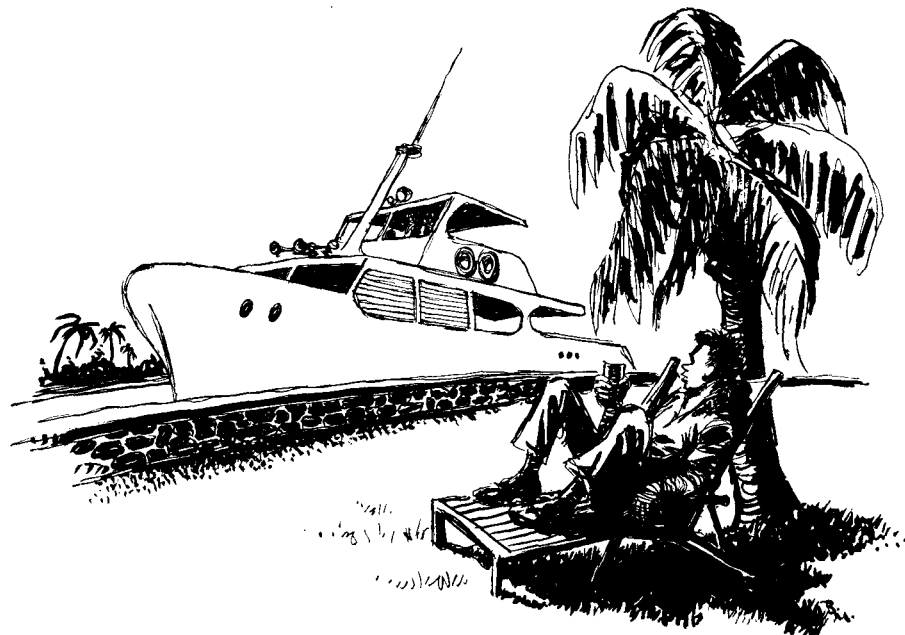


home with them after a winter in Florida. A great leveling process takes place down here. Florida is full of tropical wildlife. One of the most haunting sounds you can imagine is the mating call of the double saw-buck. The warmth of the sun is almost canceled out by the cold glint in the innkeeper's eye. A Swiss or French innkeeper is after a franc just as hard, but he's more sporting; he stacks the saucers and you don't have to settle before you're ready to leave. Your Florida host is afraid you might drop dead any minute and doesn't want to have to sue your estate. When I got my first rent bill I told my landlord I hadn't meant to buy the property, and he said not to worry, it wasn't for sale.

"Be reasonable," he said, reminding me for all the world of a chipmunk storing seeds. "This is a seasonal business. If I don't make it now, I just won't make it." Actually, I think he'd welcome a glacier. It would drive away some sun-seeking customers, but it would cut down the overhead in daiquiri ice.

ANYWAY, Joe, the kids love it down here and they're too young to realize we're spending their college money. I'd send you a souvenir orange for a joke but you'd probably get it in a blizzard and send back a grenade with a loose pin.

Regards,
BILL



'I'm a purist with a Plymouth . . .'

The Oversimplifications Of James Burnham

WILLIAM H. HESSLER

CONTAINMENT OR LIBERATION? by James Burnham. John Day. \$3.50.

AS AN UNOFFICIAL and voluntary theoretician of the movement for a "positive" foreign policy, Mr. Burnham comes onstage with his book at the ideal instant. President Eisenhower and Secretary Dulles have promised to go beyond mere containment of the Soviet Union, to seize the strategic initiative in the cold war, and to commit us to the liberation of the peoples enslaved by the Kremlin.

But their first moves—the green light to Chiang Kai-shek, the seventy-five-day ultimatum to Europe, and the "repudiation" of Yalta and Potsdam—have left a broad trail of doubts, fears, hopes, and general bewilderment. It is surely the dramatic moment for publication of a coherent statement of liberationist doc-

trine—a textbook for true believers in the new faith.

To this task Mr. Burnham brings great knowledge and superior talent. He is a perceptive and articulate professor of philosophy; as such he is a master of fine distinctions and subtle nuances. But somehow he seems to feel obliged to jettison intellectual inhibitions and reservations when he steps out from the academic shelter to speak to the common herd about the public business. Thus, "the policy of containment, even if 100% successful, is a formula for Soviet victory." And again, "If the communists succeed in consolidating what they have *already* conquered, then their complete world victory is certain."

