

## Eastern Europe, cont'd

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### Preliminary remarks

... the idea will now be, along with the constabulary, and we will get a [*inaudible*] and we will have a tranquilizer.

Anyway, one other thing before I begin — I have been concentrating on it and I haven't come to a resolution, but when I do, I will give you what my considered, Marxist, and dialectic judgment is about this phenomenon that I've read about in the paper called streaking [*laughter, applause*]. Well, of course I could give it now, but there might be a deeper meaning, more than meets the eye [*laughter*], more than meets the eye of my pupils. And, you see, it would be different: you'd have a chance, if everyone streaked — if there were simply universal removal of all garments — why, you would have a chance because, given those odds, the people that are now streaking would defeat the others.

But it suffices to say that, you see, the power establishment always keeps its clothes on. When you have your clothes on you have power. You know that marvelous play of Brecht's called *Galileo*, and you have that great scene that tells you about that. And, you see, when you take your clothes off, this is very symbolic of simply being integrated into a very natural society, so to say, or a very natural frame of human and physical reference — so that there is no sense, really, of hierarchies, and no sense of structure and so forth. So you get in *Galileo*, and, you know, you're talking, after all, about confrontation with the Church over the question of — well, of the Copernican system, but really over the question of free thought. And so you get the pope, Clement VII, and he is there getting up in the morning, and he's of course naked when he gets up in the morning. And he's saying to his body servant, his valet, he's saying, "Well, you know, maybe there is something to that. After all, Galileo is a scientist, and maybe he has something good with this Copernican system." Then go on to the undergarments, and he says, "But, you know, he is rather rocking the boat." Then go on to some more garments, and he says, "And, you know, he's becoming rather dangerous." Then comes the full weight of everything, with the crown and so forth, and he says, "We must crush him!"

[*Inaudible due to laughter*] ... people who really don't have the chance — unless, after all, they have that open competition with everyone. Now, open competition, quite obviously, I would bet

on the streakers rather than the deans. But that's not the way I think it's going to be. But that's only a first thought, I'm working on it [*laughter, murmuring*].

### Lecture

So we're talking, then, about the trajectory of the East European revolution in the period after the Second World War. And I think we can learn a good deal about that trajectory if we try to periodize that East European revolution. If we say that it falls into certain periodic movements or certain periodic sectors, we're dealing with an East European revolution which is something between those years 1945 to 1947. In those years, it is the period of those postwar political coalitions which in a very empirical way tried to address themselves to the problems of economic recovery and the problem of social transformation. In 1947 and 1948, you have a certain transition in those regimes on which you begin to get the disaggregation of those postwar coalitions under the hammer blows, under the impact of the Cold War. Then, between 1948 down to 1953, in those late years of Stalin, in that period, really, that is so awful from the point of view of the Cold War, what you get is the satellization of those East European regimes in which they really become instruments of the Soviet Union and in which their ruling Communist parties become, certainly, Stalinized right down to the very T. And then you're dealing with that period from roughly 1955 to 1989, which is a period of the potentiality, and yet the great limitations, of de-Stalinization — the effort, really, to get out from under that Russian control, to try to reorient those regimes. But all of it, of course, suffering a great deal of the limitation that Russian control would always impose upon the parties of those particular countries.

And so, we are dealing, now, with those years 1945 to 1947. And, you see, if you deal with those East European revolutions in those years 1945 to '47, you are dealing with a social history which I should say has been more the victim of Cold War mystification than any other sliver of time and space, and that for two very interconnected reasons. One: that, after all, that East European space escaped the control of American policymakers — in other words, it did not fall into the net of American power. It was not in the net of the American empire. And, consequently, American policymakers set up a tremendous barrage of propaganda against it; they identified the politics of those particular countries as a tremendous affront to "freedom," in which they identified the regimes as being nothing but satellites, after all, of the Soviet Union. And that already in the period between 1945 and 1947. And, secondly, because after 1948 it is literally true that you have the satellization of those regimes; it is literally true that you have all of the oppressions and institutions of Stalinism built in. And, consequently, the roots of those oppressions are then cast back into that earlier period, and, in a way, quite unfairly.

Because what I want to say is that for a couple of years, perhaps three years, there was a moment

of great hope. There was a moment of hope in those coalition regimes, especially, from the empirical point of view — from the point of view that they addressed themselves to certain horrendous problems: the problem of underdevelopment, the problem of archaic social structure, the problem of tremendous devastation in the course of the war. And they began a program for economic recovery and for radical social transformation. You see, we are dealing with the years known as "popular democracy" is a conception; it is a strategic conception.

