

THE SOCIALISTS IN THE WAR

BY JAMES ONEAL

ON RECEIPT of John Stuart Mill's book, "On Liberty," Henry Thomas Buckle wrote that there is a kind of tyranny more insidious than political despotism. "This is the despotism of custom," he said, "to which ordinary minds entirely succumb, and before which even strong minds quail." When custom is challenged, even by a feeble few, in war-time, the police are called out and one type of despotism becomes the accomplice of the other.

In April, 1917, the American Socialists gathered in St. Louis to offer their observations on the proposal that the United States should enter the war on the side of the Allies. According to the current statements of Dr. Wilson, God and virtue were at stake. But we Socialists had our doubts, and indulged in the illusion that there would be no harm in expressing them. We were a small band, with less than a million votes. We had a few daily publications, a few monthlies, and a few hundred weeklies, all of them in debt. Against us was a formidable array of wealth, power and publicity. The newspapers, a great majority of the pastors, most of the politicians, the corporate dynasties, myriad squads of Babbitts, the police, the army, the navy, and "the moral forces of the world" were all against us. Certainly a peep from us would not stop the general howling for blood. Moreover, there were the first Ten Amendments. Madison and Jefferson had something to do with formulating them, and Dr. Wilson was the heir of the Democratic tradition.

So after a few days of debate a majority report declaring opposition to American

entrance into the war was approved and later adopted by the members in a general vote. "We brand the declaration of war by our Government," read the strongest sentence, "as a crime against the people of the United States and against the nations of the world." That assertion was, perhaps, an exaggeration, but it represented our mood. The patriotic press immediately began to display the sentence conspicuously, and it soon dawned on us that we had no stake in God and the Fatherland. The pastors had tied God to the cannon of the army generals, and as for the Fatherland, we could prove our devotion to it only by consenting to be transported as conscripts. Within a few weeks we were almost unanimously denounced as an impious crew of vandals. We had violated custom, and the mob was at our heels. The "ordinary minds" of Buckle's phrase succumbed at once. The "strong minds" quailed and then joined in the pursuit. Then came the police and Wilson's *Cheka* and the nation was "united."

We had not calculated on the mob, though we did expect some trouble from the constables. Few of us had any idea of the crowd-hysteria that could be summoned up by journalists, politicians, and the bourgeois *intelligentsia* in general. The infection quickly penetrated our own ranks. A number of those who for years had lived on the outer edge of the Left Wing caught it almost over night. This faction had conjured up barricades and a commune in every large city. Its members were impatient for the day when they could exhibit their revolutionary valor.

But Dr. Wilson, within a few weeks, pocketed most of them. He gave them missions abroad, engaged them as publicity agents, and labeled them "real Socialists," and the newspapers welcomed them as brothers-in-arms. We had always considered most of them gas-bags and were glad to be rid of them, but their transformation was so sudden that it shocked us. The former Dantons furiously chanted the ritual of the imperialists like trained professionals. Dr. Wilson, as the custodian of "the moral forces of the world," became their God.

Had their conduct ended there we would have had little complaint. A few others who had not associated with the knights of the barricade also left us to support the war, but they did not attack their former associates. The Left squad, however, now in the arms of Wilson, could not be moderate. The very men who had enjoyed those gaudy visions of supping on bourgeois blood turned informers and Socialist-baiters. They howled with the mob and became more patriotic than the patriots.

The first suggestion, indeed, of government suppression of Socialist opinion on the war came from two converted Socialists. Winfield R. Gaylord and A. M. Simons had been highly honored by American Socialists for many years. The former had been an effective lecturer and a member of the Wisconsin Legislature. The latter had for years edited the party's most important monthly and was the author of a number of books. He had drafted a declaration against the war in 1914. In February, 1915, he wrote that "we are about to meet the test under which the Socialists of the warring nations crumpled. We have their example before us as a warning. For us to fail would be twice as great as their failure."

On April 17, 1917, Gaylord wrote a letter to Senator Paul O. Husting of Wisconsin, which Simons endorsed in a postscript. A copy of the anti-war declaration of the St. Louis convention was enclosed, with the advice that "there is no need of

estranging the great mass of Socialists and those who sympathize with them by any drastic action," but that "there is occasion for the discreet use of authority for the prevention of general circulation of this pernicious propaganda." The Senator used this in support of an argument, to quote his own words, "on the necessity of taking measures calculated to protect ourselves from disloyal and treasonable utterances and publications." This was the beginning of the American *Cheka*. The "discreet use of authority" came a few weeks later, when the State headquarters of the Indiana Socialists was raided by Federal agents at Indianapolis, the office sacked, and its literature carted away. The test of which Simons had written had come, and he was one of the first to crumple.

