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The End of the NRA:

CAPITAL ASSERTS ITSELF

THE Supreme Court has decided that the NRA and the AAA are unconstitutional. It has, in an earlier decision, thrown out the Railway Pensions Act. These decisions mark the end of the New Deal.

What is the Supreme Court? Socialists have, for years, been pointing out that the governmental structure of the United States is an almost perfect expression of the needs of the industrialists and of the financiers. The three-fold division of power provided for in the federal constitution, is intended to frustrate the popular will. The veto power of the president represents far greater legislative power than that possessed by any executive in the world, except the few absolute monarchs still left, and the new-style dictators. Coupled with the notorious fact that the candidates for the presidency must, as a rule, be acceptable to the ruling class, and that the successful candidate is usually elected with the aid of funds furnished by the moneyed classes, this circumstance gives the economic masters virtual control over legislation.

Long years of complete control of both legislative and judicial branches of the government have given to the capitalists a body of law and precedent that is almost invulnerable. Should their control of industry be threatened, as they believed it to be threatened by the NRA and the AAA, they can set the judicial machine in motion to crush the threat. The laws that they fear can be called unconstitutional. That ends them. The machinery may work slowly, as it did in the present instance, but, like the mills of the gods, it works inexorably and with telling effect.

In evaluating the power of the capitalists as expressed in

the Supreme Court it is important to consider the composition of the court. It is made up of nine men, appointed for life by the president, with the consent of the Senate. They may be removed only by impeachment proceedings, which, in effect, means not at all. Needless to say, no man is appointed to the court before late middle age. He must have achieved a degree of national prominence in the service of the master class. He must pass the scrunity of the Senate, largely composed of the hand-picked emissaries of the capitalists. If, now and then, a "liberal", like Justice Brandeis, Justice Stone or Justice Cardozo, is appointed, we may be sure that his liberalism is limited to relatively innocuous things, and does not extend to serious matters of industrial power.

The greatest value of the Supreme Court as a bulwark of the moneyed interests lies in the fact that it does not rapidly change its complexion. Rarely, indeed, does any president, even in two terms, appoint a majority of the court. So the court stands always as a monument of the past, impervious to the changing needs of the times and unresponsive to the will of the people.

It is a favorite fiction that the Supreme Court is an austere body, remote from political considerations, that frames its decisions purely on the basis of legal reasoning. Split decisions are attributed to the fallability of the human mind. This theory is pernicious nonsense. No better example of its untruth can be cited than the recent decision that upheld the government in the gold clause case.

If any principle is important to capitalists it is the "inviolability of contracts". This "sacredness of contractual obligations" is guaranteed in the constitution. The government and many private firms had issued bonds expressly payable in gold. These bonds were contractual obligations. When President Roosevelt suspended gold payments in 1933, some trusting soul brought suit to enforce the gold clause in the bonds he held. The Supreme Court voted, 5 to 4, that *this* contract was not sacred.

It is perfectly clear why it so decided. To have upheld the gold clause would have bankrupted not only the treasury,

but virtually all the private issuers of the bonds in question. It would have precipitated a major catastrophe and might have led to chaos and revolution. In the face of this emergency the fiction of legislative austerity was disregarded. The court remained true to its function as the last safeguard of capitalism.

In the case of the NRA and the AAA, the Supreme Court was as tender of the needs of the capitalist class as in the gold clause case. Here that tenderness led it to void Roosevelt's experiment in the regulation of industry, because it had become irksome to the dominant capitalist groups.

II.

Before the decision was announced capital had been restive under the code restrictions. It had been particularly resentful of wage and hour provisions, and had launched a vigorous propaganda against the New Deal. The American Liberty League, and the New York "Herald-Tribune" had been so far successful in their campaign that the Congress began to waver. It became doubtful if the president could secure the re-enactment of the NRA and the AAA for two more years. The progress of the Child Labor Amendment had been stopped. The Chamber of Commerce broke openly with the president. Public opinion, once clearly with the New Deal, was beginning to shift. It was now charged that only the recipients of the dole were with the president. It was further asserted, and it was beginning to be believed, that the president was rattled, and did not know where he was going. The degree of "recovery" that had already been made was greatly exaggerated, and it was now widely asserted that the restrictions of the codes, and of Section 7a in particular, were hindering recovery. The Supreme Court decisions merely completed a route already begun. Almost it seems as if capitalism through the Supreme Court had merely waited for the psychological moment in which to launch its thunderbolt.

III.

The New Deal is now a matter of history. What is its historic meaning?

It was an effort on the part of some capitalists to forestall the collapse of the system by voluntary self-regulation. Profits were to be limited, wages and hours bettered, competition curbed, for the common good. By self-denial capitalism was to be saved.

Socialists looked on and laughed at the notion that capital could regulate itself. The very nature of the profit motive makes self-limitation an absurdity. The psychological set-up within capitalism precluded any real suspension of competition, or any substantial regulation of it. Socialists were promptly proved right by the advent of the chiseller, by the failure of the NRA to use coercion against him, and by the transformation of Section 7a, heralded as a guarantee of labor's right to organize, into a charter for company unionism.

Now the socialist analysis of the situation is further vindicated. The less enlightened, bourbon and reactionary wing of capital has regained control over industry. It now exerts the power of the class state to curb the "radicals" in its own ranks. With one stroke of the pen it restores the old system of "each man for himself, and the devil take the hindmost".

The immediate result will be a restoration of the conditions of 1932. The process of wage-reductions and the cutting of prices has already begun. So rapidly has disintegration set in that industrial leaders have grown panicky. They are grasping at straws. We hear appeals for "voluntary" regulation, appeals to the "honor" of business men to persuade them not to give up "the gains of the NRA". If the president plays his hand intelligently, he can secure his re-election in 1936. He has already shown his political acumen by coming out for a modified NRA, for voluntary enforcement of the codes and of a constitutional amendment permitting federal regulation of wages and hours. This will swing support to him, even if it does not substantially improve the bitter conditions under which men will labor in the next few years.

But the president's new program should not again deceive labor. If the history of the New Deal demonstrates anything, it proves the inability of capital to curb itself. The history

of Section 7a should convince labor that the right to organize, granted from above, means only the organization of company unions. The right to organize unions free from control by the employer can only be obtained by labor itself. To expect men voluntarily to give up the special privileges that they have inherited or acquired is utopian. Men have never done so, and they never will. A new victory for Roosevelt, or a victory for anyone who accepts the institutions of private property and private profit, must be a shadow victory for labor, which a capitalist reaction will again invalidate. Victory is possible only if labor takes power away from capital, and so re-organizes industry, society and the government, that a capitalist reaction becomes impossible.

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The Revolutionary Moment

REINHOLD NIEBUHR

WHATEVER the values of democracy may be in the struggle of the workers for power,—and the values are still considerable,—it ought to be fairly clear that a workers' movement can never make democracy an end in itself nor even go upon the assumption that it is a certain means to its ultimate end. There was a time in the history of the disintegration of feudalism when it was inevitable that workers should believe that democracy contained within it not only bourgeois rights but the germ of workers' freedom. There was a partial validity in this assumption, for it is true that democracy has certain universal values which transcend bourgeois and capitalistic interests. But history has since proved that it is impossible to trust democracy completely. The relation between capitalism and democracy is not a simple but a paradoxical one.

Democracy is not merely the construct of capitalism. The proof of that is given by the fact that strongly organized workers' movements in Europe have used the power of their numbers within the forms of democracy to extract concessions from the capitalists by way of social legislation which the latter would never have granted without that democratic pressure. But there seem to be definite limits to the democratic forms in relation to the workers' fight for freedom. It has not yet been proved that the instruments of democracy will avail in a final hour of crisis when two social wills and social groups stand in exact juxtaposition and the triumph of the one means the annihilation of the other. In such moments of crisis the development of fascism proves pretty conclusively that the capitalists will seek to destroy democracy before capitalism is destroyed by it. Very frequently they will have the power to do so. They have in fact done so.

Not only the German but the Spanish situation proves that the alliance between bourgeois democrats and socialist

democrats during the period of the destruction of feudalism naturally ceases to hold in the period of the destruction of bourgeois capitalism. In fact it is quite obvious that in the latter period bourgeois democrats have more in common with monarchists than with their fellow socialist democrats. In Germany we had the pathetic spectacle of socialists remaining true to the Weimar Republic, in which they had a certain maternal pride, long after it had become the shadow of a shadow and their foes were using it to destroy it. The spectacle of Braun and Severing appealing to the supreme court when a Papen *coup d'etat* destroyed their government may go down in history as the perfect symbol of the decadence of the German right-wing social-democracy. For there is evidence that socialist resistance at this point could still have saved the day for the workers in Germany.

The right wing of our party in this country has not proved that it has learned a single lesson from events in Germany, Spain and Austria. It meets the genuine disillusionment of young and vigorous elements in the party merely by repression and mouths the old platitudes about democracy. Its insistence that socialists must always remain within the bounds of legality is a perfect revelation of spiritual decay in socialism. No revolutionary group of whatever kind in history has ever made obedience to law an absolute obligation. Laws are always probably more than mere conveniences of the ruling class. But they are also always less than impartial rules for arbitrating social conflict. The touching devotion of right-wing socialism to legality and the constitution is proof either of inability or unwillingness to profit from the clear lessons of recent history or it is merely a convenient ideological tool for suppressing new life in the party.

It was inevitable that vital socialism should react to the tragic destruction of the socialist movement by fascism in Europe and should re-examine the whole democratic position of traditional socialism. If it had not done that it would have revealed complete intellectual and political sloth. But unfortunately socialism is not or has not been intellectually vigorous enough in America to be able to do this without some foes of

democracy borrowing patterns from Russia in order to discredit German patterns. Now, the Russian revolution remains a beacon light to workers in the whole world. But it was effected in a country which knew nothing of the spiritual, political and economic movements which determined the history of the western world. Every effort to fit the Russian pattern exactly upon western life is bound to result in confusion and imperil the workers' cause. On the whole the program of the romantic left is borrowed from Russia.

In opposition to the democrats and constitutionalists they boldly announce that they make "no fetish of legality". Very well. But they proceed to analyze the American problem on the assumption that American constitutional rights are nothing but a facade for capitalism. That is a rather too simple analysis of a difficult and important problem. If constitutional rights are nothing but a facade for capitalism ought the labor movement not welcome fascism as being more honest than democracy and not fooling the workers as democracy does? The fact is that American legal traditions represent a combination of ancient English legal tradition, the social ideals of our pioneer period, and the restraints which a budding plutocracy was able to place upon the equalitarian and libertarian tendencies of the former. Such traditions are not unequivocally the instruments of capitalistic power. If the American labor movement had been more powerful it could have used political instruments to a larger degree than it has in mitigating the injustices of the capitalistic system. This does not prove that the final step of abolishing capitalism could be taken by democratic means, largely because it is doubtful whether the capitalists will allow democracy to live until labor has fashioned a democratic instrument powerful enough to destroy capitalism. But if one speaks of this ultimate crisis in terms of an armed insurrection of the workers, one fails to do justice to the total realities of the situation.

