

A Look at Labor Progressive Purge

By A. C. Tuohy

Within the last few weeks Philip Murray has done something for which the entire labor movement should be grateful. He cut the feet from under one of his own international unions.

The union is the CIO United Retail, Wholesale, and Department Store Employees of America. Ten years ago John Lewis and Sidney Hillman gave this international union jurisdiction over the retail and wholesale trades. In reality this meant organizing the department stores, whose working conditions were always poor and whose workers greatly needed the benefits of trade unions.

Six million American workers stood to benefit from the activity of this international, yet in 1948 the union could claim a paid-up membership of only 50,000.

Why had this department store union failed so miserably? The answer is simple. Although the international union was in control of non-Communists, most of the locals were in the hands of the Communists.

Since 1937 the international has alternately fought and made behind-the-scenes deals with the Communists. Both the Communists and the non-Communists in the union were more concerned with holding on to their jobs than they were in organizing the unorganized millions of workers in the retail trades.

At the last CIO convention Philip Murray got mad. He blasted the leaders of this union, even though they belong to the CIO. A few weeks later he turned over to the Amalgamated Clothing Workers the job of organizing the workers which the department store union neglected so miserably.

In effect this means the death of the department store union and to its demise we can only say: Amen.

THE PARTICULARS of Murray's action lies in the fact that it is one of the few times that a great labor federation has moved against one of its own international for selfish reasons.

For many years both the AFL and the CIO have led the American public prattle about trade union autonomy. This meant

that unions which belonged either to the AFL and the CIO could do what they please. These unions were independent bodies untouchable even by the federation to which they belonged.

These international unions could harbor criminals, fools and incompetents, and yet escape any penalty. The good name of organized labor might suffer from their conduct but since they were sovereign unions nothing could be done about it.

Such a policy of hands-off might have been acceptable to Samuel Gompers but it is as outdated as high button shoes.

TRADE UNIONS today are instruments of power. Having power they must assume responsibility. International unions must check abuses of power by locals, and national federations must oversee the conduct of internationals.

Autonomy and sovereignty for locals and internationals are necessary for trade union democracy. No one would want all union affairs run from the Washington offices of the AFL and CIO. Yet in the past there has been too much autonomy in the labor movement.

Philip Murray has announced to the country that the CIO at least is not going to allow its constituent unions to run amuck. By destroying the department store union he may have scandalized the old-timers in the labor movement. But to all friends of labor his action comes as a refreshing breeze.

We trust that this action will be followed by other decisions which have the welfare of all organized labor at heart. We hope that the national AFL will follow suit in removing some of the corruption and jurisdictional strife that has grown so fat within its body.

50th Jubilee



Rev. Mateo Crawley-Boevey, S.S.C.C., 73, founder of the movement for the Enthronement of the Sacred Heart in the home, is celebrating the 50th Jubilee of his ordination. Now a patient at St. Joseph's Hospital, Three Rivers, Que., Father Mateo has carried his crusade into 14 countries and continues his work through extensive correspondence. (NC Photos).

Notre Dame Priests Buy Boy Magazine

Notre Dame, Ind. (NC)—The Catholic Boy, a national magazine for boys, has been purchased by the congregation of the Holy Cross, which administers the University of Notre Dame, it was announced here by the Rev. Thomas A. Steiner, C.S.C., Provincial of the Indiana Province of the Holy Cross Fathers.

The Rev. Frank E. Garland, C.S.C., youth editor of Our Sunday Visitor from 1940 to 1946, has been appointed editor, and Robert C. Fouhy, of Birmingham, N. Y., business manager of the magazine.

An advisory board was appointed to assist the editor. Members include: Frank Bruce, Bruce Publishing Company, Milwaukee; Louis Chaplan, South Bend, Ind. attorney; and George F. Drummer, and William A. Lubbers, South Bend businessmen; and Dennis J. O'Neill, D'Arcy Advertising Company, Cleveland.

