

More Faith, Gentlemen!

by Robert Minor —

LAST Sunday the New York Times published an editorial under the title "Inevitable Socialism?" which, no matter what its faults, must be given a serious answer. Its theme is stated as a question raised by its London correspondent: **Whether "German National Socialism has made socialism in Europe inevitable even when unwanted."**

To get at the gist of it, we have to pass by the Times' painful but apparently unavoidable vulgarity in assuming that "German National Socialism" has some kinship to socialism. It was to make people think such things that Hitler named his gangsters "National Socialists."

But, having passed that by, we come to the salient point raised by the Times: **whether the people of Europe will accept the continuation of the capitalist system when the war is over.**

The newspaper senses that the problem is in its essence whether capitalist production, with a solution of market problems, can prove itself **more efficient** than its alternative. But this raises it to a world scale and includes the United States.

On a world scale, the Times would be justified in having in this matter a confidence somewhat firmer than its question-mark editorial manifests.

Why? Is it because, in terms of great epochs, capitalism is the more advanced mode of production? Certainly not. Measured in such terms, capitalism is a backward system; considered in terms of historic epochs, it is less efficient than socialism; it fails to measure up as the better system by the very measuring-rod the Times correctly selected. This is indicated by the facts related by the Times in regard to Great Britain's need to resort to "controlled collective action" out of sheer economic necessity, entirely aside from political compulsion of "public opinion" that is cited as compelling kindred steps on the Continent. Capitalism is compelled for the preservation of its own life to take steps which have, in a one-sided way, a socialistic



nature. Is that contradictory? Yes, the dialectic of history is replete with such contradictions. But measures of this kind are not in the least effectively socialistic; on the contrary, they are interventions of the state absolutely essential in the immediate present to keep capitalism alive.

Considering the matter in the less long-ranged terms of time, as a proposition of our immediate postwar years—I repeat that the Times could afford a firmer and more assured faith in capitalism.

ONE of the principal reasons why the Times and many others show weakness of confidence in capitalism's still vital and enormous role, is—though it seems paradoxical—their lack of confidence in the vital role of socialism. When we walk in a world which we ought now to know will never again be without an extremely powerful socialist country, we are made less sure-footed by failure to see the completely altered situation that arises as a result of the very fact that socialism is historically a more advanced system than capitalism. Leaders of capitalism are weakened in that very leadership if they fail to see that in the larger terms of time the socialism incorporated in Soviet Russia, upon which we depend and must depend in this alliance to help solve problems of production and consumption, is incomparably more efficient in the release of the world's capacity to expand its forces of production, and to find the road from production to consumption.

The decisive thing is not an endless Hamlet soliloquy in abstract terms over the relative efficiency of two idealized systems—but rather the fact that our country and Great Britain have taken a course of allying our capitalist system with a system which, in historic terms but not in all terms, is more advanced.

Quit being befuddled by the half-witted puns of Hitler gangsters about "socialism" and "national socialism," and face the fact as serious men that the United States, immeasurably the most advanced capitalist country, together with advanced British capitalism and with Russia, is destroying by military means the last powerful manifestation of medievalism that history has permitted in the world and that we are forming our way of living together with the socialist state.

But also face the matter concretely that even though Socialist Russia has broken a new path and has made enormous progress, and has survived a strain that would have destroyed any but a socialist state, she has not developed that productivity of labor in which we, the foremost capitalist country, still exceed the whole world.

And if we now understand that the whole of Europe and Asia after this war will be under the influence, more than anything else, of the cooperation of the United States and Russia, and will no longer be compelled to remain pauperized subjects of imperialist aggression—then we will see that the Times has more justification than it has asserted for confidence in a continued vitality of capitalism.

However, there is no rational way to firm confidence in the capitalism of our country in the present world that does not include confidence in the vitality and the enormously progressive economic role of Socialist Russia. The vitality for which the Times hopes is in fact the vitality of the two together.

IN the partnership of the two, the stronger present material strength is, by far, that of the capitalist United States. There is no immediate reason to think the United States will lose this lead.

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Worth Repeating

DEWEY'S VACATION is being spent in this kind of a hotel, says the **NATION** in its current (Nov. 25) issue: Of all the resort hotels in this country, Gov. Dewey chose the Cloister at Sea Island Beach, Georgia, for his post-campaign vacation. A Nation reader informs us that last summer the hotel had prominently displayed on its registration desk a sign which read: "Catering to a Gentile Clientele Only." The New York office of the hotel assures us that the sign is still there.