

*Radicals and Visionaries:
A History of Dissent in New Jersey*

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Radicals and Visionaries:

A History of Dissent in New Jersey



MORRIS SCHONBACH

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FOR JO

FOREWORD

Many tracks will be left by the New Jersey Tercenary celebration, but few will be larger than those made by the New Jersey Historical Series. The Series is a monumental publishing project, the product of a remarkable collaborative effort between public and private enterprise.

New Jersey has needed a series of books about itself. The 300th anniversary of the State is a fitting time to publish such a series. It is to the credit of the State Tercenary Commission that this series has been created.

In an enterprise of such scope, there must be many contributors. Each of these must give considerably of himself if the enterprise is to succeed. The New Jersey Historical Series, the most ambitious publishing venture ever undertaken about a state, was conceived by a committee of Jerseymen—Julian P. Boyd, Wesley Frank Craven, John T. Cunningham, David S. Davies, and Richard P. McCormick. Not only did these men outline the need for such an historic venture; they also aided in the selection of the editors of the series.

Both jobs were well done. The volumes speak for themselves. The devoted and scholarly services of Richard M. Huber and Wheaton J. Lane, the editors, are a part of every book in the series. The editors have been aided in their work by two fine assistants, Elizabeth Jackson Holland and Bertha DeGraw Miller.

To D. Van Nostrand Company, Inc. my special thanks for recognizing New Jersey's need and for bringing their skills and publishing wisdom to bear upon the printing and distributing of the New Jersey Historical Series.

My final and most heartfelt thanks must go to Morris Schonbach, who accepted my invitation to write *Radicals and Visionaries: A History of Dissent in New Jersey*, doing so at great personal sacrifice and without thought of material gain. We are richer by his scholarship. We welcome this important contribution to an understanding of our State.

January, 1964

RICHARD J. HUGHES
*Governor of the
State of New Jersey*

PREFACE

I have received much assistance and innumerable courtesies in the researching and writing of this book, and it is very pleasant to be able to note, however briefly, my gratitude here. The editors of the New Jersey Historical Series, Richard M. Huber and Wheaton J. Lane, and their staff have been unfailingly helpful. James E. Downes, Duane Lockard, and Robert Cross read an early draft and provided me with an exhaustive and completely constructive critique. My colleagues David Reimers, John Braeman, and Paul Goodman were always available and ready to offer encouragement and useful suggestions. The acuity and breadth of their historical knowledge and judgement saved me from several errors of fact and interpretation. For those that remain, I of course take sole responsibility. Mr. Reimers went over a draft manuscript with a meticulousness and helpfulness that honored the manuscript and me.

Donald F. Sinclair not only manages the excellent New Jersey Collection of the Rutgers University Library but, just as important, has a staggeringly capacious and detailed knowledge of, I am sure, all aspects of the State's history, in all periods, which to my marked profit he shared with me. Anthony Nicolosi, Assistant Curator, helped me with a maximum of efficiency and courtesy. My good friends Arnold M. Paul and Richard M. Brown, of Rutgers, made certain that this visiting fireman's working conditions were ideal. I spoke only briefly with Professor Richard P. McCormick, with disproportionately great benefit.

My former student Mrs. Esther Liberman wrote under my direction an honors thesis dealing with the New Jersey textile strikes and their relationship to American Communism that was truly exceptional both in thoroughness and in intelligence. In what I hope is a time-honored tradition, I have drawn upon it here with an even-increased awareness of its quality.

It has taken longer than I should have liked to express my indebtedness to Theodore Saloutos of the University of California at Los Angeles, one of the foremost authorities on American radical and reform movements. My interest in the subject developed in his fine classes; I hope that in following his lead I do him some justice.

Finally, this book owes to the sustaining friendship of Mr. and Mrs. Norton Mezvinsky, Mr. and Mrs. Seth Levine, Mr. and Mrs. Alfred Breslaw, Ted Dawes, and Sanford and Elma Schonbach more than they know.

MORRIS SCHONBACH

Brooklyn, New York
October, 1964

CONTENTS

Foreword	vii
Preface	ix
List of Illustrations	xiii
I. An Introduction	1
II. The Colonial Period	15
III. The Middle Period	24
IV. The Twentieth Century	50
V. Conclusion	103
Bibliographical Notes	108
Index	109

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

A Broadside	30
A Ku Klux Klan Bond	84
Announcement of a Klan Meeting	88
Parade of the Bund and the Black Shirts	93

I

AN INTRODUCTION

HISTORICAL ACCOUNTS as well as philosophical treatises often begin with a definition of terms. Scholarship generally is habituated to this approach. No doubt there are those who would prefer to say "afflicted with it," for the practice may seem monotonous and tedious when carried to extremes. Nevertheless, it is a particularly necessary beginning in this instance because of the single controlling word "radicalism," surely one to conjure with, one which, from the time it came into widespread usage in the eighteenth century, has been applied—and misapplied—to a confusing variety of concepts, practices, and movements. The definition will serve also to establish the criteria used for the selection of all the movements discussed herein. Many of them were vehemently opposed to each other; they were linked only by one feature in common: their radicalism.

The etymology of the word is clear enough: from the Latin *radix*, *radicis*, 'a root.' It is one of several terms, including "liberalism" and "conservatism," which came into use at about the same time, concurrently with such epochal movements as the American and French revolutions, the intense and bloody struggles for national self-determination and unification, and the victories scored by the champions of democratically-controlled governments and the rights of the individual. All of these movements, historically considered, were closely related, springing as they did from the same or similar impulses,

hopes, and world outlook: the God- and nature-given rights of man, as both a political and an economic being; man's freedom and security from oppression and persecution; his voice in determining his government, its make-up and its powers; what to change, and what not to change. To be sure, there were differences galore among the thousands of men committed to this particular viewpoint or that. At no time did these terms admit of simple, unmistakable, clear-cut definitions, but they did have, in this original context, a generally understood meaning. "Radical" was then used in its purest, adjectival sense: "thoroughgoing," or "extreme," or "far-reaching," or "root-and-branch." The British "philosophical radicals," the Utilitarians, are a case in point. The term could be and was attached to other political terms to describe the more extreme; thus, for example, the "Radical Liberals," or, in modern France, the "Radical Socialists." In this country the Radical Republicans, whose attitude toward the defeated South was much harsher than that of their fellow-Republican Abraham Lincoln, controlled Congress and the country during the Reconstruction Period after the Civil War.

It is in this original, adjectival sense that term and concept are used in this study, and as much as possible without value judgment. It will be helpful, however, to discuss other meanings for the purpose of utmost clarification.

Etymology does not exist apart from history, and it was not long before the word came to have many other connotations, most of them distinctly unpleasant. In the United States in particular, it has come over the course of the years to be not more nor less than an epithet, a "fighting word," often in the literal sense, to which are attached, consciously or unconsciously, associations of danger and opprobrium. Here it has come to signify any militant, uncompromising, and especially ruthless and violent opposition to the status quo. Recognizing the fact of this change, some scholars have taken to drawing a rule-of-thumb distinction between "radical" and "re-

form" movements, the latter by their definition the more moderate and conciliatory, accepting the fundamentals at least, if not all the details, of what is known as the American way of life, willing to accept improvements piecemeal, by degrees, and eschewing violence.* It is a valuable working device without doubt, and very few persons would wish to quibble that to *re-form*, to form anew, of itself says little as to scope or methods. One might be tempted to say that the radical is fanatical, while the reformer is dedicated, but those words imply a value judgment. Furthermore, where, precisely, is the dividing line?

To a considerable extent, the confusion and emotionalism which have come to surround both term and concept developed during the latter part of the nineteenth century. Before that time, as one scholar has put it, it was very hard to be radical in an un-traditional America. We were a new nation, busily engaged in strengthening and expanding all aspects of our national life. The emphasis was on doing: on clearing the forests, building towns and protection for those towns, tilling the fields, setting up businesses—and not very much or very often on ideas. It took some time for the norms and structure of American society to take shape. All the while there was a great deal of flexibility and movement in a country that was emerging in every conceivable way; diversity was everywhere.

Nevertheless, the young nation was replete with radicals of one sort or another, even then, and the country had had its very birth in armed revolution against one of the major powers of the world, an act which had brought forth one of the noblest of all statements of human aspiration, the Declaration of Independence. That was a war that was easily justified, however, on every level, from the most abstractly philosophical to the most concretely mundane—except, of course, to a sizable number of loyalists. Then

* See, for example, Thomas H. Greer, *American Social Reform Movements* (New York, 1949), 38.

there were the religious rebels, risking their very lives for liberty. Our background was predominantly English, but certain aspects of that background had been rejected in the Old World, and most of it was deemed inappropriate to the enormous challenges of the New.

In a new environment that was continuously evolving, there was an ambivalence, a sort of wavering from one attitude to another, on the question of authority versus dissent. The aforementioned religious rebels had been harried out of England, but once established in the New World, in Massachusetts Bay Colony, for example, they took a dim view of religious freedom and did a considerable amount of harrying themselves. There were such notable exceptions as the Quakers, to be sure, and there were others also. The career of Thomas Jefferson, principal author of the Declaration of Independence, is enlightening on this point. He had spoken at one time of the necessity of fertilizing the tree of liberty periodically with the blood of tyrants, and in 1787 wrote to his friend James Madison:

I hold it that a little rebellion now and then is a good thing, and as necessary in the political world as storms in the physical. Unsuccessful rebellions indeed generally establish the incroachments [sic] on the rights of the people which have produced them. An observation of this truth should render honest republican governors so mild in their punishment of rebellions, as not to discourage them too much. It is a medicine necessary for the sound health of government.

Only a few years later, as President, his attitude toward dissent was much less tolerant.* Dissent was not without its price.

The early days of the nation's history, while not without their share of strain and tragedy, were full of movement and opportunity. There was a lot of room in this melting pot of a country, not only geographically but

* Leonard W. Levy, *Jefferson and Civil Liberties: The Darker Side* (Cambridge, Mass., 1963).

within an exceptionally open society—for the mavericks, too. And yet the bonds of tolerance, which had plenty of stretch in them, had their breaking point. Some radicals, that is, extremists of one stripe or another, were treated with sympathy or with amused or patronizing forbearance, and some were ignored altogether. Men and women such as Dorothea Dix and Horace Mann, to cite but two of a host, were considered meddlesome disturbers of the peace in many quarters as they strove tirelessly to effect many educational and humanitarian improvements—annoyance with “do-gooders” being one of the oldest of human reactions. Nonetheless, the historical record contains more than a few examples of champions of heterodoxy who fared badly, or even met with violence. Some of them had bizarre ideas—the “crackpots” of their days: vegetarians and other diet faddists, for example. There was never a shortage of religious fringe-groups. One such was led by William Miller, a New England farmer who became convinced that the second coming of Christ was due either in 1843 or 1844. He achieved some fame as the founder and chief evangelist of the Millerite, or Millenarian order, and traveled far and wide exhorting his audience to prepare for the fateful day. Upwards of one million persons became followers, faithful to the point of ridding themselves of all possessions and gathering on hilltops at the appointed hour—and then a second time when the first turned out to be, obviously, in error. For many months, both before and afterward, they were the objects of jeers, catcalls, occasional challenges to fist-fights, and a variety of thrown refuse, but no worse persecution than that.

Then there were the genuine radicals—in contradistinction to reformers—whose ideas touched society on sensitive spots. They thus presented a serious threat to the beliefs and values of the established order. Thomas Paine’s tract advocating immediate independence from England, entitled *Common Sense*, sold well over one hundred thousand copies within three months of its publication in January, 1776. He continued as a hero of the

movement for independence during the war with a series of articles which he called *The Crisis*. The first of them, written while he was encamped with Washington's troops at Newark, contributed importantly to the bolstering of morale with the eloquent words: "These are the times that try men's souls. The summer soldier and the sunshine patriot will, in this crisis, shrink from the service of his country." That cause was won, and he turned later to *The Age of Reason* with the same rugged honesty and eloquence. This book was an attack on organized religion, though not on religion per se, and was largely responsible for an abrupt turn in the public's attitude toward Paine. He spent his closing years, some of them in New Jersey, in poverty and obscurity. He and many others—men such as the abolitionist Elijah Lovejoy and Joseph Smith, founder of Mormonism, both murdered—were not to be tolerated by an element representing themselves, however wrongly, as the guardians of established values and beliefs.

Thus, the times would seem to be just one of several factors affecting radicalism. Various religious fringe-groups, such as the Millerites, have been treated, if not benignly, with only mild persecution. Vegetarians and other faddists are treated with a bemusement which borders on affection. So were the prohibitionists of the nineteenth century; but not those of the 1930's, when the Eighteenth Amendment to the Constitution was in effect, legally at least. The holding of actual power, or the threat of doing so, real or imagined, in relation to the degree of tension and anxiety stirred up, this equation, too, is a prime determinant of the fate of radical movements. Therefore, it would follow that at times of prosperity and security, such radical movements as come into existence may have a relatively easy time of it—that is, unless they strike at intensely-held standards.

In a very fundamental, historic sense, the United States came of age during the last years of the nineteenth century. Many of the reform and radical ideas of the twentieth century, including the New Deal of Franklin D.

Roosevelt, are considered adjustments to the developments of that period. It was, as Henry Steele Commager has written, a watershed of American history, a real dividing line. It also produced the confusion which has surrounded the term "radicalism" ever since.

It was a time of intense turmoil and strain, during which men of zeal and conviction took their stands on the grievous problems confronting the country. And there can be no doubt that those problems were grievous, although not so deadly as the so-recently fought Civil War. Most of them revolved about what the historian Charles A. Beard referred to as the Second Industrial Revolution—the growth of Big Business, the formation of the trusts, the domination by the "robber barons" not only of the economic system but, to a dangerous degree, of political systems as well and, on the other hand, the existence of very large groups of laborers, farmers, and small businessmen whose share of the national wealth was as starkly small as their role in the political life of the time. If the John Rockefellers, the Jay Goulds, the J. P. Morgans, and the Andrew Carnegies did not control local, state, and national legislatures directly, then they managed quite well by taking advantage of all the opportunities their positions afforded them and of a compatible climate of opinion. The atmosphere was an exhilarating one for some, as profits and power pyramided to fantastic heights. For many more it was dismal and dreary. They had thought, in fact had often read, that the enormous sums of money that were being made by the tycoons meant more jobs, more income, more opportunity for all, but it did not seem to be working out that way. The immense technological and economic benefits which accrued to the country in the development of its resources and the building of its plant cannot be gainsaid; nor can the suffering which took place.

As a consequence of these and similar developments occurring in Europe, capitalism as a dominant fact of American life came under attack from many quarters. Since capitalism has ties and offshoots throughout the

American experience, almost the entirety of the national structure was subject to rigorous scrutiny. There was no shortage of critics who found this phase or that—or the totality—to be wanting, in sore need of being replaced by something better of their own devising.

More than the traditional flexibility and openness of American society had come to a critical juncture. The United States as “the land of opportunity” had been a pervasive motivation, and now was in doubt. Good fortune still befell many, but larger and larger numbers of men found their best hopes and efforts to be in vain. Hard, honest work had made the fortunes of Horatio Alger’s heroes, but for millions such a hope had turned into a cruel joke. In fact, longer, harder work more often than not worsened, rather than alleviated, the degree of privation suffered by the American farmer, struggling with overproduction and the competition of the world market. Many men discovered they simply could not make a go of it. Confident plans gave way to disappointment and bewilderment, particularly in the face of the success of those who manipulated, not worked, who were in many cases more clever than honest; before long that disappointment and bewilderment was transformed into a clamor for action.

The uproar focused upon government action, first state and then federal, as the answer. The demand for increased governmental power to maintain or restore a fair balance of wealth and power grew irresistible. Since government, or rather, powerful government had always been widely regarded with suspicion and dislike, this demand represented a definite and deeply significant diminution of the fundamental optimism of the people. In a related sense, the so-called disappearance of the frontier, which the historian Frederick Jackson Turner wrote about in the 1890’s and thereafter, was more valid as describing a change of attitude than in any realistic sense. The thousands of men and women who helped to form the new Populist Party, out of disappointment with both the Republicans and Democrats, joined the labor

unions in the 1890's and called for an extensive program of state regulation, including legislation to restrict the inflow of immigrants who threatened to capture scarce and precious (though ill-paying) jobs. In making use of their weight and influence in politics, they were simply following the effective example set by the manufacturing and shipping magnates before them.

The magnates and their supporters, the champions of the status quo, commanded an imposing array of the apparatus and arguments of power; among the latter were, and still are, the very watchwords and catch-phrases of the American people: free enterprise, rugged individualism, the profit motive, and laissez faire. Some went so far as to apply the biological theories of Charles Darwin, specifically the idea of the survival of the fittest, to the economic and social arena; this is nature's way, it is all for the best, and it is not only wrong but futile to interfere. The dissidents were far from united, but they brought to bear a barrage of counterarguments at least equally imposing: human welfare over corporate greed, a more equitable (though not equal) distribution of nature's wealth, conservation of natural resources, the common good, government by all the people for all the people. In this confrontation of ideas and convictions was a real hardening of the lines, thus a watershed, a major turning point in the history of the nation.

It was during this period in America that radicalism took on its modern meaning, even as the terms Left and Right as used in a political context symbolized the division described just above. To the scene must be added now the man whose name immediately suggests itself to the minds of most people in connection with radicalism, Karl Marx. Although Marx's own tenets were not quite so imminently violent as those of his more fanatical followers, and although Marxism in the United States, in the form first of the Socialist Labor Party and then, after 1917, as the Communist Party, gained fewer supporters and had less influence than in almost any major European country, nevertheless those ideas were largely

responsible for fixing a vivid stereotype of the radical in the public mind. Also active in this country during the strife-ridden 1880's and 1890's were a number of anarchists, many among them foreign-born, who opposed all government and authority; some of them justified violence as a means of ending oppression. There are vast differences between Marxism with its variants and anarchism, as the exponents of each were wont to point out at what often seemed interminable length. However, they had in common extreme opposition to capitalism and its works, which they defined very comprehensively. Idealistic enough in their own ways, they too had lost hope in the existing order and advocated a drastic overhaul. They attacked all systems and values, including religion and social mores. Thus emerged the stereotype which has not completely disappeared to this day: the unkempt, bearded, wild-eyed, embittered, atheistic, immoral, book-wormish bomb-thrower. He was a foreigner to boot, more often than not. And he was a pauper, a loser, hence an unpleasant reminder that failure, too, is possible in America. The public tended to run all the ramifications of dissent together into a hateful image of radicalism.

It was an image of the radical as Leftist. Even then the tendency was evident to lump all who favored changing the status quo, especially by state action on behalf of the masses, into the same bin, forgetting, blurring, or ignoring the many distinctions. One of the best examples is from the eloquent argument by the eminent attorney Joseph H. Choate against the constitutionality of a federal income tax enactment of 1894. The act would, if upheld, destroy the rights of private property, "the very keystone of the arch upon which all civilized government rests. . . ." It ". . . is communistic in its purposes and tendencies, and is defended here upon principles as communistic, socialistic—what shall I call them—populistic as ever have been addressed to any political assembly in the world." He appealed to the Court to stand firm

against this communistic march; the Court, accepting his line of reasoning, did.*

The practice of using the term with reference to the political Left has the sanction of tradition. The fact is borne out by the historical writing on the subject, the great bulk of which concerns itself only with the period under discussion and subsequent events. The beginnings of a great change were set in motion, however, by the coming to power of fascism in the 1920's and 1930's. The Italian and German Nazi followers of that creed were placed at the extreme political Right. In this manner a useful and convenient categorization was set up, fascism and communism being intensely antipathetic to one another, and poles apart in most respects. As the study of political and social behavior digs deeper and deeper, though, more and more students of the subject are becoming convinced that this representation of political belief on a horizontal plane, with the Left and Right standing on opposite sides of the moderate Center, is misleading in that it obscures certain similarities of both dogma and practice. In other words, Fascists and Communists may well despise and excoriate each other, but they have more in common than they understand or are willing to admit, in their thoroughgoing rejection of the sanctity of the individual and their scorn for moderation and compromise, for religious freedom, and for traditional ethical standards. Some of their leaders have had a perhaps secret and grudging admiration for each other, and certainly they have copied and learned from each other. More than a handful of persons have found the transition from one of the "isms" to the other not only possible but quite compatible, as in Germany and in Austria in the 1930's and much more recently, and just as the most vociferous Germanophobes in this country in

* The case was *Pollock v. Farmers' Loan and Trust Company*, 157 U.S. 429 (quotations at pages 532-533), decided in 1895 by a five-four decision. It gave rise to the Sixteenth Amendment to the Constitution, which went into effect in 1913.

1917-1918 became, with a quickness that is suspect, the most vociferous Russophobes of 1919-1920.

The point suggests that a circle might be a more meaningful device, with the drawing-away but eventual coming-together of lines, and indeed it is now being used with increasing frequency.* Since midway in the 1950's it has become commonplace to speak both of Radical Left and Radical Right; it is hardly likely that a book containing the words "Radical Conservatism" in its title would have appeared in this country before that time.** It is a very imperfect formulation, particularly in that it emphasizes similarities at the expense of dissimilarities, but it seems to convey more, and that more clearly, than others.†

Thus defined, then, radicalism becomes a much more comprehensive term. Hence, our discussion of such impulses in New Jersey's history will include some which fall along the political Left, others along the Right, in the modern period, and a number which fall into neither of these two categories, but which nevertheless may be considered radical, all of them parts of the rich diversity of American history.

* A very early indication of this approach came from a surprising source, the Hearst newspapers, which in the late 1940's began to refer to Stalin as "The Red Fascist." The juxtaposition of words representing two extremes then thought to be at absolute poles to each other was jarring to most people. It stemmed not so much from the search for truth as from the desire to achieve the strongest possible emotional effect from the lumping together of two highly "loaded" terms. One of the best and most recent treatments of the point is the article by Alan F. Westin, "The Deadly Parallels: Radical Right and Radical Left," *Harper's Magazine*, April, 1962, 25-32.

** Robert W. Lougee, *Paul De Lagarde, 1827-1891: A Study of Radical Conservatism in Germany* (Cambridge, Mass., 1962).

† Arthur M. Schlesinger, Jr., in *The Politics of Upheaval* (Boston, 1960), attempts to draw a distinction between demagogues and radicals in this light. But he adds that the distinction is not a tidy one. Huey Long, for example, was "a mixed phenomenon," in Louisiana a radical in important respects, as a national leader "plainly a demagogue."

Some are set down because of the presence of yet another factor which must be noted, that of violence. It is one thesis of this study that the resort to violence, not in and of itself, but as associated with a political creed, is a long-standing though minor thread in American history. It is the ultimate radicalism, so to speak. Its existence is complicated and exaggerated by the response to it. As is well known, hatred tends to beget hatred, violence tends to beget violence. The record indicates clearly that the opponents of radicalism, in their fear and zeal and patriotism, often become just as radical, in their own way, as those they deplore, absorbing, as it were, their worst traits.

