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Imperialism Shifts The Scales

by Devere Allen

LIBERAL moralists, leaning heavily on the aphorisms of Pope, used to be fond of quoting his famous dictum on vice, which

. . . seen too oft, familiar with her face,
We first endure, then pity, then embrace.

In this mood, liberal supporters of capitalist democracy, clinging to it for what warmth can be gained in a gusty world, were chilled to the marrow by the *rapprochement* undertaken between Neville Chamberlain and the fascist dictatorships of the "Rome-Berlin axis". Congressman Kopplemann of Connecticut, with understandable indignation, declared hotly that the United States had been double-crossed. Communists resented the affront to their god, Stalin, and their demi-god, Roosevelt. The ardent advocates of "collective security", at seeing Britain, the stronghold of their fancied system, turn and declare the League sanctions a dead issue, were as heartbroken as jilted lovers.

Yet everybody who was not a victim of oversimplification knew that catch-words like "axis" and "collective security" exaggerate to say the least, the congeries of conflicting aims and interests that underlie the alliances of this modern world; and that, besides, there are basic similarities between the fascist powers and the democracies.

For that matter, the "surprise" move by Hitler toward Austria and that of Chamberlain toward Rome and Berlin, were well known in advance throughout the European chancellories; Hitler's *coup* was anticipated by at least ten days in numerous European newspapers, and as early as February 10th the Belgian Minister of State made a plea in the Chamber for a "realistic" policy toward Italy.

A labor spokesman in reactionary Hungary has brilliantly characterized the Rome-Berlin axis as not made of steel but of some *ersatz* (synthetic substitute) material. The satisfaction in Rome when Schuschnigg tried to make a last gesture of defiance and contend that Austria was still independent is a case in point; the disgruntlement of German-speaking minorities in the Italian Tyrol is another; more fundamental is the fact that either Hitler or Mussolini may make economic gain from a *putsch* for prestige or power to the east, but that both of them cannot. As Hitler asserted in *Mein Kampf*, and Nazi policy has consistently indicated ever since, friendship with England is the prime essential in a series of steps the next of which—who can blame French nervousness?—is an onslaught (economic, diplomatic and perhaps even military) on France. Likewise Mussolini has far more to gain from a union with England than with Germany, and England more from Italy than France, for the latter in no way is a menace to the Indian life line as Mussolini is. Nor does France, as does Mussolini, have an institute of Asiatic fascism, whose disciples, gathered at no little expense from everywhere in Asia, are sent back from Rome into India, Arabia, and Iran, like so many typhoid carriers, to infect these regions with anti-British sentiment.

Marxists cannot expect to be always right by being always cynical in their evaluations of capitalist democracy and its aims; it was the teaching of Marx and Engels that economic factors are the ultimate causes, not the exclusive ones, in social action. But the Marxist has rightly understood that the "necessity which asserts itself under the form of contingency", as Engels once called it, is a factor that is certain to shape the foreign policies of democratic states so long as these are based on capitalist industry and commerce. To those who comprehend the relative similarity between fascist economics and the functional imperatives of democratic capitalism, the Chamberlain move was not so much a surprise reversal as a climatic *dénouement*.

Nor was it the first. For months the facts behind the execution of Tukhachevsky and the other Soviet generals could only be conjectured; today it is reasonably clear that these military leaders with that blunt realism and independence of social theory for which the military are noted, thought the U.S.S.R. would be safer if a

rapprochement were effected with the German army, while Hitler's recent purge of the *reichswehr* got rid of certain old-time officers notoriously in favor of peace with the Soviets.

For that matter, paradoxical though it may seem, the reasons why British capitalism—which really does not adore fascism, Lord Rothermere and Oswald Mosley notwithstanding—can make peace with fascist dictators are essentially the same reasons that forced them, while expressing a certain sincere horror of the Soviet state, and not wishing to strengthen it, to seek consessions in the 'twenties which at once aided the Soviet government and lined their own pockets.

By recalling these underlying facts, the bewildered observer will be able, perhaps, to grasp events in the rapidly-shifting scene of foreign affairs and find fewer contradictions in the official behavior of various governments involved in new upheavals.

Certain important developments in the march of Germany and Italy toward economic autarchy had their share in motivating the new re-alignment. While the recently-invented methods of producing motor fuels from heavy oil, coal, etc., are comparatively expensive, Germany has made startling progress, and last year, out of a total consumption of 2,600,000 tons, almost two-thirds were produced from alcohol, benzol, synthetic gasoline, and intensive working of the limited German fields of crude oil. The process is being continually accelerated. Mussolini is working feverishly toward the same end, not without some success. There is no shortage of the raw materials needed by the Nazis, thanks to the imports from the "democratic" lands; imports of iron ore increased 32 per cent from 1936 to 1937, pig iron 120 per cent, scrap 190 per cent; copper ore, 185 per cent, rubber 77 per cent, lead 66 per cent, and so on, through a long list of supplies necessary for purposes of war.

There are those who must personalize the evils of this world if their indignation is to be aroused. They can look with complacency on the economic order which results inevitably in the use of imperialistic violence against subject peoples and class violence against the workers, but when a dramatic episode illuminates the starker aspects of capitalism they are stirred to passionate protest. Thus we tend to see a Haile Selassie as the champion of the oppressed masses—a Selassie who ruthlessly subjugated the Galla tribes, who was largest stockholder in an Italian cheese factory, who, in collaboration with a French director and an Italian director, ran a platinum mine all through the Ethiopian War—a mine which, needless to say, was never once bombed.

Thus a European cartoonist depicts a Chinese running madly from a pursuing Japanese army, while Great Britain, France and the United States are obviously preparing to intervene; Haile Selassie, looking on, says sadly to the Chinese victim, "So they are going to help you, too." And yet we forget the loot of China by these three democratic powers, and we are apt to consider ourselves callously pro-Japanese if we temper our abhorrence of Japanese conduct in China by recalling that Chiang Kai-shek has been no respecter of democracy at home, sent coolies to dig roads for Mussolini in Ethiopia, prohibited criticism of the Ethiopian conquest, and was rewarded by the opening up or the first direct cable from Italy to China and by the elevation ot Mussolini's representative in China to the status of an ambassador. And so, shamed or forgetful, or resorting to those naive pigeonholes which simplify life in a confused world, we label China a "defender of democracy against fascist aggression," we look to the Soviet government, Great Britain, France, and the United States as allies in the cause of freedom against the beastly fascist foes of all that is sacred to our dreams if not our actual state of being. Until, that is, a Neville Chamberlain, not acting at all like a traitor to civilization, but precisely in true capitalist democratic fashion, jars us awake and lets us see things we had somehow all but completely lost to sight.

To explain the role of the democratic powers in confirming Japan's imperialists in their cynism is not to condone Japanese imperialism itself; but it is to let light in on obscured areas of international relations. We could begin at Versailles, when the Japanese delegation pressed for an amendment to the Covenant guaranteeing "to all alien nationals of States Members of the League, equal and just treatment in every respect, making no distinctions, either in law or fact, on account of their race or nationality." But in this eminently sound proposal, the Japanese got nowhere. The British, who have ten subjects somewhere in the world for every man, woman and child at home, thought affrightedly of India. The French, with imperialist possessions outside their own territory twenty-one times as large (notwithstanding a population that remains even stable only because of Italian immigration in the south-east) shuddered as they remembered the Senegalese and Moroccans who had just fought for them on the Western Front. The Americans, who voted in the negative, remembered that while Woodrow Wilson was President, Jim Crow also ruled in much of our territory.

The Japanese, having had Shantung benevolently handed over to them by Britain in the secret treaties of 1915, found to their dismay that the British now looked the other way while the Chinese, by an effective youth crusade and a devastating boycott, forced them to give back the province to its owners.

Came 1921 and the Washington Conference for the Limitation of Arms. After the most vicious sort of preliminary shenanigan among the democratic powers, by which each sought secret advantage at the expense of all the others, the Conference got under way. Eventually Japan struggled desperately for a naval ratio of 10-10-7, but confidential cables from Tokyo to the Japanese delegates told them that in a pinch they must give in and consent to a ratio of 5-5-3 (as among the relative strengths of Great Britain, the United States and Japan)

rather than assume responsibility for a failure of the conference. Armed with secretly decoded copies of these confidential cables, which had been intercepted and read by our corps of spies, Secretary of State Hughes knew every Japanese move in advance, and took full advantage of his illicit knowledge. When the actitvities of this "American black chamber" became known in 1929 after Stimson closed it down, the sordid details were spread across the front pages of Japanese newspapers in a justifiably inflammatory anger. Small wonder that Japan today, in utter disregard of Secretary Hull's pious rebukes, refuses to give them full moral weight, or looks with disdain upon the Nine Power Pact which was consummated on the heels of the unsavory Washington episode of 1921.

But if the methods of the supposed anti-fascist states are scarcely as distinctive as one who did not know the record might expect, the extent to which they have given direct aid to fascism ought to destroy the last vestiges of the liberal faith in the dependability of democratic capitalism. Who was it, when Count Volpi came to this country soon after Mussolini seized power, and requested a loan for the dictator's government, that hastened to save the Blackshirts, then decidedly shaky? J. P. Morgan and his democratic pals. Who loaned King Alfonso $60,000,000 to bolster up the tottering Spanish throne, in 1931? The Morgan interests, in collaboration with the Bank of the Netherlands and other affiliates.

Who came to the rescue of Dollfuss when the Socialists had to be suppressed and the free trade unions (whose independence had been guaranteed by the Allies in the Treaty of Saint Germain) broken up? The liberal—meaning generous—democracies of Britain, France, Belgium and Switzerland, which extended loans that were due and advanced funds through new loans that, to the investing public, were governmentally guaranteed! Hence, when the clerical fascism of Dollfuss cracked down on the Austrian working class in February, 1934, it was not only Mussolini who supplied the guns and money, it was "democratic" sinews of war from the "friends of freedom".

The internationalism, the blood brotherhood, which prevails between the foes of liberty and its friends has no red, blue or green symbolism, no fistic salute, no word of comradely greeting; but its devotees march in a certain goose-step harmony none the less. The United States prepares to let Brazil borrow "obsolete" destroyers; "we" keep in Vargas' paradise our naval and military missions; in England, "the mother of parliaments", six new cruisers are being built for Vargas' totalitarian regime. "We" earnestly despise the Japanese military junta, but "we" trained two Japanese officers at West Point last year. "We" are shipping 2,500 tons of aerial bombs to Germany, for re-shipment to fascists in Spain.

French and Swedish iron ore has been pouring into Nazi Germany all through Hitler's rearmament period. Canadian nickel makes fascist armament possible. The French arms firms not long since sold Hitler 400 heavy tanks. England has just placed arms orders in Germany amounting to more than $1,500,000.

And, alas, it is not always democratic capitalism that co-operates with fascists. Soviet Russia made Mussolini's Ethiopian conquest largely possible by selling barley and, particularly, oil for Italian use; Russia was the only sanctionist nation which increased its sales to Italy between February, 1935, and February, 1936. Soviet oil, according to well-substantiated reports, is finding its way today to Franco via Italy. Some 226,000 tons of ferro-manganese, an essential of munitions manufacture, was sold to Hitler in a single recent year by Soviet Russia—52 per cent of Germany's total imports. How far the trust of Soviet diplomacy in the peaceful and democratic impulses of the "democracies" has finally gone, is best revealed by M. Litvinov's roseate vision, voiced at Geneva a few weeks ago: "After all, if the League included all States, or, in other words, if all States had finally renounced war as an instrument for the settlement of international questions, the League would have nothing to do and would hardly be necessary." In short, a really international League would have nothing to do, but a League of Nations dominated by Britain, France and Russia serves to preserve peace and democracy against fascism. If only it were that easy, how simple would be the writing of history; the adoption of policies, the prevention of war, the achievement of true industrial and political democracy! Litvinov and the Communists generally in these days, no less than the middle-class collective security advocates, are under the spell of mystical fanaticism which, with the logic of a medieval morality play, in one short act sends devils to hell, and elevates Purity to the throne amid clouds of incense and the applause of the cherubim.