II

In the same month another occupant of the extreme Left Wing enlisted under Wilson with a serviceable typewriter. William English Walling had brooded for years over the alleged apostasy of American Socialists to the revolution. They were serving the bourgeois gods. He was sure of it. Three large books, several pamphlets, and numerous articles had carried his gloomy message. The party leaders were becoming soft; the flock was being led astray. In one of his larger works, "Socialism As It Is," (p. 401) he described what he considered to be proper Socialist conduct in the event of war:

Socialists are prepared to use force when governments resort to arbitrary violence—for example, to martial "law." In the Socialist view no occasion whatever justifies the suspension of the regular government the people instituted—and even if such an occasion could arise there is no authority to which they would consent to give arbitrary power. Military "government" is not government, but organized violence.

Thus Mr. Walling in 1912. Now meet Mr. Walling in 1917. In the New York *Evening Globe* of May 1 of that year the man of force appeared again as a man of force, but he was no longer brooding over

the wayward tendency of American Socialists to make peace with the modern order. He had made his own peace with it, and he urged the courts to force his late comrades to follow his example. He was indignant over the perverse example set by Morris Hillquit and wrote: "Whether the courts will deal with this latest German propaganda remains to be seen."

This yearning for the police became a marked feature of the literature produced by all the converted Dantons. In the old era Walling had pursued the late Samuel Gompers because of Sam's veneration for the altars of the higher Babbitry, but now they became intimate friends. All the other conspicuous representatives of the ultra-Left were similarly gathered in. There was Dr. Frank Bohn, joint author with William D. Haywood of a pamphlet declaring that "any means" was legitimate for the overthrow of the bourgeois order. He was given a mission abroad to save it, and upon his return many ungodly Huns were slain by his virile pen. There was also Charles Edward Russell, whose pamphlet in 1915 against the war was still doing service while he was on a mission to Russia with Elihu Root to persuade the Russians to contribute more of their bones to the Christian Crusade of the Allies!

A smaller group, not identified with the Left, also collapsed. John Spargo, author of a life of Marx and numerous other books, had objected to the militancy of Russell and recoiled at the apostasy of Gaylord and Simons, but within a few months he also took the veil. His metamorphosis was an extraordinary one. In the *New York Times* of May 5, 1918, writing of the centennial of the birth of Marx, he said that this anniversary "may be regarded . . . as the end of Marxian Socialism." In June, 1918, appeared his book on "Americanism and Social Democracy," the theme of which was that the American Socialists had been under the influence of German Socialist thought so long that they were all pro-German. This despite

the fact that the St. Louis declaration had indicted all the Powers in the war as robber states fighting for a place at a thieves' supper! By 1923 the metamorphosis of Spargo had been completed to the Babbitt stage. In the *Outlook* of March 28 he could write that "the great need of the world, the fundamental requisite for economic rehabilitation, is a vast strengthening of the capitalist system of the several countries." In 1924 he visited Washington to pay homage to Dr. Coolidge.

To the Spargo wing belonged also Allan L. Benson, Socialist presidential candidate in 1916. In 1915 his first anti-war book, "A Way to Prevent War," appeared. In it he presented a realistic view of the causes of war—the appetite for other people's real estate, back-stairs diplomacy, military fops seeking glory, the armament clans, the stupidity and intrigues of the Foreign Offices. In 1916 his "Inviting War to America" appeared. The same theme was enlarged upon, with the United States as the background. "We should seek to show the American people, by careful, patient reasoning that the same forces that brought about the war in Europe are operating here," he wrote. "We should show that the same system that kills the workers in war robs them in peace." But within a short year careful and patient reasoning convinced him of the necessity of killing in war and robbing in peace. The awkward squad of "true Socialists" welcomed him, and led him to the Wilson altar, and there he confessed his sins. In the *New York World* of November 2, 1918, he joined in an appeal to the voters "to uphold the President by voting for only such congressional candidates as support with loyalty and enthusiasm the President's entire programme of war and reconstruction."