What is referred to here is not the sheer violence of the murderer or the hoodlum; nor the doleful statistic of 3377 lynchings in the United States between 1889 and 1921 (2658 of the victims were Negroes).^{*} It is rather the spirit of the Texas Congressman who in the course of a speech supporting a bill to restrict immigration, gave vent to his opinions on the radicals of the day, equating them with the foreign-born, in these words:

Now I would execute these anarchists if I could, and then I would deport them, so that the soil of our country might not be polluted by their presence even after the breath had gone out of their bodies. I do not care what the time limit is. I want to get rid of them by some route . . . or by execution by the hangman. It makes no difference to me so that we get rid of them.^{**}

The statement was greeted by applause. Shortly there-

^{*} John P. Roche, *The Quest for the Dream: The Development of Civil Rights and Human Relations in Modern America* (New York, 1963), 85. More than twenty-five hundred lynchings occurred in the last sixteen years of the nineteenth century; the states of Mississippi, Alabama, Georgia, and Louisiana "led" the country in this respect. (John Hope Franklin, *From Slavery to Freedom: A History of American Negroes* [2nd ed.; New York, 1963], 431.)

^{**} Quoted in William Preston, "The Ideology and Techniques of Repression, 1903-1933," in Harvey Goldberg (ed.), *American Radicals* (New York, 1957), 248.

after, an official of the Federal government pronounced the following judgment: "If I had it in my power I would not only imprison, but would expatriate all advocates of these dangerous un-American doctrines. I would even execute every one of them—and do it joyfully." * This speaker was President Warren G. Harding's commissioner of education!

Granted that these words were uttered—along with the very similar ones attributed to the judge who presided over the trial in Massachusetts which condemned Nicola Sacco and Bartolomeo Vanzetti to death—at a time of unusual tension, the Red Scare which followed hard upon the Communist Revolution in Russia and the end of World War I, still similar examples could be gathered from other periods as well. The attitude revealed is a radical one, that of the true believer, so fervent in his convictions that he is willing to estrange himself from conventional practices and ideals. And that that attitude is an important determinant of action scarcely needs saying, although very often attitude remains a rhetorical gesture and nothing more. Fanatics such as John Brown are rare in American annals. But all are part of American history, and as such deserve to be included in the historical record, to which we now turn.

* Quoted in John H. Schaar, *Loyalty in America* (Berkeley and Los Angeles, 1957), 83.

II

THE COLONIAL PERIOD

WHEN NEW JERSEY was merely a part of the British Empire in the New World, a contemporary wrote of those who resided in New Jersey as "the most easie and happy people of any collony in North America." * There is much to support his enthusiasm, in fact. At the same time, the colony should not be thought of as an earthly paradise. The "good old days" that are so frequently referred to only rarely turn out under close examination to have been quite that good. Problems of various kinds did exist, and the few instances of radical behavior in that early time reflect those problems.

A grievance that began at practically the same moment as the planting of the colony and persisted to and through the Revolution revolved about the matter of quitrents. These were a carry-over, via England, of the feudal practice of paying an annual fee to the Crown in recognition of its ultimate ownership of all the land of the realm. Although many aspects of the system were exceedingly technical,** the tenant paid the rent so that he might be free, or "quit," of the Crown's claim. Land was the primary and most zealously sought-after form of wealth in that day, and land speculators abounded, from

* Quoted in Lawrence H. Gipson, *The British Empire Before the American Revolution*: Volume III, *The Northern Plantations* (Caldwell, Idaho, 1936), 136.

** The definitive treatment of the subject is Beverley W. Bond, *The Quit-Rent System in the American Colonies* (New Haven, 1919).

royal governors and proprietors to humble yeomen. So did squatters, who simply occupied and worked acreage oblivious to quitrents. They were particularly numerous in the hilly country west of Newark. Some of them made deals for land with the Indians, while others signed bills of credit at high interest rates.

The complications did not end there. There was vast confusion over the land rights retained by the original proprietors and their descendants in relation to the Crown when East and West Jersey were united as the royal colony of New Jersey in 1702. There was the considerable portion of the population who were Quakers, again mainly in West Jersey, who took a stand against the paying of taxes to a government which might use the funds for war and other purposes they did not approve of. And there was of course antagonism growing stronger and stronger to any and all forms and procedures of British rule; at various times the funds collected as quitrents were used specifically for paying the salaries of the royal governor and his council and for administrative expenses. Consequently, the frequent "quitrent riots" became part of the movement for American independence, in a real sense. They reveal a great deal of the patterns of colonial resistance and the breakdown of British rule.

By the 1740's they were breaking out throughout most of the colony. Frontiersmen were supported by many long-established and prosperous farmers. The situation was particularly chaotic in Elizabethtown and Monmouth County. When Samuel Baldwin was arrested in 1745 for cutting timber on a proprietary tract, he preferred going to jail to accepting his friends' offer to pay his bail. Shortly thereafter a small mob burst into the Newark jail and rescued him. Four months later, three men who had participated in the incident were themselves arrested. En route from jail to court for trial, they too were rescued. Not yet satisfied, the crowd, now swelled to three hundred, moved on to the beleaguered Newark jail and this time released all the prisoners. In 1749, it was es-

timated that fully one-third of the population of Essex County was rioting.

Governor Lewis Morris called the actions almost high treason, "... too likely to end in Rebellion and throwing off his Majesty's Authority; if timely Measures be not taken to check the Intemperance of a too licentious Multitude." * The situation worsened. Special committees to protect the rights and holdings of the colonists sprang up, in Morris County several people holding proprietary titles were driven from their homes, the Perth Amboy jail was now broken open against the wishes of the local committee, a moderate judge, Samuel Nevill, was threatened with assassination, assemblies refused to raise money for proposed investigations, grand juries refused to indict and trial juries to convict. Governor Morris left the situation at his death to John Hamilton, who survived only a few months; he was succeeded by Jonathan Belcher who, despite his previous opposition while governor of Massachusetts to rural democracy, was not inclined to take stringent measures to enforce a system he too disliked. British troops, landed in 1755 for the purpose, quieted the unrest to some degree, but the storm continued through the French and Indian War and the War for Independence.

More than a sign of lawlessness and land-hunger, the riots indicated how strongly independent and uncowed the New Jersey colonists were: hard-working, confident in America as the garden of opportunity and themselves as citizens; there is no overemphasizing the historical significance of these attitudes, well-expressed in a letter by a Jerseyman, published in the *New York Weekly Post-Boy*:

No man is naturally entitled to a greater proportion of the earth than another; but tho' it was made for the use of all, it may nevertheless be appropriated by every individual. This is

* Quoted in Donald L. Kemmerer, *Path To Freedom: The Struggle for Self-Government in Colonial New Jersey, 1703-1776* (Princeton, 1940), 200.

done by the improvement of any part of it lying vacant, which is thereby distinguished from the great common of Nature, and made the property of that man who bestowed his labour on it, from whom it cannot afterwards be taken without breaking thro' the Rules of Natural Justice; for thereby he could be actually deprived of the Fruits of his Industry.*

The Colony anticipated the Revolution in another more specific and striking respect. This is the Greenwich Tea Party, which occurred in November, 1774. Feelings by then had reached a very high pitch. In New Jersey, as elsewhere, Committees of Correspondence were exchanging information and coordinating plans, and a widespread boycott of British merchandise was having a marked effect. The British East India Company, with a huge supply of tea on its hands, was eager to sell much of it in the New World. Knowing the resistance he was likely to encounter, with the Boston Tea Party of a year before in mind, the resourceful captain of the *Greyhound*, bound for Philadelphia, put into Cohansey Creek, a small stream which runs into Delaware Bay, and dropped anchor at the town of Greenwich. The cargo was unloaded and stored nearby in the cellar of a house owned by a local Tory, prior to being taken overland to its destination.

The plan did not work. Some forty young men of Greenwich and Bridgeton decided quickly on enacting their own version of the Boston Party. Dressing themselves up as Indians, they assembled in the market place, then went on to seize the tea and make a great bonfire with it.

The English owners, encouraged by the considerable Tory sentiment in the area, decided to take legal action against the offenders, who not only made no effort to disclaim their roles but rather had boasted of them. The people of Greenwich and surrounding towns rallied im-

* Lawrence H. Gipson, *The British Empire Before the American Revolution: Volume III, The Northern Plantations* (Caldwell, Idaho, 1936), 152-153. The date of the letter is June, 1746.

mediately to the support of the young "patriots," as they were proudly called, even though the local Committee had disapproved their deed. A sizable sum of money was raised to engage defense lawyers. Once again, the grand jury refused to indict, in spite of the outraged insistence of the judge. Within a few months fighting had broken out at Lexington and Concord, the Revolution was on, and the matter ended. In 1908, a monument was erected in their honor in Market Square, Greenwich.

Throughout the colonial period and later, there were periodic outbursts of racial and religious prejudice, not only in New Jersey but throughout the entire country. It was not the covert, subtly discriminatory type of prejudice with which almost everyone becomes familiar sooner or later in his lifetime, but a hatred and fear that erupted time and again into riot and murder. On the receiving end were Negroes and Catholics.

The resort to extralegal measures and bloodshed is no rarity in the United States, under the Constitution or before. If one probes the historical record thoroughly enough, one will find examples, not galore, but in numbers sufficient to demand attention—on the Western frontier and in the ante-bellum South, for instance. Antagonism to Negroes and to religious minorities has, of course, a long history. It usually has political and social components joining together with economic and psychological factors in a complex intermixture.

Without glossing over the facts, some of which are brutal, it may be said that these threads of New Jersey history are distinctly minor ones. Although New Jersey had the largest slave population of any northern colony except New York, ". . . its Negro history contains no exciting chapters during the colonial period." * The earliest Swedish and Dutch settlers were little interested in importing such a labor supply, and from the first almost all the Quaker settlers took a principled stand

* John Hope Franklin, *From Slavery to Freedom: A History of American Negroes* (2nd ed.; New York, 1963), 93.

against the institution. The British-based Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts was active also in this regard, with some effect. A proposal to return Negroes to Africa was made as early as 1714 by a person believed to be a New Jersey resident.* The State Constitution of 1776 enfranchised all men, under the provisions of which some slaves apparently voted.** It must be added that as revolutionary ardor dampened, slaves were disfranchised in 1790. One of the first of the abolitionist organizations, promoting the idea of freeing all slaves as quickly as possible, was established in the state in 1793.†

The number of slaves had grown with some rapidity during the British period, and by 1745 there was a Negro population of 4606 among almost 57,000 whites, according to John Hope Franklin. The increase was accompanied by some tensions, as slaves were punished most severely for all offenses, either real or supposed. Burning at the stake was the usual form of retribution for murder then, in 1735, and in Somerset County in 1739.‡ For lesser infractions the sentence was lesser only in a sense; whipping was the mildest form, while branding, castration, and other types of mutilation were also practiced.

Early in 1741, in an atmosphere of general tension, a wave of Negro persecution broke out in New York that soon amounted to panic and hysteria. Typically, it was based on misinformation. The trials that were held were tragic parodies. Franklin reports that 18 Negroes were hanged, 13 burned alive, and 70 were banished. Four

* John Hope Franklin, *From Slavery to Freedom: A History of American Negroes* (2nd ed.; New York, 1963), 235.

** Dwight L. Dumond, *Anti-Slavery* (Ann Arbor, 1961), 122. The author suggests the terminology might better be "were voted."

† Some sources use the year 1786. A printing of the Constitution of the Society for Promoting the Abolition of Slavery, done by Isaac Neale in Burlington in 1793, included extracts from a pertinent New Jersey law that had been passed in 1786.

‡ Henry S. Cooley, *A Study of Slavery in New Jersey* (Baltimore, 1896), 40-41.

whites were hanged also, two of them women. Word of the so-called Negro plot spread across the Hudson River to New Jersey, as might be expected. Two Negroes, who were accused of setting fire to several barns in the Hackensack area, were burned at the stake. Normalcy returned soon, however, although here and there suspicion continued in evidence, as when not long thereafter all Negroes of the Perth Amboy region were compelled to witness an execution.*

The idealism of the Revolution and the Declaration of Independence had many effects in New Jersey, and the subsequent history of the State shows persistent, although not completely steady, improvement in the lot of the Negro. A manumission law was passed in 1786, and strengthened in 1804. The State set up several schools for Negroes at the end of the eighteenth and the beginning of the nineteenth century, some of which lasted only a short time. More opportunities for education were provided within private homes by well-meaning individuals.**

Most of this teaching was done by Quakers. Though it is Pennsylvania that was known as the "Quaker Commonwealth," the Society of Friends was well established in New Jersey, too; John Woolman of Mount Holly was one of their most distinguished members in the New World. By the late seventeenth century there were already 30 meetinghouses in West Jersey.† Religious radicals beyond doubt, driven to the New World much as the

* Henry S. Cooley, *A Study of Slavery in New Jersey* (Baltimore, 1896), 41. See also Alfred M. Heston, *Slavery and Servitude in New Jersey* (Camden, 1903).

** According to a pamphlet, "Thomas Mundy Peterson," by William C. McGinnis (Perth Amboy, 1960), a school custodian of that name, living in Perth Amboy, was the first Negro to vote in the United States following ratification of the Fifteenth Amendment, March 31, 1870 (the day after ratification).

† Francis B. Lee, *New Jersey As a Colony and As a State* (New York, 1902), II, 334-343. This volume contains also an excellent account of the Greenwich Tea Party.

Pilgrims were, the Quakers were no strangers to persecution, but it was of a relatively mild discriminatory sort, not riots, attacks, or banishment, and their efforts to achieve fully equal treatment were usually successful.

Anti-Catholicism marked all the colonies save Maryland, which had been established specifically as a Roman Catholic haven by Lord Baltimore. Anti-Catholicism was (and is) an expression of nativism, one of the most persistent, albeit minor and recessive, traits of the American people. Nativism glorifies the native (with the glaring exception of the Indian) and relegates to inferior status the newcomer, the immigrant, the foreign-born. It is intensely nationalistic and patriotic. The other side of the coin is darker, showing a fear and hostility that are often near-obsessive. The Catholic's religious creed was thought to bind him in all ways to a foreign power, namely Rome and the episcopacy; hence his loyalty was suspect.

It must be remembered that during colonial times, the terrible conflict between Catholic and Protestant was not only recent history but was, in fact, very much a live issue, often a bloody one. Considering how much of the history of Europe was taken up with that very struggle, it was only natural that these animosities should cross the sea with the colonists.

To the fact that New Jersey witnessed very little of this conflict must be added the fact that there were very few Roman Catholics here. Indeed, their first church was not built until 1816.* The New Jersey Constitution of 1776 contained some restrictions against Catholics holding public office, and provided an additional safeguard in that no Protestant could be denied enjoyment of his civil rights because of religion.** Such provisions were very common at the time. Non-Protestants were not excluded

* Richard P. McCormick, *The History of Voting in New Jersey* (New Brunswick, 1953), 70n.

** Ray A. Billington, *The Protestant Crusade, 1800-1860* (rev. ed.; New York, 1952), 20-21.

from voting, despite certain handicaps that were implied rather than stated.* Such problems were rather less severe in New Jersey than elsewhere; in perspective, only rarely did anti-Negro or anti-Catholic "incidents" or other uprisings mar the lives of . . . "the most easie and happy people of any collony . . ."

* Richard P. McCormick, *The History of Voting in New Jersey* (New Brunswick, 1953), 70.

III

THE MIDDLE PERIOD

THE NINETEENTH CENTURY was marked by numerous manifestations of radicalism, the most prominent of which were the utopian communities which sprang up over numerous areas of the country shortly before the middle of the period. By and large, the century was a relatively calm one for New Jersey, though certainly not for many other states of the Union.

Anti-Negro riots continued to occur, sporadically and on a very small scale, however. Now, such feelings were more than countered by the growing abolitionist movement, in which the State played a definite part. One cannot assign any order of importance in the agitation to free the slaves, inasmuch as the movement was, if not truly national, then very widespread. The responsible and effective abolitionist Theodore D. Weld, believed by many to have been the most influential of them all, lived with his wife, the former Angelina Grimke, in New Jersey during much of the second quarter of the century, though their work kept them traveling a great deal. At the time, there was a large "stand-pat" element. The result was an ebb and flow of opinion. The recession from the broad democracy of the Constitution of 1776 has been noted earlier. Voting was restricted to free white males of the age of twenty-one or over in 1807. But at about the same time other laws were enacted which prohibited the exportation of slaves from the states and one of which proclaimed that the offspring of all slaves born

after July 4, 1804 should be free.* The latter law resulted in large part from the agitation of local and state-wide abolitionist organizations, in which the Reverend Robert Finley was one of many leaders. The mob which attacked a Presbyterian minister in Newark while he was denouncing "The Sin of Slavery" had some support among the non-violent segments of society, but was fighting in vain. By 1840, the slave population of the State was less than one per cent of the total,** and six years later slavery was abolished by law, against little opposition. Nevertheless, the census rolls continued to carry the names of a few slaves until the time of the Civil War.

THE UNDERGROUND RAILROAD

Whether one wishes to term those who helped spirit escaping slaves to freedom in the North or in Canada "radicals" is again a moot point, a matter of definition. The "underground railroad," as it is usually termed, was the secret network which provided havens, directions, and, frequently, guides for the Negroes. Its scope and effectiveness have been and remain in dispute, some scholars maintaining that most earlier estimates of the extent of the underground railroad were exaggerated, in part perhaps because they accepted the data of the Southern slave owners, who constantly harped on Northern implication in the continuing loss of what the Southerners considered their property.

It did exist, certainly, regardless of the arguments as to specific details and possible magnification. Those who participated in the operation were flying in the face of the federal Fugitive Slave Law of 1793 and other legislation, although the Supreme Court's decision in the case

* Marion T. Wright, "New Jersey Laws and the Negro," *Journal of Negro History*, XXVIII, 156-199.

** Simeon F. Moss, "The Persistence of Slavery and Involuntary Servitude in a Free State (1685-1866)," *Journal of Negro History*, XXXV, 310.

of *Prigg v. Pennsylvania* (1842) * and the passage by several states of personal liberty laws went far toward legitimizing such efforts. The network was best established and most active in the Middle West, in such states as Ohio, Indiana, and Michigan. It operated also in New Jersey, with the help mainly of Quakers, whose principles, though law-abiding, precluded the passive acceptance of the evil of slavery. Several routes are said to have been developed, starting usually from Philadelphia, to Camden, then northeast along the Delaware River to Bordentown. Horses were changed usually at Burlington, twenty miles from Philadelphia; this location was sometimes called Station A, Bordentown being Station B East.** Slaves also crossed the Delaware River from Dover, Delaware, to Greenwich at night, with the aid of different-colored signal lights on shore, thence to Mount Holly and north.

Princeton and New Brunswick were way stations. Just east of New Brunswick there were unsympathetic observers living for a time at the crossing of the Raritan. If they were present, Cornelius Cornell would give the fugitives the warning of danger and take them via a by-path to Perth Amboy, then by water on to New York City. If the path at New Brunswick were clear, they would be taken across the river to Rahway and on to Jersey City, from which place John Everett would often lead the way into New York City.

Generally speaking, and especially with the enactment of the Compromise of 1850, with its provision for a new and stricter Fugitive Slave Law, the escapees met with a less than sympathetic reception in the Northern states. United States Senator Jacob W. Miller of New Jersey said to the South in 1850: "The difficulty in New Jersey has been, not about surrendering fugitive slaves to their

* This decision upheld the constitutionality of the original Fugitive Slave Law, but opened loopholes in its enforcement with regard to state officials' not being required to assist in the return of fugitives.

** This account is taken mainly from Wilbur H. Siebert, *The Underground Railroad from Slavery to Freedom* (New York, 1898).

legal masters, but rather how to get rid of those worthless slaves which you suffer to escape into our territory, and to remain there to the annoyance of our people." * Rather than contend with such an atmosphere, the slaves were sent, usually, into upstate New York and New England, or in very many instances up into Canada. The intense emotions aroused by the situation, including even the welcoming of martyrdom, are well revealed in the letter of a New Jersey abolitionist to a Pennsylvania Quaker arrested for refusing to reveal the whereabouts of a fugitive slave. "I am glad you are deprived of your liberty," he wrote, and that "slavery has laid its hateful paw on a free, white, male citizen of pure blood." **

Anti-Popery uprisings were rare in New Jersey, and never approached the dimensions of the one in Charlestown, Massachusetts, in the 1830's, when an Ursuline convent was burned down while a large crowd looked on and cheered. Still, the feeling was there. The suspicion, insecurity, and the touch of irrationality which are requisite factors in such a situation had been foreshadowed to some extent by the rise of the Anti-Masonic Party of the 1830's; its animus was directed at the secrecy (and thus at the behind-the-scenes power assumed to exist) of that order and against Andrew Jackson, a forceful and aggressive President, and a Mason, too. The movement, although it nominated a presidential candidate in national convention, gained only a few supporters in the State, mainly in the rural areas, and died out quickly.

THE KNOW-NOTHINGS

"Ante-bellum America was not ruled by a mild and tolerant spirit of reason," † as one commentator has put it. It was at this time that the nativist outgrowth vari-

* Quoted in Larry Gara, *Liberty Line* (Lexington, Kentucky, 1961), 63.

** Larry Gara, *Liberty Line* (Lexington, Kentucky, 1961), 130.

† David B. Davis, "Some Ideological Functions of Prejudice in Ante-Bellum America," *American Quarterly*, XV, No. 2, 115.

ously known as the Supreme Order of the Star-Spangled Banner, the American Party, and the Know-Nothing movement attained rather formidable proportions. Loudly proclaiming its 110% Americanism, but secretive about all else (their usual reply to questions was "I know nothing," hence the name), the party managed to garner considerable support in Massachusetts and in the South, border states included. The Know-Nothings actually gained control of the Massachusetts Legislature for a brief period, and this success turned out to be their undoing, instructively enough, although they did push through a few reforms. They came close to dominating the New York State Legislature for a time. Their failure, once in office, was not a case of power breeding responsibility, clearly, despite a notable slackening of their radicalism. Mainly it was a question of effectiveness, or rather, the lack thereof. Their forte was criticizing and attacking, not responsible governing.

The Know-Nothings represented even more than usual the mixture of elements within a party, not all of them harmonious by any means. The rapid industrialization and expansion of the country were creating serious growing pains, which led before long to the dissolution of the Union and Civil War. The Whig Party was in the process of disintegration; the Democrats were far from united; the Republican Party was not a force until the middle of the 1850's. Until well into the 1840's the country had suffered from a serious depression. Animosity toward the hordes of immigrants pouring into the country was very strong. Most of them were Irish and Catholic; many others were from Germany, and many of these were also Catholic. With few exceptions, they were poor—or even paupers—they became manual laborers, they lived in slums; their dependency on the Democratic Party for help and favors bred political machines and corruption, and their consumption of alcoholic beverages might have been almost as high as it was assumed to be.

