

Not Democracy But Frustration of Democracy

By Norman Thomas

We Americans like to boast that our country is a democracy. Well, what do we mean by it? The simplest answer is that we have a right to vote for those who rule over us and to pass judgment on the policies which they propose.

Of course, it isn't enough that we should have a right to vote. Nose-counting doesn't mean much unless there is something behind the noses. Modern dictators often permit or even compel their subjects to vote. What they do not permit is the proper discussion of issues, the effective organization of opposition, or personal freedom and security to the critics of their regimes. All these things are essentials to democracy.

Do we have them in America? The answer, in comparison to Germany or Russia or many other countries, is decidedly yes. In comparison to what we need, the answer is NO.

One of the most obvious qualifications of our democracy is that there is still so little of it in our economic life. It is still true in this field that, to a large extent, we do not have "government of the people, by the people and for the people," but government of the workers, by the bosses for the profit of absentee owners. The possession of economic power is inevitably reflected in the political life of the nation. Newspapers, broadcasting companies and motion pictures are the principal means of popular education and discussion. They are business enterprises, increasingly big business enterprises.

The fact that they give us a somewhat fairer and better balanced picture and interpretation of the news than in most countries should not blind us to the fact that on the whole it is one-sided and that minority parties and new ideas have pretty tough going. But that's another story.

Today I want to discuss a narrower but tremendously important and much neglected aspect of our political institutions—namely, the very serious imperfections of our supposedly democratic machinery and technique.

Let's begin with the simple matter of the popular election of the President and other officials. How will the next President of the United States be chosen? You say, "That's easy. He will be chosen by the people; the man who gets the most votes will win." I doubt if you would earn your \$64 on that answer! We have had American Presidents who did not have even a plurality of the popular vote, but who nevertheless got a majority in the electoral college. You will remember that in each state we vote for electors, not directly for the President. Benjamin Harrison was the last President who lacked even a popular plurality.

After every campaign, some one sits down and figures how the shift of a few hundred thousand votes in the right states would have elected Smith over Hoover, or Willkie or even Landon over Roosevelt. There is at least a possibility this year that the situation will be further complicated by the refusal of electors on the Democratic ticket from one or more of the Southern states to vote for Roosevelt and Truman, the Democratic nominees. It is probable that they have a legal right to do this normal wrong. An amendment to the Constitution needed for true democracy and for the prevention of a very serious electoral crisis is one calling for the abolition of the electoral college and the choice of the President by direct vote of the people. In campaign after campaign, we Socialists have demanded this amendment. The present situation makes our demand of peculiar importance.

There is no true equality of representation in the election of Congressmen. Some years ago I ran a rather poor third in a Congressional race in a Greater New York district and got two or three times as many votes as the winning Congressman in several Southern districts. Georgia elects as many Congressmen as Wisconsin, with one-fifth as many votes.

The principal reason, of course, is the systematic exclusion of Negroes both from the primaries and the polls. The situation would be improved by the passage of a federal anti-poll tax law, which has been prevented year after year by the active opposition of a minority in the Senate aided by Senators of both parties who profess to favor the legislation but always help the minority to prevent the issue from coming to a vote. Another imperative reform lies in the extension to all Southern states of the Supreme Court decision barring the exclusion of Negroes from the Democratic primaries in Texas.

But these things will not be enough. Louisiana has no poll tax, but I have talked to Negro college professors there who, on one pretext or another, were kept from exercising a right open to barely-literate white men and women. Fair play requires the enforcement by Congress of the provision of the Fourteenth Amendment to our Constitution reducing the representation of states which systematically deny the right to vote to any group of its citizens on account of race, creed or color. The enforcement of this amendment is one of our demands. It would probably rapidly cure one

will not consider himself bound by any mandate from the people. Indeed, the people will have given no mandate!

