The War in Earnest  
by JOHN ADAMS

Social Justice and Its Messiah  
by E.T.

Russo-German Relations  
A RETROSPECT

The End of the New Deal  
by PAUL MATTICK

Book Reviews
The "Proletarian Outlook" is the bulletin of the Proletarian Group, an organization of workers who realize that the capitalist profit system must be changed to a system which assures economic equality, security and freedom for all. Consciously opposing sectarianism, the P.G. attempts to approach all social problems on a broader basis. It conducts lectures and forums and supports every activity that encourages self-initiative in the masses.

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THE WAR IN EARNEST

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The elected representatives of the American people deemed it advisable to lift the embargo. Munition works, steel plants, airplane factories, chemical laboratories, shipyards, coal pits—all show signs of increased activity. Idle men are going back to work. The war to end the crisis has begun—a war in earnest. Soon money will flow freely. Fat payrolls will help the workers forget the seven lean years. Fatter profits will reward the capitalists' faith in the constitution of our peace-loving democracy. Be cheerful, thou downtrodden and footweary, thou shalt not wait for relief any more; thou wilt be prosperous and happy for soon you will be gainfully employed fifty and sixty hours a week. Praise our leaders in Washington and herald their wise judgment for keeping America out of war.

I.

"The World War began in August 1914, and the American nation was a participant in the war, on the side of the Allies, within a week. To contend that the United States did not enter the fight until April 6, 1917—two years and eight months after the war started—is merely to juggle with realities. America's neutrality was nothing but a sham from the beginning. In the first month of the war Charles M. Schwab, president of the Bethlehem Steel Company, returned from Europe with the largest order for shells and other war material that had ever been given, up to that time, to any munitions-making concern in the world's history. The buyer was the British government. In a few weeks the Du Ponts of Delaware got an order, also British, for one hundred million pounds of gunpowder at a dollar a pound. The peacetime price was fifty-five cents a pound.

All that was just the beginning. As the months rolled by the purchases of the Allies—Great Britain, France, Russia, and the smaller nations—
increased enormously. Millions of people were employed, one way or another, in furnishing munitions, foodstuffs, clothing, motorcars, miles and horses to Germany’s enemies. Notwithstanding this obvious fact the attitude of the United States, as a so-called neutral, was formally correct. The State Department defined the American position in January 1915, in these terms:

Those in this country who sympathize with Germany and Austria-Hungary appear to assume that some obligations rest upon this government, in the performance of its neutral duty, to prevent all trade in contraband, and thus to equalize the difference due to the relative naval strength of the belligerents. No such obligation exists; it would be an unneutral act, an act of partiality on the part of the (United States) government to adopt such a policy if the Executive had the power to do so. If Germany and Austria-Hungary cannot import contraband from this country it is not, because of that fact, the duty of the United States to close its markets to the Allies. The markets of this country are open upon equal terms to all the world, to every nation, belligerent or neutral.

This statement expresses a truth but, like so many diplomatic announcements, it does not give the whole truth. The “Markets of this country” were indeed “open upon equal terms to all the world” but for every practical purpose Germany was completely excluded from them. The whole-sale co-operation of American citizens in the furnishing of vast quantities of munitions and supplies to Great Britain and her allies certainly made the United States, for all essential purposes, an enemy from the beginning. My readers will understand, I am sure, that in setting forth this continuity of circumstances I am not taking sides but am trying to show how, by gradual and successive developments, we were drawn into a war which was purely European in character, and which had no point of contact with American affairs, except in so far as American interests were represented by profiteers in war supplies and the lend-lease money to Germany’s enemies.”


II.

In 1917 the United States entered the war to “make the world safe for democracy”. But while thousands sacrificed limbs and life in behalf of that beautiful phrase the real patriots managed to stay at home and cash in. After the world had been made safe for democracy over there, the returning doughboy found a strange democracy over here. The rich had become very rich, the poor were wearing silk shirts; but the saloon keepers had gone out of business. The doughboy found that this job had been taken by another man, his girl too -- he was left with nothing but a uniform and slightly shattered illusions. But he did not kick. He was sure that soon everything would be all right again. AND NOW we enter another phase in the struggle for democracy. Has anything changed? Twenty-five years ago it was the “ Hun”; today it’s the “ Hun” again. Twenty-five years ago he wore a grey uniform, a pick helmet, and fancied the kaiser mustache, today he wears a brown uniform, a field marshal’s cap, and a funny little mustache. Twenty-five years ago trade unions and labor parties hollered, “God save the King”, today they cry in unison “God save the King”. And on the other side, Twenty-five years ago it was perfidious Albion, today it is perfidious Albion again. Twenty-five years ago, Albion was jealous of German industry and civilization, today it denies the German people the right for Lebensraum (living space). Twenty-five years ago social-democracy
and trade unions hollered, "With God for Kaiser and Fatherland", today they keep their mouths shut. (They have been kicked around a bit, these poor gentlemen, otherwise they too would be heard howling in unison, "Heil Hitler").

But on both sides twenty-five years ago and today; Exploited and suppressed workers, wage slaves, unemployed peepers. Cannon fodder, to be sacrificed on the altar of god manon and Mclooch war. That our children may live a happier life? Or isn't it rather because our rulers' thirst for power cannot be quenched?

III.

It is an imperialist war. All highfalutin phraseology is but a guise to conceal the real purpose. Defender, aggressor, invader, are cunning terms and purport to deceive the people. To be capitalistic means to practice all three, or else declare bankruptcy.

Individual capitalists may be forced occasionally to surrender their possessions peacefully, but never capitalism. Capitalism has to defend its privileges in order to live; it has to be aggressive in order to live; it has to invade the competitor's territory in order to live. Capitalism has to do that with or without democracy, in the name of democracy and against it. Capitalism has to employ all means to further its aim; it knows no morals nor ethics; capitalism appreciates only the yardstick to measure profits and the gun to shoot dissatisfied workers. To preserve this privilege, it is willing to sacrifice millions of young people. There is no reason for workers to favor either side for both sides will turn against the workers if and when that becomes necessary. The belief that Hitlerism is the greater evil and must be crushed first before the workers can think of attacking their own democratic government is based upon the erroneous assumption that the present war is actually fought for the preservation and restoration of bourgeois democracy. Even if this were the case, what benefits would the workers realize? What did they realize after the last war? Times have changed? Of course, they have from bed to worse.

