationing was coming off, and each morning there were hot loaves of long bread which Frenchmen could again waste as they wanted. Gasoline came unrationed. The railway and electricity systems began to work. With the resumption of traffic, market life returned, and all the little pleasures of normal being returned one by one, so that the fruits came back in season, and oysters appeared on corner stalls, as well as flowers and berries and citrus and chocolates and aromatic cheeses. We fitted not only happily but shamelessly into this returning rhythm of life, knowing it to be ineffably bourgeois, inexpungeably Right Bank in quality, obnoxiously self-indulgent and sneered at by our unmarried friends who were artists and musicians of the Left Bank. But what could be more pleasant, for example, than the invitation to indulgence of our Sunday routine? The maid began by picking up for us the British Sunday newspapers about ten in the morning to read with coffee; then I went to the magic cheese store of Courtois, just beyond the Étoile, where Camembert cheeses, selected for perfect ripeness each week, were displayed to greet the churchgoers coming home from Sunday mass; then to the baker on the Rue de Berri for the butter-drenched croissants; then to the Russian stalls in the sixteenth arrondissement to pick up fresh eggs, cold meats and, above all, fresh green pickles. Then home for the long leisurely lunch with friends; then out to the flea market to browse in winter, or to the parks to sun the children in spring and summer. And at night, if one wanted, in those early days one could go to a cellar café on the Left Bank to sing with young French people.

Paris was experimental at every level in those spring years, but even so, our apartment house on Rue du Boccador was unusual in the

neighbors it offered us. On our third floor, directly across the hall, lived a dark-haired young Frenchman, a raconteur of mimic gifts, named Raoul Levy. He was a film producer, hyperbolic in his schemes and fancies, forever entertained by and entertaining others with the shrewdness of his film coups, like tricking the Paris police force to turn out for riot call as extras in one of his movies. Raoul Levy went on experimenting with cinema until he discovered a full-bosomed, pouty beauty called Brigitte Bardot, whom he made into a sex symbol and star, and who in turn made for Raoul a fortune, which he lost.

Upstairs, in the garret, dwelt a forlorn American reporter trying to earn a living by contributing to the Paris *Herald Tribune* an experimental food and nightclub column. This youngster was a sweet and melancholy ex-marine of twenty-four. But his sweetness rubbed into his reporting an apparent child's naïveté, which made his humor all the more biting and wise. The *Herald Tribune* finally let him write a column, "Paris After Dark," with his own by-line, Art Buchwald, under which name he was later recognized as a social critic and, still unspoiled, earned fame. We all lived together in the apartment house, and took one another not at all seriously, and became friends; as we did with the mistress of the most important jeweler of Paris; and with the British arms salesman who sold outworn American combat aircraft to shadowy regimes; and with the Spanish Republican veteran, Germain, who was our concierge, and presided over entry and exit to this unusual house; and with the last of the arrivals, Irwin Shaw and his wife, Marian, he having given up the short story form he had mastered to come to Paris to write novels and movies.

By all odds, however, the most memorable tenant was a handsome, flamboyant, dramatic character named Theo Bennahum. By chance, I rode up with him one evening in the apartment's elevator and recognized him as the same Palestinian traveler Bennahum I had met in Singapore in 1940 one night at the Raffles Hotel. He had been utterly destitute that night but so outrageously charming that even the staff command of the Royal Malay Rifles and the Seaforth Highlanders had smiled at him. Bennahum now lived, eight years later, on the floor below us in Paris and was, with his wife, to become closer than kin—and his charm was at its peak.

Bennahum was extravagantly and eloquently Jewish, and had fled as an adolescent from Bolshevik Russia to Palestine. That experience had taught him to sneer at rules and regulations, or at most to regard them as puzzles that could always be solved. He had grown up in Israel; and became an American only because his beautiful wife,

Midge, was a Massachusetts girl. He later came to love America and New York more than anyone I knew, with an exaggeration that was at times painful. He was, at the moment in Paris, a maker of ballpoint pens in six European countries and his description of European trade and the exchange of finmarks, German marks, French francs, Swiss francs, Belgian francs, was not only high comedy but shrewd analysis. He knew so much of the absurdity of postwar European trade regulations and restrictions that he soon graduated to adviser and counselor to larger and larger American corporations. We watched Theo and his enterprises grow. He was there at the birth of the multinationals—negotiating for General Electric to buy all of France's computer industry, for El Paso to move into Algerian natural gas, for others to exploit Mauretanian nitrates, manganese and oil, Libyan petroleum.

Bennahum loved money in the best way—not out of avarice, or any sense of investment, but the way some men love horses. With money he could prance, he could race. Money incubated both his tastes and his generosity, and he loved to give it away. He enlarged our life with his enthusiasm for arts and antiques, but he collected actors, violinists, singers and scientists as enthusiastically as their creations. Theo was even more grandiose in his aspirations than Raoul Levy, who lived just above him. Where Levy, at Levy's end, was reaching even beyond the Brigitte Bardot period of his life to make a deal with the Chinese Communists to coproduce a film on Marco Polo, Theo was reaching even further. Theo, just before he died, was circling between Paris, Tokyo, Teheran and New York on a year-round globe-girdling safari. He had foreseen the energy shortage and was trying to break up the international oil cartel by negotiating a direct barter exchange between the Shah of Iran and a consortium of Japanese utilities—Iranian oil for Japanese capital equipment. It would have been a spectacular triumph had Theo lived, but it was the grandeur of the dream, even more than money, that moved Theo.

Home remained for me all the years I was in Paris at 24 Rue du Boccador, where Nancy made a salon of graces. There young musicians like Isaac Stern and mature ones like Sasha Schneider or Burl Ives might come to fiddle or to sing; young diplomats lounged there on Sunday afternoons; summers, when the Casals festival in Prades was either gathering or disbanding, violinists slept on our floors en route. Home was where my heart was; but the excitement of my life was five minutes away, in my office at the Herald Tribune Building at 21 Rue de Berri. There almost all American foreign correspondents congregat-

ed except those of *The New York Times*, who, in those days, did not choose to run with the pack. It was there, so many mornings, before my rounds of reporting, that I would sit peering either up over my office balcony toward Sacre Coeur, or darkly down into the blind keys of my American typewriter, wondering how I could convert this particular passage of history into the tellable stories, the feature snippets, that were the market wares of our news agency. For the story, the real story, the history story, was too large to report day by day.

I was late in learning the great story that underlay the news stories, but that was because Paris seduced me in so many ways.

The first of the distractions was, I suppose, environmental—the panorama of history prickling imagination as I strolled. The second was intellectual—the French press and its beguiling French belief that facts plus logic always lead to truth.

The panorama of Paris caresses, and thus seduces, the mood of every reporter who has ever worked there. A reporter who is not waylaid by Paris's beauty probably lacks the sensitivity to be assigned there—but I found that to live and report out of Paris was like trying to do business in a museum. The museum had been erected by the public builders of the city over the centuries, centuries going back beyond Notre Dame. Public buildings reflect the imagination of princes and taste-makers, and tell as much about princes as do their laws and their wars. And so, as I walked or drove from round to round, I found I could not hurry. Here were the ruins of the baths built by the Romans, there was the cloister of St. Germain-des-Prés, there across the river, dominating all, was Notre Dame; then came the Louvre, the Madeleine, other numberless pockets of memories in stone, anthems in gray, celebrating past stories I had known only in books. All these stories connected somehow, but the buildings would not speak, and I had to string episode and panorama together, to make past connect to present.

The United Nations, for example, met that first fall of 1948 at the Place du Trocadéro. The Trocadéro session of the General Assembly was a major event, for the target of United States morality at that session was Holland: we were getting the Dutch out of the East Indies at the time, as, in those days, we were busily urging all white empires out of everywhere. The debates, however, were dull, and when I shirked the indoor rhetoric I could sit on the broad stairs that creep down from the Trocadéro to the banks of the Seine; and at dusk, watch

the people going home from work. There, on the other side, rose the Eiffel Tower; on this side Marshal Foch sat on his horse in an equestrian tableau, staring east over the fields of his victory beyond the Marne. Museums rose all about the Trocadéro, starting with the Musée de l'Homme, the best museum of anthropology anywhere in those days, and going on through all the other lesser museums in the neighborhood.

Museums tempted me from duty at every step of reporting in Paris. The Ministry of Finance, which drew me often, was housed in the northeastern wing of the long gray Renaissance palace built by Francis I. But the southern wing of the same palace, along the Seine, was *the* Louvre, sheltering the Venus de Milo, the Winged Victory of Samothrace, the Mona Lisa, as well as the scarlet pietàs of David.