No device of capitalist diplomacy has been more persistent than the balance of power. It did not go out of fashion with the League of Nations; it takes various forms; like a kaleidoscope manipulated by restless hands it shapes international affairs into ever-changing patterns. The Franco-Soviet Pact was designed to isolate the fascist countries and throw a cordon of governments favorable to "democracy" around Germany. By effecting diplomatic and military ties among France, Russia, Poland, Rumania and Czechoslovakia, it was thought England would be impressed and fascism definitely weakened. The democratic states were encouraged, by the support of Communist and Social Democratic forces within, to build up huge military establishments. This policy was undertaken, be it remembered, not with the Popular Front in office in France, when there might have been a sort of excuse in logic; but when Laval was Premier and reaction was at the helm. Nor did the Franco-Soviet Pact declare that joint military action would be taken when sanctioned by the League council, but irrespective of how the council voted, if one signa-

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ROOSEVELT'S PRE-WAR ECONOMY

by Herbert Zam

THE first year of the second term of the Roosevelt regime has been characterized by preparations for war and a steady move toward an alliance with England in foreign affairs, and a determined effort at a rapprochement with big business and putting a curb on labor in internal affairs. These are not two different and distinct orientations, but rather two aspects of one unified policy. The pre-war economy of a capitalist country requires domestic harmony, an ample military machine and dependable allies. The present Roosevelt line covers all three aspects of this matter.

There is small need to discuss the physical war preparations of the Roosevelt administration—that is, the rearmament program. Suffice it to say that it is the biggest that has ever been undertaken by this country outside of actual war years. In fact, the biggest ever undertaken by any country during peace. A careful analysis will disclose, indeed, that the Roosevelt military program is more extensive than that of Great Britain, although the latter has received far more public attention. Furthermore, the political aspects of the program closely parallel similar policies of Great Britain's. The new Roosevelt policy of a two-fleet navy is an adaptation of a similar British policy of many years' standing. The overhauling of the army staff in England was followed by a similar overhauling in this country in a few months, although with much less acclaim and far less drama, down to the installation of a new command in the Naval Academy. The close imitation of Britain's moves in military and naval matters may be accidental or deliberate. There is common talk of an "understanding" between the commands of the navies of the two countries, and while this has been formally denied, there is ample evidence of it in the recent activities of the Anglo-American navies at Australia and at Singapore.

But regardless whether a naval agreement already exists, or is only in the thinking stage, there is no doubt of the steady moving together of England and the United States. This is, indeed, one of the most deep-going changes which has taken place in the world since the first ten years of the post-war period. The Anglo-American rivalry, which reached its height during the cotton and rubber wars of the Hoover years, has been transformed into an Anglo-American friendship which may within the next two years become an Anglo-American alliance for mutual "defense". British and American imperialism have a common concern over Italy's growing ideologic influence and Germany's growing trade superiority in Latin America. And the rivalry of a Germany or an Italy is more to be feared than that of each other, for German or Italian hegemony in a market means the establishment of the "totalitarian" market and the shutting out of all rivals. So that while Britain and the United States always competed against each other in Latin America, they must now make common cause against the threat, not of ordinary competition, but of virtual extermination.

Even more than Latin America, Japan is a factor which brings Britain and the United States together for the protection of their mutual imperialist interests. Both countries had, in their turn, nurtured Japan's penetration into China, but now the upstart has become a menace to his mentors. Japan's entire structure makes it impossible for it to be satisfied with small slices of China. Only bringing all of China under its sway can provide Japanese imperialism with the sort of stable base it requires to play a role in world affairs. But this, of course, can be done only by the total elimination of England and the United States from China. So an Anglo-American alliance in the Pacific is rapidly being forged to put Japan in its place, and keep American and British imperialism in theirs.

In bringing this about, the diplomats of Great Britain have scored a brilliant victory which can well withstand the set-back of the Eden resignation. Never since the war has Britain been potentially in such a strong position. It may well be that this, rather than the myth of lack of preparation, was the real reason for England withholding any action first against Italy in the Ethiopian crisis and later against Germany in the Rhine and Austrian crises. Of course, the propaganda of lack of sufficient naval and military strength to cope with Italy was very effectively used to silence the "sanctionists" and the "pacifists" who demand that imperialist governments assume the job of protecting the weak against the strong but squirm about voting for the necessary naval and military preparations to make such "protection" possible. They have been effectively silenced. Mars reigns supreme in Britain.

We are approaching a similar condition in the United States. President Roosevelt is certainly not following the post-war American policy of "isolationism", if he ever believed in it. Quite the contrary, he is all inclined toward an active role in world affairs, is willing to participate in moves to "quarantine" an aggressor and is ready to "refrain from any action tending to defeat a collective effort" provided the American government "concurred in the judgment rendered as to the responsible and guilty party." This is much more on the lines of the Wilsonian foreign policy than the traditional American one. For this reason, the New York Times, leading organ of American finance capital, and sometimes called the unofficial mouthpiece of the House of Morgan, has been hailing the new Roosevelt policy—has, indeed, become its foremost champion (if we ex-

cept the Daily Worker and the Communist Party). The policy is well to the liking of America's "economic royalists". Wall Street has never looked with friendly eyes at the policy of isolationism. Under the leadership of the House of Morgan, there was strong pressure for a diplomatic policy consonant with the wide-flung interests of American finance capital, and deep antagonism to the policy of "isolationism", actually a policy of concentration upon Latin America, sponsored by powerful groups in the Midwest under the leadership of the McCormacks. Now Morgan and Wall Street and the New York Times have triumphed through their traditional instrument, the Democratic Party, under the leadership, once again, of a "liberal". Wilson gave America the "New Freedom"—and participation in a World War. Roosevelt gave America the "New Deal"—and what promises to be even more rapid participation in a new world war.

Many in this country seek the preservation of peace through policies of the type followed by Roosevelt. They favor "collective security"—another term for imperialist alliances, long discredited as peace agencies, "sanctions", "quarantining of aggressors" but shrink from supporting the intermediate measures required for effectuating such policies. They oppose a big navy and large military expenditures, object to militarization of the youth, are indignant at plans such as contained in the Sheppard-Hill Bill and favor the Ludlow Amendment for a referendum on war. It is impossible to straddle these two divergent lines. Those who want the United States to play the role of "policeman of the world" (in alliance with Great Britain) must of necessity want the policeman to have a club and a gun, or he will be a very sorry policeman indeed. Only those who believe that not peace but war can come from armaments, from imperialist alliances, from "quarantines" and from "sanctions" can consistently oppose all measures aimed at preparations for war. The Roosevelt administration was consistent in vigorously opposing the Ludlow amendment, because the adoption of the procedure of this amendment would make war declarations more difficult: (not impossible, as some pure pacifists believe; the value of the Ludlow amendment lies in the fact that it would give opponents of war a voice, while under present circumstances only the war-makers have a voice.) Roosevelt's aim is to grease the ways for America's slide into a war. He must fight against any possible obstacle, such as the Ludlow amendment, on the ways.

The Communists also are consistent in their pro-war policy. Apparently basing themselves on the belief that a war between the United States and Japan would be a good thing for the Soviet Union, they are ardent supporters of the Roosevelt policies, are bitterly opposed to the Ludlow amendment, and have finally become believers in military preparedness. Their two-decade-old slogan "All War Funds For the Unemployed" is now outlawed, and even the fight against the R.O.T.C., C.M.T.C. and similar institutions has been abandoned. The Communists today constitute one of the most pernicious and dangerous sections of the war-mongerers: dangerous far beyond their numbers and direct influence because they lend the mantle of "revolutionary necessity" to an ordinary imperialist war; pernicious because, operating in the labor movement, they will tend to paralyze the effectiveness of labor opposition to war and war preparations. The Communists are today playing the role of the Noskes and Plekhanoffs of 1914. Indeed, to some, like Cachin in France, Foster and Minor in this country, this role is not new. And the Browders and Bedachts will undoubtedly prove apt pupils. But the Communists are not waiting until the outbreak of war to carry on their nefarious work. They are doing so now, militantly, aggressively. They are rendering a special service to the Roosevelt administration, and to the House of Morgan.

Roosevelt's efforts to secure domestic harmony have been only partially successful. The response to his first declaration of belligerency (the famous Chicago speech) brought statements of loyalty from such disparate elements as Landon, Browder and Hearst. But his opposition to the Ludlow amendment lost him support from many liberal elements. True, Roosevelt's relations with big business are much better than they have been for some time, but this is due in great degree, to Roosevelt's acceptance of the program of big business: (cutting of government expenditures, especially in the relief field, steps for the elimination of the capital gains tax). But the administration's very inadequate wages-hours bill was effectively blocked by the reactionary wing of Congress, and when Roosevelt, after tirades by Ickes and Jackson had presumably prepared the ground, called a conference of "little business" to counter-act the demands of "big business", it proved to be a boomerang. For "little business" behaved exactly like a stooge of big business. If all of the "representative" small business men who gathered at Washington had been in the pay of the economic royalists, they could not possibly have done a better job in their behalf. Small business had been called to Washington to give comfort to the administration in its dispute with big business. When the conference ended, it was found that little business had gone on record for repeal of the undistributed profits tax and the capital gains tax, for the repeal of the Wagner labor relations act, revision (read destruction) of the social security laws, for a halt to federal spending, for a cessation to "malicious" attacks on business and the abandonment of federal regulation of business and industry. A more complete anti-labor program, a more thoroughly reactionary program, can hardly be expected from even big business. In fact, big business had not dared go so far in its demands.

Roosevelt's handling of this matter was extremely maladroit. Indeed, his second-term tactics have been as inept as they were adroit in his first term. The reason is not hard to find. In his first term, Roosevelt was concerned with winning to his side the "forgotten man"

and his policies were fairly consistently directed toward that end. Now, feeling secure in the support of the "forgotten man" he seeks also to gain the friendship of his erstwhile enemies, the economic royalists, whose active cooperation is required for the operation of a pre-war economy. That this rapprochement will be achieved there is no doubt. And it will be, inevitably, at the expense of the "forgotten men" the workers and farmers of this country.

But there is a further lesson to be learned from the small business episode. Trust-busting, attacks on monopoly, have become a standard prop in the American political theater. Theodore Roosevelt, LaFollette, Borah, were in their day adepts at this game. Even Wilson took a hand in fulminations against "monopoly". So the act put on by Jackson and Ickes is not novel. Neither is the behavior and reactionary program of the small business conference. But what is novel is the behavior of "revolutionists" and "Marxists" who hail the speeches of Ickes and Jackson, place these two ordinary bourgeois politicians on a level with Lenin and hail the small business men as allies for the fight against reaction and fascism. Quite the contrary is true. What happened at Washington can very well become a prelude to a widespread fascist movement. It requires but to assemble, organize and lead elements of the type assembled there and a fascist movement of dangerous proportions is here. The petty bourgeois revolt against monopolies was grist for Hitler's mill in Germany. The nature of this revolt was analyzed long ago, when Marx and Engels declared in the Communist Manifesto:

> **"The lower middle class, the small manufacturer, the shop keeper, the artisan, the peasant, all these fight against the bourgeosie, to save from extinction their existence as fractions of the middle class. They are therefore not revolutionary, but conservative. Nay, more, they are reactionary, for they try to roll back the wheel of industry."**

The changes which have taken place in the composition of the middle class since these words were written, the middle class as represented at Washington, only make this description more apt. A policy based on this social strata can lead only to reaction.

