
AMERICAN FASCISM SPEAKS OUT

BY WILLIAM Z. FOSTER

IN HIS recent book, *The Dynamics of War and Revolution*, Lawrence Dennis presents the most comprehensive statement, ideologically and programmatically, that has yet been made of the sprouting fascist movement in this country. Coughlin, Long, Pelley, Lindbergh, McWilliams, Smith, Hearst, Pegler, McFadden and many other crude fascist and semi-fascist demagogues have built up a large body of American fascist "theory" and practice; but Mr. Dennis' book represents by far the cleverest and most extended effort in this direction. *The Dynamics of War and Revolution** rounds out many of the conclusions outlined by Dennis in his previous books, *Is Capitalism Doomed?* and *The Coming American Fascism*.

Mr. Dennis, a Harvard graduate, is a native of Georgia, the home of the Ku Klux Klan. He is a World War veteran and he spent a number of years in the United States diplomatic service, in South America. After this he became active in

the banking business, setting up many important Wall Street connections. Among his assets Dennis is said to own a 200-acre farm in New England. At present, with an office in New York, he puts in most of his time lecturing, writing books, and editing his *Weekly Foreign News Letter*. The latter publication, price \$24 per year, deals with current national and international events. Although Dennis has no organized movement, he has wide contacts among big business and reactionary circles and he is obviously seeking to become the intellectual head of the many spontaneous and confused fascist and semi-fascist tendencies, groups and organizations in the United States. His latest book is intended as a general guide for American fascist development.

I. An Outline of Dennis' Thesis

The main theme of Dennis' book fits in with the general principles of German fascism. There is also a substantial dash of Roosevelt's scarcity policy in it. And many of its major points are in agreement with Social-Democratic concepts.

* *Weekly Foreign News Letter*, New York, N. Y. 1940. 289 pp. \$3.

The following paragraphs undertake to present only a general outline of Dennis' position. After which, in later sections of this article, a criticism will be made of his theoretical analysis and an estimate will be formulated as to how his (Nazi) program is working out in terms of the world situation.

Dennis begins by completely tying together capitalism and democracy. He asserts that one is impossible without the other. "These are companion terms. They describe two aspects of the same social system," he says (p. xix). What ails capitalism is that its "dynamic," the industrial revolution, is played out. The capitalist-democratic system is no longer expansive and revolutionary. It has fallen into stagnation, manifestations of which are the growth of unemployment, the overdevelopment of industry, the decay of world trade, the rising costs of distribution of industrial products, the decline of the American birth rate, etc. The root of the trouble, he says, is that there is too much democracy; a term which Dennis broadly defines to include competition in industry, international free trade, parliamentarism, and also, by strong inference, trade unionism and mass education.

What is necessary, therefore, says Dennis, is that society must regain its "dynamic." For this a revolution is necessary. The main task is to overcome social stagnation, no matter how. "Actually there is just one thing a revolution has consistently to maintain in order to survive, and that is change. The nature of the change does not matter" (p. 5),

"one revolution is as good as another, provided it is revolutionary enough" (p. 6).

It turns out, however, that Dennis' revolution is "Socialist," or national socialist (he uses the term interchangeably), in character. He defines socialism as follows:

"More public ownership in displacement of private ownership, more public control in substitution for private control of industry, trade and agriculture, more progressive taxation aimed at the equalization of fortunes and less individualism, must be all considered socialist trends. Briefly Socialism is a relative and not an absolute term." (P. xxiv.)

Under this all-inclusive definition Dennis lumps together Germany, "Russia" and Italy as socialist countries, with Japan fast becoming so. "Communism, Fascism and Nazism," he says, "are merely different variants of Socialism" (p. xxvi). Roosevelt, he also avers, has driven more nails into the coffin of capitalism than either Hitler or Stalin, and Dennis speaks about "The revolution which has been going on for seven years under the New Deal" (p. 189). According to Dennis, Great Britain is the great world stronghold of capitalism-democracy, an outworn system which it is fighting to preserve in this war; hence, above all, the British Empire must be destroyed.

Dennis' "socialism," he believes, would provide society with the indispensable "dynamic" which it now lacks. This "dynamic" is war, with "pyramid-building" in the intervals between wars. Typically,

fascist Dennis endlessly glorifies war. "Society," he says, "since the beginning of recorded history, has needed war . . . to take it out and keep it out of stagnation" (p. 7). "The probabilities are that war will continue, as in the past, to be a normal and necessary human way" (p. 102), "warfare or conflict is the dynamic principle both of capitalism and socialism" (p. 106). "Capitalist and democratic countries have fought each other in the past, and in all probability, socialistic countries will fight each other in the future" (p. xxvii). Germany, Russia, Italy and Japan are all proceeding on this principle, he says.

