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THE NEW AMERICA:
THE NEW WORLD



THE GRESSET PRESS

ELEVEN FITZROY SQUARE
LONDON

First published June 1935

91119

Printed in Great Britain by
THE SHENVAL PRESS

I

NEW DEALS THROUGHOUT
THE WORLD

THE cardinal fact in human history during the past thirty centuries has been the irregularly accelerated change in the scope, pace and precision of human intercommunication. Everything else is subordinated to that. It is the primary form of any rationally conceived outline of history.

About this cardinal fact all the other broad realities group themselves as a system of fluctuating adjustments. It has determined the expansion and collapse of states and empires, the position and growth of cities, the diastole and systole of population and the character of man's outlook upon the universe. Even climatic change takes a rôle secondary to this main theme in the human story. Wars, conquests, pestilences are incidents in its unfolding. The realization of this cardinal biological truth is now gradually but steadily replacing the erudite balderdash of the literary historian, with his fantasies of the "births" and "deaths" of civilizations based upon a childish analogy between the individual life and social processes, and with his pretentious muddlements about artistic golden ages and "cultural" culminations and suchlike imaginary values. There has been and there is only one human civilization

and it has manifestly been spreading and varying and wandering and drawing itself together again into larger and fewer units of law and organization since the beginning of the human story.

In the past century the rate of this change of scale has become relatively terrific. Even the literary historian may presently be expected to realize as much and set himself so to fudge his windy dissertations about the "spirit of the west" and the "soul of the east" and the "decadence" and "renascence" of nations and suchlike nonsense, so as to justify a belated claim to have understood it all along. Communication has become so swift, far-reaching, universal and intimate, that a community of destiny is dictated inexorably to mankind, either the unity of a common purpose or the unity of a common debacle and biological frustration and degeneration.

Mankind has still to achieve any world-wide mental unity. We are unprepared for this emergency that has been gathering through the centuries, to rush at last so swiftly upon us. We think within the compartments of language, national literature and political tradition, the national partitions are down, the whole world is open to us,

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but we have great difficulty in realizing that. Power—gigantic power—has come to us and we can use it only in mutual injury according to the methods of the warring past. Plenty overwhelms us and we do not know how to distribute or use the wealth we can now produce. We can mount to the zenith or plumb the deepest seas; in a few score hours we can fly to the uttermost parts of the earth; and we are as pitifully baffled by these gifts of fate as a rabbit would be if suddenly it found itself with the eyes and hands and strength of a man. Invention and scientific knowledge have taken our hearts and imaginations by surprise. Our social and political ideas, our morals, our ambitions, our courage have had as yet no corresponding expansion. Man discovers he is Nature's misfit; he reveals himself now an evasive little creature, a monkey alone in a moving motor car, terrified and imperilled by the disproportion of his opportunity.

The whole present spectacle of mankind, broadly conceived, is the uneasy and mainly unintelligent response of this misfitted human mind to the stresses of its ever increasing maladjustment. It never anticipated the possible fusions and long

range intimacies that now dismay it. Few of us as yet apprehend the reality of our situation and none of us can claim to know with any completeness or lucidity the methods by which our race may be able to adapt itself to the vast and fundamental changes of condition that are going on. Man is to-day a challenged animal. He has to respond, he has to respond successfully to the challenge, or he will be overwhelmed—like any other insufficiently adaptable animal. All the organized communities in the world without exception are in a state which partakes in equal measure of vague half-hearted experiment and convulsive reaction. We realize that the “civilizations” and cultures, the laws, the political institutions, the economic methods, loyalties, moralities, religious and poetical interpretations that served to sustain us well enough in the slower and apparently stabler past, are working more and more discordantly and dangerously, but we still lack the force of mind and will, to essay the gigantic clearances and the gigantic new constructions upon which these omnipotent changes in our conditions insist.

The social psychologist, seeking for rational

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generalizations through the swirling appearances of contemporary events, finds that the main pressures caused by this mighty change of scale fall so far into not quite clearly defined, intercommunicating classes.

The pressures may shift in the future, but this is how they manifest themselves now. First of all, hanging over all the world, is the possibility of that widespread destruction, social disorganization, and hopeless inconclusiveness of suffering, which we apprehend when we talk of the "war danger." For centuries mankind has, so to speak, muddled along, with war and conquest; though predominance has passed from this people to that, progress and the race have continued; but it is being realized by great multitudes that with the general change of proportions in human affairs, *war has changed in its nature* altogether. It has changed to something monstrous and dreadful and anti-human. This realization is now quite widespread. It is not necessary to "rub it in." Humanity is, as a matter of fact, doing remarkably little to arrest this swelling and advancing menace, but that something *ought* to be done, is no longer to be argued. It is a platitude. Meanwhile the naval war

material accumulates, the new armies swell and the populations drill submissively.

Secondly there is a world-wide economic distress, due to the fact that with increasing productive efficiency, the production of commodities by a system of unrestricted competition for profit in an open market, is giving less and less satisfactory results. Man is choked with food production—and starves. Economic life is “stalling” and a diversity of experimental controls and restrictions are being attempted throughout the world. Huge sections of our populations are in discomfort, distressed and worried and—what is extremely dangerous—unemployed and hopelessly bored. Millions are suffering acute physical misery. And in the face of over-production, this is felt to be needless misery.

Thirdly, tangled up with and tangling up the industrial muddle is the exaggeration of finance that has gone on in the past century, so that property which was once mainly tangible, and responsibility which was once fairly traceable, are lost in an intricate network of cheques, counters, stocks, shares, claims and concealing and untraceable complexities. Clever and cleverish people “play” the markets, gambling in this intricate confusion,

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snatch fortunes, spend, disorganize and tangle the natural difficulties of our situation into knots we cannot even cut.

These are the three main aspects of the great change as it confronts us in the newspapers and current discussion and political life, the problem of arresting the onset and development of war destruction, the problem of socialization and the reorganization of distribution because of the change-over from scarcity to plenty, and the problem of monetary catastrophe due to the entire inadequacy of our financial organization in the face of witless, smartness and contemporary needs. It is like a badly installed electrification system which at a score of points, through some slight dislocation, may set fire to everything.

These vast overlapping problems, the politico-war problem, the unemployment problem and the finance-monetary problem differ widely in their nature and importance, and none of them go down to fundamentals. But they are as much as has come so far within the compass of the public intelligence and it is in terms of this triple system of riddles that we must study human reactions to-day. The profounder necessity, if a new phase of

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comparative security is to open before our species, is such an intellectual expansion and such a drastic moral revision, such a gigantic educational effort, in short, that as yet we hardly dare to think about it. But war, socialization and money are being thought about—immensely, universally, clamorously and inconclusively.

The way in which various types of mind, various communities and various interests react to the confusedly presented riddles that confront them varies extraordinarily. But it is still possible to make a rough statement of the main sorts of reaction. Most of us, in changing moods and with different references, are profoundly inconsistent, displaying first one and then another type of response. However desperately we try to remain objective, none of us can in truth pretend to keep constantly level-headed, disinterested and comprehending. Since the problem is still too confused and immense for entirely explicit statement, it is perhaps as well to admit the tentative nature, as yet, of each and all of our professed solutions.

Why are all the proffered solutions so unsatisfactory? What stands in the way of assured, effective

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solutions and efforts to meet the world's great problem?

The answer is to be found not in any material difficulties but in the natural disingenuousness of everyone in the matter of the common welfare. Let us face this elementary fact of human nature.

Each one of us, long before he begins to take up the large questions of social and political and economic life, has gone far to develop a "way of living" of his own, has built up a complexity of affections, ambitions and submissions, and accepted a thousand uncriticized assumptions. It is in our human nature, as it is in the nature of every living thing, for each individual to defend the "way of living" into which it has fitted itself from the cradle onward. We parody Commodore Decatur in effect and say, "my way of living, right or wrong." We resist changes that invade our developing personalities. We dread foreign and unfamiliar things. Our family, our schoolmates, our personal rivals, loom larger than mankind, our home-town hides the world from us, family pride, patriotism, race prides, defend the precious self at the core of things. We insist we must work, reckon, talk as we are "used" to do. We are all like that. In our hearts

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all of us, the whole two thousand millions of us, are instinctively on the defensive against the cold great challenge of these new conditions, against this new commandment to change.

The primary mental fact in the individual mind in the world to-day is reaction and resistance. This is most evident in the matter of war. We know that the New War is going to be a fundamentally different thing from the war of the past, it is going to be a horror of mechanism, gas and pestilence, that may go far to dissolve anything like a civilized order altogether, and it is moreover as plain as daylight that it needs only the fiat of five or six great governments willing to fuse their foreign offices, for war to cease from the world for ever, but we do so love our waving flags, our competitive patriotisms, the brave uniforms and the band, that we cannot nerve ourselves for that strange new calm of a boundless world at peace. Even another world war may be needed before we bow to the plain logic of this situation.

