

“Unfinished Victory” and Mr. Nock

By M. J. BERNSTEIN

A PROFOUND contempt for the mass of mankind underlies the philosophy of totalitarianism, whether fascist or communist. But more difficult to discern is the same contempt masquerading under a cloak of liberalism, of which Albert Jay Nock's doctrine of the “educable elite” is an interesting example. And in times of crisis such as the world is now experiencing, it is not surprising—indeed, it is inevitable—that the basic sympathy which ultimately unites these haters of their fellow-men, should prove far stronger than the superficial differences which divide them.

In the April, 1941 issue of *Scribner's Commentator*, Mr. Nock discusses “Unfinished Victory” by Arthur Bryant, published in England in 1940, (though written before the outbreak of the war), and waxes indignant at the failure of any American firm to publish the book in this country. Mr. Nock suspects a conspiracy, a Jewish conspiracy in fact, to prevent the American public from reading what he considers a most important book, an “able, cogent and gentle-spirited book,” as he calls it. Mr. Nock dislikes Britain, he has a scarcely-concealed sympathy for present-day Germany, and his admiration for “Unfinished Victory” supports the view that he subscribes to Mr. Bryant's thinly-veiled anti-Semitism. (See *Atlantic Monthly*, July 1941, for further corroboration.)

Arthur Bryant is a die-hard, reactionary Tory, biographer and admirer of Stanley Baldwin, opponent of free trade and of economic liberalism, sympathizer with Hitler's racial dogmas and doctrine of “Blood and Soil.” A few quotations from “Unfinished Victory” will illustrate:—

“Adolf Hitler, unknown to all but a few, was still in the early stages of his struggle, yet it may be said that Germany was already seeking him.”

“Hitler was acute enough to realize that the Marxist did not stand for freedom but for a despotic uniformity, enforced by terror and the annihilation of all who opposed them.” [Hitler, in Mr. Bryant's opinion, obviously stands for freedom and individualism.]

“Hitler's real quarrel with the capitalist and Marxist system alike was that they stopped things from growing. They were concerned not with creation, *but the one with making quick profits* [Emphasis mine—M. J. B.] and the other with establishing an unnatural and sterile uniformity.” [Note the mystic nationalist's hatred for the merchant, the trader.]

“This damning indictment of modern society and ‘its original sin of racial corruption’ constitutes the central theme of Hitler's political philosophy. It has never been properly answered.”

“The dreamer of Munich [Hitler] outlined a new organization of society to undo a century's neglect.”

“They destroyed because they were shocked . . .” [Referring to the righteous moral indignation of Hitler's storm troopers.]

“To the dispossessed millions it [Nazism] offered something even more attractive—status and responsibility.”

And Bryant approvingly quotes a German as writing:—

“A conquered and oppressed people has no place for an internationally-minded and internationally-organized commerce . . .”

Now let us select a few choice anti-Semitic morsels from Mr. Bryant's heavily-laden tray.

“Few of the Jews who set the spiritual and cultural fashions for Germany in the ‘twenties had any comprehension of a countryman's point of view. They were not themselves countrymen or producers, *but by long wont migrants and middle men* [Emphasis mine—M. J. B.]; the descendants of men who had been forced to live for centuries as exploiters [though never landowners like Prussian Junkers or British Tories—M. J. B.] rather than as creators . . . Their inherited instinct was to skim the cream rather than to waste vain time and effort in making enduring things . . . They were exponents of the get-rich-quick philosophy . . . lovers of the flamboyant and the arts of advertisement . . .”

“ . . . Who [the Jews] in the nineteen-twenties seemed, with all the invincible vitality and opportunism of their race, to be making of a broken nation their washpot.”

“The lack of common purpose, the *treachery of the Jew* [Emphasis mine—M. J. B.] and the stranger within her too-open gates, above all, the lack of consistent purpose in her leadership, had consigned Germany to the lowest hell of even her unhappy history.”

“And the dispossessed—the lonely and dispirited men and women who had seen their homes, their savings and their livelihood sacrificed to the Jewish speculator when the currency collapsed—turned also to the new creed.”

“To the peasant he [Hitler] promised the freedom of his land, now mortgaged to the Jewish usurer . . .”

“If one had the money, one could stay at luxurious hotels and sit among well-dressed people—rich Jews from Galicia or native profiteers—eating and drinking fabulously expensive food and wine.” [This refers to the blockade-caused famine right after the War.]

“Authorship in Germany almost seemed to have become a kind of Hebrew monopoly.”

“The perversion [homosexuality—M. J. B.] which has always been a major German failing was now exploited

and stimulated by Jewish caterers who, while seldom sharing such tastes, did not hesitate to turn them to their profit."