That particular plaza of Paris was an entrapment. From the Ministry of Finance I could walk across the Gardens of the Tuileries, bearing in mind that this park, full of flowers and beauties, once fronted Marie Antoinette's favorite palace, which the great revolution had burned to the ground. On the north side of the park ran the Rue de Rivoli, where the Marshall Plan came to have its headquarters a few months after my arrival. But on the way to the Marshall Plan, I could pause to visit the Jeu de Paume, a cameo museum which held the most vivid of the Impressionists in historical sequence. And the offices of the Marshall Plan were even better than a museum, for the Marshall Plan occupied the Talleyrand mansion. There Talleyrand, the old master diplomat, had once bounced his lovelies in bed upstairs, and downstairs had entertained princes and generals, weaving what Victor Hugo called "the spider's web of Europe." There, too, old Talleyrand had passed away, a paradigm of successful flirtation with power, having lived skillfully through France's most turbulent generation without ever once having been in danger, even when Napoleon told him to his face that he was nothing but "a silk stocking full of shit."

A visit to the Talleyrand mansion was usually productive of some kind of story, but whether it was or not, I would always rendezvous at the Crillon Hotel nearby, where the British reporters gathered at dusk to drink and gossip.

British journalism is most impressive only at long remove, as is the BBC when its great productions are filtered from its dross. Close up, I found my British colleagues divided into three groups—scholars, pomposities and "jollies." The scholar journalists usually lived in walk-ups on Île St. Louis or the Left Bank and wrote with enormous

erudition, seemingly with a goose quill pen, of what the facts meant. The pomposities were unaware that the Empire had perished, and their haughtiness of manner was that of British inspectors examining American and French colonials for shortfalls. The "jollies" were workaday reporters who could invent, inflate or embroider any scrap of fact or gossip into overnight excitement beyond the talent of any American. The scholars sought history, the pomposities sought nothing, the jollies sought circulation for their masters on Fleet Street—and at the Crillon, such British reporters would meet American reporters. On a large occasion, like a foreign ministers' conference, the bar of the Crillon was the only place to be at the end of a day, and we all drank together, trying to decipher the day's story or agree on what we should report it as being. None of us, of course, usually knew anything beyond the agency facts, the daily rumor, the press-conference statement, or the calculated leaks of our governments, which we traced; but we could put together a reasonable facsimile of what was happening, and were content. I would then make my way home through the greatest outdoor museum of them all, the Place de la Concorde.

I would have time on the twenty-minute walk home to think how I must put that day's particular fragments of story together so they would read usefully ten days from now, and occasionally, how this episode compared to other episodes the great space had witnessed: There, across the Seine, to the south, rose the hulk of the Palais Bourbon, where the Assembly sat. There, to the west, up the rise, loomed Napoleon's Arc de Triomphe; there, across the street, the American Embassy was housed in a Rothschild mansion, just as the Marshall Plan was housed in the Talleyrand mansion. And thus across the cobblestones, picking one's way around the Place de la Concorde—where not only Louis XVI and Marie Antoinette had been beheaded, but also Danton, Robespierre, Lavoisier and so many others, all victims of the Terror. When I learned that the figure for the entire harvest of terror came to only some fourteen hundred killed, I was astounded. But the great square still brooded over the past and it was difficult to get the dimension of this past into daily reporting. I could sit, for example, with one of my favorite young Gaullist vitalists, Diomede Catroux, and he would sneer at me openly for my democratic weaknesses. "Look," I recall him saying one dusk, "look around you. Everything you see that is beautiful, everything that makes you love Paris, was built by a tyrant or a dictator. There will be nothing beautiful here again until Paris has a strong government to build."

So I would saunter home to play with the children and wish I had

worked harder, and had not been seduced by the distractions of the great museum of Paris.

The second distraction was even more difficult to ignore in reportorial life than the balm of Paris's beauty: this was the passionate absorption of the French press with the factual detail of politics. Political detail has always been a weakness of mine and in Paris I was drugged by a press environment which believed that out of multiplication of detail emerges truth. Nowhere else did I so quickly yield to the misleading belief that to know more is to understand more. The Paris press of 1948 was so beautifully written, engraved with such incision of phrase, enameled with such subtlety of sarcasm and subjunctive, that I did not realize for months after my arrival that its literary talents were devoted chiefly to the embroidery of trivia.

What was wrong with the Paris press flowed from its history—for its history was that of authentic heroes, the reporters and writers who had outbraved the German Gestapo. Never had there been a freer, more gallant press than the French under the German occupation. Those who had written for the underground sheets had gambled their lives in order to write the truth as they saw it; if caught, they knew the Germans would be merciless; thus they wrote freely without fear of any lesser penalty than death; and were fearless of death, too, for to tell the truth justified life.

As their reward, these journalistic heroes had been given by the Liberation government of France what every reporter hopes for but knows can never come to pass—ownership and control of the press itself! The guerrilla-Maquisard-journalistic groups entering Paris with the Deuxième Blindé seized and held as their property not only the buildings of *Le Figaro, Paris-Soir* and other publications, but the distribution net. Printing presses were nationalized, their time shared by journalist-publishers of the Resistance. The newsstand distribution monopoly, Hachette, was similarly nationalized and put at their disposal. Paper was rationed by the government; and each journalist group that had earned its honors underground was entitled to a share.

Twenty-eight such daily newspapers, all written by heroes, still saw light in 1946 in Paris. Within four years their number had fallen to sixteen and would later fall to nine. When I arrived, however, the Paris press was still controlled by the graduates of the underground and Resistance, but all were confronting the realities of profit-and-loss publishing, the needs of circulation, promotion, advertising. The discipline of the balance sheet was a more inflexible menace than the

German armies of occupation, and ultimately enslaved them; but all of them then still believed, as had Harry Luce, that in the name of the great truth, fact could be subordinated to passion and polemic.

Each morning, when I went to my office, a stretch of ten or fifteen French dailies was waiting for me. It was my duty to scan them all for stories, and at first I tried. But then I realized I must not be lured; such graceful writing brought a novelist's art only to record commonplaces. Each set of facts was always presented, then refracted somewhere in the opinion spectrum by its own prism of truth. In the wartime Resistance all underground groups—Catholics, Communists, Socialists, Gaullists, patriots, romantics—had used the same prism: *La Patrie! Liberté, Liberté Chérie—Conduis, Soutiens Nos Bras Vengeurs!* Now they screeched at each other in violent discord, arranged their facts and endless details of politics to suit their sectarian truths, and agreed only in their general undertone of suspicion of the American enterprise called the Marshall Plan.

Most Frenchmen, most politicians, most of the French press, agreed that America should, by right and moral obligation, help France. Some considered the Plan, however, to be a capitalist plot against French workers; others a finance plot against French industry itself; others a plot against Russia; yet others a plot against French culture, a step in what the Communists called the Coca-Colanization of France. But what the Plan was, and what it was doing, was scarcely ever reported factually in the Paris press.

Reporting from Paris, I found after a few months, was entirely different from reporting out of China—and more difficult. In China, the local press had always been useless. Whether Communist or Nationalist, the press came of the tradition of the court gazette. No important *political* fact was ever clearly printed publicly; it had to be deduced from omissions or two-line paragraphs. In France, however, *everything* was always reported *somewhere* in the press—which meant that the searching citizen as well as the baffled foreign correspondent was smothered, digging himself out from the overburden of daily facts. And each editor of the journals born of the Resistance felt entitled to drive his own particular logic through the facts, fearlessly presenting his arrangement as the real truth.

The Marshall Plan was the largest political event in French politics; I was there to report it; but it took me months to shape the story out of the events I was reporting daily. There was, I knew, a mother lode of history under the stories I was sending to New York. But not until I threw off the spell of Paris's beauty, and rid myself of

dependence on the British and the French press, did I begin to see what I was writing about.

I was writing at the start, apparently, about trade; and by using trade figures, aid figures, import-export figures, sterile as I found them, I had to lure editors and readers to understand that our kind of civilization was significantly mirrored in such figures. It was much more difficult than writing out of China, or describing a plane twisting down to its death in a spiral of its own smoke. But the story, once I found my way to it, was the most intellectually exciting I was to report for the next ten years.

The story of the Marshall Plan, it turned out, began with the Meaning of Money. It was also about Money and Europe, and Money and the Peace—but above all, Money and Power and America.

We bestrode the world like a Colossus, challenged only by the Russians. I knew that the Marshall Plan was an adventure in the exercise of American Power. I knew the Russians had the ground troops and we had the atom bomb—but the language of our push for loyalties in Western Europe was money. I had first to master the grammar of money: discount rates, equalization rates, exchange rates, interest rates. But if I wrote in that grammar, my copy would be consigned to the purdah of the financial pages. And my news agency depended on me as a "color-feature" writer to write stories people would read: Were the Europeans grateful for our foreign aid? Could the Marshall Plan stop Communism? Was there any graft? Was the money wasted or well used?

The concept hometown newspaper editors and even sophisticated commentators had of "foreign aid" in 1948 was descended from the concept of "subsidies." One wrote of the Marshall Plan from abroad to fit this concept because people can hear only what they are prepared to absorb. One wrote as if the Marshall Plan descended from England's subsidies to its continental allies against Napoleon—bulging sacks of golden sovereigns, the coins clanking as straining men unloaded them from brigantines in the dark across the Channel. But Marshall Plan money was not coinage. Marshall Plan money was a field of force, as invisible yet as energizing as electricity.

