

COMMUNICATIONS

A FURTHER CRITIQUE OF PROF. LASSWELL'S BOOK

*In re: Brown, Review
of Lasswell: National
Security and Individual
Freedom, 61 YALE
L.J. 118 (1952).*

To the Editors:

In the January, 1952, issue of the JOURNAL, at pp. 118-120, you published my review of *National Security and Individual Freedom*, by my colleague on the Yale Law School faculty, Harold D. Lasswell. There has been brought to my attention a much more extensive criticism of the same work by K. Artemov in the November, 1952, number of *Kommunist*, at pp. 119-128. *Kommunist*, formerly named *Bol'shevik*, is usually regarded as the leading theoretical organ of the Communist Party, U.S.S.R. It is a pity that your readers cannot have access to the complete document as recently translated in this country, for it includes an extended exposé of "American imperialism" oppression of the workers, especially in the recent election. It took place, Mr. Artemov asserts, "in conditions of extraordinary nervousness . . . and direct police terror, created by groups of monopolists competing with each other . . . [who] with the help of an enormous apparatus of political machinery and propagandists . . . stuffed their candidates down the throats of Americans."

In my own review I made these observations about Mr. Lasswell's book:

1. It recognizes "the intensity and continuing character of the threat to national security posed by Russian communism," and the risk that in meeting it "we will ourselves fashion a garrison-police state."
2. "The problem that Lasswell poses is how to create an effective garrison without repressing individual freedom. He proposes that every national security measure should be critically examined, with a view to minimizing whatever danger it holds for four essentials of freedom: civilian supremacy in government, freedom of information, individual civil liberties, and a free rather than a controlled economy."
3. Its sponsorship by the Committee for Economic Development meant that the

author had the benefit of criticism from "alert businessmen."

4. The author has "an urgent set of convictions about the need for understanding and meeting the world crisis by understanding and strengthening our own democratic institutions."

The brief excerpts from the *Kommunist* review which are attached to this letter will make it clear that I must have been under the influence of bourgeois, liberal, idealist ideology.

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"AN APOLOGIA FOR REACTION AND AGGRESSION UNDER THE MASK OF DEMOCRACY"

"The preparation of the war for world domination, for the enslavement of the peoples, is conducted by the bosses of American monopoly capital, [and] is accompanied by furious attack on the workers. . . .

"The American imperialists, conducting a policy of fascism and aggression, deduce that fascism in the consciousness of the mass is inseparably connected with monstrous brutality, with reaction and war. Hence the efforts of many American monopolists, through the agency of 'learned' writers, hired by themselves, to cover the fascization of the U.S.A. with 'democratic' and 'peace-loving' phraseology, in order to fool the people with lies and lead them into a new war.

"Reactionary American jurists take also a most active part in this foul business. The book, *National Security and Individual Freedom*, written by Professor of Law at Yale University, Lasswell, [is] an example of such a lackey's service to the magnates of Wall Street. It appears as one of a series of books, published by the Committee for Economic Development—an organization directed by representatives of the strongest monopolies—Philip Reed (President of the Board of the Company of General Electric), Robert Lovett (joint owner of Brown Brothers, Harriman and Co.), Eric Johnston (President of the Association of American Film Industry) and others. This committee of American monopolists hypocritically proclaim that the goal in publishing the

aforementioned series of books was to work for the welfare of the community, that all problems are considered by them, allegedly, 'from the point of view of any kind of political or economic group.' In reality, these books, including that of Lasswell, were written by the direct order of American reaction, in its interests, from the point of view of the interests and policy of American monopolists, [who are] trying for the sake of receiving maximum profits to lead the whole world into a new war.

"The fundamental task of the book [is] to justify the aggressive and reactionary policies of the ruling circles of the U.S.A. For this, infamous and vile slanders against the U.S.S.R. are employed, pharisaical reasoning about the necessity of defending 'American democracy' against an imaginary Soviet threat.

"The very question raised in the book is a hoax, introduced by the thought that allegedly in America real personal freedom does exist and can exist, that the issue turns only on its 'moderate restriction.' Marxism demonstrated that individuals may be free only when they are freed by the entire mass of the working people. Only in the conditions of socialism does there exist genuine freedom of the individual. Such freedom there is not and there cannot be under capitalism, which dooms the working masses to being exploited, without work, and miserable.

"Placing before himself the task of arguing in favor of terrorist methods of reckoning with the 'disloyal,' Lasswell above all tries to justify that exceptional role which is played in America by the political police—FBI (Federal Bureau of Investigation)—as one of the most important organs of the fascization of the American government. He reckons, that the role 'of organs of investigation' should grow and forecasts 'the growth of a number of official and unofficial organizations and persons connected with the political police.' (p. 44)

"The political police—the FBI—in the U.S.A. is already now correctly called by the people 'an American Gestapo.' . . .

"Lasswell himself admits, that the aim and result of the methods, employed by the political police and other organs of making the bourgeois government fascist,

ostensibly in the interest of strengthening 'national security,' is the creation of an atmosphere of fear, suspicion, intimidation of the citizens. . . .

"Professor Lasswell demagogically pretends to be a defender of the liberties of the individual, a person who favors only the 'minimization' of limitations. In his book he expounds his proposals [addressed to] the President, Congress, the Courts, the press, and special organizations—his proposals, which have allegedly the objective of protecting bourgeois-democratic freedoms, to limit their being stamped out in the American garrison-state. In all these things the objective is . . . to fool the people by talk about freedom and democracy and in this very way to give reaction a chance to become stronger, to spread the noose around the neck of the whole population, in order to throw it into the hell of war.

"All the elements of the governmental machine of the U.S.A.: the President, the members of Congress, and other organizations of monopolists and the already referred to Committee for Economic Development,—must, in the opinion of Lasswell, more actively and more skillfully, fool the American people. Thus, the President is obligated, writes Lasswell, to allocate a part of his annual message to Congress to the consideration of governmental measures 'of national defense,' encroaching on the freedom of the individual. The members of Congress are obligated to 'help' the people come to approve of the North Atlantic bloc 'of the American garrison,' established as a base for aggression.

"It is not accidental that the author of the book allocates particular attention to measures to convince the people of the 'necessity' of a voluntary renunciation from the struggle for their rights and freedoms. The imperialists of the U.S.A. are more and more strengthening their preparations for war. In this connection Wall Street in the postwar period has mobilized a large horde of mercenary scholars for the ideological treatment of the Americans. In the last few years in the U.S.A. have been prepared in the judicial field alone a large number of 'works' similar to Lasswell's book."

(Translator's interpolations appear in brackets.)