The plain logic of this new world ahead of us is so compelling, that in spite of the fact that our habits and hearts are all against it, it is wrung from us intellectually that our

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world must change. The compulsion to change balances at last more and more closely against the instinct not to change, and like Pavlov's perplexed dogs, men and governments become hysterical. They are unable to face up to an effort they find monstrous and uncongenial. They seek to protect themselves from the strain by self-deception. They avert their minds. That is where we are now. Everywhere we see the drive towards the new world order producing either, on the one hand, inadequate but considerable changes, accompanied by protestations that nothing more is being done than a return to dear old conditions, or, on the other hand, effusive declarations of New Deals, New Eras, New Regimes and Social Revolutions, masking very strenuous attempts to restore the lost order of things. The hysteria of Revolution can be extraordinarily like the hysteria of reaction, and very different pretensions and subterfuges may mask resistances essentially the same.

The most striking instance of what I may call resistance dismay at the present time is Russia. During the lifetime of Lenin, Russia really did seem to be setting its face steadfastly and valiantly towards a new cosmopolis, a revised morality, a

wider education. Mighty things were attempted and much achieved. But at the death of Lenin it was as if an unseen hand turned down the light of the Russian imagination. The inertia of Lenin's doctrines carried the country through the supreme effort of the first Five Year Plan; as it was carried out that plan involved much unfairness, harshness, waste, cruelty, resentment and social exhaustion, and now the whole Russian spectacle is one of relaxation and fatigue. Freedom of criticism is more and more desperately wanting, and the new Russia is clinging passionately to the persuasion that there is nothing more to be learnt. In no sense now is Russia still a revolutionary country: it has become a dogmatic country.

When I was in Russia last year I was enormously impressed by the changed morale since my former visit in 1920. Then there was danger, hardship, heroism, hope and a sense of limitless effort and adventure; now under the honest but uncreative fidelity of Stalin, cynicism and a widespread self-satisfied fatuity prevail. I do not know what stir of furtive revolt and intellectual renaissance was hidden from me—the Russians have always been a people of intricate procedure and sudden

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moods—and I had no chance of talking straightly to the younger men; but for the present at any rate the Russian experiment in cosmopolis seems to have come to a halt. It has become compromising, diplomatic, contemporary and militantly patriotic. Unwilling to go on, it vacillates, imitates and remembers. Under the influence of such reactionary leaders as Gorky and Mirsky, art and literature are becoming retrospective; they reprint the national classics, Alexy Tolstoy writes studies of Peter the Great, and Litvinoff imitates Metternich and Talleyrand in the councils of Europe.

In completest contrast to Russia, so far as their pretensions go, are the new "corporative" states in Germany and Italy. And yet they show quite parallel resistances to the onward thrust of change. They profess an economic and political adaptation to modern needs and, in the same breath, claim to achieve a renaissance of the ancient Teutonic and Roman virtues, respectively. They repudiate "communism," whatever it may be or do, and they resist any trend towards Cosmopolis with shrieks of wrath and horror. But all these three systems, Italian, Russian, German: have this in common: they have passed through

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strictly analogous phases, a violent assumption of a new system after a phase of distress and disintegration, and a real hysterical rigour after that first revolutionary convulsion.

France, in face of the modern challenge, displays a different method, because after the war she had for a time the illusion of success and ascendancy. While Russia, Germany, Italy proclaim a new birth, and do their utmost to imagine that their convulsions have met all the great necessities of the altered world and that now nothing more is needed but to carry on, France is holding on stoutly to the belief that nothing has changed, that there never was any need for anything to change, that under God and Pertinax, with adequate precautions for security, there need be no more change for ever. It was a marvellous experience this February to go about among the pleasant Riviera villas, of which half are to be let or sold, to be the only guests, or one of two or three groups of guests, in large polite restaurants and patiently expectant hotels, to motor northward, the only travellers on the road, with every room in the starred hotels to choose from, to walk about in an uncrowded Paris with shops full of bargains and

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empty of customers. Communist manifestations mutter in the industrial suburbs, but Marianne sits thin and tight-lipped, disregarding the ebb of her economic vitality, deriving great comfort, she tells herself, from the fact that her francs count for more and more even if they circulate less and less. And so it seems she will sit until something breaks. Unemployment mounts and mounts, the peasant's standard of life regresses, and there is not a town in France that cannot be bombed within two hours from the frontier.

The change of scale came upon the English-speaking communities in the past hundred years at an angle quite different from those at which it struck the rest of the world. They had room to grow in. The Americans faced the apparently limitless West; there seemed always food and work to be found by going westward. The British had a colonial empire that seemed as limitless. "Emigrate" was the British equivalent to "go west, young man." Railway and steamship and telegraphy came just in time to carry on the expansion and keep it linked with home. The strangulating insufficiency of financial method was relieved automatically by a series of gold discoveries, confined

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almost entirely to Anglo-American territories. Wherever English was spoken during this phase of Anglo-American good fortune, gold was found. And silver. Neither the corrupting pedantries of the American political tradition, nor conservative influences in British social life, nor strong mutual jealousies, could save the general Anglo-American mentality from becoming almost unconsciously progressive and expansive. All the European states have been under pressure along their boundaries for nearly a century; the tension has been particularly intense in France and Germany; the English-speaking peoples have only reached boundaries in the past two decades.

This has given them a peculiar mentality of their own. It has blinded them to certain things and quickened their minds to others. Their outlook on the world has become implicitly and often half-consciously modern and futuristic. The only other recent experience at all parallel with the English-speaking one, is the Russian, which had its open door to the East. The Spanish mind suffered fragmentation before railway and steamship could save it, and it may take long in its recovery. Modernity speaks English or Russian—and it still

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speaks English best. The idea of a geographically expanding state, which seems utter nonsense to a Frenchman or any other continental national, is fundamental to these cultures. The ideas of monetary relaxations and readjusted units, the era of big business, comprehensive economic regulation and world-wide organization, have been accessible and acceptable to them as to no other peoples.

That is why the student of human ecology, pursuing this enquiry whether our species will at length succeed in adaptation to the new conditions it faces or it is doomed to frustration, turns with a certain impatience from the heated, cramped and fettered "New Deals" and "New Regimes" of Europe and from the paralyzed traditionalism of France, to the great sprawls of the English-thinking and Russian-thinking populations, and then, realizing the temporary mental exhaustion of the latter, comes back to Westminster and Washington. There, at these centres, with a certain freedom of expression and liberty of initiative, whatever conscious effort the human mind may be making to meet the riddle of its destiny, is to be looked for. There if any-

where, the intimations of a future world state are to be found.

It may be that we Americans and British see the bare shapes of things best, each in the country of the other. We get loose from our personal habits and associations by crossing the Atlantic and we are still in the same language and the same idioms of thought. At any rate I always have a sense that essential things are plainer to me in America. It seems to me that the commonsense of the world situation demands that the English-speaking community should get together upon the issue of World Peace, and that means a common Foreign Policy. That is the logical first step in the way to Cosmopolis, and I do not care a rap what becomes of the American Constitution or British Imperialism in the process. I do not see how we can get far on the way to the world revival unless we homologize the financial control and monetary organization of our world-wide groups of people. A real English-speaking synthesis would go far beyond its linguistic limits; it would trail with it much of Northern Europe, much of the Spanish-speaking world and Asia. Equally am I convinced that the only way to get our species out of the

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social morass for good, is to take in the slack of unemployment created through efficient production for profit, by immense continuous and expanding public works; by the reconditioning of areas of production, the replanning and rebuilding of entire cities, generously and beautifully; by the secular enrichment in fact of our entire terrestrial estate.

These are immensely difficult propositions, but they are not merely desirable things; they are necessary things. The alternative to their realization is world decadence. I am not writing of utopias; I am writing of imperatives. If you are under sentence of death you go on struggling to escape, even if the odds are heavily against you. And in my search for the onset of that world order, that super civilization, which is man's *only alternative to a long, distressful, violent and diseased decadence*, I look mainly for three things: Is there, I ask, a growing disposition to merge foreign policies and get together upon a super-national basis for the suppression of war? Is a revision of the monetary and credit organization going on with a view to the elimination of speculative convulsions and "trade cycles" throughout the world? Is the

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rational expansion of public works in technically competent hands beginning to supplement and heal the gaps and chasms caused by production under the guidance of unrestrained competitive profit seeking? And behind these current questions is a deeper one on which all the others depend; how is man's awareness of his true situation growing? Is a new education commensurate with modern needs developing?

These are the questions I was asking myself last year when I visited America and also when I went to Moscow and talked to Stalin, and these are the questions I bring again to America now. How far is the trend of events in America developing the pattern of a new and fuller life for men? I have told of these last year visits in my *Autobiography*, a verbatim report of the Stalin conversation is available in pamphlet form, and I will not repeat my impressions here. Now I am trying to take a visitor's eye-view of America revisited twelve months later. Is America anyhow getting on with the job?

There are two aspects of the American effort to adapt that seem to me quite unique. It may be well to stress them. The first is that the struggle to

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reconstruct in America goes on in an atmosphere of unbridled public discussion—brawling public discussion. Discussion in Britain is legally free, but it is restrained by habit and custom and by the fact that the press and the expression of opinion generally is largely concentrated in London and more controlled by central influences. But whatever is revolutionary in America is done with open eyes. The people know what they are supposed to be doing. Anything may be suggested and anything called in question. A thing that cannot be said in one centre can be shouted in another. There are restraints upon the foreign writer who calls himself a communist or proposes to alter the Constitution by violence, but that does not affect the native freedom.