Reversing a Trend

These stark dicta are the more puzzling since Mr. Burnham said in the last book he wrote that the *trend* was against the Communists, even in spite of Communist mastery of China. Now suddenly he finds the trend reversed. In a spirit of alarm that permeates every page, he has written a book to discredit the policy of containment—which he seemingly regards as the unmortgaged chattel of George Kennan—and to goad the American people into adoption of an offensive strategy, one designed both to liberate the peoples in Soviet bondage and to destroy the Soviet state system.

By containment Mr. Burnham chooses to mean the passive defense of the non-Soviet world and the repudiation of any offensive move against the Soviet bloc. This has a Quixotic flavor, because Mr. Burnham's lance is pointed, not at concrete policy of the last five years,

but at a severely theoretical restatement of Kennan's basic thesis.

And so he lightly steps over a great number of measures and policies that were by no means passively defensive. Among these are the helping hand to Yugoslavia, which enabled Tito to succeed in making good his escape from Soviet bondage; the conversion of Turkey and Greece into powerful allies at the doorstep of the Soviet world; the forming of great coalitions in western Europe and the far Pacific; the build-up of Formosa and Okinawa; the steady conduct of propaganda aimed at the Soviet lands; the pursuit of economic warfare against the U.S.S.R. and its satellites; and the export of a concept of competitive enterprise and of technologies that offer a valid alternative to Communism for peoples in doubt.

In his elaborated condemnation of the architects of containment, Mr. Burnham stands close to the politicians of the radical Right—those who have created the legend that America was sold down the river by Communists in the State Department. Indeed, his essay on this theme is no more than an intellectual's fastidious restatement of the standard McCarthy-Jenner-Taft case. He winds up with the contention that containment is really the product of softness toward Communism—the logical prelude to a policy of appeasement.

A Strategy Grand but Vague

But when he surveys the alternative strategies at hand, Mr. Burnham gives little comfort to the sturdy phalanx of Asia Firsters. He makes a reasoned case for assigning a higher priority to western Europe, chiefly on the ground that the Soviet Union would achieve world victory quickly if it seized western Europe, whereas it would achieve that goal only slowly if it were allowed to consolidate its control of eastern Asia. He finds no good word to say for a present strategy focused on the Far East, MacArthur-style, and he carefully dissociates himself from the neo-isolationists who would defend America only on the oceans and on our own frontiers—the Hoover clan.

None of these will serve, Mr. Burnham is sure. To allow the Russians to finish digesting what they

have conquered is to hand them world domination on a platter. So he proposes and recommends an east European strategy—a considered policy of liberating the Poles, Hungarians, Czechs, East Germans, Bulgarians, Albanians, Romanians, and such. This business is to go farther and aim at the liberation also of the non-Russian peoples of the Soviet Union—the Ukrainians, White Russians, Uzbeks, Georgians, Tadzhiks, and so on.

We have no working manual for liberators here, any more than George Kennan's less ornate exposition of the containment principle is a handbook for containers. With prudence, Mr. Burnham has chosen to hold to expounding a principle, and not to "clutter it up with applications." He does suggest ways of utilizing the thousands who escape from Soviet territory, ways of switching from diplomatic recognition of "enemy" countries to dealing instead with exile governments or missions from those countries.

In the field of military policy, Mr. Burnham treads warily, limiting himself to exposition of the sound

The SOVIET IMPACT on SOCIETY

by Dagobert D. Runes

Preface by Harry Elmer Barnes

In what manner has Kremlin-controlled Sovietism raised or lowered human standards? Is a man in Soviet society master of his own fate? May he follow unhampered his self-chosen vocation and avocation? Can he express his ideas and feelings as he wishes? Can he join his neighbors in groups, unions and confederations? Are his social or cultural activities dictated by political potentates?

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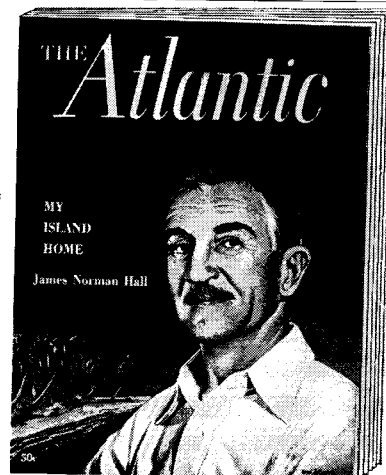
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principle that we ought to spend our defense money on those arms which will hurt Russia most and utilize American technology most fully.

