

they fought before adopting it, and have suffered just as many defeats. The real, the unwavering reason for peacetime conscription must be sought in the all too natural desire of a powerful, centralized government to regiment and control its subjects by placing them, actually or potentially, under martial law and by arrogating to itself the right, whenever it so desires (as, for example, during an inconvenient strike), to call them to the colors. In these days of atomic weapons, mass armies would seem to have become something of an anachronism. Nevertheless no country which imposed peacetime conscription in the past shows any inclination to relax its grip upon the masses of its people. Moreover in countries where peacetime conscription was previously unheard-of there are many high military and civilian officials who advocate the imposition of permanent military servitude upon the masses.

There is also another way in which the preparation for war is useful to the holders of centralized political power. When things go badly at home, when popular discontent becomes inconveniently articulate, it is always possible, in a world where war making remains an almost sacred habit, to shift the people's attention away from domestic to foreign and military affairs. A flood of xenophobic or imperialistic propaganda is released by the government-controlled instruments of persuasion, a "strong policy" is adopted toward some foreign power, an appeal for "national unity" (in other words, unquestioning obedience to the ruling oligarchy) is launched, and at once it becomes unpatriotic for anybody to voice even the most justifiable complaints against mismanagement or oppression. It is difficult to see how any highly centralized government could afford to dispense with militarism and the threat of foreign war. This constitutes yet another argument for the division and dispersal of power, the de-

institutionalizing of politics and economics and the substitution, wherever possible, of regional co-operative self help for centralized mass production and mass distribution, and of regional, co-operative self-government for state intervention and state control.

Finally we have to consider the part played by militarism in solving those problems of economic and social insecurity, which, as we have seen, are the curse of a technologically progressive society. The great depression of the 1930's was accompanied, in all industrialized countries, by mass unemployment. This fearful social sickness was treated in a variety of ways. Thus, in Great Britain an ambitious housing program was launched; in the United States the Roosevelt administration resorted to public works, "pump priming" and restriction of agricultural output with a view to raising prices. These measures were only partially successful. The numbers of the unemployed were reduced, but unemployment was by no means eliminated. Complete success came only when Hitler embarked upon large-scale rearmament. As though by magic, unemployment was banished—first from Germany and, later, as other countries took fright and joined the armament race, throughout the rest of the industrialized world. A cure had been found for the insecurity, which is the fruit of scientific and technological progress, when it is at the service of centralized finance. But the price of the temporary cure was death and destruction, and the last state of all the nations concerned was incomparably worse than the first. Nevertheless it seems quite possible that wholesale rearmament may, at some future date, again be used to palliate the symptoms of unemployment.

It should be remarked that, under the present dispensation, armaments are the only goods that are given away without consideration of costs or profits. Modern war is, among