

ECONOMICS

Increase of Taxes May Bring Communism Without Revolt

GRADUAL increase of taxes permits a nation to "approach communism at pleasure, always clinging formally to the principle of the right of private property," Dr. K.-G. Hagstroem, Swedish actuary, says in a report to the Econometric Society.

"If the 'Supported Party,' consisting of those receiving dole, relief, pensions, 'ham-and-eggs' and old age or unemployment benefits should reach a majority, it is entirely possible for them to impose taxes on the working part of the population that would plunge the country into a communistic state without any sort of revolution, bloodless or otherwise, he claims.

Exactly to what extent taxes may be increased without threatening democracy may be figured out mathematically by formulas presented by Dr. Hagstroem.

When the number of supported per-

sons reaches 50 per cent. of the population, the limit where it becomes a majority, the danger point of taxation is at 30 per cent. of the excess of an individual's income above that minimum required for bare existence, Dr. Hagstroem has calculated.

Many countries are already in the neighborhood of this danger point of taxation, he said.

The danger can be removed, he declared, only by introducing into the constitution or Magna Charta of the country a proviso that a tax exceeding a certain proportion of the excess of a person's income above the minimum of consumption can not be imposed unless the deciding majority exceeds a certain fraction. The amount of this fraction takes into account the number of producing voters in the nation.

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ARCHAEOLOGY

Dura On The Euphrates Called Great Deposit of Ruins

RUINS of Dura-Europos on the Euphrates, where Yale University and French Academy archaeologists have industriously made the earth fly, are now an Eastern rival of Italy's famous ruined city of Pompeii.

This verdict of Prof. Michael Rostovtzeff of Yale, one of the scientific directors of the digging at Dura, is pronounced in a book just published, "Dura-Europos and Its Art" (Clarendon Press).

Dura rivals Pompeii, he declares, "in the number, importance, and state of preservation of the antiquities discovered there." But the resemblance is even more significant, in that Dura contributes to our understanding of happenings in Greek and Roman times.

Wonderfully preserved like Pompeii, whole sections of Dura lie almost intact where excavation has progressed. The archaeologists have unearthed a large number of homes of the Persian period, some palatial in style. They have dug out the garrison where the Roman

dux, or leader, had an imposing residence for his staff, when the Romans took command of this Euphrates River fort-city. Twenty temples, where a great variety of ancient gods were worshipped have been unearthed, showing the religious trends in a city that had many kinds of people in its varied career.

Dura's people had as great a flair for painting pictures on their house walls as Pompeians. They also indulged in scribbling amateur drawings and inscriptions on buildings. The scribbles illustrate all sides of life in the Near Eastern city.

In the palace of the Roman dux, pantomime dancers of the staff recorded their devotion to their master, the dux, says Prof. Rostovtzeff.

Along with worship of various gods, went a keen interest in astrology and magic, shared at Dura by Greeks, Semites and Roman soldiers.

"Horoscopes were frequently scratched on the walls of the houses," says the Yale archaeologist, "and magic figures

and texts are as common as the horoscopes, both in the houses of the civil population and in the military buildings."

Evolution of Jewish religious art is made plainer at Dura, where a wonderfully preserved synagogue of the third century A. D. was painted with Old Testament scenes. In one picture of the sacrifice of Abraham, the human figures are shown only from behind and their heads are merely black spots, suggesting that rabbis at first were hesitant to depart from rigid interpretations of the passage in the Book of Exodus, forbidding the making of images.

The synagogue paintings have been skillfully transferred to the New Museum in Damascus, since they could not be saved for exhibit in their own place. Dura is not likely to become a tourist mecca on the Euphrates.

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ENGINEERING

Rifle Gives Man on Foot A Break Against Planes

THE NEW U. S. Army weapon, the Garand semi-automatic rifle, gives the man on foot a chance to hit back against hedge-hopping planes that fly low, to strafe him with machine-gun fire and light bombs. Such is the opinion of Frank J. Jervey, army ordnance engineer. (*Army Ordnance*, Nov.-Dec.)

The Garand takes a clip of eight cartridges at a loading, and can be fired just about as fast as a man can pull the trigger. Also, its recoil is very light, so that it can be held on the target far more steadily than the Springfield, standard infantry weapon for 35 years.

Because of slowness of fire and the necessity of throwing the sights off the target every time the bolt was operated to shove a fresh cartridge into the chamber, men on the march have had good reason to dread the ground-strafting plane; they have had practically no way of defending themselves. But as Mr. Jervey visions it, a company of soldiers now can turn the air above it into a veritable swarm of buzzing deadly hornets:

"An airplane traveling at a speed of about 200 miles an hour suddenly appears over the top of the trees. Within a split second, each man can bring his rifle to his shoulder and begin firing eight rounds almost as rapidly as he can pull the trigger. Defense of this type certainly should add materially to the protection of marching columns."

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