And you want to examine it a little aside from the actual history for a moment. And when you deal with this conception of popular democracy, which is applied not only to East Europe but which the Chinese, for example, will insist upon applying in the early years of their revolution — is a certain kind of stage, presumably, in socialist and Communist development. When you deal with this conception of popular democracy, it seems to me that you can look at it in two ways. And that the coin really has two sides and that it is very Janus-like. If you look at that conception empirically — in other words, if you look at coalition governments after the Second World War and see the way in which they addressed themselves to the problems, really, that were so deeply rooted in those societies — then you see a certain élan, a certain ability, a certain very real success. We are dealing as it were with something that seems really to work. But, on the other hand, if you deal with that conception in the abstract, if you deal with it as a conception for the creation of a socialist strategy, for politizing the mass, for creating real socialists in a society, then you have something quite different.

Look, this is what I mean: when you're dealing with those popular democracies, empirically, they have a lot of assets; they have a lot going for them in those years right after 1945. In the first place, the old elite, the old ruling class has either been destroyed or, basically, is in hiding. And all of the institutions by which it has expressed itself have either been destroyed or, certainly, greatly diminished. So that, for example, an institution like the Yugoslavian monarchy is abolished. An institution like the Polish army really is in tatters and completely destroyed. And even the Church, which had been a basic institution all through that East European zone speaking for the ruling class, at last has wraps on and isn't so vocal or articulate at this point. And the political parties, through which the old ruling elite expressed itself, all have been dissolved. In other words, the first asset is that you have a vacuum in that area. And you have destroyed, basically, the political institutions, the political forms of the old ruling class.

Secondly: left-wing coalitions, coalitions of parties that really come together on a certain consensus on the left. They all believe, more or less, in radical agrarian reform; they believe in the wide extension of what we would call social security for the masses in that area; they all believe in a certain amount of nationalization of industry. So you get, really, coalitions of the left that come together on a kind of consensus program very characteristic of that coalition, for

example, under [President Edvard] Beneš in Czechoslovakia.

In the third place: great popular support, for the most part, for these new regimes. That is to say that the populations of those countries have really moved to the left under the impact of the occupation and the war. And, in fact, in some instances, they have gone even further to the left than the regimes that come to replace their spontaneous action. In a country like Czechoslovakia, for example, the regime actually had to dissolve those kinds of spontaneous worker councils that had been established in the factories. The workers had gone further that the regime itself was willing to admit. Or if you take the postwar elections, those elections that were free — as the election as in April 1946 in Czechoslovakia or the election in November in 1945 in Yugoslavia — you see that the populace really votes very decisively, then, to the left.

And take a fourth asset: and that is that the Communist parties of these particular countries are, all of them, within these coalitions. But these Communist parties show no desire to dominate the coalitions. They are really collaborationists. Their leaders are very "national" at this time, men like [Władysław] Gomułka or like [Klement] Gottwald in Czechoslovakia. They're Communist leaders with a very real sensitivity to the particularity, the specificity of the conditions of their country, and are not so much simply following a Soviet line. And these Communist parties are not willing simply to strike for power by themselves. In a country like Czechoslovakia, in those elections of April of 1946, the Communists came out the biggest party. They came out with 38% of the vote. But they were perfectly willing to remain within the coalition under Edvard Beneš which really saw the primacy of power go to Beneš's party, the National Socialist Party, in that particular ministry. The same was true in Hungary. In Hungary, in the elections of November of 1945, you actually have a victory by the most conservative of parties in the coalition, the so-called Smallholders' Party, which you should not be bemused by — it really isn't a party of peasants; it's basically the party of the urban bourgeoisie. But that Smallholders' Party, in the elections of November of 1945, got 57% of the vote. And the Communists and the socialists got only 17% each. And the Communists were perfectly willing to operate within a government under the premiership of Ferenc Nagy, which really was a kind of moderate, liberal sort of government.