The Know-Nothings, though much given to oversimplifying, cannot be summed up simply. At one level,

they were mobs which gave vent to their economic and other frustrations by attacking the immigrant populations, in Philadelphia, in Baltimore, New York City, and St. Louis, for examples. In St. Louis the rioting became so serious and bloody that police and militia were overcome, and order was restored only when the mayor set up a force of seven hundred armed citizens with extensive authority. In Trenton and Bloomfield rioters did some damage before being brought under control. Negroes as well as the Irish and other Catholics were victimized, which would seem to indicate that in a situation of intense but rather generalized discontent various minorities serve as scapegoats. At the first the *New York Evening Post* wrote that Know-Nothingism "smell[s] mouldy and unwholesome in the dark and damp," and with these events an intense reaction set in. Down in Tennessee, Andrew Johnson wrote, "Show me a Know-Nothing, and I will show you a reptile on whose neck every foot ought to be placed." * Rufus Choate wrote in similar vein, "Anything more low, obscene, feculent, the manifold heavings of history have not cast up." **

And yet, there is another side. That very influential book, *A Foreign Conspiracy Against the Liberties of the United States*, first published in 1834, was written by Samuel F. B. Morse, who was certainly no thug. The Corresponding Secretary of the National Council of the American Party from 1854 to 1856 was Charles D. Deshler, a well-established Jerseyman of good reputation.† John Jones, of Camden, with Deshler, led the

* Quoted in Allan Nevins, *Ordeal of the Union* (New York, 1947), II, 326.

** Quoted in S. E. Morison and H. S. Commager, *The Growth of the American Republic* (New York, 1962), I, 648. The authors go on to state: "Mr. Choate did not live to see the Ku Klux Klan, the Silver Shirts, and similar manifestations of later eras."

† See the Deshler Papers in the Rutgers University Library, New Brunswick, especially his "An Address to the People of New Jersey," (1856), Box JK. See also Paul J. F. Hallerberg, "Charles D. Deshler, Versatile Jerseyman" (Unpublished Master's thesis, Rutgers University, 1939).



CHARLEY DESHLER

—AS—

President of the Know-Nothing Council

"Let none but *American-born* Citizens VOTE! Put none but *Americans* on guard! Let no *Foreigner* HOLD OFFICE!"

President of Democratic Meeting.

"Oh! how happy you and I are here! I'ze so happy ez I'ze got a Fiddle in my belly. We all have Fiddles in our bellies!"

Charles Deshler as President of the Know-Nothing Council—
President of Democratic Meeting

Courtesy of Rutgers University Library

state organization, which during the 1855 legislative session was successful in electing one state senator and fifteen members of the assembly; in 1856, four senators and fifteen assemblymen; and in 1857, three senators.* The eminent Theodore Frelinghuysen, whom Henry Clay chose as his running mate on the Whig ticket in 1844, had expressed himself from time to time in words similar to Morse's. There was a genuine idealism in these men's desire to preserve what they regarded as the purity of the United States, and in their desire to hold the line against drastic change. Thus their occasional opposition to abolitionism is explained, not so much as a defense of slavery, as an expression of their wish to avoid change.

Another facet of Know-Nothingism, and one which marked also the Ku Klux Klan of the 1920's which it resembled so closely, was its concern for morality. The xenophobic basis is apparent here too, inasmuch as drinking, carousing, corruption, and "loose behavior" were associated with foreigners, and with modern European influences. "Imported from abroad" was frequently employed as a derogatory phrase. Among other things, the penal code is said to have been affected by this spirit of the times, difficult though it is to trace any direct cause-and-effect relationship. New Jersey branded convicted persons on the cheek, and the conviction might have been for any of a long list of offenses. Public flogging was an occasional practice, also. According to one source, a young girl was sentenced in 1844 to receive 210 lashes on her bare back for having committed a petty theft.**

It was impossible then to connect the two ends of the nativist spectrum—the high-minded and respectable men who espoused a clear-cut doctrine of a foreign conspiracy and the superiority of the native-born, white Anglo-Saxon, and the hoodlums who shed blood and wrought

* Francis B. Lee, *New Jersey As a Colony and As a State* (New York, 1902), III, 395-396.

** Carleton Beals, *Brass-Knuckle Crusade* (New York, 1960), 12.

more than a little harm. In the period following the end of World War II, the question of whether "intellectual" convictions, however well-meant, can or cannot be dissociated from the dangerous vulgarization and brutalization that may come about when those convictions are translated into action, has become very moot. Many would maintain that ideas are entitled to an independent existence of their own. On the other hand, such disclaiming of responsibility does not rest easily on the consciences of mankind.

Know-Nothingism, in the form of the American Party, entered the national lists in 1856 with the nomination of Millard Fillmore of New York for the Presidency. This is one of the more bizarre turns of the political wheel, since Fillmore, who had occupied the White House from 1850 to 1852, following the death of President Zachary Taylor, was at most a lukewarm nativist. He had joined a Know-Nothing lodge only in 1853, hoping to muster some votes in the projected campaigns. He learned of his nomination while he was in Europe, where, ironically enough, he had just had an audience with the Pope.* In the election he ran a poor third, garnering less than nine hundred thousand votes, less than half the number given James Buchanan. The figure was a sharp disappointment to the Know-Nothings. Charles Deshler had estimated, rather too hopefully, that there were over a million members, in ten thousand councils, and that Fillmore's having once been President and the unsettled times would bring him a considerable number of additional votes.

He carried only the State of Maryland. In New Jersey he garnered 24,115 votes, or approximately 20 per cent of those cast, a smaller proportion than in New York, Pennsylvania, Ohio, Illinois, California, and several slave states. It must be assumed that most of Fillmore's appeal was to the loyal but homeless followers of the

* Ray A. Billington, *The Protestant Crusade 1800-1860* (rev. ed.; New York, 1952), 428.

moribund Whig Party, and to those impressed by his devotion to preserving the direly-threatened Union.

With his defeat, the Know-Nothings passed from the scene. Their convictions, and their "set of mind," however, persisted through the years, and they reappeared, but little changed, in the Red Scare and the Ku Klux Klan after World War I. There is a bridge, in the form of the American Protective Association of the 1880's and 1890's which originated in the Middle West and made some inroads in the East.

For long these disturbances caused by Know-Nothings and others of this type, stemming as they did from religious-racial roots and involving mainly "the lower depths" of the population, were thought of as "interesting," by journalists and other writers, that is, if they were thought of at all. Many historians all but ignored them, since they did not fall into any neat specialization. The old dictum that "history is politics, politics history," with politics understood as the top, national levels only, held sway, often with some allowance for economic history, and with "politics" understood as the national level only. To anyone alive to the events of the 1950's and 1960's, such a viewpoint must seem archaic or quaint by the most charitable of standards. Social history, that is, a more comprehensive sweep of all levels of society, followers as well as leaders, understands better the significance of these off-the-beaten-track developments, even though it is, as the eminent historian Georges Lefebvre has written, the least advanced of the fields of historical investigation.

UTOPIA IN NEW JERSEY

Into this out-of-the-mainstream category falls another historical event in which New Jersey played a leading role. This was one of the most fascinating of the many utopian communities which sprang up particularly during the 1830's and 1840's: the North American Phalanx. The men and women who established it were

reformers and radicals—in this instance the terms are interchangeable—who were neither malign nor mischievous. Quite the contrary; they were sober and peaceable, and they wanted to stay that way. Reformers-radicals tend to be difficult to get along with, some of them to the point of impossibility; not so the members of this community, who were the quietest sort of dissenters. Yet the mocking and scoffing they had to endure was not the less for this fact.

The search for a utopia here on earth is an enduring quest throughout American history, but the 1830's and 1840's were a special period in this regard. It was a time of fast-paced development and tumult, much of it associated with the Industrial Revolution, which was well under way. Factories and big cities were seen to be an irreversible part of the trend, and not everyone was pleased with this "progress." Ralph Waldo Emerson, in many respects the foremost intellectual leader of the era, expressed himself frankly:

. . . the general system of our trade . . . is a system of selfishness; it is not dictated by the high sentiments of human nature; is not measured by the exact law of reciprocity; much less by the sentiments of love and heroism, but is a system of distrust, of concealment, of superior keenness, not of giving but of taking advantage. . . .

In the face of all the changes, there was an extraordinary ferment of ideas. Many people came to the conclusion that existing society was not to their liking, and decided to change it in one way or another. Again, to quote Emerson: "In the history of the world, the doctrine of Reform had never such scope as at the present hour." "We are to revise the whole of our social structure—the state, the school, religion, marriage, trade, science, and explore the foundations in our own nature." He remarked that virtually every time he walked down the street some person or other would step up and pull from his pocket a new plan of his own devising which he was eager to discuss with Emerson.

Abolitionism, temperance, women's rights, world peace, universal suffrage, legal reform, all these movements and many more found enthusiastic supporters during these two bustling decades. Another kind of response was evoked from those who were convinced that any hope of reforming society at large or the nation was doomed in the face of the ineluctable developments then taking place; better, then, to break away completely with a group of like-minded persons and live independently, as they wanted and as they believed God intended them to. The result was a springing-up of hundreds of self-sufficient or nearly self-sufficient communities which are known by various labels, "Utopian Socialists" being the one most frequently employed, at times with the qualifier "religious" or "secular" to distinguish two of the basic types. Some authors refer to the experiments as "Communitarian Socialism." The impulse was almost worldwide; there were such societies in several countries, and the two chief theoreticians, Robert Owen and Charles Fourier, were Europeans. But the United States was the testing-ground ideal, with its open country and inexpensive land.

There were so many of these schemes during the 1830's and 1840's that, in a sense, they were very much in the mainstream, that is, during just those two decades. However, most of them lasted only a few weeks or months and involved only a handful of individuals. The average life span was a mere eighteen months. The North American Phalanx was much more stable. Established in the late summer of 1843 four miles from Red Bank, in Monmouth County, it is second only to Brook Farm in Massachusetts in the attention it has attracted, and from certain viewpoints it is even more noteworthy. In its duration, over twelve years, it stands out. While the people associated with it were not so famous as the literary lights of Brook Farm, it did not lack for luminaries: although they did not live there, the prominent writer Albert Brisbane and Horace Greeley, editor of the *New York Tribune*, were leading figures in its es-

tablishment, while George Ripley, William H. Channing, and Parke Godwin were much interested in the colony.

The attitude of the *New York Herald* toward the Phalanx was widely shared. The members, an editor wrote, were "a set of idle fellows who don't want to work . . . who are afraid to take their chance in the world and so . . . shut themselves up here." * The facts hardly square with this opinion. They did "shut themselves up" in a corner of the country, to be sure, a quiet, green, healthful corner. As to working, one could scarcely find a more unremittingly industrious group. They had not been idlers before, either; as far as can be ascertained, most of them came from what are considered middle-class occupations.** As to taking "their chance in the world," this is rather more complex. They were sensitive enough to perceive that the country was undergoing a metamorphosis that would eventually affect—as we are now discovering—every area of human existence. They disliked what they perceived, rejected it, and, with the courage of their convictions, moved on into an entirely different way of life.

By definition radicals are malcontents, and so these men and women were. Whether their course of action required more courage than staying in the towns and cities and making one's life there is not to be decided here. One may apply, if one wishes, certain descriptions which came into use long afterward, such as "neurotic" and "maladjusted"; this has been done either by inference or explicitly. It is easy to mock the utopians, their naïveté, their blueprints, and their hideaways, just as it is easy to mock certain features of the related literary movement, transcendentalism. In a country of pragmatic disposition, much concerned with results—successful re-

* Quoted in Herman J. Belz, "The North American Phalanx: Experiment in Socialism," *Proceedings of The New Jersey Historical Society*, LXXXI, No. 4, 246. The date was August 17, 1852.

** Herman J. Belz, "The North American Phalanx: Experiment in Socialism," *Proceedings of The New Jersey Historical Society*, LXXXI, No. 4, 227.

sults—their experiments did not work. The failures generally were freely acknowledged by the participants. It should be realized also that the utopians were not merely fleeing from harsh reality. They took Emerson seriously when he wrote: "What is man born for but to be a Reformer." These men and women, in making new lives for themselves, were also quite consciously trying to set an example, trying to open up an alternative path for the good of humanity. Gilbert Seldes summed up them and their kind in the following words:

The one significant thing to be said in favor of the American radical is that, crackbrained or perverse as he was, he did not submit entirely to the dominant purpose. He was opposed to the system of "make money." The conquest of the wilderness seemed secondary to him; the conquest of the spiritual world, primary. The circumstances of his own life were unlvely; but he cared intensely for beauty. He was beset by poverty; but he did not think riches a good in itself. He wanted a freer society, an easier life for men and women. In a society peculiarly preoccupied with things, he held to ideas.*

The most knowledgeable and authoritative contemporary writer on Utopian Socialism, John Humphrey Noyes, an ex-minister, leader of the Perfectionists and of the Oneida Community in New York,** another communal experiment, called the North American Phalanx the "Test-experiment on which Fourierism practically staked its all in this country." Charles Fourier was the French social and economic philosopher of the early nineteenth century who worked out his conception of the ideal commonwealth with meticulous care, at great length, and in every detail. Albert Brisbane and the other founders did not permit their devotion to their French master to prevent changes which they felt were necessary. The ideal living group (phalanx) would consist of two thousand members, Fourier had planned; it could not operate

* Gilbert Seldes, *The Stammering Century* (New York, 1928), 403.

** Alice Felt Tyler, *Freedom's Ferment* (Minneapolis, 1944), 184-195. This is an excellent short sketch of Noyes.

successfully with less than fifteen hundred. Brisbane came to the conclusion that four hundred was a viable number. In point of fact, from the beginning in 1843 to its demise, the number of residents, which fluctuated somewhat, never rose much above one hundred. The figure would have been higher had a less strict procedure for admitting prospective members been adopted. As it was, applicants were required, first, to become visitors for a month or two; then they became probationary members for one year, after which time, assuming they were still interested, they were either accepted or rejected. From October, 1847, to January, 1850, only 18 of 59 applicants were admitted.* Fourier had divided his potential residents into seemingly infinite groups and series of specific composition and number; his work had many of the earmarks of a scientific system, which, indeed, he fully believed it to be, but his stipulations were changed about considerably when the group settled at Red Bank. Fourier's requisite initial capital figure also had been set higher than Brisbane's original investment of eight thousand dollars.

The record demonstrates that the members of the North American Phalanx, for a group which had no wish to adapt to society at large, had some flexibility. They were thought of as stiff-necked, unambitious, visionary, and, above all, impractical, yet they displayed a genuine shrewdness in those very areas in which they were criticized, in contrast to most other communitarian groups. Their basic approach was practical; labor was given the highest value. As one of the members put it: "An abiding confidence in work, and a diminishing faith in talk, has activated us."

The site, nearly seven hundred acres of fertile agricultural land, was well chosen, with good access to roads and nearby markets, New York City being only about forty miles away. Several buildings of excellent quality were

* Herman J. Belz, "The North American Phalanx: Experiment in Socialism," *Proceedings of The New Jersey Historical Society*, LXXXI, No. 4, 229.

erected; the principal one was the huge, three-story phalanstery. These associationists, as the followers of Fourier called themselves, diversified their output: a variety of agricultural and horticultural produce, milling, and some mechanics as well. The first packaged and trademarked cereals sold in the United States came from the Phalanx mills. They sold shares of stock, and furthermore paid regular dividends on that stock of between $4\frac{1}{2}$ and $5\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. By 1852 the value of the property was estimated at eight thousand dollars; debts amounted to less than one-fourth of that sum.

The matter of wages was a problem which the membership strove valiantly and continually to solve. One solution which they arrived at is most interesting: a rotating system of job assignments was devised, absolutely necessary under the circumstances since many of the tasks which had to be done could hardly be construed as utopian. Then a wage scale was set up, with the unique and intriguing provision that what was termed "necessary but repulsive" labor be compensated at the highest rate, with the rate descending as the work became more attractive.

To the utter astonishment (and perhaps dismay) of many outsiders, this particular arrangement worked rather smoothly. When the breakup finally came, this was not one of the important causes, although there had been friction concerning the allocation of farming and other laboring assignments. Persons could work as much or as little as they chose. The usual work week was 30 hours. All wages, set up on an hourly basis, were low, and outside help had to be secured now and then, usually from among newly-arrived immigrants. At the same time, expenses were correspondingly low, particularly since only the bare necessities of life were available. An à la carte menu in the dining hall was one of the few concessions to modernity.

For about eleven years the settlement lived on in relative calm. The record of those years has been summarized by T. D. Seymour Bassett:

Their material accomplishments were notable. Their soil conservation measures had improved a farm exhausted by slave and tenant cultivation. As horticulturists and truck farmers they had made innovations, met severe competition, and rapidly increased their productivity and earnings. Few farms of that day kept anywhere near such good accounts. Few corporations as large as theirs could show more accommodating or better informed relations between owners and workmen, or had even considered the industrial democracy represented by their election of their own foremen and managers. While even the reformers in the outside world had scarcely more than started their campaign for women's rights, the Phalanx had accorded women an equal right to income for their domestic labor, such labor-saving devices for their work as were available, and an equal voice in forming its business policy.*

Why, then, did the experiment fail—as it did between the end of 1855 and the beginning of 1856? Possibly, among such people as these, the inevitably conflicting opinions were bound to be strongly held. Most visitors remarked on the cultured and refined qualities of the members, but along with these qualities went an independent spirit that could not accept group welfare as the highest good indefinitely. Many differences had been patched up, if not resolved: the occasional disagreements between the farmer and laborer series which existed despite rotation and despite the arrangement whereby one might choose to spend more rather than less time at a particular task; tension between brain-workers, so to speak, and muscle-workers; among the several religious sects represented; and an acrimonious dispute about whether or not to broaden the base of government.

Then, in 1852, a fierce argument erupted over the location and construction of a new steam mill, as well as the development of a water route to markets. It may well be that this incident served to ventilate the whole area

* T. D. Seymour Bassett, "The Secular Utopian Socialists," in Donald B. Egbert and Stow Persons (eds.), *Socialism and American Life* (Princeton, 1952), I, 187.

of discontent. As the argument dragged on, the president at that time, George Arnold, a former minister and nurseryman, with Marcus Spring and some thirty others, broke away and formed the semi-capitalist Raritan Bay Union at Perth Amboy.

The group which remained at Red Bank was badly shaken. The mill-site question was settled, but the spirit, the absolutely vital spirit, was seeping away. Then in 1854 the mill burned down. Even worse, the company which carried their insurance went bankrupt. Horace Greeley, whose devotion to this and other colonies was steadfast, offered to lend them \$12,000 toward rebuilding. When the membership met to consider the situation, someone moved simply to abandon the North American Phalanx. Quickly and with little fuss, the motion carried by a majority vote, and by January, 1856, the colony was no more.

The chief reason for the collapse seems to have been, quite clearly, the petering out of interest and dedication, both of which had to be unflagging to sustain an operation faced with the problem of creating a separate and self-sufficient existence. One writer has termed it "a failure of nerve," which appears accurate enough, though the terminology seems mildly uncharitable. Twelve years is, after all, a fair and respectable term for following the different drummer these people chose. Later on many former members recalled their days at the Phalanx with pleasure and affection.* Even after the loss of the mill, the overall value of the location had been increased, and the other building had been well maintained. The stockholders were paid off at two-thirds of face value. Laziness had never constituted a serious problem. The school had

* Alice Felt Tyler, *Freedom's Ferment* (Minneapolis, 1944), 219. See also Norma L. Swan, "The North American Phalanx," *Monmouth County Historical Association Bulletin*, I, 35-65, and Harold F. Wilson, "The North American Phalanx: An Experiment in Communal Living," *Proceedings of The New Jersey Historical Society*, LXX, No. 3, 188-209.

been a source of pride. And the membership rolls had remained fairly steady, although the hoped-for total was never reached.

The Raritan Bay Union at Eagleswood lasted only a few years. It, too, dwindled out of existence so gradually that it is difficult to provide a definite date at which it came to an end. It is of special note because it brought together in one place at one time so many of the strands of reform. Only thirty or forty families comprised Industria, as they called their settlement, but many religious sects were represented, the Quakers with some prominence. They were much committed to and involved with abolitionism. James G. Birney, twice the candidate of the anti-slavery Liberty Party for the presidency, in 1840 and 1844, came to reside there with his wife and son, and died there in 1857. The bodies of two of John Brown's party killed in the raid on Harper's Ferry also were brought to the Eagleswood Cemetery for burial. Mrs. Marcus Spring had promised them this in talks prior to the men's going into Virginia, when they asked to be interred in the North should they fall. It was not easily accomplished; resentment of the raid was so strong that the ship bearing the coffins landed at Rahway rather than Perth Amboy for fear of an incident at the latter port.*

Above all else, Raritan Bay Union was child-oriented, to use the very apropos modern phrase. Most visitors were struck by this fact, and by the great concern for and pride in the school. These visitors, it might be added, included not only the ubiquitous Horace Greeley, but also such famous figures of the time as Emerson, Henry D. Thoreau, and Bronson Alcott, leader of Massachusetts utopianism. Largely through the efforts of Marcus Spring, Theodore D. Weld came with his wife Angelina and her sister, Sarah Grimke, to direct the school. They became major shareholders in the colony. Abolitionism having

* Maud H. Greene, "Raritan Bay Union, Eagleswood, New Jersey," *Proceedings of The New Jersey Historical Society*, LXVIII, No. 1, 1-20.

accomplished by this time most of its aims, Weld threw himself with characteristic dedication and energy into teaching, character-molding, and the life of the Union, hampered only by his uncertain health.* The school lasted from 1854 until 1861, becoming then the Eagleswood Military Academy; Weld left to spend his last years in Massachusetts.

Another of Spring's accomplishments was persuading the artist George Inness to take up residence at Raritan Bay Union. Spring built a house for him, accepting in return the radiantly serene landscape entitled "Peace and Plenty," which now hangs in the Metropolitan Museum in New York City. Inness stayed about three years, leaving when the colony disbanded.

It did so for what are now considered the typical reasons: the strain of living together in close quarters, sharing all work and all responsibilities. Jealousy and selfishness became problems; several of the "inmates," as Benjamin Thomas calls them, were troublesome. Sarah Grimke said her sister was "no more designed to serve tables than Theodore to dig potatoes."** Weld exchanged ideas on such problems with Adin Ballou, whose Hopedale Community in Massachusetts also was in its terminal stage. Ballou's summary, as quoted by Benjamin P. Thomas, is an apt one:

I was under a mistake about the evils of competition and love of money being the chief ones. Love of command, love of ease, and the inclination to throw off care and responsibility upon others are equally potent and mischievous. . . . Few people are near enough right in heart, head and habits to live in close social intimacy. So far as household and individual organization on the basis of united pecuniary interests is con-

* Benjamin P. Thomas, *Theodore Weld: Crusader for Freedom* (New Brunswick, 1950), 225-250.

** Maud H. Greene, "Raritan Bay Union, Eagleswood, New Jersey." *Proceedings of The New Jersey Historical Society*, LXVIII, No. 1, 18.

cerned, Association is impossible and undesirable at present. It costs more than it comes to. I give it up.

Only a handful of the utopian communities survived the 1850's and the Civil War. Nevertheless, new ones were established from time to time in the second half of the nineteenth century, and a few have been attempted in the twentieth. Of these, New Jersey has had its share. The Vineland Community was begun during the Civil War in the "Barrens" of South Jersey.* It was for a time a thriving small metropolis of some eleven thousand people, most of them from New England.