Isn't it rather illusionary to think after this war our rulers' attitude towards the working class would be guided by a more profound understanding of the needs of the workers? The individual capitalist may feel sorry for the poor devil whose standard of living will be lowered by the enforced wage cut, but in order to remain in business his personal sentiments carry no weight. He is part of a gigantic mechanism whose uncontrollable inner law demands but one thing: profit and more profits. For this huge machine (total capitalism) the working class is, first of all, a productive force. That this productive force lives, eats, and reproduces itself, is of secondary importance. Socialist propaganda, union activity, strikes, free speech, etc. the capitalist system will tolerate only as long as such activity does not jeopardize the required average rate of profit. If that becomes increasingly difficult, the offensive against the working class begins.

IV.

What will be the outcome of the war? Only dreamers and braggarts pretend to know. Why are we to believe that the defeat of Hitler Germany will mark
the beginning of a new democratic epoch? We are of the opinion that the democratic form of government is closely linked up with laissez-faire capitalism and that with the disappearance of the latter the former has outlived its usefulness for capitalism.

That its judicial forms still exist and are partly adhered to in countries like England and the United States is due mainly to the fact that these countries possess capital reserves which are large enough to keep up -- temporarily at least -- the average rate of profit. During war time, however, all democratic countries introduce "War-Economy", which is merely another name for totalitarianism.

A return to the democratic form of government after the war is visualizable only on the condition that the monopolized and state controlled economic apparatus has been so thoroughly destructed that the men in power are unable to raise sufficient funds to rebuild this machinery and that they, therefore, hand back the means of production to private entrepreneurs. Return to laissez-faire capitalism however, is possible only (providing it is at all possible which we doubt) if it is accompanied by unrestricted competition, a free market, and democratic representation in government and labor. Assuming that such return would be possible, it would have to be followed by drastic cuts in the living conditions of the workers; but whether the workers would accept peacefully such terms remains highly problematical. The result of such conditions can be only one of two alternatives: either social revolution or barbarism. Should the latter triumph, neither the form of government nor the name of the dictator will make one iota of difference to the working class. (The difference which some well meaning people concur is motivated by sentiments and not by objective facts).

In view of the foregoing we hold the opinion that class conscious workers must not favor any side, or governmental form, in this war among imperialistic nations. Karl Liebknecht's slogan of May first, 1916, is still valid today: Workers, the enemy is within!

--John Adams

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ROOSEVELT'S NEW "NEW DEAL"

by Paul Mettack

It is claimed that something essential happened in 1933. "Rugged individualism" was replaced by a new "social conscience" on the part of the people and their government. The pleasant word "profit" disappeared behind the still more pleasant word "security". The New Deal was going to change things, until everybody would be able to smile as sweetly as the President. And the magic of words almost succeeded in bringing this about. Now again, however, all faces are sour. Words, ideas, hopes cannot forever compensate for actual needs. The bluff, the make-believe is gone; reality defies the most pleasant phrases.

In the depression which began in 1929 the rich people lost their profits rapidly. The workers lost their jobs, for where there are no profits no chimney will smoke. There were many unemployed - millions and millions of them - and if there are too many of them it becomes much too risky to let them starve.

The workers, out of jobs and hungry, did not understand the reasons for their misery. With some exceptions, they had always imagined that we needed capitalists in order to have people employed. However, they could not help getting angry with their employers and their government, as both failed to act "intelligently" to end the depression. They made some trouble, organized, demonstrated, demanded work and relief, and added political unrest to the economic disturbance.

The further society runs downward, the faster it will run. There are many groups with different interests in society, each fighting against all others for a greater share in political rule and a greater part in the profits created by the workers. Depression conditions make worse this struggle of all against all. The longer this competitive struggle remains unchecked, the more difficult it becomes to control the laborers and to secure the existence of the present form of society. "Common sense" rebels against such conditions, and political movements arise to end them in one way or another. Existing political parties are both forced and willing to utilize to their own advantage the social unrest caused by depression conditions. They offer programs of action and, like the beer brewers, invent clever slogans in order to get as many people as possible behind their interests and the plans connected therewith. They always ask for your support, so that you may profit. They tell you, that all depends on you, on your vote, on your loyalty. You must bring the right people with the right program into office.

However, as soon as with your help they succeed in getting control and power, they drop the "you"; they are quite busy then ruling without you and against you. But so far, you have always responded to their call, and consequently, you have always felt cheated afterwards.
You did give the New Deal your confidence. Wholeheartedly, as they say, you supported the present Administration and all the organizations favoring it. But were times really getting better? Times were only different, but not better. Many of you thought it was the competition of the machine which made you lose your job, though you knew quite well that not the machine but its owners did all the firing. You thought the new Administration would prevent your bosses from firing you by legislating shorter hours and higher wages. Your organizations, the political parties and the unions supported you in this belief and asked for your vote for Roosevelt. You even gave your money to bring the New Deal into existence by paying millions of dollars to aid the election campaigns. To distribute the existing work among more people, to maintain the purchasing power of the masses to keep people working these slogans sounded quite convincing to you and you hoped for their application.

With happy eyes you saw how more and still more workers got organized into new and old unions. You saw, that, with a few exceptions, all parties were willing "to pull together" to get us out of the depression. You saw the beginnings of an apparently new relationship between employers, workers, and the government. You heard even governmental and Supreme Court decisions in your favor. At least, they sounded as if they were in your favor. The "Right to Work" was drummed into your ears until questions of food and wages could no longer be heard, and soon you found yourself with a shovel in your hands enabled to maintain your "self-respect" and earn your living as any other worthy member of society.

A new kind of relief legislation faced you now. Unemployed organizations arose and were no longer hindered by the authorities in their march towards respectability. Organized unemployed found governmental endorsement and the deep sympathy of Mrs. Roosevelt. Though they were not supposed to strike, still their right to organize was guaranteed. And soon there was no need to restrict these organizations, for they were happy in restricting themselves. Their men - Roosevelt - was in the White House, he would do all that was possible for the poor, and not to obstruct but to support his fine work was to be the function of the organization. The Workers Alliance, the most important of the unemployed organizations, flourished in the shadow of the Titan, and soon was able to pay its leaders and organizers substantial salaries to enable them to lobby more successfully in Washington.