Twenty-five years ago a history of Tammany Hall was published in New York and in March, 1917, a revised and enlarged edition appeared. Tammany's essential industry of looting the public till was illustrated from musty old documents and newspaper files. Mooney, Stagg, Page,

Swartwout, Tweed, Croker and the other jolly pirates stalked through the volume, showing that the way to eminence in the Republic was not barred to the lowest vulgarian. The author of the book, Gustavus Myers, continued his researches into the by-ways of American history and in 1909 the first of three volumes of a history of the great American fortunes appeared, with the remaining two following next year. Rotary's Book of Genesis declares that Babbitt's first ancestors saved a few fishhooks, and by thrift and enterprise added gradually to this first store of capital. The gang without fishhooks became pack-horses for the early Babbitts, and so we have an explanation of the origin of economic sin. Myers set out to explode this myth. His work was by no means new, but his documentary material was voluminous and could not be reconciled with the version in Rotary's Book of Genesis. Stephen Girard, John Jacob Astor, Marshall Field, Cornelius Vanderbilt, Jay Gould, Russell Sage and all the others stalked in this second work as the Tammany vulgarians did in the first one. In 1912 Myers invaded the holy of holies, the Supreme Court of the United States, and in a history of that noble tribunal kicked a few national saints from their pedestals. The final sentence of this volume declared that the "next application of the rule of reason will be made by the organized working class in its own interests to the end that it will expropriate the expropriators."

Brother Myers came to the Socialist fold some time in 1908, and was soon marching with the syndicalist wing of Robert Rives La Monte. But in 1914 the Christian crusade for democracy changed his whole perspective. His recent history of American idealism makes ample amends for the impiety of his first two works. Even the brokerage business of Tammany is seen in a softer light, and now he writes of the impious conduct implied in "carping, jeering and destructive criticism of America, its people and institutions."

III

When the opulent J. G. Phelps Stokes left his clubs some twenty years ago to share our adventure he shocked the very best people. In the years following he guarded the Socialist sanctuary jealously against all persons suspected of any traces of Rotarian culture. When we obtained a substantial victory in Milwaukee in 1910 he was plunged in gloom. He declared that the Milwaukee voters were "mere reformers" who had compromised with the enemy. Only the presence of other members of the Left gave him courage to stay at his post. There he remained till the fatal call to the colors in 1917. Then he enlisted in the New York Veterans Corps of Artillery, was advanced to a lieutenancy in March, 1919, and finally became a captain in the New York National Guard the following year. Drilling his troops, he forgot the Milwaukee sinners of 1910.

In October, 1917, a new political party of all the civic virtues was organized. Its founders affirmed, among other beliefs, that the grog-shop was an offense against the national piety. Stokes became treasurer of this party, but as neither peasantry nor proletariat could be induced to enter it, it failed to make any showing in the election returns. The Social Democratic League was founded in the same year and Stokes again fell heir to the financial portfolio, but the league never lived long enough for him to make a report. When the Russian monarchists established a Russian Information Bureau in New York he became a councillor for it until Kolchak's cargo of democracy was pitched into oblivion by Trotsky's bayonets.

Of those who formed the barrier to the German invasion, Robert Rives La Monte deserves special mention. La Monte had represented a syndicalist tendency and was recognized as one of its leading philosophers. He anticipated the fall of the bourgeois Jericho by direct action. Born of a wealthy family, he became impatient for the immediate and complete surrender of

the bourgeois enemy. Balloting by the faithful was too slow. It was always uncertain, and tended to distract attention from the big job. Why not enlist for the "revolutionary tactics of insatiable syndicalism?" He was enraptured with what he described its "almost miraculous powers." But all this had a glorious ending in 1917, when the citizens of his home town rejoiced that Robert Rives La Monte had become a sergeant in the Home Guard. God and Fatherland could not be denied. Henceforth "Who's Who in America" announced to the curious that he had "not been identified with the Socialist Party since August, 1914."