Of these later examples, the term "radical" is not so suitable a description as "quaint" or "bizarre." In a nation which places much emphasis on quantity and size, they have received little attention, but they are a meaningful part of the whole, reflecting somewhat more of the innermost tensions and hopes of the people than the numbers of their members would indicate.

One such group inaugurated around 1890 at Woodcliff Lake in Bergen County called itself "The Lord's Farm." Disapproving neighbors referred to the intruders in their midst as "The Angel Dancers." From the first it was something of a storm center—in miniature because it consisted of only a handful of zealots—about which little reliable information is available. The founders were a brother and sister named Garry and Mary Storms. They have been described as religious extremists, which was true enough, but their extremism was truly comprehensive: pacifism, non-resistance, common ownership, (in the sense of not recognizing deeds, mortgages, and other burdensome accoutrements of civilization), vegetarianism, and probably much else.**

The fifteen or so "free souls" who dwelt in anarchism upon "The Lord's Farm" were akin to all the utopian communities in being accused of all sorts of sexual ir-

* Charles Nordhoff, *The Communistic Societies of the United States* (New York, 1875; reissued, 1960), 366-375.

** William A. Hinds, *American Communities* (Chicago, 1902), 382.

regularities. In some cases there was a basis of truth to the charges. Whatever the truth might be, however, the charges were almost always made, and with a sense of outraged shock that seems to reveal a hint of fascination. In the North American Phalanx, marriage and intimate relations were conventional; nonetheless, rumors of wild goings on abounded.* There apparently were such goings on in the Woodcliff Community ("The Lord's Farm," not the neighboring town), despite the profession of celibacy by some of the communicants. Nothing could be done about them, because complete freedom and non-resistance were the rule.**

Nothing could be done within, that is. Without, the townspeople did a lot, again and again. It amounted to a local vigilante committee, rather than polite pressure, and ultimately it was successful in ridding the town of the unwanted intruders after about eighteen years. A local historian summed up the episode, revealing probably more than was intended:

About twenty years ago Woodcliff Lake gained an unenviable reputation from the settlement of a sect here called "Angel Dancers," wearing long hair and being very uncouth in appearance. They settled on a farm, and while not doing much farming, they indulged in so-called religious exercises that the wildest resident of this section had never dreamed of. Wide publicity was given to the matter, and as a result the people became so disgusted that they finally rid the community of the unwelcome band, after which Woodcliff Lake settled down once more to its former usual quietness, and has not since been disturbed by any more weird ceremonies, but some drastic measures were resorted to in order to accomplish the desired purpose.†

* Harold F. Wilson, "The North American Phalanx: An Experiment in Communal Living," *Proceedings of The New Jersey Historical Society*, LXX, No. 3, 193.

** Theodore Schroeder, "Anarchism and 'The Lord's Farm'; Record of a Social Experiment," *The Open Court*, XXXIII, No. 10, 589-607.

† Frances Westervelt (ed.), *History of Bergen County, New Jersey, 1630-1923* (New York and Chicago, 1923), III, 423.

Hard is the way of the man who is labeled "crackpot" by the American people. The history of utopias bulges with illustrations. One of the most graphic is the experience of the author and Socialist reformer Upton Sinclair and his Helicon Home Colony. This was another experiment which, although the actual date of founding was the fall of 1906, is still of the nineteenth century, in a certain historical sense.

Young Sinclair, one of the most zealous and astoundingly energetic of all utopians, was able to turn his ideas into reality as a result of the smashing financial success of his novel *The Jungle*. For several years he had been living on the narrowest of margins, making the barest of livings by his writings—practically all of it unmitigatedly Socialist—when the publication of his muckraking novel brought him suddenly into the public spotlight. That success had its rueful aspects. As Sinclair frequently has said, his account of the scandalous conditions prevailing in the Chicago meat-packing industry was meant to turn the nation's mind to the economic system (capitalism) which fostered such dreadfulness, and thence to another which would rectify the inequities. Instead, he turned the nation's stomach, as it were. The American public and its governmental officials, including President Theodore Roosevelt, read the book, were shocked, appalled, and sickened by what it revealed, and decided that, to be sure, something had to be done. And so with a maximum of fuss and flurry they provided—remedial legislation!

The royalty checks from the sale of *The Jungle* provided Sinclair with the opportunity to do something else for the uplifting of mankind, the only justifiable goal in his eyes. For as long as he remembered he had believed in cooperative living. Now he meant to do something about it.

He first wrote an article for the *Independent*, one of the leading journals of the time, which ran in June, 1906, setting forth his plans for a colony. He stressed the point that all work would be carried on in primitive fashion by unskilled hand labor. A series of lecture-meetings was then held. From the interested parties fifty

or sixty members were chosen, in a process which understandably enough was not easy. A stock company was formed.

Sinclair and his committee chose a site on the heights behind the Palisades overlooking Englewood. It had formerly been a boy's school, Helicon Hall, a name whose mythological associations could not have delighted Sinclair more. The area was rather a small one, the purchase price just over thirty thousand dollars. As the Helicon Home Colony, it commenced operations on November 1, 1906.

It survived less than half a year. Thus it came even more quickly than usual to the fate which befell earlier attempts to restore, or create, a Garden of Eden in America. Whatever other significance can be attached to it derives as much from the public response as from what transpired within the group itself. This was a period when the newspapers were noted, not for discretion or objectivity, but for sensationalism; their influential role in the Spanish-American War of a few years before was coming to be understood even then. "Yellow Journalism" was foursquare for house and home and all the conventional virtues. It handled those considered to be its enemies roughly, and it treated Sinclair as an enemy. As the current phrase would have it, he suffered from a "bad press."

Sinclair and the Helicon Home Colony offered an opening too inviting to resist. Proximity to New York City across the Hudson allowed a small army of reporters to visit Helicon, and they wrote about it as they pleased: usually with some distortion, often with outright falsity. The public's receptivity to accounts of sexual irregularities was exploited to the fullest in those days. In point of fact, the group's ideas and practices were not very radical in any sense, particularly in that regard. Yet, many a story was invented of lurid escapades, full of innuendo and misstatement. For example, the fact that a member who was a professor at Columbia University danced at a Saturday evening entertainment with the Irish dining-room girl constituted the

basis for the revelation of a "nest of free love." The presence of several academicians made the target even more enticing.

Among the friendlier guests, John Dewey visited the colony several times, as did his philosopher-colleague from Harvard, the eminent William James. They were warmly received, of course, as was the general rule. An exception was made in the case of Sadakichi Hartmann, whom it is impossible to classify as anything but a prominent Bohemian of the time. The sculptor Jo Davidson had brought him over in a state of roaring drunkenness. It was a situation which the food-faddist Sinclair, who abhorred alcohol and its effects, would not tolerate. Ordinarily kind to a fault, he turned Hartmann out, literally into the snow. The next day Hartmann fired off a furious letter to the newspapers which was gleefully printed.

A large percentage of the membership consisted of writers—either established or hopeful. Some of them subsequently carved out careers of distinction. Sinclair Lewis, fresh out of Yale, tended furnace and even more enthusiastically cultivated the acquaintance of Upton Sinclair's secretary, Edith Summers, whom he later married. The writer Allan Updegraff, also just out of college, and Michael Williams, later the first editor of the distinguished Catholic lay weekly *Commonweal*, were also members. Alexander Woollcott, chronicler of the writing, acting, and painting sets of the 1920's and 1930's, who as "Town Crier" of newspaper columns and radio deserved the title "personality," was another visitor. He was the grandson of John Bucklin of the North American Phalanx and had been born on the old Phalanx grounds. It was not a representative group, but one of real distinction.

As in the case of the North American Phalanx, fire proved the undoing of the Helicon Home Colony. Early in March, 1907, its building burned to the ground, killing one man. The blow was too much to withstand, although Sinclair and his committee thought seriously for a time of rebuilding. All debts were paid off, Sinclair had the

satisfaction of suing a newspaper for libel and receiving a printed retraction and apology, and then took himself and family off to Point Pleasant to begin work on a new novel.

"Free Acres," in Union County, was set up shortly after the turn of the century by adherents of the single-tax idea of Henry George. George's *Progress and Poverty* had considerable impact when it was published in 1879. Attacking the inequities which attended the scramble for wealth, he proposed the institution of one tax to replace all others, this to be based on the increase in value of land, an increase brought about by society at large, he held, rather than individual speculators. Free Acres was the fourth such colony to be established. Despite their failure and the several flaws that have been pointed out in George's reasoning, his single tax and other theories have maintained through the years a small band of followers.

Another branch of the radical protest was the "Nationalist" movement which came into existence following publication of Edward Bellamy's absorbing utopian novel *Looking Backward* in 1888. In it he described the world of the future, an ideal world posited on a scheme of state ownership and regulation—national socialism would be an accurate description but for the association of those terms with Hitler's Germany—in which all that transpired was based on Christian ethics. Just before and after the turn of the century thousands of enthusiasts tried to put Bellamy's ideas into practice. Eltmeed Pomeroy of New Jersey was chairman of a national organizing committee; New Jersey was one of 27 states which had Nationalist clubs.*

In retrospect much of this activity can be seen to have been hopelessly visionary, impractical, and even romantic. And it reflects all in all a certain restraint and quietude. The same cannot be said of radicalism in the more modern period.

* John Hope Franklin, "Bellamy and the Nationalist Movement," *New England Quarterly*, XI, 739; Fred Haynes, *Social Politics in the United States* (Boston and New York, 1924), Ch. VI.

IV

THE TWENTIETH CENTURY

IT WAS IN THE TWENTIETH CENTURY that radicalism took on the configuration of meanings that are usually associated with the term. In that configuration the laborer and organized labor in particular play roles of unique importance. Radical movements of most kinds have claimed, sincerely or not, to fight for justice and equality for all. Since hundreds of thousands of working men, women, and children suffered under harsh, substandard conditions, it was only natural for many radical schemes to center about them and their plight, as being most in need of justice and equality. The Communist Party, in its commitment to Marxism, looked on the proletariat as the group destined to bring about the inevitable ultimate revolution—inevitable and ultimate, that is, under the proper leadership. So it set about assuming control of the labor movement so as to mold the “class struggle” along Marxist lines. Similar efforts had been made even in the days prior to the formation of the Communist Party of the U.S.A. in 1919, when the Industrial Workers of the World and the Socialist Labor Party sought, not necessarily for strictly Marxian reasons, to establish themselves as the vanguard of revolution.

THE IWW IN NEW JERSEY

It happened that two episodes of signal importance in this phase of radicalism took place in New Jersey. Both

were strikes, both were long and bloody, both revealed some grave strains which then beset the country, and both signified much in the history of labor-management relations. In both, radical organizations attempted to use the situation in such a way as to give themselves power and leverage which, had they been successful, would have altered the history of the nation. The first was the Paterson silk workers' strike of 1912-1913, the second the Passaic textile strike of 1926.

For many years Paterson was known as the "Silk City" and the "Lyons of America." Its location, by the falls of the Passaic River, was ideal for manufacturing, and it served that purpose, in a rudimentary way, even when it was an Indian settlement. No less a person than Alexander Hamilton was, in a sense, the founder of the city. In his concern for the growth of a healthy, diversified economy, the first Secretary of the Treasury was in large part responsible both for one of the most meaningful documents of American history, the "Report on Manufactures," and for the Society for Establishing Useful Manufactures. As early as 1792, as part of his program of fostering industry, he had decided the site was ideal for a manufacturing center, and so it became.

By the latter part of the nineteenth century the area was a major textile-producing center, not of this country alone, but of the entire world. Like all other major industries, this one had its share of problems, two of which were severe competition, from New England and Pennsylvania mills as well as from abroad, and dissatisfied laborers. The problems were, of course, closely inter-related. The struggle to keep production costs as low as possible led to conditions as shocking as they were widespread: long hours, paltry wages, habitual use of child labor, and unsanitary and dangerous working conditions. In November, 1910, a Newark textile factory fire had resulted in 25 fatalities. Most of the workers were women who, in their panic and anguish, had leaped to their deaths. Tragic as this episode was, it served merely as a prelude to the Triangle Shirtwaist Factory fire in

New York City the following March, which took 146 lives and revealed even more dangerous conditions.

Jobs were precious, but few people were so cowed as to endure such circumstances indefinitely without protest. For years, in the "watershed" of the 1880's and 1890's discussed earlier, strikes had been breaking out in ever-increasing numbers, and with frightening frequency they led to violence. Workers were brought to desperation, and could not contain themselves in the face of that desperation. On the one side there was the influx of foreigners flooding the country, eager for work; on the other—what was frequently the last straw—the bringing in of strikebreakers, often protected by Pinkerton detectives and/or militia, to take their wretched pittance from them.

Few employers sympathized with the workers' plight or, if they did, took steps to improve it, although in fairness it should be noted that there were some. The situation in New Jersey textiles in the first decade of the twentieth century was just that which had prevailed decades before and has been described in the Introduction. History is, as has so often been said, a seamless web, moving but slowly from century to century, but moving it was, and coming to a grave crisis. Social Darwinism was still enthroned. Philosophers and political theorists such as Herbert Spencer and William Graham Sumner discoursed with learning on the relationship between the survival of the fittest in nature and the basically similar laws of economic competition. Translated with a minimum of refinement, it meant "Dog eat dog, and the devil take the hindmost." But it did not stop there; there was a glorification of the "top," therefore superior, dog. As for the hindmost, not even sympathy or soup kitchens; the race would ultimately be the better for their extinction. The unusual interest in race which existed then, including frequent reference to "superior" and "inferior" groups, was no coincidence.

The prevalent attitude is frequently illustrated by a statement of George F. Baer, the coal and railroad executive: "The rights and interests of the laboring man will

be cared for—not by the labor agitators, but by the Christian men to whom God in his infinite wisdom has given the control of the property interests in this country. . . .” John D. Rockefeller of Standard Oil is reputed to have put it more pithily: “God gave me my money.” * Lest one believe that such statements, made by partisans, are unrepresentative, there is another by the Reverend Henry Ward Beecher, neither tycoon nor laborer, but the most prominent minister of his time: “God intended the great to be great and the little to be little.” He remarked, too,

I do not say that a dollar a day is enough to support a working man. But it is enough to support a man. Not enough to support a man and five children if a man insists on smoking and drinking beer. . . . But the man who cannot live on bread and water is not fit to live.**

With some frequency the Supreme Court was called upon to judge specific aspects of the struggle, for example, the use of the injunction to prevent strikes, the police powers of the state, and the assessment of damages resulting from strikes. While there was much disagreement within the legal profession, the Court’s rulings for the most part were consistent with Social Darwinism. The provision of the Fourteenth Amendment, to the effect that a person’s property may not be taken from him without due process of law (a corporation was interpreted as a “person”), was often the legal basis for such decisions, which provoked Justice Oliver Wendell Holmes’ famous comment, in one of his many dissents: “The Fourteenth Amendment does not enact Mr. Herbert Spencer’s *Social Statics*.” †

* William Jennings Bryan, then a young Democratic Congressman from Nebraska, is reported to have said, when informed of this statement, “Yes, and I hope he’ll let the rest of us have some when he’s through with it.”

** Quoted in Foster Rhea Dulles, *Labor in America* (New York, 1960), 122.

† Arnold M. Paul, *Conservative Crisis and the Rule of Law* (Ithaca, 1960) ably analyzes the thinking of the Court and the leading lawyers of the time.

The result of this labor-management battle was a condition disturbingly close to civil war. The Haymarket Massacre of 1886 in Chicago; the "Cripple Creek War" in Colorado; the Homestead Massacre in Pennsylvania; the Pullman strike in Illinois, all these and more are the background to the Paterson and Passaic strikes. Casualties were high, in and out of the picket lines. Ten of the Molly Maguires, a secret organization of Pennsylvania coal miners, were executed for murder in 1876. There was a typical incident in Paterson in 1902, set off by a riot of striking workers which did several thousand dollars worth of property damage. A British Socialist, William MacQueen, who had addressed a strike meeting, was arrested, tried, and sentenced to three years and two years imprisonment on two charges, inciting to riot and malicious mischief.*

Naturally, this bitter protest began to crystallize into specific forms. One type of American radicalism was based on opposition to capitalism, a concentration on the grievances of the workers, and the demand for state ownership of the means of production and distribution of goods and services; or, in one word, socialism. From an early date, several American political groups focused on this situation, taking European experience, which had followed much the same pattern of development, as a guide. As early as the 1870's there were labor troubles in Newark and Paterson in which the newly-founded Socialist Labor Party was active. Their newspaper was published in Newark, its name, *Vorwaerts*, reflecting the German background of its sponsors.** The first national convention of the Socialist Labor Party was held in that city at the end of 1877.

The unbendingly doctrinaire stance of its leader, Daniel DeLeon, led to a split in 1901, with a large segment breaking away from DeLeon's Socialist Laborites

* Alfred Wishart, *The Case of William MacQueen* (Trenton, 1905). New Jersey Collections, Box HM, Rutgers University Library.

** Morris Hillquit, *History of Socialism in the United States* (New York and London, 1910), 203-205.

and their adherence to European precedents to form the Socialist Party. In the enormous barrage of words that accompanied the event, a central issue is discernible: whether or not a policy of dual unionism should be followed; that is, whether the existing labor movement should be ignored and a separate structure built (thus, a system of dual unions), or whether there should be opportunistic "boring from within" of the existing unions. DeLeon favored dual unionism. There was much concern also over the question of industrial unionism—the incorporation of all workers, skilled or unskilled, manual or office labor, into one big union along vertical lines—particularly since at that time the American Federation of Labor was very much an association of trade unions organized with some autonomy along horizontal lines, which, furthermore, largely ignored the unskilled immigrant worker.

In September, 1905, a group known as the New Jersey Socialist Unity Conference held the first of a series of meetings that extended until March, 1906, in Orange, Paterson, West Hoboken, and Newark. It went on record as supporting industrial unionism, but did not stop there. The majority also passed a resolution commending the Industrial Workers of the World, which, "instead of running away from the class struggle bases itself squarely on it." The stage was being set for the important and troublesome events which followed shortly thereafter.

The very mention of the IWW, or the "Wobblies," had a spine-chilling effect on many people of the day. The organization had been formally organized at a Chicago convention in 1905. It was considered a conglomeration of left-wing radicalisms, becoming immediately "... a battle ground for the political philosophies of Marxism, anarchism, craftism, 'pure and simple' industrialism, DeLeonism and syndicalism..." * The marathon verbal wrangles revealed also a trace of Bellamy's Nationalism

* Theresa Wolfson and Abraham Weiss, *Industrial Unionism in the American Labor Movement* (New York, 1937), 17.

tenets. Amidst all these threads, what counted most, without doubt, was that the IWW meant to lead the way to a workers' paradise on earth, and meant to do it without delay, without recourse to legal or political procedures, with force and violence. There was even a tendency to glorify and romanticize violence, which the political scientist John P. Roche has very recently noted as a point of resemblance to fascism—one more example of the coming-together of the Left and Right extremes.*

One of the founders of the IWW was DeLeon; another was Eugene V. Debs, first of the American Railway Union, then of the Socialist Party (whose influence, incidentally, was on behalf of non-violence). The principal leader in every respect was William D. "Big Bill" Haywood, the aggressive and resourceful miner from Montana. It is safe to say that no organization in the history of the country has been subjected to more vilification and distortion than the IWW, but there was reason to fear it. Beset though the organization was by bickerings and factional disputes, it asserted an unequivocal belief in class conflict straightway in the preamble to its constitution:

The working class and the employing class have nothing in common. . . . Between them a struggle must go on until all toilers come together, on the political as well as the industrial field, and take and hold that which they produce by their labor through an economic organization of the working class without affiliation with any political party.

Haywood's record, first as head of the Western Federation of Miners and later directing the IWW, was such as to present him to the public as the very epitome of all that was dangerous in radicalism. Although the latter organization probably never enlisted more than sixty thousand members, it had an effect far greater than its size would lead one to expect. In the very first year of its existence, local chapters were established in Paterson

* John P. Roche, *The Quest for the Dream* (New York, 1963), 53.

and Jersey City, which then participated in silk workers' strikes in Trenton and Staten Island.*

The first major undertaking of the IWW in the East came with the strike of twenty thousand textile workers in Lawrence, Massachusetts in 1912. It came about to a considerable extent because of what might be termed the default of the AF of L. The strikers, mostly immigrants, turned eventually to Haywood and his lieutenant, Joseph Ettor, who took over direction of the strike with real sympathy for the downtrodden and with no little cleverness. Certain writers believe that that cleverness was aided by the essential irresponsibility of the IWW, in that its purpose was more the stirring up of class-consciousness and discontent than the practical improvement of conditions, thus leaving it much room for maneuvering. Its tactics were "hit and run," or so it was charged. Above all, the reaction of the authorities played into the hands of the strikers. Management and the local police quickly resorted to repressive measures, in keeping with the paternalistic attitude mentioned above. When the IWW arranged to send the children of the strikers out of the city to sympathizers elsewhere, the authorities found themselves in the position of attempting, unsuccessfully, to stop the exodus. At the same time, a large cache of dynamite was "discovered" by a Lawrence businessman, and the charge was immediately made of "typical" IWW terrorism. But soon a new and this time legitimate discovery was made, that the dynamite had been placed by the selfsame businessman in an attempt to "frame" the strikers. The result was a quick shift in public opinion, in Lawrence and elsewhere, and before long the strike was settled on terms favorable to the workers.

Vastly encouraged, the IWW moved into Paterson. By 1913, estimates of the capital invested in that city's silk industry reached \$26,447,000. Approximately twenty-two thousand employees whose payroll totaled \$8,872,000 a

* Paul F. Brissenden, *The I.W.W.: A Study of American Syndicalism* (New York, 1920), 123-124; 134.

year produced goods valued at about \$46,000,000 per year. In contrast, average annual wages per employee ran around four hundred dollars per year. This figure was typical of the entire industry, nationally. The problem was exacerbated by technological improvements; the factories had introduced in 1911 the three- and four-loom system which enabled one worker to supervise output on several looms at the same time, thus reducing unit costs. There were desultory attempts by the United Textile Workers of America, an AF of L affiliate, to improve conditions, but they met with little success. A strike in 1912 of workers in from eighty to one hundred of the city's silk mills was resolved by increased pay for most of the workers.*

At the beginning of February, 1913, the Chicago faction of the IWW,** led by Haywood, called a strike against the Henry Doherty Company mills in Paterson. By the end of the month the walkout had become a general strike. Eight thousand weavers and dyers demanded re-establishment of the two-loom system, an eight-hour day, and a minimum wage of twelve dollars a week for all dye workers. For five months production was stopped, and the city was like a battleground. Into the area came most of the leading lights of American radicalism, Elizabeth Gurley Flynn, John Reed, Margaret Sanger, the fiery anarchist Carlo Tresca, and Upton Sinclair (who was not affiliated in any way with the IWW). The strike leadership was notably successful in enlisting the enthusiastic devotion of the workers, who had for so long been ignored. They were magnetic speakers, spellbinders, who responded warmly to an adoring crowd. Haywood promised that the strike would continue "until hell freezes over, and then it will be fought on the ice." Eventually, "There will be a wonderful dining room . . .