Roosevelt lost another round in his dispute with big business over the responsibility for the new depression. A few months before the depression became visible to the naked eye, while the administration could still talk about a prosperity wave, Roosevelt boasted: "We planned it." When the depression arrived, he cried: "It's an assumption." Finally, when it could no longer be denied, he charged: "It's a sit-down strike by capital." Big capital on the other hand, charged the new depression to the operations of the New Deal, and with greater reason: for if the New Deal "planned" the prosperity of July, ergo, the depression of November must be a consequence of the same plan. Furthermore, in charging capital with a sit-down strike, Roosevelt was accusing capital of doing voluntarily what he had tried to coerce it into doing under the NRA—limit production and keep prices high as a means of ensuring prosperity. Roosevelt was caught in a trap of his own making. Big business was in a position to put on the pressure, and it did.

In the labor movement, there is still terrific opposition to the Roosevelt war preparations. It is no accident, neither is it the result of a Japanese plot, that unions like the Miners, Automobile Workers and Steel Workers have gone on record against the two essentials of the Roosevelt war policy—foreign alliances and large military preparations. Almost instinctively the workers know that such policies can only lead rapidly to war, and that in modern wars, labor has nothing to gain. Labor is almost unanimous in its opposition to the Sheppard-Hill bill. The C.I.O., the A. F. of L. and the Railway Brotherhoods have voiced their opposition, as well as dozens of peace organizations. The vocal protest this time may be too strong, but sooner or later, a bill along the same lines is bound to pass. It is part of the pre-war economy, part of the war preparations.

But in spite of labor's opposition to the war preparations, labor by and large still supports Roosevelt. It must be said that the organizational ties between Roosevelt and the top leadership of the C.I.O. are stronger today than ever. The Labor Non-Partisan League has become, to all intents and purposes, a section of the Democratic Party, and wherever the elements making up the League tended in the direction of independent political action, strong pressure has been brought to bring them into line. To a large extent, this has been accomplished by convincing the leadership of the League that there is danger of the Democratic Party passing into the control of the anti-Roosevelt reactionary wing, and thus endangering the social legislation in which the labor movement was interested, to say nothing of the 1940 presidential contest. Therefore, since the defeat of Roosevelt on the Supreme Court issue, the leadership of the Labor Non-Partisan League has very consistently endeavored to throw labor strength into the Democratic Party. The chances for a genuine Labor Party emerging from this combination are very obscure indeed.

That labor thus finds itself in a contradictory position is obvious. On the one hand it fights the war policies of the leadership of the Democratic Party. On the other, it gives political and organizational support to the same leadership. And as war draws closer, the contradiction becomes greater. The labor movement will not be able to pursue both a policy of class struggle and class collaboration. It will either be for the war and practice class collaboration, or it will be against the war and continue the class struggle. And in carrying on the class struggle, it will have to fight the champions of the other class—the Roosevelts, the Murphys, the Guffeys, the LaGuardias, who will be in the next war, as they were in the last, for the imperialists and against the workers. In order to be able to prosecute the class struggle labor must prepare now by breaking all its alliances with the capitalists and their parties and striking out on an independent road.

A CONGRESSIONAL PROGRAM FOR LABOR

by Harry W. Laidler

WHETHER the present session of Congress will turn to the right, or turn to the left or stay in the middle of the road—or, perhaps, strive to turn simultaneously in all directions—it is impossible at this stage of the Congressional session to state. On the question of military appropriations and international relations, under pressure from the White House, Congress seems to be swinging definitely and tragically to the right and heading the country toward war, as is being shown in other articles in this issue. The members of Congress may fuss and fume when forced by Postmaster Farley or by the President himself, on penalty of withdrawal of patronage, to oppose such measures as the Ludlow war referendum amendment, but a majority are likely to fall in line when the Presidential whip is cracked. On labor and social measures, the chances are that Congress will try to concede a little here and a little there to the farmers, city workers, small business men and big corporate interests with an eye to the 1938 Congressional elections. The result will be no legislation dealing effectively with the present unemployment situation, unless labor begins to exert militant and aggressive pressure on Congress.

In view of the present economic and social situation, what program should labor urge upon the present Congress?

In the domestic field, labor should demand a number of things. Toward the head of the list should be a comprehensive public works program. Labor should insist that society supply with jobs at prevailing wages those who are unable to obtain work in private enterprises. That is the least that capitalism should be called upon to guarantee to the workers. A generation ago, the American workers were promised "a full dinner pail" if they but put the Grand Old Republican party into power. A decade ago, Republican leaders told American labor that Republican prosperity was assuring it "two chickens in every pot" and "two automobiles in every garage". At the beginning of President Roosevelt's administration, the New Deal leaders described in glowing terms how the Rooseveltian New Deal was going to give employment at useful tasks to all employables. And yet, in late November, over four and a half years after Franklin Roosevelt took office, the unemployment census estimated that somewhere between 7,820,000 and 10,870,000 were totally unemployed and that 3,200,000 more were partially unemployed. Since November, the army of the unemployed has greatly grown.

Public work should be provided for all of these who are employable. About 1,800,000 were employed in February, 1938, on Federal relief jobs. A group of social workers recently urged that this number be increased to 3,000,000. John L. Lewis has urged the affiliates to the C.I.O. to demand that 3,000,000 be immediately put to work. "Unless an immediate order is made by the Administration to the W.P.A. to open its rolls and put at least 3,000,000 people to work," he declared in late January, "there will be dire suffering in the nation." There is, President Lewis might have added, untold suffering in the country today and many more than 3,000,000 must be given jobs at prevailing wages if the widespread suffering is to be avoided.

There are hosts of useful projects that need to be undertaken by public agencies in this country. There is the question of housing. We should immediately launch a public housing program on a scale far more extensive that that provided for by the Wagner-Steagall Housing Act. That act has provided for the expenditure of about a half billion dollars as a means of initiating an attack on the slum problem. According to Edith Elmer Wood, one of the foremost housing authorities in the country, slums will not be abolished and workers decently housed without an expenditure not of $500,000,000 but of $40,000,000,000 for that purpose. At the present rate of slum clearance and building of houses by the Housing Authority of New York, as a result of Federal aid, it will take nearly 200 years for New York City to get rid of its slums. A program of slum clearance should be adopted by nation, state and city which will lead to the housing of American workers under decent and healthful surroundings not in two hundred years but within the next decade.

The President and Congress have also approved amendments to the Federal Housing Act for the loaning of funds to men and women who wish to build their own houses. Housing in general needs to be speeded up. In the 7 year period 1930 to 1936 inclusive, we constructed but an average of 158,000 dwelling units a year as compared with an average of 803,000 in the previous 7 year period, 1923 to 1929 inclusive.

Outside of housing there are many undertakings of great value to the people. In the spring of 1936, the federal government, the states and municipalities placed before Mr. Ickes a number of possible projects for the P.W.A. to engage in. These lists were painstakingly gone over by P.W.A. engineers. Final approval was withheld from the federal group, but more than 5,000 non-federal projects were favorably reported, calling for an expenditure of more than a billion dollars. At the same time that this list was being prepared, the President asked the National Resources Board, under Frederick A. Delano, Mr. Roosevelt's uncle, to suggest a comprehensive plan for public works. The Board responded and submitted with its approval 10,000 federal and non-federal projects which, it was estimated, could be completed in 6 years at a cost of about $5 billion,

a little over a billion dollars the first year.

These projects included those for the prevention of floods, erosion and disease-breeding pollution, for the creation of hydro-electric power, for the construction of highways and for other vital improvements.

The National Resources Board plans go into great detail in the discussion of needed undertakings in the various water basins and the Board shows how imperative many of these improvements are to the well-being of the people of their respective communities. The report, for instance, describes the way in which the Ohio River system carries sewage produced by 6,500,000 persons, less than 30 per cent of which receives any treatment whatever. "This grossly polluted water, after filtration," the report declares, "is used as drinking water by 2,500,000 people." For about $4 billions the country's water-basin problems, the Board declares, could be solved.

The erection of safe automobile roads, it has been estimated, would save in the neighborhood of 35,000 lives a year. "Eroded fields can be restored at a cost from a few cents to five dollars an acre. According to informed estimates, $500,000,000, or half of what Mr. Roosevelt asks for naval construction, would provide erosion control for the entire country."

The Forest Service requests and greatly needs money to reduce the hazards of forest fires. It wants to replant thousands of barren hills. Other funds are demanded for the improvement of plant life, the attack on disease and for many other conservation projects. The jobless can be profitably employed by the government on a thousand and one socially desirable projects. Their employment would save millions of workers from the utter demoralization usually following prolonged periods of unemployment. It would greatly enrich our American life. It would reduce the pressure for the building of more and greater battleships, "as a means of giving jobs to the boys," and enforcing "our national policy," a policy that will, if consistently followed, lead to but one end, war.

Labor should demand unceasingly that society recognize its obligation to give jobs to the jobless. It is true that the pursuance of that policy will cost more money. But it costs money if the unemployed are kept on relief in idleness, and that money does not go toward the production of greater wealth.

Public works must go hand in hand with adequate relief to those for whom no work can be provided. The tentative report of Mayor La Guardia's Committee on Unemployment Relief shows how inadequate is our relief. In New York, where relief standards are higher than in many other parts of the country, they are still, according to the Mayor's Committee, about 40 per cent inadequate. In most parts of the country, they are far below standards which permit anything more than a mere existence. The President has recently called for an additional appropriation of $250,000,000 for relief, in view of the recent increase of 3,000,000 in the army of the unemployed. While, as the New York *Post* brings out, this amount should be appropriated, it should be realized that this means but $85 per person for the additional 3,000,000 men and women out of work, even should the entire quarter of a billion be spent on relief. This further appropriation would mean no more relief for the older relief cases where relief benefits have been totally inadequate.

Labor should, of course, fight vigorously for the shortening of the work-week without a reduction of pay. It is estimated that the productivity of the average worker in factory production increased to such an extent from 1919 to 1932 that the average worker in the latter year could produce in 4½ hours a day as much as his predecessor could have produced in 1919 in an 8 hour day.

Labor should fight for a minimum wage bill. Throughout the country today millions are paid wages so low that they cannot possibly support their families in health and decency. In the boom year 1929, Brookings Institution declared that $2000 a year was a necessary income for the average family to obtain, if it were to be enabled to secure the basic necessaries of life. And yet in that year of so-called prosperity, one-fifth of the families of the country secured less than $1000 a year—less than one-half of the estimated minimum; over two-fifths received less than $1500 a year, while over three-fifths received less than $2000. During the depression, the proportions of low-paid income groups have been far greater than in the "prosperous" twenties. In 1934, the average wages in the tobacco industry were $700; in the service industries, about $825; in the automobile industry, $900; in the steel industry, $984 and, in the construction industry, $959. The workers engaged in industrial home work are securing, on the whole, pitiably low returns. An investigation a few years ago of industrial home work in Connecticut by the Commissioner of Labor of that state indicated that 9 Connecticut factories, engaged in making small metal products, were employing families at home at carding, etc., at a median rate of $6.92 a month! Only one out of every three families investigated received as much as $12 a month.

Conditions among the home industrial workers in Pennsylvania were found in 1934 to be similar. Here one-fourth of the families visited received less than $2 a week; four out of 5, less than $6.

It is, of course, of the greatest importance that the right type of wages and hours bill should be pushed. If Congress had passed the Black-Connery bill as it came out of the Senate last fall, labor would have secured but a hollow victory. This bill prohibited, as is known, the Labor Standards Board from setting hours lower than 40 a week, but placed no limit on how high hours might be set. It permitted large numbers of exemptions in the case of seasonable industries and failed to touch many of the industries where hours were longest. Similar defects were seen in the wages provisions. Every provision of such legislation must be scrutinized with the utmost care.

Labor should insist that everything possible be done to advance the Federal Child Labor Amendment. Nothing short of this Amendment will make it possible for Congress to reach the child labor evil in this country. In the meanwhile labor should fight vigorously against the Wheeler-Johnson Child Labor bill, which, while pretending to give the Federal government power to prevent the flow of goods in interstate commerce if child labor has entered into their production, presents the government with an impossible task of enforcement. Labor should urge child labor legislation embodying the principles incorporated in the 1916 Federal Child Labor Law, under which the children were largely prevented from going to work by local and state school and labor authorities. Labor must realize that child labor is increasing, rather than decreasing, and that, as the National Child Labor Committee declares, not more than 25 per cent of the children now working can be reached through federal legislation based on the interstate commerce power.