Catholic Committee In Japan Housed

Tokyo—(NC)—The new headquarters building of the National Catholic Committee of Japan, corresponding to the National Catholic Welfare Conference in the U. S., was blessed here November 11 by Archbishop Paul Marilla, Apostolic Delegate to Japan.

Archbishop Peter Doi of Tokyo, Bishop Thomas Waskida of Yokohama and the Very Rev. Theodore Geppert, S.J., Rector of the Catholic University in Tokyo, attended.

The building is only a short distance from downtown Tokyo, near the Catholic University. It has two stories and a basement with a dozen rooms and offices, which will serve also as the editorial headquarters of the national Catholic weekly.

Courier-Journal Bookshelf

Miss Smith's Brooklyn

By MARY IRISH

There may be a "great day comin' znanana", but not to Brooklyn! Those who read Betty Smith's first novel, "A Tree Grows in Brooklyn", will remember that for her the borough is not a happy land of Dodger fans, but a city full of hungry kids and crowded tenements. In her latest best-seller the slums are even more dismal and hopeless.

WHY MISS SMITH has called her latest book "Tomorrow Will Be Better" is a matter for contemplation. She tells us how each generation grows up with mingled scorn and pity of their parents' squalid lives and full of hope and determination that their own future will be happier.

But always the young people in their eagerness to escape from unhappy, quarreling homes, fall into the same trap their parents fell into—a too-early marriage soon followed by the responsibilities of a family. Thereafter the grinding struggle to pay the rent and buy food leaves them grey-haired and worn out at forty.

Every young person in the book has dreamed that his or her life will be better. In the end each realizes bitterly or resignedly that the dream was false.

Here is where Miss Smith's much-advertised realism goes astray—because she shows us only the materialistic side of her people's lives and never the spiritual which might have lightened their burden. Her book is fascinating if you like people—but depressing if you like people to be happy.

MARGIE SHANNON, THE HEROINE, has the dream of a "better tomorrow" and she makes the same mistake of a hasty marriage which turns out unhappily. After the baby she has longed for is born dead, she decides to leave her husband, and turns to her former boss who after forty years of catering to a domineering mother has just been freed for marriage by her death.

Perhaps Miss Smith means to point out that of all her characters, only Margie will have a better tomorrow. But the reader finds it hard to believe she will reach any pinnacle of ecstasy in a second marriage to a forty-year-old ex-married man.

There is no denying Betty Smith's ability as a writer. She knows the people of whom she writes and she makes us know them.

While the book lasts, the reader lives in the tenement world of the Brooklyn slums, hearing men and women quarrel and count out their weekly wages and remember their youthful hopes, seeing them slap their children and wash their dishes and unwillingly entertain their daughters' fiancés; sharing with them the inside room ventilated by an evil smelling shaft; mourning with them when the arm of the phonograph, the family's pride and joy, is broken and there is never any money to replace it; but almost never in this book laughing with them.

Miss Smith's best qualities are the humaneness and poignancy with which she presents the lives of the poor, and never once in this respect does "Tomorrow Will Be Better" reach the heights remembered from "A Tree Grows in Brooklyn".

SEVERAL OF THE minor characters are more interesting and memorable than Margie. There is Flo, her mother, who constantly nag at those she loves most; there is Mr. Malone, the cop who is planning for a better tomorrow by studying undertaking and who reads his correspondence school lessons aloud at the kitchen table; and Reenie who "knows all the answers" and "disgraces" her German mother by marrying a "wop".

The plot, perhaps the weakest, is commonplace, unexciting, and uneventful. It is a series of pictures from the average lives of some average inhabitants of Brooklyn. As a result of its lack of exciting elements, it leaves the readers with a feeling of despair that so many should be doomed to such miserable lives.

Perhaps the worst thing about "Tomorrow Will Be Better" is that its author offers no solution to the unhappy state of affairs she presents. She doesn't seem to be fighting for a new system of economics, or a social reformation. She doesn't cry "Workers unite," or "Capitalists, see what you've done!" She just says, "Here it is, isn't it a mess?" and then attempts to console us by indicating the heroine may marry a richer man!