But the fifth asset is really crucial, and that is the tolerance of the Soviet Union or, more than that, the disinterest of the Soviet Union in the internal affairs of these particular regimes. Now, you have to understand that the Soviet Union had, certainly, an interest. And its interest was to revise its frontiers so that those frontiers would give it security. It was interested in having friendly regimes, so that the regimes in Eastern Europe would make alliances which should guarantee friendship with the Soviet Union. It was, certainly, interested in keeping good relations with the Western countries if it could. But it was not so concerned about the internal native of the

regimes inside Eastern Europe. In that sense, the Soviet Union is not exporting revolution. And you can take the cases of Hungary and Romania as the primary illustrations of that. In both of those countries, the Red Army was there. And the Red Army was on the spot and could have imposed anything it wanted. And yet, in Hungary, it accepted the rule of the Smallholders' Party. And, in fact, the Russians assured Nagy — who was the prime minister and was the key member of that particular party — assured this new prime minister that the Russians would be favorable to his regime.

And even more so in Romania because, in Romania, you have really a population that has been anti-Soviet, that is pro-Western, and in which there has been a great deal of Western investment (in the oil industry especially). The Red Army is there. And what do the Russians do between November of 1944 and March of 1945? They permit a general, and a rather conservative general, named [Nicolae] Rădescu to be the head of the government. And Rădescu really is a right-winger, but he professes friendship with the Soviet Union. And then, in March of 1945 — when there actually are riots in the streets of Bucharest when the Romanian workers want a more radical regime — only then do the Russians intervene and they insist that the king replace that Rădescu regime with the regime of Petru Groza. And Groza is not a Communist but is the head of what is called the Ploughmen's Party, or the Peasant Party, of Romania — much closer to the Communists than Rădescu, but nonetheless not a Communist regime. You see the point. The point is that the Russians, presumably, were going to live and let live. From that point of view, there are a lot of assets in these popular democracies.

But turn the coin over. And ask the question of what the strategy of popular democracy is, and see whether it is so empirical — see whether it really is not something rather abstract itself, something rather self-destructive and rather deceptive — see if you are not really, when you get right down to the nitty-gritty issue, see if you are not dealing again, in a subtle way, with a certain kind of Russian dictation. It's very much, you see, like the French and the Italian Communists going into those post war governments in 1945, which wasn't dialectical, which wasn't in response to the possibility or the potentiality of those areas at that particular time right after the war. In the same way, the conception or the strategy of popular democracy: does it lead to socialism? If you ask the question, does it make a revolution? If you ask the question, does it wage class warfare? The answers, basically, are no. Because, essentially, this conception conforms to the necessity of a certain kind of balance in Soviet policy.

What the Soviet Union needed were two things. And it had to keep them in balance. First of all, it needed friendly regimes in Eastern Europe. And, secondly, as long as possible, it needed a bridge to the West with the idea that it might get help, that it might be able to create a detente — that it might be able, fundamentally, to pin down coexistence. And this conception of popular

democracy really binds together those two Soviet interests.

Why? What is this strategy of popular democracy as it is spelled out by Georgi Dimitrov, for example, the Bulgarian Communist chief who is so much the ideologue of this stage of popular democracy? Popular democracy means the following things. It means, in the first place, that the old ruling class has, at least temporarily, been destroyed or put under wraps; that its place is being taken by a coalition. And, as Dimitrov put it, "a coalition of workers, of small peasants, and of a middle and lower strata of the bourgeoisie." In other words, it is a kind of popular front of workers, of small peasant-holders and of certain bourgeois strata. Now, essentially, the third is that these coalitions move toward socialism. And they move toward socialism by a progressive nationalization of the means of production and an increasing contraction of the area of private ownership. But the [fourth aspect] is very crucial. And that is that though, obviously, the class struggle doesn't disappear — the class struggle is carried on peacefully. It is muted; it is raised to the level of parliament. It is there that you carry on the dialogue, that you carry on the transaction that would create this greater and greater amount of socialization. And so the fifth point: that these coalition governments finally reach that particular point at which so much of the society is collectivized that it is the working class — led by the Communist party — that really dominates the coalition and that moves toward a completed stage of socialism. And all of that is protected by the very existence of the Soviet Union and the existence of the Soviet army.

But you see how different this is from the Bolshevik lessons of 1917. You see how very different this is from what the Russians themselves had taught about revolution. They had said that to make a revolution you have to have a long period of frontal struggle. You have to politize your people — that, after all, you have ultimately to establish a dictatorship of the proletariat, and that means to smash to smithereens those that still remained as enemies of your socialist society. You cannot do that peacefully. You cannot do by that kind of negotiation and transaction.