The second aspect of the English-speaking situation as compared with the rest of the world is the relative unimportance of large mass antagonisms. There is no widespread conception of a class war ruling the situation, such as we find in Russia, or of racial incompatibility, as in Germany, or any such exacerbation of xenophobia as we find in Italy and Japan. There are conflicts of regional interests, indeed, but little regional bitterness.

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There is no definite right and left to the struggle. Essentially the stresses arose out of the tensions created by outworn economic and financial traditions and methods, and no one has succeeded in simplifying and marshalling the issues into two opposing camps. The issues remain a tangle. In both these respects, in its freedom of speech and its freedom from broad class antagonisms, America is still in what, in the school geographies of my childhood, used to be called so hopefully the New World.

II

‘RAUCOUS VOICES’ AND THE INEXPLICIT MEN

THE visiting social biologist looking for intimations of a rational world state amidst the bristling aspects and vehement assurances of present-day America, may well be forgiven an occasional phase of doubt and dismay. He may well be forgiven if at times he can see nothing in the contemporary world spectacle but the ultimate flurry of a species overtaxed by the immensity of the changes it confronts, already past its culmination and on its way to extinction.

At times he must get what comfort he can by imagining the reactions of an anticipatory engineer, with the automobile or the aeroplane clear in his mind, confronting a conference of carriage builders of the eighteenth century. He would talk of rubber tyres, speedways, petrol and internal combustion engines, two hundred miles an hour, and directive wireless. They would think him a lunatic or at best a Utopian dreamer and yet he would be talking of things far more rational and practicable than the slow, pompous, heavily-bumping conveyances that they would regard as the ultimate achievement in travel. All these swift and powerful things were already peeping out for anyone with the vision to see them in the thought

and science of the period. And so to-day, without political machinery, our economic system, our monetary and financial methods all plainly inadequate and clumsy, quite unable to keep war and production within bounds or distribute plenty, it is still only in moods of fatigue and despondency that one loses one's faith in the power of human ingenuity, courage and persistence to release us from the antiquated mud-bogged legal political and monetary vehicles in which we are stuck to-day.

Yet it is extraordinary even here in America, the land of the go-ahead tradition, big undertakings and limitless energy, how few expressions I encounter of any really comprehensive and sustained resolve to tackle the huge triple problem of fundamental world reconstruction in its completeness. There is hardly more evidence here of a disposition to face the business enquiringly, boldly and scientifically, than there is in England. Moscow even, at any rate in its pretensions, is bolder, and signs are not wanting of that same disposition to hysterical simplification, narrowness and patriotic dogmatism which has so completely locked up the minds of Germany and Italy. Difficulties are being met piecemeal and with a nervous

evasion of generalities. It is odd to find how many business men and responsible administrators in America are taking refuge from exhaustive effort and severe intellectual trouble in Arthur Balfour's war-time consolation, that we Anglo-Saxons have a "way of muddling through." Naturally, anything that is still alive must have muddled through thus far. I suppose that the last of the Dinosaurs to survive, thought it was muddling through quite nicely.

When I left England for this visit to Washington, liberal thought in Europe had been much exercised by the refusal of the Senate to endorse the President's adhesion to the World Court. Sir Norman Angell, that pioneer in the study of international psychology, had discussed the circumstances of this rejection. He had quoted Mr. Raymond Buell as saying that the final defeat was due to "a last minute avalanche of at least 40,000 anti-Court telegrams," prompted by the radio speeches of Father Coughlin and Will Rogers, and a "patriotic campaign of the Hearst newspapers." Sufficient senators to destroy the necessary two-thirds majority, had been weak enough and frightened enough to give away and abandon their promised support of this very guarded, weak and

inadequate first gesture towards world co-operation. And yet it is a plain fact of the situation that there is no sound and enduring escape from the wasting distresses not only of America, but mankind, except through the rapid organization of permanent international co-operation.

Hearst and Arthur Brisbane I knew of old, but I was naturally curious to learn more about these potent radio voices that were able to turn America back upon the tradition of exemplary planetary benevolence that has been her chosen rôle in the past. In the dear dead days before the war, the American mind looked down upon the Old-World scene, as if from the battlements of heaven; it showered Peace Palaces and Hague Courts upon us, promoted some admirable arbitrations and, at length, after the world war, left its distinctive invention, its child, the League of Nations, to our care. Since then there has been a tremendous recoil from such cosmopolitan tendencies. America, engaged, as I supposed, in a strenuous attempt to expand its organization in accordance with the enlarged and more urgent requirements of modern conditions, was beginning by abandoning that very breadth of outlook which was the primary

thing indicated by these conditions, and which it had hitherto seemed to find most acceptable. This disconcerting realization, which was sustained not only by the World Court failure, but by the rôle played by America at the World Economic Conference, threw a shadow upon the hopefulness of all my impressions of the New Deal, not merely in regard to its world aspect, but in respect to its quality throughout. “Have we, European Liberals,” I asked, “been underrating the power and understanding of this American planning?”

Was the inspiring quality of the early radio messages with which the President had inaugurated the New Deal, holding firm, or was a more essential American mentality, at an altogether lower level of vision, impatient of effort and clumsy in thrust, coming into play?

I came to America against head-winds in early March, and I arrived amidst a tornado of angry voices. Things conspired to give an unfavourable impression of all that had been done in the past year. Then the radio had been dominated by the President and a certain hopeful imaginative generosity prevailed; now, so far as the discussion of public affairs went, the air carried a chorus of

utterances of a quality that dear old Sanderson of Oundle would have called "raucous." What did these raucous voices amount to, and were they and not those broader intimations really going to determine the general quality of the American effort?

A great slanging match was in progress between General Hugh Johnson and Senator Huey Long; Father Coughlin was on the air not only on Sunday afternoon, but Monday evening, and in general conversation everybody seemed to be talking about these vehement personalities to the entire exclusion of the working aspects of the reconstruction process. I heard endless particulars of the vast audiences affected. People were listening-in by the score of millions, and Father Coughlin's National League of Social Justice numbered anything from 8 to 20 millions. Doctor Townsend of California had a large majority in the assembly of that State and had rolled up 25 million signatures for a petition embodying his peculiar brand of impatient suggestion. Will Rogers, after his contribution to the World Court defeat, was comparatively in the background. I remember him years ago, chewing gum, playing his lasso and delivering wisecracks on the London music hall stage.

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Slowly but steadily he has roped and chewed his way to become the supreme exponent of what we may call the dry negative humour of the American intelligence. The first of his contributions to the national thought that I encountered on my arrival was concerned with the world problem of money. Money, he said, “has them all buffaloed.” Three things the boys could never figure out—women, horse-racing, and money. That was all the oracle had to say in the matter. The dry humorous type of American intelligence guffaws sagely and leaves it at that. And yet something has to be done about money. Presumably by somebody else—who will be wise-cracked and chewed at, whatever he attempts.

I listened in to Father Coughlin at the first opportunity, and heard him with a very carefully sustained Irish accent and manifest reverence for his own persuasions, unfold a vague pretentious demand for a new Declaration of Independence, the liberation of the country from “the Baruch’s” and “the Morgans” and the “foreign influences,” whom, it seems, he holds responsible for the present discomforts of America. Incitement to hostile action against the rich, mingled with demands that the people control their own money.

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Week by week Father Coughlin is disseminating the idea that economic confusion and want is the deliberate work of bankers and foreign influences, to tens of millions of eager but ill-informed hearers; his xenophobic suggestions might be very easily tuned to the discomfort of the Jews, but his concrete proposals are of the flimsiest. The empty poverty of his method, considered in relation to his undeniably immense popularity, was a disconcerting symptom to a visitor who still hoped to find in America a practical and moral constructive lead for the rest of the world.

I visited Huey Long in the Senate House and had an interesting talk. He is much more definite in his proposals than the radio priest but, if anything, cruder. He proposes to tax or confiscate away all the large fortunes and distribute the proceeds. Americans respond to this idea by the million, just as they respond to the delightful proposal of Doctor Townsend, that everybody over sixty should be restrained from labour, given two hundred dollars a month, to be raised by a general tax on sales, and be obliged on oath, under penalties, to spend it all within thirty days.

Senator Long had recently taken advantage of the polemics of General Johnson to broadcast his

conception through the States, and the reception has been favourable enough to make many people, who hitherto dismissed him as an adventurer and mountebank, take him seriously as a possible presidential candidate. I found his rooms in a state of excited activity; groups of political workers and visitors in the ante-room and in the passage outside; five or six typists clattering busily in the middle apartment which was ankle-deep in envelopes and paper, and the new great man himself busily gesticulating to two grave business men about some matter of baseball organization, in his sanctum. Nothing could have been in greater contrast to the Elysian calm in which I later encountered Senator Borah. Long's genial manner of greeting, his method of expressing himself—he shifts from chair to chair and likes the “close up”—reminded me of the British Winston Churchill. He is like a Winston Churchill who has never been at Harrow. He abounds in promises and is capable, I suspect, of the same political versatility. I am less impressed by his proposals and his recitals of the good things he has done for Louisiana—he gave me his book about himself and his early deeds—than by the fact that he is personally very

attractive with the knack of being interesting, very energetic and, for a prominent political figure, extremely young. It is becoming usual to say of him that he will "go far," and just on the turn between the thirties and forties, he has a reasonable expectation of years ahead to do it in. He has impressed those who know him intimately by a sudden leap from—how shall I put it?—frequent lively alcoholic animation to an absolute temperance. His knowledge is limited, his mental movements swift and undisciplined, his ideas and outlook on the world that of a rather backward Southern Baptist, but on the whole, I have to admit that I agree that for some time he is likely to remain an important voice in the current readjustment of America.