A workers' movement powerful enough to achieve power must have a tremendous mechanism of social cohesion covering this continent. This will be achieved partly by trade union activity and partly by political activity. It need not neces-

sarily have a majority of votes but it will have to be the most powerful social will standing against the old order. A few revolutionary groups on the fringe of the labor movement, no matter how honest their intention and how vigorous their revolutionary will, can never have the authority nor the mechanism to take over power. Most of these patterns taken over from Russia do not deal with American political realities at all. In Russia the vast masses were amorphous and without means of integration. In such a nation the general discontent of the peasants, coupled with the revolutionary will of a small proletariat furnished the force of revolution. In America a revolutionary movement must face a capitalistic force which will be, even in the hour of its disintegration, strong enough to maintain its authority in large sections of the population.

The building of such a movement is just begun or hardly begun. In fact it is so much in the stage of infancy that exact specifications for the strategy of the day of revolution belong in the category of romantic day dreaming. It is the business of socialists to prove to the workers that nothing but the social ownership of the means of production can heal the sickness of society, and that the attainment of this goal will be something more than a picnic or a parliamentary debate. Beyond that it is not necessary to go. History, said the Italian statesman Cavour, has a penchant for improvization. Certain general patterns run through history. The rise of democracy is one of them and the ultimate triumph of socialism is another. But democracy came to England in a very different form than it came to France. It may be assumed that there will be similar differences in the triumph of socialism in the various western nations. To talk at this stage of the historic development of the necessity of arming workers for insurrection is to talk in terms of complete political irresponsibility.

Obviously the relation of the socialist movement to the trade unions is a tremendously important aspect of socialist strategy. The ultra-left in the Socialist Party opposes the communist strategy of dual unions but it also has a plan for revolutionary workers' councils which are to be the real organs of revolution. Doubtless this is regarded as necessary because

the trade unions are not trusted to be revolutionary. Now it is a fact that trade unions are not naturally socialist or revolutionary. They naturally concern themselves with the day-to-day problems of labor and they inevitably absorb a great deal of bourgeois complacency. They will not believe until they are forced to believe that pure trade union activity can not guarantee them a just society. In America they have not yet become convinced that political activity must be joined to trade union activity. It may therefore be idle to speculate on how long it will take before they test not only the possibilities but the limits of purely political activity. They may, however, learn this lesson rather quickly. Nevertheless it can not be expected that trade unions will ever be revolutionary in any unambiguous sense in advance of a critical situation. But in specific situations the workers may be trusted to know when the time has arrived when they must fight for their rights or lose everything. In such moments a leadership which is in intimate contact with them ought not to find it impossible to prove to them that the only possibility of preserving their rights is to use the crisis in order to push through to a new society in which rights will be on an entirely new basis. In other words, the revolutionary will of workers will have something of a defensive attitude in it. The trade unionists of Prussia were hardly revolutionary. But when they saw the threat of von Papen's *coup d'etat*, there is evidence that they were ready for a revolutionary policy. In that hour they were betrayed by a leadership which could not see or did not have the courage to act upon the realities. But they were previously betrayed by a revolutionary leadership which had lost contact with them and was organized into a different political party in order that it might disassociate itself from their reformism.

It is of course no easy thing for socialists to work out an adequate policy of relationships with conservative trade unions. But one thing is obvious and that is that the revolutionary will and the mechanism of a revolutionary movement must ultimately come from organized labor. Any socialist movement which does not maintain the most intimate

contact with organized labor is lost. An adequate policy means a strategic compromise. It probably means that at the present moment socialists ought to help in creating a farmer-labor party even if such a party, particularly the agrarian end of it, can not be expected to come out for pure socialism. A good socialist is not afraid of such compromise. He distinguishes himself from the liberal and the progressive by not being fooled by these compromises. He knows that there is no easy transition from capitalism to socialism. He does not believe that workmen's compensation and social security acts, that public ownership of public utilities, etc., are all steps in the direction of socialism in the sense that the final step is no different from these preliminary steps. He has a catastrophic view of society. He knows that the immediate rights gained by labor in a dying capitalism help to destroy the system and that the more capitalism is frustrated by a united labor movement from making labor bear the burden of the contraction of the system, the sooner will its various schemes for avoiding collapse run out.

A realistic socialism must in short fully appreciate and be in intimate contact with the slow and historic movements without falling into the illusion that they guarantee the victory of socialism. Society is an organism and not a mechanism. Old societies decay by slow process and new ones are born in gradual gestation. A revolution does not come by the will of any one person or group but only because an old system is literally played out. But this does not mean that the processes of growth and decay automatically guarantee a new society. The process of coming to birth frequently requires expert help and sometimes surgical aid. It is always bloody and painful, a fact which evolutionary optimists have forgotten. It is the business of the revolutionary statesman, as Trotsky wisely observed, not to mistake the third month for the ninth month but also to know when the ninth month is at hand. The ninth month is obviously not at hand in America. When it arrives the child may be born dead because revolutionary midwives have killed each other off in a period before the birth in a desperate argument about the advisability of using forceps.

Arming for the Next War

EDWIN C. JOHNSON

I.

IT may or may not be true that the final passing of capitalism will be an act of social suicide committed in a period of new international war. Only future historians, possessed of a hindsight based on evidence not now at our disposal, will know and be able to tell definitely. Whether or not militarism is an integral counterpart of capitalism, and whether or not capitalism must always and inevitably lead to war, may or may not be true. Again, only the future will tell. But if time and events are not to prove these things as true, precious little evidence upon which to base such optimism is being provided us today.

Despite the views of those who, like Hoover and Mills, are wont to "explain" the current economic crisis in terms of the World War, it is now clear that that war was not a first cause; it was the result of a series of earlier causes. These included, among other factors, causes essentially capitalistic—a fact which, to its everlasting credit, the Socialist Party of America clearly recognized and acted upon in its famous St. Louis declaration of 1917. The same causes which brought on the World War are operating in the world today. And more than ever before they now threaten the world with new war.

II.

Two major trends of history have been revealed by post-war events. From the armistice until 1930, the major nations war-weary, biologically, economically and spiritually exhausted, seemed to be moving, generally speaking, in the direction of peace, not toward war. Out of Versailles grew the League and the World Court; in 1922 the Washington Conference produced the first measure of disarmament by mutual agreement among the major nations, limited as it was; in 1925 the Locarno Pact stabilized relationships in Western

Europe; later Germany was accepted into the membership of the League; 1927-28 brought the Kellogg-Briand Pact by which more than sixty nations renounced war as an instrument of national policy; and in 1930 the London Conference slightly extended the 5-5-3 ratio, somewhat modified, to additional types of naval armament. History, apparently, was moving toward peace rather than war.

But if the movement of post-war events up until 1930 was toward peace, the trend since that time has been running in the opposite direction. Since 1930 the world has been drifting, slowly possibly, but unmistakably, toward war. First, the impotence of the World Disarmament Conference at Geneva has brought into clear focus the failure of the whole post-war disarmament movement. Instead of redeeming the disarmament pledges they accepted at Versailles, the victorious Allies steadily increased their armament expenditures and by so doing encouraged the emergence of a Hitler in Germany. Instead of meeting the conflict between Germany's demand for "equality" and France's demand for "security" by *dis*armament, the misguided statesmanship of the Allies faltered and lost one opportunity after another; today the conflict is in process of being resolved by *re*armament. And the possibility of averting catastrophe by the application of mutually agreeable controlling limits on rearmament is discouragingly remote.

In the second place, the world has witnessed, since 1930, the tragic failure of its so-called peace machinery to serve effectually in time of crisis. The League was discredited in the Orient when the Japanese militarists ran amuck in Manchuria, as it has been in connection with wars in South America and Africa. With Germany, Japan and the United States outside its membership, can any realist expect the League to play a decisive peace role in any future crisis?

Since 1930 we have also seen the intensification of economic strife between nations: currency wars, increasing tariffs and other trade restrictions, and the general resurgence of economic nationalism are clear manifestations of this. This international strife can and will easily pass from its present economic phase into a military phase—war.

But probably the truest barometer indicating the current drift toward war is the mad armaments race in which the nations are now engaged. This had been going on in a rather underhanded way even during the 'twenties when apparent progress toward peace was being made; but it took the New Deal and its recovery efforts to precipitate its latter and more frantic phase. While the New Dealers were elected on a platform which containd a plank pledging that, if elected, they would undertake a survey of existing military and naval expenditures with a view to economizing upon such items, this pledge has been ignored and in fact violated by steadily mounting outlays for war purposes. The betrayal, to be sure, was committed on the excuse of reducing unemployment by naval building; but the excuse itself was founded upon a tissue of falsehoods such as Secretary Swanson's incredible claim that labor would receive 85% of the funds set aside for naval building. Nothing more than a casual knowledge of the profit-taking proclivities of the shipbuilders would have been sufficient cause for doubting that they would be content with a mere 15%. In addition to the large sums diverted from Public Works funds for naval purposes, the New Deal has greatly enlarged regular appropriations for war purposes. Army expenditures have steadily increased, the appropriations for 1936 recently approved by Congress amounting to $401,998,179, a peace-time record for the United States. The bill includes increases for the Regular Army, the National Guard, the Organized Reserves, the R. O. T. C. and C. M. T. C. As I write Congress has under consideration the 1936 appropriations for the Navy—$457,805,261, as passed by the House, also a peace-time record for the United States.

Whether or not the New Dealers betrayed their election pledge on this matter is of little importance; nor is it of large import whether or not naval building for reemployment purposes is practicable and justifiable; these questions are comparatively inconsequential beside the main fact that the Roosevelt administration, probably the most militaristic ever to preside over the American government in peace-time, has very definitely stimulated a world armaments race which has

reached a stage both frantic and insane in its intensity. Every major nation today, consequently, is engaged in a mad and utterly irrational search for "security" and "defense" by increasing its armaments more and more. Armies, navies and air forces are being expanded everywhere. Each increase by one nation calls forth a parrot-like imitation from the others. As the level of their joint armaments rises higher, their sense of security diminishes and the possibility of avoiding catastrophe by the adoption of sane policies which might yield peace rather than war grows less. The nations, despite their pretensions, are drifting unmistakably toward war.

III.

Why? Why does the world drift toward war? Why does it not drift toward peace?

Socialists seldom lack understanding of the economic forces which are accelerating the world's drift toward war. They see that the chief characteristic of capitalism is cut-throat competition between hostile economic units. From the newsboy on one street corner who works in competition with the newsboy on the next corner, to the larger economic units whose sphere of activity takes them into fierce international struggle for sources of raw materials and markets, this characteristic of capitalism is always present. The logical extension of this abiding characteristic of capitalism, socialists understand, is war.

Socialists also understand that the profit-seeking motive of capitalism is a potent cause of war. From the standpoint of national interest it may be true that war "does not pay", but there are those for whom war *does pay*—and handsomely so. From 1914 to 1918 the number of millionaires in America trebled from about 7,500 in 1914 to about 25,000 in 1918. War pays! And socialists know it. The Nye commission has mercilessly exposed the munitions racket. This exposure, socialists realize, is much more than the mere exposure of a small industrial and commercial group bent upon a peculiar type of economic deviltry; socialists realize, first, that the munitions racketeer, by every test of capitalism, is simply a successful

business man and, second, that the exposure of his racket constitutes another just indictment of profit-seeking capitalism. The American public, if it fails to comprehend this, will have missed the main point of the whole Nye inquiry.