These few examples are at least indicative of the nature of Mr. Bryant's prejudices. However, even a temperamental bias may occasionally be justified by an appeal to facts, to history, or to authority. "Unfinished Victory" is a jumble of distortions, inaccuracies, misquotations and downright lies. Let us examine some of the statements in Mr. Bryant's book, first those in which he quotes or refers, as his authority, to Edgar Ansel Mowrer's "Germany Puts the Clock Back":—

"Just after the revolution, three little Jewish clothing dealers came to Berlin from Poland . . . They had a gift of pleasing. They received contracts for municipal uniforms and linens . . . In return they provided nearly the entire city administration with free clothes . . . From time to time they arranged Roman banquets with tubs of caviar and barrels of champagne . . . After a trial that lasted three years the Sklareks were given hard labor."

But Mr. Bryant doesn't finish this quotation from Mowrer. Here is what he omits, falsifying as he does always where the Jews are concerned:—

"The Sklareks, etc., all were Jews and served splendidly for anti-Semitic propaganda. But Dumke was incurably Aryan. Conspicuously Aryan were the Lahusen brothers, church-going deacons who built up a wool trust by ingenious financial jugglery. Even worse was the case of the *Devaheim*, a combined bank and a home-purchasing Co-operative under the control of the Protestant Home Missions. The managers were nearly all Lutheran pastors. All in all, a pretty piece of embezzlement of poor people's money by holy and wholly Aryan crooks. Corruption under the German Republic was, sad to say, not limited to Jews and Republicans."

Let us turn once more to Arthur Bryant:—

"The same vivid writer [Mowrer] and others have described for us those innumerable meetings that were taking place throughout the length and breadth of a tortured land under National Socialism . . . The speaker [Hitler] never halts for applause. The audience remains intent, silent, absorbed as it follows every word of his scorn, his indignation, his invincible faith."

But let us read what Mowrer himself actually has to say about it:—

"If he [Hitler] stops, they howl for more. He states the most astonishing and totally inaccurate things. He roars, he pleads; if need be, he can weep. But he never analyzes, discusses or argues. He affirms, attacks, comforts. According to his axiom of aiming at the lowest in his audience, he keeps to the vaguest generalities and formulae, repeating them with infinite verve."

"So it went on, night after night, for years. Within the thousands were perhaps a handful who did not rise to the

occasion. They looked for persuasion and received only theatricals of a pretty cheap type. They wanted argument and were given rhetoric and preposterous misstatement.

"He [Hitler] collected and disseminated social and political resentments, fostered special hatreds, encouraged the violent suppression of adversaries, appealing one after the other to each of the more brutal human instincts.

"Germans seem obsessed by a desire to obey. And Hitler so thoroughly fostered this feeling that you could hear National-Socialist students at Berlin University shouting in chorus: 'We spit on Freedom!' (*Wir scheissen auf die Freiheit!*)"

Mr. Bryant refers to Matthias Erzberger as "the Social Democrat politician." As a matter of fact, Erzberger was not a Social Democrat, but a Catholic Centrist who was forced to sign the armistice ending World War I because the Junker generals who demanded the armistice refused to accept the onus of signing it. Erzberger, the Catholic (not the Social Democrat), was murdered by fanatical nationalists as a betrayer of Germany—but Hindenburg was elected President and manifested his gratitude by calling Hitler to the chancellorship. Mr. Bryant has no word of criticism for the Junkers who made the war, refused all possible attempts at a peace during its course, forced the Republican government to sign the armistice, bled the Republican government to the tune of hundreds of millions of marks, and then aided Hitler to gain control of the German state.

"Unfinished Victory" depicts Republican Germany and the origins and success of National Socialism completely in the manner in which it is now being presented in the Third Reich. According to this view, Hitler and his movement represented the inevitable and justifiable reaction of the overwhelming majority of the German people against the ignominy, the humiliations and the material and spiritual sufferings engendered by the imposition of the *diktat* of Versailles. They stood for the reunion of Germany with all the German-speaking sections of Central Europe. In other words, the Nazi party, and especially the Fuehrer, are shown to us here as the concrete political manifestation of a Germany resurgent, a Germany reaching out to take its rightful place among the family of nations, as the most important power on the European continent.

This is the National Socialist fable, whole-heartedly accepted by Arthur Bryant, and incidentally by Albert Jay Nock. What are the actual facts in the matter, facts either utterly ignored or crudely misrepresented in "Unfinished Victory"?

The German Army was not stabbed in the back by the treachery of the Jews, the republicans and the radicals at home. The last offensive had failed to reach its objective and American troops and equipment were steadily strengthening the Allied forces. The German High Command (Ludendorf and Hindenburg) *demand*ed that the newly installed re-

publican government (the Kaiser had fled to Holland, his landed estates inviolate, as they still are) request an armistice, refusing to accept responsibility for the inevitable military catastrophe that would otherwise result. In other words, the German Army was a defeated army, incapable of further resistance to the growing power of the Allied arms. And forever after, despite its undoubted achievements, the republican government was unjustly associated with the defeat and the peace treaty.