* John R. Commons (ed.), *History of Labor in the United States* (New York, 1935), IV, 274.

** A split had occurred in 1908, with the "rump" DeLeonite group holding its convention in Paterson. Subsequently it set up headquarters in Detroit.

your digestion will be aided by sweet music. . . . Your work chairs will be morris chairs, so that . . . you may relax in comfort." When the factory owners decked their places of business with American flags, the appeal to patriotism became a stirring cry to the workers, all the more effective since most of the flags had been made right in Paterson: "We wove the flag; we dyed the flag; we live under the flag; but we won't scab under the flag!"

Both sides were intransigent. The attitude of the employers was in every way typical of the times. Wages and working conditions were their province, theirs alone. Any change was flatly inconceivable. Even a more conciliatory union than the IWW could scarcely have hoped for a different reception, and the IWW did not believe in compromise. Emma Goldman, loved and respected by so many of the radicals, none the less formidable for all her motherly warmth, offered the counsel, along with some extreme anarchists, that it was not militant enough.

How else, then, were the employers to react, considering the prevalent climate of opinion, when faced with such statements as this, made by Haywood at the outset of the strike:

We will have a new flag, an international flag. . . . We will have the flags of every nation, dip them in a common dye pot. . . . Then you will get a flag of one color—the red flag, the color of the working man's blood. Under that we will march.*

One manufacturer, not panicked by talk of class conflict and generalized threats, and not at all oblivious to the workers' conditions, indicated that under different circumstances he would have been willing at least to discuss matters. Not now, however. "These people [the IWW leaders] say . . . they will not be bound by any agreement and will continue to strike again and again until they own the mills." **

There was sufficient basis for such a statement. The

* *New York Times*, March 11, 1913.

** *New York Times*, April 13, 1913.

IWW did conceive of the employers as a well-organized, resourceful, and unscrupulous enemy class which might be countered only by a similarly organized, skillfully led, and not necessarily scrupulous union of workers. If that enemy, in its greed for power and profit, used tricky tactics, might not the IWW be justified in resorting to whatever means at its disposal? Many modifying nuances existed, too. The IWW had its share of internal dissension and irresolution. There was a less passionate, more moderate faction at work. Furthermore, it should be remembered that the great bulk of the contemporary accounts of the organization are not objective, some of them being completely farfetched. Certain authorities contend that a more lenient interpretation of its practices is not only possible but probably more accurate. One case in point concerns what the IWW referred to as the "withdrawal of efficiency." This was one method of combating the power of the employers. The phrase was usually regarded in the press as a euphemism for "sabotage," meaning the use of dynamite, sand in the machinery, and other destructive methods of stopping work. To many others it meant merely a slowdown, a refusal to devote full effort to the job.

Another compelling reason manufacturers and other businessmen behaved as highhandedly as they did was the obvious attraction which the mainly foreign-born, usually illiterate workers (and in Paterson a sizable Negro contingent, too) felt for the IWW. Comment after comment made by the property-holders indicates that they regarded such people quite simply as unworthy of any consideration, not really "people" at all. Yet, they existed, and in large numbers. Now passive, could they conceivably be turned into a huge destructive force? That thought doubtless generated a lot of fear.

The question of how loyal the workers of Lawrence, Paterson, and elsewhere were to the IWW as an organization is moot. That thousands were attracted to it is beyond doubt. They had little or nothing to lose, everything to gain. More than likely, however, the fear of the

IWW's leading a mass movement to its ideal society was much exaggerated. Probably most of the strikers were little interested in abstraction and prescriptions for the ultimate society. Their make-up must have included an ample share of skepticism; the chances of changing the world were small. They were in distress, though; men such as Haywood had a genuine warmth and interest in them, whatever other impulses may also have been operative—indeed, Haywood was in so many ways one of them. The IWW promised some alleviation of their misery. That was sufficient to win their support.

The city fathers were caught in a terribly difficult situation. As Paterson was a major industrial city, concentrating on a product in which there was the most intense competition, the authorities were anxious to defend their homes and reputations against the incursions of subversives. In the nineteenth century both the National Labor Union and the Knights of Labor had been active in Paterson, and there was extraordinary sensitivity on the issue of potential labor radicalism. The Board of Aldermen quickly proposed the formation of a strike settlement committee, to be composed of an equal number of strikers, employers, and aldermen. The mill owners as quickly rejected the suggestion. The townspeople were embarrassed by all the publicity—especially since the city already had had some publicity as the residence of certain Italian-born anarchists—and by the large number of pro-striker writers and other observers who poured into the area. Tempers rose on all sides, a development for which the press bears some share of the responsibility; as in the case of the Helicon Home Colony, it was an easy matter for New York City journalists of all stripes to come over and cover a big story. The Socialist Patrick Quinlan made a speech about the strike in Union Square, during the course of which he said, as the *New York Times* reported more than halfway down the column:

. . . we are going to win this strike or Paterson will be wiped

off the map. If the strike is not won, Paterson will be a howling wilderness and a graveyard industrially because the workers will not stay here.

Ignoring the all-important qualifier and the reasoning, the *Times* headlined the account:

QUINLAN THREATENS TO FINISH PATERSON.

WE'LL WIN THE SILK STRIKE OR

"WIPE THE CITY OFF THE MAP,"

HE SAYS IN UNION SQUARE.*

Local police were particularly hard pressed. As law-enforcement officers, they are entrusted with the responsibility of keeping peace and order; hence the very act of a strike, no matter how orderly, is bound to seem provocative—rather, was bound then to seem provocative. The existing statutes were predicated on more stable times. They did not envision quite the type of situation which developed at Paterson—and at Chicago, Pittsburgh, Homestead, Centralia, and many other places where major strikes erupted. It was not until well into the 1930's that statute-making drew abreast of these problems. And that decade, too, was ridden with strife, for which there were no clear legal controls, as those who remember the Republic Steel strike and the attempt to organize Ford Motor Company employees will attest.

The authorities were forced to rely upon disturbance of the peace ordinances. These, while necessary beyond doubt, are by their very nature subject to "overenforcement," to the detriment of free speech. This is what happened in New Jersey. A law had been passed, as in many states in the aftermath of the assassination of President McKinley, outlawing the advocacy of "criminal anarchy." At a mass meeting held shortly after the strike began, Elizabeth Gurley Flynn and Carlo Tresca were arrested just after they finished their speeches. Only a few weeks before, during another strike in New York City, the newspapers had learned that the two, separated but

* *New York Times*, May 18, 1913.

not divorced from their respective spouses, were living together. So private scandal now provided an additional fillip to the general uproar. Patrick Quinlan, arriving tardily, was arrested as he came down the aisle toward the platform. Chief of Police Bimson conceded that there had been no disorder—indeed virtually all observers agreed that the strike was a remarkably peaceful one, considering the number of workers involved, the issues, and the pitch of feelings—but justified the action as “preventative medicine.” The attractive appearance of Mrs. Flynn and Haywood sincerely puzzled Bimson, and he asked, “What are you two doing with all these foreigners?” * Mayor Andrew F. McBride supported the chief at this time, and again soon thereafter when several of the strikers’ meeting halls were closed. At that time he said simply, “The strikers gave all the [legal] justification necessary by their actions,” and did not expatiate. When the trustees of the Unitarian Church in neighboring Hackensack voted to allow Tresca and Mrs. Flynn to speak in their church if they were refused permission to use the streets, Hackensack Police Chief Dunn warned that the two would still be liable to arrest, even there, if the speeches were inflammatory. Alexander Scott, editor of the Socialist weekly, the *Passaic Issue*, was arrested when he excoriated the Paterson officials in general and Bimson in particular, using the word “anarchists” frequently and bitterly in attacking them. The charge was violation of the “criminal anarchy” law, for printing matter “with intent to incite, promote or encourage hostility or opposition to or the subversion or destruction of any or all government.”

The response was by no means completely antagonistic, however. The *Newark Sunday Call* went on record claiming that the strikers’ demands were in many respects just. The *Outlook* magazine, which listed ex-President Theodore Roosevelt as a contributing editor,

* Elizabeth Gurley Flynn, *I Speak My Own Piece* (New York, 1955), 147.

severely criticized the indictment of Alexander Scott; the *Outlook* did not believe that Scott's words, while certainly wrathful, were necessarily an incitement to anarchy. An article in the *Survey* picked up Scott's point, and in calmer tones suggested that before the strikers were assumed to be flouting the law, it would be well to see that law-enforcement officers were not themselves guilty of the practice.* The neighboring town of Haledon, with its socialist mayor William Bruckman, provided the workers and their leaders a friendly and much-needed haven. Bruckman cautioned the strikers to avoid open conflict, and offered facilities for holding mass meetings. For his magnanimity he was subjected to severe and damaging political attacks. John Reed, the young Harvard graduate who was to gain fame and no little notoriety in the Communist Party later, wrote several sympathetic articles about the strike for *American* magazine. He also conceived the idea for a labor pageant which was held in June in the old Madison Square Garden. It was well advertised and, with the assistance of many professional performers, was both a commercial and a theatrical success. To the IWW, however, it was a mixed blessing; while it elicited much sympathy for the cause, the cast of more than a thousand did take time off from the picket lines and meetings to attend rehearsals. Elizabeth Gurley Flynn notes with the sorrow of a disappointed zealot: "Jealousies arose as to who could go to New York." ** In May a victory of sorts was won when the State Supreme Court authorized a change of venue in the trial of Haywood, Tresca, Flynn, and Adolph Lessig for disorderly conduct and inciting to riot. Justice Minturn wrote: "The Court [is] of the opinion that a fair . . . trial of the . . . defendants cannot . . . be had before a jury . . . of the County of Passaic." It was the

* John Fitch, "The I.W.W. An Outlaw Organization," *Survey*, June, 1913, 362.

** Elizabeth Gurley Flynn, *I Speak My Own Piece* (New York, 1955), 156.

first time in thirty years that such a change had been granted in Paterson.

Despite these strenuous efforts and others, which included the sending off of many children to affluent benefactors—a humanitarian tactic which was not so effective an appeal as it had been at Lawrence, possibly because it was not opposed by the police—the strike failed of most of its purposes. Patrons, funds, and morale began to run short, although the fact that they had been sustained for nearly half a year was an achievement. In addition to the usual internal squabbling the IWW was beset by some difficulty with various interlopers who were seeking to establish reputations or gain experience. The first big break came when the Summit Mills, located near Paterson, agreed to an eight-hour day and a 25 to 35 per cent wage increase, on condition that the workers withdraw their insistence on recognition of the IWW. By early June the movement back to work was general. On July 7, Haywood told an audience at Cooper Union in New York City that the remaining strikers were starving. Meetings between shop committees and the employers were held regularly, and by the end of July the strike was to all purposes over. Most of the workers settled for much more modest improvements than Summit Mills had granted, while many returned to exactly the same conditions and wages they had left months before.

In many ways the strike was costly. Five persons had died and scores more had been injured. Almost twenty-five hundred persons had been arrested, three hundred were held for the grand jury, and more than one hundred served prison terms.* Most estimates placed losses in wages to the strikers at about five million five hundred thousand dollars, in income to the mill owners at ten million dollars. Patrick Quinlan was sentenced to serve from two to seven years in prison. Alexander Scott was

* Selig Perlman and Philip Taft, *Labor Movements*, Volume IV of John R. Commons and others, *History of Labour in the United States* (New York, 1918-1935), 555.

convicted and received a sentence of from one to fifteen years, but the New Jersey Supreme Court on appeal reversed the trial court. Hung juries necessitated retrials of Flynn and Tresca, but both were acquitted in 1915 by juries from Hudson County. Haywood and Reed were in and out of jail, but were released quickly. It can scarcely be said that calm returned with the settlement of the Paterson strike. The IWW lost as much prestige as it had gained by its spectacular victory in Lawrence.

The historian David Shannon believes that the IWW, along with the Socialist Party, represented the high tide of American radicalism.* Neither organization realized its main ambitions, neither became a major force in American life as such. Nevertheless, the influence of each was over the long run significant. Particularly as regards labor, the IWW performed a service—in a bludgeoning fashion, it is true—in awakening the country to a condition which cried out for justice, and it demonstrated the possibilities of organizing large numbers of voiceless, downtrodden, and divided workers into an effective union.

THE RED MENACE

In the ensuing several years, labor-management relations continued to be a sensitive issue in New Jersey, and one in which radicals repeatedly involved themselves.

There were other issues, of course. One was the Red Scare, which swept the country in 1919 and carried over into 1920. It was a national phenomenon which affected all states to one degree or other. It is now regarded, as it came to be very soon afterward, as one of the most unsavory developments in the country's history. When one speaks of hysterical aberrations, this is the example par excellence. It arose not out of thin air but from a certain basis for concern; the Bolshevik take-over in Russia at the end of 1917, the open proclamations or the revealing

* David Shannon, *Twentieth Century America* (Chicago, 1963), 85.

of secret pledges of loyalty to the Soviet Union by hundreds of Communists in other countries, and a wave of bombings in New York City and elsewhere were facts which could not be blinked away.

To these events must be added the intense pitch of idealism with which the United States had entered and fought the war, the cruelly abrupt deflation of hopes for "a world made safe for democracy," and the widespread unemployment following immediately on the heels of the cessation of hostilities and mass demobilization. Nor do these factors exhaust the list; political ambition was another ingredient to be reckoned with, in particular that of Attorney General A. Mitchell Palmer of President Woodrow Wilson's cabinet, whose nickname, the "Fighting Quaker," reveals some of the curious twists of the time.*

The crusade to rid the country of Bolsheviks and their sympathizers got out of hand quickly. During the war 166 IWW members had been arrested for violation of the Espionage Act of 1917. A much smaller number were convicted. Now, law-enforcement officials and tens of thousands of self-appointed deputies showed themselves unable to distinguish among Bolsheviks, Socialists, anarchists, syndicalists, and various and sundry other radicals; the person who believed in the right of free speech for all and said so was likely to find himself in grave trouble. Before long the campaign collapsed of its own grotesquery—and lack of evidence.

New Jersey was caught up in the dragnet. There were five hundred arrests in the State in 1919, as suspects were rounded up in Jersey City, Newark, Passaic, Hoboken, Paterson, Trenton, and several other locations.** Often the suspects were seized without warrant. Some were detained several days and nights on unspecified charges, under miserable conditions. The great majority of the five hundred were quickly released, however. One man

* Stanley Coben, *A. Mitchell Palmer: Politician* (New York, 1963).

** Robert Murray, *Red Scare* (Minneapolis, 1955), 215.

was arrested by Federal agents as he walked along Charlton Street in Newark, because "he looked like a radical," * another when he stopped to inquire what the commotion was all about. In New Brunswick, a Socialist club was raided, and practically everything in it was seized. Drawings of a phonograph, on which one of the members was working, were sent in a great rush to demolition experts on the assumption they depicted the internal mechanism of bombs. Several "bombs" picked up in the same area turned out to be bowling balls. The Red Scare was a manifestation of weakness, not of strength. The *Newark News* was one of the few newspapers in the country which had the perspicacity and courage to oppose its excesses while they were occurring.**

Within the state—as opposed to the nation—all this was by way of a very brief, diversionary sortie. The problems of labor continued to offer real opportunity to radicals. Other types of radicalism were developing and coming to the fore, too. Strikes continued, meanwhile, to present immense difficulties.

In the summer of 1915, a mass walkout hit the huge Bayonne works of the Standard Oil Company of New Jersey. The usual grievances were cited, in addition to which many of these jobs involved danger to health and life itself. The local sheriff strove to uphold order by conciliatory means. He exerted himself to be fair, even after his suggestion that the company submit the dispute to arbitration had been rejected. As usual, blood was shed, and five men lost their lives.

The directors of the firm were adamant throughout. As the company's sympathetic biographers point out, they had not concerned themselves with working conditions, and the foremen and supervisors who held that responsibility had permitted those conditions to become highly unpleasant. The directors likewise were convinced that the strike had been fomented by professional agita-

* Robert Murray, *Red Scare* (Minneapolis, 1955), 215.

** Robert Murray, *Red Scare* (Minneapolis, 1955), 218.

tors, and they wrote to associates that they had confidential information to this effect.* What that information was has never been revealed. While there was possibly substance to it, particularly in the context of those times, there is also the chance, given the tendency of embattled men to exaggerate, that these professional agitators had little influence. Some such attempts were in the open; the radical *New York Call*, for example, tried to make this their cause,** with a lack of results that was nearly complete.

In a few weeks the strikers reached the limit of their resources and returned to their jobs. The following year another strike broke out, and in the ensuing clashes three men were killed. By this time the management of the Standard Oil Company was coming awake to the necessity of improved conditions and improved liaison between different levels of employees, and many changes were made. Thus, while Standard of New Jersey remained a prime target of Populist, Progressive, and Socialist reformers and also of many of the radicals with regard to its size and certain of its business operations, its labor force from this point onward was no happy hunting ground for radical movements.

Textiles continued to be the sick man of American industry. As a symptom of that illness, strikes continued to break out sporadically during the years of World War I. A major one developed spontaneously in March, 1915, in the great woollens center of Passaic and its environs. It began in the Forstmann & Huffman mills, and quickly spread to others. Now there were additional arguments the workers could use, the increased profits derived from war contracts, and the fact that several of the mills had German connections. By this time the country was concentrating on other affairs and the ethical basis of the latter charge was dubious; the only notable result was

* George S. Gibb and Evelyn Knowlton, *History of the Standard Oil Company (New Jersey)* (New York, 1956), II, 148.

** George S. Gibb and Evelyn Knowlton, *History of the Standard Oil Company (New Jersey)* (New York, 1956), II, 146.

the formation of a sort of employers' union, the Industrial Council of Passaic Wool Manufacturers. Its function was to serve as an information exchange and to standardize wage-and-hour scales in the member mills. It offered obvious possibilities for the drawing up of an effective "blacklist" of undesirable employees, a practice that was one of the foremost bogies of the labor movement.

Organizing the workers proved more difficult. Although the IWW was moribund in the East by the end of the Great War, some of its former or current members, along with some Socialists, helped to form the Amalgamated Textile Workers of America. The ATWA was straightforward in its radicalism, proclaiming that production for the market rather than for social need was outdated, and that workers' control of industry was both logical and inevitable. It dissolved in one year, after A. J. Muste and other officials postponed a worker-approved strike.*

With the founding of the Communist—first called the Workers'—Party, the Socialists came to another crossroads. There had been many others: in 1900-1901, when the Socialist Party with Eugene Debs, Morris Hillquit, and Victor Berger split off from the DeLeonite Socialist Labor group; another schism in 1913 when Haywood and the "actionist revolutionaries" were ousted, a victory which was costly in terms of membership; then the dilemma of whether or not to support this country's entry into the war. The latter choice was to cost Debs a term in federal prison for continuing to make speeches opposing that entry even after war had been declared. A jail cell was Debs' place of residence when he received almost nine hundred twenty thousand votes for the Presidency in 1920 (the Socialist Labor Candidate received just over thirty-one thousand). Hillquit, running for mayor of New York in 1917, received close to one

* This information, as well as most of the material on the Passaic strike of 1926, is taken from Morton Siegel's excellent doctoral thesis, "The Passaic Strike of 1926" (Columbia University, 1952), 116.

hundred fifty thousand votes, evidence of a substantial following.

Both the Socialist Party and the Communist (Workers') Party, when it was formed in 1919, were agreed that the position of the working man was, all in all, deplorable, and that elevating him from his downtrodden status was the foremost task confronting them. As to what specific means were to bring about this goal, there agreement ended, and dissension reigned. Men such as John Reed, William Z. Foster, Benjamin Gitlow, Jay Lovestone, and Charles Ruthenberg spent countless hours debating the topic, as the scholars of this radicalism of the Left have recounted ably. In evidence throughout was the fatal flaw: the tendency of the Communist, and to a much lesser extent the Socialist movements, "to shape itself, slavishly and mechanically, in the image of European Bolshevism. . . ." The approach was sectarian, "violently out of rhythm with social developments in America." *

The split between Communists and Socialists became definite as the submissiveness of the former to the "party line" from Moscow became unmistakable. For example: several individual members of the party had attacked with scorn and vituperation the "boring from within" approach to unionism, particularly Foster when he established the Trade Union Educational League in an attempt to unify dissident elements. But when Lenin, in 1921, issued a pamphlet endorsing just this tactic, the chorus of opposition suddenly and dutifully changed its tune. Benjamin Gitlow is not always a reliable source, but his account rings true when he writes, "This about face was not caused by any change of conditions in our country, but was instituted for the sake of consistency with Russian internal policy." ** The Socialists were free from this connection. Despite this critical difference, both groups were radical; both aimed their efforts at labor, partly out of a desire to help, partly as a test of strength.

* Irving Howe and Lewis Coser, *The American Communist Party* (Boston, 1957), 28.

** Benjamin Gitlow, *I Confess* (New York, 1939), 334.

THE PASSAIC STRIKE

By the end of World War I New Jersey had become one of the most highly industrialized states in the union. Its labor force was still very restless, a condition clearly shown in the national statistics: 175 strikes recorded in the country in March, 1919, 248 in April, by May, 388.* The great steel strike and the Seattle general strike were particularly vicious. The entire decade of the 1920's was strife-ridden in this respect.

The Amalgamated Textile Workers had accomplished nothing in New Jersey. Another 1919 attempt to organize, by the Independent Union of Industrial Workers of the Textile Industry of Passaic and Vicinity, quickly fell to pieces after it led a brief strike of three thousand workers. The silk workers of Paterson went out in August, then went back, having accomplished nothing. The challenge to the young, idealistic reformers of the time was irresistible. One result was the first major strike led entirely by Communists, that which broke out in Passaic in 1926.

The city had been the subject of considerable scrutiny aimed at improving conditions there. Attempts had been made along that line: a law which went into effect at the beginning of 1925 prohibited night work for women, another made half-hour lunch periods mandatory, but they lacked the machinery for adequate enforcement. The State undertook a serious investigation, modeled after Frances Kellor's Committee for Immigrants in America in New York, designed to aid in understanding and improving the immigrants' lot.** Obviously, however, a great deal remained to be done. As Justine Waterman Wise, daughter of Rabbi Stephen Wise, reported in several influential articles in the *World* and the *Independent* based on close study, low wages necessitated wives' working either alongside husbands or on different shifts, to

* Robert Murray, *Red Scare* (Minneapolis, 1955), 111.

** John Higham, *Strangers in the Land* (New Brunswick, 1955), 241.

the neglect of their pregnancies or children. A New Jersey Department of Health report for 1925 noted that the infant death rate in Passaic was markedly higher than in the rest of the state. The woolen workers comprised more than half the total population. Most of them were immigrants from Eastern and Central Europe, with over one-half their number coming from Poland, Russia, and Hungary. Their housing, living, and working conditions were substandard. The average wage for most of the workers in Passaic mills was then less than eleven hundred dollars per year.

