

have been ignored—their proper functioning in the industrial system misapplied. There is nothing the matter with the system itself if these functions are recognized for what they are, and the office they fill and the work they do, properly apportioned. The industrial system has apparently broken down because the factors have not been recognized for what they are by those whose duty it is to teach, the statesmen and politicians, and the heads of our institutions of learning from which only occasionally a lucid voice is forthcoming.

THE notion that we need a central regulating power over industry explains the opposition to the Constitution and its interpretation by the Supreme Court in the recent N.R.A. decision. Paul Blanchard in a recent number of *The Forum* complains that the Constitution hampers progress because "it prevents a central control of our economic life and a unified system of labor laws." For our part we would be quite as distrustful of unified control of our economic life by politicians temporarily in power as in the hands of the nine able gentlemen who constitute the Supreme Court. As a matter of fact, the Constitution is more flexible than "unified control" in the hands of a strong administration. It has been amended twenty-one times in 150 years. It is far from being a static instrument since it provides for its own modification by direct amendment. And we were told years ago by Peter Finley Dunne, somewhat cynically, that decisions of the Supreme Court "follow the election returns." So we may rest in that assurance if all else fails us.

BUT the very centralized powers for which Mr. Blanchard contends are a danger more imminent and perilous than any possible usurpation of power by the Supreme Court. We would not lightly ignore certain considerations, but some thoughtful men are saying that a dictatorship has been averted by the Supreme Court decision. We will not go so far as to assert this, but certain recent developments in the process of vesting in the Executive unusual powers have held a menace which it were wise not to underestimate.

NO doubt the power of forty-eight states to legislate in their own way on all matters which are not interstate opposes an obstacle to "unified control of labor," and we for one are glad of it. We would rather bear the possible inconveniences, if there are any, in favor of the forty-eight experiment stations in the legislatures of forty-eight states. It seems to us that democracy has a better fighting chance. We are glad that the Supreme Court stands as a guardian over the rights of the states. We have forty-eight times more faith in the emulative example of half a hundred legislatures competing for adventure in social progress than

a centralized government at Washington, however sloppily benevolent.

WE have made some progress in economic thought. No complaint that unemployment arises from laziness or improvidence is likely to be heard again. Nor is it probable that any great paper like the *Chicago Tribune* will again advance the giving of arsenic to the unemployed, the tramp or the striker. Strikes have become almost popular and unemployment too familiar a phenomenon. No future president of a great railroad system will advocate that strikers crying for food should be given "rifle diet and see how they like that kind of food." No, newspapers and railroad officials have grown if not more humane at least more cautious. So much has been gained for the cause of sanity and a calmer outlook upon the social problem.

HOW little we can depend on the teachings of so-called radical journals like *The Nation* is shown by their attitude toward the Supreme Court decision. *The Nation* says: "The President cannot complain about his luck. The Supreme Court has given him a new chance to assert his leadership after he himself has forfeited many golden opportunities. We think that he now has the best issue of his career." If *The Nation* really understood the economic issues involved it would hail the Supreme Court decision on the N.R.A. as a great step in the preservation of our liberties. We have no grave objection to amending the Constitution in a way that will restrict its power over national legislation. But that merely looks to a possible improvement of the instrument itself, and the Constitution provides the method of procedure. It is unfortunate that the issue should be presented at this time when the decision is in accordance with the best traditions of a liberty-loving people.

IF there is need for an amendment to the Constitution it is a pity that the chief protagonists of such change should be those who have shown small comprehension of American traditions. We should far rather trust the future of this republic with the men composing the Supreme Court than with Franklin Delano Roosevelt and those comprising the milk and water socialistic school of *The Nation* and *The New Republic*. There is, we believe, little to choose between Mr. Roosevelt and Mr. Villard. Neither school to which these men belong has the faintest conception of natural law in wealth distribution, and both seem to think that laissez faire and the operation of free competition disastrous in their results. Neither school has the faintest conception of human liberty. *The Nation* has done some good service on occasions for the defense of human rights, but what man's fundamental rights are is left to conjecture.