Nationalist sentiment was not slow to profit. Those elements which later became the backbone of Nazi barbarism, directed all their efforts to the destruction of the Republic. Political assassination was usual, and sad to relate, treated leniently. Mr. Bryant has much to say about Communist violence against the Hitlerites, but not a word about the Nazi counter-violence, and the brutal assaults of both extremist wings against the democrats and moderates.

But despite the attacks upon it, in frequent cooperation, of both extreme Left and Right, the Republic managed to achieve the *de facto* termination of the most repressive provisions of the Versailles treaty. All foreign troops were withdrawn from German soil years before the date provided in the Treaty. This was accomplished by Streseman. Reparations were in effect cancelled during the period in which Brüning held office, and while Hjalmar Schacht still professed a belief in the democratic form of government. When Hitler finally took power at the beginning of 1933, the Versailles Treaty's terms had been virtually cancelled, including the disarmament clauses. And Hitler was interested in this—not to realize the just aims of the German nation, but for the purposes of imperialist conquest, indeed for world conquest. Recent and current events sufficiently demonstrate that.

It is true that Austria wished union with Germany—but with the Germany of the Weimar Republic (a step, incidentally, of which Great Britain approved). Hitler delivered his ultimatum to Austria on March 6, 1938; Schuschnigg, the Austrian Chancellor, had planned to hold a plebiscite to determine the wishes of the Austrian population with respect to joining the Third Reich. But Hitler's ultimatum forbade the plebiscite, and despite its cancellation, the German army nevertheless invaded and absorbed Austria. Does this indicate that the Nazis had any confidence in the desire of their Austrian neighbors to become one with them?

But, it is said, the German people, at any rate, overwhelmingly welcomed "the new order." No cruder lie has ever been circulated. Hitler was a minority chancellor, and at no time in its blood-stained career prior to the acquisition of political power, did the Nazi party ever represent a majority of the electorate. The largest vote it ever polled, roughly, 13,000,000, in the July, 1932 election, represented 37% of the total number cast. But a few months later, in November, 1932, in the *last free* election held in Germany, the Nazi vote

dropped to approximately 11,000,000, a decline of 2,000,000 votes, and the party lost over 30 seats in the Reichstag. The movement had passed its peak and was visibly on the wane. But Hindenburg, under the influence of the Junker clique surrounding him (known as the *Herrenklub*), fearing an investigation into the land frauds in which the East Prussian Junkers were deeply involved, hastily called Hitler, the leader of a minority party, to power, in order to prevent a threatened Reichstag investigation into this filthy business. (This is a story which should be of particular interest to Georgeists, but which must await another opportunity for the telling.)

But what need to go on? Enough has been said to indicate that "Unfinished Victory" is a completely inaccurate and distorted history of the forces and events leading to the conditions which have prevailed in Hitlerian Germany since 1933. Mr. Bryant has attempted to whitewash the horrors and atrocities of the Nazi regime, to find justification for its existence, and to lend the weight of his opinion (for whatever it may be worth) to the myth of a nation betrayed not by its own sins and shortcomings but by the treachery of its enemies within (the Jews and republicans), and the injustice and cruelty of the world without. That the Jews represented less than 1% of the German population, that 12,000 of them (a larger percentage than the non-Jewish total) were killed in the first World War, that Ludendorff invited the Polish Jews into Germany, are all facts which "Unfinished Victory" chooses to ignore.

"Anti-Semitism is a temptation to look for evil, not in oneself but in some other exterior quarter. It is flight from an intellectual and moral demand upon oneself, refuge sought in a material claim upon another, whom one can make responsible for one's own weakness and unhappiness. Further, anti-Semitism expresses the inclination of the present age to substitute general exterior activity for spiritual self-transformation. The evil that we will not recognize in our own natures we combat in the shape of a plausible personification. We do it when we are no longer strong enough as human beings to struggle with it directly."

These are the profoundly penetrating observations, not of one who has always hated Hitlerism, not of a Jew seeking to defend himself and his race, but of the former President of the Danzig Senate and close collaborator of the Nazi regime, Hermann Rauschning, writing in his most recent book, "The Redemption of Democracy." And they constitute a sufficient answer to the Hitlers, the Bryants, and the Nocks.

However, the purpose of this article was neither a discussion, as such, of Hitler's Germany nor of Bryant's book. It was rather an examination of the present position of that supposed Georgeist and Jeffersonian democrat, Albert Jay Nock, as manifested in his most recent lucubrations.

In his article on "Unfinished Victory" in *Scribner's Com-*

mentator Mr. Nock makes the following assertions:—

— "No statement that he [Bryant] makes from beginning to end, can be questioned."