Whatever you call this system, it is certainly not a true or efficient democracy. The result of it is government by a combination of pressure groups. I am not saying that all so-called pressure groups are bad. They have an inevitable and legitimate place in our democracy. What is bad is that they are neither checked nor guided by any broad and intelligent popular mandate given at the polls, after a campaign devoted to the discussion of great principles.

And what is now unhealthy for our democracy may in a few short years become a disease fatal to it. The lack of a proper party alignment and the clumsiness of our political technique will play right into the hands of some prospective American fascist demagogue, some new Huey Long, some revived type of Ku Klux Klan. You don't dare tell yourself, in the light of American history, that the American climate or the American tradition or our political virtue makes such a prospective fascism, called of course by a nicer name, impossible! The postwar bitterness, unemployment, poverty and their accompanying racial tensions will put a strain on the best organized democracy—and our democracy is extraordinarily ill-organized.

Our Canadian neighbors are better able to face the future because of the rise of that new democratic Socialist party called the Cooperative Commonwealth Federation which brings principles into political discussions and provides a vehicle for democratic action.

There is just one way that we on this side of the line can begin to catch up with our Canadian friends. Just one way in which we can give expression to some definite ideas about plenty, peace and freedom. That is by creating a new party. The deeply rooted two-party habit and the virtual monopoly of the ballot which the old parties have established in many important states make our task difficult. But with your help it is not impossible.

Co-op Institute Expands Its School

Training Courses for Co-op Farm Supply, Petroleum and Food Store Managers Planned; McAnahan Elected Acting Director of Rochdale Institute; Expanded Program Set up

CHICAGO (CLNS)—Rochdale Institute, national training school in consumer cooperation, will swing into action with a greatly expanded program this fall operating from its new headquarters in Chicago. The board of directors of The Cooperative League of the USA, meeting here August 4, elected C. J. McAnahan, educational director of the League as acting director of the Institute and gave the green light for the expanded program.

A new board of directors of Rochdale Institute will be elected in Chicago, October 9 just before the Centennial Congress. Nominations are being made by the educational directors of the regional cooperative associations, by the present board of trustees of the Institute, and by members of the Institute.

The fall program of the Institute will include a general school for prospective educational directors and managers in Chicago; an advanced course for cooperative farm supply managers at Columbus; an advanced school for petroleum cooperative managers at Kansas City; an advanced course for cooperative food store managers in Chicago; and an advanced school for personnel directors in Minneapolis.

Look Out! Here's Mr. Ruml Again

Mr. Ruml has another "plan." The last time he persuaded Congress and President Roosevelt to "forgive" \$7,000,000,000 or \$8,000,000,000 in income taxes. That made Mr. Ruml the most glamorous Santa Claus the very rich have ever seen.

With that experience fresh in mind, we naturally have our fingers crossed on Mr. Ruml's latest plan.

It's an after-the-war idea. All taxes on corporation profits are to be wiped out, and a uniform levy of 3 per cent, called a franchise tax, substituted. There would be no Federal sales tax. Taxes on individual incomes would raise \$13,000,000,000, and the total Federal budget would be \$18,000,000,000. Extra billions would have to be raised to take care of social security and payments on the public debt.

Mr. Ruml says there must be "full employment" after the war, with a national income of \$145,000,000,000 and 55,000,000 persons on the payroll. That part of the scheme we can readily accept. Putting the burden on individual incomes might be all right if there were proper exemptions in the lower brackets and sufficiently heavy levies in the higher brackets.

But Mr. Ruml is a clever "salesman." He doesn't always reveal his real purpose. That's why we have our fingers crossed. —Labor.

WHEN BIG NAVY GUNS WENT TO WORK ON GUAM



THIS DRAMATIC SCENE aboard a U. S. Navy heavy cruiser was photographed as shells were poured at point blank range upon the Island of Guam. Gunners hold their ears to deaden the terrific noise. During such assaults, the main battery softens the enemy as the second battery stands ready for action.