A new era indeed! But wait. -- If one drinks enough he will soon forget what he is drinking. The same happened to you. You were drunk with words, slogans, hopes, and delusions. You wanted so much that things get better, that saw them getting better. But you did not know any longer what you were getting. Despite all the high-sounding security propagandas you were working for about $50 a month. But you thought it would be temporary. The memories of the past provided you with sufficient excuses to do nothing to improve your lot. You waited for the return of the good times. And as each soldier, though knowing that many will be killed, marches into battle deeply convinced that he himself will be spared, you too kept on hoping that despite all and everything you would some day return to the "orderly life" of a real wage slave. For it is true that, though millions are out of work and other millions on WFA, still many more millions get along quite nicely in private employment, and you drove the blues away by dreaming of entering their lines once more.
There was no longer charity, there was something like a "right to relief", when the "right to work" could not be exercised. There were new budgets, but the budgets remained inadequate. To manage on relief meant to train as a hunger artist. This miserable relief, however, was just enough to make a WPA job look like a great improvement. And as the workers on WPA were hoping for a real job with real pay, you were waiting for your turn on WPA. Waiting always waiting! Till then it would be better to try to manage somehow, to be quiet and satisfied in order not to jeopardize your chances to land the WPA job. Even the least relief is undoubtedly better than nothing. Having worked all your life for every little compensation, you have not learned to think of getting "something for nothing." You were surprised at getting anything at all. You hungered proudly and some of you jumped into the lake or out of the window not to be embarrassed by asking for help. Your "pride" is only silly. You continue to produce profits even when unemployed. Your unemployment scores the rest of the workers into working harder and raises the profits of their masters. There is nothing in this world capitalism cannot utilize.

But why count up all those things which you know only too well? We could put your misery into statistics and impress those who do not know what real hunger is those who deal in statistical hunger and find only statistical solutions for it. What you need is not so much exact knowledge, but exact food. What you need are not formulas, but suggestions for real actions to relieve your suffering. It is not illustrations you need to "drive the facts home". Look into your mirror, into the eyes of your children, into the faces of your fellows at the relief stations. The truth is in men, not on paper.

Today the lot of the unemployed is as miserable as it ever was. The newspapers report every day on Public Works, WPA, Old Age Pensions, Unionization, Social Legislation, and Relief. They serve their purpose, but the betterment of your position is not this purpose. All these well-sounding measures are not for you; they are out to serve those who live well already. What had been hailed by people with very little hunger as a peaceful, bloodless revolution, turned out to be exactly that which it was conceived to be a way of maintaining the present-day society, which consists of workers on the one hand, employers on the other, and a tremendous number of parasites between them. And as such, it could result only in an increase of your misery.

The depression forced the American capitalists and politicians to adopt and try some new methods of social control to improve the profitability of capital and reduce the cost of the depression as much as possible. It happened that there was - for we do live in a capitalist democracy - no unity on the question as to how to go about stabilizing society. The depression forced the government to interfere to a greater extent than before with the country's business affairs. It had to turn against some capitalist groups in order to satisfy others. It had to force reluctant groups into the general scheme of things expected to bring about a betterment of conditions. It was forced to sacrifice the interests of some capitalists in order to serve the whole of capitalist society. But in America, where "rugged individualism" had celebrated its highest triumphs, the government was relatively weak, and to carry through the measurements deemed necessary it had to appeal for mass support to enforce its will against stubborn capitalistic opposition. In order to get the masses behind itself, the New Deal was decorated with a number of effective liberal phrases.

Successful in pacifying the masses and employing schemes financed with inflationary methods, and supported by a world-wide rise in business activity, the government was able to create new confidence in the present social and
Economic system. It is today hotly debated whether the temporary upswing experienced after 1933 was due entirely to the New Deal measures or whether it occurred in spite of them. But it should not bother the workers so much what really caused the spurt in business. We do know that the government resorted to a pump priming policy in the hope of initiating a general rise in business activity. In 1937, however, the trend of business once more went in the opposite direction. Despite all governmental policies the new depression could not be prevented. Opposition to the tried governmental policies now grew rapidly. The New Dealers were driven into defensive positions. They tried to lay the blame for the "recession", as they called the business decline on the shoulders of sabotaging "reactionaries." The latter in turn blamed the policy of the Administration for the new misery.

Defeated slogans came to the fore again. No longer a policy of higher wages and shorter hours demanded, but the reduction of prices by way of an increased productivity in other words, more work and less pay to raise profits. There seemed to exist a real struggle between the "new" and the "old". And as far as political interests of administrative jobholders played a part, there was a struggle going on in preparation for the forthcoming elections. But as regards economic policy and therefore as regards the essential political lines, the struggle between the New Dealers and the Reactionaries is only a sham-battle.

If one pays no attention to his rulers' words, but looks only at their actions, he will soon discover that the present Administration, like any past or future administration of capitalistic character, defends no particular philosophical principle, but is solely engaged in helping to make possible greater profits, and in participating in the enjoyment of these profits sweated out of the workers. Different methods are proposed for that purpose. Some capitalistic groups favor deflationary methods to bring this about. That is, they want to solve the problem by direct wage cuttings, saving expenditures, and by leaving the business revival entirely to the supposedly automatic workings of the market, which would lead to the elimination of incapable capitalists and to a greater profitability for the surviving capitalistic groups. Other capitalistic groups are more interested in inflationary methods as a shortcut to better profits. They favor increasing governmental interference, they are quite ready to force out of existence undesirable capitalistic elements and to cut wages in the round-about-way of raising prices by prevailing wages. The Hoover administration represented the first group and method. Any other party, wishing for power in 1933, had to express the opposite idea. And that brought the Roosevelt landslide.

Though the methods may be different, the goals of both groups and their parties are identical. The Roosevelt Administration did not hinder further technological development, but, in so far as this was still materially possible forced this development through all its measures, which, however, they appeared still had no other effect but to increase further the centralization and concentration of capital. As always in capitalism, the richer became still richer, the stronger, and the poor poorer. The increase of governmental influence itself is only one indication of the trend towards the control over the workers and their products by fewer people. The "liberalism" accompanying this process was such only apparently. By favoring, for example, the unionization of more workers, most of the possible activities of the dissatisfied working masses were directed into channels not at all dangerous to capital. The workers were busy building their organizations and competing with each other as to which
particular labor bureaucracy should remain or occupy the field. The growth
of the unions increased the influence of the unions upon the workers at
large. By controlling the union bureaucracy, which in turn controls the unions,
the government via the unions controls the laboring masses better than ever
before. The union leadership knows quite well that in times of depression it can
only operate with, not against, the government. And what the union leaders
know, the other labor leaders also know: that under conditions as they are to-
day, it is better for them to swim with the stream.

Roosevelt or no Roosevelt, capitalism remains what it is. It has to
follow its own necessities. A depression means that profits are insufficient
to induce and make possible further capital expansion. To make things roll
again means to make possible greater profits to allow for production on an en-
larged scale. Either wages have to be cut, or production has to be so increased
that, by prevailing wage rates, the part of the social production which falls
to the workers is considerably decreased. The smaller the workers' portion,
the bigger that of the capitalists, and the greater the desire and also the
ability of the latter to build new plants and hire more workers.