More than sixteen thousand persons worked in mills within the Passaic city limits. Thousands more worked in the neighboring towns of Clifton, Garfield, and Lodi. The Botany Worsted mills were the largest, employing sixty-four hundred persons and covering over one hundred acres. Forstmann & Huffman mills employed about four thousand, while Passaic Worsted and Spinning, Gero Mills, New Jersey Worsted and Spinning, and Dundee Textile employed another thirty-three hundred. Their product was fine woolens used chiefly for women's dresses, coats, hats, and suits. Not only was the business a highly competitive one; it was also subject to continual fluctuations caused by the erratic changes in styles which frequently caught firms with huge inventories on hand, unsalable and worthless. Furthermore, the general trend showed woolen garments losing out steadily in favor of those made of cotton.

Botany Mills announced a 10 per cent wage cut in the fall of 1925, explaining that only in that way could they maintain their position and keep all their employees working. When the cuts were put into effect at the beginning of 1926, walkouts ensued on a broad scale. The United Textile Workers of the AF of L having remained apathetic, possibly due as much to recognition of the insuperable odds against successful organizing as to lack of interest, the possibilities for assuming leadership were great.

At its fourth national convention in 1925, the Workers'

(Communist) Party passed a resolution urging the unionization of textile workers. As to how this was to be accomplished, the familiar problem, there followed a marvel of hedging: by strengthening existing organizations and by creating new unions where none existed. Here was the opportunity to put beliefs to the test, to achieve something truly noteworthy.

Two bodies that were really one quickly appeared on the scene to fill the vacuum. Both were agencies of the Communist Party, one the Textile Committee of the Party's Central Executive Committee, headed by Gitlow, the other the United Front Textile Committee of Textile Workers of Passaic and Vicinity (UFC) guided by Albert Weisbord. Lines of authority between the two were badly blurred, due in part to the inevitable personality clash between Gitlow and Weisbord. The latter had graduated in 1924 from the Harvard Law School after studying at the City College of New York. In the same year he joined the Communists, moving over from the Socialists. His zeal for improving the lot of the textile laborers was sincere; for at least a year prior to the outbreak of the strike he had been working as a silk weaver in Paterson, while organizing a United Front Committee built around a nucleus of Communist Party members there and elsewhere in New Jersey. He hoped to establish a new, strong union.

As soon as the wage cuts were effected at Botany Mills, a committee of 45 workers belonging to the United Front Committee presented to the management a demand for restoration of the cut, for time-and-a-half for overtime, and for recognition of the UFC. Botany's response was to discharge the committee, whereupon 5000 employees walked off the job. The strike spread quickly to other mills; new demands were added, including a 44-hour week, sanitary working conditions, and no discrimination in rehiring, and just as quickly rejected.

Again the familiar pattern emerged of a long drawn-out, intensely and viciously fought struggle. In all, fifteen thousand or sixteen thousand men were on strike. In-

junctions were used, and, when that was not completely effective, the authorities brought to bear clubs, hoses, tear gas, and even guns. This was done when picketing was attempted despite a prohibiting order issued by Passaic's Commissioner of Public Safety Abram Preiskel. Across the river in Bergen County conditions were equally tough. The violence was not confined to management by any means; each side used the weapons at its disposal, and if one array was more formidable than the other, this was because it represented the status quo. Commissioner Preiskel could not regard with equanimity Weisbord's charge that he had become rich dealing in mill remnants on a favored basis. Weisbord orchestrated his theme that the owners controlled this, that, and the other official with no little richness and ingenuity. When the Forstmann-Huffman mills, which had a company union, closed down to save its employees from alleged threats by the United Front Committee, they were picketed by men in army uniforms bearing signs attacking the Kaiser in America and the aforementioned connections with German interests. Whether or not the pickets were in fact veterans is another moot point.

In any clash between the established order and radical forces, violence tends to breed and feed upon violence. "To win" gives way to "fight back." Weisbord had cautioned the men not to use force; nevertheless, the homes of several non-strikers were bombed, and there were numerous beatings.

The fight was not, nor could it be, an even one. But as time went on, an interesting response manifested itself, a sympathy for the underdog which probably would have been impossible a generation before. And it did not emanate from the "radical" and "liberal" journals. In April the headquarters of the United Front Committee—located in the same building as the Communist Party local, a less than brilliant stroke—was raided and papers were seized without warrant. Weisbord was arrested and charged with having advocated hostility to government and violence at specified times, for having attended a

Communist-sponsored meeting six months before, and for having introduced Bertram Wolfe of the Party at a meeting in February. The arrest was made on the basis of the same statute under whose provisions Alexander Scott had been convicted, Section One, Chapter 33, New Jersey Laws, the Criminal Anarchy Statute of 1902. The rumor was spread that Weisbord was the recipient of \$200,000 of Moscow gold, that the strike leaders were being paid high salaries from general relief funds (there is truth to this charge, although it is doubtful that the salaries were very high); then as a last straw, Weisbord was brought into court again on a \$50,000 breach-of-promise accusation.

None of the charges, including the last, which presumably was designed to prove Communist immorality in personal relationships, was ever proven and the suits eventually were dismissed. The strategy being used against him became perfectly clear when the bail was set inordinately high on one charge, \$25,000, then on another when he was re-arrested for another violation, the hope being that he would be kept in jail and the strike would be broken. Even such a proper aristocrat as Bainbridge Colby, a former secretary of state, appeared in the local courts to protest this practice.

The *Jersey City Journal* accused the police of creating sympathy for the strike by giving "the impression that they are a bunch of 'Cossacks'!" * The Passaic authorities harmed themselves when out-of-town newspapermen were roughed up by police. Cameras were broken when the police tried to prevent the photographing of battles. The press corps then took to wearing steel helmets while on the scene. Some newspapers ingeniously provided their staffs with automobiles altered to resemble tanks to serve as advance observation posts, thus neatly making news while covering it. Several Congressmen, in response to petitions by liberal organizations and labor unions, pro-

* Quoted in "The Battle of Passaic," *The Literary Digest*, LXXXVIII, 11.

posed a full-scale legislative inquiry, but without success.

A furore was aroused when Sheriff George Nimmo issued a "riot act" proclamation on April 12. Such measures are fairly common on the local level,* but the power of ordering crowds to disperse themselves and peaceably to depart in order to prevent "routs, riots, and tumultuous assemblies" is all too easily subject to abuse. This type of ordinance has its function, but under certain circumstances smacks of the police state and is tantamount to a proclamation of martial law. In this instance it had the effect of virtually eliminating picketing and meetings and putting not only strike leaders but many strikers as well in jail. It was probably the most effective step in bringing the strike to a close. Valiant attempts were made to protect the civil liberties of the strikers. They were futile at this time; furthermore, as the *New Republic* perceptively noted, by this means public officials are diverted away from reaching a solution of the strike itself.**

An effort was made by President Coolidge's Secretary of Labor, James J. Davis, to bring the two sides together, but to no avail. By June, relief funds were becoming seriously depleted. Equally damaging was the stand of the AF of L. The head of the Massachusetts branch called for a halt to contributions in June, attacking the strike leaders for using the workers as dupes of Communist propaganda. At exactly the same time, the Federation headquarters condemned the UFC as dangerous and unnecessary, a misguided attempt at dual unionism, although the UFC had in fact tried earlier to join with the AF of L. To bring their attitude to crystal clarity the United Textile Workers affiliated with the AF of L, accepted large advertisements from three of the struck firms in their June issue, while remaining completely silent about the strike. As the *Christian Century* com-

* As this is being written, 1964, precisely these ordinances are being used as the legal basis for jailing hundreds of "Freedom Marchers" and demonstrators for racial equality.

** Mary Heaton Vorse, *Passaic* (Chicago, n.d.), 316.

mented, "It is within the truth to say that, if the strike is broken, the AF of L will have borne a conspicuous part in breaking it."

And broken it was. Once again without hope, the workers began to straggle back. Many left the state. At the end of July, after a conference with Senator William E. Borah of Idaho, Weisbord agreed to withdraw from the strike if AF of L affiliation were guaranteed. Not until September could the Communist executive committee bring itself to admit defeat. They had claimed to be in control both of Weisbord and of overall strategy throughout, but in truth Weisbord had acted with some freedom, not on major decisions, which were made behind the scenes, but in the sense of day-by-day leadership up front, where he had become a genuine hero in the eyes of most of the workers. Recognizing their defeat, he and his associates, still disunited and bickering, gave up. The ensuing intra-labor negotiations were protracted and tedious, with the AF of L union ultimately taking over as a sort of receiver.* Weisbord and his associates agreed to leave. Faith in the UTW's ability to negotiate meaningfully was dim, for good reason. In November a compromise with the Passaic Worsted Company was arranged by two local residents and three clergymen. That started a mass return, and the last group of strikers, in Lodi, returned on the last day of February, 1927.

"The strike had been lost; completely, pitifully, and at enormous cost." ** Within two years, fewer than a hundred Passaic textile workers remained in the UTW. What purpose, then, had the strike served? From the standpoint of the workers, none in the immediate sense, except to remind them of their weakness, which hardly needed doing. In the long run, however, a great deal was learned of what to do and what not to do, which knowledge

*Irving Howe and Lewis Coser, *The American Communist Party* (Boston, 1957), 242.

** Irving Howe and Lewis Coser, *The American Communist Party* (Boston, 1957), 242.

helped to bring about successful industrial unionism a decade or so later.

From the standpoint of radicalism, the incident is highly instructive. Much of what was revealed in the 1940's and 1950's about the Communist movement in the United States with shocked gasps and wide-eyed amazement was there for the seeing, in the 1920's. There was the zealous dedication to a cause, a genuine idealism. Mingled with the dedication and idealism, driving ambition, usually unwitting, frequently dominating all else. Perhaps that ambition was so powerful that the idealism had to be stressed all the more, lest one disappoint oneself. The nasty and often vicious and slanderous attacks on one another bespoke a constant pitfall of the radical: he who disagrees with me is not merely misguided and mistaken, he is evil and dangerous. Weisbord, like many other Communist leaders, in New Jersey and elsewhere, was able. Given power, he displayed along with his attractive traits more than a hint of the *gauleiter* psychology, arrogance and egocentrism in particular, and a hint of ruthlessness.* They wanted change for the betterment of all, but being in the vanguard of that change was equally important. The exhilaration of it was accompanied, however, by what Max Eastman, at the time one of them, called "that inward dread of not proving sufficiently revolutionary which hounds us all." ** And with all, the commitment to one's beliefs so total as to lead to incredible errors, such as the statement: "The capitalist government of the United States has become just as centralized and as sinister as the former monarchy of the Czars." † Had this radicalism been able to break more completely from its subservience to European precedents

* Irving Howe and Lewis Coser, *The American Communist Party* (Boston, 1957), 64.

** Irving Howe and Lewis Coser, *The American Communist Party* (Boston, 1957), 39.

† Irving Howe and Lewis Coser, *The American Communist Party* (Boston, 1957), 111 n.

and experience, its impact might have been far greater than it was.

Although the strike had been an abysmal failure in every obvious way, many radicals still were able to find in it much that was encouraging. Ella Reeve Bloor, the "Mother Bloor" whose staunch support of radical causes was almost legendary, acknowledged the failure to gain anything for the workers. "But the strike strengthened the resistance of textile workers everywhere, and developed in Passaic a strong corps of revolutionary workers with a new conception of the meaning of the class struggle politically as well as industrially," she wrote.* The statement reveals more how total commitment leads to wishful and illusory thinking than it does of objective evaluation. The authors of another work sympathetic to the workers furnish additional evidence. Calling the strike "a partial victory," a triumph of optimism in itself, they go on to say that it "marked the outstanding achievement of American communism in the 20's. It was handled with wisdom, skill and a lack of demagoguery that permitted the most genuine united front American radicalism was to know between 1919 and 1933." ** Again, emphasis on certain aspects at the cost of the whole truth: that the Passaic trouble was the most genuine united front American radicalism achieved during that period would appear to have been so, that is, if one excludes the support given the cause of Sacco and Vanzetti. But it happens that this type of radicalism was badly disunited, fragmented, and in general retreat at the time. In this particular instance the front was not so united in reality as it may have seemed superficially. Actually, a genuinely united front completely devoid of demagoguery and more free to acknowledge the realities of the situation, working for so meritorious a cause, might have achieved important benefits, material as well as intangible, for the workers. As it was, the strike is con-

* Ella Reeve Bloor, *We Are Many* (New York, 1940), 202.

** Lillian Symes and Travers Clement, *Rebel America* (New York, 1936), 356.

sidered a major landmark in the histories of American democracy and of the labor movement, for having lasted as long as it did and for having generated so much fervor, not only among the workers and radicals but among liberals and more than a few conservatives, too. Only a very few years before, a vice-president of the United States was moved to fear subversion at Radcliffe College because the school's debating team had taken the affirmative on the subject: "*Resolved*, That the recognition of labor unions by employers is essential to successful collective bargaining." Now, a new climate of opinion was in the making.

The historian's hindsight permits yet another observation. There was scarcely any thought whatever then of what turned out to be probably the most important of all effects of the strike. Before long the textile industry in large measure simply departed from New Jersey, with serious effects on the state's economy. Clearly, it would be erroneous to point the finger of blame at the radical leaders of labor for this fact. Nevertheless, it is just as clear that textiles, in Massachusetts as in New Jersey in difficult straits for years, could not face the likelihood of continuing struggle, and with the labor factor as well as others in mind, moved their operations to more favorable areas, particularly in the South.

THE QUESTION OF FREEDOM OF SPEECH

One problematic facet of the Passaic strike was left completely unsettled, it too of much significance. It turned on the authority, or lack of authority, of local officials to suppress speeches and meetings which might be inimical to public safety. The suppressive measures aroused various persons to come into the area to speak—or try to speak—to the workers, even though they did not care for the strike leadership. Not only were certain Communists denied this right, but anti-Communists too, such as the indomitable Norman Thomas. The struggle

to clarify the issue began under radical auspices, but soon found many sponsors.

When Thomas was denied permission to address the strikers, he and the American Civil Liberties Union, of which he was a leading member, decided to make a fight of it. He did speak to a meeting held in defiance of a previously given order in an open field. Bergen County sheriff's deputies carrying sawed-off shotguns arrested him and held him in the Hackensack jail on \$10,000 bail. The ACLU and the strikers thereupon obtained an injunction against the sheriff for false arrest, on the ground that only the governor can declare what amounts to martial law. The sheriff died before the case came to trial, and so the proceedings were dropped.*

That was just the beginning. A flurry of legal writs and orders followed. Roger Baldwin of the ACLU was arrested and charged with holding an unlawful assembly as he began to read the Declaration of Independence in front of Paterson City Hall. His conviction was appealed, and reversed in 1928.**

In the 1930's the scene switched to Jersey City, where a special situation existed; it may be concisely described as Mayor Frank Hague, who said, "I am the law"—and was not jesting. Norman Thomas, by then head of the Socialist Party and their candidate for the Presidency, not only was prohibited from speaking, but was escorted right to the New York City ferry. He brought suit, but lost; the court ruled that "The public are entitled to their tranquillity, and the discretion to issue the permit in question is vested in the chosen representatives of the city." † W. M. Callahan, editor of *The Catholic Worker*,

* David Shannon, *The Socialist Party of America* (New York, 1955), 187-188. Elizabeth Gurley Flynn and Carlo Tresca, among others, were involved in similar incidents in New Jersey and elsewhere. Upton Sinclair sought on several occasions to clarify this issue in California.

** *State v. Butterworth*, 104 N.J.L. 579 (E & A, 1928). Cited in Zechariah Chafee, Jr., *Free Speech in the United States* (Cambridge, 1942), 410.

† *Thomas [Norman] v. Casey*, 121 N.J.L. 192, quoted in Zechariah Chafee, Jr., *Free Speech in the United States* (Cambridge, 1942), 427.

was refused permission to hold a meeting there in order to discuss the meaning of several Papal encyclicals. Making use of various local ordinances and especially the New Jersey Disorderly Persons Act of 1936, one section of which required a permit of anyone "who cannot give a good account of himself," Hague gave short shrift also to organizers for the CIO, then on a major organizing drive.

The exposure and correction of such conditions was merely a matter of time. The judiciary of the late 1930's was not inclined to permit such actions to continue. Thomas and the ACLU now had the support of numerous influential and highly regarded organizations, such as the League of Women Voters. In 1939, in the case of *Frank Hague et al. v. the Committee for Industrial Organization et al.* (307 U.S. 500), the United States Supreme Court circumscribed mayoral powers in this regard and severely chastised Hague. Hague took the defeat in good grace, and the offending ordinances were repealed almost immediately.*

RADICALISM ON THE RIGHT

The 1920's and 1930's gave rise to the radicalism of the Right in the form of the Ku Klux Klan and the American Fascist movement. Both are closely related, as they are to the most current manifestation, the John Birch Society.

It is difficult to conceive of a starker contrast than the Wobblies, Anarchists, and Communists, enemies of capitalism and the free enterprise system, with all their works, on the one hand, and the Ku-Kluxers on the other, guardians of old-fashioned, rural, white, Protestant fundamentalist America and its traditional economic system. Yet both were radical, hating each other but united in their estrangement from the society about

* There were two dissents, by Justices Pierce Butler and James C. McReynolds, and two other Justices abstained from the case. See Zechariah Chafee, Jr., *Free Speech in the United States* (Cambridge, 1942), 409-431, for a masterly discussion of the legal issues.

\$10	Bond	\$10
Nº 36	STATE OF NEW JERSEY COUNTY OF MIDDLESEX	
RUTGERS KLAN No. 44 KNIGHTS OF THE KU KLUX KLAN	OLD GLORY KLAN No. 64 WOMEN OF THE KU KLUX KLAN	
<i>In witness whereof, The Trustees will forward check by surrender of bond.</i>		
<i>Edw. W. Dunning</i> Trustee	<i>Willie R. Appleton</i> Trustee	
<i>Char. A. Kern</i> Trustee	<i>Marion Schuyler</i> Trustee	
<i>Ralph O. Byrley</i> Trustee	<i>Florence Clark</i> Trustee	
\$10		\$10

Bond—State of New Jersey—Rutgers Klan No. 44—Knights
of The Ku Klux Klan

Courtesy of Rutgers University Library

them. Both were victims of their own dogma, their own prejudices and need to believe. The Radical Left had its utopia, a workers' paradise freed from the grasping hands of millionaire-exploiters and their lackeys, to be attained peaceably if possible, with bloodshed if necessary. The Radical Right believes in an America that never was except in their imaginations: the myth of the garden, now sullied by Negroes, Jews, Communists, Catholics, drinkers, immoral (and often clever and prosperous) city folk.* These interlopers were to be fought, too, by words or by open force. Incongruities and differences are many, but the similarities exist.

The Klan was Know-Nothingism brought up to date, with remarkably little change considering the passage of time.** The suspicion of and antagonism to Catholics was still there, scarcely changed, if at all. Opposition to Negroes and Jews was not entirely new, but was much intensified. Distrust of the city carried over, again intensified because of the immorality and irreligion that were associated with it. Above all, there was now the Communist, in whom was embodied all that was hateful, the stereotype of everything bad. The atmosphere was heavy with irrationality, as when Communists and Jews were equated; one was the enemy to the death of capitalism and all its works, the other controls and manipulates that very system, to his enormous profit—from his office on Wall Street, of course. The contradiction mattered not; Jews and Communists were linked, they maintained.†

* It is probably in this sense of the redefinition of goals and enemies that John Roche refers to the years of the Red Scare as "the pivotal years of American radicalism." John P. Roche, *The Quest for the Dream* (New York, 1963), 276.

** John Higham stresses this point in the Introduction to the second edition (New York, 1963) of his *Strangers In the Land*, xiii.

† The link between the Know-Nothings and the Klan is an organization known as the American Protective Association, which under the aegis of Henry F. Bowers gained some prominence in the Middle West in the 1880's and 1890's and attempted a campaign then in the East. It seems to have made little headway in New Jersey.

There have been very few detailed studies of the Klan, with the exception of the Klan in the State of Indiana, where its influence was great and fairly open. Elsewhere we know little about it, because it was a clandestine organization. While it would be an exaggeration to say that it swept the country, it did attain a wide following, perhaps as many as four million in the country. Because of the secrecy, and the temper of the times, along with a campaign of high-pressure salesmanship, the Klan enrolled a number of businessmen who were not necessarily in sympathy with the organization, along with some ambitious young politicians in the South. It cared little for either the Republican or Democratic party, but was very active on the local level throughout the South and the Middle West, and is considered to have been a force in supporting the Prohibition Amendment and the defeat of Al Smith, a Catholic and a "wet," in the election of 1928.

It was inevitable, probably, that the Klan should find a few thousand supporters in New Jersey.* The state not only had a large population, but one that was unusually heterogeneous as well. It had become one of the foremost industrial states of the union while its agricultural output remained high. Thus there was a true mixture of old and new. There were economic opportunities of many sorts, and into the State had come a great variety of people, from other areas of the Union and from abroad. Because of its geographic position, a large number of immigrants had settled there. New Jersey had become heterogeneous in every sense, and it was this heterogeneity, this modernity, this pace, that the Klan was bent on fighting.

What should also be noted is that the Klan fever did not last long, nor was the sheeted company able to make serious political inroads. In fact, the resistance they en-

* Arthur Bell, of Bloomfield, who had been "Grand Dragon" from 1923 to 1934, told the Dies Committee in 1940 that membership had reached a peak of three hundred thousand in the 1920's. The figure seems absurdly inflated. I should be surprised if the real total were one-third that.

countered was unusually strong. On occasion, the tables were turned and they found themselves the victims of extralegal action. In one such instance, in Perth Amboy in 1923, a mob that the *New York Times* reported as numbering six thousand, led, it was said, by Jews and Catholics, overwhelmed police and fire department forces and proceeded forcibly to disperse some five hundred no doubt dismayed Klansmen.

Somewhat similar treatment, though without the fisticuffs, was accorded a Maplewood minister named Elmo L. Bateman. While there is no published record of his having ever become a member of the Ku Klux Klan, he had become convinced of the validity of at least the anti-Catholic portions of their beliefs. These included the purported oath taken by all members of the Knights of Columbus. The charge was an almost exact counterpart of another forgery, the Protocols of the Elders of Zion, which also was widely circulated during the turbulent twenties, particularly by means of Henry Ford's *Dear-born Independent*. Both "documents" proved to the satisfaction of the gullible that groups of Catholics and Jews, respectively, were plotting to overthrow the government by nefarious means and impose their own dictatorial control. Many scholars have remarked the readiness, even the eagerness, of so many Americans to believe that certain of their fellows are engaged in a deadly conspiracy against the Republic. During the presidential campaign of 1928, when Governor Alfred E. Smith of New York was the Democratic nominee, a good deal of this abusive material was surreptitiously circulated. Some appeared quite openly.

The false Knights of Columbus oath was one of the principal items. Bateman was completely taken in by it. Aflame with the desire to save the country from falling into such subversive hands, he, with the aid of several of his co-believers and a mimeograph borrowed from his church, turned the cellar of his home into a publishing house. One theme was harped on: "I believe the days of the Inquisition may return."

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Courtesy of Rutgers University Library

His crusade lasted only briefly. Early in 1929, a group of townspeople became so irate that they saw fit to burst in on Bateman while he was conducting a prayer meeting in his home. They demanded not only an explanation, but that he cease forthwith turning out his "sheet." He was summarily dismissed from his church by the board of trustees, and then quickly was indicted, tried, and convicted of libel.