Thus he would maintain minimal ground forces and rely on air power to strike the decisive blows. Whether airplanes should take off from the ground or from aircraft carriers he is reluctant to say. This certainly is a special case of political warfare in which makers of grand strategy do well to observe an upright neutrality. The weakest feature of his treatment of strictly military problems is his depreciation of overseas airbases, on the assumption that increasing ranges of bombardment aircraft tend to make them unnecessary. In fact, bomber ranges are decreasing as we turn from the B-29 and B-36 to speedy jet bombers; bases close to the Soviet world are more essential than ever.

Policies or Theories?

There is much to provoke useful thinking in this tract for the principle of the offensive. Mr. Burnham shows well the folly of dispersing our strength in many peripheral battles that tax the main enemy so little. He sets in good perspective the relative urgencies of the west European and Asian theaters.

These facets of *Containment or Liberation?* will have their transitory uses—to combat the MacArthur thesis of defeating world Communism in the Far East, to justify the priority already given western Europe, and to pave the way for comprehensive rethinking of our total strategy. For it seems clear that by the end of 1952 the Truman-Acheson team had come to be in some measure the prisoners of their own ingrained principles of policy, and that a new set of leaders ought to be able to re-examine that policy and contrive some variants which will hit closer to the Soviet solar plexus without undue risk or cost.

Mr. Burnham's method, while it provokes fresh thinking on the central problem, does not give us a reliable guide to the shaping of a better anti-Soviet policy. This is because it is not in fact an exposition of two alternative policies, containment and liberation. It is an

overdrawn contrast of two theories, neither of them very close to reality. For Burnham, containment is a rigidly logical formula which forbids any aggressive or offensive move whatever. But we have not had such a policy. For Burnham, liberation is a ruthless, cunning, hard program of political warfare, steadily pointed at the destruction of the Soviet system in its entirety, built on the hypothesis that all-out war with the Soviet Union is probably inevitable. But the Messrs. Eisenhower and Dulles are not going to embark on any such adventure.

THE FACT is that containment in practice has been a dynamic effort; and liberation in practice, as modified by the discretion and sense of responsibility of the new Administration, will still be mostly defensive, illumined perhaps by a more positive objective and holding out more hope to potential allies behind the Iron Curtain.

Although he writes of high strategy with clarity and assurance, Mr. Burnham falls down badly in his own tactics. Condensation and sarcasm can be useful tools in polemical writ-

ing. But as this author deploys them, they interdict his own primary offensive. In chapter after chapter, he digresses from a closely reasoned argument to slur George Kennan, George Marshall, Eleanor Roosevelt, Chester Bowles, or "liberals" generally. This of course is pleasurable for those readers who agreed with Burnham before opening his book. It lends spice, of a Pegleresque or Sokolskyish sort, to what is otherwise a book about ideas, and therefore a trifle abstract.

If Mr. Burnham's object was merely to reinforce the ardor of the hard core of his pre-existing devotees, this is a good tactic. But if, as I should think more logical, his aim was to save "liberal" souls now lost in the wilderness of Truman-Acheson-Kennan containment, he is using very bad tactics indeed. For the liberation of 800 million people from Soviet slavery is a noble venture, one with an intrinsic appeal for what we customarily call "liberals." Somebody else may win these well-intentioned folk to the Eisenhower-Dulles liberation policy, if such a policy indeed exists, but that somebody will not be James Burnham.

Charles Dickens

At the Bar (*Continued*)

ANTHONY WEST

In The Reporter of March 3, 1953, Mary McCarthy reviewed Charles Dickens: His Tragedy and Triumph, by Edgar Johnson. In her review she disagreed emphatically with a disparagement of Dickens's role as a reformer by Anthony West in the New Yorker of January 10. The quotations in the following passage of Miss McCarthy's review are from Mr. West's article:

"What is bewildering in this violence is first of all the fact that it seems to issue from an almost insensate ignorance of Dickens's writing

and life . . . if Dickens was cut off 'from easy intercourse with his intellectual equals all through his life' and surrounded himself 'with an entourage of second-raters,' is this meant to be a judgment on Thackeray, the Carlyles, Mrs. Gaskell, Lord John Russell, George Eliot and George Henry Lewes, Tennyson, Landor, Mazzini, Lamartine, and Victor Hugo—Dickens's friends and intimates? If Dickens was following in the wake of his audience, how did that audience make its views felt? Not in legislation, certainly,