



## The Third American Revolution

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Article Summary: Hicks suggests that if the establishment of the American nation was the first revolution and the economic transformation of the Civil War period was the second, the twentieth century brought a third social revolution. He affirms that this third revolution has brought significant progress toward a classless society in which no one need think of himself as underprivileged, outcast, or inferior.

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Photographs / Images: Union Stockyards, Omaha, 1890 and 1955

## THE THIRD AMERICAN REVOLUTION

BY JOHN D. HICKS

**T**HE First American Revolution, with which we associate the Declaration of Independence and the military exploits of George Washington, was primarily a political affair. Out of it came the severance of the ties that bound the continental colonies of North America to the British Empire, and the establishment of a new nation, the United States of America. Out of it, too, came the recognition, at least as far as this nation was concerned, that men have certain "unalienable" rights upon which government may not trespass, rights that the founders of the Republic chose to describe in general terms as life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness.

The Second American Revolution, which came to a head during the period of the Civil War, was as much economic as the first was political. It is hardly accurate to speak of the Civil War itself as the Second American Revolution, although some historians have formed that habit. But before, during, and after the Civil War there did occur in the United States an economic revolution which greatly exalted industry in the life of the nation and pushed agriculture into second place. And, although this vast transformation was basically economic, it was not without its political overtones. Before it happened the South and the West, both agricultural sections, could, by standing together, rule the nation; after it happened, the industrial Northeast took over, and the South and the West played secondary roles.

The Third American Revolution was possibly more social in its nature than either political or economic, al-

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though in one way or another it was all three. This third "Big Change," as Frederick Lewis Allen called it, grew with the twentieth century. To some extent it harked back to the theories of the First American Revolution, for it emphasized anew the rights of men, but the men of the twentieth century wanted much more than freedom from political tyranny or mere equality before the law. They wanted a common standard of living below which the most humble should not be permitted to fall, freedom from want and fear. They wanted a share in the good things of life for all men without regard to race, national origins, or creed. They wanted, in short, a classless society, not in the sense that every man's bank account should equal every other's, but in the sense that no man need think of himself as underprivileged, or outcast, or inferior. And toward these goals, without stooping to any such nonsense as a dictatorship of the proletariat, they have made remarkable progress, progress so great that it may properly be termed a revolution.

It is worth noting, to begin with, that the American people, as of today, are vastly different from the American people at the turn of the century; here in itself is a revolution. Americans were twice as numerous in 1950 as in 1900, 150.7 million as against 76 million, and in the past five years they have grown by another 10 million or more. All this confutes the prophets of doom who had said during the Great Depression that the nation had reached the leveling-off stage in population, and would show only small increases in the future. Instead, the numbers have grown inordinately, both at the beginning and at the end of the life cycle—more and more babies are born, and old people live longer. Furthermore, the statistical swelling that used to come from immigration has all but disappeared. The percentage of foreign born in 1900 was 13.6, but in 1950 it was only 8.7. Not since the outbreak of the First World War has the United States experienced the addition each year to its native population of fantastic numbers of aliens. Whether this is right or wrong is quite another question; the fact is that the increase in the American population now comes primarily from the excess of births over deaths, and not from outside sources. Once it was the fashion to make fun of the "melting pot" theory, but with immigration cut off the fusing process cannot be indefinitely delayed. The children

of the immigrants and the children of the native stock mingle and intermarry; on one side, young Americans may have grandparents or great grandparents who came over in the steerage; on the other side, ancestors who made it across even more uncomfortably on the Mayflower and her seventeenth and eighteenth century successors. The American nationality is a composite of many breeds; the United States was once, and to some extent still is, a nation of nations. But constant cross breeding is developing increasingly a new all-American type. Ask any European; Americans all look alike, and talk alike, and act alike to him.

There are other interesting new developments. The American people are increasingly an urban rather than a rural community; in 1900 census takers classified 60 per cent of them as rural, but in 1950 only 36 per cent. This does not tell the whole story. In 1900 the country town, up to several thousand population, was really rural; its people came from the farms, and they brought farm life with them to town. Nearly every family kept a cow, a horse or two, a pig to butcher in the fall, a yard full of chickens; and all enterprising residents as a matter of course had vegetable gardens. But the automobile and other modern means of communication have almost abolished the country town as we used to know it. Now it is only a projection of the city, with city ways as commonplace to its people as to the residents of the cities themselves. And as for the cities, they grow and grow. Classic examples are Los Angeles, which started the century with one hundred thousand people, and by the 1950's had over two million; and Houston, Texas, which in the same period grew from 45,000 to 750,000. Thanks to the new transportation facilities, however, the cities themselves began to spread. Suburbanization became almost a disease, and the harassed census takers had to devise new terminology to meet the situation. Most Americans (84.5 million in 1950), they now figure, live in 168 "standard metropolitan areas," each composed of a central city of 50,000 or more population together with its surrounding suburbs. And 30 per cent of the people (44.4 million) live in the fourteen largest metropolitan areas. The upshot of it all is that the average American is a city dweller, even when he lives in the country. We are now an urban, not a rural, people. That

could hardly have been said in 1900, although we were heading in that direction even then.

