

Having spent the last ten years visiting every corner of every continent, Colin Ross now passes final judgment on the world we live in. Here are two representative, arresting verdicts.

Two Tracts *for the Times*

By COLIN ROSS

I. NO PLACE TO GO

Translated from the *Vossische Zeitung*, Berlin Liberal Daily

DURING previous business depressions the possibility of escape existed. Emigration offered a way out of the crisis. Time was when the world was less closely knit than it is to-day, when it was not one world but many. If the world one inhabited became too crowded one could always move to another. A generation or two ago America really represented a new world, and South Africa and Australia also offered opportunities for people to leave everything behind and start out afresh.

What is America to-day? Essentially nothing different from old Europe, and even if the United States had not forbidden immigration the journey there would no longer mean escape and a chance to begin a new life. Europeans are indignant because

the new, young countries where there is still plenty of room are beginning to raise the bars against overpopulated Europe. The United States followed the example of Australia and soon the South American republics and South Africa may pursue the same course. This policy of exclusion is entirely caused by modern economic developments, which are determined by national self-sufficiency.

But the stoppage of immigration is not the only thing that has kept Europeans from seeking refuge in another world. Other factors also enter. This is proved by the fact that during the past year the very limited American immigration quota has not been filled completely and many more people could also have gone to Australia and South Africa, to say noth-

ing of South America. The trouble is something besides lack of space, for there is plenty of space, more than ever before. Modern inventions, and especially the development of irrigation, have opened up huge tracts of country that used to be barren wastes and deserts.

No. Escape from Europe, and escape from America, too, is impossible for two reasons, one psychical, the other material. The psychical reason is that Europeans and Americans have become accustomed to a high degree of civilization and are no longer desirous and perhaps no longer capable of being pioneers. To be a pioneer means to renounce everything that civilization offers, electric light and warm rooms, moving pictures and health insurance, everything, in short, that makes life exciting, agreeable, and amusing. Emigration means settling alone in the wilderness and being thrown back on one's self, beginning life anew with the sure knowledge that it will consist of nothing but toilsome labor and that in the best of circumstances one's children will be the ones to reap the fruits of this labor. Such a degree of renunciation, bravery, and will power is possessed by but few Eastern Europeans and by not a single Central or Western European.

It is therefore rather silly to demand that colonies should solve our surplus population problem. Our citizens, although too numerous, will not go away. Consider England, with all the splendid colonization prospects that are open to its citizens, and that nevertheless suffers from unemployment as much as we do and perhaps even more. To the unemployed English worker the whole world lies open

—Canada, Australia, South Africa, Rhodesia. He can easily make the trip, sometimes free of charge. But he does not go, or if he does go he only increases still further the proletariat population of the big cities overseas. Never does he install himself as a settler in the wilds. South America offers the same spectacle. How many Germans who wanted to establish colonies there have come back disillusioned!

BUT it is the material consideration that plays the really decisive rôle. The living conditions of settlers, planters, and farmers have declined perceptibly. Moreover, the modern European is by no means in a position to supply all his own needs. Not only is he unable to provide himself with all the requisite forms of nourishment, but he is also incapable of being his own carpenter, locksmith, tailor, shoemaker, saddler, and tanner. Yet even if he were able to master all these handicrafts there would still remain certain needs which he could satisfy only by exchange of goods, by purchasing certain commodities, and he cannot earn enough money from the sale of his own products to make these purchases unless he begins farming on such a large scale that he needs a considerable amount of capital.

The Germans of a hundred years ago fled from a similar business depression to South Australia, where they could begin an utterly primitive life in the bush, and, when they would bring their products in crates to the market place in Adelaide, thirty or forty miles away, they would receive as much in exchange as their primitive needs required. But now that agricul-

ture has become mechanized, and in the big agricultural nations overseas it is much more mechanized than we realize, the little settler and little farmer can no longer produce enough to maintain life, so that it really does not pay to take up such a difficult existence. We thus find that very few people are in a position to pack their bags and flee abroad, and even those few do not necessarily find better conditions and greater security for life and property beyond our frontiers. And, as far as the mass of the population is concerned, it has no possibility

at all of fleeing from conditions that have become unbearable.

In former times of crisis it was possible, by moving hundreds of thousands, even millions of people, to ease the pressure in certain parts of the world. This possibility no longer exists and this is what gives the present crisis its unique character. At the same time, this condition makes it absolutely necessary for us to make a fundamental change in our methods of production and distribution, in our whole economic organization, and hence in our spiritual life.