The "Larger Americanism"

IT is easy to sneer at Theodore Roosevelt, as easy as rolling off a log. But it is not as interesting or instructive as trying to measure his social significance in terms of the Imperialistic tendencies which are forging into supremacy in this glorious democracy of ours.

Roosevelt is a politician, but he is not a politician of the type of President Wilson who changes his convictions over night and sees realities through a haze of stale ideology. Roosevelt is a politician with

a canny sense of realities; a politician who, representing certain class interests, has conformed to those interests in a series of logical developments. The war has given him a fine chance for assertion. And the first thing to note in all his recent declarations is not an abandonment of his former convictions, but a development, an elaboration, a systematizing of former principles in line with new conditions.

The "Larger Americanism" is what Roosevelt calls his present policy. And what is this "Larger Americanism"? It is a policy, a set of principles, identical in every fundamental respect with the "New Nationalism" enunciated by Roosevelt in 1912. The enunciation of the "New Nationalism" marked an epoch in American politics. It was a consistent formulation of the requirements of concentrated and collectivistic capitalism, and of the necessity for a compromise between warring factions of the capitalist class in a centralized national administrative control of industry—in all essentials, State Capitalism. The difference between the "New Nationalism" and the "Larger Americanism" is that the former emphasized a domestic policy, the latter emphasizes a foreign policy. But each flows from the other; and Roosevelt is co-ordinating his advocacy of preparedness and an aggressive foreign policy with the principles of his "New Nationalism."

There are many gaps in Roosevelt's policy,—ideas tentatively proposed or completely neglected,—but its essential meaning is unmistakable. In his address, "Fear God and Take Your Own Part," Roosevelt formulates the chief points of his policy:

Military training, starting in the high schools of the country; greater Governmental control over corporations and lessened State control, together with Federal supervision and encouragement of the manufacture of munitions; taking care of the working classes and the business interests at the same time; an efficient National Government system as the best instrument of industrial and military preparedness, all the forces to such an end to be under the regulation of a single power—the power of the National Government. Military policy to be planned from the standpoint of lasting national interests; and the workers to be given a stake in this Imperialistic "Larger Americanism" by the promotion of "prosperity" and the "just distribution of its blessings among employers and employees alike." Elsewhere Roosevelt has indicated the Imperialistic bias of his plea for national defense:

"For reasons I have given elsewhere I believe that we should base our military and naval program upon the retention and defense of Alaska, Hawaii, the Panama Canal and all its approaches, including all the points of South American soil north of the Equator, and of course including the defense of our own coasts and the islands of the West Indies. To

free the navy we need ample coast defenses manned by a hundred thousand men, and a mobile regular army of one hundred and fifty thousand men."

And the Imperialistic and State Capitalistic character of Roosevelt's ideas is underscored in his reference to Germany: "Germany offers a striking example of national efficiency on a gigantic scale."

The Roosevelt program should be considered in relation to developments in the world of American industry and finance, and then its ominous significance is plain.

The accumulation of capital and the necessity of seeking new outlets for its use is the financial urge behind Imperialism. Today, due to the war, the accumulation of capital in this country is proceeding at a terrific pace; and after the war means must be sought for its profitable investment. Already the prediction is being made that interest rates will drop. But capital refuses to remain idle, and if necessary *creates* opportunities for its use. Undoubtedly, this capital could be profitably invested in this country: our resources and industrial capacity are as yet only slightly developed; but the returns would be small and slow, comparatively. Accordingly, an irresistible tendency will arise to invest in undeveloped countries where returns are both quick and large. This tendency is now active in the circles of financial capital, where feverish preparations are being made for an attempt to secure dominance after the war in the investment markets of the world.

The organization of the "American International Corporation," capitalized at $50,000,000, with the purpose of promoting American investments abroad, is indicative of the tendency we have discussed. James A. Farrell, president of the United States Steel Corporation, emphasizes the necessity of foreign investments as "a commercial preparedness measure," the means of increasing our trade and exports by financing the need of those growing countries which are our best customers. Great Britain's $20,000,000,000 of foreign investments "retains and strengthens its hold on the neutral markets of the world." This standpoint gives foreign investments an importance not only to financial capital, but to the capitalist class as a whole.

In the light of these developments, the "Larger Americanism" looms as an attempt to prepare the United States for an aggressive rôle in world finance and politics. Armed force, potential and actual, is required to protect Latin America from European aggression and preserve it for "our own" monopolistic exploitation; armed force and an aggressive foreign policy are required to maintain the prestige of the United States in world politics and guarantee "our" capital an equal opportunity in Asia and the markets of the world; a strong centralized national government and administrative control of industry are required to secure an obedient and faithful working class the "just distribution" of the profits of Imperialism by means of slightly higher wages and social reforms; and an effective administrative control of industry is required to free the energies of concentrated capital by compelling small capital to compromise and satisfy its interests by participating in the spoils of an aggressive Imperialism. This is the "Larger Americanism," and Theodore Roosevelt is its prophet!—*F.*

Schenectady and Elsewhere

THERE is trouble in Schenectady, dissatisfaction among the members of the Local, growing out of the action of Mayor Lunn in filling the several positions of the city administration. Those comrades displeased with the Mayor complain of his tendency to "disregard, whenever it suits him, the letter and spirit of party rules." Some of the appointments by the mayor are particularly criticised on the ground that the appointees are not party members, and because qualified members could have been found for those positions.

This is not the first case of this kind in the history of our party. Similar troubles have arisen before in other municipalities carried by the nominees of the Socialist party.

As a matter of fact, such victories as we achieve are usually the result of a combination of forces: 1, party members; 2, enrolled Socialists who are not dues paying members of the organization; 3, Socialist sympathizers, more or less half-baked camp followers; 4, bourgeois elements, dissatisfied with the old party machines and hoping to get more satisfactory results from a personally honest and capable Socialist.

In all such combinations the regular party members are a comparatively small minority. Yet they feel morally responsible for the administration sailing under their flag, and naturally desire to steer its course along the lines of straight Socialist policies.

It so happens that in American cities Socialist victories are far from producing clear-cut Socialist administrations. The obstacles encountered are tremendous. Our municipalities are not self-centered political units like the medieval European cities with their self-governments under permanent charters. Nor are they economically as self-centered. They are treated as sub-divisions of the states, subject to state legislation constantly interfering with their internal affairs. Our legislatures are dominated by capitalistic influences. They create barriers to municipal activities interfering with the capitalist ideal. If need be they pass "Ripper laws" effectually tying the hands of daring reformers. Socialist officials bold enough to disregard such capitalistic handicaps may be removed in short order by state authority.

Hence we need not be surprised to find that our victories in Haverhill, Brockton, Milwaukee, Sche-