Several other population factors are too obvious to be overlooked. The old westward trend in migration, so long associated with the existence of an undeveloped frontier, has continued with a vengeance throughout the twentieth century. The states along the Pacific Coast and in the Southwest have gained inordinately in population, particularly during the Forties and Fifties. California's population of under seven million in 1940 had grown by 1950 to ten and one half million, and today is probably twelve million, second only to New York. Comparable figures could be cited for Washington, Oregon, New Mexico, Arizona, and Texas, particularly Texas. For oil riches have transformed Texas to a degree no one could have predicted a half century ago. Cotton acreage is down from sixteen to six million, and oil production is correspondingly up. The other Western and Southwestern states that share in the new population growth are similarly indebted to some form of industrialism, with urbanization everywhere in evidence. Even in the Old South, which has shown a downward trend in the proportion of the nation's population living within its borders, industrialization and urbanization are taking over. Cotton hands fleeing the mechanization of the cotton fields do not all or even mostly go north or west; many of them find jobs in the new industrial cities of the South.

The population shift to the West and the Southwest has echoes in many aspects of the nation's life. California contributes a Vice-President and a Chief Justice, Texas a Speaker of the House and a majority leader of the Senate, to say nothing of the most unsavory crop of millionaires the nation has ever known. Automobiles (virtually unknown in 1900) may still be produced principally—although not exclusively—in the Detroit area, but we get around in them the country over in western fashion, with the bigger and better motels that the West made popular invading every other section, and with highways, federally-financed at western insistence, extending even to the least populated parts of the country. Hollywood fads and fancies, exclusively twentieth century developments, loom large in the nation's behavior pattern, and Davy Crockett rides again.

Asia and Asiatic problems compete for attention with Europe and European problems. Hawaii's claims to statehood win such influential supporters as the President of the United States. We do not really have a Senator from Formosa, but undoubtedly many people think we should.

Over all is the gloss of urbanization. If our legislatures would only redistrict our states fairly, farmer influence in state and national affairs would drop several notches lower than it is now. City standards of creature comfort, city opportunities for recreation and amusement, city educational and religious facilities tend increasingly to determine the norm which all the people everywhere expect to achieve.

There has been a startling transformation, too, in the business life of the nation. At the turn of the century the old free enterprise system was in full flower, with governmental restraints almost totally lacking, and great monopolistic industries such as United States Steel and Standard Oil clearly on the make. These immense businesses, moreover, were usually the work of gifted individuals, entrepreneurs who saw an opportunity and made the most of it. It makes little difference whether one believes with Matthew Josephson that they were a spate of "robber barons," or with Allan Nevins that they were great benefactors of the human race, the fact remains that they were there, and that they were still in full control, busily engaged in turning million dollar corporations into billion dollar corporations. "Who made the world, Charles?", a catechism teacher was said to have asked. And Charles, bright boy that he was, was said to have replied, "God made the world in 4004 B. C., but it was reorganized in 1901 by James J. Hill, J. Pierpont Morgan, and John D. Rockefeller." It was Calvin Coolidge who later delivered himself of the platitude, "The business of America is business," but the idea was at least as old as the turn of the century, probably older. Nor did these business leaders confine their business to business. They took a hand in politics, although according to Henry Cabot Lodge it was often a heavy hand. "The businessman dealing with a large political question," he said, "is really a painful sight. It does seem to me that businessmen, with a few exceptions, are worse when they come to deal with politics than men of any other class." They dealt also with the life of the people.

The wages our business overlords chose to pay, the hours of labor they prescribed, the conditions under which they required their employees to work—these were the common denominators of American social life. The great business leaders by determining the wage scale also set the standards of living that the common people, willy-nilly, must observe. And needless to say the standards of living for the business leaders and for the common people were vastly different.