War serves one of capitalism's indispensable needs—its need for mass "consumption". War serves this need by bringing about the hasty destruction of the huge surpluses of wealth, human and material, which tend to accumulate under the economy of capitalism. This hasty destruction of surplus wealth results in rising price levels which, in turn, stimulate capitalism's productive capacity to new and more intense activity. Thus, from a hard-hearted capitalistic position, war may be and often is considered "a solution" for economic depression—such as the present one in which capitalism finds itself. Professor Ralph Stimson has recognized this relationship between war and surplus wealth, as did Scott Nearing in his book entitled *War: Organized Destruction and Mass Murder.* The important implication of this point is that the major race today is between war on the one hand and far-reaching economic reorganization on the other. Prof. Charles A. Beard has comprehended this and in his recent article in *Scribner's* on "National Politics and War" says: "If there is anything in American traditions and practices to guide us, it is that a wider spread of economic calamity will culminate in a foreign war, rather than in a drastic reorganization of domestic economy. . . . Confronted by the difficulties of a deepening domestic crisis and by the comparative ease of a foreign war, what will President Roosevelt do? Judging by the past history of American politicians, he will choose the latter, or, perhaps it would be more accurate to say, amid powerful conflicting emotions he will stumble into the latter."

IV.

In addition to the essentially capitalistic, that is economic, causes which aided in bringing on the World War and which exist in the world today, there are other forces, primarily psychological, which must be taken into account if the whole story is to be told.

Socialists know the economics of war and militarism, and their efforts to further public enlightenment on this aspect of the problem are all to the good; but more is needed. One suspects that few would have enlisted for the last war if the recruiting posters featured exhortations to sign up for the purpose of making the world safe for Morgan's millions. The recruiting posters and other official propaganda, however, made another appeal—and it worked in every country participating in the war. Of what did it consist?

In the first place, the nationalistic sentiments and predispositions of the masses were appealed to with systematic repetition. While the basic economic interests at stake were *special* interests which had gone far afield in their search for profits, the official war propaganda transformed the struggle into a war in defense of *national* interests—and the masses, conditioned by living in an age in which devotion to the national state is, generally speaking, the prevailing form of political loyalty, accepted it uncritically. In our time this psychological attachment of the masses to the national state has acquired many of the attributes of formal religion. Nationalism today has its "sacred books"—history textbooks crammed with stories of military exploits; it has its "holy days"—they are called holidays; it has its priestly cult—its apostles wear military uniforms. These nationalistic prejudices of the masses constitute a much greater obstacle to socialism both in the way of stopping war and in the way of ushering in the cooperative commonwealth than is ordinarily realized.

Secondly, several psychological considerations related to "national defense" must be included in any attempt to understand why men fought in the last war and why the nations drift to new war today. If there is a diminishing number who believe in war's inevitability because of some innate perversity in human nature or the natural order at large, there are yet countless millions who believe that war is both possible and probable because of contemporary political circumstances and that, even though war may be costly and horrible, military preparedness is the safest road to peace and security. Even though history offers vast proof that military preparedness

makes for war—not peace—the public mind is far removed from basing public policy upon any other than the dogmas of discredited militarism. Despite what Sir Norman Angell and other pragmatic critics have taught, the public mind still believes in the illusion that national interests may be advanced by militarism and war. Even today, the public mind now and then exhibits inclinations to believe that the cause of civilization and culture, broadly conceived, can be furthered by war. And as long as public opinion is inclined to accept such discredited assumptions there need be no wonder that Congress should bow to the pressure of the munitions interests and the professional military and naval bureaucrats and approve the staggering appropriations for war preparations mentioned above; and the international phase of the current armament race is to be explained in similar terms.

In war-time these psychological tendencies which lie dormant in the bourgeois sections of the public mind as well as in large sections of trade union and other workers' groups, are fanned to a white-heat pitch of patriotic fervor and conviction. This patriotic conviction includes two factors, the first being a readiness to accept the "defensive war" myth, the second being a tendency to interpret the struggle in terms of a "holy crusade" motivated by divine inspiration against an enemy which typifies the quintessence of evil. The World War illustrated this truth. From the standpoint of the official propaganda published by each and every nation participating in it, the war was

(1) a struggle of self-defense against a brutal aggressor and

(2) a gigantic struggle of the forces of civilization and right against those of barbarism and evil.

V.

The problem facing radical pacifists and socialists, therefore, is neither simple nor light; it is both complex and heavy. It calls not only for the exposure of the economic self-interest which lies behind and feeds upon militarism and war, but also for the revolutionary reorganization of our whole economic

set-up because only thus can we hope to remove the deep seated economic causes of war once and for all from contemporary culture. There also rests upon them a responsibility for elucidating the part popular concepts of national patriotism and military preparedness play in sustaining the martial tradition. They must focus their unrelenting attack upon all the institutions perpetuating these concepts. Finally, in the face of the current war danger, radical pacifists and revolutionary socialists must give ringing utterance to their denials of the false "defensive war" and "holy crusade" war myths. In all probability the success of their anti-war efforts in the near future will very definitely be determined by the extent to which they insulate the masses against belief in these twin war dogmas.

Moving Toward Fascism

DAVID P. BERENBERG

I.

GERMANY after the war was largely in control of a government nominally socialist, but in fact bourgeois and liberal in color. This government by inclination and by circumstances over which it was not fully in control was impelled to enter upon a program of social legislation. In fact, the one thing of which socialists in Germany, and social democrats in other countries who looked to Germany for their inspiration, could boast was that in no country were social reforms carried to such a pitch of perfection as in Germany. Old-age pensions, compensation insurance, unemployment insurance, workmen's housing, sickness insurance, in fact all the pet schemes of the liberals and the progressives, were in operation. Many of these benevolent devices dated back to the pre-war days; it was nothing new for German capital to accept a degree of governmental control.

But the Weimar Constitution, and the laws adopted under it, went further. They added to the social protections listed above, the eight-hour day, the official recognition of the unions, the recognition of the workers' councils. It is not surprising that under the circumstances the whole world looked upon Germany as the most progressive industrial state. Many in 1919, and for a few years thereafter, found reason to believe that in Germany at least, gradualism had justified itself; that it would go further, and that Germany would in the end evolve into a social-democratic state.

Germany was not allowed for long to enjoy the benefits of her far-reaching plans for social security. Soon after the signing of the Treaty of Peace it became evident that to pay the reparations a very heavy program of taxation was inevitable. After the invasion of the Ruhr by the French came the inflation which wiped out middle-class property, and which

by depriving money of meaning largely nullified for the workers the benefits of the social security program.

A short respite was obtained when, after 1924, Germany entered upon a period of false prosperity financed by American loans. When, in 1928, the depression which was becoming world-wide made itself felt in Germany, and when no further American loans were forthcoming, came the period when the social security program, and the philosophy of gradualism involved in it, were to be tested.

In 1928 the forces which undermined the German Republic and which ultimately produced Hitler and his fascism came into full view. So long as the inflation permitted the myth of prosperity to exist, the capitalists could afford to tolerate the social security program. In the post-inflation years, the social security program could be, and was, financed in part at least, by loans from credulous American banks and bankers. In 1928 German capital found itself face to face with the necessity of meeting the social security program out of its own pockets, or of finding ways and means of nullifying it. Here, reduced to its simplest terms, is the underlying reason why capital turned from the liberal and socialist coalition which had ruled Germany, and set up its own dictatorship behind the Nazi mask.

The cost of the social security program was enormous. Capital felt it as a heavy handicap in competition with foreign enterprise. To the middle classes, impoverished by the inflation, by the depression, and by the enormous increase in competition for jobs, the security program loomed up as an example of discrimination in favor of the working classes. This again explains, in part at least, why the members of the middle classes turned to Hitler, who promised in unvarnished terms to curtail this item in the government budget.

Throughout the period from 1928 to 1932 the social democrats with their allies, the democrats and the Catholic Center Party, who for reasons of their own, favored the continuance of the security program, fought a long, losing fight. Economic conditions gradually worsened. International trade, upon which Germany largely depended, dropped to the vanishing point.

Building operations virtually ceased. In 1932, seven million people were on the dole. Here, plainly, was a situation that could be met only by revolutionary action, either from the right or from the left.

In 1932 capital could not pay the dole and yet maintain itself. The government either had to capitulate to capital and cut down the dole, or it had to advance to confiscatory measures. Not even the social democratic elements of the government were ready for this step. The result we know. Papen, Schleicher, Hindenburg, acting at the behest of embattled capital, took advantage of the crisis and launched the counter-revolution, looking to the destruction of the Republic. They over-reached themselves and power fell into the hands of the adventurer Hitler.

Hitler continued their work. The doles have been greatly curtailed. The unemployed workers have been drafted into labor armies or into industry at starvation wages. Some three million individuals, former social democrats and communists, have been dropped from the lists of workers, whether employed or unemployed. The International Labor Office at Geneva reports German unemployment figures at 2,764,676. Germany has "recovered". This of course does not mean that the depression is over in Germany. It does not mean that the workers are now on wages. It does mean that in the fight over the dole, capital has won. It has washed its hands of responsibility for the evils it creates. The unemployed must accept slavery and charity.

II.

England went through much the same development, but England does these things in a much more urbane fashion. The post-war history of England is also a history of struggle against unemployment, against loss of trade, against depression and threatened economic collapse. England, like Germany, had even before the war developed a social security program. This program was not so elaborate, nor so far-advanced as that of Germany, but it gave to many observers the same conviction that in England, too, a gradual evolution in

the direction of socialism was taking place. England had accepted, with little disturbance, the drastic tax measures of the Lloyd George regime, and was growing accustomed to taxes of a shilling in the pound, and to death taxes that took away as much as three-quarters of the estate from the legatee.

The war had created in England a feeling of philanthropy toward the under-dog. There was then no outspoken visible objection to the development of the social security program, even under avowedly conservative governments. The government of Bonar Law and of Stanley Baldwin maintained the dole. The first MacDonald government sought to add to the dole a housing program, and an extension of the insurances. In many of the small municipalities of England throughout the twenties, and early thirties, the administration of the poor rates was in the hands of the socialists and laborites, and was, therefore, often liberal and humane.

The first few years following the war were for English capital, a period of recovery and expansion. The inevitable reaction followed in 1921, and 1922, but by 1925 England had recovered so far from this depression that the gold standard was restored, and England seemed launched on another era of prosperity. In spite of this economic spurt, however, unemployment grew, and with it grew a greater degree of industrial discontent than England had ever witnessed.

The first political reflection of this development was the defeat of the Conservatives in 1924, and the surprising "victory" for labor. The general strike of 1926, following upon the bitter struggle in the coal-mining industry, disclosed the seething unrest among the British workers. The return of labor to power in 1929 showed the country swinging away from the conservative influence. Up to this point, while the capitalists groaned under the burden of increased taxes, there was no movement looking to the elimination of the social security program that had been built up since 1906.

But in 1929 came the depression. English industry came to a standstill and now English capital, its foreign trade dead, its internal markets destroyed, and its income down to the vanishing point, found itself, like German capital, face to face

with the necessity of paying the dole to some six or seven million unemployed workers.