Your Dollar

By CONSUMERS UNION

Armour for Free Enterprise

Ads for Armour & Co. will sell not only meat but free enterprise from now on, George A. Eastwood, president of the company has announced. Says Mr. Eastwood's ad for July, "Armour and Company has a wider and more humane mission than merely to compete with 1200 other packers. Its public service job is to apply better operating methods in the struggle against public hunger and malnutrition." He adds that if Armour and other free enterprises hadn't developed modern and efficient methods for handling cattle and hogs, we'd be in no position now to participate in the war, keep high home-front standards, and lend-lease food to our allies.

All of which sounds to us like a somewhat elaborate slap at OPA which recently restricted Armour's freedom of enterprise, along with Swift's, Cudahy's and Wilson's to the extent of forbidding them to sell pork with as much as two and a half inches of fat; when a half inch of fat was the legal limit.

Volunteers Save OPA

Consumer volunteers make a contribution worth many millions of dollars to OPA, to judge from a recent tabulation in a single district—Oklahoma City. In just two surveys last Spring, covering food stores and restaurants, the volunteers made 161,184 separate visits to check prices and compliance. These visits would have cost OPA over \$100,000 had they been made by paid personnel—even if the paid personnel had been available.

OPA now employs over 100,000 volunteers—almost twice its paid staff—in regular service, and this number is increased to 325,000 at times of special need.

"Without these volunteers to handle . . . ration requests and to check on prices . . . the whole job of rationing and price control would have been impossible," Chester Bowles admitted in a recent radio broadcast. If this was true under the old price control act, it will be doubly so under the present act which hamstring OPA's enforcement powers.

Stockingless Fad

With the end of the war in sight, manufacturers of women's stockings are beginning to view with alarm the fad for bobby socks, leg paints, or no stockings at all. They seem more than a little concerned that women will continue stockingless Summers right into the postwar nylon era, reports the Daily News Record.

Granted that nylon stockings add to the appearance of most legs, and that they serve as anchors for girdles, manufacturers are wondering whether these advantages will outweigh the economy and the pleasure women get from exposing their legs to Summer breezes.

Serious problems, then. The only proposal put forth so far is for production of seamless nylons as a bare-leg imitation.

"Foxhole Pillows"

Alleging gross misrepresentation to the "millions of members of the purchasing public who have relatives and friends in the armed forces and who readily seize upon every opportunity to lighten the burdens of the men engaged in the military service," the Federal Trade Commission has issued a complaint against New York's Lewis & Conger and C. W. Products Co. The condemned article is the so-called "Foxhole Pillow," a gadget advertised as affording soldiers more comfort than any other article they may carry into combat.

According to the ads, the "Foxhole Pillow," a horseshoe-shaped cushion, can be placed under the crown of a soldier's steel helmet, being especially constructed to fit beneath the webbing so that it will not impede the circulation of air. It is said to fit into the pocket without bulging.

These claims, says FTC, are deceptive and misleading. Because of

its size, the pillow cannot fit beneath the webbing of a helmet. In fact, if it is worn beneath the helmet, the helmet will be elevated on the head, and will fail to give the necessary protection to the neck. Nor can the pillow be carried in the pocket of a regulation Army blouse without bulging.

Furthermore, use of the word "foxhole" in the name is deceptive, FTC charges, in that "it implies that a soldier engaged in active combat may utilize the pillow when in a foxhole. Actually, the respondent's pillow would constitute a useless piece of equipment under such conditions."

Cola Drinks

Do you ask for a "coke" at the soda fountain? If so, the clerk must serve you Coca-Cola, federal courts have ruled. Pepsi-Cola, Spur and other cola drinks are not entitled to be known by the name "coke," which has been built up with millions of dollars worth of Coca-Cola advertising.

Aside from the brand name and the quantity you get, you'll find few differences in cola drinks. All use about the same flavors—extracts of the cola nut and the coca leaf or artificial cola flavor, sugar, acid, artificial flavor and caramel color. None contain cocaine, and even the strongest have much less caffeine than a cup of coffee. Since rationing, differences in sweetness have been cut considerably. Therefore, CU's advice is to buy the brands which give you most for your money.