But by mid-century, what a contrast has developed. Undoubtedly big business has grown bigger with the years; probably there are few, if any, fields of business endeavor in which the number of operating units has not declined, and the size of the individual units increased. Where competition exists it is now likely to be among the few rather than among the many. But along with this change has come a tremendous change in management—the managerial revolution, businessmen call it. The number of great industrial enterprises now owned and operated by the founding families is conspicuously small. Ownership has been greatly diffused through stock flotations. Such a gigantic corporation as the American Telephone and Telegraph Company has over a million share-holders, and the maximum holding of any one individual amounts to only one tenth of one per cent of the whole. The management of a great modern corporation cannot be safely entrusted merely to the descendants of the founders. In the world of automobiles Henry Ford II, indeed, stands out as a striking exception to the rule, but his own abilities are outstanding, while the greatest problems he had to face in saving the Ford interests from collapse came from the bad management of the original Henry Ford, who held on to the controls far longer than his talents for business organization justified. Nowadays in the Ford Company, or General Motors, or General Electric, or the various Standard Oil companies, or almost anywhere else one may choose to turn, the business of management is in the hands of salaried experts, trained specialists who in most instances have risen from the ranks, and have demonstrated abilities of the first magnitude.

Much else besides the change in the nature of management has happened to big business. Time was when the great captains of industry took pretty much for granted

their right to control the government, whether local, state, or national, and at their brutal worst they could operate on "the-public-be-damned" principle. On problems of finance they might have to submit to the directives of Wall Street bankers, but otherwise they did about as they pleased. Nowadays, however, the situation has changed. Increasingly the corporations are their own bankers, and so the old reliance on Wall Street has declined, but toward government the change has gone far in the opposite direction. Innumerable regulations, both state and national, have made a mockery of what was once called "free enterprise." The government sets minimum wages and maximum hours of employment that employers dare not disregard; it limits the claims that advertisers may make; it designates the standards that food, drug, liquor, and similar manufacturing establishments must observe, and turns loose upon them an army of inspectors and enforcement officers; it levies manufacturing taxes, taxes on earnings, social security taxes, withholding taxes, to say nothing of local property taxes, all involving as a charge on business itself the most intricate types of book-keeping and reporting; it takes a look at the securities corporations wish to issue, and gives or refuses consent to their issuance; it provides and makes an effort to enforce elaborate rules to prevent the establishment of irresponsible monopolies; in these, and a thousand other ways, government makes its power over business apparent.

Nor do the managers of big business dare overlook the problems of labor and public relations. In most instances they must bargain collectively with unions, and astute business executives show the utmost eagerness to keep the good will of labor leaders. Whole books have been written on the growing importance of labor unions in the twentieth century. They were of small consequence in 1900, and represented only a skilled minority of labor at best. But they made headway during the earlier decades of the century, while between 1933 and 1945, thanks to the New Deal and the Second World War, they carried everything before them. The "open shop" all but disappeared from the land, and "big labor" became almost as potent as "big business" itself. Today practically every big business must deal on virtually equal terms with organized labor. And as for the people in general, their friendship and support is the con-



stant objective of a veritable army of public relations experts who insist in season and out that the businesses they represent are not dedicated solely to the making of profits, but that they have also a social conscience, a desire to contribute to the general good. One can understand why Frederick Lewis Allen observed that, in view of these limitations, to speak of American corporations as "engaged in 'free enterprise' is more picturesque than accurate. They are . . . operating under a series of disciplines, and committed to doing so with an eye to the general welfare." This is not capitalism after the fashion of the nineteenth century or the Marxist diatribes, but a new and modified capitalism. Indeed, the corporations even put certain limitations on themselves. Through trade associations—there are now twelve thousand of them—they seek to check unfair practices among competing concerns, to pool information of general interest to all, and to lay plans for the industry as a whole. These trade associations, as their critics are quick to point out, may serve as a kind of substitute for monopoly—oligopoly is the new and ugly word the economists have invented for what goes on. But it is by no means certain that in the long run a wholly unrestrained competition would be the best thing for the people any more than for the business interests involved.

Perhaps at this point a word of warning is in order. The power of organized business is very great, and the profit motive, even with salaried managers, is still very strong. Business lobbyists in Washington and in our state capitals are forever seeking to loosen the brakes on business. They have a keen nose for special favors, whether in the shape of generous government contracts, or discreet tax adjustments, or less strenuous controls. If the system we have now evolved is to continue to work, the regulatory power of government must not be subverted. It would be a colossal mistake to turn the government over to the very group it is designed to regulate. We tried that once in the 1920's with disastrous results; under strictly business leadership we rode high, wide, and handsome toward the Great Depression that began in 1929. Business leadership must have learned something from that debacle, but we dare not put our faith wholly in its discretion. The government must represent the public at large, and not merely the business interests.