American labor should make a vigorous drive for the thorough organization of the social insurance laws. At a time when over nine-tenths of the families of the United States cannot possibly put aside in times of "prosperity" a sufficient sum to guarantee them proper medical treatment during serious sickness, labor should work for a sound system of health insurance. The United States stands with China and India as among the only large countries in the world without any public system of insurance against sickness.

Labor should see to it that the Federal government contribute generously to the unemployment insurance funds and to the permanent system of old age pensions; that unemployment insurance covers domestic servants, agricultural workers, employees of non-profit organizations and other groups of workers and that the provisions of both unemployment insurance and old age pension systems be liberalized all along the line.

Labor should urge a revision in the system of taxation, with a view to taxing the population on the basis of ability to pay. It should see to it that the holes in the present income tax law are pegged up and that the spectacle of our biggest financiers paying no income tax in periods of depression be a thing of the past. Labor should urge the abolition of tax-exempt securities; the broadening of the income tax basis and the securing of sufficient funds from the progressive income tax, the inheritance tax and other forms of taxation based on ability to pay, to meet the relief and social service needs of the public.

Labor should fight hard and vigorously for laws aiming at the maintenance of the civil liberties we now possess and the extension of these liberties; for the passage of the anti-lynching bill and against attempts at labor union incorporation.

It should renew its efforts toward an amendment to the Constitution giving specific power to Congress to pass needed social legislation and to socialize industries. The Supreme Court at present may be depended upon to regard certain measures as constitutional which received from their predecessors the judicial veto, but the validity of legislation should not have to depend upon the political bias of five out of nine members of the U. S. Supreme Court.

Labor should likewise urge legislation looking toward the socialization of industry. The coal industry should be socialized. The electrical energy of the nation should be owned and controlled by society. The nation's transportation system should be socially owned and democratically and efficiently controlled for the common good. The financial structure should be made a servant of the masses, not of our autocratic industrial rulers. If labor is ever to be emancipated from present day exploitation, if we are ever to run industry with a view to security and abundance for all useful workers of hand and brain, we must transfer industry in general from private hands to the hands of the community and give the workers, consumers and technicians an adequate say in the management of these industries. This cannot be done until the workers of hand and brain in the factories, shops, offices and mines and on the farms control the reins of government, but something can be done immediately toward the transfer of some of our public utilities and natural resources from private monopoly to public ownership.

Mr. Roosevelt began his Presidential career by urging that industry regulate itself under the N.R.A. Even if the Supreme Court had not declared this attempt unconstitutional, it would have done nothing to eliminate insecurity from our midst. Mr. Roosevelt is now denouncing private monopoly and promising a frontal assault on the trust. We have heard similar promises since the Sherman Anti-Trust law was placed upon the statute book 48 years ago, but the trusts have not been broken up, except in rare instances. There is no solution to the trust problem short of socialization and the sooner labor realizes this the better. Not in trust busting, not in trust regulation, but in socialization of the trusts and other essential industries may be found the solution of our chief social evils.

Finally, as is being pointed out in other articles, labor should fight against all of those forces which are bringing America closer to the brink of war. It should fight for disarmament, not a larger army and navy. It should compel the Administration to define its foreign policy. We don't need more battleships to protect our shores. The only conceivable reason for them is to send them to Japanese waters and become embroiled in another world war. Labor should fight for the Ludlow Amendment, and for every measure tending to lessen the economic frictions which constitute the fundamental causes of war.

In the present and future sessions of Congress, therefore, American labor should support these measures leading to greater economic security, higher living standards, the extension of civil rights and national and inter-

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THE LABOR MOVEMENT IN CALIFORNIA

by Travers Clement

LABOR on the Pacific Coast has always presented a number of anomalies. For years there has existed in the San Francisco Bay Region and in the Pacific Northwest, centering in Seattle, one of the strongest—and at times most militant—A. F. of L. trade union movements in the country. At various apogees of this power, San Francisco and Seattle have been practically "closed shop" towns with the unions dominating not only the economic but the political life of their communities. At the same time, Los Angeles has been known as an "open shop" paradise and the great interior valleys—Imperial, San Joaquin, Sacramento, and on northward through the farming regions of Oregon and Washington—have been the scene of some of the worst labor exploitation outside of the Deep South.

In general, the attempts of radicals to superimpose upon this strong trade union movement any social philosophy, to lift it above the level determined by the immediate self-interest of a comparatively small number of highly-skilled men in building trades, typographical union, etc., or strategically-favored groups such as the teamsters, have come to naught. When new men with new ideas have attempted to battle their way to the top in this movement, they have had to fight not only the employing class but also an entrenched and powerful labor bureaucracy as jealous of its prerogatives as any prima donna. Invariably one of two things happened. Either the new forces have abandoned their principles—when they had any—and made their peace with the A. F. of L. machine, or they have gone down to defeat.

The bitterness of these defeats and the seeming impossibility of establishing a very necessary base in the more stable fields of trade unionism has again and again turned the attention of Pacific Coast radicals toward one of the West's real mass production industries—agriculture. But here, too, they have gone down to defeat, partially due to their own ineptitude but primarily because of the opposition or indifference of that same labor bureaucracy.

Organizing migratory labor without the cooperation of the stable trade union movement has proved an impossibility. Free lance organizers, Socialists, I.W.W.s, Communists, etc., operating on a shoe-string, can and have led significant agricultural strikes and won concessions for the farm workers. But they have never been able to establish sound, permanent organizations. The migratory workers have rallied to their various banners by the thousands during certain crises in the harvest season, but have then necessarily scattered letting their mushroom organizations collapse. The stabilized trade union movement, as represented by the A. F. of L., has not denied support to these organizers merely because they were radicals. Under pressure of agitation from within, the A. F. of L. itself has even put organizers into the field, but its bureaucracy is much more concerned with lobbying activities at the various State Capitols than with the organization of the unorganized. It wants the political support of the farmers for its legislative program, and, as a price of that support, it is perfectly willing to stay out of agriculture or merely make gestures toward organizing it. Consequently, it has sabotaged the work of those organizers which it has placed in the field from time to time only as a concession to progressive agitation from within.

With the launching of the Committee on Industrial Organization great hopes were entertained by many radicals and progressives on the Pacific Coast, who for years have been bashing their heads against the stone wall of A. F. of L. indifference. The C.I.O. was formed ostensibly for the purpose of organizing the unorganized in the basic industries of America. This meant, if it meant anything, organizing textile, steel aluminum, rubber, auto, etc., but it also meant organizing the agricultural and processing industry. It would have been foolish for the C.I.O. to have concentrated its energies immediately in this last and most difficult field. The importance of this industry on the Pacific Coast cannot be overemphasized, but the C.I.O. was a national, not merely a regional, movement. What was to be expected locally was that in organizing auto, rubber, steel, textiles, the garment industry, maritime, etc., all of which industries employ large groups of workers on the Pacific Coast, a new stable union base would be established from which could be launched a vigorous campaign to bring into the organized labor movement those hundreds of thousands of now unorganized agricultural and cannery workers who, particularly since the mass influx from the Dust Bowl, menace the living standards of every organized worker on the Pacific Coast.

When the Communist Party not only jumped onto the C.I.O. bandwagon, but—through the appointment of Harry Bridges as West Coast Director—plopped right into the driver's seat, those hopes went glimmering. Nationally, of course, the obvious fact that this appointment placed in jeopardy, if it did not actually destroy, all chances of a strong, unified national maritime union seemed more significant—so significant, in fact, that the implication of this appointment as it pertains to agriculture seems to have been lost sight of entirely.

As long as the present Communist Party line remains dominant in the West Coast C.I.O., the situation in agriculture will be no different from what it was when the old labor bureaucracy was unchallenged. Under its present leadership, the C.I.O. will not launch upon any real campaign of organizing the unorganized on the

West Coast, because that means, particularly in California, the organization of the agricultural workers. The Bridges CP leadership is even more afraid of antagonizing the farmer at the present moment than is the A. F. of L.

Politically, the Communist Party is committed to a People's Front and to rallying the widest possible support for its own war program. Any aggressive campaign in agriculture—especially in California where agricultural organization has for so long been associated with radical leadership—will immediately label it as "red" no matter what its professed program may be and lose it the support not only of the farmers whom it hopes to entice into its People's Front but also the support of middle class elements in general. Its game then is the same as that of the A. F. of L. political lobbyists. Under pressure, the western C.I.O. will put agricultural organizers into the field, but will not make a serious drive for agricultural organization.

The only sincere, coordinated effort to solve the problem of West Coast agricultural organization in recent years was initiated by Socialists with the calling of the California Conference of Agricultural Workers at Stockton, California, in June 1936. At this conference agricultural workers, together with Socialists and A. F. of L. progressives, decided to seek a charter from the A. F. of L. for a state-wide union to comprise all workers in the canning, packing and agricultural industry. Communists at the Conference opposed this on the grounds that it would "antagonize" the A. F. of L. top leadership. Th second conference held in San Francisco a year later was packed by the Communists with delegates from paper organizations, the set-up put in the hands of Bridges' lieutenants, and a program adopted which made the denial of a state-wide charter from the A. F. of L. Executive Council a foregone conclusion. With Bridges' elevation to C.I.O. leadership, a young college graduate and former organizer of the YCL who has recently become a "big-shot" in the West Coast C.I.O., succeeded the Organizing Committee elected at the conference. The appointment for agricultural leadership aroused so much criticism that another shift had to be made, but it was merely a change in names. Every official and every organizer put into the field, with one possible exception, was a member or follower of the Communist Party. Scores of able, experienced agricultural organizers with other political affiliations or independent were totally ignored. After all paid jobs were filled, Socialist Party leaders were called into conference with Donald Henderson, head of the national C.I.O. agricultural organization who was on a flying trip to the Coast, and asked what they intended to do toward organizing West Coast agricultural and cannery workers for the C.I.O.!

Since then the situation has been summed up eloquently by the editor of a local labor bulletin devoted to the problems of agricultural workers. "The following represents the sum total of the past year's efforts of the C.I.O.'s drive to unionize upwards of 250,000 farm workers of California." The "following" consists of a sizeable blank space of clear white paper.

I have devoted so much space to agriculture not only because it is basic on the West Coast but also because it is a field which has been sadly neglected of late by labor journalists. Reams have been written about the maritime situation. The glaring blunder of the C.I.O. top leadership in acting upon the advice of John Brophy and appointing Bridges West Coast director, thereby tossing the western organization into the lap of the CP and so antagonizing the Lundeberg forces that an independent position seemed to them the only tenable one, was a piece of stupidity for which the C.I.O. both locally and nationally is paying and may continue to pay during many years to come. The virtual collapse of the C.I.O. Seaman's Unity Convention here recently was one payment on that dishonorable debt.

Late developments, particularly defeat of the CP machine in the Marine Firemen's Union up and down the Coast and the 6 to 1 vote for Harry Lundeberg over his CP rival for secretary of the Sailors' union of the Pacific, have slowed down Bridges' "march inland" through the medium of his Warehousemen's Union. The Communists are too busy right now mending fences to be seeking new fields to conquer.

In the main the energies of the dominating CP forces in the western C.I.O. are not going into organizing the unorganized, therefore, but into ousting dissenters from the ranks, engaging in jurisdictional disputes with the A. F. of L. over small groups of white-collared workers, milk wagon drivers, cleaners and dyers, etc., and battling for control of established unions, no matter whether A. F. of L., C.I.O. or independent, where the CP line is not established as gospel.