"Between wars," says Dennis, "we will have to build pyramids" (p. 222). In "pyramid-building" Dennis includes government construction of parks, housing, roads, health facilities and the like, so familiar to both the Hitler and Roosevelt regimes. Jones Beach in New York, he says, is a perfect example of "pyramid-building." Alternating between wars and "pyramid-building" society will be able to escape stagnation. Sick industries would be subsidized. Thus alone can work be provided for the unemployed. Dennis heaps scorn upon the notion that by rising living standards a lasting stimulus can be given to production. He says (p. 240): "The orthodox assumption of democracy that needs and desires are dynamic is all nonsense." "It is better to mulct the capitalists by losses on foreign loans and periodic domestic crashes than to attempt to mulct them by taxation and artificially maintained wage levels" (p.

80). Dennis also advocates an economy of scarcity, with "incentives for the leaders and compulsions for the led." Scarcity, he says, is indispensable in order to discipline the people and to avoid the otherwise inevitable stagnation that comes from abundance.

Dennis' revolution is in some unexplained manner supposed to be a sort of people's revolution. It is led by a super-class élite, who by demagoguery deceive the capitalists, workers and other classes into going along with the revolution. "Capitalism is actually breaking down. Contrary to Marxism, it is not being overthrown by enemies on the outside" (p. 136). "The big point to remember about the new revolution is that it does not have to be sold in advance to the people. They will get it whether they like it or not" (p. 138). "A vital element of the fascist and Nazi way of coming to power was the taking of the businessmen and middle classes into camp without resistance and, even, with enthusiasm on their part for a revolutionary movement which they lacked the social intelligence to understand" (p. xxvii).

Dennis gives the leading revolutionary role to his rather mysterious élite, which, he says, "may be capitalists, politicians, priests and soldiers" (p. 97). He ridicules the theory of classes and class struggle, and he also condemns Marxism generally. Revolutions, he declares, are brought about by élites, not classes. The people are but putty in the hands of these élites. Speaking of the United States, he declares, "If and when a majority of

the élite or ruling minority decide that the time has come for us to go to war, the masses will be made overnight to cry as lustily and innocently for war as a baby cries for milk" (p. ix). "A revolution is essentially a shift in power from an in-élite to an out-élite." "In the Russian revolution it was not the proletariat but the frustrated élite who created the revolution" (p. 187). "The real cause of the American revolution against George III or the later Latin American revolutions against Spain was that the colonial élite resented the favors, jobs and revenues going to the élite of the mother country" (p. 187).

For the United States Dennis foresees a two-sided sort of "socialism." In one sector the economy would be privately owned and in the other publicly owned. Dennis is a bit hazy and contradictory as to just where the dividing line would run between these two sectors; but it appears that the publicly owned sector would deal principally with "the satisfaction individuals will receive from roads, public works, parks and cultural and recreational facilities of every sort provided by the state." The "free" sector, although controlled by the state, would obviously be the major phase and would be owned by private monopolies, for which Dennis has many words of warm defense. Typically, he says, "There never has been and probably never will be a society without subsidies, monopolies and favored classes" (p. 126).

Democracy would play no role in Dennis' "socialist" society. He says (p. 235) "The chief essential

for the success of economic planning and social order is the suppression of what we know as democracy or the parliamentary . . . form of government." His élite, or collection of fuehrers, would do all the governing. The state, presumably, would be of the typical corporative character, but Dennis does not enlarge much upon this. He says, however, "I do not believe in democracy or the intelligence of the masses as my critics will generally use these terms." The present period proclaimed is "the twilight of democracy" (p. 125). He says that we have reached the "saturation point" in civil liberties, and that no longer "can one say with plausibility that more democracy is the cure for any major social evil" (p. 124).

Moreover, he says, the problems of the workers—to secure jobs, for instance—do not allow of a democratic solution and the masses know this quite well. Now only the employers, who feel threatened with socialism, are demanding democracy. Dennis informs us that "The cry for civil liberties today is not heard from the underdogs but from the top dogs" (p. 128). "Communists, Fascists and Nazis now leave the term democracy to the capitalist powers" (p. xx). What is necessary is not democracy, but "folk unity"! This would be established by the "party-state" of "Socialism," which is superseding the "nation-state" of capitalism-democracy. "The emphasis," he says, "is shifting away from the winning and assertion of rights to the imposing and fulfillment of duties" (p. 129). "One will hear less about the rights of man

and more about the duties of men and the rights of the American people" (p. 250). Then, typically contradicting himself, Dennis speaks of "the inherent democracy of all (socialist) dictatorships," and argues for totalitarianism on the basis that it is more democratic than the "democracies" themselves.