Although I could not write it so, I had to start with the Idea of Money. In Western culture, this idea conceals the idea of command. The idea of money grants command to any man who holds a tiny coin of silver or copper, or a heavy coin of gold; or to any man who holds paper which commands silver, copper or gold; or to anyone who

controls credit, which is better than coin because it can control tons of coinage—the idea of money shares dreams of power unequally between poor and rich and men of state. Money can command a cigarette in a blockade, or heroin at the corner; or a turnip, or a pot, or silk for your wife, or a new plow; or the services of a killer. Whatever else money is, it is a medium that can translate one kind of command into another kind of command, up to the command of armies. Kings and states once came to Rothschilds and Morgans to gather moneys so they could pay and command their soldiers, officers and generals to go out and kill.

What was novel about the Marshall Plan was that the command quality of money, used on such a scale between nations, was being used for the first time not to kill but to heal; money provided the energy for a field of magnetic force, like electricity, in which things happened. And since the Marshall Plan has become one of the schoolboy parables of American political history, it is worth some effort to go into the condition that brought it about, the mechanics of its application, the abstractions that made it, and then into the tough-minded characters who forced the dollars to do good.

The condition that brought about the Marshall Plan could be described metaphorically as that of a beached whale that has somehow been stranded high beyond the normal tides and which, if not rescued, will die, stink and pollute everything around it. Europe was the whale, and its carcass could not be left by Americans to rot.

Less dramatically, the condition could be described as a bankruptcy—not the bankruptcy of a corporation or a city but of an entire civilization. The civilization of Western Europe had wasted its men, its wealth, its credit in two great wars and could no longer meet its bills. Like a profligate, it had spent its strength around the world, and now the world was repudiating it.

More specifically, the situation read like this: In the previous two centuries, the half-dozen West European states that share the rockfall of the Alps and the shoreline of the Atlantic had not only conquered the world by arms and technology, but unified the outer states as communities of tribute-bearers. Now, internally gutted by wars and faced with revolutions across the oceans, the Europeans could neither command nor pay for what they needed to live decently. Whether it was the hot red tea in the morning in London, the tobacco in the cigarette in Paris, the coffee with *schlag* in Vienna—Europe lacked it and could not pay for it. That was bad. But what was critical was the

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necessaries: it had no wheat for bread, no cotton for clothing, no petroleum to fuel the automobile. People were hungry; some starved; others stole; most hoarded; everyone cheated.

For the first two years after the war, only American gift and grant had financed the minimum needs of this European civilization, America's parentland. But in 1947, American leadership had undertaken to persuade the American Congress that they must make one new massive effort to help old Europe, to save it from starvation and Communism—one last try. Thus, then, in early spring of 1948, the United States Congress had passed the European Recovery Program (ERP) to help preserve freedom and put down Communism in Western Europe, and had swallowed its many and justified exasperations with its old allies.

Americans had good reason to be exasperated with Europe in the spring of 1948. They had already contributed all that their domestic politics would permit. America's Congress had pumped over a billion dollars into the United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration—and Tito of Yugoslavia, who had received the largest proportionate share of this money, had reciprocated by shooting down American planes. Congress had endowed the new French government of liberation with a billion and a quarter of direct dollar aid; and it had disappeared. Americans still hated the Germans; but the U.S. Army, occupying Germany, could not let Germans starve in the streets—and the Army thus had claimed and received over half a billion dollars to feed Nazis, ex-Nazis and German innocents alike. To America's gallant senior allies, the British, the United States had given in a single grant in 1946 no less than three and three quarter billion dollars! These were in the good, heavy dollars of the postwar years, each worth three of the diluted dollars of our time—and all had disappeared, tracelessly. In one single six-day period of August 1947, the British Treasury had seen $237 million slip from its reserves as its bankers yielded to international traders what the traders had right to claim. Then, to prevent monetary catastrophe, the British had broken their promise to the Americans, suspended convertibility, and waited to see what the Marshall Plan might offer in relief.

Thus, in the spring of 1948, Europe trembled on American decision, victors and vanquished alike. For me, reporting this anticipation was most difficult because the drama was, above all, invisible. I had, in the service of Time Incorporated, learned how to "hype" a dispatch with color; but no amount of "hype" got at this kind of narrative. I could tell a true story: say, a Solomonic parable of the

quarrel of the French and the Italians in the fall of 1947. Four ships, each bearing thousands of tons of American wheat, were on the high seas crossing the Atlantic; each country pleaded with the American dispensers of foreign aid that it needed all four of these American aid ships to maintain its meager bread or pasta ration of half a pound a day. Or else. Or else Communism would take over. That could be built into a vivid story. But in the larger, true story this was a minor bureaucratic quarrel. And one could scarcely write a realistic story about Germany. The days of gloating over their defeat were gone; but it was still too early to write a sympathetic story about the hated Germans, reduced in 1947 to a ration of 1,040 calories a day, with men and women fainting at their desks, or dropping in the streets with hunger. If the downspiral went further, of course, there would be riots in all the streets of the Continent, bloodshed, cracked skulls on the old cobblestones. But the Marshall Plan had been passed by Congress precisely to prevent such bloodshed, for only the Communists would gain from civil violence.

If the mythology as taught to schoolchildren insists that American good will fostered the Marshall Plan, it is right. But so also are the realists who insist that fear of the Communists and Joseph Stalin was equally important. George Marshall had come back from the Foreign Ministers' Conference at Moscow in the spring of 1947 convinced that the Russians meant to have all Western Europe. The Russians, he felt, would never cease pushing Western European democracies on the downspiral of 1946-1947 unless we, the Americans, did something to reverse that downspiral. In this sense, the Marshall Plan was the most successful anti-Communist concept in the past fifty years.

The American political memory which holds that the Plan was an act of national unity is thus true. It won the support of the hard and the soft, the fearful and the hopeful. The Marshall Plan was more than a foot-dragging, nibbled-away compromise of lobbying and conciliation grudgingly passed by Congress. It was a wholehearted resolve of the United States Congress, like a genuine declaration of war, or the Civil Rights Act of 1964. Such authentic Congressional resolves are markers in American history, and they call forth from American life its very best.

The mythology of the Plan is far more true than its debunking by revisionists. Where the mythology breaks down and misleads is in holding that success rested chiefly on American good will, lavishing money like rainwater on the ruins and deserts of Europe. This mythology has led since to the entirely erroneous belief that money

and good will can solve anything. Which is untrue, for brains and leadership are also required. And the men who directed the Marshall Plan were not only very attractive and humane custodians of power, but also very hard-minded men who had come out of a war in which they learned that mechanics were as vital as purpose to the success of a good cause.

Thus I had to explore the mechanics of the Marshall Plan in Paris—which led, inevitably, to the Château de la Muette, where high purpose had to be brought down into trade ledgers and the nastiness of national greeds. Most liberal high purpose collapses in fraudulent accounting; the Marshall Plan did not; at the Château de la Muette, tough Americans held Europeans to tough figuring.

At the Château de la Muette—a lovely old yellow-and-beige mansion with high scalloped windows, and floors that creaked properly—gathered the sixteen nations who had accepted America's invitation to be helped, plus Trieste and West Germany, states under Allied military occupation. Each had a voice in the Organization for European Economic Cooperation, the OEEC. The OEEC was empowered to negotiate with the Marshall Plan administrators how America's money should be parceled out, but their voices were babble. To listen to each European nation's plea for aid could carry one back in conversation to Charlemagne; the Duke of Alba; traditional fishing rights; the three sons of Louis I, the Pious; the Peace of Westphalia; as well as the consequences of the treaties of Versailles, Rapallo and San Remo. Europe carried too much history; Europe was split by too many boundaries, too many fossil ridges. It was impossible for American aid managers to listen to arguments over the traditional markets of Greek against Turkish tobaccos; or the complaint about the blockage of Dutch artichokes from their traditional Ruhr market in Germany; or why the Belgians, who had excess rolling-stock manufacturing capacity, were blocked by currency regulations from making rolling stock for German railways, which desperately needed it only forty miles away. All wanted their aid portion, directly and immediately, from the U.S.A.—just as Chiang had. The Europeans, talking to either American reporters or American officials, were like starving tribesmen jostling each other for a share of the meat.

At the Château de la Muette, the Americans took a simple tack. Let the Europeans first diagram their own problems, deciding who could physically supply whom on the Continent with what they needed of each other, ignoring the payment difficulties in European currencies. Then, finally, all should bring to the Americans, as Dis-

pensers and Overlords of the Great Purse, what the net margin of their needs was in dollars and supplies from the outside world, which the Marshall Plan would cover. It was a practical, common-sense solution. In just such a practical way, Henry of Anjou, King of England, had let the jury system begin, when he despaired of understanding or getting at the facts of dispute among his quarreling English underlings and permitted them to decide the facts of a case while his appointees decided which laws must apply. So the Americans, without trying to force Europe to a common market, nonetheless pressed an idea on Europeans which became the Common Market, for Americans would yield dollars only to the common consensus of all claimants.