LET *The Nation* speak for itself. In one article entitled "A Constitutional Plutocracy," it says: "Our mutual life is dominated by agriculture and commerce. Unless they can be controlled by the nation the government of the country virtually passes to them." We say now that this is un-American doctrine. It is bad economics; it is Socialism half disguised. They are words if they mean anything that lead straight to Karl Marx. No wonder the Supreme Court decision irritates men who believe as they do in federal control of all means of earning a livelihood. The control of economic factors by forty-eight states is not enough. Statute law and the civil law we are told are not sufficient to guard against abuses. So the federal power must be asked to step in and work its wonders.

*The Nation* writer continues: "How can the situation be met? Met it must be, for without action we are confirmed as the serfs of big business." This is the sheerest kind of nonsense. In this instance the Supreme Court stands for sound economics and American liberty. The bigness of big business is a negligible factor. *The abolition of monopoly is all that is demanded*, but *The Nation* is not willing to take this step. It prefers to fight the Supreme Court decision when such decision is a victory for the principles of American liberty which we have cherished for 150 years and to which *The Nation* now and then has contributed some lip service.

REMEMBER now that in all of this Mr. Oswald Garrison Villard proposes no reform in the process by which we are (to quote) "handed over to the mercies of a business and fundamental plutocracy." Did indeed the Supreme Court decision do this to us? If so it is really imperative that something be done about it. Why these strictures against the Constitution and the Supreme Court and not against the powers to which we are now "handed over, bound hand and foot?" Will this kind of dreary nonsense find disciples? Is the answer that if Henry Ford's plant is now too big it should be made smaller, and by federal enactment? That big farms be split up into smaller farms? If the objection is to big business may we not ask, "How big?" Nothing here about monopoly that operates against both big and little businesses. Nothing against federal meddling and taxes that choke little businesses as well as big. Nothing to show that the earth is closed against industry, that men are denied a place to work, that capital and labor, big and little businesses, are crushed by the exactions of land monopoly.

IT seems to be the opinion of *The Nation* that everybody not opposed to the Supreme Court decision is committed to the status quo. If to reject the status quo means the acceptance of "production for use rather than

profit," which is a fundamental tenet in *The Nation's* Socialism—we are indeed committed to the rejection of all such nonsense. For is not all production for use, and is not profit the incentive and the real wages of production?

IN making his fight against the Supreme Court, if President Roosevelt should deem this essential for his reelection, he will have with him the forces of organized labor. There is little hope here for any real effort to get at the root of the matter. We shall hear nothing of fundamental economics, of course. These will be carefully kept in the background. The leaders of the A. F. of L. are for the most part politicians who will strive only to retain their power. The fight is none of ours though we may well remind both principals to the controversy that wages and hours of labor are not something in the power of any tribunal to regulate. They will learn this some day when they cease their shadow boxing. They will no longer serve as pawns in the game, whether played by politicians of the stamp of Hoover or Roosevelt.

THE condition of the tenants of the State of Georgia, once called, because of its greater enterprise, "The Yankee land of the South," is described as deplorable. The State can no longer be singled out from portions of the less progressive South. At least this is true of a part of Georgia. The landlords have seen to it that the land which yields abundance, which despite the fact that if the farmer can get a piece of land to work he can live comfortably all his life, the opportunity is closed against him.

HERE is such an obvious lesson that it seems impossible it can be ignored much longer. The impudence of a certain section of Georgia landlords passes all comprehension. One is reported to have said: "If a tenant makes a living he ought to be satisfied instead of trying to make more. When they come and tell me they are not making enough I tell them to get off my land and stay off." No wonder Erskine Caldwell, who has contributed a series of papers to the *New York Evening Post*, says: "The landowner-tenant system will have to go. No act of its own is motivated by any desire save that of profit at the expense of the physical, moral and economic welfare of the workers." This is the condition that is transforming the Yankee Land of the South into a veritable hell on earth for Whites and Blacks who are of the disinherited landless.

AT last we have found an appropriate name for the men in control of affairs at Washington. There is a type of antelope at the Central Park Zoo called aoudads which race around in circles. Recently when the eclipse



of the moon occurred they accentuated their speed along a circular course, though the aoudads are likely to run around in circles with no excuse whatever. The same is true of the Washington species. No eclipse of the moon or sun frightens them really; the eclipse of industry only sets them to work with pen and paper figuring how if they had been in charge of the matter there would have been no eclipse.