As an indication of the type of activity engaged in, one can cite no more graphic example than that provided by the San Francisco Office Employees Union. Originally this union which grew rapidly during the general organizational upsurge of a year ago was organized under the auspices of the A. F. of L. Then it switched to the C.I.O. This immediately brought it within the sphere of influence of Bridges and through the warehouse office employees within that of his omnipresent Warehousemen's Union—an organization which has branched out in so many directions that a certain newspaper man declared recently that he fully expected to wake up some morning and find himself a member of it. (As member now of the CP-dominated Newspaper Guild he would feel at home there being called upon to rubber stamp the same flood of CP resolutions.) Socialists who had done the hard spade work of organizing the office employees, led strikes and negotiated favorable agreements, remained in some of the key positions. A tremendous campaign in the usual Communist Party style was started to oust them, a campaign which featured a series of personal appearances by Bridges and

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STUART CHASE'S NEWEST FAD

by David P. Berenberg

STUART CHASE has a new toy. After writing half a dozen books he has discovered that words have meaning. Now he is determined that everyone shall be converted to his new gospel.[1]

There is nothing particularly new, as he admits himself, in his discovery. Even in the pre-Einsteinian era careful thinkers insisted that words had relative and not absolute meanings. Early in the 19th century Jeremy Bentham inveighed against the "impostor-term". Karl Marx, whom Chase affects to despise, pointed out the errors that lay in confusing "profit" with "surplus value", and the "cost of production" with the amount of labor put into a commodity.

Since there is nothing new in "semantics", the new name given to what Chase calls "the science of communication", Chase finds his justification for writing about the "meaning of meaning" in its new and vital importance. He finds that the world is going to the demnition bow-wows because of "failure of communication". So, for example, he thinks (page 20) that "if knowledge of semantics were general, and men were on guard for communication failure, the conflagration (i.e. the next war) could hardly start." He asserts (page 21) that "it is doubtful if a people learned in semantics would tolerate any sort of supreme political dictator. Ukases would be met with a flat 'No comprendo' or with roars of laughter."

I have no quarrel with semantics. Any effort to clarify thought, to give precise meaning to words, and to produce easier and more certain communication is worth while. I sympathize with Chase in his revolt against the tricky use of absolutes, although I think that in attacking the classical philosophers he is whipping a dead horse. Even the attempt to create a "science of communication" is worth while, although it is certain to meet with obstacles that the chemist and the physicist do not contend with. I become only a little suspicious of semantics when I discover (page 105) that C. K. Ogden, one of the pioneers in the field, is also the creator of Basic English, which is a hopeful effort to replace Esperanto as an international language. All efforts to create an artificial language bump into the apparently invincible human habit of idiom-making. (Referent—the history of Ido, Esperanto, Volapuk and Basic English.) It may be that the semanticists assume too easily that the almost infinite number of possible cell connections in the human brain (page 28) are capable of being plotted accurately.

In spite of this, it seems to me that much good must come from the semantic discipline. But, while I have no quarrel with semantics, I have a serious quarrel with Stuart Chase and with his applications of his new toy.

He insists, for example, that no word has meaning unless it can be traced to a *referent.* The referent (page 9) is "the object or situation to which a label refers". So far so good, but does it follow that because Stuart Chase, or anyone else, does not find a referent for a given word, there is none? Chase insists again and again in his book that he can find no referent for *capitalism. He* may not be able to do so. We may grant at once that different social groups will define the word somewhat differently. It is certainly not true that within these groups (workers, capitalists, church people, etc.) there is no substantial agreement as to its meaning. Nor is it true that the definition of one group will be *altogether* different from that of another. All groups will agree that capitalism is not feudalism; that capitalism is not socialism; that the relation of the workers to his employer under capitalism is different from the relation of master and slave in ancient Rome. All groups will agree that we are today living under capitalism, and not under feudalism. In plain words and Stuart Chase to the contrary, we *do* know what we are talking about when we use the term *capitalism.* It has not one referent, but a series of referents. It refers, not to a thing, but to a relation. (See *Chase* on multi-valent logic, Chapter XIII.) These are easily discoverable by what Chase likes to call "operational methods".

Similarly, Chase asserts that the term *fascism* has no discernible referent, and hence no meaning. To "prove" his point he has gathered 42 definitions of the term from a wide variety of people. These "definitions", he finds, prove that the term is without meaning. Yet 18 of them agree that fascism includes the idea of irresponsible dictatorship by one man, or by a small group, over the masses. Five or six go further and include the idea of an open dictatorship by the capitalists. What Chase overlooks here is that minds are not equal; that they are not equally trained; that men and women have special interests, however trivial, and give only marginal attention to matters outside their special fields. To any teacher the degree of agreement in the definitions he quotes is more remarkable than the degree of difference.

Nor can I follow him in his conclusion that *fascism* is without meaning because it is differently defined, or because it exhibits different characteristics in different countries. No biologist would find this variation strange. Lions and cats are of the feline species, even if they differ vastly in size and in the nature of their prey. The dictatorship of capital is the dictatorship of capital however much it may differ in form in Italy and in Germany.

Chase quotes a definition of fascism from Harold Laski (page 192):

[1] "The Tyranny of Words" by Stuart Chase—Harcourt, Brace, N. Y. $2.50.

"I suggest the conclusion that Fascism is nothing but monopoly capitalism imposing its will on the masses which it has deliberately transformed into slaves. The ownership of the instruments of production remain in private hands."

Of this Chase says, "He is saying nothing worth listening to" because "the apparent meaning has faded into a series of semantic blanks." (page 193)

Let us see. Chase says that Laski is equating private ownership-capitalism-fascism. Why should he not. Because Stuart Chase cannot find the referent? The referents are there, in the history of post-war Germany, of post-war Italy; they are to be found in the actions of the Bank of England toward the Macdonald Government; in the action of the Bank of France toward the Blum Government. They are even to be found in the attitude of the Liberty League in the United States. That Chase cannot find them only argues that some of his infinitely numbered brain-cells do not function as do Laski's, which we knew beforehand.

Chase says that he never saw an "ism" imposing its will. Has he ever seen a man "catching" a train? Or "forming" a plan? Has he ever *seen* an "idea shedding light"? Does he know what he means when he says "How are you?" Or "Good-bye"? Here we come to what may be the limitations of Stuart Chase, or to what may well be the limits of semantics. Man is an inveterate creator of idiom. He starts with a word that has a material referent. He proceeds to an abstraction with a more remote series of referents. Then he plays with the word; he makes it do things. This may be unfortunate, but it is so. What is more, man shows an imperturbable ability to understand his idioms, within the limits of time and place. So while Chase may have difficulty in seeing "capitalism imposing its will", it is only the same difficulty that the Frenchman has in seeing a man "catching" a train. I have no difficulty in grasping Laski's idiom. And there are millions who have none. Nor does the phrase "Ownership of the instruments of production" trouble me as it troubles Chase. I am ready to grant, even to insist, that management is often divorced from nominal ownership. Yet there is no difficulty in understanding that actual management is effective ownership, which, I take it, is what Berle and Means also say.

"Private hands" offers no difficulty, even if the "private hands" that are back of the Fascist dictators rule themselves and their retainers, small and large, with brutal severity.

Chase thinks he has disposed of the word "Socialism" by confusing it with Hitler's "National Socialism". Now this is exactly what Hitler wants him to do. Hitler says in "Mein Kampf" that he chose the name "Socialism" for his movement because the term had so great a hold on the German masses. With that referent it should be easy for Chase, and for every one who is really interested to distinguish between the two concepts.

Chase asserts that the Marxian theory of value is capable of no verification today, and has no referent. He need only note what happens to commodity values, and prices, when a technological improvement is put into use. There, and not in the futile bookkeeping attempt to disentangle labor hours in past production, is his referent. Labor-saving devices are just that. They are introduced, not to give labor an easier time of it, but to reduce the amount of labor put into a commodity, and so reduce the value of each commodity unit, and so to reduce its price. The assembly line, mass-production techniques, the photo-electric cell, etc., etc., (I like the etc., and I use it on Stuart Chase's recommendation) all reduce the necessary human labor time that goes into the making of a commodity. Hence lower values and lower price. Hence the inability of the "marginal producer" who still uses obsolete devices, to compete. Hence, too, unemployment, overproduction and underconsumption, depressions, wars, etc., etc. Hence, the need for Socialism.

Chase thinks there is no class struggle. He thinks so because he sees struggle between groups of capitalists, between groups of workers, and ideological struggles that seem to cut across class lines. Marx and the Marxists never asserted that there is *only* class struggle. In Marx's time there was still struggle between capitalist and feudal aristocrat; between artisan and factory worker; between Marxist and Bakuninist. To prove this is to prove the obvious. But how does proof of this refute the existence of class struggle? Did the bourgeoisie as a class struggle against the aristocracy as a class? The referent is documentary history, even if the Medici did betray their class and throw in their lot with the aristocracy. I refer Chase to the long history of the bourgeois rebellions from the fourteenth to the nineteenth centuries.

Do the workers as a class struggle against capitalists as a class? The referent is the Liberty League, the Supreme Court fight, the recent "small" business conference, the "Mohawk Plan", the "American Plan" of the post war years. A referent is the perennial hostility of business men toward all forms of labor organization. But, says Stuart Chase, did not U. S. Steel and General Motors recognize the C.I.O.? And does not this prove that the class struggle is poppycock. (Find a referent for that, Mr. Chase!) No, Mr. Chase. It may be good business for U. S. Steel and General Motors to make a concession to labor. It was good business for King John to grant the merchants of London some rights in Magna Charta, but that did not end the class struggle between the bourgeoisie and the aristocracy.

Chase thinks he has deprived the material conception of history of its meaning. But he betrays only that he has not understood it. He thinks Marx meant that only methods of production determine human culture. (page 266) He says that "elements of race, climate, plagues and many other things determine human culture too." Quite right. They do. And Kautsky has so insisted in

his "Material Conception of History". (In two volumes, unfortunately extant in German only! But *that* shouldn't stop a Chase.)

A better understanding of the materialist conception of history would have prevented Chase from assuming, as he does in the sentence quoted earlier in this review, that wars are caused by words. What is his referent for such an assertion? He gives almost as great value to the "Word" as does St. John. ("In the beginning was the Word") when he assumes that the power of the dictator rests on his words. Any one who has looked into the referents for imperialism must know what causes wars. Anyone who has investigated the referents for dictatorship knows that its power rests, not on words, but on machine guns, bombs and air-planes.

The worst semantic failure of Stuart Chase in this book is to be found, not in the appendix, where he chastises himself for his semantic offenses, but on page 269, where he uses the term "Middle Classes" with utterly un-semantic looseness, without any referents whatever. Here is an "impostor term" of fearsome proportions. Analysis of its referents will disclose that the Middle Class dissolves largely into proletarians with white collars and aspiring bourgeois without cash.

No. The main trouble is not with a conceivable "science" of semantics, but with Stuart Chase. The chief trouble with him is that he is an accountant and a reformer, two terms for which he gives no referents. He sees things in pieces, and never as a whole. The smaller the pieces, the better he likes what he sees. If he loses the forest because of the trees, he is happy. He hates, or perhaps he fears, a synthesis. The scientist risks an hypothesis once in a while. Chase is content forever to count pickets on a picket fence.

The second trouble is that he is a pedant. He hates idiom. Poetry, for all his lip service to it, is a closed book to him. He must have every joke diagrammed. He wants everything made clear to him. If things are not clear, "teacher is to blame", or the text-book. But not Stuart. He hates the abstractions that he cannot understand, but he throws abstractions like the "Calculus of tensors" "quantum" and "semantics" about with a fine abandon. He wants language to be an exact science, and balks because it is so hard to make it one. He has not accepted the fact that ten with 2,783,000 zeros after it is quite a number of possible brain cell connections. Since brain cells are so many, to expect practically complete identity of reaction to a given sound is Utopian. (Referent—Mr. Chase)

To see Mr. Chase in a dither about words is highly instructive. Perhaps he will some day fly into a dither about ideas, and realize that some generalizations are really permissible. His warning to look into the meanings of words is timely and well-taken. The "Tyranny of Words", if it is not epoch-making, is at least amusing. It is most valuable as a sort of "Apologia Pro Sua Vita."

