

Lease-Lending our Liberty

THE BLUEPRINT of the plan whereby the President is empowered to lead the nation into war without warrant from the people's representatives may not immediately, or in its present form, be adopted. That the thing could have been thought of at all in these United States is significant.

It is sad satisfaction to this commentator to call to mind the interpretations of events—since *The Freeman* began to speak more than three years ago—which pointed indubitably to the present denouement. We repeat, and we urge our readers to repeat, the basic truth obscured by present passions: that no political forms can guarantee even political freedom to a hungry people. Democracy thrives on prosperity; it vanishes when poverty becomes the normal existence of the many.

American democracy showed very definite signs of decay long before the moral panic of 1933. When we assay the abracadabra of politics with the touchstone of economic freedom, we observe that even the American Constitution was born in a bed of disease. Americans were never truly free; but not until this last decade was escape from economic slavery completely shut off.

Before our eyes a thing which in our boyhood could hardly have been thought of has come to pass: Americans are giving up one by one their sacred constitutional liberties. Not reluctantly, but with an alacrity and a rationalization that show the depth of decadence. Ten years of depression have re-oriented American concepts of liberty, have conditioned American minds so that they now endow with the words of freedom acts which their forebears would have recognized and rejected as tyrannical in tendency.

President Roosevelt asked for a "blank check" in 1933, and Congress gave it to him. He asks for one in 1941, and Congress will give it to him. But neither the President nor the Congress are to blame. A desperately poor people, oblivious of causes, depression-depraved, will sign anything that their "leaders" will put before them. Merely to exist.

On January 11, 1941, the curtain was raised on the last act in the tragi-comedy entitled "American Democracy." When it falls at last, will the audience acclaim the performance with a *Heil*?