Some people imagine a kind of parallelism between Long and Hitler, but I found little in common between them except a certain mental crudity. Hitler talks crude Germanism which embodies all that is wrong in the popular history and political thought of Germany, and Long talks crude, Southern poor-white Americanism which embodies all that is wrong in the education of a Southern American Baptist. But the German brand of popular poison is profoundly different from the

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American. There is no Brown House, no senile traitor president, and no powerful dispossessed military class in the American picture. Long can excite and gather a crowd, but he cannot organize it into any imitation of the Brown Shirts. Every demagogue is the creature of his crowd and the American crowd is quite unlike any crowd in Europe.

Just exactly what weight all these raucous voices in the American spectacle carry, is very difficult to determine. They are ignorantly anti-cosmopolitan, they are economically distributionist, and they have that debtor mentality which drives towards hasty unplanned monetary inflation. But it may be a mistake to add up the millions who follow Long to the millions who follow Coughlin and the millions who follow Doctor Townsend, and the millions who respond to the utopianism of Mr. Upton Sinclair. These may be extensively overlapping crowds and when it comes to an electoral test, it may be found that they are less numerically important than their present extreme audibility suggests. Yet I do not think it possible to minimize the significance of their voices as an intimation of a widespread discontent and discomfort, and of an impatient preparedness for sweeping changes, in

the great masses of the American population. These masses were ready and eager for a New Deal; the actual New Deal has not gone far enough and fast enough for them, and that is what the shouting is about. They want to know why, and so far it is none of the Raucous Voices that has undertaken to tell them. In a little while they may be demanding not a New Deal but a new sort of game.

The more ominous thing in the contemporary American situation is not what these raucous voices say, but much more what is said against them and still more what is *not* said by way of a reply. I am not so much impressed by what Senator Long or Father Coughlin asserts and suggests as by the unsubstantial weakness of those who would oppose and discredit him. If the inferior voices, so to speak, are raucous and vague, the superior voices seem to me to be thin, and even less explicit than the crowd shouters, and moreover, contradictory to an extreme degree.

Now, when I visited Washington a year ago (April 1934) there seemed to me to be the clear promise of an unprecedented creative effort in American affairs. I was enormously impressed by the personality and fine mental quality of the

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President, and by the implication conveyed by such a phrase as the Brain Trust. The available intelligence of America I assumed was to be drawn together into a synthesis of understanding. That was seeing things hopefully, but I do not think it was a vision of impossible things. I did think that America was about to be made over, with its eyes open, into a more rational social order; the New Deal was to be a deliberately replanned America, and the convergence of minds about the White House was to produce a clarified American Idea, a guiding quintessence of strong, clear thought which could be imparted by press and radio to a ready, sympathetic, intelligent and willing people. The President, with that peculiar effect of observant detachment of his, was nothing of a Dictator, but instead a responsive and synthesizing intelligence, a guide, the elected decision maker whose decisions would become more and more purposive and consistent and more and more readily translated by Senate and Assembly into act and reality, as this essential American mentality grew clear.

After which it was a considerable anti-climax to come across a particularly windy Atlantic from war-stirred Europe and hear American thinking aloud

in the person of the Reverend Charles E. Coughlin.

Nobody now, I found, had anything very much to say about the Brain Trust. That was last year's fashion and old clothes. The crystal had not crystallized. That constellation had dispersed. Some of its former stars had risen, and some declined. Some who had been most ready to tell me all about it a year before, had vanished. The New Deal, the National Industrial Recovery Act that is to say, and the Agricultural Adjustment Administration, had been working for a year, and any amount of people were prepared to tell me how well it had worked in detail, and how badly it had worked in detail, and if I had even attempted to read and digest the reports and the masses of figures that were put before me with an unrestrained generosity, I should have changed into a helplessly distended blue book and become silent for ever. But that axis of strong clear thought which I had hoped to find, that lucid, guiding outline of the relations of America to its future and the world, I found, hadn't appeared—not even in the White House.

The United States as a community, as a mind, has no more idea how it stands to world politics, how it stands to economic development in general

and what it means to do about money and finance, than it had in 1934. On the whole, the American mind is less disposed to come down to elements now than it was then. That seems to me to be the loss of a very crucial piece of time.

I had a quite extraordinary conversation with a group of government administrators who had agreed to answer questions and tell me things round a lunch table. I assumed they constituted a team, working towards a common end, and as I had no idea of what that common end was currently supposed to be, my questions were of the most elementary kind. I asked what sort of new America they supposed they were bringing into being. Was it a “small man” democracy? Did they figure its future as President Roosevelt had figured it, as a wide land of small independent homesteads, farms and business, protected for ever from fusion and large collective operations by anti-trust laws? Or did they see it as a great and highly organized and mechanized economic system in which the individual would be like a cog on a wheel meshing at last with all the world? Or did they see their work as essentially salvage and restoration? Were they trying to put America back

to the confidence and vigour of eight or ten years ago, with perhaps a few new checks on human weakness in the way of world banking and bankruptcy laws and a certain mitigation of labour conditions—and then begin again on the old competitive profit seeking lines? Here were three widely divergent and mutually incomparable lines of advice. Upon which were they advancing?

It was astonishing to realize that even this primary decision has not yet been made. These three main objectives were *all* in evidence and in addition there were, so to speak, intercalary activities mystically going two ways, East and West, at once. I doubt if these busy responsible men were in the habit of discussing the general scheme, the strategic conception that is to say, of the New Deal together. They may have been in the earlier stages of the New Deal, but I suppose they had all said what they had to say to each other in the way of fundamental views, long ago. They had done little in the way of assimilation. They had grown accustomed to the inconsistencies that my questions revived. It was an unusual occasion.

From this gathering and from a number of individual conversations I had in administrative

bureaus, I gathered that at the present time the United States Government is engaged in a great work of reinstatement, assisting the mortgagers of homes and farms back to solvency and independence. It is simultaneously imposing codes to sustain prices and wages that put the small business men and producers at a seeming disadvantage in face of big organizations. It is putting the little man on his feet from one bureau and shooting him down from another. It is also inaugurating immense schemes, such as that of the Tennessee Valley, for a social reconstruction upon paternalist lines. The problem of unemployment is being met in part by setting multitudes of people to work in disused factories and fields, to produce goods not for sale, but for use. They are to consume their own products, but not sell them. A world of barter is to be created side by side with the world of trade. This Work Relief is not to be profitable nor to interfere with profits. The most unprofitable thing in the world is a battleship, and so it is quite logical that the funds for work relief should drift towards the dockyards. This produces no jealousy between profit-sharing traders and the public spender. On the contrary. Over all the economic discussion of

the situation hovers the desire to "raise prices." One business man discussing that with me said: "It is your Maynard Keynes who put that over on us." The thing seems to be that producers will only work happily with prices "high," and in order that prices should be kept high, an extensive destruction of products at the source goes on. It is a little puzzling. One simple-minded cotton grower the other day who took a pride in his crop, was so puzzled at having to plough in three acres again, that he refused to do it, and when he saw it being done for him, shot himself.

I shall discuss the material problems of the American situation in a later paper; I cite these aspects of the New Deal in action here, simply to point the remark that there is as yet no clear idea of what America is up to, and that the real reason why there is no reply to the crudities of the "raucous voices" is because in fact there is nothing—or to put it perhaps more exactly, nothing has been extracted from the confused and undigested matter available—to be told. Over against the raucous voices are the inconsistent inexplicit men.

Putting it in the most general terms, what has happened to America is what has happened to the rest of the world. The American mind has not

kept up its vision of the world and its thought about social structure up to date. While France goes on with late eighteenth century political and business ideas, while Germany flounders in the tawdry militarist nationalism of the middle nineteenth century and Russia clings to revolutionary patterns, sixty years out of date, America, like Britain, has been caught short of any vital social and economic philosophy at all. And may be because of deep-lying British affinities—particularly the lazy disposition to under-exert and trust to “muddling through,” America even now, is failing to display any real vigour of intellectual synthesis. Until she does so, this sort of discursive experimenting now in progress, lucky here, perhaps, and unlucky there, on the way to the general human catastrophe, is about all that she is likely to do for herself and mankind.

In 1934 I visited the President, and I did so again on this occasion. I lunched with him at his desk in his office, and he talked with that curiously detached freedom, which is part of his distinctive charm for me. He looked well and energetic—better, I thought, than he had looked a year before.