NO CATHOLIC could read this book without making one particular loud complaint. That is, although Betty Smith knows very well the struggles, hopes and fears of the people of whom she writes, she does not understand their religion or what it means to them.

All the characters in "Tomorrow Will Be Better" are called Catholic except one who later becomes a convert, and yet not one of them thinks like a Catholic. Never does it occur to one of them that their ultimate Tomorrow can be better, like the author evidently, they all live entirely for this world.

They get no comfort from their religion. The thought of Margie's dead baby happy in Heaven never enters her mind and her grief is unassuaged; and she decides to end her marriage and turn to another man without the least qualm!

MISS SMITH gives away her ignorance of Catholic doctrine when, through Flo, she says, "... Purgatory, where lost souls walk up and down and nobody cares." In another place she has a nun shake her head gently and smile sadly—as though all nuns wandered around in a perpetual air of tragedy.

All considered "Tomorrow Will Be Better" is a sad book that will probably do its readers no harm but won't leave them any the better for having finished it.

Currency Reform, DPs Snarl Religious Jailed German Catholic Relief Work By Polish Reds

Frankfurt—(NC)—Caritas Verband, the gigantic German Catholic charity organization, faces a hard winter with new problems—a reformed currency, eleven million immigrants and an army of helpless sick people.

Employing 120,000 paid workers, while receiving the aid of 600,000 volunteers, Caritas has been able to keep some 40 per cent of the German population (roughly 30 millions) from starvation and destitution. This has been made possible, of course, in good part through the great generosity of non-German Catholics from all over the world, and particularly from the Americas, operating through War Relief Services, National Catholic Welfare Conference.

BASIC TO AN understanding of the German situation as it now exists is the fact that while the currency reform was an absolute necessity giving fundamental value to German money, it at the same time affected adversely all private individuals and organizations, wiping out immediately whatever money reserves they may have amassed since the war's end.

At the same time, however, food, goods, clothing, equipment, and even luxury articles of many sorts were brought into the open and exposed for sale in market and store, since they could be bought and sold with currency that had a basic money value to it. This has given the country an artificial appearance of prosperity.

THERE ARE FOUR fundamental factors in the German economic situation. These factors are:

- (1) The eleven million people of German extraction who have been dispossessed of homes, holdings, and belongings, and thrust upon the German economy from Poland, Czechoslovakia, Rumania, Hungary and Yugoslavia during the past three years.
- (2) The hundreds of thousands of German prisoners of war who are gradually finding their way back into the American, British and French zones from the East and who have no means of support.
- (3) The vast numbers of sick, aged and infirm who are completely dependent upon charity for their subsistence.
- (4) The large groups of children throughout the country who are without proper means of nourishment and clothing.

ON THE SPECIFIC problem of the settlement of the vast hordes of Germans coming in from the East, strong measures are being taken to make the people in the three free zones receive them hospitably and take them under already almost overburdened roofs. For the Catholics, there is the further grave danger that many of these refugees are being settled in predominantly non-Catholic sectors, with the consequent danger of loss of faith.

To cope with this difficulty, strenuous efforts are being made to keep a priest with each group, to obtain building facilities for a church of some sort, and to secure traveling facilities for the pastor and curates, to enable them to keep in close contact with their variously scattered parishioners. One hundred motor-vehicles, donated by War Relief Services, N.C.W.C. during the past year have been of invaluable assistance in this regard.

Information Course Ads Attract 1,900

Boston—(NC)—It pays to advertise even religious advantages, according to the Paulist Fathers Information Center here. In the last few months the Paulist inserted seven advertisements in Boston dailies, announcing a free correspondence course in the Catholic religion, and more than 1,900 requests for the course have been received.

The Rev. John Carlin, C.S.P., director of the center, told an interviewer that in their responses to the ads "the writers generally exhibit much good will."

"Some wish to do justice to a Church that obviously suffers injustice, and leached of its teachings from a reliable source. Others, with a loyalty to the truth of things, wish to protect the Church from slander. Good will toward the Church and a spirit of fair play activate most of the correspondents."

