

*Aspects of Revolt*, by Max Nomad. New York: Bookman Associates, 1959. \$5.00. Pp. 311.

While Max Nomad's previous books were mainly biographical sketches of leading personalities of various radical movements, and the theoretical explanation of their behavior was incidental, the present book reverses the procedure; personalities are dealt with merely to illustrate his theory of history. This theory is simple and seems very convincing because of the enormous evidence that supports it. It is not properly his own but is as old as mankind itself. It consists of a well-founded scepticism regarding man's ability to become a truly social being. But more specifically, the theory, or the "iron law of oligarchy," has found various interpretations—some tainted with glee and others with despair—in the writings of men such as Gaetano Mosca, Vilfredo Pareto, Wacław Machajski and Roberto Michels. Yet none of these writers gave the theory such generality and absolute character as Max Nomad, even though he is deeply saddened by "the inexorable scheme of human history which ever since the dawn of civilization, has divided mankind into the educated 'classes' and the uneducated 'masses,' with the déclassé stepsons or malcontent relations of the former invariably using the masses for the switch in power and privileges called by Pareto the circulation of elites."

Whereas some people see history as the work of great men and their ideas, and others as a series of class struggles, for Max Nomad it is just "a vicious circle of high incomes securing higher education (for the offspring) and higher education securing privileged positions with higher incomes." History exhausts itself in such simple and basic terms as dog and underdog, the saddled and the spurred, white-collar and horny hands, the smart and the stupid. And it makes no difference whether, with regard to the past, there might not have been really significant educational differences, or, with regard to the future, there may be equal education for everybody, because "human nature being what it is and refusing to change" still excludes equality and non-exploitative social relations "by the natural division into the more and the less gifted, or the more and the less energetic, with the better endowed invariably claiming and obtaining more power and more luxuries than their more average fellow humans."

Invariably, "human nature" precludes preference of underdog to dog. For, as soon as opportunity calls, the underdog is ready to take on the vicious character of the topdog. But as only elites can circulate, there always remains a mass of people permanently reduced to the underdog status. Though this does not alter their "human nature," they are

prevented from exercising it properly. And this, in turn, creates the childish illusion that "human nature" may be something other than it is. At any rate, Max Nomad acknowledges the existence of fools attempting to alter the "vicious circle" of history together with "human nature." He has a great weakness for them and, like Rilke, proclaims his unwavering adherence "to the cause lost in advance."

The "tragic farce called mankind's progress," Nomad illustrates with countless facts and anecdotes from history. He draws from different times and various places and all manner of social movements. Taken by themselves, they are interesting, amusing, discouraging, sad and true. His main interest, however, lies in the contemporary scene, in the modern labor movement; anarchist, syndicalist, socialist and communist. Here he includes among the enemies of the "horny-handed underdog" the self-educated ex-workers, or middle-brows, competing and collaborating with the middle-class intellectuals, or high-brows, for the allegiance of the lowest social strata, with no brow at all, so as to elevate themselves into the higher income brackets. By this very process the mass of the proletarian helots are able to improve their own conditions to a certain degree by clamoring for "more and more" as the price of their allegiance to either one or other of the competing elites. As regards the future, the non-capitalist "knows" will come to step into the shoes of the capitalist "haves," and the workers "will work, most of them indifferent as to who will rule the roost, the brightest among them becoming either labor tycoons or politicians and contributing their share towards the maintenance of the status quo and the perpetuation of the American dream."

And, of course, if history, due to an unchangeable flaw in "human nature," is nothing but the circulation of elites, there is no hope for the dispossessed save that of picking up the crumbs dropped by contending elites in their struggle for the best seats at the table of abundance. Yet, history is so much more—even though it is also a struggle of elites representing one or another social class striving for, or trying to maintain, their class rule. And though it is possible to bring the relations between slave and master as well as those between wage-slave and capitalist under the common denominator, "dog and underdog," there is still a great and significant difference between slavery and wage-slavery, between the past and the present. And though, from the point of view of the underdog, the capitalist owner of laissez-faire capitalism is no better or no worse than the controlling bureaucrat of the state-capitalist system, there do exist important and significant differences between these two social systems. Social change does take place and affects social relationships, modes of production and human consciousness.

The always greater interrelatedness of social production and social life creates problems that cannot find their solution within class society, and through a mere change of elites. The very life or death of man and society may depend on the abolition of all forms of inequality and privilege and on the total socialization of "human nature." For the present, this possibility is still only a directional sign followed by those interested in the perpetuation of human life on earth.

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*Social Science Research on Business: Product and Potential*, by Robert A. Dahl, Mason Haire, and Paul F. Lazarsfeld. New York: Columbia University Press, 1959. \$3.00. Pp. 185.

Do we know enough about business? And if not, can the new techniques being developed by social sciences such as psychology, sociology and political science help to fill the gap?

This is a problem that the Ford Foundation has set itself to answer. As a starter, it has sponsored this volume, in which leading academicians from the three fields mentioned show what is being done and what in their opinions could and should be done in research on business. The Foundation expects to underwrite some fifty Ph.D. theses on business in the next five years. Also some professors are to be set free to study business for a year from the point of view of these allied fields. It is assumed that economists are already doing what they can.

Since Professor Haire mentions one hundred recent studies on business and Professor Lazarsfeld 133, the lack of information complained of is evidently not due to lack of research as such. The trouble must lie elsewhere.

The political scientist, Professor Dahl of Yale, points out that the role of business, particularly big business, in the political system, has been discussed by a lawyer (Berle), a sociologist (Mills), and an economist (Brady), but hardly at all by political scientists, who seem to concentrate on the relatively safe and well-worked field of government regulation of business. Some work has been done on the internal structure of big corporations, tackling the problem of bureaucracy which is not confined to government. But on the relations between business and the existing political order, the subject, concludes the professor, is "in a curiously incomplete state." We know something—from the outside looking in, as it were—about political campaign contributions by business-