

power resources are still untouched. It may sound exaggerated, and at the moment, of course, it is altogether unrealistic, yet the exploitation of the wealth of the vast continent which the U. S. S. R. comprises could very likely lift the entire capitalist West out of the slough of despond in which it is floundering today. Perhaps the capitalist world has no interest in building up Soviet Russia. Neither is Soviet Russia consumed by any desire to save capitalism from shipwreck. Nevertheless, Moscow would gladly accept co-operation from capitalism even though it would thereby grant capitalism another breathing space, and if the world's bourgeoisie were not intellectually bankrupt, it too would seek relief by injecting strength into what it fears may be its ultimate conqueror. There is of course a double paradox in this situation, but that does not change the facts. The future may have in store a prolonged armed economic truce between the capitalist and Communist worlds during which each will seek to exploit the existence of the other.

If the Russia of today suddenly turned private-capitalistic but continued its present rapid economic advance, every industrialist, banker, and exporter of the world would certainly have representatives on Moscow's doorstep. It is the height of folly to boycott a huge market, and a safe market in a country which has already had its revolution, at a time when millions of persons go hungry and billions of money are being lost for lack of markets. But this is the situation which Russia faces, and her leaders are patterning their plans accordingly.

The decision of Stalin to stress the population's everyday needs during the second Five-Year Plan seems like an admission of the wisdom of the now-suppressed right opposition led by Rykov, Bukharin, and Tomsky. Rumor has it, indeed, that Rykov may soon resign his position as Commissar of Posts and Telegraphs in order to be advanced to the Supreme Economic Council, where he will take charge of light industry. The right wing always demanded that more attention be paid to light and less to heavy industry. Rykov's promotion may therefore be regarded as the vindication of the opposition's program. But in fact it documents the greatness of Stalin, which even his worst former enemies now admit. For if Rykov's platform had been adopted in 1928, Magnitogorsk, Kuznetzstroi, and other industrial giants would not now be built. Nor would the Stalingrad and Kharkov tractor factories be producing machines. Nor would collectivization on a large scale have been carried out. And without these measures the stimulation of light industry would today be impossible. Moreover, it is obvious now that the U. S. S. R. stole the last three years from history, so to speak. The Five-Year Plan could not be started now. The international economic crisis and the anti-Soviet financial boycott would make it impossible. Stalin took advantage of a temporary situation between 1928 and 1931 to build the foundation of a new industrial Russia. The task is far from complete. But enough has already been accomplished to permit of further domestic progress despite limited outside assistance.

At present Stalin, having destroyed the right opposition and then assigned its members to minor posts, can magnanimously reinstate them into power. Events have justified him. He now does what Rykov and Bukharin advocated in 1929. But it was wrong then and is proper and inevitable today.

The supply of consumption goods has grown rapidly

during the last six months, and the Bolsheviks, in consequence, have been able to avoid further currency inflation. A walk through Moscow streets would convince even the skeptic that living conditions have improved and that store stocks have been replenished. The situation is very far from satisfactory, but the fact of progress and the now universal confidence in the success of the Five-Year Plan generate a healthy atmosphere of enthusiasm and dispel many earlier doubts. Time after time acquaintances who half a year ago rained abuse upon Bolshevik heads come in now and confess that recent achievements have won them over.

The Soviet output of cotton goods, woollens, knit goods, and leather and rubber products rose about 30 per cent during the last year, and continues to rise month by month. These commodities are immediately gobbled up at any price and leave the hungry domestic market unsatisfied. But it is obvious to all citizens that the increase in light-industry production is the natural result of the large-scale construction of iron and steel mills and machine foundries and of the agrarian socialization provided for by the first Five-Year Plan. This immediate dividend inspires faith that the second Five-Year Plan will yield even greater practical benefits, particularly since the Communists now make that their specific goal.

In the Driftway

"IT has become a hallowed tradition," writes Mr. Hoover in his recent proclamation, "for the Chief Magistrate to proclaim annually a national Day of Thanksgiving." Now the Drifter, as his friends must be aware, is usually suspicious a priori of all traditions, hallowed or otherwise. After a careful reading of the President's latest Thanksgiving Day observation, the Drifter feels it his sad duty to report certain misgivings about this one. With the third winter of widespread unemployment nearly upon us, in all its ugliness, want, and distress, Thanksgiving Day has not, for him at least, a genuine ring. Somehow it sounds ill-suited to the times. The President's counsel that "our people rest from their daily labors" brings to the Drifter's mind some ten million jobless to whom that advice will seem more than slightly ironical. And he wonders how many of that army stopped work on Thanksgiving Day in 1929, not realizing that they would still be resting two years later. Will they be duly appreciative, as the President is, that "the passing adversity which has come upon us" is a "spiritual" blessing?

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A LARGE part of our people, the Drifter suspects, will be equally dubious of the wisdom of the following:

Our country has cause for gratitude to the Almighty.

We have been widely blessed with abundant harvests . . .

Our institutions have served the people. Knowledge has multiplied and our lives are enriched with its application.

In the time of our forefathers this would have made sense. Bountiful crops were just cause in earlier times for gratitude and hearty thanks. For they meant the assurance of food and security through the long winter. But under our topsy-turvy economics abundant harvests assure us nothing.

