

Jerome Joachim Writes—and We Quote— From the Beacon of Berwyn, Ill.

"ONE WEEK you say our American system is all wrong. The next week you praise it to the skies. What is your attitude?" This was the question put to me last month.

Stating my views briefly: — our nation and the world will create the greatest wealth and the greatest sum of human satisfaction only when its citizens are encouraged to develop their ability by being permitted to keep and use the fruits of their labors. They must also be permitted to apply their labor as they choose, regardless of how unsound some of our college professors and brain-trusters may believe the individual to be.

The retention of such freedom by the individual will develop a corresponding responsibility and will create a nation of strong, capable people.

A nation which subscribes to the theory that the wealth produced by its most capable people should be redistributed for the benefit of its less capable members, will develop into a nation of weaklings.

Such progress as we have made in the U. S. (it has been the greatest economic progress made by any nation on this planet) was made because under our Constitution, we came closer to giving what was produced to those responsible than did other nations.

No one will ever know however, the progress which might have been made if we had developed this concept more perfectly. A society, in which no one ever was able to have anything for which he had not caused something of equal value to be created, might have done a hundred times as well.

Man hasn't progressed very far, as yet, from the animal stage. Such progress as he has known has all resulted from the fact that he has worked to some degree with his fellow man to produce the material and spiritual pleasures he has had. However, most men still feel their best chance for real success comes not from hard work but from attaining a position where he can deprive other men of a portion of what they produce. That not all men spend all their time seeking advantages or privileges may be because of a lack of confidence in their ability to gain such an advantage or to their fear of being caught. Only a few refrain from such effort because they realize the futility of such a course.

If all the people on an island devoted themselves to stealing from each other, all would starve. When too large a percentage, as in 1929, get the notion they can make more through speculation than by working—the bubble bursts. Soon, with millions of useless governmental employees and millions of Europeans living on the production of a relatively smaller number of American workers, the bubble will burst again.

No animal has ever tried to increase the productivity of nature. Animals merely exist on what nature voluntarily provides. Largely their number is limited by the extent of nature's bountifulness. Since there is never enough for all who would be born if there were no struggle, animals fight with each other for what exists.

Man has a capacity not possessed by any animal. Civilization (or partly civilized man) took over a continent which never supported as many as 1,000,000 Indians and increased its yield sufficiently to support 140,000,000 Americans (and a lot of Europeans) with a living standard no red skin ever visualized. Man can increase nature's productivity to an unlimited degree—if he devotes himself to production instead of to conflict with his fellow man.

Man has the capacity for causing nature to yield anything he desires. But because he is an animal and is still largely guided by his animal instincts he continues to spend much of his time as do other animals, trying to get what he wants from another man rather than from greater application of skill and effort.

Even when he is working in peace with his fellow man and receiving more than he ever did before, he wants more. This desire for more is natural. But instead of seeking more by improving his technique or increasing his effort, like an animal he seems to feel that he can get the most by taking it from some other man.

Most of our trade associations, meeting in conventions, still spend more time discussing how to "control" production than they do in discussing methods of increasing their service. Most union meetings are devoted to devising ways of "getting more" rather than studying how to produce more.

The old maxim "In Union There Is Strength" was intended to show how many men, working together, could accomplish tasks that none of the individuals could accomplish alone. But today the slogan is generally believed to mean that if the "gang" is big enough, and well enough organized, it can take anything it pleases.

It was such an attitude that the National Manufacturers Association originally fostered and perhaps still largely does. It has been this attitude that has largely motivated the farm bloc. It is this attitude that organized labor sponsors. If the nation—or even a group in the nation—could prosper over the long run with such a program, no one could blame them for trying. But inevitably this viewpoint brings chaos and ruin to all.

So it behooves management, farmers, laborers and all others to realize that all must work together if all are to prosper. "Ganging up" may often seem to be expedient, but it will never bring or even retain prosperity. Nor will

a system, in which all that is produced is divided as our political leaders think best, bring prosperity. The system that will bring the greatest prosperity is one which permits each man to keep what he produces, in a free market system. Educating the people to work together harmoniously and without the use of force will bring prosperity. Nothing else will—despite our hopes to the contrary.

Mentioning to a friend the regret which I felt because even our school teachers have also "ganged" up for the purpose of getting more, he pointed out that he was certain his school teacher friends likewise regretted the necessity of joining a "gang." "But what are we to do? If the plumber makes twice as much as a school teacher because he is a member of a 'gang,' how can we protect ourselves except by using the same tactics?"

His question is a hard one to answer. As long as we have a democracy in which politicians will heed only the voice of those sufficiently organized to make loud noises and influence the ballot, we can expect that as long as some gangs exist there will be new ones formed for self protection.

Carrying the thoughts to its logical conclusion, those who defend the formation of "gangs" will have to admit that the preachers, the clerks, the white collar workers and every individual in America would eventually have to join a "gang" to survive at all. When all are so organized, then the division of what is produced will be strictly on the basis of the power of each "gang". The strong one will naturally feel that they should have more than the weak ones and the more they get, the stronger they will become—enabling them to get even more.

Without a free market in which the laws of supply and demand operates to determine wages, prices, etc., the answer which Karl Marx had and which the Communists now advocate of totalitarian government supplies the only solution. Since permitting the "gangs" to fight for the division of production would result only in their spending their time in fighting instead of producing—dictatorships become necessary when all are organized into "gangs".

This leaves our civilization with but two alternatives. Either our people will realize that the formation of "gang" rule—expedient as it may seem at the moment to many—will eventually necessitate dictatorship and loss of all personal freedom—or we will fight the formation of such "gangs," even at a momentary loss and realize that we can continue to be a free people only if we do this.

Surely a nation, which was willing to send its youth to foreign countries to give their lives and their health for a principle, should be willing to make the small sacrifice necessary to fight gang rule. How can anyone contend that he entered the service of his country because he was patriotic—when the same person will not freely engage in fighting a battle which takes less sacrifice on his part but which is even more important to his long run happiness?

We will either make the fight against "gang" rule or we will suffer dictatorships as bad as any which might have come our way if we had failed to fight Nazism!