

(The article referred to follows:)

[Article in the Washington Post, Apr. 16, 1964]

GENERAL EISENHOWER'S VIEWS

(By Walter Lippmann)

General Eisenhower has just published in the Saturday Evening Post a long statement of his present beliefs about the state of the Union. They can fairly be described as Goldwater minus the howlers about the graduated income tax, social security, TVA, and the like. That is to say, General Eisenhower's position is that of the conservative right not of the radical far right.

His basic thesis is that there has been for 30 years under the New Deal, the Fair Deal, and the New Frontier "a steady obvious drift of our Nation toward a centralization of power in the Federal Government." We have "an overbearing Federal bureaucracy that seems unchecked in both size and power." The net result of the "easy money and inflationary policies" of this Federal bureaucracy is that "the dollar you saved and earned 24 years ago is now worth just 45 cents."

This is a strange interpretation of the history of the past 25 years, and one thing we may be certain of is that General Eisenhower will never be hailed as a reliable historian. He was the supreme commander in Europe during the Second World War, he was the supreme commander of NATO in the cold war, and he was twice the President of the United States. Yet, incredible as it is, he has interpreted what has happened since 1940 without even mentioning the fact that the country has grown by 50 million people, that during these 25 years the country has fought the Second World War, the Korean war, and the cold war.

How is it possible to talk about the rise in prices which has cut the purchasing power of the dollar by rather more than half without mentioning the wars and the preparation for war? As a matter of fact, half of the rise in prices occurred during and immediately after the Second World War: another 15 percent of the rise occurred during the Korean war. From 1953 to 1963 the rise in prices has been a little over 1 percent a year. The rise was just about the same under President Eisenhower as it was under President Kennedy.

If General Eisenhower is blind to the economic consequences of the wars in which he has played such a distinguished part, he exaggerates grossly the part played by the civilian sector in the growth of the Federal bureaucracy.

There has not been, as General Eisenhower says, an unchecked growth of the Federal bureaucracy. While State and local government employment has doubled between 1947 and 1963, nondefense employment in Federal Government was the same percentage (1.9) of the total civilian labor force in 1963 as it was in 1948. In fact, Federal civilian employment has not grown so fast as the population. There are now approximately 13 U.S. workers per thousand of population. Of these, five are employed in Defense, three by the Post Office, one by the Veterans' Administration, and four by all the rest of the Federal Government.

Nor is it true that there has been a "consolidation of power and revenue in the Federal Government." While the share of State and local government in the national product has doubled since 1948—from 5 to 10 percent—Federal revenue as a percentage of the national product has increased only slightly—from 12 to 14 percent—and has not risen for 5 years. And if we take debt as a measure of activity from 1947 to 1963, we see that State and local debt increased 382 percent; private debt increased 279 percent; Federal debt increased 26 percent.

Thus, General Eisenhower has not painted a true picture of the state of the Union. It is not possible to paint a true picture of the state of the Union since 1940 by ignoring the three wars, by ignoring the growth of the population by as many people as live in Great Britain, by ignoring the preponderance of Federal employment (71 percent) in the indispensable functions of defense, the postal service and veterans' care, by ignoring the relatively greater growth of State and local activity, and by professing to believe that all the troubles and dangers of our age are due to the handful of civilian welfare measures.

It is just this refusal to recognize the facts of American life which accounts for the condition of the Republican Party today. General Eisenhower meant to speak for the moderate, prudent, and, in the correct meaning of the word, the conservative mass of our people. But what he says is so greatly out of touch with the realities—with what has happened, with what is happening, with what the people need to have happen in the future—that it lacks all credibility.