According to Dennis, the United States is hastening into his "socialist" revolution. Whether we go into the war or not, he says, "we shall have disintegration and revolution." "The quickest and surest route to an American fascism or Nazism is a war to end Nazism in Europe; the next best route, perhaps, is vigilanteism and witch hunts against subversive movements at home" (p. 139). Speaking of the government's Industrial Mobilization Plan, Dennis says gleefully (p. 243): "I cannot possibly be prosecuted, investigated or even criticized for applauding it with all the enthusiasm of one who sincerely hopes for the revolutionary achievement of the new order which this plan and its governmental agents are eminently well suited to initiate under the smoke-screen of a war to preserve the American system and to check the march of dictatorship abroad."

Despite his conviction that American participation in the war would bring national socialism here Dennis, like Lindbergh, Hearst, Hoover, Coughlin and other more or less conscious fascist or semi-fascist elements, nevertheless opposes the United States becoming a belligerent; he prefers to let Hitler himself dispose of the British Empire,

while the United States picks up the pieces and establishes fascism here in doing so.

On an international scale Dennis accepts substantially Hitler's scheme of a new World Order. The big nations should gobble up the little ones, and no tears shed for their disappearance. "The new revolution obviously does not mean the end of imperialism, of political and economic concentration of power, of the rule of the weak by the strong, of the absorption of the small by the larger, or the rule of naked power" (p. 149). "To allow the rule of the stronger is a more humane course than to attempt to impose the will of the weaker or to frustrate the stronger" (p. 214). "The revolution, in its very essence, is the erection of socialist imperialism on the ruins of capitalist imperialism" (p. 149).

The British Empire must be destroyed, while Germany, France, "Russia," Italy and Japan should have great empires. The United States, of course, would get a lion's share—the Western Hemisphere, plus what it can grab of the collapsing British Empire. The several "socialist" empires in Dennis' world order would operate upon the balance of power principle, with presumably great wars among them for domination. Dennis applies Hitler's racial theories in the sense that each of the great nations would, by the fact of its strength, represent an intrinsically superior people.

II. Dennis' False Analysis

Dennis' analysis is an amazing

theoretical hash, but very cleverly stated. It is a concoction of half-truths and outright fabrications, a lumping together of opposites, a mess of glittering generalities, an ignoring of inconvenient facts, a mixture of mysticism, metaphysics, cold-blooded cynicism and blatant demagogy. At first glance a Marxist might be inclined to dismiss the whole thing as fantastic and inconsequential, and let it go at that. But we know that Dennis' central fascist ideas represent the basic trend of finance capital and similarly of the policies of the Roosevelt Government. The growth of fascism in many countries, including the lightning-like spread of the Ku Klux Klan and the "share-the-wealth" movement in the United States, has taught us that among confused and desperate people such a program as Dennis presents, despite all its contradictions and superficialities, constitutes a great social danger. Therefore these ideas have to be countered systematically and patiently and theoretically destroyed. In this sense, therefore, I shall single out for consideration some of the more glaring of Dennis' errors in his fascist system.

One: Dennis presents many facts to show the decline of capitalism, but, significantly, he never indicates, however remotely, the basic cause of this decline; namely, the private ownership of the industries and the land and the exploitation of the workers and farmers. He does not analyze the fundamental contradiction that is wrecking the world capitalist system; that is, the

profound antagonism between its socialized mode of production and its private ownership of the social means of production and distribution. This it is which at bottom causes the market problems, the overproduction, mass unemployment, political crises and wars, which evidence the breakdown of capitalism. The failure of Dennis to expose the rotten base of capitalism occurs precisely because fascism leaves this base intact.

Fascism maintains the capitalist system in existence, fortifies capitalist ownership of the social means of production, intensifies the exploitation of the toiling masses, and thereby fails to remove the root of the capitalist crisis.

Two: Dennis' presentation of capitalism and democracy as identical, as constituting but two sides of the same thing (a notion shared in practice by Social-Democrats) is also utterly false. There is capitalism without even a trace of democracy, as in Germany, Italy and Japan; and democracy without capitalism, as in the U.S.S.R. At best democracy is very limited in form under capitalism; it reaches its maximum development only under socialism.

Three: Dennis' theory that society can regain its "dynamic," its power of growth, by "any kind of a revolution," is one of his typically fantastic ideas. The economic stagnation of capitalism that Dennis complains of cannot be cured merely by stirring it up. It must be radically removed by changing society at its base, by the abolition of private property in the means of produc-

tion and distribution and the establishment of socialism.

Four: The grouping together of "Russia," Germany, Italy and Japan as socialist, or national-socialist, countries, by Dennis (which is akin to the practice of the Social-Democrats in designating all these as totalitarian countries) is also utterly without foundation. In the Soviet Union the industries and the land are owned by the people and the government is in the hands of the workers, farmers and working intellectuals; whereas in the fascist countries the industries and the land are privately owned and the government is completely dominated by the big capitalists. The socialism of the U.S.S.R. and the national "socialism" of the fascist lands, contrary to Mr. Dennis and the Social-Democrats, are opposite poles of modern social organization.