Fortunately our checks and balances system can sometimes save us from our own mistakes. By mischance, or under the influence of a glamorous name, we may on occasion turn the executive power over to a single interest, but we do not always give a President or a Governor as responsive a Congress or legislature as he would like to have. And once in a while even a Supreme Court goes to bat.

If we examine into the conditions of the working classes, we find that here, too, revolutionary changes have occurred. As of 1900 the average wages of American workmen amounted to about four or five hundred dollars a year. Allowing for inflation, this would be the equivalent in purchasing power of twelve to fifteen hundred dollars today—hardly by our standards a decent living wage. Unskilled workers were lucky to receive as much as a dollar and a half a day, and allowing for frequent unemployment, this might mean only four or five dollars per week. The normal work-day was ten hours; the normal work-week six full days. Unemployment benefits were practically unknown; if a man lost his job, he begged, borrowed, stole, or starved. Women and children in industry were altogether too numerous—twenty per cent of the women of the nation were gainfully employed, while child labor in the southern cotton mills, in the eastern sweatshops, and in the western packing plants was a commonplace. Ten million Americans—two out of every fifteen—according to an eminent authority, were “underfed, underclothed, and poorly housed.” And for many, the words “poorly housed” were an understatement. Unsanitary tenement districts disgraced the great eastern cities. In New York the typical tenement was six stories high, and constructed in such a way as to use every available foot of space. A single block might house four thousand people; streets and alleys—often unpaved and filthy—were the only playground for the children; the lack of privacy was almost as bad as in the steerage accommodations by way of which many of the tenement dwellers had come to America; the evidences of crime and vice, inevitable accompaniments of poverty, were painfully apparent.

As of 1950, what changes do we find? According to the President’s Council of Economic Advisers, which reported in January 1951, the nation could be divided into five

“spending units.” One-fifth of these units had only \$1,280 a year or less to spend, but since in many cases only a single individual was involved, this was hardly as bad as it seemed. Three-fifths of the spending units had from \$1,280 to \$4,499 to spend, one-fifth had \$5,000 or over. The average wage of American manufacturing workers was nearly \$60 a week; the average hourly pay of factory workers was \$1.77, and the customary work week was forty rather than sixty hours. Substantial unemployment benefits tided workers over lay-off periods; old-age pensions reduced the burden on children for the care of the aged, and child labor had all but ceased to exist. As for housing, the supply seemed somehow never quite equal to the demand, but the gains of a half century were tremendous. The loathsome tenements, so plentiful at the turn of the century, were pretty well cleaned up; eight and one half million new housing units appeared for the decade of the 1940's alone, and thereafter about a million more each year, with FHA, VA, and private agencies all participating. It is the rule today rather than the exception for American houses or apartments to have “all modern conveniences”—good kitchens, electric refrigerators, telephones, sanitary plumbing, central heating, electric lights, and increasingly, radio and TV sets as well. Most of the houses, too, have garages to furnish temporary shelter for the fifty-eight million automobiles (on an average one for every three persons) that otherwise clutter the nation's streets and highways.

There are always exceptions—slums can still be found, poverty is not yet abolished—but by and large the ordinary people of the United States can count on a living wage, reasonably steady employment, housing that a half-century ago would have seemed luxurious, plenty to eat, plenty to wear. The differences that used to exist between the conditions of life for rich and poor are on the wane. Our steeply-graduated federal and state income taxes have had something to do with this. There are always a few of the “big rich” who seem somehow to evade the down-grading process. In Texas the weird 27½ per cent oil depletion exemption helps out some who really need no help. Certain rich men know how to convert income into capital gains for taxation purposes and pay only 25 per cent when they really owe much more. Stagnant wealth can keep on