The English middle classes felt toward the workers much as did the German middle classes. The over-crowding of the professions, the increase in the number of educated men and women, the vanishing of small business in England, as in Germany, threatened the well-being of the middle class. The one factor present in Germany that was missing from the picture in England, was the inflation. This perhaps accounts for the circumstance that in England there is no Hitler and that the reaction against the social security program has thus far, at least, not been so pronounced. Nevertheless it has been quite definite. In 1931, the Bank of England and the whole of English industry served notice upon MacDonald that he must reduce the budget. He was told that the civil service must take a wage cut, and that the dole must be curtailed by ten per cent. He was further told that the number of those on the dole must be decreased. The result was the downfall of the MacDonald government, the national election of 1931, the return of MacDonald now as the leader of the Tory reaction, and the momentary disintegration of the Labor Party. MacDonald listened to his new master's voice. In every respect the demands of the capitalists were carried out. The reductions in government wages and in the dole were made, and the means test was adopted to reduce the number of recipients of the dole.

In England the end is not yet. Bye-elections since 1931 have shown a decided swing toward labor. Labor in England is now facing the question that Germany faced in 1932. Capital has shown its hand. So far it has only reduced the dole. That it wishes to go further and to make serious inroads on the social security program there can be no doubt. Labor must decide whether it is ready to coerce capital, even to the extent of confiscation when English capital follows the example of German capital, or whether it will follow the example of German labor, and curl up in the face of a determined opposition.

III.

In this country there has been until now no social security program. Even now, the only equivalent of the English and German programs lies in the federal relief service. Unemployment insurance plans, and old age pension plans are still in the stage of public discussion. Nevertheless, American capital is already on the move against any extension of a program of social security, and even against the retention of that degree of social aid to the under-privileged that is already in existence.

To clarify our understanding of the situation it must be made clear that the social outlook of the Roosevelt administration is not very different from that of the socialist-liberal coalition that ruled Germany in the twenties, and from the philosophy that dominated the British Labor Party under MacDonald's influence. It is true that the socialist wing of the German coalition government paid lip service to the ultimate goal of socialism; it is also true that the British Labor Party held forth vague hopes of an ultimate socialization of industry. Actually, however, in both cases, the ultimate hope was postponed to some distant millennium. In the meantime, both parties were concerned with an immediate amelioration of the condition of the working classes, with particular emphasis upon the needs of the unemployed.

The Roosevelt administration pays little attention to millennial hopes, except insofar as it speaks vaguely of the New Deal and of a new social order. In the meantime, it is concerned, for mixed reasons, with the feeding of the unemployed. It has met the necessity with feeble, fumbling and inadequate measures. The dole that it has set up is insufficient, is unfairly administered, is planless. This first step taken in America toward the social acceptance of responsibility for society's casualties was forced upon capitalism as an alternative to chaos or revolution.

Capital under Hoover and Coolidge paid no attention to the problem of the unemployed. When the problem became insistent, capitalists said that the workless were subjects for charity, and that private benevolence must take care of them.

The Roosevelt victory of 1932 came in part as a result of the collapse of private charity, faced with the impossible task of feeding twelve million unemployed workers and their dependents. For the past three years they have been fed, more or less, by the various devices of the Roosevelt administration. The bill for their feeding has been met thus far, not by taxation, but by a process of borrowing. Roosevelt has sought to placate the capitalist enemies of social responsibility by keeping taxes at a moderate level. He is now facing a day of reckoning. For some time capital has raised the question of the ultimate payment of the debt which the Roosevelt administration has been piling up. It is asking embarrassing questions about the ultimate disposition of the debt. It is becoming painfully aware of the interest charges on the debt. That is the underlying reason for the formation of the American Liberty League by Al Smith and Mr. Shouse. Fear of the capital levy, or of very heavy taxes, is the basis for the action of the National Chamber of Commerce in its recent sharp break with the Roosevelt administration.

In other words, the situation in America in the next few years will come to resemble that of Germany in 1932 and of England in 1931. Capital may accept the burden of debt so far piled up, if it is given a free hand in industry and in government in the future. If it is not so released from the restraints of the N. R. A. it will, without question, resort to sabotage. It will refuse to pay further doles, and will find ways and means of securing a government that will do its bidding. If it can not do so by direct methods, if it can not either persuade Mr. Roosevelt to do its bidding, or defeat him with an open representative of its wishes, like Mr. Hoover or Mr. Ogden Mills, it will, here as in Germany, seek devious means for attaining its ends. This may mean the financing of a seemingly left movement, like that of Huey Long or Father Coughlin.

It may seem to the politically uninitiated incomprehensible that capital in search of protection should ally itself with forces that seem to threaten its very existence. The catch lies in the word "seem". The adventures of German capital

with Hitler have demonstrated again what the politically wise have long known, that the antics of the demagogue who uses revolutionary phrases, who has a "catch-all" program, designed to trap all social groups, may be very useful to the controlling powers. Under cover of the seeming revolutionism of the demagogue a clear-seeing and bold capitalism can do what it wishes. The experiences of capital in Italy and in Germany must be illuminating to American capitalists.

They will not resort to an alliance with this type so long as they have reasonable hope either that Mr. Roosevelt can be made to "see reason", or that they can defeat him by the time-honored methods of resorting to the Republican opposition. There is no seeming possibility at this time that a Republican candidate can be found strong enough to defeat Mr. Roosevelt. There is a very strong possibility that capital will find in Mr. Roosevelt himself a demagogue behind whom it can carry out its purposes.

Mr. Roosevelt has proved himself to be, above everything else, an ambitious man, eager for place and power, and also for the applause of the masses. He must know by now that his government is faced with the dilemma that faced Germany and England in by-gone years. He must decide whether he will proceed against capital by means of confiscatory measures in order to provide the funds with which to finance the dole. There is nothing in Mr. Roosevelt's philosophy as expressed in his books, his speeches or his actions, that indicates that he is anything but an upholder of the capitalist system. He has repeatedly told the business world that he is in favor of private profit. His tenderness toward capital is shown by his refusal to use the licensing clause of the N. R. A., and by his failure to meet the relief bill out of taxes. He will side as always with capital, making it seem in the process that he is still the "friend of the people".

The dole will be curtailed and ultimately abandoned. Insofar as it will at that time still remain necessary to provide for unemployed men and women, he will resort to the Hitler methods of forced labor and false statistics. There is reason to believe that capital knows this and that only a few die-hard

elements really hope for the election of a Hoover or a Mills.

In a very real sense, therefore, America is at the cross-roads. There is no group in America today capable of challenging the dictatorship of capital that threatens us. Even less than in Germany or in England is there a force that might advance to the confiscatory measures that alone can defeat capital in the coming crisis. Such a force can be developed but only if the socialist movement succeeds in unifying the isolated rebellious elements that already exist among the workers and farmers into a coherent revolutionary force.

A WORD ABOUT OUR CONTRIBUTORS

REINHOLD NIEBUHR
Professor of Applied Christianity, Union Theological Seminary. Author of "Reflections on the End of an Era", and other books.

EDWIN C. JOHNSON
Secretary of the Committee on Militarism in Education.

MAX ADLER
Former socialist legislator in Austria. Noted Marxian writer. Author of "Weg Weiser", "Marx Studien", "Marx als Denker" and other books.

ALFRED BAKER LEWIS
State Secretary, Socialist Party of Massachusetts.

HENRY BLACK
Member of Faculty of Commonwealth College. Writer on agricultural economics.

Left Socialism

MAX ADLER

Translated by JOHN LESTER LEWINE

I.

NOTHING can more readily arouse the resentment of a representative of right-wing policies within the social democracy—so often identified with the official policies of the party—than an allusion to the existence of an opposition within the party: that of Right and Left. Thus Comrade Wels presiding at the Leipzig Congress declared to the applause of the right wing: "Such things as a Right and a Left do not exist for us." Leaving out of consideration the fact that such a remark proves a singular incapacity to recognize facts or at least to take them into account when they do not suit one, this statement is interesting from another point of view. It enables us to look deeply into the special mentality of right-wing politicians, a mentality foreign to the spirit of comradeship, and which has nothing in common with Marxism. In this pathetic attempt to deny the existence of a leftward tendency, there is at the same time a sort of attack upon it. It may appear paradoxical, but it is unfortunately in conformity with the truth to say that many people of right-wing tendencies within the social democracy consider a leftward tendency something immoral, if not punishable. And one often gathers the impression that these same right-wing socialists who become so terribly indignant over the terrorism exercised against free opinion by the Russian bolsheviks, would proceed with exactly the same intolerance and brutality against its left wing as the Soviet rêgime, in power at the moment, proceeds against its left or right "deviations".

This opposition of Left and Right is not a phenomenon of recent years, the work of some "ambitious marplots" or "irresponsible trouble-makers". It is to be found throughout the entire history of the Marxist workers' movement. The earliest

"left-wingers" in the socialist movement were . . . Marx and Engels. This can be deduced from the correspondence between them and with Sorge, Bernstein, Bebel, etc., and in noting how they were constantly obliged to wage war against opportunism, reformism, and the embourgeoisement of the party. Unfortunately it is not generally known how incessant, passionate, and not always successful a struggle they waged against all of these revisions in the revolutionary, proletarian class struggle, and also against what Marx had already designated as "vulgar democracy" within the social democracy. Since then, and up to our time, that struggle has always remained necessary. Never has it been more necessary than at the present time, that is since the end of the war, since new reformist ideologies within the political as well as the economic domain have taken hold of a large portion of the social democracy.

II.

The distinction Right and Left in the party, therefore, represents nothing more, but likewise nothing less, than the antitheses between two fashions of conceiving the proletariat's emancipation, the road to socialism—the reformist conception and that of the class revolution.

We need not enter here into a history of reformism, which has always ambitiously represented itself as true Marxism. To accomplish this, it was obliged to "revise" Marx' doctrine. Thus there has come about the characteristic identification of "reformism" and "revisionism"—characteristic because reformism was and always has been occupied in denying the rigorous causality or in weakening it somewhere or somehow in its consequences. Even before the war reformism had confused and practically eliminated the clear statement of the class character of the state and of the class duty of the proletariat to abolish this state. Reformism became the direct cause of the collapse of the International at the outbreak of the war in 1914. Reformism during the war in the name of social-patriotism and even sometimes social-imperialism, adopted the war policy of the ruling classes. Everything which tended to induce revo-

lutionary class sentiment and to re-create an international consciousness was condemned by it and persecuted almost as acts of high treason committed by a minority. One need only recall the cry of hate unleashed during the war against comrades like Karl Liebknecht and Fritz Adler! After the war this right-wing socialist attitude in Germany more and more dominated the majority of the proletariat. The fatal consequence followed at the end of the war when that majority was precipitated into the revolution of 1918-19, so "derevolutionized", and in a state so unprepared for proletarian tasks that it even turned against its working-class brothers who were eager to push forward, thus losing and betraying the historic moment for a proletarian revolution by sanguinary fratricidal struggle, and egoistic collaboration in the restoration of the middle class to power.

Concerning all this, we cannot enter into detail. This simple historical recapitulation suffices to show that the rule of right-wing socialism is connected with the sorriest pages in the history of the socialist movement. Let us concern ourselves only with right-wing socialism's latest phase. Nowhere has the saying: "Misfortune makes for prudence" been less a historic truth than in its reference to reformism—for though reformism has caused socialism infinite harm, it has not always pressed so heavily on its champions. After so many instances where the party has degenerated, or the historic character of social democracy has been compromised through right-wing socialism, there has returned to dominance today a reformism more creative of prejudice and error than ever before. For, in view of the division of the proletariat in the Second and Third Internationals, it provides fuel all too easily for all the calumnies of the communists who accuse the social democrats of having abandoned the class struggle, thus rendering extremely difficult our work, both defensive and offensive, in regards to communist demagogy.