As the pump-priming idea to initiate a new expansion of capital was de-
feated in the depression of 1937, and as the governmental expenses are growing
rapidly, eating up more and more of the diminishing profits, to escape the
present slump seems to become more and more difficult. Fear rises again. The
old course has to be changed. Other ways must be tried. Wages must be reduced,
work hours prolonged, and strikes eliminated. Despite the increasing influence
on the part of the political bureaucracy, American capitalism is primarily
still based on private property. The government must continue to serve the
interests of private capital. At any rate it could do no differently even if
it were exclusively serving only its own interests. From its attempts to ini-
tiate business activity by way of spending, it now attempts to reach the same
results by savings. It once more has to attack the workers openly to let
capital flourish again.

For years the capitalist propaganda has hammered against the New Deal.
The fiercer the attack upon the New Deal the easier it is for the Administra-
tion to change its policies with the least loss of popularity. As long as it
is possible to make the masses believe that Roosevelt is still fighting their
battles, they hope that he may win despite the present temporary set-back. In
the end he may still appear triumphant with the "tories" on their knees. The
friendly attitude the labor organizations maintain towards Roosevelt and his
New Deal, not to speak of the open swindle of the Communist Party which at-
ttempts against all facts to remove the blame for his policy from the shoulders
of the President, serves the Administration well in its attempt at wage cutting
and profit raising.

To bring wages down, to make the workers work harder, the weapon of
unemployment has to be used to make them submit. However, to scare the workers
with the loss of their jobs it is necessary to make unemployment more miser-
able than it already is. To cut wages, then, means also to bring down the wages
of the WPA workers. To bring down the wages of the WPA workers implies the
"cutting of relief. This, in turn, means savings for the capitalists as it
reduces governmental expenditures. It means higher profits, which, combined
with the greater direct exploitation in the working places, might improve
the position of capital considerably. At least it is hoped that it will do so.
The continued friendly attitude of labor organizations towards Roosevelt and his New Deal means, at the present time, when workers on WPA and relief are forced to defend their very lives against the recent measures of the Administration, that these organizations are acting as agents saboteurs of the workers' struggle. Among your enemies today are not only both the reactionaries and the New Dealers, but also the New Deal supporters in your own ranks. To fight, then, against the new measures and to have a chance to win the fight, most of all it is necessary to recognize the fact that you cannot strike and win with the existing "labor organizations," but only against them.

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AN APPEAL

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DEMOCRATIC FRANCE is following the example set by Hitler, Mussolini, and Stalin as the report by Bowno on the conditions of the Spanish refugees bears out.

We should attempt to ease the lot of these comrades many of whom cannot return to Spain but must seek a temporary haven in some other country.

Money and clothing is needed.

The PROLETARIAN OUTLOOK appeals to its readers and sympathizers to contribute as much as possible AT ONCE.

Send money orders or checks to Wendelin Thomas, 318 Haven Ave, New York, N.Y.

Send parcels to Proletarian Group, 137 East 13th Street, N.Y.C.

Contributions will be acknowledged by mail.

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"SOCIAL JUSTICE" AND ITS MESSIAH

He says he teaches Christianity. He appeals to Americanism. In his Sunday afternoon radio-sermons, which he calls "my educational talks on economic and politics" he greets his regular three-and-a-half million radio listeners with a dramatic voice:

"This is America - a re-awakened America - an America that stands 100% for Americanism - an America that will have no patience either with Nazism or Communism, an America that still stands by the traditions of our forefathers - traditions of liberty, traditions of Godliness, traditions upon which we must establish a sane Christian nationalism."

This saviour from all worldly ills - Father Coughlin - is a depression-made man. By the clever juggling of religious, political, and economic phrases, the crest of misery and despair following the crash of 1929 has lifted him to his importance as a priest-politician. His "Social Justice program for all" represents a mixture of cure-all-state-fair-medicine. His weekly newspaper "Social Justice" has taken over the street corners of the big cities as the battleground of its headline shouters.

II.

The outstanding characteristic of Father Coughlin's program is that it can mean almost anything; it is one big generality. He has definite strategic purposes in mind, and he will switch his policy with the wind if need be. His phraseology derives from fascist sources. He is a master of rhetoric. His speeches resemble those of Hitler, they are vague and emotional with no appeal to logic of reason. Distortions, exaggerations, and outright misstatements of facts do not bother his Christian conscience.

The depression in America after 1929 was favorable ground for his rise to popularity. People were losing their jobs, their farms, their homes, their savings. They wanted to know why and what to do. Father Coughlin was their man. He had an answer ready for everything. His fellowship grew day by day. He organized the Radio League of the Little Flower, and in 1930 bought time on stations in Chicago and Cincinnati. From preaching religion he switched to preaching economics flavored with religion. Depression was getting worse. The father was fully occupied to counsel the depressed farmers and the 'small people'. He had no time for his parish work anymore and engaged three young priests to fill his place. For his radio-sermons he employed his own brain trust, experts, and explored books and documents to make up his speeches. He kept pace with the development.

When Roosevelt came along as a presidential candidate, having every chance of success with the people, Coughlin was all for him. His popular slogan was "Roosevelt or Ruin". However, during the following presidential
campaign of 1936, when Roosevelt's chances of re-election were uncertain, Coughlin's slogan by a slight turn became now "Roosevelt and Ruin". He could not go far enough in inventing names for the President, the "Anti-God", "that great betrayer and liar Franklin Double-Cross Roosevelt", "the scab". He supported Lemke as presidential candidate and was certain of his victory. When defeated, he saw himself forced to withdraw. In his farewell speech over the radio he said:

"I am withdrawing from all radio activity in the best interests of all the people. I am doing this without attempting to offer one alibi, thereby proving that my promise is better than my bond".

But a year later, with the declining popularity of the New Deal, the shrewed father saw his sun rising again. He came back. Forgotten was his promise in "the interest of all the people". His new loves were fascism and nazism.

This incident has a parallel in history: after his unsuccessful putsch in Munich in 1923, Adolf Hitler swore before the German National Court to refrain from all political activity in the future. The country, economically and politically shaken by a lost war and a revolution, was not ready yet for the absorption of the Nazi ideologies. Hitler had appeared prematurely and failed. Ten years later, mounting disorder and turmoil lifted him into power. The reign of fascism began in Germany.

III.

Already during the election campaign of 1936 his turn to fascism became visible. He declared that "Democracy is doomed", and "I take the road to fascism" (see: "Coughlin, Lemke and the Union Party", by Dale Kramer). In one of his anti-Roosevelt speeches he exclaimed, "When any upstart dictator in the U.S. succeeds in making this a one-party form of government, when the ballot is useless, I shall have the courage to stand up and advocate the use of bullets", (United Press, Sept. 23, 1936).