The job of being President of the United States is one of the most difficult, the most nearly impos-

sible, ever devised by the ingenuity of man. A politician is elected and he is expected to become a divinity. Past presidents of the United States belong to two classes; those who attempted to rise to the occasion, and those, the majority, who did nothing of the sort, and from the outset remained, like Harding, apologetic good fellows, or like Hoover, just paralyzed figure-heads overcome by their own prominence. Wilson was the great tragedy in the former class. In some respects I imagine Franklin Roosevelt has got nearer to the effect of a divinity floating in a cloud a little off the earth, than any one of his predecessors. He is a politician, they say, although, how it could be possible to become President of the United States and not be a politician, no one has ever explained to me; but at any rate he is an exceptionally subtle and exalted politician. And I fancied that if any thing, that quality of exaltation was more evident this time than on my previous visit.

I have already expressed an opinion that the rôle of the American President is neither to be the father and teacher of a subservient people, nor to embody any personally accepted dogma. The rôle of President in a real free-thinking democracy is to sublimate, clarify and express the advancing

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thought of the community. And the President this time seemed to me to be *listening* and talking interestedly rather than decisively, of what he was hearing. He has not been heard upon the air for some time. For the very good reason that upon many issues he is plainly in a state of suspense. He has nothing to say—immediately. When the time comes, he will talk again. “If the New Deal,” he said, “has done nothing else, it has made the people of America think.” Unaccustomed as they are to public thinking upon anything but personal and party issues, it is not surprising—and clearly the President does not find it surprising or disconcerting—that their first responses are confused and raw. But I think he would be glad if something more definite and constructive began to come in from other quarters. He has rather an air of waiting for that.

In this paper I will not dwell upon the particular things that were said in our rambling and discursive conversation. It was not an “interview” for publication. What I am concerned with here is just that want of any strong elementary contribution to the American problem or the world problem from the side of the “superior” voices. Among the educated, directive, important and ex-

pert people I have met, I have heard endless destructive criticism; the ways in which they disapprove of the President are endless; I have heard endless fragmentary suggestions, but I do not find anything growing together out of these criticisms. I do not find anything from the side of experience and understanding that can be set out against the projects, accusations and drive of the raucous voices. The American people is thinking—yes; but it is doing very little of that thinking in its higher strata.

If the rôle of a democratic President is to be a sort of sounding board by means of which general directive ideas can be got over from the people who know and think hard, to the mass of the people and to legislative and administrative realization, then I can quite understand why it is that at present he finds very little to add to the great utterances of a year ago.

I suppose it is one of the necessary qualities of the types of men produced by competitive individualism that they acquire the habit of keeping their own counsel. They do not like to go along explaining what they are doing. And the national game of poker may have helped train and develop this inexplicitness. But in the face of the new needs that have arisen, this inexplicitness of the

directors and leaders of American economic life becomes a weakness and a danger. A multitude of people, from Professor Soddy, the Nobel prizeman, to Father Coughlin, for instance, declare that the general process of private banking is unfair and dishonest and socially destructive. The banker replies that this indictment comes from sheer ignorance. But he does not volunteer the information that would remove this ignorance. He does not proffer improved methods. He does not explain, though it is he who ought to know if any one does, why money and credit do play queer tricks with economic life, and what ought to be done about it. Such an explanation would be contrary to his training and habits. Yet he ought to make the effort.

Quite equally is any plain telling of objectives and relationships contrary to the former practices of the big business organizers. They, like the bankers, are critical of the prominent part played by “inexperienced professors” and “theorists” in the attempted reconstruction of America, but they are either unwilling or unable to make their own experience available for a collective effort. That is why the President went to the Professors. I find in this curious present inexpressiveness of those who

were dominating the American system in its days of hope and glory six years ago; in this inadaptability of the former leading men to the demand of the new situation for open and explicit popular leadership, one of the most ominous signs of the times. If they will not get together and think so that they can direct the thinking of the country; if they will not come out of their secretive individualism to explicitness and take their proper share in the reconstruction of American life upon broad and more generous lines; if they will not bring themselves openly into the collectivity while there is still time for them to do so, then it is from the level of Huey Long who thinks loudly and audibly, even if he thinks wrong, that the reconstruction of America must proceed.

It is not communism that threatens America, or any Fascism of a European type. These things come in because of the moral and intellectual bankruptcy of the classes and types in charge of affairs in Russia, Germany and Italy, and their characters were determined by local conditions. It seems more probable that an intellectually cruder and more instinctive sort of revolutionism is likely to appear in America, if this confused inexplicitness, this failure to state and direct in a way understandable by the popular mind, on the part of those who should lead in reconstruction, continues.

III

RELEASE OF ENERGY

IN the two preceding articles I have tried to view the American spectacle from a broad biological standpoint, an ecological standpoint. We have considered mankind as a species in which there has been a continually more facile and extensive communication between individuals, so that at length what was a comparatively rare animal living in small communities is now compelled to face the necessity of a world commonweal. The closer intercommunication of mind with mind has developed such knowledge and cooperation, such science and combination in invention, that there has arrived at last an almost catastrophic acquisition of material energy.

The question I have put, with especial reference to the American instance, is whether this animal has sufficient intelligence and sufficient probabilities of a new morale, to avert the crashes, the disorder, the degeneration and biological defeat, this sudden unanticipated flood of power entails.

I have tried to show how all the revolutionary changes of régime that are going on almost everywhere in the world, arise essentially from the pressures and tensions due to this change of conditions, and I have tried to define roughly the

mental forces centring upon that outstanding representative figure, the President in Washington. I have given reasons for supposing that, in spite of still almost unrestrained freedom of discussion, the mental effort of America (and Britain is in no better case) is unlikely to avert a disordered revolutionary collapse. That is the primary conviction my visit to Washington confirms, that human destiny is a race between ordered thought made effective by education on the one side, and catastrophe on the other. So far catastrophe seems to be leading. In this and the next paper I shall consider two main aspects of human perplexities about which this ordered thought has to play successfully if disaster is to be averted.

The first of these aspects is the problem of surplus energy or, as some people prefer to put it, the leisure problem, and the second is the question of money. How is this great American community which is, when all detraction is spent, still the most alert and enquiring in the world, seeing these problems, and what sort of tentative measures is it taking about them?

There has been a stupendous release of surplus energy for *Homo sapiens* during the past half

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century. We have that in view when we talk of an economy of plenty succeeding an economy of want. But always in human history man, as contrasted with most animals, has had some surplus energy. Otherwise he would not have multiplied and spread and raised his standard of living from the hand-to-mouth hardships of the early stone age. In every age he has been making more than a bare living and "getting on."

Sir Thomas More in his *Utopia*, written in the sixteenth century, in complete ignorance of any supplement to human force but windmills, sailing ships, horses and oxen, could imagine a human community living in sufficiency and happiness upon two or three hours' work a day. A certain ignorance of the housewife's side of life may have made him underestimate the minimum of unavoidable toil, but allowing for that, there is still a wide margin available. Holidays are known throughout all the world. Few animals take holiday. Human living has not been a whole-time job for thousands of years. Famine and shortage were frequent local and regional phenomena in the past, but in every age in history the surplus energy of man has found expression in art and

ornament, in great buildings and gardens, and in the free life of a leisure class. There have been leisure classes at the top of the social order and generally there have been non-productive religious classes to express and consume the surplus energy of the community. Humanity has been able to carry these. Now we are also getting a leisure class—the unemployed—at the base of the social pyramid.

But the chief release for surplus energy in the past has been war. It is too commonly assumed that peoples go to war because they are in want. Yet a very little consideration of history will show that on the contrary they go to war because they are fit and full. Miserable peoples do not go upon the war-path. War has been a sign of plethora through the ages. It is as closely interwoven into human affairs now as money. It has kept the balance and prevented over-population and degenerative crowding. It is an excretion of surplus energy, and it remains a necessary channel of excretion until some other outlet can be found for the accumulating energy. The immense exaggeration of war in the past century has destroyed our former balances and war becomes now rather an explosive

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than excretion, but that does not alter the rôle it has hitherto played. Just as the varieties of Dinosaurs and the Titanotheria in the geological past grew to their maximum size, with tremendous and often quite useless horns and humps immediately before extinction, so the human armature of tank and battleship becomes fantastically big and disproportionate to any rational need for it.

This fact that war has been a release of surplus energy as human communities increased in their collective vigour and has been the easiest, most congenial path along which that energy has escaped, is one of quite primary importance in our study of this world peace problem. Man could understand the hope and pride and triumph of warfare, with scarcely any education at all; it mingled with the aggressiveness of his sex assertion and his self-assertion. It is only as war has grown so big as to become impersonal and catastrophically destructive, so big as to reduce personal encounters and the physical glory of battle to rare and unimportant incidents, that there has been any considerable movement against war. But until other avenues open for the surplus

energy of the community, it is idle to dream of a political solution of the war riddle.

If we could establish a legal peace to-morrow, throughout the earth, disarm universally and disband our armies, we should find the world at once confronted with the problem of over-production and unemployment in a far more formidable form than at present. We should find the consumption of iron, steel, chemicals, clothes and a multitude of such-like munitions, shrunken alarmingly and additional millions of able-bodied young men upon the labour market for whom industry has no use.