But here is Dimitrov justifying this conception of popular democracy: "Though the dictatorship of the proletariat was indispensable in 1919 in the Soviet Union, now, in our several countries of Eastern Europe, the realization of socialism is possible through the collaboration of the working class, the peasants, the artisans, the intellectuals, and other progressive strata." Now, by other progressive strata, Dimitrov means the bourgeoisie: the industrial, the commercial, the financial bourgeoisie that is not frontally destroyed.

You see what I am saying. There is something self-destructive and self-defeating about this conception of popular democracy as a strategy. Ultimately, you can do certain things like great land reform because land reform does not destroy the conception of private property. In fact, it enhances it by the diffusion and distribution of property. But, when you get down to the real

confrontation over the sources of production, there is bound to be a clash that cannot be negotiated at the parliamentary level. And that clash will become all the more difficult because those sources of resistance will be aided and abetted by the United States. The United States will stand at the outside, at the exterior, and encourage a certain kind of resistance.

And consequently, it is my accusation, in the final analysis, that in this period of the popular democracy — where I think so many things that were done were helpful and useful and really fine — that in this period there was the artificial application of a certain kind of strategy that really was not in conformity to the reality. In some countries, like Czechoslovakia for example, the institution of popular democracy meant that you destroyed the chance to radicalize the working class that really had created those factory councils; you destroyed the chance to politize a significant part of the populace. Whereas in other countries, like Poland or Hungary for example — where you couldn't possibly have the victory of socialism or communism by the polls, where there was much too much resistance in those countries — you have one of two choices: either you had to make a dictatorship of the proletariat and use the force and violence which was the only way to get rid of the enemies of the new society; or you had to do what, eventually, those East European regimes did. You had to falsify. You had to debase. You had, ultimately, to trick elections in order to claim that your side came out victorious.

All of which by way of preface to what went on. And, in those years 1945 to 1947, there were some remarkable things done. Don't underestimate what those governments did in that popular front period or that popular democracy period. You see, they started with hellish conditions. And I'm not only talking about the archaic social structure, I'm not only talking about underdevelopment, but just think of what conditions of devastation those countries were in 1945. You have, after all, the annihilation of the Nazi occupation. And then you have the battleground of the Russian struggle against the Nazis. And all of that takes life after life.

But more than that: it takes the infrastructure out of which an economy and a society functions. Consider that you are dealing with agricultural countries. Look at what happens to the livestock. The livestock is not only food, but it is draft power — it is the power to pull the plow, the power to harvest and to sow. So, in a country like Poland in 1945, 43% of the horses have disappeared, 60% of the cows, 87% of the pigs. In Yugoslavia and in Hungary, half of the animals, half of the livestock have been killed off or disappeared, and, consequently, you have that tremendous hole. You can't even imagine what it is with the material infrastructure: the bridges destroyed, the railroads destroyed. In all, in a country like Poland, it is estimated that the infrastructural damage came to \$19 billion. In a country like Yugoslavia, the infrastructural damage came to twenty times the annual gross national product before the war. It is tremendous.

And these regimes plunge in. And they plunge in, first of all, with vast agrarian reform. And those agrarian reforms do something for those societies has not been done up to that time. Consider the brute figure that, in the period between 1945 and 1947, 32 million hectare of land were redistributed to 12 million peasant families. In every country, a really fundamental land law: first in Poland, in September of 1944, a law which said that all landholding over 50 hectare should now be expropriated — so that 50 hectare became the maximum — and should be redistributed, which means that 5.6 million hectare of land were distributed to 880,000 landless peasant families by the middle of 1947. Consider the case of Hungary. In Hungary, by the law of 1945, all landholding over 60 hectare was now expropriated, which means that 3.25 million hectare of land is redistributed to 640,000 landless peasant families. In Romania, you have a law that said all landholding over 50 hectare is to be expropriated. That means you distribute 1.6 million hectare of land to 800,000 peasant families. Fantastic.