CU tested 12 brands for sugar content, acidity and carbonation. Cleo Cold, Spur and Pepsi-Cola are among the "Best Buys."

Flour

White flour is much better food than it used to be, reports Consumers Union. Most of the all-purpose or family type flours are now enriched—which means the manufacturer puts back part of the vitamins and minerals which were removed in milling. They're still not as good as whole wheat flour, but the enrichment is a big help to your nutrition. Most cake flour is not enriched.

CU reports in its August issue on tests of 26 all-purpose or family flours, 21 cake flours as well as various brands of whole wheat, soy, rye and gluten flour. Actual baking tests were made as well as laboratory analyses of the flours. Among the excellent quality flours tested by CU were: Finest, Ecco, Kitchen Graft, Red & White, Co-op, Pillsbury's and Gold Medal.

Toilet Tissues

Toilet tissues are generally no worse than before the acute paper shortage. CU found in testing 83 brands. True, they're not bleached as white as they used to be, and a few brands have been skimmed in size. But general quality, as measured by absorbency and bursting strength, is much the same. And as usual, you need not pay top prices to get a top grade of tissue. High quality brands sell for as low as 7c for a roll of 1000 sheets.

Although CU found considerable difference in the softness of various brands, this was not considered in the ratings. Degree of softness seems to be largely a matter of personal preference. A few brands were rated down, though, for excessive harshness.

Statler and Pacific (A&P) were rated as "Best Buys."

Flavored Ice Cream Mixes
CU's taste squad has moved on to taste chocolate, strawberry and other ice cream mixes sold in grocery stores. As with vanilla ice cream, the tasters preferred commercial ice cream to home-made. But some of the mixes were found to be of good quality.

The best of the chocolate flavored ice cream mixes was Frizz, which requires the addition of water and chocolate flavoring. Next best was Junket, which has the flavor already included but must have cream added. Londonderry also was liked by the tasters.

September Is Nutrition Month

(The following article was written especially for the National Fraternal Congress of America by M. L. Wilson, Chief Nutrition Programs Branch, War Food Administration.—Ed.)

September is Nutrition Month in the Food Fights for Freedom calendar of the War Food Administration. During this month, the attention of the nation will be directed toward the subject of choosing, preparing, and eating three well balanced meals a day, not only because of their importance in meeting the exigencies of war, while it is our duty to keep physically fit, but for the long pull afterwards.

Few of us realized the far-reaching effects of not eating the right kinds of food, even though we ate heartily, until the causes of the first draft rejections were made public. Then we were shocked to learn that approximately one-third of the young men who were turned down as unfit for military service were found to have physical deficiencies due in part, if not altogether, to malnutrition. Scientists sometimes call it "Hidden Hunger" when a person eats plenty of food to satisfy his appetite but not enough of the natural foods which furnish the health-giving vitamins and minerals so essential to good health and general well-being.

In September, I hope that the members of the National Fraternal Congress will take advantage of the many opportunities that will come to them to learn all they possibly can about eating the amounts and kinds of foods necessary to maximum health. These opportunities will come through press, magazine, radio—but especially through the community programs of local nutrition committees in every State and in every county. I hope, further, that they will participate in the activities being carried on in their communities in support of their nutrition program. These activities will take many forms—food demonstrations, special events, such as service club luncheons, youth group food preparations contests, food preservation demonstrations, harvest festivals, information booths in libraries, retail stores, and in other places where people generally gather, and other activities too numerous to mention here.

If you do not happen to know the chairman of the nutrition committee in your town, ask your local defense council, your home demonstration agent, your local health officer, the superintendent of schools, the local librarian, or the community service member of the War Price and Rationing Board. At least one of them will know her. Get in touch with her and then do your part to make Food Fights for Freedom by learning how to eat wisely—The Basic 7 way.