"Mr. Bryant's statements are all true and are all put with the most careful discrimination."

In view of our own careful examination of "Unfinished Victory," it is obvious that Mr. Nock is either deliberately attempting to distort and mislead, or else has assumed the role of irresponsible scribbler. He is completely unconcerned with or unaware of the need for arming himself with some authoritative corroboration for the point-of-view he so unqualifiedly endorses. The history of the German Republic, and of the rise of National Socialism have been exhaustively documented, developed and discussed. There is literally no end of accurate and trustworthy sources of information in this field. But Mr. Nock chooses to stand sponsor for a book that might almost have originated from Goebbels' German Ministry of Propaganda. So we shall gently draw the veil by charitably supposing that Mr. Nock's present attitude is due to ignorance, and in order to help him (and others who share his prejudices) to avoid similar mistakes in any future treatment of the subject, we are appending the following bibliography:—

The Revolution of Nihilism—Hermann Rauschning.
The Voice of Destruction—Hermann Rauschning.
The Rise of the German Republic—H. G. Daniels.
The Fall of the German Republic—R. T. Clark.
The History of National Socialism—Konrad Heiden.
Hitler—Konrad Heiden.
The Fascist: His State and His Mind—E. B. Ashton.
Inside Germany—Albert Greszinsky.
Men Against Hitler—Fritz Max Cahen.
The Nazi Dictatorship—Frederich Schuman.
Fascism for Whom?—Max Ascoli.
Germany Enters the Third Reich—Calvin Hoover.
Nazi Germany Means War—Leland Stowe.
The New German Empire—Franz Borkenau.
The End of Economic Man—Peter F. Drucker.
The German Republic—H. Quigley and R. T. Clark.
The Third Reich—Henri Lichtenberger.
The Burning of the Reichstag—Douglas Reed.
Militarism—Karl Liebknecht.
The Recovery of Germany—James Angell.
Fascism and National Socialism—Michael T. Florinsky.
War Against the West—Aurel Kolnai.
Peace With the Dictators?—Norman Angell.
My Austria—Kurt Schuschnigg.
The Vampire Economy—Gunter Reimann.
Battle Against Time—Heinrich Hanser.
German Economy, 1870-1940—Gustav Stolper.
The Strategy of Terror—Edmond Taylor.
France Speaking—Robert de St. Jean.
Unto Caesar—F. A. Voigt.
Out of the Night—Jan Valtin.

(Mr. Nock thinks that Valtin's book is simply war-mongering anti-German propaganda, and almost purely fictional. He is referred to a review of the same by the Rev. H. A. Reinhold in *The Commonwealth* for March 28, 1941.)

In addition to the above, the following are Nazi sources, or sympathetic to National Socialism. They tell their own damning story:—

Mein Kampf—Adolf Hitler.

Germany Reborn—Hermann Goering.

My Part in Germany's Fight—Joseph Goebbels.

Hitler's Official Programme and its Fundamental Ideas—Gottfried Feder.

Man and Technics—Oswald Spengler.

The Hour of Decision—Oswald Spengler.

The End of Reparations—Hjalmar Schacht.

A New Social Philosophy—Werner Sombart.

Germany Prepares for War—Ewald Banse.

John Dewey on Henry George

Dr. John Dewey, America's foremost philosopher, has written a Foreword to the new "Guide for Teaching the Principles of Political Economy," published by the Robert Schalkenbach Foundation (See the Foundation's report elsewhere in this issue). The Guide is a student's manual based upon Henry George's "Progress and Poverty," and in his Foreword Dr. Dewey has the following to say:

PROGRESS AND POVERTY is one of the world's classics. While it falls technically in the field of economics, it is one of the comparatively few books in that field that link economics with politics, sociology, and ethics, and, in consequence, it is required study for the student of government, social affairs and morals, as well as economics.

Domestic conditions have for a long time forced attention to the need of free access by the inhabitants of a country to land, in which are included the natural resources of mines, forest and water-power as well as farms and building-sites. Present international conditions, the world war included, point with intense emphasis to the fact that the problem is of equal importance in all questions and issues arising in the intercourse of the nations of the earth with one another. That person lives in a dream-world who believes war can be permanently averted and helpful cooperative relations of the peoples of the earth established until the question is faced of free access of populations to the resources nature has provided for the common use of mankind.

Because of my conviction that no person is properly educated today without acquaintance with the problem and with the solution advanced by Henry George, I am happy to write this Foreword. Whether study of the book leads or does not lead a student to acceptance of the views put forth by George, it will immensely widen and broaden his understanding of the world in which he lives and equip him to deal with the menacing problems it presents.

The Guide which is here offered bears on its face the proof that it is a careful and competent aid to any student who is given the great opportunity of becoming acquainted with a book which will enable him to see domestic and international problems in a vitally important perspective which might otherwise escape his vision.