When he had started out, his program resembled the Farmer-Labor platform. He stuck to specific issues, traditional American issues. Occasionally he would attack the Jews; more often, the communists; but seldom did he link the Jews with communism. When he came back on the air in 1937 he had changed, he responded to his new possibilities. He shed no tears for democracy; on the contrary, he only had contempt for it. Increasingly he adopted the Nazi technique of shouting "Jew" and "Communist" to people he didn't like.

Coughlin's activities have won him admiration and praise in the fascist countries. He has been looked upon as a fellow-traveller. In the N.Y. Times of Nov. 27, 1939, Otto Tolischus wrote:

"The German hero in America for the moment is the Rev. Charles E. Coughlin because of his radio speech representing National Socialism as a defensive front against Bolshevism".

On March 13, 1939, Coughlin had broadcast a speech in favor of a corporate state (fascist state of Mussolini). And the Times of Jan. 17, 1939 published a dispatch from Rome stating that the radio priest "received fascist praise and thanks today from the Regime Fascisti.....".
In a signed article in the February 13, 1933 issue of "Social Justice" Coughlin declared:

"I am beginning to understand why I have been dubbed a "Nazi" or a "Fascist" by the Jewish publications in America; for practically all the sixteen principles of Social Justice are being put into practice in Italy and Germany".

The "Jews' friend".

Coughlin's anti-semitic utterances had evoked a great deal of unfavorable publicity. One of his supporters comes to his defense in an article in "Social Justice" magazine, entitled "Father Coughlin proves self Jews' friend". He goes to great trouble and length of space, and finally declares:

"...in other words, instead of being anti-semitic, Father Coughlin was very pro-semitic insofar as he attempted to contribute a suggestion by following which the Jews of America could co-operate with all decent Americans in preventing from happening here what happened in Germany".

Other 'pearls' in this alleged defense are:

"Father Coughlin pointed out that Jews were deeply implicated in Communism and in the advance of Bolshevism... Father Coughlin did not say that all the Jews are communists or that all communists are Jews. Bear in mind that he made a clear and careful distinction between atheistic Jews and religious Jews and, finally, bear in mind that he invited the religious Jews to join with him in stamping out the red menace of America. He also pointed out that Nazism is a defense mechanism against communism...."

and

"...the peaceful, silent attitude of the good Jews towards the bolshevik-minded Jews is likewise inviting recriminations against the Jews".

In another article in the same issue of "Social Justice" we find the following accusation:

"...A national solution of the Jewish problem is the very last thing these Jews desire. Their solution is the international solution. Their solution is to promote by every means their power the enmity of liberalism and the consequent emasculation of Christianity, so that on the ruins of Christendom they may construct a new Jerusalem; an international order dominated by their own compact international, racial and esoteric religious organizations, which is the essence of Jewish power today".
What has he in store for labor?

What Coughlin advocates in his program for the workers, reminds very much of the Nazi Labor Front in which the German workers are regimented and prevented from independant action. Yes, he grants labor the right to organize, but

"...I do not mean that labor should organize only for its own selfish interests. Labor should organize for its own protection and for the common good of the nation, on the basis that capital cannot do without labor, and labor cannot do without capital....

Neither capital nor labor should organize against each other * because social justice must be meted out to all without exception".

He is all for harmony, for class cooperation as opposed to conflict - one of the big generalities in his program but he does not say "how". Hitler has shown how to eliminate "conflicts", how to achieve national cooperation - through elimination of the party system, ruthless suppression of all labor organizations and the concentration camps.

The father attempts to satisfy everybody, his recipe is of a generous nature: "Social justice to all without exception". His program is "safe" on the labor question, guarantees the profit system, appeals to the farmer, and to the middle class. He has also a message to the big employer: Production for profit is "selfish, un-Christian". But production for use is socialism, and socialism is communism which he hates. So, by a little twist of terms, he manufactures a recipe which is to combine the tastes of the capitalists and the workers: "Production for use at a profit".

Adolf Hitler's program was very much the same, "everything was promised to everyone". *

Social Security? He does not favor sharing the wealth for the common good of the nation. An article in his paper (October 17, 1938) contained the following message:

"Studying it (the Social Security Act) closely, one discovers that basically it is socialist in its conception and aims. It is socialism of the old school; socialism that offers a remedy more disastrous than the threatened evil; socialism that demands we take from those who have and give to those who have not".

Coughlin opposes premature organization

One of his Sunday broadcasts, relative to the Christian Front, caused stormy protests. In "My Position towards Organizations" he clarified his position:

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*He proved what he meant when he joined hands with anti-union employers, broadcast an attack on thousands of striking General Motor workers in 1937 and organized a company union at the Ford Plant under the name of "Workers Council for Social Justice".
"...I resolved... to hold absolutely aloof from all organizations. ... As a clergyman, I do not find it compatible to identify myself with any movement in any way whatsoever. I prefer to remain entirely outside all organizations... except as an outsider, to sustain or direct them I must hold myself disengaged from your organization; I must act in no other capacity toward you than as a friend and councillor, whose privilege it is to address you in your homes each Sunday... To depart from this program would destroy any usefulness I may have; for I would be assuming both an authority and a position altogether impractical".

The fascist father seems to be on the guard: he is not only a shrewd politician but also a careful student of history. He apparently has learned from Hitler's premature appearance in 1923 to assume both an 'authority and a position' publicly, appears to be too early. No doubt, the clergyman will find it compatible to identify and qualify himself openly as a politician as soon as conditions are favorable.

IV.

It is clear from the daily press that the fascist-minded groups here are beginning to cooperate more and more. On August 23, 1929, 5000 people attended a meeting in New York in what was called the first of a series of "nation-wide" open air gatherings uniting all Christian Fascist groups. Featured were such fascist proponents as George Deatherage, national leader of the Knights of the White Camellias, once allied with the Ku Klux Klan; Major General George Van Horn Moseley, Fritz Kuhn of the German-American Bund, and Joseph McWilliams, leader of the Christian Mobilizers. This meeting ferociously attacked the Roosevelt government as the "Leftist Government". "The United States government offices in Washington are controlled by atheistic, apostate, Communist Jews," McWilliams declared, "You must be ready to go out and fight - and I mean to fight physically - the La Guardias and Roosevelts and all like them. You must learn to hate the Roosevelts and La Guardias as you hate a rattlesnake for they are more dangerous than a rattlesnake to the American people." Deatherage warned "Nothing would set the country more on fire than the arrest of one of our leaders. If anything like that happens, or should they try to stop Father Coughlin, the country will be up in arms overnight".