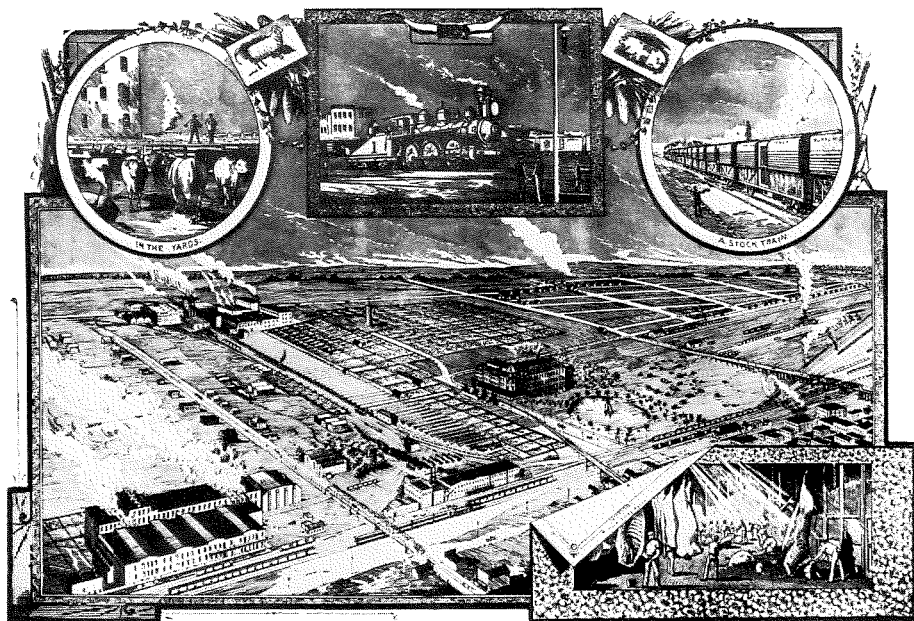
producing large incomes from tax-exempt state and municipal bonds. But most Americans with large gross incomes each year turn over huge sums in taxes to the government. There's "no such thing as being rich anymore," one such taxpayer complained, "only being poor on a much larger scale."

Once the well-to-do could maintain large and pretentious establishments, but taxes virtually make this prohibitive today, to say nothing of the servant problem. There is now no longer an immigrant class from which to recruit domestic help, and country girls who move to the city can do far better for themselves than to work for a servant's wages. The houses of the well-to-do tend therefore to be smaller than they used to be, and they are built if possible all on one floor, for only rarely can the mistress of the house avoid "doing her own work" in major part. She has numerous mechanical devices to help her out, but these exist alike for nearly every gradation of wealth. Indeed, Americans, conscious as they are of being richer or poorer, rarely think of themselves as belonging to upper, lower, or middle classes. There is no landed gentry in America, nor has there ever been, so our richest citizens can scarcely pretend to anything more than upper middle class status. And, since practically all of our "have-nots" really have a good deal already, and expect eventually to have much more, we lack any self-conscious lower class, a matter of considerable dismay to those who postulate in every land and clime a revolting proletariat. If you press almost any American into saying what class he belongs to, he will usually tell you middle class, but what he means is that in the United States there are no classes, in the European sense of the term. We Americans travel, so to speak, in a one-class boat. Some of the passengers have better quarters than others, and more money to spend. But they all have full freedom of the ship, and eat in the same dining room.

There is another factor of great consequence in this growing sense of equality among Americans. We used to think of the working classes in terms of hard and tedious hand labor, the man in the mine digging coal with pick and shovel; the railroad fireman and the furnace tenders, laboriously shoveling the same coal into fire-boxes; the farmer

afoot guiding his heavy plow; the carpenter sawing, planing, and nailing all day long; the day laborer digging ditches. Then, when Henry Ford introduced the assembly line, we worried about the tedious tasks each worker must perform—screwing in the same bolt hour after hour, day after day. But nowadays the work of the nation isn't done so much by hand as by machinery. Watch the loading of a ship, the building of a house, the grading and paving of a road, the preparation of a field for seeding, and you soon get the idea. Power machinery exists for nearly every purpose. And every monotonous job is an immediate challenge to the tool-designer; if the same movement must be done time after time, he knows that there should be a tool to do it better and faster than any man could do it. The total result is that American workers are now mostly skilled workers, men who are in command of tools, and have the fun of making their tools work for them. American industry in 1900 employed eleven million unskilled workers; in 1950, with twice as many people and many times as much work being done, only six million. Rural electrification and the gasoline engine have transformed even the farms. Combines, milking machines, corn pickers, cotton pickers, these and a thousand other devices have changed the whole nature of farm labor. We still have some stoop-labor demands, particularly in the West and the Southwest, and because native Americans won't do this kind of work any more, we get it done mainly by imported Mexicans, both "wetbacks" and legal entrants. Even so, the demand for farm laborers is going steadily down, while farm yields go fantastically up. When the Russian agriculturalists visited the United States last summer they were continually impressed by the small number of workers on the farms. "With you, one man," they said, "with us, a hundred."

