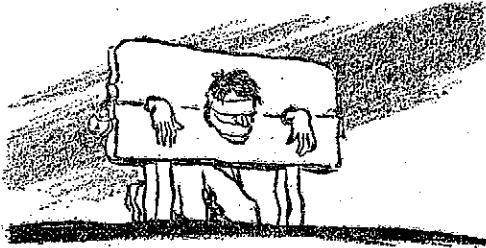


Let's Muzzle All of Them

THE HATCH ACT, acknowledging the inclination of bureaucracy to perpetuate its power and its emoluments, attempts to diminish this danger to democracy by barring Federal employees (below "policy making" grade) from participation in politics. Included in the proscription are those whose income is partially derived from Federal funds.

It is reported that one out of every six citizens in the United States either is on the payroll or re-



ceives support from government disposal of taxes. The new conscript army will increase the number of those who technically come under the spirit of the Hatch Act. If we include supply contractors and their employees, since they all derive their income from taxation rather than from production, it is obvious that the number of those whose interest in politics is pecuniary will soon embrace the larger part of the population.

This is inevitable. The unsolved problem of poverty necessarily results in a centralization of power. Economic maladjustment creates mass fear; the populace, completely ignorant of causes, rushes to its equally ignorant but more cunning politicians for help, and the politicians, whether maliciously or from a false sense of destiny, take advantage of such mass resignation to entrench themselves in the power thus thrust upon them. Taxation is the grinding stone and a large class of citizens, dependent for their livelihood on the grist, create the bureaucratic mill.

No Hatch Act can stop or even delay the process. The rise of a dominant ruling class and the consequent growth of a class of dependents can be obviated only by removing the cause of poverty; and that will be found in the field of political economy, not in politics. The failure to apply ourselves to this economic problem has not only resulted in the "dirty politics" which legislative acts have failed to clean up, but also in creating conditions which point to a greater centralization of power and a dependence of the people on the whim of bureaucracy.

Just how the cunning hand of Statism lays hold of our democratic idea of life is shown by a recent decision of the United States Civil Service Com-

mission, an enforcing agency for the Hatch Act, that this law applies to the faculties of land-grant colleges. So subsidized by the nation are sixty-eight educational institutions, like the University of California, which applied for a ruling on whether its teachers are permitted to engage in politics. The faculties of these institutions may vote, but they may not plump for any political party. Theoretically they may not express their political opinions in public nor in their classrooms. Since their salaries come from a public endowment it is assumed that their opinions may not be unbiased.

Now, when the government subsidizes a button factory, should not the same inhibition apply to the button-makers? Does not the remuneration of the button-makers come from the same source as that of the professors in these sixty-eight colleges? The janitor in the button factory should not suffer discrimination as compared with the university president. Both should be muzzled.

Our mail carriers—railroads, airplanes and steamships—are subsidized. All periodicals enjoying second class mail privileges are subsidized. Farmers and land owners (including banks and insurance companies) receiving AAA bounties are subsidized. Veterans are subsidized. Many hospitals and scientific institutions are subsidized. The millions of people who through direct or indirect subsidization derive all or part of their sustenance from the public larder should, if the decision in the University of California case is logically extended, be estopped from any political effort, save perhaps that of voting.

In time this will come about. It will not be brought about by the bureaucrats. A hungry people loses all sense of dignity; a fearful people becomes depraved. Clamoring for help from a decaying economy it will heap upon the politician all the power he demands as necessary for its relief; it will force him to become the master of a slave people.

No Hatch Act can save democracy.

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