The fascist movement appears to make progress in the United States, coordination of the many proselytes, both of the indigenous and the imported variety, seems to be a question of time only. The outstanding personality to accomplish this task might be Father Coughlin. He certainly is ambitious and ruthless.

Though the constitution of the United States bars him from becoming President (for he was not born in the United States and there is even doubt as to his citizenship), he yet may reach the top. Lack of citizenship did not prevent Hitler from becoming ruler of Germany. Hitler simply tore up the German constitution and wrote another one, more to his liking.

On account of the European developments, however, Coughlin's chances are rather slim; and should the American government succeed to keep America out of war until public opinion has been effectively reoriented - Coughlin's "Social Justice" has had its day -

E. T.
RUSSO-GERMAN RELATIONS

(A Retrospect)

The signing of a non-aggression pact between Russia and Germany on August 23, 1939, took many people by surprise. Not only the liberal, Russia-friendly, intellectuals expressed bewilderment, equally astonished were scores of left-wingers who, only a few weeks before, considered such an alliance an utter impossibility and who, in fact, saw in Russia an ally in their struggle against fascism. Dr. Fritz Sternberg, for instance, whose new book "Why Hitler Can't Win" was reprinted recently in serials by the New York Post, in a lecture before the Proletarian Group in August 1939 expressed the opinion that the report of a loan to Russia by Germany, to be followed up by a treaty, must be considered nonsensical for, in the first place, Germany has no gold and secondly, the ideological difference between the two countries is too great to allow for such allignment.

Similar sentiments were expressed in a pamphlet, published by three German left-wing groups in Paris, July 1939, under the heading "The Coming War" It is of interest to note that in the opinion of these people Russia not only is still a workers state, but that she is also devoid of imperialist intentions. The non-imperialist character of the Soviet Union, it is claimed, will make her a potential ally in the event of a workers revolution in Western Europe during or after the coming world war.

The Stalinites need not be mentioned at all for they have an answer ready for the most insidious acts of their fatherland. Incidentally, the closer the alliance between the two dictatorships becomes, the sooner might the workers learn to differentiate between the two systems.

The surprise and bewilderment in the various layers of the liberal and working class movement is explainable on the ground that these people never understood the character of the Russian revolution, nor the nature of economy that was the result of this revolution.

In order to fully understand the recent Russian "betrayal" one is forced to get acquainted with the theory and practice of bolshevism. That, however, we do not attempt to do here, but we wish to refer the reader to an excellent little pamphlet which gives a brief outline of the bolshevik concepts. (Bolshevism, by Rudolf Springer, 15 cents, International Review, P.O. Box 44, Sta. O., New York, N.Y.)

What we intend to do in this article, is to present a rather sketchy outline of the Russo-German relations during the past 25 years, and we hope that it will answer many perplexing questions.

I.

The Bolshevik-German relations begin with the October revolution, 1917. Both countries were eager to end the war; the Russians, in order to put their domestic affairs in order — the Germans, in order to relieve their Eastern front. Both governments agreed to meet in January 1918 in Brest-Litovsk.
Shortly before the conference at Brest-Litovsk, the executive organ of the Soviets invited the Entente to participate in joint peace negotiations; but in this note they included also the following passage:

"Should the allied government refuse to participate at the peace conference, the revolutionary working class will face the task of wresting the power from those who in blind stubbornness do not want or wish to give the people the long desired peace."

The Entente considered such a language an indirect declaration of war. All relations were severed and the Entente began at once the armed intervention which proved so disastrous for Russian internal development.

The hope of the bolsheviks of a general soldiers strike within the enemy armies did not materialize. The bolsheviks themselves were unable to continue the war. The old czarist army was smashed and demoralized, and a new army could not be stamped out of the ground. Furthermore, the appeals to the European proletariat to rise against their governments met with no success. As a result, the bolsheviks had to abandon the hope for a speedy world revolution. Only one point in their program proved to be effective, viz. the right of national self-determination led to the separation of the border states -- a move of almost disastrous consequences for the young soviet republic. For these newly founded states became very hostile towards their "liberators"; they not only suppressed at once the revolutionary movement within their boundaries, they also permitted the Entente and white guards to use the territory as military base against the Soviet Union. These latter developments forced the bolsheviks to enter into separate peace negotiations with Germany. At the conference of the two governments at Brest-Litovsk, the German generals demanded more than the bolsheviks were willing to give, and the conference came to an abrupt end. But when the German armies began to march again, the bolsheviks were compelled to accept the German peace dictate under worse conditions.

The bolsheviks, however, did not as yet abandon the hope for world revolution. They still believed that the German workers would come to their assistance as soon as the collapse of the German armies would have become an established fact. Until then, they considered it necessary to bargain for peace and concessions with all states who were willing to accept the promise that they had given up the world revolution which, of course, they had not for they continued and even increased the propaganda among the European workers. But when it became clear -- after the collapse of the German war machine -- that the European proletariat was not ripe for the revolution, they abandoned that hope and prepared for a peaceful settlement of all arising difficulties. Already in February 1919 they informed the Allies that they would be ready to meet the demands of the Entente regarding the war debt, and as guarantee of their good faith they offered economic concessions, supply of raw materials, and even Russian territory. Furthermore, they offered to include in all pacts the promise "to abstain from interfering in their [Allies'] home affairs". This "Propaganda Clause" was included later in all pacts between the Soviet government and other countries.

Despite this retrogressive development on the economic front the bolsheviks -- by way of the newly found Communist International -- continued to nourish the illusion of thousands of European workers that the world revolution was near and that soon the old capitalist order would cease to exist.
"Within Russia there will be no restoration of world economy", Radek declared in 1920. This statement served not only Russian economic interests but also world capitalism, and it enabled Russia to start negotiations with Western powers. After having been successful in signing satisfactory commercial treaties with several smaller states, she began to fight for the right to participate at the important international conferences. She finally succeeded in gaining admission to the conference at Geneva, 1922, which dealt with the economic and financial restoration of Europe. Although the result was nil for Russia -- she did not receive the financial support wanted -- the conference paved the way for a better understanding with Germany. Soon afterwards the two governments signed the treaty of Rapallo. Germany recognized Russia de jure, and thereby won an ally in her fight against the treaty of Versailles.

"The Rapallo treaty", Preobrashenskii wrote, "opens the door to Russia for German capital, however, was not used to build up Russian industries, on the contrary, it was used for the building of German airplane and poison gas factories in Russia. It is even suspected that there existed a secret clause in the treaty which called for close military cooperation in case of a German-Polish war, similar to the one which called for combined military operation against France should Germany decide to liberate herself from the treaty of Versailles.