CONTESTANTS for the Big Award are pressing one another very closely now. The reader will ask, "What award?" It is the award that awaits the one who suggests the most original remedy for poverty and depressions. Out first choice is Roger Babson. Most of us will remember the remedy suggested by Dean Swift for Ireland's troubles, which was the killing of all new born babies. The "gloomy Dean" was not as serious as Mr. Babson appears to be, nor as thorough. But let the Sage of Babson Park speak for himself. He says, advocating birth control for families on relief: "The very fact that a family is on relief shows that too many of that group exist. (sic). Hence I would use every decent means of reducing the number until the group no longer needed relief. That is just ordinary common sense." Then he adds with a self-satisfied air: "The whole question of relieving unemployment is so simple that I cannot understand why any one will permit religious or other prejudices to block the situation."

THE whole question may be simple indeed but Mr. Babson has not come within miles of solving it. He further elaborates his plan, which includes the "drafting of workers into industry on the same principles that men were drafted out of industry during the World War. Every employer should add to his payroll one or more persons from each family in distress, and should not be allowed to discharge any on the payroll without the consent of some impartial board like the draft boards."

IT is significant of current confusion that suggestions like the above receive attention in the public prints. Mr. Babson evidently thinks that there are such persons as "employers of labor" who pay wages regardless of the demand for the product. How glad they would be to be able to take on one or more employees! Mr. Babson has been an unsparing critic of the New Deal but he is even more at sea than the supporters of that strange policy. We think Mr. Babson qualifies for the Big Award. We cannot imagine any profounder nonsense.

MR. WALTER LIPPMAN is little better in his reasoning than Roger Babson, though he is more suave and a little less ignorant. In one of his articles in the *Herald-Tribune* he says, speaking of the planning programme: "There are of course many who think that artificial measures are never warranted. They may

be right, though I think that our situation in 1933 called for them. But in public affairs, as in medicine, the resort to artificial stimulants, even when it is necessary, is dangerous and habit-forming. The good doctor and the good statesman are those who know how big a dose of stimulants is necessary, and, above all, when to stop giving them."

REASONING by analogy is always dangerous and especially so in this illustration. The economic man does not need stimulants but a restoration of the natural functioning. Every good physician ministering to his patient considers this first. The economic man is bound hand and foot with tariffs, taxes and monopolistic exactions. His normal functions are interfered with. He is a mighty poor physician who in such a crisis recommends stimulants rather than freeing the patient who is being choked to death. Why not try the experiment of unbinding him?

WE think Mr. Lippman has a vague consciousness of this. We instance, "They may be right," followed by the phrase, "even when necessary." This is a deliberate begging of the question for if those opposing artificial stimulants "may be right" the necessity vanishes along with the rest of the argument. That is a kind of careless writing which is habitual with Mr. Lippman and does much to destroy our faith in the soundness of his reasoning.

IN the *Atlantic* for August is an article by Abraham Flexner on Private Fortunes and the Public Future, in which is given a list of the most notable benefactions in the establishment of hospitals, colleges, etc. Were we inclined to be captious we might question the title "Private Fortunes," since all fortunes are private. There is only one *public* fortune, the economic rent of land—all other fortunes are private. Mr. Flexner seems to think that there is need of some agency or power "to check greed or folly." We may remind Mr. Flexner of Herbert Spencer's statement that the only result of laws designed to protect fools against the consequences of their folly has been to fill the world with fools. But a far more important consideration is that the great fortunes out of which these benefactions have come are for the most part the accumulated loot of privilege and monopoly, and, to an overwhelming extent, the privilege of land monopoly. Had these enormous fortunes been allowed to remain in the hands of the people where they belong, communities would have built more magnificent hospitals and more extensive colleges than any we see today as the result of private benefactions. Mr. Flexner has a few flings at the laissez faire doctrine, which seems to be the habit just now of those who do not understand what it is all about.