The brief trial had its poignant aspects. Aware of the seriousness of the charge against the Knights of Columbus, he had sought earnestly for documentary proof. This he found—in the pages of the *Congressional Record*—in the Appendix, as it happened, where Congressmen of varying abilities insert material of varying authenticity for a variety of reasons. He was not the first, nor the last, to come to regret relying on this source. To this fact must be added another which, if not poignant, is very revealing: the little band meant to save the country, and in so doing discovered that their altruism was not without commercial possibilities. They were making careful plans to incorporate, which brings to mind the old saying, "Scratch an American, find a capitalist." Bateman was liable to a year's jail sentence and a heavy fine. Partly because of his penitence, the jail sentence was suspended and he was fined \$250.

THE GERMAN-AMERICAN BUND

During the 1930's and early 1940's New Jersey was seriously troubled by manifestations of an exceptionally dangerous form of political extremism, the German-American Bund. That organization established units in almost every state of the union. In many it was a mere shadow organization at most, but in the New York City area, in Chicago and a few other locations, it was large in numbers and quite affluent. The number of members who were New Jersey residents was not startlingly high. The State came very much into the limelight for another reason. The New York Bundists loved nature and the

countryside, which offered the additional advantage of providing space for military-style marching and drilling, done in uniforms obviously and closely modeled after those worn by their Nazi heroes. Two of their dozen-odd camps were set up in New Jersey, "Nordland," a 205-acre wooded tract near Andover, and "Bergwald," near Bloomingdale, the latter operated by the German-American Vocational League, one of several Bund affiliates. There was a special youth camp near Griggstown.

Few men were inclined to study the Bund in any sort of dispassionate manner during its existence. Since that time, however, the question of whether the Bund was comprised of faithful Nazis ready to serve the Nazi cause in the United States in any way or was, rather, a group of loyal (naturalized) American citizens of German descent still deeply attached to the Fatherland has been the subject of scholarly research. It was also adjudged by the Supreme Court; * the fact that the decision, handed down at the end of World War II, was a 5 to 4 one, is indicative of the difficulty of the questions the Bund raised.

That the Bund was a pro-Nazi outfit was never in doubt. But one may support without being what one supports, and the law recognizes the difference. Probably most of the Bundists were homesick for the old country, for the German language and cooking and beer and companionship. Nevertheless, their loyalty to the United States was open to question, obviously and correctly. The speeches which were such an integral part of all their programs were a constant glorification of Hitler and his accomplishments toward a new order in Europe. They were just as constantly a vilification of those nations and persons who stood in nazism's way. As the war drew closer and closer, that vilification switched its object from Soviet Russia, England, and France to the United

* The case was *Keegan and Kunze et al. v. the United States*, 325 U.S. 478, decided June 11, 1945. The immediate issue of the case was the charge that the Bund had counseled its members not to register for conscription, but the Court in its decision did not restrict itself to this issue alone.

States, and most particularly, to the Roosevelt Administration. There can be no limitations on an individual's right to have political opinions. When, however, they lead to fevered denunciations of one's adopted country, there is room for suspicion.

Certain incidents which occurred just before and during World War II proved that the widespread suspicion was well founded. To mention but one, the group of carefully trained would-be saboteurs who put ashore from a German submarine off Long Island was comprised almost entirely of former Bundists. One of the reasons they were captured so quickly was the close surveillance of the Bund which the Federal Bureau of Investigation had maintained. The percentage of those who became actively disloyal was not great, but that it existed at all is significant.

One can easily imagine the reaction of the residents of the area to the sight and sound of marching men with their brown shirts and riding pants and high boots, singing praises of Hitler and shouting "*Sieg heils.*" Childrens' groups were similarly organized. Reams of publicity, complete with photographs, shocked the public. That shock increased in degree as the 1930's moved into the 1940's. So proud were the Bund leaders of the "achievements" of the rejuvenated Germany, so adulatory were they—with the apparent support of at least a considerable portion of the membership—that their zeal could scarcely be contained. They condemned with almost unimaginable venom those who stood in the Third Reich's way. President Roosevelt clearly was the principal target, especially after his "Quarantine the Aggressor" speech of late 1937. Gerhard W. Kunze of Union City, who at the time was "public relations director" of the Bund and who succeeded Fritz Kuhn as its head when Kuhn was imprisoned, said at Camp Nordland, "if President Roosevelt has any character left, he should look for the first hole and pull himself into it." *

* *New York Times*, May 1, 1939.

Virtually every aspect of the New ("Jew") Deal and Administration foreign policy came under attack, as did most American legislators and officials, with the exception of a few ultra-isolationists. Eventually it became clear that the entire American system was anathema. They would replace it root-and-branch, that is, radically, and by radical means, with something else never really specified, except for the installing of an all-embracing central government under a strong, forceful leader; the details were not too difficult to surmise. One can scarcely call these men reactionaries, although certain details fit that description, as when Kunze, in the speech just referred to, delivered on May Day, urged one and all to "clean up your unions and make them white men's unions. . . . Make America a white man's Christian country again," he insisted, concluding by calling Hitler "the prophet of labor." * Taken all in all, they too were radicals, in the Fascist revolutionary sense.

The Bund, Italian Black Shirt units, and a host of native Fascist organizations, the most prominent of the latter being Father Charles E. Coughlin's Christian Front, were noisy and provocative far beyond their numbers, but they were not without influence. Reasonably enough, therefore, the demand to "do something," to take action against the threat they represented grew to irresistible proportions. But the question of what that action was to be was an exceptionally serious and difficult one. New Jersey was one of the first, if not the first, jurisdictions to make a move. In the spring of 1935, the legislature passed a bill making illegal the publication of any statement promoting race hatred or hostility, even if true or of public concern. The Rafferty Bill, as it was often called after its chief sponsor, as written into the *New Jersey Revised Statutes* of 1937, provided that:

. . . any person who shall, in the presence of two or more persons, in any language, make or utter any speech, statement, or declaration, which in any way incites, counsels, promotes or

* *New York Times*, May 1, 1939.



A Parade of the German-American Bund and Italian Black Shirts

advocates hatred, abuse, violence or hostility against any group or groups of persons residing or being in this state, by reason of race, color, religion or manner of worship . . . or who knowingly leases out his premises for the purposes of engaging in the proscribed conduct [is] guilty of a misdemeanor.

A similar resolution was set before the United States Congress at the same time by Samuel Dickstein of New York City. It sought to avoid impinging on freedom of speech by concentrating on the mails, proposing to bar therefrom materials of any kind "which . . . [were] designed, adapted, or intended to cause racial or religious hatred, bigotry or intolerance." This measure, along with numerous others introduced in other states, failed of adoption.

The anti-race-hatred law was clear enough, and few would dispute its intention. Discussion that attended its passage was far from thorough, since the issues had not been explored at that time. Before long objections were being aired, and they were of the utmost seriousness. It was not that they were based on any sympathy for the pro-Nazis and pro-Fascists who had gone on a verbal rampage. The law, however, might be a repressive weapon in the wrong hands. Differing interpretations of certain words promised difficulty of enforcement. The basic question had been expressed almost a century before by Abraham Lincoln: whether any government, not too strong for the liberties of its people, could be strong enough to maintain its own existence in grave emergencies.

The dubious constitutionality of group libel and defamation laws was worrisome. Those laws as applied to individuals were well-established and enforceable, but the tactic designed skillfully by Nazi propagandists evaded that trap by referring to groups, such as "Jews," or "Wall Street bankers," or "New Dealers," or, if by name, to politicians who are traditionally open game for name-callers.

The Bundists and their native Fascist co-believers were

following the Nazi lead of sowing dissension within a nation and building up among the disaffected a core of loyal followers. The resemblance to tactics used in the Nazi rise to power in Germany, which was marked by a cynical abuse of democratic liberties, was more than coincidental. If they were haled into court, they welcomed the opportunity to gain publicity, even if it meant paying a fine.*

Again and again the charge was repeated, either outright or by implication, that the Jews (led by President "Rosenfeldt") were betraying the country into one more needless war in order to save and aggrandize their own fortunes and those of their decadent and/or tyrannical European accomplices. Those accomplices included, most importantly, the Communist masters of Russia. This mixture of distortions and outright untruths gained considerable credence. David Riesman, then of the University of Buffalo Law School, regarded the problem as an acute one, with the most serious implications for the future. He wrote, "what is new . . . is the existence of a mobile public opinion as the controlling force in politics, and the systematic manipulation of that opinion by the use of calculated falsehood and vilification."

As the threat was new, so the response had to form new channels—or rather, should have formed new channels. They could not be smoothly cut, for the overriding reason that the basic freedoms of any citizen, however problematical his loyalty may be, are sacrosanct in the absence of an overt act of disloyalty. The fact is that most of the early attempts to cope with the danger were inadequate, for one or another or a variety of reasons. In the summer of 1939, the New Jersey Legislature passed another law aimed at the Bund camps. This one forbade the wearing of quasi-military uniforms, and was patterned after a similar statute by means of which the State of New York had attempted to combat the Ku

* It was precisely for this reason that several prosecutions were dropped.

Klux Klan (with its hoods) in the 1920's. Both had little effect, except for bringing about slight modifications of the Bund uniforms. Shortly thereafter United States Senator W. Warren Barbour of New Jersey revived Samuel Dickstein's proposal and submitted a bill calling on Congress to add to the criminal-code provision which barred indecent and obscene matter from the mails a similarly proscribed class, "of a character fraudulent and scurrilous tending to incite hate against any religious sect or creed or race." This, too, died in committee. Again, opposition came from the American Civil Liberties Union, the individual members of which shared Senator Barbour's deep concern but feared possible misinterpretations and misapplications of such a sweeping grant of power.

On at least one occasion in 1940, the Bund met at Camp Nordland not only with units of the Italian Black Shirts of America, but with a sizable delegation of the New Jersey Ku Klux Klan also. At first glance, any cooperation between the 100% American Klan and the Bundists, who though American citizens (for the most part) were obviously and openly of foreign derivation, would seem a grotesque impossibility. The times were stormy and troubled, however, and there were many odd alliances. The united meeting was arranged by a native Fascist named Edward J. Smythe, a truly bizarre and disturbed figure whom the often-misused and rude designation, "crackpot," describes rather well. The theme of the conclave was, of course, "Save America"—this being precisely the refrain shouted by the Bundists at all meetings, right arms outstretched, palms downward, in the same inflection and cadence as "*Sieg heil!*" The flood of publicity resulting from the many news stories and photographs brought a disavowal from the Reverend Edwin Young of Bloomfield, who had joined the Klan in Texas in 1917, and who had risen to the position of New Jersey Kleagle. "I made an awful fool of myself," he said, "and I don't mind that going on the record. I'm an old man. I thought I had a good idea for an Ameri-

canization rally, but I learned differently." * A Bund auxiliary more or less simultaneously took the offensive and brought suit against the *Newark Ledger* for charging that it and the membership of Camp Nordland were linked officially with the German Nazi Party. (The charge has been made literally thousands of times, and it was made at the Nuremberg Trials at the end of the war. It was never proved. Of course, an official connection was not necessary, in view of the utter devotion to the Nazi cause of some of the Bundists.) The auxiliary sought two million dollars in damages, but the court dismissed the suit.

Major action was taken when Kunze, August Klaprott, and seven other men were arrested at Nordland, then indicted by a Sussex County grand jury for violation of the race-hatred law. Since they had clearly and constantly violated that ordinance, trial and conviction followed quickly. An appeal was taken to the New Jersey Supreme Court. One year later, that body in a split decision dismissed the convictions, holding that the charge had been vague in certain respects, that the law itself was null and void as violative of the right of free speech guaranteed by the New Jersey and Federal constitutions, and that the State had not proven the defendants constituted a clear and present danger.** The date of the decision was December 5, 1941.

The case aroused an extraordinary amount of debate, particularly in the law journals. Many lawyers disagreed with the decision, and to many more laymen, coming as it did at the time of the attack on Pearl Harbor, it represented a dangerous weakness in the face of vicious totalitarian methods. There is no doubt that the decision

* *New York Sun*, October 2, 1940, 2.

** *State v. Klaprott*, 127 N.J.L. 395, 22 Atlantic (2d) 877, Sup. Ct. N.J. 1941. Both Kunze and Klaprott were to be involved in important cases later. Kunze was captured and imprisoned for trying to escape to Germany via Mexico during the war. The Rafferty Law was used also as the basis for a protest by the Negroes of East Orange against the showing at a local theatre of *The Birth of a Nation*, on the grounds that it would incite racial antagonism.

was in keeping with the broadly civil-libertarian policy of the United States Supreme Court.

There are many ways in which opposition and control may be asserted, and the prosecution of Klaprott, Kunze, and company was but one. Jewish war veterans and civic organizations such as the Minute Men, headed by Nat Arnold of Irvington, often assisted by American Legion units, frequently appeared at Bund and Black Shirt rallies, and fist-fights often were the result.

Sheriffs and other local authorities maintained close surveillance over Camps Nordland and Bergwald. When the defense effort was well under way, they and their deputies sought to protect the many plants, arsenals, and military installations in the area against sabotage and espionage efforts. To this end they began taking down the automobile license numbers of men attending such meetings. When several Bundists were discharged from work in New Jersey defense plants, they protested that they were being unfairly deprived of their means of livelihood.

Sheriff Denton Quick, of Sussex County, confirmed that their names had been found and subsequently traced by means of their license plates, in a joint effort by Sussex County peace officers, American Legion officials, FBI agents, and representatives of the Committee on Un-American Activities of the House of Representatives, then headed by Martin Dies of Texas.* These men had discovered, among the approximately two thousand numbers of those in attendance, some six hundred which they claimed belonged to aliens who were engaged in vital defense work. Congressmen Dies with J. Parnell Thomas of New Jersey and Joseph Starnes of Alabama, members of his committee, held hearings in Newark in which they probed the situation in some detail, including the role of the Ku Klux Klan.** Evidence given in such proceedings

* *New York Journal*, June 26, 1940, 1.

** Richard Rollins, in *I Find Treason* (New York, 1941), 185, states that the Klan was building swiftly in New Jersey in early 1940. I have not been able to find substantiation for the statement, and there is reason to believe it may have been an exaggeration.

often is of dubious validity, but most newspapers reported everything at face value and placed the accounts on their front pages.

The coming of war on December 7 and 8 naturally put an entirely different complexion on matters. As early as the previous June, State authorities had begun to take steps preparatory to closing down Camp Nordland as a standing public nuisance. It was done just a few days after Pearl Harbor, with no audible protest. Many members of the Bund and similar organizations who lived in the New Jersey area were arrested by the FBI and other agencies which were either overzealous or unwilling to take any risks. In case of doubt, they arrested, and numerous mistakes were made. A high percentage of those detained were quickly released, including two artists who in complete innocence were sketching landscapes which happened to include defense installations. Many Bundists who were aliens were interned and then deported. The federal government attempted to do likewise to others who had become citizens. To denaturalize them, the government had to prove mental reservations at the time of entry and application for citizenship, and subsequent disloyalty beyond a reasonable doubt. Few of these attempts were successful.

Of great and lasting significance was the wartime case of *United States v. the German-American Vocational League Inc., et al.*, operators of Camp Bergwald. Twenty-seven members of the League, which had chapters in twelve cities, were indicted for conspiracy to violate the Espionage and Sedition Acts of 1917-1918 and the Foreign Agents Registration Act of 1938. They were tried in Newark late in 1943, and in May, 1944, nine were convicted. The government based its case largely on the results of an exhaustive content analysis of the speeches, letters, and other writings of League members. The validity of this novel method was challenged at length by defense counsel, but in vain. Developed by a group of scholars and lawyers under the guidance of Professor Harold Lasswell, content analysis strove to contain totalitarian propaganda methods within American constitu-

tional guarantees. It sought to prove collusion, if collusion existed, in the absence of conventional, tangible proof such as financial payments, directives, and the like, methods which the Nazis usually were careful not to use. Content analysis isolated the principal themes used in Nazi propaganda, and then did the same with the speeches and writings in questions. They were then laid side by side for comparison. If occasionally, or even frequently, themes corresponded, no meaning was attached to the fact; to do otherwise would mean, literally, guilt by association. But when the same arguments, points, and themes, every one of them, are repeated again and again, the reasonable assumption arises that more than mere coincidence is involved. To be sure, men may well share a body of ideas point by point, so a rule of reason is always involved, and content analysis does not stand alone as the accusation. The method was also used during the war against William Dudley Pelley, the Silver Shirt leader, against several Nazi-sponsored organizations, and the Bookniga Corporation, a Soviet agency in the United States. Informally, it was used with decisive effect against Father Charles Coughlin, probably the most threatening native Fascist of them all during the prewar period.* Following the conclusion of the war, it has become part of the legal offensive against the threat of internal communism.

CONTEMPORARY COMMUNISM

Clearly the most prominent form of radicalism in the United States contemporaneously is communism. The basic beliefs of that creed presumably need no elabora-

* Shortly after the United States Supreme Court had ruled against Mayor Hague in the case with the CIO, the American Civil Liberties Union and Norman Thomas held a free-speech rally in Journal Square that was attended by a crowd of five thousand. The only jarring note came from young men selling Coughlin's incendiary magazine *Social Justice*, who also did a great deal of jeering and jostling, revealingly.

tion here, in 1964. The number of adherents has been the subject of fierce controversy, of course. Again, the clandestine nature of much of the activity is a bar to knowledge; numerous legislative investigations have fallen short of providing definitive answers, and have erred repeatedly and grievously in failing to distinguish between Communists and others whose connections with communism may have been tangential or nil. This is no simple matter, certainly, partly because various of the components of the Communist creed are shared by Socialists, for example, or by liberals, in addition to which domestic communism has been apt in the use of protective coloration.

One point that is clear is that, whatever the number of American Communists may have been in the 1930's and 1940's, it is very much smaller in the 1960's. Much of the diminution has been due to developments in international diplomacy which revealed much about Soviet leadership, and to a federal program of action.

It is a form of radicalism the threatening aspects of which are best handled on a national level, as the Supreme Court decided in 1956. In the so-called *Steve Nelson Case*, the high tribunal in invalidating certain anti-Communist procedures adopted by the State of Pennsylvania, set forth a variety of reasons why permitting states free rein in this crucial and infinitely complex area was undesirable.* Numerous states and some municipalities have complained of this arrogation of authority, but the matter is settled.

Prior to that decision, there had been a great deal of anti-Communist work of various types within most states. Some of it was official, some unofficial, after the fashion of the anti-Bund activity. New Jersey did not succumb to the almost hysterical and vindictive red-hunting of the McCarthy era, which seemed often to be more an exercise in name-dropping than anything else. A committee was set up by legislative resolution in 1947, with personnel

* *Commonwealth of Pennsylvania v. Steve Nelson*, 350 U.S. 497, 76 S. Ct. 477, decided April 2, 1956. There were three dissents.

appointed by the governor, to study the possibilities of subversion in the schools, then much bruited about. It functioned only in closed meetings, and whatever needed to be done, if anything, was done quietly.* A loyalty oath for candidates to elective office was voided by the State courts.**

The work of the New Jersey State Council of the Congress of Industrial Organizations does deserve special mention. It is now accepted beyond dispute that the Communist movement, which was more than a figment of the imagination in the 1930's and 1940's, made a determined and shrewd effort to infiltrate the labor movement at the time, and that that effort achieved some success within units of the CIO. In 1944, according to the enormously knowledgeable Daniel Bell, the Communist Party controlled unions enrolling approximately 20 per cent of the total membership of organized labor.† By 1952, that figure was down to a point just under 5 per cent.‡ What the statistics do not reveal is the rigors of the campaign to rid the CIO of this element, deemed inimical to union welfare, without harming the labor cause and without smearing innocent parties. It is an intricate history, full of tense maneuvering, resolutions, elections, and walk-outs. The New Jersey State Council, beginning in the 1947 national convention and afterward, played a decisive role.§

* American Civil Liberties Union, "The States and Subversion" (New York, April, 1953), 6.

** American Civil Liberties Union, "The States and Subversion" (New York, April, 1953), 4.

† Daniel Bell, *The End of Ideology* (New York, 1961), 110.

‡ Daniel Bell, *The End of Ideology* (New York, 1961), 110.

§ See Max M. Kampelman, *The Communist Party vs. the C.I.O.* (New York, 1957), 111-112 and *passim*.

V

CONCLUSION

ANY SUMMATION of the history of radical movements as confined to one state must be very general. That history in New Jersey does not differ in any major respects from the paths trod by radicals elsewhere. Defeat has been their lot. But in striking out in new directions and meeting that defeat they have served to reveal much of what was transpiring beneath the surface of American life. In concentrating on the main trends, one may tend to lose sight of the variety, the pluralism, which does exist.

The radicals have served the purpose, quite incidental and distressful to them, of supporting the belief long held by many historians and political scientists that the United States is essentially a conservative country, one in which dissent exists, but continues to exist only within certain limits. There is a sort of consensus of belief concerning values, methods, and institutions, albeit an imperfect and not completely stable one. Change occurs, and constantly, but it is only rarely radical change, and that only when considered over the long run. Even the American Revolution, once considered one of the most radical of all steps, is now interpreted in the light of historical perspective as having been not so radical after all; some historians have no difficulty in placing it within the conservative tradition: a minority of colonists, mainly men of affairs and for long allowed much latitude, taking care to preserve their position and also believing with all their minds and souls in freedom.

The response to radicalism also is enlightening. A study which does not take that response into account is glaringly incomplete, inasmuch as there is always a degree of interaction which affects both sides. The response to almost all varieties of radicalism proves that constitutional democracy, while it provides a soil conducive to radical growths, is hardly without defenses, even harsh and militant ones. Too, it tells much about the nature—and the limits—of tolerance.

The viability of those defenses is impressive. On the other hand, there are methods which surely are questionable. Some of them were on the fringes of legality, others extralegal. The Bund leaders and many of the members were harassed beyond the letter of the law, to a significantly greater extent than were the native-born Fascists, such as the Christian Fronters, although their beliefs were nearly identical. The episode proves, as did the Paterson and Passaic strikes, that anti-radicalism can sometimes be as dangerous (and radical) as radicalism itself. The measures taken to counter a threat may themselves contain threatening elements.

These eddies and marginal currents of the American experience show a dissatisfaction with, and sometimes a lack of understanding of, governmental and legal machinery which results now and again in taking matters into one's own hands. It is a long, long thread which exists along with the other, larger one of treating the proponents of heterodoxy and change with forbearance. Arthur M. Schlesinger, Sr., once noted in a presidential address to the American Historical Association that there is a pervasive lawless streak in the American character, a troublesome one, "but it has also served as a check on the abuse of governmental powers and as a safeguard of popular rights." * It is an extremely complex phenomenon which permits no glib explanations. Without doubt the frontier tradition is involved; from the Regulators of

* "What Then Is the American, This New Man?" *American Historical Review*, XLVIII, No. 2, 225-244.

the Carolinas and Dorr's Rebellion in Rhode Island to the California Gold Rush it has played an important, and mixed, role. Belief in the individual above all is involved too; Henry Thoreau on civil disobedience and the Reverend Henry Ward Beecher and his gifts of "Beecher's Bibles" (rifles) to the anti-slavery settlers of Kansas in the 1850's are just as good texts to cite as "Big Bill" Haywood and Mother Bloor. Then too, one must consider the continual upcropping of serious problems in a country whose opulence seemed to make all dreams of fulfillment reasonable ones; the response to such a dilemma can often verge into violence.