III.

What gives particular force to this neo-reformism in enabling it to impress simple souls, is that it represents the left-

ward tendency as a conception at once absolutely dogmatic and unrealistic. It portrays the left socialist as always referring to Marx without having learned from him what is most important: namely, that the theory and practice of the class struggle must adapt itself as new economic and political conditions arise. The Right picture the Left as continuing to mull over old formulae of Marxism which fitted the situations of 1848, or, at best, 1871, but fail to take into account conditions which came into being after Marx' and Engels' demise. As new conditions of this nature, right-wing theory, as enunciated principally by Hilferding and Renner, points out a profound transformation in the nature of present-day economy and the contemporary state. These two transformations are supposed to have one thing in common, that they bring about a diminution of opposition between classes, that they soften the hostility of the proletariat against the capitalist state and instead assure the workers greater economic welfare and a position closer to the state. Thus the class struggle should change from a struggle against the state to a struggle for that part in the state which is the proletariat's due.

All these supposed transformations of capitalist economy and of its state which, frankly, are just so many refutations of Marxism are subsumed by neo-reformism in two fundamental facts: the birth of planned capitalism and the establishment of the democratic republican state.

Under the first heading it is pointed out that capitalism, thanks to an ever increasing intensification and organization, continually eliminates the economic anarchy which formerly reigned in the production and distribution of merchandise. The growing systematization of production causes, so it is said, the unevenness of the mechanism of capitalist economy to disappear more and more; crises become rarer and less dangerous, and the proletariat is enabled to acquire a growing part in an economy which is on the way to stability. It follows that the proletariat, having a greater interest in the growth and strengthening of the nation's economic life, develops a larger comprehension of that economy's necessities. The abrupt, irreconcilable opposition of yesterday between worker

and owner gives way to the realization of certain common interests, and all this, in the end, leads to the development and strengthening of a new form of social collectivity, economic democracy; i.e., the assigning of an always growing role in the determination and control of the economic process to the proletariat.

The factory in a constitutional democracy must necessarily (and here is where they particularly pose as Marxists) be the economic infra-structure upon which the superstructure of the popular republican-democratic state is erected.

According to this theory, the establishment of democratic republics in Central Europe brings about a new situation in regards to the state where the classes must divide political power, and whereby the idea of irreconcilable class struggle loses its historical truth. The working class, by utilizing its democratic rights to hold positions in the state, in parliament as well as administrative posts and the courts, more and more penetrates the former state, which has long since ceased to be the sovereign state but has become transformed into the "free people's state". With the fields of action thus newly acquired by the proletariat, there open for it, on the other hand, new tasks and duties, which it cannot face unless it resolutely accepts this new point of view of considering the state no longer an instrument of class domination but a collective organ of the people. Another necessary attitude in regards to the government follows therefrom: governmental collaboration, in the sense of collaboration with the whole state is the new road by which the proletariat must march. And to this end, it must also be ready intimately to "cooperate with the whole state", to accept collaboration with other classes. For the former directing idea of irreconcilable class conflict must be substituted the national community's will and governmental coalition.

This theory was born at the time the capitalist state was arising from the ravages of war and the shock of revolution. It seemed to gain some support as a result of contemporary circumstances, notably from the political point of view, because, in the beginning, the middle classes seemed disposed

to coalition, as long as they still held necessary the alliance with the social democracy as assurance against extremists of the left and of the right. Another factor was the economic: the reconstruction of capitalist economy. The favorable conditions occasioned, in the beginning, by a wholesale "rationalization", appeared to herald the opening of a new era for capitalism, an era of community of interests between capital and labor. America, that "economic miracle", with its prosperity for workers and owners alike, seemed the striking example of a "New Capitalism" without class struggle, offering at the same time ever increasing profits to the owner and well-being to the worker, leading to working class ascendency without Marxism, even, against Marxism.

IV.

Thus ran the sublime hymn of the "new conditions" "unknown to Marx and Engels" and on the basis of which the Marxist doctrine of the proletariat's irreconcilable class struggle for the overthrow of capitalism was declared refuted. But today there is no longer any need of combatting in detail these errors and illusions enunciated by right-wing socialism. For, meanwhile, history herself has undertaken the task of clearing the ground of these shortsighted errors.

Lately, moreover, there has been little mention of appeals to "new conditions" of planned capitalism and the free democratic state. The world economic crisis of 1929 which continues to become intensified, with no "recovery" in sight, even precipitating America, that "economic paradise", into the slough of large scale unemployment, indicates more and more clearly that it is precisely modern capitalism's organization which accentuates to an unheard of degree its monopolistic character and causes the crisis whereby its economy is so placed that it cannot extricate itself by capitalistic methods. And, at the same time, fascism, everywhere on the advance, but especially in Germany, has revealed that a formal democracy may become a means of legally fortifying and finally inaugurating a fascist dictatorship if the working class does not, in fact, possess the strength outside of parliament to

preserve the existence of democratic rights. Revisionism, happy over the new modifications discovered by it since Marx' day, overlooked but one small detail—that one thing still remains unmodified: capitalist private property in the means of production. And this one unchanged element is just that which constitutes the basis of Marxist theory in economics and in politics.

The chief task of socialist and Marxist educational work has always been the ceaseless direction of attention to this decisive point, and from it to gain a critical and living class-consciousness, which takes the form of left-wing socialism.

Its duty, in the present situation of the working class movement, is above all to combat the illusions, and, in large part, also, the ignorance concerning the role and nature of economic as well as political democracy. For the proletariat, there can be no truly socialist class struggle if it does not understand that all the so-called "economic democracy", already of a very doubtful nature, has necessarily almost reached its absolute limit under the capitalist system. And likewise one idea must be part of the revolutionary working class treasury of ideas: namely that political democracy is indispensable for the class struggle, so that the proletariat must gain it when it has not yet acquired it, and defend it to the last when it is menaced, but that political democracy *per se* is not the road which leads to socialism. It becomes so only if it be not wrongly understood as an instrument to conciliate the classes and bring them together, but only if it be conceived of and utilized as what it has always been historically—a method of struggle to realize the basic interests and the development of oppressed social classes.

Thus alone can the proletariat protect itself from the aberration of reformism which identifies democracy and parliamentarism. On the contrary, its principal task in the democratic struggle must be to assure itself of power outside of parliament. There is no more anti-historic and, moreover, no less intelligent manner of conceiving the function of democracy in a class society than the concept common to reformism: the continued enlargement of democracy, serving to

bring about, in the end, the transition to socialism. For here, too, there is the same limit to political democracy and the middle-class republic: private property in the means of production, which, through the class-differences which it establishes, renders nugatory all real democracy.

Hence follows, finally, a last illusion of reformism, particularly pernicious today: namely that political democracy and dictatorship are opposites. Reformism does not realize, or does not wish to grant, that political democracy, up to the present, has precisely consisted in the exercise, through democratic methods, of a dictatorship of the owning class, and that if fascism has, today, so many partisans it is because the anti-proletarian classes are losing confidence in perpetuating their dictatorship "democratically". Hence, naturally, reformism is unable to assimilate the fundamental dictum of Marxism that it is the proletariat's duty to conquer democracy for itself through the dictatorship of the proletariat. He who interprets victory for democracy as human fraternity, a national commonwealth, a classless society, is, doubtless correct, in its application to the future. But for the present, that is, for the period of class opposition, he must, if he would not be a mere dreamer, recognize that all this may be made possible only through the dictatorship of the proletariat, which is the conquest of political power by the working class, become a majority. For that class alone is interested in eliminating capitalism and establishing a classless society.

V.

It is easily seen from all this that the correct function of the left wing is to waken in the proletariat revolutionary class-consciousness where it does not at present exist, and to keep it active where it is imperiled; in short, to work for the awakening of class consciousness, which was the goal Marx set for himself and which has remained the *leitmotif* of Marxism.

To free the workers from bourgeois mentality, even where it is still clothed with the apparently revolutionary ideology of people's rights and the national community, and to render the proletariat capable of speaking, no longer the

language of bourgeois revolution, but its own, the language of its class aims, this is what working and thinking as a left socialist means.

It results, finally, in the identification of "left-wing socialism" with proletarian socialism, that is, revolutionary class socialism on a Marxist base. It becomes left socialism in the struggle with opportunism, petit-bourgeoisism, and the edulcorations (refinements) of every kind which begin anew from the right, to obscure the luminous line of Marxist theory and policy.

Seen in this light, the favorite reproach made against the left, that of compromising party unity, loses even its historic sense. The unity of the socialist movement is today broken by the division of the Internationals. And, if today, within the social democracy there are even greater masses dissatisfied because of the absence of principles and ideals in the party, it is entirely due to the fact that the left tendency remained within the party. The stronger the leftward tendencies are within the social democracy, the more they keep the living revolutionary elements, and above all, the youth under the party's standard.

The German social democracy must surely regret having misunderstood this truth. The labor of extending and reenforcing the left wing is, in reality, the true and noblest form of "party patriotism". Any other form places a purely formal and empty party unity above its true conscious unity. And, at the same time, the fortification of the leftward tendencies in all the socialist parties offers the best and only hope of regaining the unity of the workers' International, by the rebirth of the spirit of struggle of the international revolutionary social democracy.

This article is a reprint of the French translation (1932) of an article by Max Adler which appeared in the October 15, 1931 issue of *A Ma'sik Ut* (The Other Road) Hungarian socialist magazine, Cluj, Roumania.

Political Democracy—Blind Alley or Road to Power?

ALFRED BAKER LEWIS

I.

THROUGHOUT the world the socialist movement is rent into contending factions by differences of opinion as to whether political democracy offers an adequate method for bringing about socialism. Some believe we can safely put our trust in the maintenance of democratic institutions, and that a socialist government can be voted into office and proceed more or less gradually to socialize our industries. Others insist that democracy is a blind alley because the right to vote and other civil rights would be destroyed by fascism before we can achieve socialism through democratic and peaceful means. Consequently they believe that we must have an armed insurrection to accomplish our aims and should prepare ourselves psychologically and materially to that end.

Difficult as it is to persuade people to vote for socialism, it is even harder to persuade people to resort to violence for that purpose. And a good many who prefer the capitalist system, or think they do, would be willing to support suppressive measures against those who propagandize for change by bullets, and yet would want those who work for peaceful change to be allowed to continue their propaganda. So both the psychological and legal difficulties in the way of the propaganda which asserts "that the workers must prepare for victory not by parliamentary methods but by heavy civil war", are much greater than in the case of a party which believes there is a genuine chance to change things peacefully.

No one but an agent provocateur, therefore, would favor the policy of armed insurrection if he thought that a party intending to socialize banks and industries could achieve power by peaceful and democratic means. On the other hand, few convinced socialists would refuse to resort to armed insurrection under circumstances that offered genuine chance

of success if they were certain that fascism would intervene and make it impossible to obtain control of the government by democratic methods. The difference of opinion even between the two extremes, namely, those who insist on trusting our future to the maintenance of political democracy alone and those who want an armed insurrection, is merely a difference of opinion as to whether we could get control of the government by democratic methods.