And it was popular. And the only institution that bleated and cried about it was the Church, for good reason. In Hungary, the Church owned 17% of the land, and so it went. But don't cry about their weeping, because it was basically a popular reform. And to what effect? And what was the effect of those great land reforms of that period? Certainly, from the point of view of economic development, a very minimal effect — that is to say, it does not even really provide jobs or provide livelihoods for all of the landless. And secondly, it isn't very efficient. What you do is distribute a lot of land in very small holdings. It doesn't do very much for productivity. In the third place, there is a tendency, on the part of these small peasants, now, to hold grain stuffs, to hold foodstuffs away from the urban market because they can't get industrial goods in return. And consequently, all of these East European governments have to impose a certain coercion — in other words, to set a certain quota that has to be sent into the urban market at a fixed low price. And the rest of it can then be sold in the free market at whatever price. From the point of view of industrialization, from the point of view of economic development, this land reform really doesn't produce very much. And, certainly, it doesn't produce anything from the point of view of socialism because what it does is to universalize the private property syndrome. It doesn't collectivize the land; it simply creates a vast private property interest. And, from that point of view, really does very little for what you would call a socialist consciousness.

But what is crucially important about these land reforms is political first of all. In a very important period, the peasantry supported these new regimes. In other words, these new regimes won over the peasantry. But, secondly, from the social point of view, this redistribution destroyed the social base of power of the old landowning class. So that what you have is something the Russians very much wanted: you destroyed the basis of social power for those great landlords who have always been the very care of the anti-Soviet interests in those particular countries.

But that takes you to the crucial question. And the question is development; the question is industrialization. Will you provide jobs for those who still don't have land? Will you provide a better standard of living? And here, you see, the question was credit. The question was how much help from the outside these devastated countries could expect — or, precisely, the question was whether the United States would help. Because the United States, obviously, has more to give than anyone else. And, here, we get the formulation of Secretary of State Byrnes — Jimmy Byrnes, Secretary of State, in November of 1945, writing to the ambassador in Poland Arthur Bliss Lane — and Lane, opposed to giving any credits to what he considers to be a Communist regime in Poland. And this is what Byrnes says, leaving the door open a little bit: "One of the primary purposes of advocating credit to these countries of the East is to promote an economic foreign policy framed to further the economic interests of the United States." In other words, the United States held that door open if the regimes met US demands and interests; the United States would even consider these regimes, which it felt were inimical from the point of view of their social bias.

But all of that, you see, went by the boards, because that view cannot be accommodated to nationalization. Nationalization means two things that American policymakers couldn't accept. It meant, first of all, property taken without due compensation. And some of that property was American. But it meant, in the second place, that you block off the opportunity for private investment. And, in all of these countries, in this popular democracy period, the tendency toward nationalization was very deep. In part, because the productive units were owned by collaborationists, by enemies of the state. And, in part, because there was a great desire to plan — in other words, to put into production some state plan — these particular productive units. And so, in Czechoslovakia, in the period of the Constituent Assembly, from October of 1945 down until March of 1946, you nationalize all the banks, you nationalize all the insurance companies, all of the mines, and 50% of the productive units in industry. But that's only 50%, and you should note that because, parenthetically, it means that there still will be a sizable capitalist, bourgeois interest in Czechoslovakia that surely plays into the crisis of 1948.

But, you see, in that nationalizing, some foreign interests really got burned. British Unilever was burned, and Dutch Phillips was burned, and American Socony-Vacuum was burned. And then, of course, ITT — and they should have burned it all, but you burned just that little Czech part. And, consequently, there was this idea of what would happen to that nationalized property — would it be compensated? And then the Poles, you see, by the nationalization law of January of 1946, they nationalized the mines and the factories that employed fifty workers or more. And that meant a lot of foreign interests, again, burned.

And, consequently, the American position finally ended up this way. This is the State Department policy on loans, directed specifically, toward the case of Czechoslovakia in October of 1946: "The present disposition in the Department of State is to accord credits to the Czech government only after it shows concrete evidence of friendship toward the United States which would include some reorientation of its general foreign policy, but especially an agreement on immediate compensation for the nationalized industry and an agreement on commercial policy questions." And, of course, it meant that there would be no American aid.

All of that has two consequences. It means that, in that nationalized sector, these new regimes would take over by the instrumentality of the state the attempt to make economic recovery and to make more industrial progress. And when I say the instrumentality of the state, I'm talking about a lost opportunity. Not until 1950 in Yugoslavia do you have an effort at what we call *autogestion*, an effort at worker control over industries. You see, if you are nationalizing all of these industries, you have a chance to make a different kind of industrial structure. You can turn it over to the workers; you can say, after all, it is you who do the work, you ought to do the *gestion* — the planning, the animation of this.