In 1917 the patriotic Samuel Gompers became alarmed that the required amount of cannon fodder he was expected to deliver from the ranks of labor might not be forthcoming. Prospective conscripts recalled that he had visited Europe in 1909 and had embodied his observations in his "Labor in Europe and America," published in the following year. One sentence is sufficient to present his view of the war that everybody knew was coming. "In Europe anti-militarism signifies a challenge to governments by the workers," he wrote, "a defiance by them of the classes that stand to win much and lose little by the killing of thousands of common soldiers in battle, and a deep-seated resolve to refuse to take the last step in what is termed 'military duty'—that is, for one set of laborers to shoot down on the field of carnage other equally well-meaning and simple-minded toilers between whom and themselves there should exist in this age of awakened conscience and general enlightenment a fraternity strengthened by a common suffering."

In 1917 there were still members of his unions who were asking, as he had asked in 1910, whether it were worth while to take the last step in military duty. But Sam had contracted that they should take it, and so he concluded that a demonic influence restrained them. Whereupon he called the faithful together in Minneapolis

in September, and there the American Alliance for Labor and Democracy was born. It was blessed by a long message from Dr. Wilson, and the "true Socialists" honored the occasion by their presence and approval. The conference declared that "war waged for evil ends must be met by war waged for altruistic ends." Inspired by "ideals of liberty and justice," the delegates affirmed "that where expressions are used which are obstructive to the government in its conduct of the war, or are clearly capable of giving aid and comfort to the nation's foes, the offenders should be repressed by the constituted authorities in accordance with established law." The dissenters among the union leaders promptly took the hint. In the previous May Dr. Wilson had issued his proclamation of the Selective Draft Act in which he humorously declared that the nation had "volunteered in mass." The Espionage Act was passed in June, and was supplemented by the Sedition Act in May, 1918. The Minneapolis declaration regarding loose talk assured the Washington dictators that Sam's crowd could be relied upon.

A man-hunt now began, with the religious fervor befitting its altruistic ends. Tar and feathers, yellow paint, in some cases coils of rope, the raiding of homes, ostracism, arrests, and a few murders solemnized the joyful pursuit of the ideals of liberty and justice. The farther he was removed from the draft by age, the more militant did the patriot become. Gompers rejoiced that he had contributed a number of his relatives to the war. To certain Army officers in October he declared that "this war is the greatest event in human history since the Creation." Before the American Luncheon Club in Paris the following year he became almost poetical. There he declared that "the name of America to us is a symbolism, an ideal, the apotheosis of all that is good and great and righteous." Unluckily, the nobility of money, with which Sam thus fraternized beautifully during the war, kicked him

unmercifully following its end. Employers' organizations by the score announced boldly that his trade union conscripts must abandon their unions and accept the open shop upon their return from the trenches. Nevertheless, he never lost his faith in America as a holy land of idealism.

IV

Within one year after our entrance into the war twenty-two of the Socialist publications were thrown out of the mails, four of them being dailies, and a number were prohibited from shipping by express. Books, pamphlets and leaflets were also denied transmission through the mails. At a later period circulars merely appealing for funds to insure efficient counsel for indicted Socialists were held up by the alert postmasters. The national office of the party was raided in September, 1917, and its files, mailing lists, records and documents were carted off. In the following year Victor L. Berger, a member of Congress, Adolph Germer, national secretary of the party, J. Louis Engdahl, editor of the national party weekly, William F. Kruse and Irwin St. John Tucker, heads of departments in the national office, were indicted. In January, 1919, two months after the end of the war, the accused were convicted and sentenced to twenty years in prison. In September, 1918, Eugene V. Debs received a sentence of ten years.

We Socialists were not alone in sharing this rebirth of liberty. At Bisbee, Arizona, a thousand miners were chased into the desert; at Butte Frank Little was lynched by the local Babbitry; seventeen members of the I. W. W. were tarred, feathered and whipped in Oklahoma; Herbert S. Bigelow of Cincinnati was kidnapped and his back was cut into bloody strips; a German miner named Prager was lynched in Illinois. No matter where the Socialist or other radical turned, the terror dogged his heels. No man was safe from the swarm of informers, spies and *agents provocateurs*, volunteer and official. Only in some of the larger

cities were Socialists able to meet, and at these meetings *Cbeka* agents appeared with pencil and pad to report to Washington what was said.