IMPERIALISM SHIFTS THE SCALES

(*Continued from page 3*)

tory was attacked. The results have been no little disillusioning; Britain has not been securely wooed, Rome and Berlin are stronger than before, Franco's cause has probably now been aided, Poland and Rumania are reeds upon which no anti-fascist policy can lean, and the concessions that must be made to fascism are not voluntary agreements to share markets, raw materials, and international control—which might have reduced the power of fascism over the masses—but concessions to fascist bluff and power politics, certain to enhance fascist prestige at home and abroad. This is the fruit of a policy which, throughout much of the world, has encouraged the working class to put its faith in capitalist democracy as a defense against fascism, to trust capitalist diplomacy as a safeguard of the masses from oppression.

One need not, of course, take so extreme and unsupportable a position as to say there is no difference between life in Nazi Germany and in France. This would be mad. Only those angered beyond restraint at the suppression of left Socialists in Spain break out in assertions that "You might as well be in Italy," or those embittered by their chagrin at the Soviet executions cry, "What's the difference between this and the Nazis?" There are differences, of course; the right to have even a modicum of free speech, assemblage, and press, or of economic security, is not to be lightly sneered at. G. A. Borghese has ably shown, in his book, "Goliath, the March of Fascism," that it is hardly safe to stop at describing fascism as merely capitalism's last stand.

Nevertheless, this extreme is no more warped than that other, which has slain its tens of thousands of good radicals so far as their effectiveness is concerned, which assumes that there is a vertical partition, lowered from heaven, sequestering on one side all the demons of fascism and on the other side, produced from the capitalist *demos* by immaculate conception, such angels of light as Chautemps and Delbos, Chamberlain and Halifax, Stalin and Stalin, Roosevelt and Hull.

No, it never works that way. New alliances are in the making. Capitalist democracy has let its followers down once more, that's all. The balance of power shifts, now this way, now that. Perhaps the lesson will not be completely lost. The workers are not puppets, mere creatures of events; we can act with courage and, though harder, with intelligence.

But it is high time to develop our own means of struggle, to create our own agencies of anti-fascist action. This we cannot adequately do while we leave our fate in the hands of those politicians, however astute, thrown into power by present-day democracies even at their best. For that driving "necessity" of capitalist economics is the Supreme Fuehrer, after all. Imperialism shifts the scales, but it is still imperialism.

THE FARMER IS STILL DOOMED

by Frank N. Trager

ONCE again Congress has passed an agricultural act designed, presumably to meet the needs of the farmers in Cotton, Wheat, Corn, Tobacco and Rice. This new act, written in the main under the direction of Secretary of Agriculture Wallace, attempts to avoid the unconstitutionality of the old AAA by providing the essentially same farm-therapy through the means of regulating *marketing,* i.e. interstate and foreign commerce. The aim of the Act is to secure "equality for agriculture", that is to return to the farmers of these (and no other) specified crops a Federal bounty.

This Federal relief or gift to the farmers is allowable only if they "cooperate" with the U. S. Department of Agriculture in the following ways:

1. Accepting proper measures to conserve the soil resources by planting soil-restoring crops; by shifting and/or rotating soil-depleting crops; by practicing certain soil conserving techniques to prevent the worst effects of soil erosion. This, in effect, achieves a form of crop production control.
2. Accepting certain marketing quotas both for domestic and foreign markets determined in advance by the Secretary of Agriculture. These quotas, when approved by the "voting farmers", apply to all farmers, cooperators as well as non-cooperators. They are designed to protect prices against abundant yields or good years which lower prices. The "surplus" in amounts of 35%-40% of total yield may be designated as normal granary holdovers. (What happens to a larger "surplus" is left out.) The proclamation of anticipated marketing quotas by the secretary also sets acreage quota for the farmers. The acreage quotas would be apportioned to the states and applied by state and local agencies.

For this the cooperating farmer receives a reward in terms of (a) benefit payments for soil conservation practices—i.e. getting *paid* to improve *his* land; (b) parity price payments—i.e. the difference between prevailing market prices for the five major crops and the purchasing power of farmers for the "normal" period 1909-1914; (c) commodity loans to all farmers on the 5 major crops (dairy products included here) at low interest rates—lower to cooperating farmers. The estimated cost of this annual farm bounty will depend upon the domestic ratio of farm-industrial prices and the increasingly competitive world-prices for agricultural commodities. The cost will undoubtedly exceed, perhaps by as much as 100% the current budget provision of $444,000,000.

Two other features mark the new AAA: One, an experiment in crop insurance applied exclusively to wheat. The full cost of the "risk" insured up to 75% of "average normal harvests", minus the federally contributed cost of administrations, will be borne by the farmers. A Federal Crop Insurance Corporation, capitalized at 20 millions and supplied with 6 millions for the first year's operating costs, will be chartered under the U.S.D.A. This is to begin in 1939—a decidedly sound experiment, getting a late and somewhat narrow start. (If wheat, why not other cash and truck crops?) Secondly the Act creates 4 regional agricultural research laboratories at a per annum cost of 1 million each whose function it becomes to seek more varied uses for agricultural products.

These are the main provisions for "Farm Aid and Security" devised by the Roosevelt-Wallace leadership. They are designed to avoid, nay, remedy, those conditions which according to Louis Hacker make for the "doom" of the farmer. The disappearing foreign market, the change of U. S. from debtor to creditor nation, the aggravating effects of prohibition (destruction during the 20's of an annual market of 65 millions bu. of barley, 33 millions bu. of corn, 35 millions bu. of hops), the change in food habits (declining per capita consumption of flour and beef, etc.) the decline in need for forage crops for horses, the disparity between domestic farm prices and industrial prices—all these and other factors have contributed to the depression of the farming industry since the war removed its tragic inflation.

Hoover made the attempt in 1929 to stave off the "doom" through the ill-fated Federal Farm Board operating under the 1929 Farm Marketing Act. Essentially Hoover's *purposes* were not dissimilar to those of Roosevelt-Wallace. The differences between them exist solely in that Roosevelt-Wallace demand certain *returns* in terms of farm production and practice from the farmer for the loans, subsidies and stabilization (i.e. over normal granary) which both administrations grant to the farmer. In both cases a median path between "living-at-home" and international trade is advocated; *in both cases the heart of the remedy is to subsidize a permanent relief group in America whose productive role, unlike that of the unemployed worker, is maintained.* This subsidy paid out by the Federal government amounts to (a) a concealed but none the less active sales tax on agricultural products for the consuming population and (b) an indirect grant-in-aid to profit-making industry and transportation whose prices and profits are to this extent at any rate artificially maintained.

Let us examine the above mentioned "returns" which the Roosevelt-Wallace program demands for its continuing subsidy to the cotton, wheat, corn, tobacco, rice and dairy farmers of America:

The arguments for conservation do not need belaboring. No words can better the depiction of the loss of

our natural resources than the epical motion picture *The River* made and produced by the Tugwell Resettlement Administration, now the Farm Security Administration. It is not the complete record of the ravages of bad farming, erosion, deforestation and perversion of the water-power-resources of America but it is sufficient. It could be fully and painfully documented by dozens of notable studies produced as well as shelved by government agencies. Significantly, *The River* omits any explanation as to the motives (profits) and means (legitimatized and illegitimate public theft) by which this great despoilation has come about. He also omits reference to the continuing obstacles placed in the path of even so moderate a government conservation enterprise as TVA by private capital.

However, the facts are known—facts about the causes, facts about the conditions, facts about the potential cures for these conditions. But the *Roosevelt-Wallace Conservation program to date has been more words than deeds!* True, Wallace last year and this year under the agricultural acts will be able to "persuade" (by cash reward) many farmers to prevent the further depletion of their soil resources. As a long range feature this will be altogether to the good. But what of the great deforested, cut-over regions of the midwest and northwest? What of the literally millions of acres abandoned and non-productive which have been lost via wind and water erosion? What of the protection of the remaining timber lands? Except for the acquisition, at good prices to the culprits, of a limited amount of park and timber land and for the work—hardly satisfactory—of the C.C.C., little has been done.

Let me illustrate: Overgrazing and dry wheat farming in the Great Plains states have heightened the destructive effects of wind, water and sheet erosion. Millions of acres now in wheat must be returned to the Range; rigid control so as to prevent overgrazing; tilling on the contour and strip cropping are the demonstrable antidotes. These have been proven by the Soil Conservation Service Experiment Station in that and other regions (Dalhart, Texas). But there is no method under any Roosevelt-Wallace program by which these useful practices may be established for a majority of the acres. Farmer A accepts the aid of the Soil Conservation Service, but "next door" Farmer B does not. Along come the wind and dust storms. The blowing top soil (i.e. dust) from Farmer B and all the other farmer Bs not only ruins Farmer B but also ruins Farmer A. His fences catch the weeds; dust piles up over his contour listing and strip cropping; hummocks reappear and both A and B are back where they started. The example is even more pertinent if A and B are among the increasing number (45% of all farmers) who are tenant farmers moving from farm to farm without real roots in any particular section of the soil. In short under the best intentioned Secretary of Agriculture the maintenance of the family sized farm and piece-meal application of scientific techniques cannot eliminate the devastating role of capitalist planless agriculture. The Sahara and Gobi deserts were once occupied by prosperous peoples!

To avoid this the new Act will demand rotation of crops, retirement of acreage, production control (although it isn't called that) and certain conserving techniques in farming. This, as a long range program, will improve sections of the soil in cultivation but it will not change the basic character of one cash-crop farming in the wheatlands, cottonlands, etc. It will, in part, improve the yield per acre on a small scale but it will not alter the conditions which produce erosion and soil depletion. It will prevent certain aspects of resources-loss but it will not cure the patient. It will leave the patient subject to an ever present danger of re-infection by contagion from surrounding areas which are not treated.

The argument for better marketing of agricultural products likewise does not need belaboring. The Roosevelt-Wallace proposal will pay in parity-price subsidies and low interest loans for the acceptance of these quotas. Presumably marketing quotas will raise the level of farm prices. But the Act completely ignores the "regulator" of these prices: "The Pit" in La Salle Street, Chicago. Trading in farm futures under the auspices of the Chicago Board of Trade is the bankers' gambling casino, the markers for which are the bushels and bales of farm produce. As long as the Administration refuses to kick out these exchanges it is guaranteeing *not farm prices, but the 4 billion dollars annually gambled, and the resulting brokers commissions of* 100 *millions.*

These marketing quotas are designed also to stabilize the total amount of produce both for domestic and foreign consumption. Secretary Wallace in all probability personally favors a policy closely resembling Charles Beard's "Live-at-home", a form of American continent autarchy. But by virtue of his post he must do something about production in excess of domestic consumption. (This is not real excess production. It is an excess only because farm products in sufficient quantities cannot be purchased by America's "one-third ill clothed, housed and fed.") He therefore espouses a middle of the road internationalism. Here the capitalist New Deal could have really ventured upon a chartered sea of far-reaching import *if* it was not so capitalist-minded, *if* it did not shut its eyes to the guarantees it furnishes to the Pit. That is, Wallace could have made available to the consumers of America, especially the "one-third, ill clothed, ill fed and ill housed", a larger portion of the farmers' product. He could have, as his economic adviser, Ezekiel, tried to persuade him, launched a campaign for the greater consumption of home grown products in order to step up the standard of living.

But this path away from scarcity, away from a price economy that imposes scarcity—was not chosen. Despite all Wallace's protestations the course mapped out by the Administration entails an agricultural economy of modified scarcity. "Modified" because Wallace through the Ever-Normal Granary plan, an essential

feature of the marketing quotas, has the government guarantee the hold-over of "unsold" products from year to year at least up to 40% of the total yield. In a real pinch the Government could "release" this "excess" to needy consumers.