So far as Marx in concerned, he can be quoted on both sides. Marx in some places plainly meant revolution by force of arms. But Marx wrote before the working class had the vote in most European countries. Furthermore in Marx's day even liberals in most of the European countries were actively engaged in armed revolution. Nor were armed revolutions hopeless in Marx's day. But conditions of warfare have changed greatly since then, a fact which romantic revolutionists dreaming of the French Revolution and the Paris Commune conveniently forget.

II.

Recent history gives us little hope that we can make the change from capitalism to socialism without fascism destroying political democracy, the labor movement, and such civil rights as free speech, free press, free assemblage and association. In fact, fascism may be defined as a movement on the part of the capitalist class to destroy a growing labor and socialist movement that is on the verge of taking power, by denying political democracy and all the civil rights of the working class and its organizations.

The first country to go fascist was Finland in 1918. When the Russian Czar was overthrown, the Finns declared their independence and established a republic. The Socialist Party was on the verge of taking power under the constitution of that republic when the capitalist class called in the German General Mannerheim and his troops to overthrow the socialist government. Then Italy went fascist. The rapidly growing socialist and labor movement was checked by Mussolini and his blackshirt thugs, democracy was overthrown, and the cooperative, trade union, and socialist movements drowned in the

blood of their active leaders. Still the invincible optimists of democracy said, "That's Italy, it could not happen here." But Germany and Austria went fascist too. Both had constitutions giving more perfect political democracy than we have, with constitutional guarantees of the right to form unions; both had powerful trade union and socialist movements.

Spain overthrew the monarchy and established an advanced democratic constitution as a result of the united action of syndicalists, socialists and liberals who wanted a republic with progressive economic institutions. In the first election held under that constitution the vote of the women, who were overwhelmingly clerical and conservative, returned a reactionary majority with a large fascist wing that openly favored destruction of the democratic republic, the Socialist Party, and the working class organizations. A revolt started by syndicalists and Trotskyite communists and joined by the socialists and the trade union forces was put down in blood. The last vestiges of democracy for the workers there are now disappearing.

Bulgaria, Jugo-Slavia and Esthonia have seen the overthrow of democratic institutions and the outlawing of socialist and communist parties. Poland is on the verge of the same development. So far as we can judge from recent European experience the heavy hand of fascism seems certain to strike down any liberal or socialist movement that is strong enough to be a real danger to capitalism before it can achieve political power.

III.

Those who believe that democracy will offer a safe road to power argue that fascism has taken hold in countries where democracy had not been established long enough to be a real tradition. They point to England and the Scandinavian countries, and claim that they show that where there is a democratic tradition fascism can gain no foothold. This argument has great weight. But American democracy does not stand up under the strain of any hard fought industrial conflict. The constitutional guarantees of free speech and free assemblage, the legislative guarantees of the right peaceably to picket,

all go by the board in important strikes against big companies. The record of the capitalist class is neither peaceful nor democratic.

Our record of bloodshed and judicial frame-ups in industrial struggles dates from the last quarter of the nineteenth century . It began with the great railroad strike in 1877, put down by the militia in the various important railroad centers, with a score of workers killed and hundreds injured; thirteen killed in Reading alone. In 1886 eight labor leaders were framed for murder in the famous Haymarket Riot, which occurred when police broke up a demonstration for the eight-hour day; four of the men were hung, one committed suicide, before the next governor, Altgelt, convinced of the injustice of the verdicts, pardoned and exonerated those who had escaped the gallows. The Frick Steel Company strike at Homestead, Pa., in 1892, marked by the brutality of Pinkerton agents, ended in the death of ten workers. In 1894 the federal government broke the Pullman strike, led by Eugene Debs, by issuing an injunction against the strike, jailing Debs, and moving federal troops into Illinois against the wishes of the governor.

Then came the series of bloody clashes in the Rocky Mountain section at the turn of the century, wherever the Western Federation of Miners undertook militant labor action, such as at Coeur d'Alene, Idaho, in 1893, and at Cripple Creek, Colorado, in 1905. Later Haywood, Moyer, and Pettibone were framed for murder, and were acquitted only after Debs in the *Appeal to Reason* had rallied the entire American labor movement to their defense. In 1911 a most horrible instance of violence occurred at Ludlow, Colorado, when the militia set fire to the tents of the strikers, burning to death eleven women and children; thirty-three persons altogether lost their lives in this coal strike.

All was not quiet in the east. Twelve died in the Pressed Steel Car Company strike at McKees Rocks in 1909 when the Pennsylvania cossacks attempted to quell a strike led by the I. W. W. In 1912 in the textile strike at Lawrence, Massachusetts, three strike leaders were charged with murder

when a picket was killed by the militia,—after a company bomb plot had failed. The police further brutally attacked women and children, but in no case were there any indictments against the police or company agents. In 1915 in New Jersey six pickets were killed by deputies in a strike at a fertilizer plant at Perth Amboy, and eight strikers were killed during the Standard Oil strike at Bayonne.

On the western coast the I. W. W. was constantly harrassed by violence during these war years. When strike speakers sought to land from a boat to conduct a meeting in Everett, Washington, during a saw-mill strike, the police shot and killed five. On Armistice Day 1919 a patriotic mob displayed its adherence to American democracy by raiding the I. W. W. headquarters at Centralia, Washington, and fatalities resulted. Several workers were indicted, one defendant was lynched, the others convicted, while no action was taken against the mob.

The New Deal has not changed this in any way, as evidenced by the organized violence against workers in the San Francisco water-front strike in 1934, the continued oppression of agricultural workers when they attempt to organize in the Imperial Valley, the arrest of Ward Rogers and the terrorism of share-croppers in the south, the killing and wounding of pickets in strikes for union recognition at Rowes Run and Ambridge, Pennsylvania, and the killing of thirteen pickets during the course of the 1934 textile strike.

This is but a partial account of the American tradition of violence in industrial disputes. The courts have rarely taken action against those who commit crimes in behalf of capital. But the history of the American labor movement is replete with judicial frame-ups against labor, from the Haymarket Riot to the Centralia case, from Mooney and Billings to Sacco and Vanzetti.

Surely in the face of such a record only the blindest optimists would confidently expect a capitalist class to maintain the constitutional and legal rights of socialists and workers when our movement becomes strong enough to take over government and industry.

Through this entire period the workers of Great Britain have been engaged in hard-fought industrial conflicts. At one time three-quarters of a million miners struck for nearly six months, and every trade union in England came out on a general sympathetic strike. But no worker has lost his life in industrial strife in Great Britain in seventy-five years. If British democratic traditions argue that peaceful change is possible there, our traditional methods in industrial struggles would indicate that the workers must wade through gore to power in America.

IV.

There are, however, certain factors in our economic life which tend to make it possible for us to escape fascism and change our social system into a cooperative commonwealth without the horrors of civil war. For one thing, the agricultural population in Europe was extremely conservative and opposed to all forms or manifestations of socialism, and proved a fertile breeding ground for fascism. In America this is emphatically not the case. Agricultural radicalism is traditional here.

Farmers of course want to own their own farms, for their farms are their homes. They do not want their farms socialized. But they are "hot" against the banks, the backbone of the capitalist system. The farmer has an equal interest with the city producer in squeezing out unnecessary middlemen and socializing this type of concern which takes a toll of profit at both ends, from agricultural producer and urban consumer. They have an equal interest with the industrial workers in getting cheaper electricity by socializing electric light and power plants. And the farmer's interest in socializing railroads and banks is as strong as that of any group in the community.

Nor is the farmer backward in action when aroused. We have had milk strikes with bitterly determined and militant action by farmers not merely in the farm regions of the middle west, but in New York as well. While industrial workers were protesting against injunctions issued by judges, the farmers

in Iowa actually put a rope around the neck of one judge who issued a foreclosure and eviction order, until he withdrew his order. They nullified foreclosures by penny sales, until the legislatures of the farm states granted a moratorium on such foreclosures.

The American middle class, too, is not the safe harbor and fertile breeding ground for fascism that it was in some of the European countries. Unlike European countries, the class barriers between working class and middle class here are weak and unimportant. The occasional seepage from class to class in Europe is in America an almost unimpeded flow. Any movement which strongly attracts the workers will have hosts of supporters and sympathizers in the middle class. Professional and white collar workers are starting to organize into regular labor unions. The American Federation of Teachers was the first union of the professional group to join the A. F. of L., and it is among the more progressive unions in the Federation. The engineers, architects and draftsmen have started a union. Newspaper men have formed a guild and have conducted a successful strike at Newark, N. J.

The same is true of the church. As far as the Protestants are concerned, the clergymen as a whole are far more to the left than the general mass of voters. This is clearly shown in such questionnaires as that prepared by *The World Tomorrow*. Whenever the ministers of the Protestant denominations get off by themselves in church conventions, away from the watchful eyes of the boards of trustees, they resolve with increasing vigor and clarity against the capitalist system. The younger clergy are definitely turning socialist in substantial numbers.

Since neither church groups, farmers, nor middle class offer as good a field for recruiting fascist bands as they did in Europe, any fascist movement that may get started in this country would have to be much more openly and frankly a move on the part of the big bankers and employers. This means that it would have to forfeit its mass appeal and accordingly be far less dangerous.

We cannot be dogmatic about the road to socialist power

in this country. Only the blindest optimist would bid us rely on the maintenance of democracy and civil rights by our class enemies, when the socialist forces grow strong enough to be a real threat. The record of violence and illegality by the capitalist side in industrial disputes is too vivid and complete to make such easy optimism possible. And he who would predict that only armed insurrection can forestall fascism and accomplish our aims before a colored shirted bogeyman will get us, overlooks the fact that the farmers will prove willing and enthusiastic allies, if properly approached, on such problems as socialization of banks, transportation, electric power and other important industries. At the same time the nearly complete impossibility of winning an armed uprising against an army with modern equipment bids us to grasp at any chance to make our change peaceably.

It is plain that we should adhere to our declared intention of seeking to make the change to socialism democratically. If we assert and constantly reiterate that violence is inevitable and that therefore we should shoot it out with the capitalists at the first favorable opportunity, the capitalist class will certainly spray us with machine gun bullets as soon as enough of them seriously believe that we mean business.

On the other hand, we should start preparing to protect our civil rights and our right to vote by stronger methods, such as the general strike. This means, for one thing, that organized labor cannot be antagonized by dual union movements. We must keep doggedly to the task of winning organized labor to socialism, no matter how conservative unionists may be. We must be psychologically prepared to take power if we can during a period of crisis and chaos. Such a situation may arise here as it did in the defeated European countries after the war. If only to forestall similar attempts, which we may be certain will be made by the capitalist class during such a period, we must be prepared to act if we are strong enough to have a real chance for success. We know from the bloody record of the capitalist class in America that we cannot expect it to remain peacefully legal during such a period of crises or chaos.

Agriculture in a Functional Society

HENRY BLACK

I.

THE high degree of mechanization in all major industries, the increasingly close interdependence of all branches of productive mechanism, necessitates close coördination and central control of all industry. The economic machinery broke down in 1929 largely because of a lack of that control. The production of each commodity must be nicely adjusted to the demand for it; industry cannot function at all unless each branch is working smoothly, without friction with other parts. This can be accomplished only by placing considerable power in the hands of some social planning agency. It is obvious that all branches of agriculture must come within the scope of this directing agency. Production of all important agricultural commodities will have to be adjusted to actual needs. Agricultural prices must be kept in line with prices of other commodities. Investments in farm buildings and in machinery, which total hundreds of millions of dollars each year, will have to be predicted and controlled. A functional economy is one in which all branches of industry are made to work together for the social good; in such a society practically every economic aspect of agricultural activity will have to be under social control.