With this as their first tough decision in June 1948, the Marshall Planners went on to the even more intricate mechanics of getting the dollars threaded through the beggar governments into the hands of the people who could use them fastest, most productively, most accountably. Only learned economists and professional financial experts could follow all the detail, but when simplified, the mechanics of flow worked this way: Congress appropriated the dollars and placed them at the disposal of the Marshall Plan. After the most esoteric of bargaining processes, the Planners put at the disposal of each European government its share of the annual total of dollars recommended by the OEEC. At that point, matters became even more complicated, for the European governments did not, in turn, *give* the dollars away. Their central banks made such dollars available to importers of national necessities like food, oil, machines, cotton and sulfur. The importers *paid* for such dollars in local currencies, which accumulated in huge digital columns called "counterpart funds." Such "counterpart funds" could not be used by the receiving country without the consent of American authorities, which generated much bickering and ill will between the American donors and the recipient cabinets. Moreover, the ultimate recipients of Marshall Plan aid (except for the starving) did not feel particularly grateful, either, or sense they were getting anything for free. They had to pay in francs, pounds, marks, lire, to buy the Marshall Plan dollars from their own government. They could not be accused of being "bought" by the Yankee dollar, for what they were getting in effect were the tickets to enter and buy on the world market—tickets purchased at the standard, not the scalper's, rate. They were getting the dollars that commanded wheat, coffee, tobacco, dried milk, as well as airplanes, rolling mills, computers and raw materials. The United States was handing out tickets of admission to the circling globe of world trade which Europe itself had once

dominated. For the next generation, the Europeans were to move in that world trade only with American dollars and by American permission and policing—after which they were to turn on America, repudiate her dollar and denounce her leadership.

The immediate solution of 1948, the share-out of the first five-billion-dollar appropriation of the American Congress by a group of Europeans forced to look at their continent as a whole, was reached in July, little more than a year after George Marshall had proposed his plan at Harvard's commencement—which is lightning speed in terms of diplomatic proposal and effect.

It was pleasant to see how efficiently the dollars were put to use. For the Americans, the experience was exhilarating. They were not only doing good; they were doing good efficiently and smartly. It was as if they were faced with an enormous puzzle; they embraced the puzzle with the enthusiasm of game-players.

High purpose had assembled to guide the Marshall Plan the finest group of American civilians in government since Roosevelt had gathered together his war cabinet of 1940-1942. It is an axiom first enunciated by Eugene Meyer, when he was head of the Reconstruction Finance Corporation, that in the first two years of any national emergency the American government can freely call on its citizen best. But not for more than two years; the best then drift back to private life, and are replaced by the job-seekers.

In its first two years, then, the purpose of the Marshall Plan recruited America's best. And the nature of the talent is essential to explain the plan's success.

The high command of the Marshall Plan was two men: Paul Gray Hoffman of Chicago and Pasadena, and W. Averell Harriman of New York. Both would now be certified as Establishment types, but two more dissimilar characters would be difficult to find; the former folksy, the latter imperious; the former warm and persuasive, the latter haughty and peremptory; the former a Republican, the latter a Democrat. But both were men of extraordinary ability, devoted to their country.

As chief of the Economic Cooperation Administration (ECA), Hoffman was also chief of the Marshall Plan (or ERP) in Washington. He is difficult to describe, as is his genius. Paul Hoffman came closer to being a saint, in the secular sense, than any man I have ever met in politics except for Jean Monnet (with whom Hoffman became friends during the Marshall Plan years). Hoffman was a stocky, ebullient,

inexhaustible man; people smiled almost reflexively when they met him, as they did at Hubert Humphrey, for Hoffman spread joy around him. He was a businessman, and sounded naïve when he talked politics, until I learned he had a knack of twisting politicians to his every whim when his salesman's blood raced, his eyes twinkled and his enthusiasms swept a room. The spell he cast around him was quite simple: he was obviously a *good* man; and obviously a *wise* one. People trusted him; he sought nothing for himself; he managed first to accumulate a large private fortune, then to get rid of it, and ended his days in modest circumstances, having toyed with millions and billions of dollars in absolute honor.

As chief of the Marshall Plan, Hoffman kept the U.S. Congress in line. He never promised Europeans more than Congress authorized, or Congress more than he expected Europeans to deliver in response. Hoffman never sounded profound; indeed, sometimes his exhortations rang like those of a sales manager at the annual sales weekend. But his simple manner was deceptive: he believed it was America's duty to help the weak and suffering; he also believed in the work ethic; he also believed in making the terms of the contract clear at the end of the sales exhortation. Thus everyone on either the giving or the receiving end of Marshall Plan aid knew Paul Hoffman required that good will and performance must balance. Hoffman had entered the Establishment through the business-executive stream, as president of Studebaker; he had organized the Committee on Economic Development, and was one of the first great business executives who insisted that business must have a social conscience. As a millionaire, an industrialist, a phrase-maker, he had been called into the war effort and risen to command the postwar Marshall Plan because he was so obviously competent, trustworthy and "plain folks" that Congress would accept as truth anything he said.

Averell Harriman, his unlikely overseas partner in command, was field director of the Marshall Plan, headquartered in Paris; he kept the Europeans in line. Harriman was an American aristocrat who had well earned his post; if his accomplishments during the war had been rewarded with diplomatic hash marks, they would have run up his sleeve from wrist to shoulder. One of his minor problems was that people generally, and newsmen particularly, thought he was stupid. This was an impression one might easily gather from his mumbled diction, his apparent inattention to conversation, his groping for the proper figures when making a point. But Harriman was not at all stupid—only single-minded. He loved the United States (as did Hoff-

man), and he loved it with passion, devotion, and total contempt for personalities who might stand in its way. Once Harriman was wound up and pointed in the direction his government told him he must go, he was like a tank crushing all opposition. From America he expected nothing in return except recognition, for he was as vain for honor as he was wise in experience.

The jovial Hoffman and the lordly Harriman made one of the oddest partnerships of all time—incomprehensible to outsiders, but too rich in contrasts not to amuse friends of both. Hoffman was still a Midwesterner at heart, of the breed of Chicagoland industrialists and makers of things who baffle Eastern financial men. Hoffman's family still owned their manufactory of plumbing equipment in Indiana, though Hoffman, like so many Midwesterners, now thought of himself as a Southern Californian. His modest villa overlooked the slopes of Pasadena. Harriman was a polo player, a Yale man (Skull and Bones), of the elite; and his mansion in New York was just across the street from the Metropolitan Museum of Art. Harriman had enjoyed an imperial domain larger in acreage than the Rockefellers' on the Hudson, but had given most of it to New York State. He also owned a small dacha of several hundred acres on Long Island; and a winter sunning place in Hobe Sound, Florida. Harriman collected Klees, Mondrians, Picassos and great sculpture wherever he went, whether in Paris, London or New York; as in his youth he had collected polo ponies and ladies. Hoffman was still Midwestern in his tastes; he preferred collecting awards, silver cups, bronze plaques, and teaching his parrot, in Pasadena, to squawk odd kitchen phrases. At that time, the second Mrs. Harriman was Marie Whitney, a delightful lady of Edwardian style and candor, a patroness of arts and music, an authentic *grande dame*. The first Mrs. Hoffman, by contrast, was a sturdy Midwestern lady, very much down to earth, with strange religious views and a great devotion to her husband, a lady who collected and adopted orphans, not fine arts. Averell Harriman was a genuine gourmet and set one of the great tables of our times. Hoffman, by contrast, ate heartily of anything; one night, having promised us a treat, he arrived at my home carrying a basket of warm, dripping take-out Chinese food.

Between these two, Hoffman and Harriman, American leadership spanned a large range. Both were good men; but when they had to, both could be rough as a rasp, Hoffman with regret and Harriman with relish. Hoffman knew how the American system worked from the foundry, through the combustion chamber, through the assembly line, through the sales system. And still he believed in human kindness.

Harriman knew how the affairs of nations worked; from his youthful negotiations with the Soviets on a fur deal, he had accumulated more knowledge of the simplicities and deviltries of foreign leaders than almost any other American of his time. On any list of the top ten diplomatic heroes of World War II, Averell Harriman could claim a place. They made a fine pair. Hoffman trusted people, Harriman distrusted them.

Beneath these two came a second range of leadership, of equally impressive quality. The names are too many to list, and I choose only two as prototypes of what the American system could then offer—David Bruce and Milton Katz. Both were to become ambassadors in service to the Marshall Plan. Each had a specific contribution to make.