Five: Dennis' definition of socialism as "a relative and not an absolute term," as merely the tendency toward "more" government ownership and control of industry (under which broad definition he lumps together Soviet socialism, Nazi fascism and the New Deal as "socialism") is entirely incorrect. The establishment of socialism in a given country requires a revolutionary break economically, politically and socially with capitalism. The trend toward more governmental control over private industry, which Dennis notes in this and other capitalist countries and dubs socialism, is actually the development of state capitalism. It reaches its highest stage under fascism.

State capitalism, especially in its

fascist forms, is the chief means by which the hard-pressed capitalists seek to organize their forces to combat the economic crisis, to make war upon each other eventually, and to beat back the advancing forces of socialism. Such state capitalism is not the organization of the socialist revolution, as Dennis would have us believe, but the crystallization of the capitalist counter-revolution.

Contrary to Dennis, there has been no revolution in Germany and that is not a socialist country. As Stalin has pointed out (*Marxism vs. Liberalism*, International Publishers, New York, p. 22), a revolution "means the transference of power from one class to another"—in the case of the socialist revolution, as in the U.S.S.R.—from the capitalist class to the proletariat. There has been no such transference of class power in Germany. The bourgeoisie remains fully in power, both in the industries and the state, as was brilliantly shown by G. S. Jackson in the *New Masses* of February 11. The socialist revolution also means the "expropriation of the expropriators," and this has taken place fully in the Soviet Union. But Jackson clearly shows in the same article that in Germany, "The big (capitalist) concerns are squeezing out the little ones. This is the only kind of expropriation that is taking place."

The *History of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union* (p. 345) says correctly that the U.S.S.R. is founded upon the basic socialist principle of "From each according to his ability, to each according to

his work." This is the law in the Soviet Union, where there are no exploiters and no idle rich. But in Germany the old capitalist jungle motto still prevails, of "grab all he who can and the devil take the hindmost," and vast hordes of capitalistic parasites are sucking their sustenance from the toiling masses, without rendering in return any useful services whatsoever.

Sir: The élite theory, which is made very much of by Mr. Dennis, is a common attribute of fascism in all countries. It is the *fuehrer* principle. It is built upon a false foundation. Actually the élites which Dennis glorifies so much are only the representatives of social classes. Thus the government heads of tsarist Russia, which Dennis calls an élite, were representatives of the dominant land-owning and capitalist classes and, despite all their personal corruption and dictatorial practices, they defended the interests of those classes against the proletarian workers and peasants. By the same principle the heads of the Soviet Government and other vital institutions of the U.S.S.R. are the representatives—the most capable and devoted—of the cooperating classes of workers, farmers and working intellectuals in the socialist country.

In many capitalist countries the government apparatus is largely made up of middle-class elements. This gives rise to the theory that fascism is a middle-class revolution (a theory held by Social-Democrats as well as by Dennis). Actually these middle-class leaders under fascism are only representatives of

the dominant capitalist class. In the United States, for example, although two-thirds of Congress is composed of lawyers this in no way disputes the fact that the big capitalists control the Government and the country. Dennis' "theory" that revolutions are made by "out-élites" against "in-élites" and that the proletariat is not revolutionary, is destroyed by the fact that in the only country where socialism has been established the revolution was led by the working class, and it still is.

Seven: Dennis' arguments to the effect that the masses of the people can be readily deceived and stampeded into war and fascism are also not true. The people's strong resistance to the war is well illustrated by the present world situation where in no country, including the fascist lands, Britain, and the United States, do the masses favor the war*—in spite of their having long been subjected to the greatest deluge of pro-war propaganda in history. Nor has fascism ever gained a majority of the people for its general program in any country by propaganda means alone. Everywhere, whether the reactionaries are setting up a fascist regime or embarking upon imperialist war, they have to supplement their demagogy by the use of terrorism. Characteristically, the Roosevelt Administration is literally forcing the American people into the war. But, opportunistic as ever, Dennis, for fear of antagonizing the masses,

* The Gallup Poll, as reported in the press of March 21, showed popular sentiments 87 per cent against American participation in the war.

says little or nothing about the use of terror, as an indispensable part of his program to force fascism upon the American people.

Eight: Absurd are Dennis' allegations to the effect that the German capitalists were fooled by Hitler into carrying through an anti-capitalist revolution. Norman Thomas, like other Social-Democrats, in his book *Socialism on the Defensive*, joins Dennis in this theory, by saying: "The German industrialists who helped Hitler to power miscalculated. They thought they could use him and his movement." Actually the German big capitalists were and remain the fountain source of Nazism, and Hitler is their agent. They know, even if Thomas does not, that through fascism they have smashed the labor movement and consolidated their control of the state, thereby enabling them more effectively to reap their profits, to carry out their imperialist war adventures, and to fight back the socialist revolution.