But the hopelessness, planlessness and uselessness of the present Act, is most clearly illustrated in terms of cotton. Cotton production under the impetus of subsidy has reached close to 18 million bales. Domestic consumption hit a "high", "which certainly will not be equalled in 1937-8" of almost 8 million bales. Export cotton hit a new low since 1920-21, 5½ billion bales. Cotton acreage has increased in foreign countries by an amount almost equal to the amount of acreage taken out of U. S. cotton since 1932. Wallace tries to clear the Administration from the justified charge that its plowing-up program adversely affected its export program by encouraging foreign countries to make up the acreage difference. The stark facts are: 1. World cotton production with especially large contributions from China, Brazil, India, Uganda and USSR decreases the preeminence of the U. S. and heightens the competition in the world market despite increased consumption. 2. The U. S. starts this year with a carry-over of 6.2 million bales. Together with what we produce it enters the year with close to 24 million bales. Of this it consumes domestically *less* than one-third. It exports approximately another 25%. In short, there is a carry-over of 40%, approximately 10 million bales. This progressively increases at the "Government's expense" i.e. at the expense of a concealed domestic consumers sales tax on agricultural products and indirect grant-in-aid to finance capital and industry. "The U. S. in every year since the depression has had (progressively-FNT) more cotton on hand than the total market, domestic and foreign, would absorb at the prices maintained."

Thus the Act at best temporizes at the brink of an inexorable doom. It illustrates how science and technology could act *if* they were universally or generally applied to the problems of conservation and agricultural production. It illuminates the willingness of a capitalist government to increase the burdens of its people in order to *stave off* an oncoming catastrophe. It creates the illusion that test-tube experiments in problems of conservation will really cure the sick patient. It deliberately overlooks the measures (direct producer-consumer marketing) which may vouchsafe some temporary stabilization of prices, i.e. the elimination of the futures market. It fails to enlighten its masses that its proposals are *necessarily* doomed in the world capitalist markets.

(*A second article, dealing with the omissions in the Administration's Farm Program, will appear in the next issue.*)

CONGRESSIONAL PROGRAM FOR LABOR

(*Continued from page* 9)

national peace. It should do what in it lies to prepare the ground for a change of our industrial system from a system dedicated to profit to a cooperative economic order dedicated to security, peace and abundance for all. For it should realize that only under a new social order will labor be able to come to its own. And finally it should realize that only as labor mobilizes its strength in powerful economic and political organizations of its own can be effected fundamental changes toward an emancipated world.

LABOR IN CALIFORNIA

(*Continued from page* 11)

his chief lieutenants. Despite, or possibly because of this, the Progressive Caucus led by Socialists swept to victory in the recent elections. The Communist campaign of disruption continues, however, to threaten the very life of the organization.

Both in Los Angeles and in the Bay Region, the C.I.O. Labor Councils, set up when the C.I.O. unions were expelled from the A. F. of L. Central Labor bodies, exist primarily for the purpose of rubber-stamping CP resolutions. So swamped have these Councils become with CP resolutions on Spain, Fascism, Labor's Non-Partisan League, and write-your-Congressman campaigns that no time is left for the transaction of union business. A plain-spoken trade union delegate to the Los Angeles C.I.O. Council recently reported a meeting at which he had gone prepared to introduce a resolution concerning union organization. "I didn't try to introduce it, though," he said. "I'd have been ruled out of order."

C.I.O. unionists in Los Angeles not under CP domination—in the ladies garment workers, clothing workers, rubber workers, auto workers, shoe workers, shipyard workers, etc.—boycotted the recent C.I.O. elections after they had been refused information on the payment of per capita of the affiliated locals. They took the position that the CP domination rested largely upon "paper unions" hastily organized with CP members as a nucleus and that under these conditions a fair election was impossible. However, there is little these unions can do about the general situation on the West Coast—unless their national leadership in the C.I.O. brings some pressure to bear upon that situation.

Many of the C.I.O. unions which C.P. disruption or control have not touched or where it has been held in check by action of the internationals, have made real progress. It is in the progressive leadership of these unions, backed by a growing resentment among the rank and file of the Communist-dominated unions, that hope for a healthy C.I.O. movement on the West Coast lies. On that, and on a growing realization on the part of the C.I.O. leadership and national rank and file, that the role of the CP in the trade unions—especially exemplified in its efforts to prepare the workers for a new war—is neither progressive nor militant, but definitely reactionary.

DISCUSSION SECTION

Militant Socialism and an Inclusive Party

A Criticism of Norman Thomas' Article

by Francis Girard

(Editor of Sozialistische Worte, Paris)

"To revive this great socialist hope, to give it a new program for the times and an organization worthy of it, this is our supreme task." These are the courageous words with which Norman Thomas concludes his article on "Socialism on the Defensive" in the September, 1937, issue of the SOCIALIST REVIEW. It is in the spirit of these words that he warns American socialists not to follow the lines of European socialism which he finds on the defensive all over Europe, and in particular not to be drawn into nationalism, not into an enthusiasm for the Popular Front, nor on the other hand to close themselves up into sectarian groups.

However, the alternative which Norman Thomas offers can hardly find the appreciation of those of us European socialists who lived through the terrible experience of the past years. Thomas attributes the greatest importance to the "integrity of the Socialist Party"—and we agree of course to this—but he thinks that this integrity is "fully consistent with the building of an inclusive democratic Socialist Party, with room for considerable variations of opinion." And this phrase should be read in connection with that other of his article where he says it is too easy a theory to accuse the leaders of European socialism with betrayal "unless at least it tells us why that betrayal was possible." For, to reply to this "why" it would certainly have been necessary to examine to what extent the failure of European socialism is due to the fact that socialist parties in Europe have usually been "inclusive democratic" parties. This investigation Norman Thomas does not undertake: that he passes by it makes his tableau of European socialism on the defensive singularly incomplete.

Now you may understand by a democratic socialist party one in which there does not rule the dictatorship of a man or of a clique, whether in official positions or not. And by that you may understand that there should be free criticism of doctrine and tactics, of program and rules, of day-to-day attitude and of personal action, of leadership and of rank and file activity. If this is what you understand by democratic, this kind of attitude is the one necessary for success and at the same time the only one compatible with human dignity.

But consider how such a "party life" can be achieved. Do you mean to obtain it by a "democratic" form of party constitution, in the other sense of the much disputed word? This is probably what Norman Thomas means to say when he speaks of "room for considerable variations of opinion." That is to say, decisions concerning doctrine and action of the party, as well as the nomination of leaders, should, so it seems, in his opinion be effected on the principle of majority rule. Thomas himself does not ignore, though he does not mention them, the objections which the Militant Socialist Internationalists raise against this sort of party constitution. But it may be useful to recall these objections to him in the light of what he saw of European official socialism and communism.

In the German Social-Democratic Party integrity had been absent for a long time, but majority rule reigned. The application of this rule meant that the politicians came to fish for majorities in order to carry a motion, which they wanted to get through, for whatever reasons that may be, or in order to obtain or defend an official position which they cherished. In this competition for majorities on all levels of organization from party congresses to branch meetings, considerations of objective weight of arguments and of personal value of candidates for important positions were naturally almost always beaten off the field by opportunism, confusion and personal ambition. Indeed, the integrity of the Socialist Party cannot be maintained if the integrity of the leaders and members is not guaranteed by means of the party rules. And the fate of the German Social Democratic Party is an illustration of the fact that majority rule is hostile to such guarantees. The development of the British Labor Party and its catastrophic breakdown in 1931 is easily understood when regarded from the same aspect.

Norman Thomas rightly speaks of conditions of intrigue and terror in Russia, but he seems to think that these became inevitable when Russia was forced, through developments outside of her, to rearm as quickly as possible. But do not the recent happenings in that country suggest that the integrity of the Communist Party there has been lost for the very reasons for which it disappeared from democratically organized parties? That is to say, because of the absence of rules in the party constitution, making sure of the integrity of leaders and members? Either the executed or the executors or both should not have been in the positions they are or were in; and if they had not been there no re-armament in the world would have corrupted the Soviet rule.

In France nowadays the slogan of the Popular Front has almost become the cloak for the advance of reactionary forces, and, among the reasons for the disaster which prepares itself here, is certainly the failure of the Socialist and Communist parties to live up to the demands of the situation arising out of the victory of the 1936 elections. Neither of these two parties threw its whole weight into achieving certain measures which had long since been recognized as being vital to the success of the "Blum experiment", (effective disarmament and dissolution of the fascist leagues, cleansing the personnel of the civil and military posts of command, abolition of the control of French economy by the strong forces of private monopolies, to mention only some of the most important measures, considered as urgent all over the country.) Both parties lacked the clearness of tactics as well as the capacity for leadership necessary in such a situation. The Socialist Party is democratic in constitution, as much as you may want it: there rules a great diversity of opinions, and this is one of the reasons of the lack of energy in party action. The competition for majorities is fierce, and Blum being the best tactician gains the day every time. But every time the resolution resulting from this competition is so weak a compromise that no clear directions can be drawn from it. The Communist Party on the other hand followed the orders of Moscow in favor of an all-inclusive French front including conservatives and Catholics and in this way lost all possibilities for what Thomas calls aggressive socialism. The above mentioned failures of Moscow are thus repeated in France.

Many of those who are conscious of the deficiencies of majority rule still keep to it because they consider it the smaller evil compared to party autocracy, and, if this can be avoided, to a sectarian separation from the masses which, they fear, will result from a stringent form of organization.

A sectarian attitutde of a party may consist in this, that its

tactics and its slogans do not correspond to what a given political situation demands, so that there is no response to its appeals. This kind of sectarianism is, as many examples show, not to be avoided by majority rule. On the contrary, it is the more likely to be avoided the more the party constitution provides for decisions being taken and work being directed by the most qualified members. This can be achieved only by making party leadership dependent on severe conditions concerning integrity, reliability, political judgment and organizing capacity. Observing such conditions is a necessary part, perhaps the most important one, of the re-birth of socialism.

But would not this making a socialist party a selective body constitute sectarianism in this sense that few people only would be attached to the party? In different fields history does not bear out the theory that size of membership goes parallel with magnitude of power. Whether you consider the Order of the Jesuits, the Society of Friends or the Communist Party of Russia at the time of the 1917 revolution, you will find everywhere a strong "rayonnement" of a small body of people on large masses, and this influence is precisely all the more effective the more severe and the more appropriate the selection. As a corollary, the history of the Eusopean social-democratic parties shows that large membership is no reason for efficiency or for success.

The re-birth of socialism then is closely bound up with remodelling party constitutions in such a way that integrity of character, ability of leadership, objectivity of argument are given the importance that is due to them. This cuts out majority decision as the guide for action, and thus clears the ground for freedom in exchange of ideas and for energy in action, grounded upon unflinching loyalty to the cause. That such a change in outlook would not leave doctrine and program unaffected, is without doubt. Aggressive, or as we say, militant socialism throws overboard a number of preconceived ideas and misconceptions which have become almost traditional with European socialism: the fatalism of materialist interpretations of history, the uncritical acceptance of the material and spiritual dependence of all individuals on the Government under complete State Socialism, the subjugation of the struggle for spiritual freedom to that for economic equality, etc. The revival of "this great socialist hope" is indeed possible only at the price of abandoning many long-cherished prejudices.

REPLY BY NORMAN THOMAS

I have read Comrade Girard's article with interest. I am sorry if my article suggested that I thought that the extent of Russian rearmament was primarily responsible for the situation in Russia and in the Communist Party. I think it was a factor and that it in turn is excused by the military threats to Russia on the part of fascist powers. But on no account would I attribute to the extent of rearmament the crimes and blunders of the Communist bureaucracy or the entire responsibility for the growth of the totalitarian state in the Soviet Union.