David Bruce, then fifty-one, needed no lens of imagination to transform him into a novelist's hero; by all odds he was the most romantic of the leaders of the Marshall Plan. Though an amateur of all professions, he was the model for all professional diplomats. In his youth he had served for several years in the Foreign Service; when he came back many years later to diplomacy, he served at one time or another as Ambassador to France, to Germany, to Great Britain, to NATO, to the People's Republic of China. His father had been a United States senator from Maryland and a Pulitzer Prize winner; he himself was a man of letters, a biographer of presidents, a contemporary at Princeton of F. Scott Fitzgerald and Edmund Wilson. Bruce's honors and bizarre achievements pin-pointed his record like sparks. In his youth he had, as a lark, run for the Maryland legislature from a tenement district populated largely by poor Jews—on a promise to legalize fox hunting, which so amused his Jewish voters that they elected him forthwith. He had been a businessman, dabbling in ventures from denicotinizing cigarettes, to race tracks (Suffolk Downs in Boston), to French vineyards. He had been Colonel Bruce of the OSS during the war, spymaster of the French underground and Resistance; had been an Assistant Secretary of Commerce, and then, as Ambassador to France during the Marshall Plan, he made his great achievement: mobilizing American diplomatic support for Jean Monnet's dream of a United Europe, and then seeing that dream through to reality. He was both a diplomat and an ambassador: as a diplomat he was graceful and elegant, but as an ambassador he knew the clout and compulsion his country could exercise and used that clout to make "a Europe" come into being. Bruce loved beautiful things: old French veneers; good furniture and paintings; his exquisite wife, Evangeline; and what Europe, at its best, stood for.

If Bruce was the very model of what was best in the old American

Establishment, in Paris his counterpart of the new Establishment was Milton Katz. Milton Katz was a professor. I had heard about professors during the war who made bombs, perfected radar, served the OSS. But Katz, a professor on leave from Harvard Law School, was an entirely new type in my political experience—the academic as operator. He was general counsel to the Marshall Plan in Paris, then successor to Averell Harriman. Harriman had the most imposing office in the old Talleyrand establishment—huge windows opening on the Tuileries, green carpet, gilt chairs with wine-colored silk cushions, the whole scene surveyed by its marble bust of Benjamin Franklin. Katz sat in a rather dingy office, little better than an office at the Harvard Law School, though more spacious—but Katz could explain the purpose and mechanics of the Plan better than anyone else. Katz was brains; his specialty was to translate ideas to action. He brought brains to bear on decision, and recruited brains for action.

Dark-eyed and handsome, then only forty-two, a spellbinding conversationalist, Katz was one of those priests of academe then just emerging from their studies to become American Cardinal Richelieus—or at least, policy-makers.

And through Katz I met others. Katz's scholarly counterpart in Washington was Professor Richard Bissell of Yale, an economist. Just as Katz was personal wise man to Harriman in Paris, Bissell was personal wise man to Hoffman back home. Katz went on to the Ford Foundation, then back to Harvard. Bissell went on to the CIA, where he, alas, was one of the masterminds of the Bay of Pigs invasion. They were the senior academics in the Marshall Plan, as Oppenheimer, Conant, Bush, Langer, had been senior scholars in the war. And beneath them were countless other professors and scholars interwoven with businessmen, soldiers and diplomats in the Plan's operations. The Chief of Trade and Payments for the entire Plan, a man required to understand all the esoterica of trade balances, was Joseph McDaniel, formerly Professor of Economics at Dartmouth. A young Milwaukee law school instructor, Henry Reuss, arrived to pursue the European cartels as deputy general counsel of ERP—and later continued as congressman, still distrustful of big business and banks, to become head of the House Banking and Finance Committee. Scholars and academics buzzed about the missions and the committees, from my old classmate Arthur Schlesinger, who was briefly a summer consultant, to a contemporary of ours from Yale, Kingman Brewster. Brewster was then a bright young Harvard Law School graduate, a favorite of Professor Katz, who brought him to Paris as an assistant.

Brewster served for a year, returned to Harvard to become a professor of law, and then on up the ladder of academe to the presidency of Yale, and out to the big world again as Ambassador to the Court of St. James's in London.

The best of American talent was attracted to Marshall Plan headquarters as if by a political law of centripetal attraction; but what made them so remarkable historically as a group was the change they made visible in the character of America's political elite. The traditional Establishment still commanded at the top, to be sure; but the foreshadow of a new governing class was plainly to be seen below. The roster of white male Protestants, born to the kinds of families that had been governing America since the Civil War, began with George Marshall himself, who had first been tapped for leadership by John J. Pershing in World War I, and then in World War II had been given command of the nation's army by Henry L. Stimson, Secretary of War, and Franklin Roosevelt, themselves classic establishmentarians. Paul Hoffman's grandfather had been a wealthy man with a social conscience far in advance of his time; a century before he had been chairman of the Chicago School Board, and had commandeered the land along that city's lakefront for one of the nation's most imposing public green spaces. Harriman's father could hardly be called a man of conscience, yet the railroads of E. H. Harriman had undeniably served the public interest, particularly the Union Pacific, which spanned the West and created the national market that had made America rich. So, too, were Dean Acheson and Bruce men of the Establishment, and each of these men of the old Establishment had earned his way to public dignity and responsibility.

Yet the Marshall Plan needed more than generalized ability and devotion to the national interest; it needed expert knowledge. And so its older leaders chose as associates men of the academy, men of knowledge and expertise. Professors Milton Katz and Richard Bissell came of a new growth in public service; they were among the first of a fast-growing corps that would, in a generation, dominate the political landscape. In that new landscape, such men would eventually spurn their old advisory role in policy and insist on actually setting policy themselves.

That was, however, still far away. The command of the Marshall Plan was an accidental mixture of the new America a-borning—of businessmen and professors, of generals and diplomats, of men of heritage and men of ambition. Together their energy, talent and dollars soon infused a despairing Europe. Less than a year after

George Marshall's speech in June 1947, first proposing the Marshall Plan, the first vessel of Marshall Plan cargo arrived in Europe, in Bordeaux, France—bearing nine thousand tons of wheat out of Galveston to make bread. Two years later, by June of 1949, the tough mechanical, distribution and payments problems within Europe had been solved; at which point the planners, new and old alike, intellectual and executive, historians and bankers, ran into the insoluble problem—which was England.

Of the first eighteen months of the Marshall Plan it can be written that the United States saved Western Europe and discarded England. The problem was that England did not fit into the world the Americans were remaking. The English had acquired a whole new set of ideas; and we were fashioning a world on the old English model of ideas which the English themselves had rejected. The breaking of England's trading strength was inadvertent and inevitable at once; it was performed without malice because between the hopes of the new British Labour government and the demand of the postwar American Congress, no bridge was possible. To understand what was happening required a close examination of the connection between trade figures, culture and history, which, of course, neither the American nor the British man in the street cared to read.

It had proved easy in 1948-1949 to patch up the trade balances that European nations owed each other. American dollars could start the Dutch artichokes moving to the Ruhr, the Greek tobacco moving to England, the German coking coal moving to French steel mills, simply by picking up a four- or five-billion dollar deficit a year. But to connect Western Europe, as an industrial community, to the greater cycle of world trade—that was far more difficult. World trade was infinitely more complicated; and grew continually more so as overseas luxuries, like bananas and oranges, became as familiar as tea, while overseas requirements, like oil and food, became indispensable. Americans wanted to revive fair, open world trade, a system which had been invented by the British. But by 1949, as the Marshall Plan pushed into its second year, it was becoming quite obvious that the British, under their Labour government, could not survive as a great power in the old open trading world England had invented.

Trying to understand the face-off between the British and American policy-makers of the Marshall Plan in 1949 exposed me to the effect of legend on politics—or how myths control action. In my dispatches, I described the dilemma as that of the memory of the

Century of England, or the myth of the Golden Yesterday.

The Golden Yesterday was a period of history which, as I saw it, stretched from the last minuet of the Congress of Vienna in 1814, when the autocrats buried the memory of Napoleon, to the last waltz in London in 1914, when no one noticed that international civility was being buried for all time. In that explorers' century, the entire globe was made one. Europe made it one—and England led Europe. At the beginning of that century London was about to become the capital of the world. Chicago was a fur traders' post; Los Angeles was a mission station; South America and Africa were wilderness; Shanghai did not exist. By the end of that time the price of bread in Europe was not only what bread actually cost at the bakery, but also a statistical intersection of prices in London, reflecting the wheat yield in Kansas and the Ukraine. In that period, the plantation millionaires of the Amazon had flourished and then passed away as international trade stole the rubber culture from them, and transplanted rubber to Malaya and Sumatra. Cables and telegraph wires linked prices and markets together so that men in London or Liverpool could make fortunes on futures in copper, pepper, cotton, bristles, zinc or cocoa, and be sure of delivery and payment in recognized standards of quality and money. From the ports of Europe, all oceans, sea lanes, cargo carrying, insurance rates, were interlinked as one. Gold measured all values; London set the price of gold; the phrase "payable by draft on London" meant anyone, anywhere, could buy or sell, secure in London's guarantee to deliver gold.

The stability of the pound, and the globe-girdling authority of the British Navy as it brought the heathen to accounting, set up a rhythm of economic progress never before matched. It was this echoing rhythm of an open and fair world trade that the Americans of the Marshall Plan wanted to recapture.