The great capitalists of the world, in England, France and the United States, as well as in Germany, Italy and Japan, favor fascism because they fully realize that, as Comrade Dimitroff said at the Seventh Congress of the Communist International in August, 1935: "Fascism is not super-class government, nor government of the petty bourgeoisie, or the lumpenproletariat over finance capital. Fascism is the power of finance capital itself."

Nine: Dennis' theory that Great Britain and the United States are fighting for the status quo (which he condemns), while Germany and

Japan are carrying on a policy of active expansion, is also fundamentally wrong. It is the fascist converse of the Social-Democratic theory that there are two kinds of imperialism: good (passive) and bad (militant); the good kind being represented by the Anglo-American alliance, and the bad kind by the Axis powers. In reality, all the imperialist powers are expansive, seeking to grab for themselves whatever the given circumstances will permit. Take Great Britain, for example. Its Tory government deliberately built up Nazi Germany, with the triple objective in mind of strengthening world reaction generally, of using Germany as an offset to French continental domination, and especially of organizing a German war against the Soviet Union. Certainly, there was nothing status quo about all that.

We can be sure also that should Great Britain win this war it will seize even greater European and colonial spoils than it did after the World War. The Communist International justly placed the main guilt for the present war at the door of British imperialism. As for that other "status quo" great power, the United States, even Mr. Dennis indicates that in this war situation it is out to establish its control over the Western Hemisphere and to absorb whatever remnants it can of the crumbling British Empire. In other words, that the United States is a militant imperialist state whose aim is precisely to break up the status quo to its own advantage.

Ten: Dennis' assertions to the effect that the toiling masses are no

longer interested in democracy and that only the capitalists are demanding freedom are so wrong as to be fantastic. If we will look at the workers in all the capitalist countries, at the peasants in the colonial and semi-colonial lands, at the oppressed national minorities and conquered states—everywhere we will see that they are linking up all their demands with a militant insistence upon a broader election franchise, upon greater civil liberties generally, upon national independence, upon the abolition of capitalist tyranny and exploitation.

And as for the Communists, far from giving over the slogans of democracy to the capitalists, as Dennis alleges, they are the most militant champions of democracy. The recent cry of dictatorship by the Hoovers and other spokesmen of big business against Roosevelt, which Dennis thinks was a demand for liberty, was in reality only a complaint of finance capitalism against a government which it considered to be making too many concessions to the toilers. But how soon these Wall Street complaints and demands for "liberty" ceased when Roosevelt jettisoned his reform program and headed into the imperialist war! These same people became the greatest champions of the so-called Lend-Lease Bill to set up a war-dictatorship in this country.

Eleven: Dennis' theory that the "nation-state" of capitalism is giving way to the "party-state" of socialism (a notion also shared in by Social-Democrats) is wrong at both ends and in the middle. To begin with, the bourgeois democracies,

although having historically come into being as national entities, cannot truly claim to be "nation-states" in the sense of representing the interests of the whole people, but are capitalist states, dominated by the capitalist class in its own interest. Under fascism the state remains a capitalist state, the only major difference being that it is then more completely controlled by the big capitalists, who destroy all other political parties and establish their own one-party dictatorship. In the Soviet Union, the only socialist country, on the reverse, there exists a real "nation-state," or rather a "multi-nation-state." The Soviet Government is fully representative of all the Soviet people. If there is only one party, the Communist Party, in the U.S.S.R., this is because the interests of the friendly and gradually merging classes of workers, farmers and professionals are fully harmonious and can be properly represented only by a single party. Hitler talks of maintaining his one-party, centralized state dictatorship for "a thousand years"; whereas the Soviet people are consciously heading toward the eventual withering away of their Party and the state, and the establishment of a stateless form of society: communism.

Twelve: When Dennis, having in mind the U.S.S.R. along with the fascist states, avers that his "revolution" will bring about "the erection of socialist imperialism on the ruins of capitalist imperialism," he is not only fundamentally wrong, but, as so often happens, he also finds himself in the company of the

Social-Democrats. It is true that under fascism imperialism remains. All the factors that Lenin analyzed as constituting the imperialist, or final stage of capitalism, persist and are greatly intensified. That is, the monopolization of industry, the concentration of finance, the consolidation of industrial and bank capital together and with the state, and the struggle for the re-division of the world, are all enormously increased and speeded up. Fascism is imperialism, and imperialism's era is the era of wars and revolutions, accompanying the general decay of the capitalist system.

But imperialism is totally foreign to the socialism of the U.S.S.R. Under that system there is no imperialism, because there exist none of the requisite conditions for imperialism, because there exists none owned industries nor banks, no ruling class of monopolists and financial oligarchs, no profit-making urge to subjugate colonial peoples and to enslave neighboring states. Consequently there is not and cannot be any imperialism. "Red imperialism" is a contradiction in terms. The liberation of the peoples of Poland, Latvia, Estonia, Lithuania and Bessarabia, and their inclusion into the U.S.S.R., was in no sense imperialism. Contrary to Dennis, socialist countries will not make war against each other, but will live together harmoniously. A fascist world would mean a world endlessly torn with devastating imperialist wars; a socialist world will be a world permanently at peace.