ON THE OTHER hand, there seems to be much fear of the Church among non-Catholics, he said. Many non-Catholic laymen are afraid that they will not be able to live up to the high Catholic moral standards. "But—in spite of their fears and doubts—they are interested. They are susceptible to Catholic influence—now!"

"That Catholics are not meeting the demands is evidenced by last year's report on conversions," Father Carlin continued. He recalled that there was an average of only one convert to every 250 Catholics and that New England was far below this national figure.

"Catholics have failed to appreciate the fact that the threshold sometimes assumes the height of a picket fence in the mind of the earnest seeker," the priest personally.

"Intold good will can be purchased by a three cent stamp," Father Carlin emphasized. "From our files, we could produce hundreds of examples of the value of a personal note in bridging over the gap that separates us theologically. To date, many of our loyal converts could say, 'A three cent stamp made me a Catholic!'"

NON-CATHOLICS can be attracted to the Church in other ways, too, he said. "Special services to which non-Catholics are invited often attract those who would normally feel very uncomfortable in a Catholic Church. Pulpit dialogues, in which one priest takes the part of the religious objector, add a refreshing informality that tends to make visitor interested and at ease."

"The radio, like the correspondence course, appeals to the faithless who would prefer a certain amount of anonymity in his first steps toward the Church. We have found out the list of correspondents the names of residents of Beacon Hill, within three minutes' walk of the center. They would not be seen entering the door, or perhaps they would prefer not to commit themselves with further information. But they are interested. They will listen to the radio; they will receive instruction via the mail route."

Buffalo Priest At Kyoto School

Kyoto, Japan—(NC)—The only foreign professors in the Imperial University here are three Catholics. The only American of the trio is the Rev. John C. Murrell, of Buffalo, N. Y., a Maryknoll missionary, who previously served in Manchuria and at a Japanese mission in Seattle. Father Murrell is the author of "The Heel Apostle," the biography of the Rev. Thomas F. Price, co-founder of Maryknoll.

Father Murrell has been teaching English literature at the university since 1946, and conducts a hostel for students. The other two professors are the Baron de Montin, professor of French, and the Rev. Paul Egli, O.P., professor of medieval history.

Religious Jailed

New York—(NC)—The Mother Superior of a convent and three priests have been imprisoned in Poland, according to a report received here from Cracow by the Inter-Catholic Press Agency.

A military tribunal in Cracow sentenced Mother Hermina Olejnik, Superior of the convent of the Little Sisters of the Immaculate Conception at Krynica, to five years in prison, and the Rev. Wojciech Zygmunt of Zeglestaw to a six-year term. They were accused of assisting one Irena Mastalska, who was suspected of underground activities.

CHARGED WITH knowing of the activities of an underground group and not reporting to the security police, the Rev. Michael Kuc of Dabrowka was given one year in prison by the same tribunal. Seventy persons allegedly belonging to or assisting the same group are also under arrest.

A severe sentence of 10 years in prison was meted out to the Rev. Thomas Opatowicz by a military tribunal at Lodz. He and several of his parishioners were accused of leading assaults against a group of art students.

THE STUDENTS, members of the communist-dominated Union of Polish Youth, had been commissioned by the party to make a list of religious treasures and statuary. When the students learned the holy places, they were forcibly ejected by the local inhabitants. The other defendants got from four to 15 years in prison.

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U. S. Socialists Send Pope Spiritual Gift
Nearly a million Masses were contained in the spiritual bouquet which the Socialists of the United States and Canada presented to their fellow-Socialist, His Holiness Pope Pius XII on Christmas Eve this year, according to the Reverend J. Roger Lyons, S.J., of the central office of the Sodality at St. Louis, Mo., who was in charge of the tidings at which the Masses and Holy Communion were offered. The number—824,970 Masses and 762,375 Holy Communion—was the largest in the history of the annual Sodality gift to the Pope, which began in 1933, Father Lyons stated.

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