This rhythm, or memory, or image, was the closest thing to doctrine in the Marshall Plan. The Marshall Planners had been sent out by Washington with nothing like a blueprint, least of all a *plan*. What guided them was this image of a world that educated Americans had learned about from teachers, from historians, from grandparents. They meant to restore it—though shorn of the grossness, the abuse, the extortions and inhumanities of the nineteenth century. Although, initially, the American technical experts described their purpose in such dreadful jargon as "the automatic, multilateral, international integration of trade balances," they meant far more than that. They meant the restoration of a culture. In the century of the Golden

Yesterday, not only did goods pass freely for gold, but men and women traveled freely from country to country without passports; no nation toyed with export-import controls except in time of war. At the beginning of that century, science was considered above war, and scientists could cross borders into enemy country even in time of war; and art was universal, provocative, humane and fashionable, all at once. Indeed, it was this open world that was most threatened by Nazi Germany in the 1930s and by Stalin's Russia in the late 1940s. A civilization was involved, whose foundations the Marshall Plan was trying to restore—and it had to do so with dollars.

Only the British understood this American dream of restoration. The British had centralized the nineteenth-century world that America was now trying to recreate. Except that now, in the aftermath of the war, British politics had been ripped by other political dreams. Britain, the motherland of capitalism, had gone Socialist. And the British diplomats and civil servants in Paris who presented themselves at once as our partners and supplicants were thus schizophrenic.

To begin with, the British spokesmen in Paris were well-educated, upper-class men, steeped in their own history. They knew their nation had created world trade, but they understood better than anyone else what was involved in "automatic" integration of trade balances. They knew that the surest thing about the automatic world market of the nineteenth century had been the way the gold standard "automatically" squeezed out the weak. As a banker automatically stops cashing checks from an overdrawn depositor, so the great "automatic" trade world of the Golden Yesterday cut off credit to a pauper nation. If a nation could not pay in gold or pump out enough goods or services to pay for its needed imports, it was squeezed down to what it could pay for. The currency mechanism took care of that: if England (or more likely, France, Spain, or Italy, or one of the lesser breed of countries) could not buy what it needed, the nation went without. Only not everybody in the nation went without; some went more without than others. If the price of imported cotton, coffee, tea, wool, shot up, the poor went without; and their wages dropped and dropped until they were paid so little that their products could be exported at a profit; and so the cycle went from giddy prosperity ("a penny for the old man, a farthing for the boy") to apocalypse.

The British emissaries in Paris understood far better than the Americans both the glories and the cruelties of the Golden Yesterday. Now they were speaking for the new Labour government of the

United Kingdom. And the men of the Labour government knew, not only in their minds but in their bellies, what the old "automatic" mechanisms had done to them and their families. They had seen coal miners coughing to death in Yorkshire; dwarflike, pigeon-breasted longshoremen hauling cargo off wharves in London; little beshawled ladies in Lancashire whose sons went off to fight England's wars and, if they lived, came home to work for bread and jam, to marry girls like themselves who worked in the mills. The new leaders of the Labour Party had been elected to abolish such injustices. They believed in their own good will. Half a century of protest had given the movement heroes, bards, martyrs; now it had given the movement power. With this power they meant to conduct a bloodless revolution that would bring brotherhood not only to victorious England's green and smiling land but to lesser people also. Yet somehow, the same power insisted, of its own, that England hold on to its imperial past and its share of the great victory over Fascism.

Except Labour's leaders could not.

The contradictions of British Socialist purpose were too large. If they wished England to remain the world-girdling trading power it had been before the war, they would have to use harshly their share of victory over Germany and Japan, two potential rivals, and restrain them as victors can. But if they were to act in brotherhood, as Socialists, and forgive and forget, they would have to make their own workers compete against Germans and Japanese, who lived on sausages or rice balls. There was the further conundrum of empire. The British Labour Party could not hold on to the old Empire and exploit it; that was forbidden by Socialist morality. Doctrine suggested they free the Empire as fast as possible—which would have been commonsensical if they had simply called quits to the Century of Empire. What they did, however, was not only to free such dominions as India and Egypt, but to free them with such staggering dowries of conscience money as to make a reasonable economy impossible in the home country. In India, Burma and the dependencies of the Middle East (including Egypt), the bookkeeping of Empire and war had notched some 1,929 million pounds sterling as debts of the mother country for protecting her subjects from Nazis and Japanese! This was the equivalent of 8 billion postwar American dollars (the old hard dollars), which England owed as a debt of honor to the newly independent Commonwealth. To India alone, the most demanding and difficult of the newly freed dominions, the English acknowledged a paper debt of 750 million pounds. The British Labour Party was the

first of the great political enterprises I witnessed to sacrifice common sense to morality. They had no idea how much good will costs, and even less idea how to use their share of victory and world power.

This contradiction of good will and common sense led Britain's Labour leaders inevitably to the court to which all moralists seeking refuge from reality eventually turn—the government of the United States, which was then held capable of solving anything. The best way of holding on to power while simultaneously advancing Socialist brotherhood around the world was for the English to persuade the Americans that the Marshall Plan was a joint enterprise—i.e., the Americans would put up all the money, but the British would share the direction. It seemed to Labour's leadership like a continuation of the wartime comradeship embodied in the Combined Chiefs of Staff.

But by the summer of 1949, when the British trading crisis became acute once more, the wartime comradeship had faded. Americans were in no mood to change their program—the establishment of a free and fair world trade—to protect their old companions in arms, the British. Moreover, had the Americans accepted the implied premise of governing the world in partnership with British victors, no chorus of voices would have been quicker in denunciation of American imperialism than the intellectuals of the British Labour Party, already discontent with their leaders' dependence on American power. There was also American opinion to consider. Most Americans had been conditioned to adore Churchill, salute the Royal Air Force, revere the defiance of 1940. But now it was time to face the new world; we were going one way in our politics, the British another. We were not about to break the British openly as a great power until the Suez crisis of 1956, when we broke their will and pride. But by 1949 we were content to cut them adrift to sink or swim in the new world we were making.

The new British Labour cabinet had not yet mastered the rhetoric of international economics—not even the governing trio. The most colorful member, Ernest Bevin, a tough union leader, had now mastered, as Foreign Secretary, the coarseness of dialogue necessary to negotiate with the Russians. But the Prime Minister, Clement Attlee, a social worker by profession, a bandage dispenser, was one of the great nonentities of British history; and the Chancellor of the Exchequer, Sir Stafford Cripps, a brilliant man, was an intellectual who combined the cutting mind and tongue of a barrister with the icy manners of a doctrinaire Socialist. Both Attlee and Cripps were, moreover, sincere religious Christians. None of these three could adequately present the

selfish, primary, nationalist case for Britain, or invoke, with the hearty rumble of comradeship, shared memories and good brandy, the brotherhood of war, as might a Churchill, an Eden, a Beaverbrook, if then in power. Thus it was left for the nonpolitical British civil servants, not the guiding politicians, to make the case for England and reality.

I recall a conversation at my home with Sir Edmund Hall-Patch in August of 1949. That night I had gathered six of my fellow correspondents who met regularly and privately and who, collectively, for almost five years, hoodwinked famous European statesmen into the belief that we held the keys to American public opinion. We all respected Hall-Patch as the best professional diplomat of the old school in Paris at the time. A meticulously groomed man, a clipped and precise speaker, he was Britain's senior spokesman at, and also chairman of, the Executive Committee of the Organization for European Economic Cooperation, where in the contest among the eighteen rival nation claimants for the American dollar he performed best of all. But his task humiliated him. Begging for the American buck was not his style. So now, privately, as soon as dinner was over and we gathered in the easy chairs of our apartment, Hall-Patch shed his diplomatic manners and spoke bluntly, as Englishmen and Americans had spoken to each other during the war.

The whole trouble, declared Sir Edmund, was our American "surplus"; the world's problem was how to deal with this "surplus production of America," which it so desperately needed, but for which it could no longer pay. He compared America's dominance of the mid twentieth century with Britain's dominance of the nineteenth century; declared that our power far exceeded Britain's power at its peak; and then waxed eloquent about the difference between Britain's world and America's.

In the old world of the nineteenth century, said he, Britain not only dominated but also depended on the outer world. And that outer world reciprocally depended on Britain, as well as resented Britain. Now Britain was left with this still-dependent backward world making economic claims on it. And the Americans, in the Marshall Plan, were insisting in the name of free trade that Britain meet such economic claims. Did we realize, he asked us, that even then, in 1949, more people around the globe settled their bills with each other in pounds sterling than in dollars? Twice as much trade went on in the old pound as in the Yankee dollar! The Malays with their rubber and tin, the Australians with their wool and wheat, the Argentinians with their

beef, the Africans with their cocoa and coconuts—all traded and banked in pounds sterling. Sir Edmund made trade figures dance and jiggle around the globe: If we Americans cut down on buying Malay rubber (as we were just then doing), Malaya earned fewer dollars; then England had to supply Malayan needs in dollars. What happened to Africa when the cocoa market cracked totally, as it did in New York in the spring of 1949? England had to supply Africa's dollar needs!