Removing Temptation

An English coal miner, aged 73, visited a Newcastle lawyer, a young bachelor, for the purpose of making his will. He owned two small modestly furnished cottages.

"My old woman's to have all so long as she's my widow," said the old man. "After that my bairns get all."

"How old is your wife?" asked the lawyer.

"Seventy-two," was the reply. "How long have you been married?" inquired the attorney.

"Over 50 years," replied the client. The lawyer suggested that the old man will his wife full interest in the cottages during her life, whether she remained a widow or not. But the old man would not agree.

"But surely," protested the lawyer, "you don't expect your wife would marry again in 72?"

"Well," said the miner, "there's no knowin' what young chaps like yourself will do for money."

Map Centennial Co-op Congress For Oct. 10-13

CHICAGO (CLNS)—The champion Co-op Congress Arrangements Committee of all time, already organized and functioning with sub-committees on housing, exhibits, publicity, pageant, churches, music, advance ticket sales, recreation, and other tasks, is finding its anticipation of Congress matters outlasted by the imagination and excitement of the people.

To allow more time for discussion this year, and provide for special events befitting the Centennial Year, the official Cooperative Congress program has been expanded to four days—opening Tuesday morning, Oct. 10 and running thru October 13.

The evenings this year will be devoted to entertainment and fellowship. For Tuesday evening, a very unusual program of the best platform talent available among the co-operators of the several regional organizations will grace the stage of the Terrace Garden, redecorated and air-conditioned theatre-auditorium in the Morrison Hotel, Congress headquarters.

The Cooperative Centennial Banquet with world cooperation as its motif, and for which a prominent foreign speaker is being arranged, will be followed by the Congress "Sing-a-Swing," where, under the leadership of experts from co-ops across the land, you can schottish, you can waltz, you can polka, you can square dance, you can swing it, or sit out!

On Thursday and Friday nights (second night for Chicagoans so out-of-towners can all get in the first night) will come the first showings of America's Cooperative Centennial Pageant, "In the Hearts of Men." In music and color and rhythm, through interpretative pantomime, dance and dialogue, here will be depicted a startling impression of man's struggles and achievements in the quest for security and peace.

Three special luncheon programs and two dinner programs are on the line-up, and in addition to reports of officers and recommendations of affiliated groups, there will be extensive graphic presentations and discussion of local experiences in cooperative finance, merchandising and education.

On Monday, October 9, there will be a joint board meeting of National Cooperatives and The Cooperative League, conferences for cooperative women's groups, co-op youth and campus co-ops, an afternoon panel discussion and conference of ministers, priests and rabbis, and an inter-faith mass meeting on the church and cooperatives in the evening. Sunday, October 8, to be known as Cooperative Sunday, will open the Cooperative Week with cooperatives the theme in many churches and young people's meetings from coast to coast.

For the third successive time, a daily Cooperative Congress newspaper will be published—this time for five days. Reports and recommendations, the final program of the Congress, and special Centennial Souvenir Brochures, will be combined in a Centennial Memorial Congress Book. Special half-hour music programs will open each morning session. More than 1,000 out-of-town delegates and visitors are expected to attend.

British Co-ops Approve \$40,000,000 Postwar Expansion Program

MANCHESTER, England (CLNS)—The British consumer cooperative movement is swinging into action with a postwar program which waits only for the close of the war for its actual accomplishment. Postwar projects involving an expenditure of \$40,000,000 have already been decided on by the Cooperative Wholesale Society which is owned by 1200 co-operative societies operating 12,000 co-op shops throughout Britain.

In addition to projects already decided upon, several important new developments are under consideration. Of chief importance among these is a proposal to merge the operations of the British and Scottish Cooperative Wholesale Societies. Such a merger would make the combined organization the largest private trading enterprise in the world.

Another proposal is for the establishment by the Cooperative Wholesale Society of a cooperative mail order service which would serve co-operative members throughout the country and would attract much trade of cooperative members which is now going to private profit mail order concerns.

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