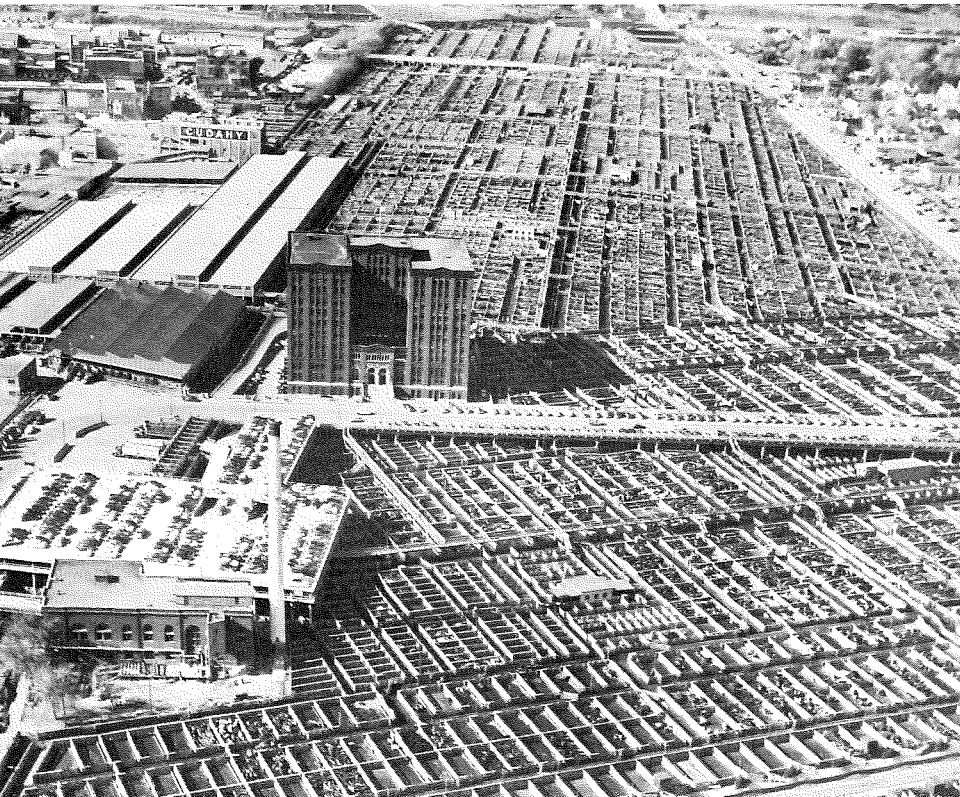
Americans who talk proudly of their country abroad are usually brought up short by the query: "What about the Negro problem?" It is true, indeed, that we have long treated Negroes as second class citizens, but unsatisfactory as our record is when compared with the ideal, the change that has occurred in the status of the Negro during the last half century is truly heartening. For one thing, the Negro problem is no longer merely a southern dilemma; the Negro population, while still overconcentrated in the former slave



Union Stockyards, Omaha, about 1890.

### ONE ASPECT OF THE THIRD AMERICAN REVOLUTION

Union Stockyards, Omaha, 1955—now the world's largest livestock market.



states, is now diffused throughout the nation, and the problem has become national rather than sectional. The northern migration of the Negroes during and after the First World War provided tremendous leverage for those who wished to help the Negro along. In the North Negroes mixed freely with whites in public conveyances, their children and white children attended the same schools; the color line was not drawn at the polling booth, and northern political machines bid avidly for the Negro vote. Inevitably the northern Negro began to demand these same privileges for his southern kinsmen; inevitably, too, southern Negroes began to demand for themselves the same treatment they might have received in the North. And the conscience of the nation was touched. Suffrage discriminations began to go down the drain; the poll tax as a device to keep southern Negroes from voting disappeared in state after state; the Supreme Court held "white primaries" to be unconstitutional, and southern Negroes by the millions began to vote. Throughout the North, and extending into the upper South, social discriminations began to loosen up. Negroes were accorded equal treatment in first class hotels, restaurants, and hospitals. They were allowed to participate in sports, made great names for themselves in boxing, baseball, and football. The armed services, under pressure of world opinion and the Korean War, abandoned segregation; Negroes won commissions as officers, and even more important, Negro top sergeants talked the language of the noncommissioned officer to buck privates of whatever color, and got away with it. The success of desegregation in the armed services was followed by greater desegregation in the schools, beginning in the South with the acceptance of Negroes in graduate and professional schools, and reaching a climax with the decision of the United States Supreme Court outlawing segregation in public schools throughout the nation. And, while the same court admitted that this could be achieved only with "deliberate speed," there were few who doubted that in due time the Court's order would be obeyed. Negroes ran for office and won; a Negro soloist sang in Constitution Hall; an American Negro won the Nobel Peace Prize. And the number of lynchings of Negroes, which had approximated a hundred a year at the turn of the century dropped to zero in the 1950's, a record marred only by the recent nauseating incident in Mississippi.