Hall-Patch then went beyond trade balances and came to the nub of it. What would happen to our Marshall Plan if all the people who dealt in pounds sterling suddenly demanded American dollars in exchange? If all of them tried to claim their share of the great American surplus by squeezing dollars out of the old pound sterling? India and Egypt, now free but owning sterling, were steadily drawing down dollars from England's shrinking reserves. But what if there were a famine in India next year and England had to spend half a billion of her dollars to buy wheat for India? What then? Was America willing to see Britain cut off India? Play rough with her? Remember, he warned, what happened when Britain had its last pound crisis in 1931, remember "what happened all over the world." And Britain was approaching such a pound crisis now, right now.

For the European participants in the Marshall Plan Hall-Patch had contempt. Sit with them in a meeting with Americans, he continued, and they grovel. If a junior American economist told a pleading minor nation that it might be wise to increase its production of triplets next year, the European pleader would probably say, We'll go into that right away and report back. As for the French—the French entered a meeting with American aid-givers with their legs spread so wide apart they seemed to be saying "*Baisez-moi*" ("Slip it to me").

A concerted *Putsch* against the pound was impending, said Hall-Patch; the lesser European nations were ganging up. Only one response was possible: refashioning the great English-speaking alliance that had won the war! We needed a merger, a total merger of the resources of America and Britain, so that the dollar and the pound would become the obverse and reverse of the same coin of value, an economic union run by a single board in Washington ("on which, by God, Britain has a say"). Together we could create a globe of free movement, of free circulation of goods, of free men. But it must begin with the union of English-speaking people, for "our word is our bond, we know what good faith is," while our Latin friends—well, Sir Edmund thought that Latins were flatly untrustworthy. "Not since the

time of Delcassé has a French diplomat's word been reliable."

So on and on with ever-increasing eloquence went Hall-Patch, until we realized that the senior British diplomat in Paris, emotionally under strain, was talking from the heart. America must move to save and take over the British economy that very fall, or Britain would fade from world power. He had little faith, either short range or long range, in the Labour government he spoke for publicly. He doubted whether England had the stomach to go the rough road it must go if it went alone—to cut the Empire adrift, to repudiate its distant and inner obligations, to hold on only to military command of the oil resources of the Middle East, which he thought someday must become the trump card of international diplomacy (!). He left us, as correspondents, perplexed both professionally and historically. We could not, in honor, quote or report what he had said, because he was appealing privately, off the record, over the head of his own government, to the court of American opinion. But we could not escape the lesson he had meant to teach: the U.S. must, that fall, decide whether we were going to govern the new postwar trading world in partnership with the British, or support it all by ourselves as long as we could. And there were very few weeks left for this decision.

I have never mastered the reporting of international financial crises, for their details are usually kept almost as secret as the internal debates in the United States Supreme Court. From outside, in the summer of 1949, one could sense that the shove was on—but whether the United States shoved the British to a devaluation of their money, or simply urged the Italians to do the shoving, I do not know. I enjoyed the leak furnished me for publication by the American authorities to help speed the crisis. Italy was then one of the most docile and obedient partners in the Marshall Plan, and, for a year, American authorities had frowned on Italy's desire to cash in her pounds in London for dollars. In its recovery, Italy had been selling so much of its wines, fruits and traditional luxuries to countries which could pay her only in British pounds that Italy had a surplus of pounds in her reserve, when what she really wanted was dollars. Now, finally, American authorities had winked at this Italian desire to convert pounds into dollars and slipped the leash. Along with all the other drainage on London's reserve came the Italian drain—and the British Treasury cracked.

On the weekend of September 17–18, the British dropped the value of the pound from $4.03 to $2.80. And England headed on that long downward slope to which good will had led her; from which

America refused to rescue her; and from which only North Sea oil might, eventually, give a temporary respite.

It was a moment in history worth recording and I meant to see it. I knew that if the United States had not pressed the event, it had at least invited it. The Marshall Plan sought to create a twentieth-century trading world even more efficient than the old nineteenth-century world—but a world in which we would be the chief guarantor, the senior armorer, the central banker and permanent umbrella holder. Under our umbrella there would be no favorites; not even our great allies the British could expect special privileges.

It scarcely occurred to me then, and certainly not to the Americans of hope who directed the Marshall Plan, that in this new trading world the vanquished would become the victors, that the Japanese and the Germans would become the greatest beneficiaries of our exertion. And that, ultimately, we would drive the British from the Middle East, too, and leave all of America's economy and civilization in debt to, and uncertainly dependent on, the oil of Middle East sheikhs and strong men, whom the British had previously policed for us.

The timing of my visit to London could not have been better, for I had booked my arrival for the Monday afternoon after what turned out to be the weekend of devaluation. But if my timing was correct, my anticipation could not have been more delusive, which was better for my education. I had expected the British crack-up to come, if not with a bang or a whimper, at least with a snarl of anger that would be reportable. But in London I found that the British had set out on the long road leading off and away from the mainstream of world affairs with complete, affable and cheerful indifference. Perhaps all financial crises are similarly unreportable except for panic inflationary bursts.

I had boarded the *Golden Arrow* out of Paris very early Monday morning bound for London, with a lapful of newspapers, both British and French, describing the drama of devaluation. But from the moment I passed through the turnstile of passport inspection on the British side of the Channel, the intensity of what I thought was a historic crisis withered. The passport inspector ticked off the questions: Occupation? Purpose of trip? Et cetera. And when I answered, "Journalist . . . to report devaluation crisis," he looked at me, said, "Really? But nobody's at all excited," and waved me on to the train. The British trains in those days seemed quicker than the French, perhaps because they were bumpier; and the napery in the dining car was certainly thicker and stiffer. The English villages of Kent, through

which the train rolled, seemed neater and cleaner than the grim rock-walled villages of France; no crisis there. I went looking for crisis immediately in London, but was taken by my friend Denis Plimmer that evening to the pubs in the council housing at Wapping, a waterfront district. They were tranquil—men playing darts in one pub and their youngsters watching them; in another pub, a man with an accordion played while people sang, chanted, stomped. Walking away, I noticed the big bulletin board of the London County Council's offering of evening school courses; and then the houses, all of them postwar, were pointed out to me, clean, neatly gardened, well lit. Whatever glories Labour had sacrificed abroad, the new government had been generous to its own. If there was a crisis at this level, it required a detective to get through to it. The world was distant; whether Labour had managed or mismanaged the pound meant nothing here. Labour had been good for Wapping.

I scoured offices, factories and the port of London. The port was quite busy and I spent a full day there. It was picturesque and made good vignettes; I might have strung the thread of a story through my observations had I been writing of the old Empire. The wharves made good feature copy: the Canary Wharf, with its fresh fruits, tomatoes and bananas from the Canary Islands; the meat piers with lamb coming in from Australia and New Zealand; the Blue Star and Royal Mail Lines slinging beef from South America overside. There was the tobacco pier, with huge, yellow-pine hogsheads of tobacco swinging down to the warehouses; there were the ships loading and unloading cargo, whose ladings in my notes read like the manifests the Marshall Plan monitored in Paris: incoming sugar stacked in piles under Quonset huts; logs of timber from Rumania and West Africa. And going out, simultaneously, on one ship to Durban, a load of British Fords, of Ferguson tractors, cases of whiskey, green cement-mixing machines, cement in paper sacks.

One ship, however, made the story come to point—a gray ship called the *Triberg*, out of Vancouver. The *Triberg* carried ten thousand tons of wheat and it would take days to unload her. A huge vacuum pipe endlessly sucked a stream of grain to the top of a huge elevator while, from the bottom of the elevator, a dusty workingman presided over three chutes, milking away at the bottom as if at the teats of a cow, directing the chutes to pour the golden-red grains into railway wagons that waited to carry North American wheat to the millers. In order to eat bread, England needed five such ships every single week!

The story I was writing had, somehow, to do with keeping this flow of grain for bread coming in to England; and how the English might pay not only for the wheat but for the timber, the tobacco, the Canary Islands luxuries and, above all, the oil and cotton that were unloaded at Merseyside or Bristol. But, between the contentment in the council flats, where the new Labour government cared for the workingmen, and wharfside, where the goods went in and out but did not balance, the story became confused. The new Labour government meant to protect its workers from the ups and downs of the old world and its new competitors in trade. Benevolence oozed from the Labour leaders, but they could not say how they proposed to do what they proposed to do.

In search of the story, I interviewed not quite as many English Labour leaders as I had Communist Politburo members in Yenan. I was in no hurry and had more time; but the English Labour leaders, whom I then cherished as men of my own philosophy, made far less sense. They offered a limited, shopworn store of ideas, all resting on the unspoken premise that whatever went wrong was America's fault. And their querulous debate, now that I reread my notes, had as its central theme the familiar question that amuses British intellectuals still: Were the Americans kindly but stupid people? Or were they outright cold warriors, breaking England to the yoke of their anti-Communist crusade?

Two previous acquaintances spanned the debate.