But that never entered into the whole state planning procedure, the whole state ownership procedure. Instead you get the formulation of Hilary Minc. And Minc is an important figure. He is the Communist who is the Polish Minister of Production, and he is very important from the point of view of this early period of nationalization. And Minc states it this way, what the purpose is: "Socialist industry is an industry where the means of production belong to a non-capitalist state, where surplus value is invested to raise the living standards for the working class masses and to enlarge the productive base." In other words, what Minc is saying is that the state, the technicians, the managers, they run the industry; they run it for the better working-class standard; they run it for better investment in order to expand the productive base. But that isn't all that socialism in history is. Socialist industry is not only the social ownership of the means of production, but it is also a new social relationship within those means of production. It means a different relationship, presumably, between manager and worker. And that is not built-in to the formulation.

But what you do get that is positive is planning. And the plans of this first period, between 1945-1947, were modest short-term plans. They were plans for recovery that set realizable targets. There was a lack of credit. There was certainly a great deal of sacrifice to be made by the workers. But I want you to understand something and that is that, in this first period, there is no such idea of sacrificing a whole generation of workers simply to heavy industry. There is a concern with consumer goods. A concern to raise the standard of living or even to maintain it even as you recovered your productive base. And so I give you the conclusion of Francis Fejtő

— and Francis Fejtő, which is a name really that you might know — Francis Fejtő is surely the best authority we have on this early period of the popular democracy. He is himself a Hungarian who has lived in France for a number of years, and in his massive two-volume work on the popular democracies during this particular period, Fejtő makes this particular conclusion which I think is really very just for the period 1945 to 1947: "In spite of the relatively high rate of investment, these short term plans were eminently reasonable. Their goals were met without recourse to forced labor and without lowering the standard of living. On the contrary, in Hungary and Poland, the standard of living rose. The workers had no real reason to complain. The black market was suppressed. Food was assured. Shoes and clothing were available at reasonable prices." And so you get from that point of view a kind of real success.

But let's go back, then, to the other light that I tried to cast upon these popular democracies. And then you understand something about the second phase of our periodization, those years 1947 and 1948, when you begin to get a real disaggregation of these particular regimes. See what happened.

What happened was, to begin with, that you get all of this American pressure on the outside. and I want you to understand something about American pressure vis-à-vis Eastern Europe, vis-à-vis these popular democracies in the years 1946, '47, and '48. What it is is a certain amount of coping, a certain amount of propaganda, on the outside. Suddenly, you see, American policymakers, excluded from those areas, discovered what was fundamentally wrong: they discovered that they were "unfree" areas, that there were not free elections. Now, you know that American policymakers don't give a fig about free elections. They don't have them in Korea, they don't have them in the Philippines, they don't have them in the Latin American satrapies, and they don't give a fig about that. But suddenly they discovered, you see, the absence of free elections in Poland. And there is [Senator] Arthur Vandenberg in Michigan, where there are lots of Poles, and he's going around saying that we are going to fight for free elections in Poland. Well, nobody is going to fight from America for free elections in Poland, really. It was just propaganda thrown in the wind.

But you know what it's like? It's like casting seed. And maybe the seed will fall on something fertile. And maybe it will hit something and there will be a revolt in those East European countries. Or it will eventuate in those three elections in which, actually, a much more favorable American position will be worked out. And that is important because, you see, in these East European countries, if you do not have a frontal class struggle, if you do not really extirpate the forces of the old order — they are still there, even though in hiding — this is my conception of the woodwork: they have all gone into the woodwork, but you scratch a little bit and they begin to come out, you see. You have two kinds of interests. You have, in the first place, those parties

that are in the coalition governments that are the most conservative of those parties (the Peasant Parties and so forth) that, basically, are anti-Soviet and anti-Communist. But outside of that, it is really the old elite — the former landowners, the big Churchmen, the former army officers — and some of them, after all, with a certain kind of grip upon the peasantry. And, consequently, when they hear about the United States talking about free elections, are they not encouraged to think that they ought to resist?

Well, you see, it happens with both of these groups in a country like Poland. And this really gets us into tragic terrain, very tragic terrain. Because, you see, in Poland, you have an underground. You have a reactionary underground in 1945 and 1946. And an American ambassador in Warsaw, Arthur Bliss Lane — who by his own admission, in his memoirs, *I Saw Poland Betrayed* — was in contact with this Polish underground. And this underground: yes, ex-landowners; yes, ex-army officers; yes, great advocates of the old regime, yes; but especially the Church — the Church, after all, which resented being attacked in its monopoly of education, which resented its land being taken away. And consequently, you have an underground and it has an issue.