Thirteen: Although he constantly and roundly condemns democracy,

Dennis systematically obscures his position regarding trade unionism. This is a typical example of his demagoguery. While clearly aiming at a social system in which free trade unions would be non-existent, he nevertheless deems it advisable not to arouse the antagonism of the workers by talking plainly of this matter. It is similar trickery on his part which makes Dennis soft-pedal anti-Semitism and anti-Negroism, which are organic to his fascist thesis. Obviously, he does not care to buck the widespread mass disapproval of such reactionary propaganda.

Fourteen: In Germany we can see in operation the so-called folk unity which Dennis believes is superior to democracy and destined to supplement it. To picture the monstrous fascist orgy of terrorist dictatorship as a system of freedom and unity, as Dennis does, is fantastic. The capitalist exploitation which splits the nation into warring classes is now worse than ever. Beneath the apparently smooth exterior of present-day German political life, class antagonisms are being enormously sharpened and rendered vastly more explosive. Their culmination in revolution is only a matter of the continuation of present trends.

Fifteen: Throughout his book, Dennis pours out a stream of hostile criticism against the "Haves" and speaks sympathetically of the "Have-nots." Occasionally he translates these generalities into terms, on the one hand, of great bankers and industrialists, and, on the other, of workers, farmers and other poor people. But all this is nothing more

than typical fascist demagoguery, designed to fool the masses. His criticisms of the exploiters and condolences for the exploited are just as false as the rest of the book. The whole system which he represents, fascism, has no other reason for being than to increase the power, privileges and wealth of the already great capitalists, and to deepen the exploitation, poverty and oppression of the toiling masses.

III. Dennis' Program Tested by Life

Having briefly outlined Dennis' theses and also pointed out the false foundations upon which they rest, let us now turn our attention briefly to the validity of his theses in the crucible of actual life. As we have noted, the main point of Dennis' argument is that the world capitalist system has lost its dynamic force, its expansive power, because the industrial revolution has exhausted itself, and that therefore a new "dynamic" is necessary. This dynamic he attempts to furnish by a program of war, with "pyramid-building" as a sort of stop-gap in the intervals between wars. But this fascist program, based upon unsound principles, as we have seen, cannot and does not work out in practice to give capitalism a new lease of life.

That capitalism has lost its dynamic force and expansive power is true. This is due to the fundamental contradiction between the socialized method of production and the private ownership of the means of production. This contradiction, resulting in the exploitation and rob-

bery of the workers, brings about a contradiction between the producing and consuming powers of the masses. This antagonism has become very much worse with the growth of monopoly to the general effect that capitalist society is increasingly paralyzed by economic crises and the various political struggles and wars associated therewith.

Dennis' plan to cure this fundamental chaos and paralysis of capitalism by a program of war and "pyramid-building" can only make confusion worse confounded. In seeking to prove that war is the great necessary "dynamic" for society, Dennis pins his argument largely upon the fact that the present "democratic" capitalist empires, in building themselves up, carried on many wars. He points out that during 150 years England and France respectively waged 54 and 53 wars, big and little, lasting 102 years in one case and 99 years in the other; and that the United States, counting Indian wars and punitive expeditions in Latin America, has been at war almost continuously ever since its foundation. War was a powerful "dynamic" for developing the "democratic" capitalist empires, argues Dennis; therefore it will be an even more potent "dynamic" for building the fascist empires.

But Dennis leaves a most important consideration out of his calculations. It is the fact that wars nowadays are qualitatively different from the wars of capitalism prior to the first decade of the 20th century. This difference is not

merely, as Dennis indicates, with his thumb-hand method of analysis, that the earlier wars were "easy" wars while those of today are "hard" wars. The difference is far more profound and meaningful. Dennis' so-called "easy" wars were typical wars of the period of the "free" development of world capitalism, when England, France and the other empires expanding the world market were making the first division of the world among themselves. Their wars were directed mainly against the weaker, especially colonial, peoples. But during the past quarter of a century the situation has fundamentally changed. With the world already almost entirely divided among the great empires, in order to redivide it these powers must now come into wide and devastating collisions.

Capitalism in its early stages, when it was relatively healthy and broadly expanding, could and did readily use its method of "easy" wars against colonial peoples to extend its sway. But today capitalism is sick and weak from its incurable internal contradictions, which amount in sum to a general crisis, and it cannot withstand the destructive force of the great wars of the imperialist powers, much less prosper by them. The collisions among the imperialist powers are disastrous; the colonial peoples are also more rebellious and harder to conquer, and the breakdown of capitalist economy is making the colonies more difficult to exploit profitably.