Sir Stafford Cripps was on the American side of the debate. He was a man I had come to admire when I had first met him, out of power, in China years before, as a Christian Socialist. Now, when I looked him up again, as Chancellor of the Exchequer, he stated his feeling that America (by which he meant both the United States and Canada) did not understand its true importance to Europe. Historically, felt Sir Stafford, America's role had been to offer homes to European immigrants, thus draining off the excess population of Europe to work the mines and fields of America; and having been given this second chance in life, these exiled Europeans furnished in return to the old continent wheat, cotton, bread and raw materials. But a generation ago America had closed its gates; Europe was now stuck with a bloated population in a ravaged world; Europe was now forbidden to ship its poor to America, while America would not ship food and raw materials for the poor of Europe without dollars. Cripps's bitterness that day was most intensely focused on the Canadians. Canada was a member of the Commonwealth, yet insisted on

charging for its wheat exports in dollars, not pounds—four hundred million dollars a year for the nourishing wheat brought over in convoys of *Tribergs!* And England already had so crushing a dollar burden to bear, furnishing the dollar needs for foods of such dependencies as India, Malaya, Africa, as well as its zone of occupied Germany!

Sir Stafford could make me feel guilty for both Canadians and Americans; we did not understand Britain's global trading burden, and thus had just broken the value of its pound.

Cripps was intelligently instructive. But a much more emotional British Socialist could not make me feel guilty at all. He was Harold Laski, a sparkling personality, the idealogue—if there was one—of the British Labour Party. British Labour boasted many fine minds, but no theoretician: no Lenin, no Trotsky, certainly no Mao: Laski was the closest thing to a theoretician in chief that the Labour Party had developed. For this reason, he was distrusted by the men who had to form a Labour government for England after the war, and was left out of both government and honors. In some way, his personal bitterness focused on American policy and the government of Harry Truman, with whom, perforce, his governing comrades were now associated. Laski was one of those European intellectuals who were personally fond of most Americans they met, but always ready with a word or essay of criticism on American life.

Laski invited me to his home one evening, not as a journalist, but as a fellow writer whom he had met in Paris—where, the previous year, he had assured me that insurrection was coming ("I smell gunpowder in the air," he had said). He was a talker, convinced of his own brilliance, and that evening was doing several things at once: he was penciling an article for some publication or other; he was occasionally pawing through a litter basket at his feet from which now and then he would extract one apple-green piece of White House stationery after another and say, "Oh, yes, Franklin Roosevelt wrote me this." And all the while he talked in a tirade against American imperialism. Laski's view—to summarize the evening—was that the Americans had outwitted and outmaneuvered Ernest Bevin, the British Foreign Secretary; they and Churchill had lured England into the cold war; they had made Attlee a pawn; our American policy was forcing Labour's new England to disaster. The politics and the economics of the cold war did not make sense to Laski. He felt Britain's first priority was to make friends with Russia; that England's technology and Russia's resources together made for a natural alliance

whether in trade or in atomic secrets; that a greater community of interests for the future lay between the Socialist countries of Europe than the freedom countries of the Atlantic.

Laski was one of the great minds of England in his time; he had been a reference point in the thinking of my generation at college, a humanitarian Socialist theoretician in the time of gathering of Fascism and war. Now, in London, this thin little man, with a brush mustache and wire-rimmed spectacles, sitting by his fireplace, was convinced that the Marshall Plan was a device of corporate American imperialism. I was sad that he had not been knighted by the Labour government; but he was chirpily above such honors as he gossiped away about his one-time comrades, now ministers of state in the cabinet.

I can see Laski now as a symbolic figure, in a parade of symbolic figures who mark the various time junctions when a primitive emotional movement gains strength and the movement becomes a party, then gains power and is transformed into government. The Labour Party was now in power, and honored Laski, but it could not employ him; he was left behind to talk.

Yet Laski and other advocates of Labour swayed me. They had come to power by persuasion, and I was vulnerable to their persuasion because their good will was so complete. They were translating the Christian Socialism of Labour's past into fair shares today—into orange juice for everyone's children; into a national health service; into council flats; into social services of new and imaginative quality. American economists of the Marshall Plan cautiously pointed out that the British were thus making their major national investment in social benefits, not in production. But if the British wanted fair shares from the encircling world as well as at home, they would have to invest in production to compete; we would not protect them. It seemed to me that this American position was much too rough; that we were depriving the British of their war-won share of victory simply because they would not sacrifice their priorities of social benefits to the priorities of production we set for the rest of the trading world.

And so I wrote a screeching series of articles, defending the British effort for fair shares, denouncing Marshall Plan imperialism—only to see that conviction of mine dissolve in the next nine months, the last nine months of the Marshall Plan before the invasion of Korea ended the era of American good will.

I was persuaded of how effective an enterprise the Marshall Plan was, not by the forceful men who directed it, nor by the attractive

young men who staffed it, but by the evidence I had to report.

My change of heart came gradually. My memory marks a winter trip through the fields of the Beauce, France's wheat basin, the speckling of the stubbled fields with tractors—and my discovery that the Plan was now shipping tractors to France at such a rhythm that now, by 1950, France had four times as many as before the war! Wheat was about to be plentiful; France not only ate of her own, she could *export* food. I stopped off at one of the farms; the burly young farmer, in French hip boots, and his full-bosomed wife were proud of these tractors, for which they had paid in French francs; they were convinced that they had done it all on their own. American aid was something so remotely upstream in the financing of their new tractors as to be incomprehensible. They, like everyone else helped by the Marshall Plan in Europe, were convinced that they had struggled the road back all by themselves. But they extended their *politesse* to me because they were courteous people.

The road back began to open everywhere in Europe, and by the spring of 1950 it had become politically fashionable for Congressional junkets to tour the Plan's triumphs, as in war they had visited the battlefields. The Zuyder Zee was a showplace; the great postwar poldering projects which added so vastly to the Netherlands' placid and arable acres were financed by Marshall Plan funds. Sardinia was also a showplace; its malarial marshes were being drained, and not only would its people thrive but tourists would rediscover its beauty. In the cleft of the Rhone, the French were building with Marshall Plan funds and equipment the dams and channels of the Donzerre-Mondragon project, which would add 10 percent, by itself, to the generating capacity of prewar France.

By the spring of 1950 the evidence was overwhelming. One day in the winter of 1950, I dug into the dreary cargo manifests of the Marshall Plan in Paris, hoping, like a good investigative reporter, to discover sin. All I could find out was that on that day an estimated 150 ships, all bearing American aid, were on the Atlantic en route to Europe. On that particular day, the cargo train to France alone included five cotton-carrying vessels (for the record: S.S. *Geirulo,* S.S. *Delmundo,* S.S. *Lapland,* S.S. *Cotton States,* S.S. *Velma Lykes*) to supply the mills and lofts where 170,000 French textile and clothing workers depended on American cotton, but voted Communist or Socialist; such workers were more likely to vote Socialist (with us) than Communist (against us) if they had jobs. In addition, *Godrun Maersk,* out of Baltimore, was arriving that day with more tractors, resin and

cellulose acetate; the *Gibbes Lykes* was pulling into Marseilles with American Gulf sulfur; the S.S. *Rhondda* was arriving with more farm machines, chemicals, oils; and so on and on, in detail and statistics, to the conclusion that we had well and fairly done what we set out to do. By the end of 1950, industrial production in Western Europe was not only 45 percent higher than in 1947, the year the Marshall Plan was proposed. It was also, despite all war devastation, 25 percent higher than in 1938, the last prewar year! By the time I left, three years later, Europeans were putting out almost three times what they had made in 1938—and were shooting even higher.

What happened between 1950 and 1953 is another story, which requires a separate telling. But historically, the Marshall Plan lasted for only two years, 1948–1950, and it was in those two years that the old civilization regained a sense of its own workability. In those two years, as Europe began to earn its oil and produce the steel for its automobiles, the new traffic jams that infuriated those who loved Rome, or Paris, or London, also began. But the traffic jams, as they clogged the rhythm of the streets, also clogged the rhythm of politics—and somehow, just as planned, the rising rhythm of Communist appeal to the discontented either faded or froze. Those who loved the old civilization, as I had come to love it, who loved its graceful tolerances, its layer upon layer of memory, its vices as well as its vitality, knew that Europe would now change. I objected, as did all my French friends, to the American-style supermarkets that were spreading through the provinces, and even more to the hot-dog-and-hamburger emporia and the airline offices on the Champs Élysées, the sudden rash of American comic strips in French papers. But it was quite obvious that the down-spiral which George Marshall had feared would give Europe to the Communist idea was over. Europe was no longer an object of our sympathy. By 1950 it was about to be put to harness again, because American policy, and freedom's policy, required that it be done.

Halfway around the world on June 25, 1950, the Communist bureaucracies of Russia, China and North Korea misread their signals and invaded Korea. At which point, all Europe was mustered, half-finished in purpose by the Marshall Plan, to support the war of American purpose against Communist purpose halfway around the globe.

There was much more to be learned in the next three years—of armies, countries, government, diplomacy. But by fall of 1950 it was