It was in the economic sphere that the Negroes had their hardest hurdles to surmount. Always, it seemed, they were the last to be hired and the first to be fired, and their incomes tended generally to be in the lowest brackets. But by the 1950's not all the Negroes were in the lowest brackets; more and more of them were climbing into the middle brackets; more and more of them felt secure in their jobs. They were winning acceptance in the labor unions, a privilege at first not fully accorded them. They were making fast strides toward literacy; only 11 per cent were illiterate in 1950 as compared to 44.5 per cent in 1900; that, too, helped out in the matter of job placement. Nearly one hundred thousand of them were in attendance at colleges and professional schools, and the number of Negro teachers, doctors, lawyers, and independent businessmen was on the rise. The Negro had indeed a long way to go before achieving full equality with the whites, but sighting backward he had also come a long way. Probably no other segment of the human race had ever come so far so fast. Communist propaganda has made little headway with American Negroes, either at home or abroad. Negroes taken prisoner by the Chinese Communists in Korea were quite as resistant to Communist pressures as the whites. They were not a part of a downtrodden proletariat, and they knew it.

Whatever the verdict as to equality between the races, few will deny that equality between the sexes has arrived. Women attained full suffrage at the end of the First World War, and full educational equality even before that. The idea, and increasingly the attainment, of equal pay for equal work was not far behind. Women now enter the professions freely, becoming doctors, lawyers, preachers, teachers, politicians, cabinet members, United States Senators, Ambassadors, and lady wrestlers. They have won freedom from the restraints of marriage; thanks to the wide dissemination of information on birth control, they may have children or not have children as they choose. Thanks to the new-fangled gadgets of the home, their domestic duties are greatly simplified; and thanks to the ease with which divorce may now be achieved, they may discard slightly-used husbands for new models with a minimum of difficulty. The community property idea, which divided equally between husband and wife all of the earnings of either spouse and



all property acquired after marriage, has spread rapidly in recent years from West to East, but even so the women have managed to keep in their names title to about 70 per cent of the nation's wealth, partly because women tend to live longer than men, and so wives survive their husbands by many years. Women have won freedom from all the old taboos; they shorten, lengthen, or abolish their dresses at will; they cut or don't cut, curl or uncurl, dye or bleach their hair, and they have brought the use of cosmetics to a fine art. Above all, they have maintained their inalienable right to complain that they have somehow been discriminated against—this, they say, is a man's world; a woman just can't win. Which reminds me of the comment of old Uncle William Peebles, the head janitor at a woman's college where I once taught. "These here women," he was wont to say, "you can pacify 'em, but you just cain't satisfy 'em."

A people to be truly free must have more than the material comforts of life. American society has been criticized as hopelessly mechanized, content to substitute the drone of the machine for the workings of the mind. There is too much to this criticism for us to feel entirely comfortable about it, but there is also a brighter side; no longer is it quite so easy for our current Menckens to ridicule the aridity of American culture. For one thing, the huge American investment in universal education is at last beginning to pay off. Illiteracy is on the way out; indeed, the average young American adult of today, with over twelve years of schooling, is at least a high school graduate. As against this record, his father probably had only one year in high school, and his grandfather never got to high school at all. The expansion of higher education is also one of the phenomenal changes of the time. In 1900 the number of students enrolled in our colleges, universities, and professional schools was only 4 per cent of all young Americans in the appropriate age bracket; in 1950 it was 30 per cent. Along with this expansion have come revolutionary changes in the curriculum, tremendously enlarged facilities, better and more appropriate instruction. Any reader of students' blue books will be slow to equate genuine education with college attendance, but the growth of public interest in education, and the willingness of so large a proportion of

our youth to invest time and money in it, can hardly be devoid of meaning.

There is much evidence to indicate that Americans of today read far more than was the custom with Americans of a half century ago. In 1950 they invested nineteen million dollars in reading material, over half of which went for educational rather than merely recreational reading. They bought three and one half times as many daily newspapers as in 1900, although the population in that period had only doubled. They patronized public libraries, joined book clubs, bought paperback pocket books (to say nothing of the so-called comics), all in tremendously increasing volume. They read more and more magazines, some good and some bad, but historians can take comfort in the fact that a new and comparatively high-priced journal of popular history, *American Heritage*, sells over one hundred thousand copies each issue. As long as freedom of the press persists, as long as ideas may be generally disseminated, as long as the public can and will read, we have little to fear for our democracy, or for the way of life in which we have come to believe. The advice of Jimmie Durante is not amiss. "Don't put no constrictions on da people," he said. "Leave 'em ta hell alone."