It seems likely that we live now in a relatively settled age, and to some its blandness and homogeneity are a high price to pay. Many of the radicals were dogmatic, inflexible, and even arrogant. Some of them were so convinced of the rightness of their vision that they became enslaved to their dogma, the strike leaders at Pas-saic and Paterson, for example, "more gifted at mimicking Lenin's postures than matching his sagacity." * Many of them expounded a doctrine of loving kindness to their fellow men, and lived that doctrine. In action, a sizable number exhibited a notable lack of warmth and consideration for others, which lends support to George Orwell's not frivolously meant statement, in his "Reflections on Gandhi," that "Saints should be judged guilty until they are proved innocent." Their unpopularity was augmented by their seeming to be living, walking, talking rebukes to everyone else. One may speculate whether the intensity of their idealism might not have been to some degree a subterfuge, a necessary gloss to cover an intense ambition and drive for a type of power. That too would be a familiar trait. Certainly there were many examples of true benevolence and genuine humanitarianism. The radicals tended also, with some noteworthy exceptions, to be "systems" men, pulling from their minds huge, all-

* Irving Howe and Lewis Coser, *The American Communist Party* (Boston, 1957), 27.

embracing schemes and systems of human organization, thus flying in the face of the basic pragmatism of the American people, and thus, in effect, dooming themselves to defeat.

But is radicalism entirely a thing of the past? It would seem not, though it is in a state of relative abeyance at the moment. Conde McGinley published and edited *Common Sense* from Union for many years prior to his death in 1963. The magazine was an unremitting attack on Jews, Negroes, Catholics, Communists, and the United Nations (often lumped together); McGinley claimed a paid circulation of ninety-one thousand. Its principal financial backer was Benjamin Harrison Freedman, a retired manufacturer who refers to himself as "an excommunicated Jew." Officially, the paper's publisher was listed as the Christian Educational Association. It is being continued by McGinley's son. A similar publication is run by Carl McIntire and his Christian Beacon Press from Collingswood, supplemented from time to time by a half-hour radio program. McIntire's chief point of emphasis is "modernism" in the churches, which he feels are infiltrated with Communists.*

Accurate figures on the John Birch Society as it exists in New Jersey are not available. That organization, considered to be the mainstay of the current Radical Right, contains many elements in its crusade against a too-broadly defined Communism. It will presumably be around for a long time to come, in part because it is well financed, in part because it is very careful not to allow itself to become associated with such obvious hate-mongers as the anti-Semites, in part because the struggle against Communism in its complexity is bound to attract many who prefer the quick and simple "solutions."

New Jersey is still the site of a very few examples of old-fashioned communalism that are so reminiscent of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, one such

* See, for example, his "Communist Influence in the Baptist World Alliance," *American Mercury*, XCI, 93-101.

example being the small farms operated by left-wing Socialist Jewish organizations. Beginning in the 1930's, a series of eight agricultural camps were set up in New Jersey by young Jewish groups, as training grounds, so to speak, for life on the *kibbutzim* (communal farms) of Israel. They flourished during the period following the end of World War II and the establishment of the Israeli State, but at this time only one remains, the Hechalutz (pioneer) Farm-Shomria, which owns and works some two hundred acres of farm land near Hightstown. Well over one thousand dedicated young people have spent from six to twelve months in these camps, learning the communal way of life, the Hebrew language, and above all the rigorous duties of running a modern chicken and dairy farm, and then, after passing on their knowledge to newcomers, have moved on to Israel. All participants have been or are members of the *Hashomer Hatzair* (Young Guards) movement, affiliated with the American Zionist Council and the American Zionist Youth Foundation.*

The scene is very quiet. But one cannot say it will always be so. Radicalism has left its mark, either by creating doubts and stirring people to re-evaluate what they had taken for granted, or by providing the starting force for changes, not made usually as the radicals would like, but piecemeal, quietly, over the long course. All in all, this has been the real contribution of radicalism, to serve as an advance guard, mirroring lesser but genuine and often growing discontents.

Each age develops its own radicalism, which departs from the contexts of that age. There can be little doubt that a new radicalism is in the process of emerging. It will not be without its dangers—that is the price of a free society, as of life itself—but it will have much to tell those who will listen.

* *New York Times*, February 9, 1964, 76.

BIBLIOGRAPHICAL NOTES

There are many collections of New Jerseyana which contain materials relevant to this study: the libraries of Rutgers and Princeton universities, the Roscoe L. West Library at Trenton State College, The New Jersey Historical Society in Newark, various local and county historical societies, and the excellent local history section of the New York Public Library. For the most part, however, this study, because of its nature, has relied mainly on published materials of various kinds and on newspaper files. Concerning the episodes described which took place in the twentieth century, there is a wealth of secondary accounts but, since those episodes were highly controversial, the accounts tend to be polemical and emotional to an unusual degree; they must be used with extreme care.

On the crucial matter of the definition of terms, the brief articles in the *Encyclopedia of the Social Sciences* provide a valuable starting point, in particular that on "Radicalism" by Horace Kallen. Those by Roberto Michels on "Conservatism" and Guido de Ruggiero on "Liberalism" are also noteworthy, as are the discussions in certain books on political ideology, of which two might be singled out, Feliks Gross (ed.), *European Ideologies: A Survey of Twentieth Century Political Ideas* (New York, 1948), and Carl J. Friedrich (ed.), *Totalitarianism* (Cambridge, 1954). Some of the articles in the latter, especially those by Hannah Arendt and George Kennan, are exceptionally stimulating and perceptive. Harvey Goldberg (ed.), *American Radicals* (New York, 1957) contains useful articles, in particular that by Goldberg and William A. Williams entitled "Thoughts About American Radicalism." I have found Chester Destler's *American Radicalism 1865-1901* (New London, 1946) helpful, as I did Fred E. Haynes, *Social Politics in the United States* (Boston and New York, 1924). Pitirim A. Sorokin, "Leaders of Labor and Radical Movements in the United States and Foreign Countries," *American Journal of Sociology*, XXXIII, No. 1, 382-411, is an early attempt at definition.

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INDEX

- Abolitionists, in New Jersey, 20-27; *see also* Underground Railway
- Alcott, Bronson, 42
- Amalgamated Textile Workers (ATWA), 70-72
- American Civil Liberties Union: "Free Speech" issue, 82, 83; pamphlet cited, 102n; *see also* Civil Liberties
- American Federation of Labor (A F of L), 55, 57, 58, 73, 77, 78
- American Party, as political arm of Know-Nothings, 29-33; *see also* Fillmore and Deshler
- American Protective Association, 33, 85; *see also* H. F. Bowers
- American Railway Union, 56
- American Revolution, 1, 17, 18, 19, Chap. II *passim*; and Conservative tradition, 103
- American Zionist Council, 107
- American Zionist Youth Council, 107
- Anarchism, 55, 61-64 *passim*, 67, 68, 83
- Anti-Communism: procedures in, 87; and literal expression, 81-82; Supreme Court on (Nelson decision), 101; in New Jersey, 101-102
- Anti-Defamation Statutes, 94-95
- Anti-Masonic Party, 27
- Arnold, George, and Raritan Bay Union, 41; *see also* Utopian communities and Utopian "mission"
- Arnold, Nat, 98
- Baer, George F., quoted, 52-53
- Baldwin, Roger, 82
- Baldwin, Samuel, 16
- Ballorn, Adin, quoted, 43-44
- Barbour, U.S. Sen. W. W., 96
- Bassett, T. D. Seymour, quoted, 39-40, 40n.
- Bateman, Elmo, 87-88, 89
- Beecher, Henry Ward, quoted, 53, 105; *see also* Social Darwinism
- Belcher, Governor Jonathan, 17
- Bell, Daniel, 102, 102n.
- Bellamy, Edward, 49, 55; *see* Nationalism Movement

- Berger, Victor, Socialist leader, 70; *see also* Socialism and Socialists
- Bimson, Chief of Police, Paterson, 63
- Birney, James G., Liberty Party candidate, 42
- Bloor, Ella Reeve ("Mother" Bloor), 80, 80n., 105
- Borah, U.S. Sen. Wm. E., 78; *see also* Passaic Strike
- Bolsheviks & Bolshevism, 66, 71; and terrorism, 67; *see also* Communism and Communists
- Bowers, H. F., and American Protective Assn., 85n.
- Brisbane, Arthur, 35, 37, 38
- British East India Co., 18
- Bruckman, Wm., Socialist Mayor of Haledon, 64
- Bryan, William Jennings, quoted, 53n.
- Buchanan, James, 32
- Bucklin, John, 48; *see* N. American Phalanx
- Bund, German-American, 89-100
- Carnegie, Andrew, 7
- Case of William MacQueen* (Wishart), cited, 54
- Channing, Wm. H., 36
- Choate, Joseph H., and Income Tax Bill of 1894, 10
- Choate, Rufus, quoted, 29
- Christian Century*, magazine, 77
- Christian Educational Association, 106
- City College of New York, 74
- Civil Liberties at bay, 62, 67, 77, 81-83; Supreme Court rulings on, 82, 83
- Civil War, 2, 7, 8, 44
- Colby, Bainbridge, 76
- Communism and Communists, 11, 12, 14; of 1920's, 66-81 *passim*; and early Red scare, 66-68; and Radical Right, 83-85, 86, 89-95; idealism of, 79; and Socialist schism, 70, 71, 101; after WW II, 100, 102-106 *passim*; versus Liberals, 101; and CIO purge of, 102
- Communist Party of U.S.A., 64, 71, 75, 102
- Compromise of 1850, 26, 59
- Congress of Industrial Organizations (CIO), 83; purge of Communists in N.J., 102
- Cornell, Cornelius, abolitionist, 26
- Coughlin, Father: and the Christian Front, 92, 100; *Social Justice*, cited, 100n.
- Darwin, Charles, 9
- Davidson, J., 48
- Davis, James J., 77
- Dearborn Independent*, and the "Protocols of the Elders of Zion," 87; *see* Henry Ford
- Debs, Eugene, 56-70 *passim*; and IWW, 56; and American Railway Union, 56; Presidential candidate (1920), 70
- Declaration of Independence, 3, 4, 21, 82

- De Leon, Daniel, Socialist Labor Leader, 54-58 *passim*; and IWW schism, 56, 58, 58n.; and Deleonites, 70
- Deshler, Charles, and the American Party, 29-31, 29n., 32
- Dewey, John, at Helicon Hall, 48
- Dies Committee, 98
- Dix, Dorothea, 5
- Doherty Company, Henry, Paterson, 58
- Dunn, Police Chief, Hackensack, 63
- Eastman, Max, quoted, 79
- Emerson, Ralph Waldo, 42; quoted, 34, 37
- Espionage Act, 67
- Everett, John, abolitionist, 26
- Fascists, American, 11, 12, 83, 94
- Federal Bureau of Investigation, 91
- Fillmore, Millard, and the American Party, 32-33
- Flynn Elizabeth Gurley, 50, 62, 64, 64n., 66, 82n.; and Tresca, 63, 63n.; work cited, 63n., 64n.
- Ford, Henry, and anti-Semitism, 87
- Foster, William, Socialist Labor Leader, 25, 71
- Fourier, Charles, 35, 37-38, 39
- Fourierism, 37
- Franklin, John Hope, cited, 19-20, 19n., 20n., 21, 49n.
- Frelinghuysen, Theodore, and Henry Clay, 31
- Fugitive Slave Law of 1793, 25-26; and Compromise of 1850, 26
- George, Henry 49
- German-American Bunds, 89-100
- German-American Vocational League, 90
- Gitlow, Benjamin, Socialist Labor leader, 71-74
- Godwin, Parke, 36
- Goldman, Emma, 59
- Gould, Jay, 7
- Greeley, Horace, 35, 41, 42
- Greenwich Tea Party, 18-19, 21n.
- Grimke, Sarah, quoted, 43
- Hague, Frank, Mayor of Jersey City, 82-83
- Hamilton, Alexander, and Society for Establishing Useful Manufactures, 51
- Hamilton, John, 17
- Hartmann Sadakichi, at Helicon Hall, 48
- Hashomer Hatzair, 107
- Haywood, Wm. ("Big Bill"); and Western Federation of Miners, 56; and IWW, 56-70 *passim*; see also IWW and Paterson strikes
- Hechalutz Farm-Schomria, 107
- Helicon Hall, 46-49; see Upton Sinclair
- Hillquit, Morris, Socialist Labor leader, 70-71
- Hitler, Adolph, 90

- Holmes, Oliver Wendell, Justice, quoted, 53
- Immigrants and immigration policies: consequences of, 52; working conditions of, 60, 63; and Kellor Committee, 72; living conditions of, 73; and KKK, 86
- Independent Union of Industrial Workers (Textile Industry of Passaic), 72
- Industrial Council of Passaic Wool Manufacturers, 70
- Industrial Revolution, 34
- Industrial Workers of the World (IWW), or "Wobblies," 50-66, 50-79 *passim*, 70, 83; and textile strikes, 55-59, 60-66; violence as policy, 56, 57; civil war in ranks of, 60, 64, 65; and Red scare, 67
- Inness, George, 43
- Italian-Americans, 61
- Jackson, Andrew, 27
- James, William, at Helicon Hall, 48
- Jefferson, Thomas, 4
- Jersey City Journal*, in Passaic strike, 76
- John Birch Society, 83, 106
- Johnson, Andrew, quoted, 29
- Jungle, The* (Upton Sinclair), 46
- Klappcott, August, 97, 98
- Knights of Columbus, 87-89
- Knights of Labor, 6
- Know-Nothings, 26, 27-33
- Ku Klux Klan, 29, 31, 33; and Know-Nothings, 83-87, 85n.; in N.J., 85-86, 98
- Kuhn, Fritz, 91
- Kunze, Gerhard, 91, 97, 98
- Laswell, Harold, 99
- League of Women Voters, 83
- "Leftists," defined, 10, 11, 12, 55, 56, 71; distinguished from "Rightists," 85
- Lenin, Vladimir, 71
- Lewis, Sinclair, at Helicon Hall, 48
- Lincoln, Abraham, 2, 94
- Looking Backward* (Bellamy), cited, 49; see also "Nationalist Movement"
- Lovejoy, Elijah, 6
- Lovestone, Jay, 71
- Lynchings, statistics on, 13
- MacBride, Andrew, 63
- MacQueen, William, 54
- Madison, James, 4
- Madison Square Garden Pageant, 64
- Mann, Horace, 5
- Marxists, Marxism, 9-10, 50, 55
- McCarthyism, 101; 104
- McGinley, Conde, publisher of *Common Sense*, 106
- McGinnis, Wm. C., first Negro voter, 21n.
- McIntire, Carl, and Christian Beacon Press, 106
- McKinley, Pres. Wm., consequences of assassination, 62
- Meliorism, 35ff., 61
- Miller, Sen. Jacob W., quoted, 26-27, 27n.
- Miller, Wm., and the "Millerites," 5, 6

- Minturn, Justice, 64
 Morgan, J. P., 7
 Morris, Gov. Lewis, quoted, 17
 Muste, A. V., 70
- National Labor Union, 61
 "Nationalism" movement (Bel-
 lamy), 49, 55-56; *see also*
 Utopian communities and
 Utopian "mission"
- Nativism, 22
 Nazis and Naziism, 89-100;
see also German-American
 Bund
- Negroes, 13, 19, 20-21, 24, 29,
 60
- Nelson, Steve, Supreme Court
 case, 101
- Neville, Judge Samuel, 17
- New Deal, 6-7, 92, 94; *see also*
 Franklin D. Roosevelt
- New Jersey, localities: Bergen
 County, 82; Bridgeton, 18;
 Cohansey Bay 18; Dela-
 ware Bay, 18; Elizabeth-
 town, 16; Essex County,
 17; Greenwich, 18; Hack-
 ensack, 21, 82; Irvington,
 98; Monmouth County,
 16; Morris County, 18;
 New Brunswick, 68; Perth
 Amboy, 17, 21, 87; Somer-
 set County, 20; Sussex
 County, 28; Union City,
 91; *see also* Jersey City,
 Newark, Passaic, Paterson
- New Jersey Socialist Unity
 Conference, 55
- New Republic*, on civil liber-
 ties, 77
- Newark, 16, 68; Fire of 1910,
 51; Dies Committee hear-
 ings in, 86n., 98-99; sub-
 version trials in, 99-100
Newark News, and labor, 18
Newark Sunday Call, and la-
 bor, 63
- Nimmo, George, Passaic
 sheriff, 77
- North American Phalanx, 33-
 48 *passim*; *see also* Horace
 Greeley and Arthur Bris-
 bane
- Noyes, John H., leader of
 Perfectionists, quoted, 37;
see also Utopian commu-
 nities
- Owen, Robert, 35
- Paine, Thomas: *Common*
Sense, 5; *The Crisis*, 6;
The Age of Reason, 6
- Palmer, A. Mitchell, architect
 of the "Red Scare," 67
- Passaic Issue*, Socialist weekly,
 63
- Passaic Strike, 51, 54, 60,
 69, 70, 72-81, 104, 105;
 Communist activities in,
 74; defeated, 78; conse-
 quences of, 78-81; and
 "Revolutionaries," 80-81;
 assessment of, 80, 81-82;
 and civil liberties, 81;
 leaders of, 105; anti-radi-
 cal reaction to, 106
- Passaic textile mills, 64; sta-
 tistics on, 73
- Paterson strikes, 51, 54, 57-
 65 *passim*, 72; and "labor
 radicals," 61; statistics on,
 65; consequences of, 65-
 66
- Pelley, Wm. Dudley, 100

- Pinkerton Detectives, 52
 Pomeroy, Eltmeed, 49
 Populist Party and Populists, 8, 9, 69
 Preiskel, Commissioner Abram, 75
Prigg v. Pennsylvania, 25-26, 26 n.
Progress and Poverty (Henry George), 49
- Quakers, 4, 16; anti-slavery sentiment, 19-20, 27; and Negro education, 21; in New Jersey, 21-22, 26; as Utopians, 42
 Quinton, Patrick, 61-65; *see also* Paterson strikes
 Quitrent riots, 15-17; significance of, 17-18
- Radcliffe College, 79, 81
 Rafferty Bill, 92
 Raritan Bay Union, 42-43. *See* Utopian communities
 Reconstruction, 2
 Red scare, 14, 33, 66-71; in N. J., 67-71; and anarchy, 67-68; *see also* Communism, Socialism, and Standard Oil Co. of N. J.
 Reed, John, 58, 64, 66, 71
 Religious "extremists," 4, 5, 6, 44
 Riesman, David, cited, 95
 Ripley, George, 36. *See* North American Phalanx
 Rockefeller, John D., quoted, 7, 53
 Roman Catholics: enlightened treatment of, 22-23; persecution of, 19, 22-23, 29; as immigrants, 28; *see also* Know-Nothings, KKK, and Elmo Bateman
 Roosevelt, Franklin D., 6-7; target of Bund, 91-92, 95
 Roosevelt, Theodore, 63-64
 Rutherford, Charles, Socialist Labor Leader, 71
- Sacco and Vanzetti trial, 14, 80
 Sanger, Margaret, 58
 Schlesinger, A. M., Sr., quoted, 104, 104 n.
 Scott, Alexander, as Socialist editor, 63-64; indicted and convicted "anarchist," 65-66, 76
 Seldes, Gilbert, quoted, 37
 Shannon, David, cited, 66, 66 n., 82 n.
 Sinclair, Upton, 46-49, 58, 82 n.; and Socialism, 46-49 *passim*; as muckraker, 46
 Slavery, 19, 20, 21, 24-25
 Smith, Al, as 1928 Presidential candidate, 86, 87
 Smith, Joseph, and Mormonism, 6
 Social Darwinism, 52-53
 Socialism and Socialists: in New Jersey, 54, 55, 56, 60, 61, 67-70 *passim*, 74; compared with Communists, 101
 Socialist Labor Party, 50, 54
 Socialist Party, 66, 71, 82
 Socialist Unity Conference, New Jersey, 55
 Spencer, Herbert, 52; *Social Statics*, 53; *see also* Social Darwinism

- Spring, Marcus, as Utopian, 41, 42, 43
- Standard Oil Co., of N. J.: working conditions in, 68; strikes against, 68-69; reaction against, 69
- Strikebreaking, 52, 53, 77-78; by police action, 52, 53; through local ordinances, 62, 77; by arrests, 75-77; through injunctions, 53, 74-75; by violence, 75; by attrition, 77-79
- Strikes and Strikers, 52, 53, 54, 70, 72, 74; causes of: 52; injunctions used in, 51, 53; in 19th century, 61; in World War I, 69, 70; in New Jersey, 57-58, 59, 72 ff.
- Storms, Garry and Mary, 44.
See Lord's Farm
- Sumner, Wm. Graham, 52; *see also* Social Darwinism
- Textile industry, 69, 81; in 19th century, 51, 57
- Textile workers' unions: in New Jersey, 72-81 *passim*; and union committees (UFC), 74-76 *passim*, 77; central exec. committee, 74.
- Thomas, Congressman J. Par-
nell, 98
- Thomas, Norman, 81, 82, 83
- Thoreau, Henry, D., 42, 105
- Transcendentalism, 36. *See*
Emerson
- Tresca, Carlo, 58, 62, 64, 66,
82 n.
- Triangle Shirtwaist Fire, 51-
52
- Underground Railway, 25-27
- Unions, 55, 73-74
- United Textile Workers
(AF of L), 58, 73, 77, 78
- Updegraff, Allan, at Helicon
Hall, 48
- Utopian communities: in New
Jersey, 33-49; Brook Farm,
35; Free Acres, 49;
Hopedah Community, 43;
Oneida, 37; Lord's Farm,
44-45;
- Utopian "mission": character-
istics of, 24, 44; radical,
24, 33, 36, 49; reforming
zeal of, 33-34, 35-36, 37,
42-44, 46; visionary and
theoretical, 34, 37, 38, 44,
45, 47, 49; idealistic, 37,
49; anarchism of, 44
- Vigilante response, in Ameri-
can history, 22-23; 45, 88
- Vorwaerts, Socialist newspa-
per, 54
- Weisbord, Albert, 74-79 *pas-
sim*; heads UFC, 74; ar-
rested and tried, 75-76
- Weld, Angela Grimke, 24, 42-
43; *see also* Raritan Bay
Union
- Weld, Theodore, 24, 42-43;
see also Raritan Bay Un-
ion
- Whig Party, 28, 33
- Williams, Michael, at Helicon
Hall, 48
- Wilson, Woodrow, 6-7
- Wise, Justine Waterman, 72
- Wolfe, Bertram, 76
- Woolman, John, 21
- Woolcott, Alexander, at Heli-
con Hall, 48

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

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