As the treaty of Rapallo reduced considerably the danger of German aggression Russia tried to effect similar treaties with her border states. She offered to reduce her standing army to 200,000. But when the border states refused to discuss disarmament, Russia in turn, refused to participate at a conference which was to establish non-aggression pacts. Through this maneuver, Russia indirectly obtained for herself a raison d'être for the anticipated German-Polish war -- a circumstance which seems to indicate the existence of the above mentioned secret clause.

II.

Russia had become the partner of Germany, a state which tried hard to restore its former imperialist position, and the Rapallo treaty was but one means towards that end. Russia, on the other hand, was also strengthened, and she began to exploit the antagonism among the great capitalist powers in order to obtain further concessions. The Fourth World congress of the Comintern which assembled early in 1922 in Moscow had the task to revise the "line" of the Communist Parties along these new developments, a task which solved in an extraordinary fashion. More pronounced than ever before, Russia was made the center -- the alpha and omega -- of the bolshevik's international policy. "The greater and stronger Russia becomes, the more powerful will be her revolutionary influence on an international scale", the theses to the congress proclaimed. Particular attention was paid to the German situation, and the resolution concerning the treaty of Versailles bewailed the fate of the German nation which, "disarmed and deprived of all defensive means is at the mercy of the imperialist powers". Thus the bolsheviks paid homage to a country whose rulers had just finished a bloody campaign against the revolutionary workers. But to the Communist Parties of Germany and France was given the advice to fight unitedly against the Versailles treaty.
These and sundry other resolutions before the congress pursued to gain the confidence of the German military clique in order to effect the signing of the proposed secret military treaty. (It was finally signed at Rapallo some time later). It is of interest to note that the Communist Party of Germany — immediately after the congress — began with impudent frivolity to prepare the stage for a national peoples front. Later, at the CPR congress in Essen (1925), the theses on tactic declared that up to 1923 Germany was not an imperialist but a nationally suppressed country, and that at that time expected war with France would not have been an imperialist war; on the contrary, it would have been a national war waged for the purpose of liberating a suppressed people. The CP would have supported such a war without hesitation. It seems almost unbelievable that the Comintern considered it possible in 1923 to carry its brand of socialism at the Red army's point of bayonet to Germany and, after having helped Germany in the abolition of the treaty of Versailles, undertake to crush the united German bourgeoisie.

But that was actually the Comintern's new concept of class war, a view shared also by Lenin who declared that in the highly developed European countries socialism would not grow out of the capitalistic economic contradictions but rather through imperialist exploitation of one state by another.

The Comintern began to identify the German war for national liberation with the workers revolution. This policy, however, was renounced soon because the bolshevik discovered that there was no real basis for joint action of German workers and capitalists against France, and secondly, certain changes of alignment affecting several major powers (England, Italy, and China) convinced the Russian government that acceptance of the "status quo" — for the time being — would be of greatest benefit for her. And thus was laid the foundation for the famous slogan of "socialism in one country".

As Russia extended her commercial diplomatic contacts to the Western hemisphere her relations to Germany cooled off considerably, but there continued to exist rather close contacts between the Reichswehr and Russian military circles. Another commercial treaty was signed in 1925 which, for a long time, occupied first place in Russia's business. In 1926 both countries signed a non-aggression pact which, despite slightly strained relations, allowed for continuation of German-Russian co-operation in the Polish question.

III.

Internally, up to 1926, Russia experienced many changes. Lenin had died in 1923, Trotsky was on his way to exile. Stalin had become supreme ruler. The battle cry, "Forward to world revolution" gave way to the more substantial phrase, "Socialism in one country". The NEP period (New Economic Policy of private capitalism rigidly controlled by the state gave way to outright state capitalism and its "planned" economy. (The Five year plan in four years" — the planned plan planned even this slogan for the plan.)

As in the rest of the capitalistic world each change at home is the result of a change in foreign relations, or vice versa, so in Russia. Determined to play her game in world politics, Russia tried to force her way into the League of Nations. Disarmament was the talk of the time, and since Russia had a standing army of from one to two million men — the exact figure no one knew — she was invited in 1927 to join the preparatory disarmament conference of the
League of Nations. Litvinov, replacing the ailing Tchitcherin, demanded "complete abolition of all fighting forces on land, sea, and in the air". This, of course, was an impossible demand, and the Russians knew it only too well; but the purpose of this little trick was achieved: thousands of workers and liberals saw in Russia the truly peace-loving and only non-imperialist country in the world, which would join the League of Nations for no other reason but to help to preserve peace. After this face-saving maneuver had been successfully staged the Russian delegation settled down to real work. The capitalist representatives encountered little difficulty in convincing the "bolsheviks" that reasonableness is one of the golden rules of imperialist foreign policy. Already in March 1928 the Soviet delegation capitulated. Litvinov explained: "Since our proposal for complete and general disarmament has been met by the counter-proposal of partial disarmament, the Soviet delegation decided to accept this proposal on the condition that it will serve merely as a starting point for further negotiations. The Russian displayed a high degree of diplomatic skill at these conferences which, of course, purported to conceal the continuous arming of all participants, including the Soviet Union.

In the summer of 1928 Russia signed the famous Kellogg Pact which was to put an end to wars. Practically, the pact marked the beginning of undeclared wars (Japen in Manchuria, Italy in Abyssinia, etc.) Russia signed the document because she believed it would pave the way for her official entry into the League of Nations which, however, took place only in November 1934.

IV.

The outbreak of the world crisis increased the economic and political uncertainty tremendously. In view of this, Russia intensified her endeavor to assure economic and political understanding with the capitalist powers and secondly, to accelerate the pace of her own industrial development. During the ensuing years she signed several important trade agreements with England, Italy, and Germany. The relations with Germany had grown very friendly again, and for a number of years the Russian market proved highly profitable for German capitalism. The Soviet orders in 1931 assured three to four-hundred thousand workers wages and bread, the communist press proudly announced, but that these orders included huge profits which helped bankrupt German capitalism to avert a complete breakdown, the same communist press modestly failed to mention. However, Russia's orders were not big enough to get German capitalism on its feet again, and one fine day in March 1933 the budding friendship between the two countries was brought to an abrupt end by Adolf Hitler. It meant a sharp turn in German foreign policy. Hitler's Eastern orientation, Drang nach Osten, forced the European powers to reshuffle their cards. Russia in particular was anxious to assure herself the support of the major powers, for she actually feared Hitler would attempt to wrest the Ukraine from her. And when German diplomacy succeeded to effect a branch in the Polish-French relations the Kremlin accepted joyfully the French offer for a military alliance. At the same time she made overtures towards Japen, and fortified her very friendly relations with fascist Italy. But despite the apparently insurmountable obstacles in ideology Moscow did not give up hope to eventually reach an understanding with Berlin. If it was possible to get along with Mussolini, why not also with Hitler? Stalin, in a speech before the 17th party congress of the CPSU in 1934, declared: Of course, we are far from being enthusiastic by the fascist regime in Germany. However, at this present stage the question of fascism is of secondary importance, a fact which can be illustrated best by
referring to fascism in Italy with whom the Soviet Union is on very good terms. The main question is the question of peace, Stalin continued, and we must draw closer to "these or those countries which are not interested in disturbing the peace". In the eye of Stalin fascist Italy emerged as a champion of peace. And in 1935 Molotov declared before the Seventh Soviet Congress that "we have no other desire but to continue good relations with Germany. Everyone knows that the Soviet Union wishes to develop friendly relations with all states, those with fascist governments not excluded." The ultra-nationalistic race theories of the National Socialists, Molotov emphasized, constitute no obstacles for the development of Russian-German relations, and he added: "Although we do not have a very high opinion of these theories, we do not conceal our respect for the German people as one of the greatest peoples of the present epoch".