Left to his own devices, however, the average American does not spend all his spare-time in reading and thinking. He takes far more literally than his ancestors who coined the term "the pursuit of happiness." Shorter hours and longer vacations have made him recreation conscious to a degree unknown in the nineteenth century. In recognition of the new situation, governmental as well as commercial agencies have catered to the public demand for amusement. Scores of state and national parks provide tourist objectives that millions of American motorists seek out in season and out of season. WPA projects under the New Deal set important precedents for the multiplication of municipal parks, swimming pools, golf courses, tennis courts, and public ski trails. Airplanes contribute to the ease of long-distance hegriras. The radio and television bring what goes on in the rest of the world directly into the home, while each year thousands of American tourists, traveling by sea or by air, flock to the Old World and to foreign parts of the New

to see these sights for themselves. The movies, of no importance in the nineteenth century, rose to great heights in the twentieth, but possibly may yet save their lives only by providing films appropriate for television. Millions of camera fans collect millions of moving pictures, or stills, or both, black and white, colored, and 3D, with which to bore their friends and neighbors on long winter evenings. Gardening far outdoes baseball as a means of keeping folks home from church on Sunday; indeed, the passive spectator-type sports seem to be losing ground to the active participation by individuals in whatever form of amusement most strikes their fancy. In 1953 eighteen million licensed fishermen, not to mention the unlicensed, whipped the streams of the nation; fifteen million bought hunter's licenses; eighteen million rode bicycles; a half million owned motor boats; 52 per cent of the adult population (and from personal observation about 100 per cent of the junior citizens) could, and presumably did, swim; Boy Scouts and Girl Scouts, YMCA groups and YWCA groups, Catholic, Protestant, and Jewish organizations kept the campfires burning. There is no such thing as exhausting this kind of list. Americans sing, dance, play, make whoopee generally, and drink far more than is good for them.

On the more serious side of the ledger, Americans are taking a far greater interest in the fine arts than ever before. The phonograph and the radio have made them music conscious; there are hundreds of "symphonic groups" today against a mere handful in 1900. The record business has grown to immense proportions, with good music in increasing demand. And American composers are doing their part, not only in the regularization of jazz, but in the field of experimentation known as modern music. The record in art is similar. American appreciation of traditional art has grown; art galleries and museums have increased greatly in numbers, in offerings, and in popularity. And American artists, particularly American painters and architects, are winning attention for their work, not only at home but also abroad. American literature had a great burst of speed after the First World War, a much less distinguished record after the Second. But American novelists and playwrights have taken Nobel prizes; American poets have scored at least minor triumphs; American historians were never better—

well, hardly ever. At least the time when America had nothing worth while to contribute along these lines has long since passed.

It is difficult to put a national brand on scientific contributions, for scientists, unless for real or fancied security reasons, are by nature our greatest internationalists, forever exchanging ideas, and each standing on the other's shoulders. But America has certainly done its bit in the advancement of science—possibly more than its bit. Its contributions in public health and medicine, agricultural science, the preservation of foods, electronics, plastics, synthetic rubber, the aircraft industry, and atomic developments, to mention only a few, are outstanding. The number of Nobel prize winning American scientists grows apace—six from my own campus alone.

The things I have here had to say can give only a hint as to the extensive character and enormous significance of the Third American Revolution. A book recently published under the auspices of the Twentieth Century Fund, *America's Needs and Resources: A New Survey*, by J. Frederic Dewhurst and Associates, will provide the persistent reader with further details. It is a huge book of nearly twelve hundred large, double-columned pages, but it takes all that to record the remarkable transformations that have come over our country in recent years. Time was when misguided idealists believed that such changes could come only by the violent overthrow of the existing order. But much of their millennial dream has come about peaceably—even, almost, the classless society that so far no proletarian revolution has ever yet achieved. The people of the nation have increased in number and in cohesiveness; the greedy capitalists of yesteryear have somehow changed their spots; nearly everyone has a good job and a high degree of job security; the American mind has begun to bring forth fruit. This may not prove to be the "Permanent Revolution," claimed in a series of articles published by the editors of *Fortune* a few years ago. After the experience of the 1920's Americans have learned to be cautious of all sure things. Those who lived through that decade remember too well how "Two cars in every garage and two chickens in every pot" turned speedily into "Two chickens in a garage."

But there *has* been a Third American Revolution, and the people are on guard to preserve it, if they can. They are awake as never before to the position of the United States in the world community, and they are ready to pay the price of leadership. They know their political power, and they are willing to use it again when necessary, as they did in 1932 and 1952. They demand with one voice that the colossal calamities of world war and world depression be averted for the future. And they have faith to believe—faith in God and faith in man—that these goals can be achieved.