Moreover, with such a pacification, the reason for what is called economic nationalism, the desire that is to make a country self-sufficient and capable of enduring a blockade, would disappear. The production of goods from less suitable materials in less suitable places would come to an end and the drift to production under the most economical conditions would further increase the stress. The question of what shall we do with the increasing surplus of energy that is overwhelming humanity is therefore far more fundamental than the war difficulty, and the settlement of the former

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is a necessity preliminary to the elimination of the latter. Until the human community discovers a pacific and creative method of consuming all excesses of energy, or else some means of restraining them, it must necessarily remain in constant danger of violent stresses and dislocations, of social and political earthquakes, that is to say either wars or else social disturbance and disorder of an equal destructiveness.

Now, because America is still much further removed from the war menace than any other modern community, its responses to the difficulties created for it by the surplus of productive possibility are less belligerent than the similar responses on the European continent. It has not the stimulus of an enemy frontier to direct its energy in that direction. There have been considerable increases in naval and military expenditure, pointed chiefly at the nearest enemy country, Japan, but the main effort of the New Dealers has been directed to such readjustments of the internal situation as will either check the further production of energy or direct the surplus into amplifications of the capital of the community and a general raising of the standard of life.

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I must confess that I am temperamentally hostile to all attempts to lower the vitality of the human community in order to ease its troubles. But I think that below this innate feeling there is an intuition of a primary biological fact. A living creature or species that will not live more and more, will soon be living less and less and presently pass away. Restraint that concentrates vigour is always justifiable, but only if it amounts to a real net gain in vitality. Birth control, for example, may be either a means to fewer, better, and individually more energetic offspring, in which case it is admirable, or a mere evasion of parental responsibility, in which case it is an attenuation of life. And in a large part of the governments' controls of production in America and Great Britain, I cannot see anything else but devitalization.

In America, under the A.A.A., growers are being paid to limit their output of cotton and hogs, just as people are being paid to under-produce hogs in England. This does no good to America or mankind. America diminishes its output of cotton, the price rises, and to almost the same extent that America contracts its output, the

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Brazilians and Egyptians increase theirs. A former fraction of the export trade of America is wiped out for ever. An artist takes a cottage in Kent in England, with some land that was formerly a hop-field. He is astonished to receive a handsome cheque from the government for not growing hops. America which was pioneer in the heroic "scraping" of old plants, is now discouraging the setting up and equipment of new vigorous labour-saving factories. The old plant is to be "made to do." Hours and days of work are reduced by regulation, and everything is being slowed down. Train crews are increased in number beyond all experience; five men are to do the work that four men did before. So by continually reducing the intensity of employment and increasing the multitude of the slackly employed, there is a reduction in the total of the unemployed. This is one way of dealing with this embarrassment of surplus energy. You meet a lion on the way, drop your gun, get up a tree, and see who starves first.

The N.R.A. abounds in contradictions and when you say it is doing this, it is always possible to cite another field of its operation in which, on the contrary, it is doing that, but on the whole its

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codes of industrial control are restrictive and slackening, on the worst lines of European trade unionism. In certain ways it had marked a distinct advance in American social life; in the belated ending of child labour which consumes future energy for present private gain, and in the recognition of collective bargaining, which conduces to fellowship and pride in a calling, it has done a long needed piece of social work. But I am writing here and now only of the regulative side of its activities.

Even if these restrictions succeed they would be biologically and socially unsound. But they do not seem to be succeeding. They are doing very little to diminish unemployment. They are only hiding some of it away by dividing it into fractions and distributing them so as to create an intermediate class of underemployed. And while they are diminishing full time work, many of the regulations, according to Clarence Darrow, handicap the versatility of small employers and free workers "on their own" in favour of the big stereotyping organizations against which they compete, and so tend finally to drive the former out of business into this very unemployment the regulations are aimed

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to relieve. So that much of the slack is taken in at one point, only to be let out at another.

Behind all these restrictive acts floats a complex of economic theory which seems to me to have no sound relationship to primary realities. For various empirical reasons, immense importance is attached to price levels. If only things can be made dear, everyone will be better and happier. By the time prices have been forced up to a point when nobody can buy anything, the millenium, it seems, will be attained. Apart from the one truism that rising prices promote competitive production, so long as purchasers are forthcoming, there is nothing, I can find, above the level of Father Coughlin's economics, in all this solemn talk about raising prices as a necessary step towards recovery. It is an invasion of rational economic life by a counting-house technicality. As a piece of constructive policy, it is hardly better than boiling the thermometer to warm the house. The converse to this ideal of economic contraction is the ideal of abundant production not only for immediate consumption but for a continual extension of human activities and a continual raising of the individual's standard of life. From the point of view of

this second ideal it is a quite secondary aspect, a detail in the business, whether at any point in the system, the price of this, that, or the other commodity rises or falls—so long as nothing happens to enhance the claim of the creditor upon the general life of the community, to an inconvenient degree.

In the face of these considerations I can but regard this mania for restrictive controls in America and England, this drive towards under-living, as a temporary aberration, a reaction from the facile optimism of the great boom, that also will in its turn have its day and pass. In the boom years we were all talking of an age of more abundant living, of the economics of plenty, of a headlong rush upward and onward. The rush was altogether too headlong. Yet, after all, when all these things are weighed up in the end, we may find that the hope and courage of 1927-28 were better justified than these hopeless salvage economies of 1933-34. Then we were all for spending the gift of our talents; now, too many of us are for burying and ploughing them in. Even if the American and the British prove so poor-spirited as to consent to under-live, I doubt if the German, with all his faults, and the Japanese, are so amenable to the

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claims of retrogression. They mean to live dangerously, even if they do not live greatly and generously, in their present mood at any rate. They will make the pace for us. If the Americans wall themselves in from the entire world as the Chinese did after the Ming period, and the Japanese after their first experience of Europeans, sooner or later some curious faces will come looking over the wall.

From my point of view, which has always had a slant towards optimism, this side of the New Deal appears to me the least expressive of the genius of the Atlantic peoples. I cannot imagine us going on indefinitely under-producing, with multitudes living empty parasitic lives on the dole, a loitering, half-time working class, and nothing worth while doing for our abler individuals, and for the spirit of youth in our children? What will happen in a stagnating, restrictive state? Maybe a certain efflorescence of art. A few of us may paint some delightful pictures or produce some exquisite poetry. Exaggerations of sport and sex may take up some of the tedium for the younger people, but the possible patterns of vice have always been very limited and in the end, there will be nothing for it but suicide for the bored individual, and war for

the bored community. As it becomes plainer that this is the road along which a controlled, instinctive, unprogressive social and economic life will lead us, I think our Western communities will turn again to the task, from which they have temporarily recoiled, of using up the new excess of energy instead of damping it down. They will rouse themselves to set about that realization of that New Life for mankind, which is the only alternative to the waste and destruction of our heritage of power.

The New Deal we must recognize is thrusting in that direction also. It is restrictive on the one hand and expansive on the other. In its unrestrained discursiveness, it makes nothing of advancing backward and forward at the same time. While it is combating the cheapness due to mass production, by limiting output, it is also setting masses of unemployed men to work "for use" outside of the sphere of prices altogether. Its Work Relief organization is a half-hearted attempt to create a sort of embryo of a socialist state, in which there shall be no profiteering, within the great body of the profiteering system. Mr. Hopkins is following out the suggestions of Professor Miles Walker in England, and setting the unemployed

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to grow and make things, furniture, cotton goods, soaps, shoes, canned goods, and so forth for themselves, bartering among themselves. But in deference to the voting strength of the private trader, work relief is putting nothing upon the open market. Its product is not put to the test of competitive selling. The Work Relief colonies may buy and do buy from the outside, but they may not send out their produce in exchange. The established system is not to be altered, but a smaller social system involving something between 10 and 20 million unemployed, is to come into collateral existence, it seems, with unprogressive methods of production and subsidies from the general taxpayer. The vital prospects of this new Work Relief community with its present stifling limitations do not seem to be very helpful and ultimately there may be considerable difficulty in disposing of the body.

The realization of the possible New Life for mankind which opens before us as the alternative to decadence and disaster, must be conceived of upon far bolder lines than this. It seems impossible to keep up the individual consuming side of the economic cycle in the face of continual technological improvement and mass production. The

correlative to mass production is social consumption. I cannot see any other way out. Technological advance, increased production efficiency, rationalization as it was called some years ago, diminishes the number of workers to whom purchasing power over the increased product can be paid as wages. I do not see how any one can deny that. The corrective is plainly either distributionism, "sharing out" *à la* Huey Long and Townsend, or a social dividend on Douglas lines—if any such sharing out is practicable—or else collective consumption of the surplus productive energy in the general interest. This last means that in a world organized for peace, the surplus of energy has to be poured into public housing, into a complete and continuing reconstruction of homes and cities, into a continual increase in the general convenience and an incessant beautifying of our world. Everywhere and in everything the standard has to be raised. It has to continue using a common progressive design for life in the place of the wild, confused spending the distributionists would release. A vast extension of public education, great schools, great clinics, and a multitude of giant enterprises, in research, exploration and social

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adventure, are inevitable if progress is to continue. Man must lead an expanding life in this expanding universe. What the results of mere distribution, the unearned dole-dividend would be, I cannot conceive. The suggestion conjures up in my mind a nightmare of planless, silly individual expenditure, a world-litter of toys for adults, a planetary Coney Island, and the vastest exploitations of every form of human folly.