This espionage system radiated from Washington through a thousand channels. It was linked up with committees of safety and defense councils, whose chief duty was to see that the daily thought ration issued by George Creel was accepted without a whimper. The England ruled by a landed squirearchy in the period of the American Revolution was a freemen's paradise compared with the America of the Wilson war years. Hinkhouse's recent study of British opinion of the American Revolution convincingly shows that even after hostilities opened at Lexington subscriptions were openly taken in London for the relief of American families whose breadwinners had fallen. But in 1917 our publications were destroyed and our meetings dispersed by bullies. This was not because we favored the so-called enemy. We had no more affection for the pompous idiots of the Central Powers than we had for the sanctimonious frauds representing the Allies. In fact, openly pro-German publications fared better than our own. The *New Yorker Volkszeitung*, a German Socialist daily, had bitterly attacked the German Socialists for voting the war credits and this continued to be its policy. The conservative *Staats Zeitung* served as spokesman of the German cause. Yet the former was thrown out of the mails and the latter continued publication under a government license. Our crime as Socialists was not that we accepted the German fraud, but that we would not accept the Allied fraud.

We soon learned that the *Cbeka* had become highly organized and systematized. Once having got their hands on the national throat, the bureaucrats continued business into the peace period. I once saw a printed volume of suspects compiled from index cards in the so-called Department of Justice. It looked like a New York telephone directory. The New York *Call* obtained access to this volume and ran long

excerpts from it. All the active Socialists of the country were listed, together with every other man or woman who had said or written anything that offended the Wilson Cossacks, including Jane Addams, whose name headed the list. That model of the patriotic virtues, Attorney-General Daugherty, in the annual report of the department for 1921, declared that the *Cheka* was being continued and perfected. He reported that the General Intelligence Division had accumulated 450,000 index cards and "many exhibits, photographs, and descriptions of persons." In the fiscal year then ended 1,500 new photographs had been added. Daugherty's predecessor, the celebrated Palmer, added a special news service, which he provided free to country newspapers to keep his Red Menace buncombe alive. The *Nation* of March 6, 1920, reprinted a facsimile of a page of this stuff, offered free to country papers at the expense of the taxpayers.

Out in the interior private organizations of Babbitts imitated the official *Cheka*. Among my collection of curios is a volume compiled in Minneapolis in 1920, illustrated with photographs of private letters and documents that could have been obtained only by a wide system of theft. This index of undesirables has 127 pages, but it was apparently compiled by amateurs. Its authors committed the ludicrous blunder of including excerpts from articles and letters written by some of the Lefts years before they began rooting for an Allied victory! Thus the local or provincial *Cheka* of Minnesota damned certain men as miscreants who in fact were trusted aids of the central *Cheka* at Washington. This stupidity recalls some of the blunders of the half-wits in charge of the Russian *Okbrana* in the days of the Romanoffs.

I cannot omit from the narrative an interesting story of Wilson's Fourteen Points. If my readers will take the trouble to read that archaic document they will observe that it is largely based upon the idea that none of the Powers at war should be permitted to profit by it. Such a programme

agreed with the view of the American Socialists. They asserted that the two alliances were smeared with the same muck, and that neither should be permitted to strip the other of its valuables at the end of the war. I do not say that this was Wilson's view. I only assert that his Fourteen Points can be reconciled with this view. He outlined them in January, 1918. But nearly three years before—that is, in May, 1915—the American Socialists prepared a programme of fourteen points that so clearly resembled the fourteen later presented by Wilson that a comparison of the two suggests that he had ours before him when he wrote. Such questions as indemnities, the transfer of territories, self-determination, international organization, open diplomacy and freedom of the seas are clearly outlined in the Socialist document just as he later discussed them. He departed from it only when he particularized regarding Belgium, France and Turkey. Thus the "moral forces" locked us up, and then took our declaration as a basis for working out a programme for settling the questions raised by the war. It was a grim piece of humor, which Dr. Wilson no doubt enjoyed.

Meanwhile we were cut off, during the war, from all the Socialists and trade unionists abroad. Attempts were at one time made to get together in an international conference in the hope of contributing something to end the slaughter. The Allied governments countered this scheme by sending handpicked delegations to various countries. With one such group Sam Gompers did business in England. The Trade Union Congress and the Labor Party over there had supported the war with some misgivings, and as it dragged out both organizations began to suspect the real aims of the Allies. They never went crazy over the war or regarded it as a crusade of God's saints, as Gompers did. Naturally, he could not deal with men of such views, so a delegation picked by the British Government was sent to visit him here. Its members had no mandate from

the political or economic organizations of British workers. In fact, these organizations publicly objected to the impudence of selecting men who did not and could not speak for them, but they were nevertheless accepted by Gompers and Wilson as true spokesmen of British workmen. While abroad later on, Gompers got snarled with the only organizations that could speak for the British proletariat, and so spent most of his time in London and Paris eating and drinking with financial leaders, political brokers and the titled masters of England. He would not agree to meet genuine representatives of the British workers during the war. His British accomplices in deception represented an insurance society, the General Federation of Trade Unions, not the trade union executives or the heads of the Labor Party.