HOW plausible seem these attacks on the laissez faire principle which Mr. Flexner tells us is "forever closed." Yet when was it open? Free competition against which superficial writers fulminate, has never existed in the world. Monopoly of the natural resources has everywhere interfered with the normal law of competition, and thus against the law of cooperation, which is its complement and not its opposite. With government monopolies everywhere, how idle it is to attribute the ills of society to the exactly opposite policy!

AND speaking of "private fortunes" reminds us of the "share the wealth" slogan heard so frequently nowadays. But whose wealth? Granted that what is needed is a more equitable distribution, is there no ethical discrimination to be observed? Are we to ignore the origin of these fortunes which we propose so lightly to share among us? What right have we to them—how much greater right than the present possessors?

DICK TURPIN had a political economy like that. It made him quite popular for a time, but looking at him in retrospect his code of morals does not seem quite so inviting? Of course, his practices included one of the cardinal principles of Mr. Lippman and other thinkers when discussing taxation without any consideration at all of "the benefits received" theory. Of course, too, there are times when Dick Turpin's somewhat reprehensible conduct seems lily-white when compared to the practices of governments. Turpin seems a somewhat gallant figure when compared with the sneaking practices of our official representatives and their greedy snarls. "Share the wealth," indeed! That has been the cry of every highwayman and brigand from Robin Hood to Dillinger.

IT is impossible to imagine a greater robber than the government itself. It has "shared the wealth" with a vengeance. Every purchaser of a twenty cent article in many states is robbed of a part of his purchase. Even the mother who buys milk for her babes is robbed in New Jersey, so that the receiver of economic rent (the only public wealth) may escape his contribution to the cost of government which itself creates these values. Dick Turpin would not have done that!

THE great robbery of which these lesser robberies are but the sequels and consequences is the robbery of the earth. Against this robbery the great minds of all the ages have protested, Moses, Gregory the Great, Tom Paine, Carlyle, Rousseau, Tolstoy, Henry George and many others. Only the last offered a definite solution. But the robbery continues. With the earth closed, or open only on the terms of the lords of the earth, unem-

ployment, poverty and misery result. They are the ev results of the system which denies man a place to wor Not only is this a challenge to labor, it is equally a cha lenge to capital. It is time that capital and labor awok These stupid, snarling cries of "share the wealth" shou be a warning to capital, to the possessors of wealth, ar to labor. The remedy is theirs if they will but take i To the wealthy, the conservation of their fortunes, th security of their possessions; to labor, the freedom work—these call for the application of the only remed that is safe, sane and easily brought about. Publ wealth for public purposes, private wealth as the sacre property of those who create it. And all this to l effected by the mere shifting of the tax burden. Is not worth trying?

## "What Are We Going to Do About It?"

WHEN the complete panorama of human justic reveals itself to the student of "Progress ar Poverty," he asks with an impetuosity born of knowled and conviction:

"What are we going to do about it?"

That question has confronted every teacher of Henr George. It is a question which bespeaks not only a understanding of the fundamental economics on whic the proposal to socialize ground rent is based, but als an earnest desire to see this reform enacted into law that involuntary poverty, that scourge of humanit shall be abolished from this earth. The riddle of th Sphinx has been solved. Why wait?

In attempting to answer that question every teach reaches back into memory for a satisfying reply. H thinks of the time when he, too, having closed the grea book with that ecstatic feeling that comes to one to whos a great truth has been revealed, asked the same que tion. He recalls the many plans and campaigns, th speeches made, the pamphlets written and distributed the congresses held and the resolutions passed—every thing that has been done "about it" since the time of Henry George. He finds no adequate answer, becaus he knows that every plan attempted has fallen far shor of the goal. He realizes that this failure to advance cause so grounded in reason and justice has not been du to any fallacy in its logic, nor yet to lack of ability o self-sacrifice on the part of many who have devoted the lives to it. The reason that the Single Tax reform ha not advanced must be due to lack of public demand fo it, which in turn must be ascribed to lack of publ knowledge of it.

The late Oscar Geiger, founder of the Henry Georg School of Social Science, realized that widespread educ tion must be a prerequisite for any successful attemp to enact Single Tax legislation. He arrived at this cor