Only along the lines of the highly organized progressive state, a community with a steadily increasing collectivity in its life and undertakings, can I see any rational hope of mankind employing this excess of energy, these idle brains and hands and all this idle power, that threatens to overstrain and shatter and defeat our species. We all know now that the potential wealth and vigour of living is here for us to take. It is a commonplace of the times that men starve in the midst of plenty. It is the widespread realization of this material wealth which gives reality to the demands and menaces of the Longs and Coughlins. We have in America the spectacle of a great material civilization, halted, paralyzed. Vast new achievements seem materially possible and America does not go

on to them. What is the matter? Why is it not going on? What has arrested the former triumphant advance of democracy? Why is the citizen of our western world not reaping the harvest of its material victories?

Father Coughlin talks of the conspiracies of "the Morgans" and "the Baruchs" and the foreign financiers. He points his accusing finger away from himself, away from the profound intellectual indolence of himself and his kind, towards the wicked "barons" of Wall Street. He voices and gives form to the vague instincts of a vast multitude of Americans. I agree that this concentration upon Wall Street is unjust and wrong and dangerous, but nevertheless, is it altogether wrong to point somewhat in that direction? Is it not in our existing *mechanism of human relationships*, that is to say, in our money property system, is it not in the way in which the social machine is controlled by payment and gain, that the essential fault, the key explanation of our present discontents, is to be found? Is it not there that the full utilization of our vast excesses of social energy, is obstructed?

This question I will discuss in the paper to

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follow this one. If I do not endorse the Raucous Voices of the American scene, I do at least turn a face of respectful enquiry at those I have called the Inexplicit Men. It is no doubt much more difficult to be simple and right than it is to be simple and wrong, but what are they really doing in the way of exhaustive thinking?

My mind returns to this unhurried, slightly detached gentleman in his Presidential office at Washington, with his air of listening to the voice of America and waiting serenely for an occasion. He talked to me of the recent financial legislation that has been designed, it may be a little too drastically to protect the small investor from the unscrupulous promoter. "I am more and more impressed by the evil of Speculation," he said. He dwelt on the way in which every improvement in the national outlook could be exaggerated and overrun and arrested by speculative operations. And from that we passed to the mystery of these international operators who are keeping the dollar, the franc, and the belga in an unwholesome state of see-saw, and blighting any hope of a recovery on world trade. The President, reflecting America, is still in theory for the profit system, but

all the same I realize that the narrowing down of the field of legitimate profits is likely to become an important feature of the American effort to adjust. If speculative profits are to be eliminated, if the process of price regulation is to go on, the President may presently be reflecting and considering a much more socialistic America than any of us imagined possible ten years ago.

What are the Inexplicit Men thinking about it? Is there any really complete remedy whatever for the difficulties and inadequacies of the property-money mechanism upon which human society is based, or is this uncertainty and inexpressiveness on the part of those who should know, a sign that those difficulties and inadequacies set a fatal limit to the possibility of our species adapting itself to its new occasions? Is this greater world, this World Pax, of ever-increasing vigour and an ever-widening outlook for the individual life, no more, after all, than a mirage, and is our community so completely caught in an inadaptable tangle of relationships and antagonisms of its own devising, that no escape is possible, and it has to work out the consequences of the present system to the bitter end?

IV

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NOTHING could better illustrate the absurd contradictions between manifest possibilities and actual performance in the present human situation, than the condition of education in the Southern and Western states of America. I think that gives a little picture, a hand specimen, so to speak, of all that is wrong with, and that is most ominous, in America and the world. For if there is one thing more indisputable than another, it is the absolute necessity of education, to fit the common citizen to the complex and artificial requirements of the modern community.

First, let me give credit to Mr. Huey Long for having broached one side of this question. He has been clamouring for a great extension of college education. All over the country there are masses of unemployed youth. There is nothing for them to do until "recovery" comes—if ever it comes. They are growing up with nothing to appeal to their imaginations, with no impression that there is anything calling to be done by them. They are unhappy, and the better quality they are, the more unhappy they are. There are also many thousands of unemployed teachers. There is ample material and there are hands for building. Why

then do we not gather these myriads of young people into colleges, building and equipping the colleges if need be, and set the teachers to work upon them? Let us train them for this or that—make them competent technicians or agriculturists, and anyhow, make them good citizens. Let us turn their minds from present idleness to future activity. Let us make them restless and impatient to get the wheels of progress and creative adventure turning again. Everything that is needed to set up a number of vigorous colleges exists—men, material, potential learners. All that is required to change these scattered ingredients into a living system of mental activity is to assemble them.

But we cannot assemble them because there is no money to do it with.

Is it altogether so absurd for Senator Long to declare that if only people will support his movement, he will multiply the college attendance a hundredfold?

I do not consider his project for supplying the missing factor of money by confiscating large fortunes as a very practicable one, but his contention that it is preposterous to have young people un-

employed and not under instruction in a modern state is, I think, fundamentally sound.

But this proposal of Huey Long's is only the aspiring aspect of the educational situation of America. While the Louisiana Senator is shouting for more colleges, the south is faltering even in the work of elementary education. Just as I write this, I chance upon a well-informed article by Avis D. Carlson, and I learn that last year a third of a million of American children were out of school and receiving no education at all because there was no money to pay their teachers. There were the schoolhouse, the children and the teacher. And they were at a standstill. It is not a question of assembling them, but of their dispersal; the unpaid teachers had been starved out and the schools shut down. In Georgia, 1,318 schools, with an enrolment of 170,790, were closed. In Alabama, 81 per cent of all the children in rural schools are taking an enforced vacation, and in Arkansas, over 300 schools were open for sixty days or less during the year.

There was no money forthcoming.

This is appalling reading for one who clings to the hope that America will lead the world towards

the organized world order. Education is *the* cardinal function in a modern civilized state. A modern state has no use for illiterates. They are only one step removed from defectives, and a sheer burthen on the state. The same cessation and retreat is also apparent in nearly every other civilizing process. A parallel to what is recorded here of education, could be given in regard to sanitary services, housing, new undertakings and public enterprise generally. Men and material stand wasting and idle, but no public funds are available. It is not a lag; it is a recession because . . . ? There is no money.

And in different measure what is happening in America is happening all over the world.

Is it not plain that there is something profoundly wrong about the organization of money? Its business is to set things working. Combined with private property it should be the basic mechanism of the contemporary human community. There is no reason why human society should protect anyone with possessions, unless there is a corresponding social benefit. And since money is a mechanism to serve the human community, and not the human community to serve

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money, it is plain that if it works so as to stall the economic life it has hitherto sustained, if it is not forthcoming where property has to be liquidated in order that idle hands may work, something has to be done about it. It has to be altered. Money has to work for us. We cannot tolerate that it should play about at games of its own. The raucous voices say that with emphasis, and so far, they are right.

But where they go wrong is in assuming that there is some simple, understandable plot on the part of certain wicked, knowing men, "the Morgans," "the Baruchs," against the commonweal, or that some simple panacea, "more money," or some violent redistribution of money, or what not, is all that is needed to restore the economic health. There are, unhappily, no completely knowing men in this matter, wicked or not, and the mechanism of money and credit interlocks with the laws of property and political considerations, and with little-understood kinks in individual and mass psychology, in the most perplexing way. The working of the social body is at least as intricate as the working of the individual body, and it has been far less studied. This is not

to say that this overstrained and inadequate mechanism of money and property cannot be restored and set going again. The situation is not hopeless. But it is very dangerous and uncertain. The task is at best a very difficult one. The money-property mechanism which is now failing the world, can be recovered and set going again only after such a strenuous co-operative mental and moral effort on the part of the human intelligence as has never been made before.

We are only beginning to realize this. We are only beginning to apprehend the extent of the social and mental adjustments necessary, and how completely and urgently the rest of the human outlook, the escape from war catastrophe and economic and social degrading, depends upon these adjustments.

Here I may at least venture to throw out an observation or so upon this problem which has been forcing itself upon mankind, and to point out the scope and scale of the necessary effort if we are to arrive at even a provisional solution, and release our civilization from its present phase of arrest and reversal.

The institution of private property, the use of

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money, banking and so forth, have grown up, step by step, with the growth of the social organization. The two things have unfolded and complicated themselves together. Monetary methods have sprung from a miscellany of impulses, arrangements, inspirations, misconceptions and usages. But if we attempt a rough simplification of the rôle of this intricate complex in the light of modern ideas, it is possible to extract certain guiding principles about which there can be little practical disagreement. Whatever we may know or may imagine about the origins of private property, we shall be in accord in saying that it is tolerated and accepted in our current world because it is, and in so far as it is, a way of getting things taken care of and made productive for the general good. We are not ready to recognize any sort of private property that would be seriously inconvenient to the community—private property in the air we breathe, for example, or in the rainfall. We recognize all sorts of qualifications of ownership with regard to this or that sort of possession; hardly any ownership is absolute; and we are prepared to qualify ownership by law in all sorts of ways. We may differ widely as to

the things that may be owned by private individuals and the extent to which these things may be owned by private individuals; the communist will hardly leave us more than our pants and a toothbrush and, on the other hand, some extreme individualists would have a man free to own and close at his own sweet will, such a possession as a unique mine of urgently needed ore; but the ultimate test of the rightfulness of ownership as between private individuals and groups on the one hand, or the public administration, on the other, is the collective welfare. To me, at any rate, it is extraordinary that upon this base there should not exist a far more explicit and practicable system of knowledge and theory about property, than the vast, vague, misleading tangle of laws, usages and arbitrary assumptions upon which we are going to-day.