V

Although a thousand or more of the Socialists' locals in the smaller towns and cities had been destroyed by the White Terror, we increased our membership, after the war, in the large cities. But we were not to have peace. Within our own ranks appeared another mania, an irresistible desire to ape the Russian Bolsheviks. Hundreds of ambitious Lenins appeared immediately after the armistice with model soviets, red armies, commissars and Marxian experts, all of them apparently more eager to hang us and each other than to establish a soviet republic. I myself stood near the top of the hanging list. This movement offered fine sport to the Wilson *Cheka*, whose agents immediately entered the Bolshevik organizations, helped to write their programmes, rose to high positions in them, arranged for their scattered members to meet on the same night all over the country, and then bagged thousands of them in a general raid. The Bolsheviks went underground, taking the *Cheka* agents with them, and in 1920 they selected two delegates, Jacob Nosovitsky and Louis Frania, to represent them at a

secret conference in Amsterdam. On the eve of leaving the United States Frania was charged with being a spy. A trial followed, in which Nosovitsky represented Frania. The latter was acquitted by his fellow "Bolsheviks." Nosovitsky was actually an agent of the Department of Justice and subsequently wrote an interesting story of his adventures for the Hearst papers. A few years later Frania left Moscow with a large sum of money to be used for propaganda abroad. He disappeared from the Bolshevik ken, and was eventually reported to be enjoying life in Paris. Thus the American Bolsheviks were apparently represented by two agents of the Department of Justice at the Amsterdam conference.

Within a few years no less than eighteen Bolshevik organizations appeared on the scene, each with a tinpot Lenin at its head. They frightened the Babbitts with broadsides of revolutionary maledictions, but even the *Cheka* agents could not keep the thing a going concern. By a process of arrests, deportations, amalgamations and desertions, the Bolshevik revolution has finally declined to two small fragments whose members are content to dream of the hectic days of police-hunts through cellars and garrets. We Socialists thrived on the malice of the *Cheka*, but the Bolshevik nonsense hurt us. It left gaping wounds from which we have not recovered. We could not deny that the Bolshevik absurdity had its origin in our own ranks.

But having disposed of us, clever mountebanks saw an opportunity to underwrite the "Bolshevik menace" and cash it into dividends. The National Security League, the American Defense Society, and Ralph Easley's National Civic Federation had been in the field for some years. Now hundreds of promoters appeared with their Sentinels of the Republic, Minute Men, and other such societies, appealing for cash to save the Republic. How many millions they obtained will never be known. Here and there an individual Babbitt acted on his own account. Thus, shortly after the Wall Street explosion, Darwin P. Kingsley,

president of the New York Life Insurance Company, sent a circular, dated September 17, 1920, to all his agents declaring that the explosion "was the voice of the Red, the shriek of the parlor Bolshevik, the united utterance of all forces that hate organized society." The War Department, jealous of the *Cbeka* activities of the Department of Justice, also established a propaganda department which specialized in attacking organizations of women. These included the Girls' Friendly Society, the Needlework Guild of America, the Women's Christian Temperance Union, the Ladies of the Grand Army of the Republic, and the Young Women's Christian Association. Not until the New York *World* exposed this nonsense did the heroes engaged in it abandon it.

It is the opinion of James Harvey Robinson that there are four historical layers underlying the minds of civilized men. These he enumerates as "the animal mind, the child mind, the savage mind, and the traditional civilized mind." This may in part explain the war and the post-war periods. The primary instincts underlying the civilized mind rise to the surface in adult life under the stress of some great catastrophe. Ancient barbaric and animal impulses, slumbering beneath a thin veneer of culture, were thus released by the war and have left deep scars on our modern life. Those under the spell of primitive emotions indulge in grotesque conduct, rationalize it in terms of idealist exaltation, and carry us back over the ages to our shaggy ancestors.