The World War of a generation ago, a vast imperialist struggle, did

irreparable damage to the capitalist system, especially by the loss of Russia, covering one-sixth of the earth, to socialism; by the discrediting of Social-Democracy and the rise of the Communist Parties. The present imperialist war threatens to wreak even greater havoc to world capitalism. Far from constituting the healthful "dynamic" for the present social order that Dennis presumes it to be, ultra-destructive imperialist war is actually tearing capitalism to pieces. And the eventual response of the people to these ruinous imperialist wars is revolution: the abolition of capitalism and the establishment of socialism.

Dennis' "new world order," which is essentially that of Hitler, offers no prospect of stability, either nationally or internationally. It would be a regime of endless violent and destructive wars. The only way the several great world dominating empires, that Dennis has in mind, could be built up, as we now see by Hitler's course in Europe, would be by ruthlessly conquering and subjugating the weaker capitalist states and colonial peoples. Such a prospect does not appeal Mr. Dennis, however, who says in *The Nation* for January 11: "The extinction of the myriad small nations and the integration of the world into a few great systems are probably both inevitable and desirable for the welfare of the world masses." Such empires would be even worse "prison-houses of peoples" than the old British, French, Dutch and Belgian empires, with scores of oppressed peoples, deeply rebellious and eagerly awaiting a

favorable opportunity to smash the whole reactionary structure to bits.

As for the relations between the several fascist empires, these would necessarily be of the most warlike nature. A stable balance of power between them would be unthinkable. The uneven development of capitalism (that is, the varying rates of industrial expansion in the several countries, the different degrees to which the respective capitalist classes are held back by, or have defeated, the workers, etc.) would inevitably bring the great fascist empires into ever more violent collisions with one another. Fascism, and world reaction generally, sharpen all the internal and external contradictions and antagonisms of the capitalist system. Hitler's and Dennis' new world order, could it be achieved, would surely plunge humanity into an endless series of the most desperate and devastating wars the world has ever seen.

Dennis, like the fascists, tries to prepare for the acceptance of his "dynamic," war, by glorifying and defending mass slaughter. War with him, as with other fascists, is made to appear as the be-all and end-all of mankind, the one great constructive driving force of society. By periodically butchering one another on a mass basis in the interests of their capitalist rulers the peoples of the world are supposed to find peace, prosperity and freedom. But all of Dennis' glowing advocacy of war cannot change the fundamental fact that the imperialist wars of today are themselves the very climax of all the internal de-

structive forces within the capitalist system; they inevitably greatly accelerate the tempo of capitalist breakdown and enormously stimulate the revolutionary movements of the masses, who are the historic gravediggers of capitalism and the builders of the new socialist order.

Dennis' secondary "dynamic," "pyramid-building," with which he says society will sort of patch along in the intervals between wars, rests upon a no less shaky foundation than his major "dynamic," war itself. At the most, what Dennis calls "pyramid-building," that is, government make-work schemes and subsidized industries, can serve only as a stop-gap proposition to relieve widespread unemployment and popular distress in times of industrial depression or crisis. It can in no sense expand and develop a nation's economy. Moreover, such "pyramid-building" can be put into effect only as a result of strong mass pressure against the capitalists and the government (and of course Mr. Dennis is opposed to any such democratic pressure).

The big capitalists all over the world are, in the main, opposed to "pyramid-building" as a means to keep their bankrupt capitalist industrial system going. At most they use "pyramid-building" sparingly, unwillingly, and only under heavy mass pressure. Then they accept it only temporarily, until they can once more get on the road to war, which, in this period of capitalist decay, they look upon as the only solution of their industrial problems.

The German example is typical.

The way Hitler was able to "abolish" unemployment was not through "pyramid-building," but by his gigantic armaments program which, according to the *New York Times* of January 9, is now, during the war, burning up 72 per cent of the national income. In England the Tory Government during the thirties reluctantly carried through a housing program as a means to fight off the industrial depression, but now it has arrived at what it really wanted all the time as the "cure" for its troubles—imperialist war.

There has been the same basic experience in the United States. When Roosevelt, facing the unparalleled economic crisis, embarked upon a limited program of "pyramid-building" (W.P.A., P.W.A., etc.), the great capitalists of Wall Street yelled and protested. They condemned his make-work schemes as "boondoggling," denounced him as a Communist, and shouted for a balanced Federal budget. Every billion the government spent for relief and make-work projects was like pulling Wall Street's teeth. But see what a marvelous change has come over the erstwhile big capitalist malcontents since Roosevelt has dropped his "boondoggling" and embarked upon an imperialist war program. Now they are happy. Congress squanders billions in dozen lots, but never a squawk comes out of Wall Street. Business is good, the goose hangs high, everything is hotsy-totsy—at least until the devastating reckoning comes at the end of the war. Contrary to Dennis, the great capitalists

of today do not adopt "pyramid-building" even as a second line "dynamic" for their society. They depend upon war as the way to keep things going.