And in the same way, for the practical purposes of human welfare, money and monetary organization are to be judged primarily by the way they work. Open the question by asking, what do we want money to do? Money should be the flux of property, the oxygen of work, the assurance of reward, and there is no reason that I can see why

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a soundly working property-money theory and scheme of practice could not be built up upon the basis of these commonsense statements. But such a revised and modernized property-money science does not exist; it is not even attempted, and everybody who deals with these questions seems to come into them, not at the base of the matter, but higher up, accepting all sorts of usages, conventions and technicalities without examination. For instance, there is this idea of "raising prices" upon which I have animadverted. It has inspired a large part of the financial policy of the New Deal, and it has failed to produce satisfactory results, because it is essentially an attack upon the matter from the level of customary practice and experience. Which now do not work. The change of human conditions has overtaken the old conventions, and the experts who are empirical experts, with a certain scorn for scientific analysis, have, through their disregard of this, sailed on confidently to failure.

It is natural, it is inevitable that practical men who have hitherto found their experience adequate for every occasion, should be reluctant to go deeper, to go down to fundamentals and begin again. Very often their experience in the past

hampers their grasp upon the underlying forces that they have never had occasion to examine. Their contempt for the elementariness of the raucous voices may not be altogether justifiable. But the change in human conditions has become so great and the situation is so imperative, that readjustments based on such a fundamental re-statement of the principles of human relationship is the only alternative now to progressive social disentanglement and complete confusion and disaster.

Irresponsible people have always shown a greater curiosity and enterprise in these questions of human relationship than the expert, and from the days of Plato's *Republic*, every age of change and unrest has produced its speculative schemes for a new order of society or, as I prefer to call it, a new social mechanism. Very many of these social projects have released themselves from money perplexities by the delightfully easy expedient of sweeping money aside. More, in his *Utopia*, would have used gold only for vessels of dishonour. Hardly any of them recognized the intimate and increasing importance of money as the nexus of the social and economic scheme. But to invent a

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social mechanism without money is like inventing a body without blood. The early socialisms, such as Owen's, concerned themselves with a new adjustment of property and work, and treated money as a secondary matter. Owen introduced "Labour notes" as money substitutes into his model community, and as late as 1920, the Soviet government was trying out a system of ration cards for everyone, in the evident hope of superseding money altogether. It was one of the chief defects of Fabian socialism that it refused to discuss money or recognize that the two questions of property and money organization are inextricably interwoven. Fabian socialism was, and is, merely a project for withdrawing certain general interests—land, natural products, transport, staple production—from the realm of private to public ownership. Upon the fact that through money manipulation the natural claims of the creditor upon the debtor can be increased or diminished, or that a whole rentier class, as in Germany during the great inflation, can be pauperized and wiped out without any formal confiscation whatever; upon that reality, socialist theorists have nothing to say.

It was one of the oddities of American thought

in the past that it had a curious aversion to the words "communist" and "socialist," and even to-day, with immense collective public undertakings of an essential socialist type taking shape, there is still a kind of squeamishness about giving these things their proper names. But it is impossible to discuss the readjustment of the social mechanism without giving these types of constructive suggestion their proper rôle in the business. One of the most astonishing things that has happened during my visit to the United States has been the proceedings to expel Mr. John Strachey from America on the ground—I doubt if there is a sound case—that he is a revolutionary communist and that he is lecturing in that character. With Mr. Hopkins organizing his millions for production for use and not profit, I should have thought that any lucid exponent of the Russian experiment, and of Marxist ideas generally, would have been welcomed as a most desirable witness for cross-examination by the American publicist.

Directly one is confronted with the actual spectacle of America struggling to adjust itself to the novel conditions of to-day, directly one sees theory trying to realize itself in fact, it becomes plain that

without exception, all these schemes for new and altered human relationships, these various socialisms, communisms, and plans for the corporate state, all the endless "plans" and devices for monetary innovation that are put before the world as substitutes for current law and usage, are the sketchiest, most incomplete anticipations of the real planning that is demanded of us. None of them really cover more than a part of the field, if a new social order is indeed to replace the old. They are the projects of individuals or small groups of associates; they have none of the breadth of a science to which millions of minds have contributed; they are tentatives or dogmas, or magic formulæ. Either they are so general that like collectivist socialism anyone can "in principle" accept them, and do nothing more about it, or else they are so narrow and negative that like class-war Marxism, they provide for nothing beyond conflict and revolution. They are found to be void of any constructive quality so soon as they are put to the test. When I went to Russia in 1920, the communist party did not know whether it intended to have such a thing as money or not in the new order, and Lenin, in the most experi-

mental mood, was studying the problem of the electrification of Russia, and the conversion, province by province, of the peasant into an agricultural labourer. To this day the amateurishness of things in Russia, the amount of haphazard improvisation, is astounding.

Now, plainly, America is undergoing a social if not a political revolution. It is changing its administrative methods, its economic organization, its working conceptions of private and public property, its methods of pay, maintenance and distribution, upon the most drastic and extensive scale. Every radical theory is out of breath. Immense and irreversible changes are happening. Unless these changes are drawn together into a greater unity than they now possess, unless a coherent vision of the New America and the new world that is latent in the knowledge and invention of to-day can be given to the miseducated and perplexed masses waiting for leadership throughout the world, these changes will end in downfall and disaster: The deliberate readjustment of the social mechanism, the bold reconstruction of the money-property system of relationships, so as to realize the possibilities of human expansion that

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are now running to waste and disaster, is the only way out from catastrophe to a new lease of life for civilization.

Is that effort likely to be made? In time?

If that effort is to be made at all, it must be made now, chiefly in English; and the main part of it should come from America. No other country has the necessary freedom of speech and mind left, if the conception of the new order is to be worked out. Europe and Asia stagger towards war. All other communities are confused by the war threat. No other community than the English community can give its mind to this huge and difficult, but not impossible task of intellectual and purposive world organization.

But if America pulled her back and reassured her, Britain might be able to stay out of the impending Old World conflagration. Her mental strength could be combined into the American effort. The stronger the links between Britain and America, the weaker the links between Britain and the Continent. Liberty of speech and considerable liberty of political organization, may quite possibly keep on in the British Empire for a score of years yet, and in America they may last for twice

that time. This may be a hopeful estimate, but it is a possible one. These are the years of opportunity that remain to us. During these years the vague, exciting promise of a New Deal for mankind which has been dangled before our people, may be converted into a clear, firm intention, planning definitely, experimenting boldly, explaining lucidly, to evolve that new phase in human affairs, that fuller life which is manifestly so possible and so tantalizingly not yet in our grasp.

I have already hailed the President as a very strange and great man, a recipient and resonator of all that is most soundly progressive in Anglo-Saxon thought. But in his position and with his character, he cannot originate, and if the New Deal is still inchoate, it is because there are no strong, clear leads to support him.

It is the duty of every civilized man to contribute thought, influence and material help to his effort to make over the worn-out, private capitalism of America, which has produced so much in its time, made such a flourish of hope and performance, and which totters now at last so dangerously—to make that over, if it can be made over, into a renascent progressive modern state. I have

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been saying this to everyone I have met in America. It is preposterous to think of this as a one-man job, to set up a President as something between a divinity and a cockshy, and hold him responsible for the whole business. I hear here in America the same accusation against Franklin Roosevelt, made, I think, with much less justice, that was formerly levelled against Woodrow Wilson when his world-state schemes were wrecked—that the President has political bias and whimsical preferences, and that he excludes good men eager to help him. They say he shifts his confidence, though, perhaps, in some cases, he has reason for that. And able men complain: “He will not let us work with him.”

But that is really no excuse for not working body and soul and substance, for the definition and realization of the possible New World. The thing most conspicuously absent from the contemporary American scheme and the thing most urgently needed in American political affairs, is a clear-speaking, well-led opposition of honourable men, a Radical Republican opposition, as resolutely creative as the President himself, neither obstructive nor malignant, but critically helpful

and ready to take over the constructive task if by any reason he presently falters and fails. The true task of an opposition in a democratic state is not the frustration of government but its criticism and the preparation of alternative methods. There is too much mere carping at the President in able and experienced circles, too much watchful waiting, and not enough collateral response to the forces that are driving towards reconstructive effort.

The raucous voices, let it be remembered, are the residual heirs of America; America in default falls to them; they are the natural, final masters of negative, inarticulate men. If America does not go high and resolute and proud, consciously taking the leadership of mankind in the realization of a new way of living, she will go low and she will drag the world down with her. She will develop enormous internal stresses unless she rouses herself to a sustained far-reaching constructive aim; she may presently see one Boss ruling here, and another there, and aimless bickerings and social and civil war breaking out between region and region. The only way out for America and for mankind, is up.