And the issue is fantastic: it is anti-Semitism. Now, how can you have anti-Semitism in postwar Poland? You have killed off 3 million Jews, the largest pool of executions and deaths anywhere in Europe. And what was left: a miserable 250,000, of which 150,000 left between 1945 and 1947. And it made no difference. The peasantry, after all, could be whipped up. And the point was that there were Jews in that government. And the point was that that government was making certain miserable little compensations to the Jews to try to resettle them. And, consequently, the underground began a kind of campaign of anti-Semitism, a campaign almost of pogroms, that culminated, on July 4 of 1946, at Kielce in a pogrom. There, in a house, forty-five Jews repatriated from the Soviet Union, all of them killed on that day of the 4th of July of 1946. And after that, a whole wave of that anti-Semitism. And, in Arthur Bliss Lane's memoirs, he tells about the fact that the government really brought it upon itself because so many members of that government really had what he called "Semitic features."

And yet, you see, that underground, ultimately, it peters out. The government suppresses it. The peasants fall away because they get the land. But it makes its way into — and that's the point — the most conservative of the coalition parties. It makes its way into, by the end of 1946, in the Peasant Party of [Stanisław] Mikołajczyk. And Mikołajczyk, you see, had joined the coalition to begin with even though he hated the Soviet Union because he had great confidence in his popularity. Just give him free elections, and he would be the boss of Poland. And that was probably true. And he looked for those free elections, and they never were held. What was held instead was a referendum on the 30th of June of 1946. And in the referendum, the government

asked the people to go out and vote on whether they approved of a unicameral legislature or not. And Mikołajczyk didn't give a damn, but he told his people to vote No just to give a test of strength. And the election proved that the government got 63% of the vote — or did it prove it? Did it fix the elections? That's what Mikołajczyk said. And then, you see, as the reactionaries came into his party more and more, he went into the opposition talking about the fact that America would yet come and liberate Poland.

Well, you know the result. The result is that the government cracked down in the most illegal way. It went to those elections, finally, in January of 1947, and it said that that Peasant Party, which was a mass party, elected only twenty-eight persons in 444 deputies. They fixed the elections, no less than the Greeks fixed them in 1946. And that, tragic. Why do it? If you go to the electoral thing, then go to it honestly and lose. If not, proclaim you're in class struggle, proclaim your dictatorship of the proletariat and say these are class enemies and suppress them. And neither was done. And you get this kind of messing around with the legal and parliamentary system. And it's even worse in Hungary. By the end of 1946, the Smallholders' Party has been subject to two plots, plots against the state. And consequently, by 1947 it is suppressed.

You see the point. In the ambit of the Cold War, with all of that propaganda from the outside, the popular democracy finally came a-flounder. It had to confront the internal contradiction within its structure, and it did it in the least direct and the least honorable way possible. And all of that period, you see, the Truman doctrine, and the Marshall Plan, and organization of the Cominform, all of it gives you an atmosphere of growing blocs, of growing division, until such time as you come to a turning point. And the turning point of course, will be Czechoslovakia.

And Czechoslovakia, in 1948, will open up a whole new era. And just remember two things about that. Remember, in the first place, that when the Cominform met in September of 1947, that, at that Cominform meeting, they are the Yugoslavs that really carry the ball. And the Yugoslavs give a precise formulation of what has to be done in Eastern Europe. They say popular democracy cannot be achieved easily. And the way they put it is extremely interesting. This [Yugoslav partisan Milovan] Djilas: "We have heard the opinion expressed that any government in which Communists participate is *ipso facto* a popular democracy. Such a view is false and dangerous. Popular democracy begins where the working class, that is the Communist Party, allies with all the laboring masses, holds the key positions in state power." And the Russians agreed, but they agreed for other reasons. What the Yugoslavs were saying at the Cominform meeting was, "Alright, let's really go out and radicalize our people. Let's really establish dictatorships of the proletariat." What the Russians were saying: "Eliminate all of those unreliable parties and make Communist regimes that really are Russian, reliable, satraps." And that, ultimately, is what would be done in the Czech case of 1948.

And so we begin with Czechoslovakia in '48, with the Tito-Stalin split. And we begin with a world, really, into which you were born and which, maybe, layer by layer, we can begin a little bit to see through, and then see what options there may be. [*applause*]