Society is vitally interested in the conservation of natural resources and the combatting of destructive diseases. The prosperity of agriculture is essential to the welfare of the country, but our professional "farm-relievers" are inclined to overlook the fact that society has a strong interest in how farms are operated.

One of the most serious conservation problems confronting us is that of soil erosion; erosion affects to an extent great enough to be of immediate importance, at least two-thirds of

the farm land in the country. It is probably not an exaggeration to say that the failure to solve the problem will lead to national decline.* The control of soil erosion is not only a matter of converting certain areas to pasture or forest, but a problem of altering routine, day-to-day practices on the farm. The situation is similar as regards the control of insects and plant or animal diseases. Not only has the nation a real concern with the control of bovine tuberculosis or the arsenical residue on apples, but the very nature of these problems necessitates a national rather than an individual or local attack. Here, too, any solution will require greater social control of the processes of production and marketing. Whether we like the prospect or not, the pressure of events will bring an increasing degree of social control over the technique of all agricultural work.

The necessity for improving rural working, living, and social conditions will bring greater social control of agricultural activities. The extremely poor living conditions prevailing in most agricultural areas are so common that we have become callous to them. Long hours and low pay are just as bad on the farm as in the shop. Child labor in the beet fields is as much a crime as at a loom. Agricultural workers and their families are as much entitled to adequate homes, schools, and health facilities as are city people. An enormous amount of work must be done in raising rural living conditions. Labor legislation will have to be extended to agricultural work, which is now largely exempt. No one can seriously contemplate the possibility of city workers laboring 25 or 30 hours a week (as it seems probable they will within a very few years) while agriculturalists labor 60 or 70 hours a week. Even if common justice did not force a readjustment the difficulties of keeping labor on the land would do so.

But, it will be objected, the farmer, if he is to take directions from the central planning agency, get orders from conservation agencies in combatting erosion or controlling diseases and be told by a Labor Department how much to pay his help

* See article by H. H. Bennett in *Scientific Monthly*, Nov. 1932.

and when, if at all, his children may do farm work, will become nothing more than a hired manager. This brings up another fundamental question. Can the family system of farming survive? Is it worth saving?

The family system of farming has been the subject of an immense amount of ballyhoo and sermonizing. Far from regretting the anarchistic competition in agriculture, we boast that here, at least, is a field where the individual enterpriser can do as he pleases. "The nation needs the stabilizing influence of a large rural population." In a recent issue of *Scribner's Magazine,* Walter W. Liggett gravely informed us that at least fifty per cent of the country's population should be on farms. A large amount of federal and state legislation has for its confessed purpose the strengthening and maintaining of the system. Our whole American tradition stands firmly behind the idea of the sacredness of the independent family farm.

Yet it is difficult to find any good reason for this faith in an institution so out of keeping with other tendencies in our economic life. A particular economic set up is justified only as long as it performs its functions satisfactorily. Far from being at all satisfactory, the small independent farm has, as we have noted, led to over-production, waste, poverty, and chaos. It neither produces goods cheaply, nor provides well for its workers and their families. A change is most certainly needed.

II.

How will our farms be organized in an economy operated for use rather than profit? Obviously no single general answer can be given. What will apply to an extensive, highly mechanized wheat farm in the northwest certainly will not fit an area devoted to the intensive cultivation of fresh vegetables. The cotton areas will require types of organization quite different from those in the corn belt. It is not a problem of working out some general, all-inclusive scheme, but rather finding a variety of specific solutions to fit specific situations. Farm organization will be influenced not only by soil, climate, and crops grown, but by previous history, relations with other industries,

and so forth. Much experimentation will be necessary, mistakes will be inevitable. Still an examination of the various types of farm organization in use today, their strengths and weaknesses, may give us some idea of the probable future organization of agriculture.

"Corporation-farming", the operation in single units of thousands or tens of thousands of acres of land, is the first possibility which comes to mind. Even now in the Northwest and Southwest a number of these "giant" farms, of which the Campbell farms in Montana and the Price farm in Texas are the most noted, are in operation. Up to 1930 some of them were quite successful. In sections where large areas of relatively level and unbroken land are devoted to one or two crops, the "giant" farm may well be the most suitable. It is a common belief among American students that the large corporation farm is a complete failure, but it is to be remembered that thus far it has had to compete with the family farm which pays low wages, utilizes the labor of women and children, neglects living conditions, and keeps very poor accounts. It is entirely probable, that if the family farm were compelled to raise wages, shorten hours, and eliminate unpaid family labor the corporation would prove to be the more efficient.

The corporation farm does have some limitations. In areas where soil and topography vary considerably it might be difficult to manage a single very large unit from one control point. Where a variety of crops are grown, complexities of management might exceed present experience. Too, difficulties in controlling diseases might place limits on the number of animals or poultry which could be efficiently handled in a single unit.

"Chain-farming" is another recent development which gives much promise. Under this plan each of a group of farms of ordinary size is operated by a tenant or foreman under the direction of a central office which handles all buying, marketing and financing. Where they have been tried, farm chains have shown several advantages; since the operating units (which, by the way, are seldom contiguous), are of ordinary size, current farm management techniques can be used

and closer adaptation to local variations is possible. The centralization of financial and marketing functions brings several economies. A number of these farm chains are in operation in various parts of the country.

Another possibility, little explored at present, lies in the extension of coöperative relationships to cover all farm activities. Buying and marketing coöperatives have been quite successful in the United States, and in some cases the principle has been extended to the ownership of expensive machinery and breeding animals. It is not improbable that in sections where considerable areas are devoted to specialized and intensive farming, poultry or vegetables, for example, the coöperative idea might be extended to include all farming operations.

Still another possibility is the operation of farms as subsidiaries of other industries. Today, though we seldom think of them, many farms are operated by colleges, prisons, asylums and occasionally in connection with commercial establishments. It is occasionally suggested that cities should take over the retail distribution of milk. Why could they not also take over the production end of the dairy business, operating dairy farms as they now operate water systems, electric plants, or markets? Specialized poultry or vegetable farms might also be operated by cities; or farms might be run in connection with manufacturing plants which use agricultural goods as raw materials. The change in the relationship of industries resulting from socialization will doubtless open up possibilities for entirely new types of farm organization. The fundamental differences between agricultural and factory work necessitate entirely new managerial techniques for socialized farming.

It is clear from the above discussion that in this sort of socialized economy agricultural workers will usually be salaried or wage-earning employees, having about the same relation to their job as a factory mechanic does to his. Doubtless they will be organized into labor unions. Quite probably such farm workers' unions will take part, not only in the management of farms, but in the work of general planning and de-

termining of goals; they might have authority in administration of labor laws as they apply in farm work.

As agriculture becomes organized into larger units there will develop numerous associations of farm managers, societies of specialists, and regional and national trade associations. Like the labor unions these bodies will probably have an active part in economic and social planning, possibly they will take over many of the functions now performed by market reporting services, statistical agencies, and inspection services.

The problem of the organization of marketing and distributing services falls outside our field. Perhaps this work will be done by publicly-owned regional or national trusts or by coöperatives. Agricultural research will doubtless be carried on much as at present, by the state and federal governments. They are the only agencies possessing the stability, the independence, and the financial resources necessary for adequate research work.

Agricultural reorganization will take many years; much experimenting will be needed. How can we span this transitional period? What can be done for working farmers during the period of reorganization?

There is little possibility that anything can be done under the present regime. State and national governments are committed to the policy of preserving the family farm, no matter how great the cost to society or to the family. It might be possible to force a speeding up of work on the topographic and soil maps of the United States which will show fundamental data about topography and soils essential to any planning, but that is a minor administrative matter. Once a socialist organization gets into power, it can begin by working land held by the states through tax delinquency. Much of this land is unfit for farming, but there are probably considerable areas of good land which could be put to use immediately. Such areas might be farmed by coöperatives or by specially chartered public corporations. Individual cities or towns might take over dairy and vegetable farms. In view of the increasing chaos in the dairy industry some such action as this seems rather probable.

Of course, the task of creating and directing socialized agricultural units will fall most heavily on the federal government. The government might charter or sponsor a number of experimental farm corporations in various parts of the country and take three or four years to test each. Whether or not such a course could be followed will depend on the extent of confusion and emergency attending the change; possibly the situation will be such as to require most vigorous emergency action with little time for experimenting. Socialists should give much critical thought to this problem.

But even with the most aggressive program of socialization, the small farmer will be a dominant factor for many years. A revolutionary government cannot afford to overlook him. Much will have to be done to strengthen his position, and to improve his level of living. The socialization of transportation facilities, the elimination of high finance and private graft, will make possible a considerable reduction in freight rates, and an improvement of his marketing facilities, a matter of immediate interest to all farmers. Similarly, the socialization of the great commodity markets and the banks will greatly aid all farm people.

Of equal importance would be a shift in rural tax burdens, the reorganization of our chaotic system of local government, and the strengthening of rural social services. The transference of a large part of the farm tax burden to incomes and inheritances and from buildings, livestock, and equipment to land values, would remove a heavy burden. The consolidation and reorganization of local governmental units, the regrouping of public functions would aid rural dwellers immensely. Along with this governmental reorganization would naturally go a strengthening and extension of rural educational, medical, and recreational facilities. All of this will have to be done eventually, and to a considerable extent it could be done in advance of the change in farm organization proper. Doubtless heavy subsidies from the central governmnt would be required.

Not only the farmer himself, but numerous city people are convinced that he is the cornerstone of society. Persuading farmers and their families, a third of the population, that times

have changed, and that they will be in all ways better off if working for a socialist trust or corporation will be one of the problems of the new society. It is not merely a question of appealing to economic motives; ideas of "independence" and "freedom" play a large part in human action. That such ideas do not fit reality is irrelevant; men do not change their beliefs merely because they are untrue. The redistribution of workers among different industries following socialization will help to break down old traditions; the shortening of hours in industry will result in a renewal of the farm to city migration. The application of labor legislation to agriculture will help, as will also the improvement of rural schools and recreation centers. Aside from their economic influence, such things have a subtle effect on the psychology of people. Of course, many cases of individual hardship, painful breaking of ties, will be inevitable, but it will be incumbent on the new society to make the change with as little human cost as possible.

Notes on Labor in Nazi Germany

HARRY W. LAIDLER

IF a worker remains out of all radical or liberal agitation; if he obeys the iron laws of the dictatorship and merely seeks to take part in the working life of Germany, what can we say of his working conditions? What security has he? What wages does he receive? Herr Hitler, prior to his enthronement as the ruler of the German totalitarian state, maintained that his heart went out to the common people; that he believed in the redistribution of wealth, and that everyone under Nazism would be guaranteed the necessities of life. To what extent are these promises being carried out?

In the first place, a glance over wage rates in Germany indicates that wages are declining under Hitler. The Paris Office of the International Federation of Trade Unions estimated last month that the average annual wage of the workers in the Siemens Company, manufacturers of electrical equipment, decreased from 1753 marks in 1932, before Hitler came into power, to 1436 marks in 1934, a decrease of about 18 per cent. This average, it must be borne in mind, includes the wages paid to administrative workers and directors, so that the actual wages received by the manual workers and clerks are much lower. In fact, according to official figures, the average wage of the German worker in 1934 was $9.50 a week, or about $7.75 a week (a little over $400 a year) after all deductions were made.

