

PACTS, FACTS AND RED HERRINGS

By Sidney J. Abelson

A curious fact stands out in the history of contemporary dictatorship—the fact that the European dictator countries were established either by socialists, by ex-socialists or by men who modelled their programs and their tactics after those of socialist or socialist-derived governments.

Specifically, there is Socialist Russia. Then Italy, the handiwork of Mussolini, one-time Marxist firebrand. Next, "National Socialist" Germany founded by Hitler who brazenly appropriated Socialist catch-phrases and who, more to the point, proceeded to nationalize control over German economic life along collectivistic lines. Finally, extinct Poland, which was shaped into national unity by Pilsudski—an ex-socialist like Mussolini.

On the other hand, the democratic powers are the ones which have resisted socialist progress and turned back the tide of Marxism, so that today England and France, the nations which actually have taken the field against Hitler, are governed by "capitalistic" parties in an atmosphere of comparative freedom.

These facts in themselves do not

automatically lead to a conclusion. But they do supply food for thought. Collectivism fattens on the fruits of its growth. It develops power which seeks to perpetuate itself for the sake of that power alone, and the preservation of this power, which inevitably concentrates in the hands of an oligarchy, becomes the prime issue, displacing those idealistic purposes for which the collectivization might have been undertaken in the first place.

"Every economic phase has a political phase corresponding to it." This is the fact that is plain to the sight of all: wherever in the world today there is comparative freedom in economic affairs there you find also a corresponding comparative freedom in political affairs; wherever there is dictatorship and collectivization in economic affairs, there you find also dictatorship in political affairs. Socialist thinking, supposedly restricted as far as control from above is concerned, to economic affairs, inexorably leads to a pattern of political control—dictatorship.

The Marxists have been bellowing for many years that the "capitalist" system bears within itself the seeds of its own destruction (Marx's "Critique of Political Economy"); but now

it turns out that Marxism and its derivative doctrines, Naziism and Fascism, bear within themselves the full blossoms of complete disillusionment. After what has taken place in Poland no national person can credit any of these doctrines with doctrinal respect—they appear to be once and for all what they actually are, catch-phrase "philosophies" which lend themselves readily to the purposes of megalomaniacs obsessed by Napoleonic delusions. There is little danger, therefore, that even rabble-rousers will be able to gain much of a following in this country for the camp of Stalin, Hitler, or Mussolini.

But as long as the Marxist-Fascist doctrines are exposed only on the political front there is danger that the economic background of this front will be neglected, and that collectivism, whichever form it takes, will be left untouched by the scorn it deserves. The important thing to remember is not that Hitler, Stalin and Mussolini are brutalized rogues, but that Socialist ideas, collectivism—i. e., the political management of economic affairs—must lead to dictatorship over civil affairs. "Every economic phase has a political phase corresponding to it." Where there is no economic freedom there can be no political freedom.