Despite all the contentions of fascist apologists (which are seconded by Norman Thomas and other Social-Democrats) fascism has not found the solution to the industrial crisis. It has not cured unemployment, neither in Germany, nor in Italy, nor in Japan. Actually by intensifying the grip of monopoly capital, by increasing the exploitation of the toilers, by breaking the resistance of the masses and by lowering mass living standards, fascism has fundamentally made much worse the problem of unemployment. The only way the fascists anywhere have put the workers to work is by making armaments and waging war. This does not eradicate unemployment but, in the long run, makes it far more acute.

Dennis draws a fascist picture of "a world of nations all pursuing policies of increasing self-sufficiency and all industrializing, the less industrialized countries, of course, industrializing the most" (p. 151). This is sheer nonsense, as we see from Hitler's activities. Actually, German fascism, by increasing all the contradictions of capitalism and restricting the purchasing power of the people, creates a downward spiral so far as the production of useful goods is concerned. Instead of industrializing the weaker countries it is de-industrializing them. Its policy toward colonial countries is even more stringently against

their industrialization than are the policies of the British and French and American empires. The Nazi aim is to make Germany the world's major industrial country, equipped with great heavy industries, while the rest of the nations, reduced to a colonial, semi-colonial, or otherwise dependent status, serve as suppliers of raw materials and light finished commodities. Here is the scarcity theory, which Dennis (like Roosevelt) ardently champions, brought to its logical conclusion.

Thus we see that Dennis' major "dynamic," war, does not lead to a growth and strengthening of the capitalist system, but to its weakening and eventual destruction through revolution. We also see that his secondary "dynamic," "pyramid-building," is not a dynamic at all, nor does it serve as an effective expedient between wars. All the major trends of fascist society, and of capitalist reaction generally, lead to war, and imperialist war means eventually the destruction of the capitalist system.

Socialism Is the Solution

The false national socialism of Hitler and those in America for whom Dennis speaks does not provide the constructive answer to the present chaos of capitalism, but intensifies it and makes it more malignant. On the other hand, life has completely demonstrated that the socialism of Marx, Engels, Lenin and Stalin, crystallized in the U.S.-S.R., does provide the solution to the problems and privations growing out of the breakdown of the

capitalist system. Dennis' reactionary theories of scarcity and his "dynamics" of "pyramid-building" and war are only destructive expedients of the obsolete capitalist system, which is desperately struggling to prolong its useless existence.

The U.S.S.R., by socializing industry and agriculture and by abolishing human exploitation, has developed the only possible dynamic for a healthful growth and expansion of society. The Soviet Union, contrary to the Hitler-Dennis-Roosevelt theory of scarcity, works upon the principle of abundance. It has proved beyond all question of doubt that the systematic raising of mass living standards as productive capacity increases provides the only way to keep industry and agriculture upon an upward plane of growth and to maintain society generally on a forward march. The U.S.S.R., alone of all countries, has abolished industrial crises and unemployment. While the whole capitalist world was prostrated by the great economic crisis of the past decade Soviet industry and agriculture steadily and rapidly extended. The economic system of the U.S.S.R., spurred on by the constantly increasing demands of the people, goes ahead with an ever-greater expansion, the limits of which are set only by the country's natural resources, the state of human knowledge, and the productive power of man.

With this sound economic system as its base, Soviet socialism brings about real national unity. Instead of the false "folk unity" of Hitler and

Dennis, with its terrorism, demagoguery, cultivated ignorance, anti-Semitism, and division of the people into desperately warring classes, the Soviet Union, founded upon a socialized economy, has abolished classes and class hatreds. The Soviet people are the most united and therewith the most democratic in all the world. It is along the path they are treading that the peoples of all countries will eventually find unity, freedom, prosperity and maximum cultural development.

By the same token, the healthy economic system of socialism also lays the basis for international peace. With no monopoly capitalists dominating its life and ruthlessly seeking profits in the four corners of the earth, the U.S.S.R. consequently has no imperialism. Its whole system leads it to live in

peaceful collaboration with other nations. That is why it does not participate in imperialist wars. As against the series of ruthless empires contemplated by the fascists in their "new world order," made up of numerous oppressed and rebellious peoples fighting bitterly against their conquerors, the structure of the U.S.S.R. forecasts the future system of world society. It is a union of free republics. Its three scores of peoples, big and little, live together in unity, harmony and freedom. Not toward a fascist "new world order," consisting of imperialist states periodically deluging humanity with blood and terror, but toward a world federation of free peoples, on the type of the U.S.S.R., is the only road along which harassed mankind can eventually establish international peace.