They are a dubious blessing indeed when rich surpluses leave the farmer poor and the destitute hungry. It were better had the harvest been lean. The well-stocked storehouses would not then present a tantalizing mockery of the knowledge that has multiplied.

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WHAT the Drifter is working toward is the suspicion that our highly mechanized society has to a large degree outgrown the Thanksgiving Day custom. Abundance today is not the blessing of plenty. Even the farmer—forced to specialize in one crop—sees wheat piled high on his land and lacks necessary food. The Drifter hastens to add, however, that he does not mean that we should abolish the holiday. He is in favor of all holidays, the more the better, and his vote is for this one. But he believes that it should have a more realistic purpose. As a beginning he offers a new name for it—Fact-facing Day. To be sure, it is not quite so optimistic as Thanksgiving Day, but it might prove more fruitful. Instead of offering spiritual consolation to the needy and expressing pious hopes that by another year the Almighty might have matters adjusted to normal, the nation would unite in facing the facts of our adversity. The Drifter believes this might lead to action which would make abundant harvests mean abundance for all. And should that happen, you would see an ardent campaign to change the name of Fact-facing Day back to Thanksgiving Day.

THE DRIFTER

Correspondence

A Defense of the Spirit

TO THE EDITOR OF THE NATION:

SIR: May I have space for a few words prompted by Benjamin Ginzburg's article, Religion and the Lost Leadership, in your issue of October 21? It was so good that one felt it ought to be better.

Much of the \$817,000,000 a year spent on religious worship in this country may be wasted for all it contributes to intelligent thought of God. For thinking people what is heard in many of our churches may help atheism almost as much as a vital theism. But there is more to be said. Not all church people fall into this thinking class. More than that—and much more!—what religion does is not entirely dependent on the correctness of its ideas. Even if the idea of God promoted in the churches is antiquated—for that no defense is offered—there is much reason to believe that other and higher values, even a "social vision in these disordered times," are generated and conserved.

To say that the church is negligible as a factor in the fight for social justice or that its influence is used too timidly to make it a real force for a better order is entirely intelligible. But to say that "the connection between religion and social justice is today as extrinsic as . . . the connection between religion and physical gymnasiums" is seemingly to deny or ignore the facts. Mr. Ginzburg ought to know his prophets better. With them and not with the apocalypticist, at least in the social aspects of his work, Jesus stood in direct historic succession. And so, it may be held, stand all those today, whether avowedly or not, who advocate and work for Christian social ideals. And that even though the concrete "proposals" made by them are drawn from "secular economists and reformers"! The spirit

that moves them, whether secular or religious, frequently arises from religious sources, and in so far as it does, its result must be regarded not as a "sideshow" of religion, but as an expression of the "religious spirit."

Meadville, Pa., October 20

IRWIN ROSS BEILER

The Trouble with the Doctors

TO THE EDITOR OF THE NATION:

SIR: Anent the editorial The Doctors Look at Medicine, in your issue of November 4, the trouble is that those doctors who speak are really not the ones who are looking. Most certainly doctors who charge \$10 a visit for each of two children, or \$50 for a consultation, or who have doorkeepers, nurses, and secretaries are not in a position to see clearly the medical needs of the largest part of our population, consisting of poor people who have probably never heard of these doctors. The doctors competent to speak on the cost of medical treatment and its real value are those who practice medicine among the working class. These people can receive medical care in their homes at a cost of about \$2 per visit. Unfortunately, the cost is not what is wrong with medicine.

The great trouble with medical practice is its terrible incompetence. It is absolutely impossible to give the great mass of ailing people the benefits of modern medicine under our prevailing system. A typical case is a man of forty-five who complains of gastric symptoms which office visits over two weeks fail to relieve. This man should have a thorough examination of his gastric tract—X-ray, test meal, etc.; and does he get it? He cannot afford the fee of the private Röntgen examination. He cannot lose the time necessary to lie in the ward of a hospital under observation for a week, and anyhow he could not pay for it. He cannot wait for long hours in a free clinic.

The solution for the countless cases of this type is in some form of state medicine. I have read again and again the cry of the medical profession against "state medicine," but it has always been the men in the foremost rank who have been doing the crying—men who do not come in contact with the difficulties of the working and lower-middle classes, men who belong, as in your article, to the \$10 and \$50 class, where state medicine has no place.

Philadelphia, November 4

W. STEINBERG, M.D.

After the British Election

TO THE EDITOR OF THE NATION:

SIR: It is literally true that nobody foresaw the amazing massacre of Labor at the polls. Nor can anybody give a really convincing psychoanalysis. As the election drew near, everyone believed that the National Government would be returned with a working majority—but nothing more. It was, I suppose, in the main a triumph of propaganda and skilful phrasing. The word "national" with its imprudent claim "Vote for your country" no doubt counted heavily among a people the vast majority of whom did not know why "the nation was in danger," or what the danger was, or who put it there. Decorated by the best-known heads of all three parties (with the exception of Lloyd George) the appeal stampeded alike the ignorant and the timid, who believed the impudent falsehoods about the "crash of the pound" and the loss of all their savings to which Snowden and others resorted at the last moment to cover any fear which protection might otherwise have caused. From the Tory standpoint the election was engineered to get a tariff, though today not a single Tory newspaper except the *Express* mentions the

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