A recent correspondent for the New York Post claimed that wages fell on the average during Hitler's rule about 30 per cent. Unskilled workers, he claimed, were getting about $8 a week as compared with $10.80 a couple of years before; skilled workers, $10, as compared with $19.20 and construction workers, about $20, as compared with nearly $35.00.

While wages have been tobogganing down, prices of goods have been skyrocketing up as a result of the shortage of raw

material, the squandering of the nation's resources on armaments and on the unnecessary and expensive Nazi bureaucracy, the government-fostered internal boom and the general international uncertainty, resulting in large part from Hitler's policies.

Vegetables have gone up 25 per cent; potatoes have ranged as much as 80 per cent higher; the price of butter has almost doubled, and that of split peas almost trebled. Wages in fact have reached a virtual starvation level. This is the way that the German fascist regime is bringing prosperity to the masses!

In the old days, when an attempt was made to lower wages, the workers could protest through their unions. Today, with strikes forbidden, this remedy is denied to them, and discontent is increasing as the days and the weeks pass by.

But how about work? Production, as in other countries, has gone up somewhat, due in considerable part to the expansion of the munition industry, although foreign trade is the lowest it has been in the last ten years and only about ¾ of its pre-Hitler level.

As to unemployment, it is a difficult thing to get accurate statistics on this subject. The International Labor Office declared that, in March, 1935, there were 2,764,676 out of jobs, an increase of about a half million over the low point of October, but a decrease of between two and three million from the high point of 1932. The *New York Times,* however, maintains that the actual number of unemployed approximates around six million. For it is understood that the Nazis, in making their case for the diminution of unemployment, do not include among the registered unemployed that vast army of men and women in the so-called voluntary labor corps service and among the emergency farm and relief laborers. Many others who are listed as employed have taken the places of Jewish political refugees, as well as of married women who have been ousted by the thousands by the Nazis. In the past many have been given temporary employment in public works projects that will not be renewed this year.

The voluntary Labor Service is a misnomer. Regulations for the enforcement of discipline in this service have recently been published. They appear to be strikingly similar to those in the Army Crime Book.

Some time ago discipline was maintained in these corps through extra work and the allotment of disagreeable fatigues, and, where a man proved unsuitable for the corps, he was expelled. But now the punishment meted out consists of confinement to barracks and incarceration in prison. The corps is nominally voluntary but in fact it is compulsory. Recently an order was issued by the government to all employers requesting a return of all single male employees with certain exceptions up to the age limit of 25, with the object of eventually enlisting them in the corps. Exceptions on a considerable scale are allowed, for apprentices and such workers whose training would be interfered with by enlistment in the corps, and young men who have dependents, such as parents or a wife, are also exempted.

The corps is one of the main parts of the government's campaign against unemployment, since the jobs temporarily vacated by the young men are given to unemployed older men. It has become almost impossible for a young man under 25 to get a job without having gone through the corps and having been given a ticket certifying that he has performed his labor service satisfactorily.

And then there are the Concentration Camps where conditions of penal servitude exist. The *Manchester Guardian* recently published the rules and regulations in the Lichtenberg Concentration Camp. The rules are elaborate and brutal. I shall mention only a few. The spirit of them is shown from the following sentence in the preamble. "Tolerance," it declares, "signifies weakness. . . . To the politically minded agitator and intellectual sedition-mongers—of no matter what shade of opinion—we would say—'Look out that you don't get caught, or you will find yourselves seized by the throat and reduced to silence." The catalogue of offenses for which penalties ranging from confinement in the cell to hanging, are prescribed. If you don't leave your dormitories promptly, the

campus is told, or if you snatch your food too quickly when it is being distributed, you may be confined for three days in the cell. If you are found out of bed after lights are declared out, or fail to comply with orders, you are confined for five days. If you are absent from a roll call, or a parade, without due cause, you will be given five days of confinement, followed by several weeks of penal labor. If you commit the terrible offense of collecting signatures with a view to making a complaint, or of writing more than two letters or two postcards in one month, it is eight days' confinement for you. Disrespectful remarks about a member of the Secret State Police subject you, in addition to eight days of confinement, to 25 strokes with a stick at the beginning of your confinement and 25 strokes at its end.

Should you go out of the orbit of the little dictators within the prison called the Concentration Camp, and make disrespectful remarks about the Nazi leaders, the state, the government , the authorities or the existing institutions, or if you should dare to glorify Marxist or liberal leaders, or any of the parties connected with the "infamous" November republic, or if you should give information concerning what has transpired in the Concentration Camps, or in any way create dissatisfaction among the public, you get the strokes plus 14 days of confinement.

Other so-called crimes in the eyes of the Nazi tyrants are punished by worse sentences. Should funds derived from the "red" prisoners' aid be sent to you, or should you confide your wrongs to your minister, you may be subject to 42 days confinement or to permanent solitary confinement.

The regulations then declare under what conditions the death sentence will be imposed. Any person in the camp who talks politics, or utters remarks calculated to arouse the passions of his hearers, or joins groups with such an object in view, or smuggles any secret missives out of camp, hides an article in his clothes or tries in any way to get in touch with the outside world, for the purpose of agitation, will be hanged as an agitator. And so the rules go on, pages and pages of them, regulations promulgated not in the middle ages, but in

the year 1935 under the benign rule of that self-styled mighty friend of the common people, Herr Adolph Hitler!

The social insurance system, furthermore, is being continuously contracted. Unemployment insurance benefits, originally set at 80 marks a month in 1927, have gradually been pared to 30 marks. As it is, less than one tenth of those reported as unemployed receive insurance benefits. The remainder have been shifted to municipal welfare and emergency relief. One of the chief Nazi apologists, and an arch opponent of organized labor by the way, has written a bitter attack on health insurance now circulated by the thousands by some of our foremost medical societies.

To labor, the present regime in Germany means increasing insecurity. It means increasingly low wages and economic disintegration. It means conscripted labor, prison camps and penal servitude. It means suppression of all genuine workers, political, economic and cultural organizations; suppression of strikes, of free speech, free assembly and free press. And it means increasing military ventures, the logical conclusion of which is further wars, which may well carry with them a new period of dark ages for Europe.

Book Reviews

SOCIALIZING OUR DEMOCRACY

By Harry W. Laidler, Harper Brothers, N. Y., Price, $3.00.

In this new book Dr. Harry W. Laidler pursues with commendable persistency his painstaking job of popularizing, explaining and discussing socialist ideas and programs.

For a socialist—I mean for a well-read socialist—there is not much that is new in this book, although even the best informed will find in it an exceptional wealth of material collected from a great variety of sources, kept together by the force of a dominant idea, sewn by a strong logic and exposed with an enchanting clarity.

For the laymen—for those, I mean, who have a very confused idea about socialism, reforms and revolution, democracy and dictatorship, economic collectivism and "rugged individualism"—the book is priceless.

And it is to this class of people, to the so-called intellectuals, to the confused and vague liberals, that "Socializing Our Democracy" appeals. This is not a superfluous task.

In the crisis that is shaking the capitalistic society, the position of the intellectual middle class is very important. The political ignorance of that class is the greatest danger for the success of the proletarian revolution. Fascism in Italy, Germany and everywhere has thrived on it. It is absolutely necessary for the industrial workers to have an ally not only in the farmers but in the intellectual middle class as well, which now may more properly be called the intellectual proletariat.

But how reach them? The pure economic interest, which has been the great source of the industrial workers' movement, does not appeal to the farmer in the same simple direct way. Social relations and social prejudices, cultural links and a deeply set individualism are formidable hindrances to the enlistment of the intellectual middle-class in the fighting army of the socialist workers.

The communists have made some inroads among some of the intellectuals—artists, writers, and literary critics most of them—through an emotional appeal. They have gained many sympathizers among them, but very few militants.

The socialist should try to win them through reason; the intellectual weapons should be the most efficient. Books like those Harry W. Laidler has written and this one just published are, in my opinion, the kind of books we should help to circulate among the illustrious ignoramuses of the intellectual guild.

Even a short summary of "Socializing our Democracy" is difficult in the short space I am allowed to use in reviewing it.

It is sufficient to state that there is not a problem relating to socialism—tactical or programatical, regarding the political framework or the economic structure of our dreamed

of society—which is not projected and analyzed. An exceptionally fascinating chapter is the fifth: "Will there be a revolution?" Dr. Laidler states with great fairness all the arguments of pure logic and factual history for and against the thesis of the violent overthrow of the capitalist regime. He openly shows his sympathy for a "peaceful change" and does not spare any pains in trying to convince the readers that, in the United States at least, a social revolution is possible and even probable without an armed uprising of the masses with all the fearful consequences that such a method would imply; but at the same time he does not exclude absolutely the possibility of a violent catastrophe. The author's thought in the matter is thus summarized: " . . . while it is impossible to prophesy with certainty whether the change from capitalism to socialism will be a peaceful or a violent one, there are many forces at work which point to a genuine possibility of a peaceful change in this country, and the revolutionary movement should strive with might and main to make this possibility an increasing probability as time goes on."

Unfortunately, in making a peaceful revolution as in making love, the consensus of at least two parties is necessary. Socialists may strive as much as they can to achieve a "peaceful change in this country" but they must take into account the mood of the other party: the capitalists. In this country, no less than in any other, whenever their purse has been scratched, they have shown a disposition that no possible amount of optimism can call mild or peaceful.

The part of the book which deals with practical problems of organization of the new society, although in some way utopian, is of great propaganda value and constitutes a persuasive and very efficient defense of the socialist aims and purposes.

VINCENZO VACIRCA

CHANTS FOR THE NEW TIME

By David P. Berenberg, and two poems by Manuel Maples Arce. John W. Wheelwright, Boston. 25 cents.

A familiar device for children's amusement is a bound

series of cartoons, which when flipped rapidly give the impression of moving figures. Comrade Berenberg used a similar device in these chants, flipping before our eyes a hurried succession of word-pictures of modern society in motion. Each separate picture is a cartoon in words, easily identifiable, with its elimination of the superfluous, its inclusion of the barest essentials. But Berenberg has not written for children, and not for amusement.

Let us sing, the chants say, of all life and of living men. A chant "for the millions lost in the stone" of the cities, and a chant for the grim men and grim women of the red-horizened farm lands. Men of high and low degree, children and soldiers, safe-crackers and rebels, smart lawyers and raw labor—these taken together, says the poet, are your civilization.

Berenberg has written for a mass audience. A short, nervous line and a simple verse form make for easy reading. If poetry is to be revived for the garden variety of reader, this is one of the forms it can happily take. Yet the simplicity of the form creates its limitations. The short line, while tripping and gay in "A Chant for Free Sundays", and powerful in "A Chant for the Robot", inevitably becomes monotonous. There is little freedom in imagery; no daring in tonal devices. As suggested in a note, "Chants for the New Time" should make interesting material for mass recitation.

Included in this booklet are two poems by the Mexican Stridentist Manuel Maples Arce. Here the pendulum swings to the other extreme. Imagery runs rampant to the point of obscurity. If Berenberg's chants address themselves to a mass audience, Arce's appeal is to the decipherer of the esoteric.

The booklet, one of the "Poems for a Dime" series, is pleasingly set up and printed. It is published by John Wheelwright of the staff of *Arise.*

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