As for democracy, in brief my position is this: Democracy, as Comrade Girard recognizes, in one sense of the word, is the necessary alternative to bureaucracy and tyranny. Democracy never can be interpreted as meaning merely the rule of a majority. It must, however, be agreed that a majority can determine the policy and action of a party at a given time. Now when a labor party or a Socialist Party with basic labor support is active I think it is the duty of militant socialists to function in it till the last possible moment. There may arise circumstances where the integrity of what seems to socialists their own position will compel separation. But in general and as long as left wing socialists are permitted to act together in a socialist or labor party to advance their ideas I think there should be an inclusive party. Thus, I think the I.L.P. would have done more for real socialism inside of the British Labor Party than out, and the same thing is true in the pre-Hitler epoch of the groups which left the German Social-Democratic party. Inside a Socialist Party, however, these groups should work for a continual advance in genuine socialist construction.

TOWARD AN UNDERSTANDING OF TRADE UNIONISM

"Introduction to American Trade Unionism," by Elsie Glück, Ph.D., New York, The Affiliated Schools for Workers, Inc., 104 p., 35¢.

As a condensed and simple introduction to the study of trade unionism, or for use in elementary classes, this booklet is excellent. In direct, simple terms, it discusses in a very objective manner, the present position of the trade unions, gives a short historical sketch of the rise of trade unionism, and then, in greater detail, perhaps because the classes to which the Affiliated Schools cater have a large proportion of pupils from the needle trades and textiles, devotes special chapters to these, and to the mine industry.

The author is amply qualified for the task involved in this booklet. She was formerly educational director of the Women's Trade Union League of New York, and has been connected with workers educational efforts for many years, thus being in a position to appreciate the problem involved in presenting this subject to untrained workers. The material is admirably organized. Every chapter has at the end a list of questions for the use of the reader, and a list of references for further reading.

The pamphlet, in its attempt to present a simple story of the rise and position of American labor, falls into the error of all such efforts—oversimplification, and therefore distortion. For example:

> **"When conditions of work in the big towns on the eastern seaboard were unsatisfactory, the adventurous or dissatisfied worker could go to Ohio or Illinois, and later farther West. The majority of these workers were skilled craftsmen who could find a place for themselves anywhere as carpenters, shoemakers, and so forth. They could take up farming or open a store."**

and

> **"The brave textile workers in the struggles of the 1830's and 1840's soon went West to become teachers or wives of farmers."**

These two statements are not false and yet they present a distorted picture of the process of the westward migration which was a factor in the successive liquidation of the early labor movement in the United States.

The pamphlet suffers from several other faults. It leaves the impression that up to about 1890, aside from Haymarket, the development of the American labor movement was one of peaceful apathy, whereas in reality, it was extremely stormy. The political aspects of the labor movement are not discussed, and perhaps it is not the province of this pamphlet to do so. But when the pamphlet states "this type of workers organization has not been very pronounced," it creates the impression that the political aspects of the labor movement can be ignored because they played an insignificant role. This is entirely wrong, for ofttimes the labor struggle assumed political rather than economic forms, and labor history is just as much dotted with rising and disappearing labor parties as with rising and disappearing trade unions. Further, the pamphlet points out that "In many European countries, where the wage system first found a foothold, the law of the country prohibited such associations." But this was also true in the United States.

In discussing the rise of the A. F. of L. it fails to discuss the different roles of the A. F. of L. and the Knights of Labor in the eight hour day movement which was a turning point in the life of both organizations. In fact, the A. F. of L. isn't mentioned in this connection. It speaks of the A. F. of L. springing up outside the Knights of Labor exclusively. Actually many of the unions which later went to make up the A. F. of L. had their beginnings inside the Knights of Labor and

were compelled to leave the Knights because the latter prevented them from forming national organizations along craft lines.

These criticisms are made with the hope that a new edition of the pamphlet will take them into account. In fact it is to be hoped that a new edition will not be long in making its appearance. The present edition differs from the 1935 edition only with respect to a supplement dealing with the C.I.O., consisting of ten pages tacked on to the end. We all know, of course, that with the existence of the C.I.O. the labor movement as such presents a new aspect, and requires new treatment. In view of the fact that at least half of the organized labor movement in this country is in the C.I.O., it behooves the Affiliated Schools to bring its material up to date.

—H. S. TORIAN

BOOKS

"A Social Study of Pittsburgh", by Philip Klein and Collaborators. 958 pp. Columbia University Press. N.Y.C. $4.75.

It is obvious that no brief review can adequately treat so extensive a study. Its authors and staff workers as well as Columbia University Press are to be commended for giving to the interested student so thorough a job of its kind.

The book is a "social survey" of organized plilanthropy and government services in Pittsburgh and Allegheny County. It is preceded by a comprehensive summation (pp. 346) of the social and economic background of the community as distinct from the social work (private and governmental) agencies. The survey as a whole is the largest, most complete one of its kind, with adequate indices and appendices but without a bibliography.

The study is remarkably and oftentimes unexpectedly honest. It does not avoid describing the general technical incompetence of the Pittsburgh social work leadership as compared to other communities. It frankly faces (but does not solve) the "paradox" that a social work agency has to "pioneer educationally" at the risk of financial loss from its "militantly conservative" supporters; it is sharply critical by implication as well as by open statement of the extreme, undemocratic character of Pittsburgh as a social community and of the use by the money lords of their power in the community to smother social complaint.

All this comes out not in a single presentation but in little nuggets of social criticism imbedded in the abundance of "case-work" detail on the ramifications of Pittsburgh's "philanthropic" attempts to expiate its sins against its ill-housed, ill-fed and ill-clothed population.

The study, like almost all products of its kind coming from the Schools of Social Work, is marked by the paradox above referred to: the private social agency depends for its continuation not on the extent of its services, not on its understanding of the economic causation of the plight of its patients, not upon its breadth of social vision but upon the random whim of its benefactors who almost invariably thwart any chance for fundamental prevention as well as cure. The social agency sooner or later learns this and sets about to conform—in Klein's words, "the agency must take account of the opinion and will of the (fund-giving) community . . . to this extent its freedom of action must be restricted and its formulation of principles must retain some harmony with the philosophy held by the (fund-giving) community as a whole."

Although this is what every Marxist expects of any "institution" which is a product of its society, yet there remains a justifiable opinion that social agencies dealing with the "halt, the lame and the blind" cannot themselves remain halting, limping or blind to the causation of their problems, their "cases". That they not infrequently do—despite the recent organizational efforts among social workers as "trade unionists" (mainly in the governmental agencies)— attests to the strength "of the opinion and will of the (fund-giving) community.".

The book is well written and well documented. After all allowances for its victimization by the paradox which it expounds it is none the less an extremely useful arsenal of material for Marxist interpretation and presentation. The Socialist Party in Pittsburgh and the Valley should make this not only compulsory reading but the basis for a series of local campaigns, the facts for which are amply supplied.

FRANK W. TRAGER.

BOOKS RECEIVED

Labor's Road To Plenty, by A. W. Rucker. XXII+205. $2.50. L. C. Page & Co. Boston.

The Changing West, by Laurence M. Larson. IX+180. $2.50. Norwegian-American Historical Association, Northfield, Minn.

C.I.O. Industrial Unionism In Action. By J. Raymond Walsh. Pp. 293. $2.50. W. W. Norton & Co. N.Y.C.

World Economic Survey. Sixth Year. 1936-1937. League of Nations Publication. Pp. 261. Paper. $1.50. Columbia University Press. N.Y.C.

The Dollar; A Study of the "New" National and International Monetary System, by John Donaldson. Pp. XIX +271. $3.75. Oxford University Press. N.Y.C.

America South, by Carleton Beals. Pp. 559. $3.50. J. B. Lippincott Co. Philadelphia.

Revolt Against War, by H. C. Engelbrecht. Pp. XV+367. Dodd, Mead & Co. N.Y.C.

I Knew Hitler, by Kurt G. W. Ludecke. Pp. XIV+814. $3.75. Charles Scribner's Sons. N.Y.C.

Inside Europe, by John Gunther. "1938 Edition." Pp. 531. $3.50. Harper Bros. N.Y.C.

The Proletariat, by Goetz A. Briefs. Pp. XVIII+291. $3.00. The McGraw-Hill Book Co. N.Y.C.

The Cultural Heritage of India, by one hundred Indian scholars. Sri Ramakrishna Centenary Publications, Ramakrishna Mission, P.O. Belur Math, Howrah, India. About 2,000 pages, 171 illustrations. Price: $12. plus $2.50 postage.

The American Steel Industry. At the Cross-roads of Progress and Reaction, by Folke W. Sunblad. Pp. 106. $1.50. Dorrance & Co., Philadelphia.

An Encyclopedia of Pacifism, edited by Aldous Huxley. Pp. 104, paper cover, $.50. Harper & Brothers, N. Y. C.

The Bonus March and The New Deal, by Bartlett. Pp. 128. $2.00 M. A. Donahue & Co., Chicago, Ill.

The Process of Change in the Ottoman Empire, by Wilbur W. White. Pp. 315. $3.50 University of Chicago Press, Chicago.

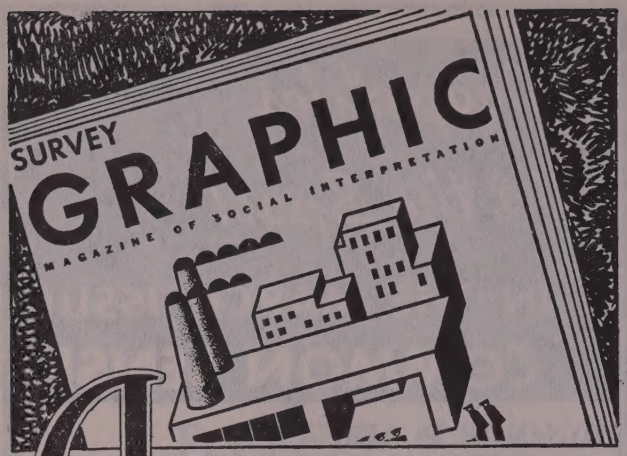
First Act in China, by James M. Bertram. Viking, $3.00.

Civil War in Spain, by Bertram D. Wolfe. Paper covers. New York; Workers Age Publishers, 131 West Thirty-third Street.

Victorian Critics of Democracy, by Benjamin E. Lippincott. 12mo. Minneapolis, Minn.; The University of Minnesota Press. $3.75.

Ulrich Von Hutton and the German Reformation, by Hajo Holbon. 8vo. New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press. $3.00.

League of Nations Armaments Yearbook, 1937. Paper covers. New York: Columbia University Press. $6.25. A reference book of general and statistical information.



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INTRODUCTORY OFFER

As projects in *discovery*, Dr. Douglass W. Orr brings out surprising testimony as to health insurance in England. And Pierce Williams, the economist, explores our American depressed areas, just as William Allen White added up America up and down the Main street of Emporia, and newspapers from coast to coast quoted it.

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THE SOCIAL FRONTIER

A Journal of Educational Criticism and Reconstruction

A medium of expression of The John Dewey Society for the Study of Education and Culture

Editor
GEORGE W. HARTMANN

The Neck of the Bottle

In the process of Building a Better America, farmer, labor, and progressive groups generally have tended to forget the important part that schools could have in advancing social change.

How many radicals know that . . .

(1) There are more than a million teachers in the United States?

(2) One American in four is at present attending some kind of educational institution?

(3) During times of social stress, people grow hungry for more knowledge and new ideas?

(4) The typical teacher is more progressive in his social, political, and economic outlook than the average adult in his community?

(5) School administrators are as liberal as the average teacher?

(6) Boards of education are less liberal than the average voters who elected them?

(7) Progressivism as an attitude increases with intelligence, with actual information about public affairs, and with increased schooling?

(8) There is a magazine called THE SOCIAL FRONTIER whose primary purpose is to help educators, parents, and enlightened laymen use the schools as a means for the attainment of economic democracy?

(9) The best teaching—in both the academic and the personal senses—is NOT done by conservatives or reactionaries as they cannot prepare pupils to comprehend our changing social order?

(10) Progressive influences, when they reach the teaching profession, are multiplied in effect because of the leadership of public opinion exercised by workers in school life?

(11) If Education is kept on the side of the Common Man in his struggle for the Good Things of Life, the future of democracy on this continent is bright indeed; if not, the alternative is too horrible to contemplate?

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