Russia's foreign policy, past and present, depended on the policy of Germany. A retrospective glance at the history of both countries reveals many attempts towards close co-operation, and despite, or rather because of their big differences economically and politically mutual understanding proved to be beneficial to both. The latest pact, therefore, will remain, inconceivable only to those who believe that (1) there exist ideological differences between Russia and Germany, and that (2) ideological differences determine the economic and foreign policy of a nation. To all others the signing of the pact will be nothing else but the logical sequence of a development necessitated by economic interests.

In conclusion, a few explanatory remarks. In view of the fact that we wished to restrict our review to the Russo-German relations we excluded such important questions as (1) Why was it impossible for Russia to reach an agreement with France and England, (2) Will Russia be able to support the German war, and (3) What role will be played by Russia in the event of a German social revolution. We hope to get back at these questions in future issues of the "Proletarian Outlook".

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READ:

Bolshevism by Rudolf Sprenger 15 cents

International Review, P.O. Box 44, Sta. O. New York
BOOK REVIEWS:


Dr. Devine's biographical book describes the first attempts in America to deal with the welfare problem. These early beginnings of social work are rather thin, and their fruitlessness reflects itself in the dryness of the book. The bad conscience of the bourgeoisie arose with the increasing profitability of capital after the Civil War, and the more intensive the exploitation of labor grew, the more hypocritical became the charitable sense of professional "economists" and their following of rich widows and tasteless philanthropists. However, the strength of the bourgeoisie was growing; welfare could remain charity — a plaything for the most ridiculous part of "society." In this period, as today, organizers of labor engaged in social work, were about 100 per cent more disgusting in their attitudes than the bourgeoisie itself. Altogether, this work makes clear that the workers were mistaken when they spoke of the crumbs falling from the tables of the rich into the mouths of the poor. There were not even crumbs. There were only the beginnings of a new profession, the creation of new jobs for a group of "sociologists," and there was the cheap advertisement of the bourgeoisie who had been moved by the Xmas carols of Charles Dickens.

Health and Unemployment concludes from serious researches that unemployment is bad for the health. Of course, not merely unemployment, but unemployment of workers without means or on relief. Professor and income affect health to a large extent. The fact that developments in medicine have prolonged life has somewhat compensated for the misery caused by proletarian unemployment, but it can already be demonstrated that prolonged unemployment, under the present relief conditions, will reverse this trend. Though the work relies for its material on conditions in Canada, its conclusions may be safely generalized, as the conditions of unemployment in industrial countries do not differ essentially. Keeping this capitalist system intact involves sacrificing not only many of the good things in life but also the very years of life itself.

The New Jersey relief report discloses the numerous contradictions and complications of the unemployment relief problem in the United States. From a description of the beginnings of relief, it proceeds to describe in great detail all the activities of the different relief agencies in the various phases of their history. Those interested in a comprehensive view of the whole matter of relief and its practical implications will find this book quite helpful. It is, as far as we know, the most complete report on the subject, and it contains even the least studied phase of the relief problem which goes today under the name of "unemployed movement?"
The report of the 11th National Conference on Social Security takes up recent trends in social security legislation and the administrative practices. Most of the reports describe the existing social legislation as inadequate. Whatever suggestions are made in the line of improvements, however, entirely disregard the basic questions of social welfare: the character, the possibilities, the necessities, and in general the limitations determined by present-day society. Disagreements among social workers, coming to light at this conference, reflect no more than the competitive struggle among them. Underlying the whole discussion is an unmistakable tendency to further governmental initiative legislation for improving the status of the poor as a way of improving the status of the social workers. In keeping with this attitude it was demanded that authority be transferred from politicians to professional social workers. One participant, however, commented on this request quite trenchently by pointing out that "he has never seen it demonstrated that political party politics is any more vicious than professional-guild or professional-association politics in the field of patronage." In attempting to restrict the demand for more and improved social welfare, Goetz A. Bries contends that one should never ask for too much, as the experience in Germany have shown that too much emphasis on social legislation may lead to the factionalization of the middle classes. Altogether the proceedings of the conference present a comprehensive picture of the present state of social insecurity in America.

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In 1789 the French West Indian colony of San Domingo constituted the greatest market for the European slave trade. The brutality of the slave trade and the plantation system exploiting the slaves is described here in a very impressive way. Property relations and class ideologies between poor and rich whites, between mulattoes, the whites, and the Negroes, are taken up in connection with problems arising out of the imperialist rivalries of this period. Though national and racial questions played a part in the history of San Domingo, James succeeds in showing that the determining cause of historical development was of a socio-economic nature. The relations between capitalist development and the colonial system is demonstrated by the reactions to the slave revolts in England and France. The rising bourgeoisie favored slavery as long as it was profitable; it declared itself against slavery only out of competitive considerations. The revolts between the different ruling classes and groups, however, made the slave revolts possible. The new rising class of Negro origin did not oppose the existing property relations. Slavery was supplemented with a tenant system which was just as exploitative. The new rulers, James’ hero Toussaint not excluded, fought for equality in exploitation of the masses, and ruled no less dictatorial than the former white masters. The development of Toussaint into a Negro emancipator, is here described in the hero-worshipping fashion of the old historical school. The author’s sympathy is always on the side of the Negroes. He believes that the slave revolts accelerated the change from slavery to more modern exploitation systems. Adhering to Lenin’s idea of connecting the proletarian struggle with the fight for liberation of colonial people, James sees in the San Domingo slave risings early signs pointing to future struggles, which will eventually lead to the independence of the suppressed black race. Though we find many of James’ conclusions rather forced, and though we do not share his particular Leninist approach to the problems raised here, still the book makes interesting reading.

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