

Is This True About Business?

By JEROME JOACHIM

"THE PRESENT inflationary spiral is primarily due to the business man's selfish desire to grab all he can".

The above mis-statement constitutes the basis of communism in all parts of the world. Spoken glibly—and accepted as a major premise by millions without question—it makes an excellent starting point for arguments favoring controlled economy.

To begin with, it is *not* the business man today whose so-called selfishness has caused high prices. The business man today is no more selfish than he was in the depths of the depression when these same "controlled economists" said that low prices were wrecking the country. The cause of high prices today is the result of the fact that there is more buying power than there is goods and in a free or comparatively free economy, this invariably results in an increase in price. An increase in price, when accompanied by increased wages does not necessarily mean that an hour's labor buys less commodities—in fact it may mean an increase in buying power.

But it is the so-called selfishness of *all* of our population that has brought about a decrease in real price. The average American—can buy an automobile in America if he wants to work hard and forego the purchase of other things instead. Millions of Russians, where the "selfish" business man has been eliminated, could not own an automobile no matter how hard they worked.

It was because Henry Ford was "selfish" and wanted a lot of money and power, that he created a situation which brought the price of cars down from \$2000 to \$500, while at the same time he caused to be created a vast empire of tools and machines which enabled men to produce millions of automobiles at these low prices.

It was the "selfishness" of hundreds of our industrialists that caused this country to have forty corporations, each with physical assets in excess of a billion dollars. What nation on earth would not welcome these billions of dollars worth of tools and factories which contribute so greatly to the common welfare?

What great deed in history has ever been accomplished by altruists? Who can name a single act that contributed to the well being of so many people as did the building of the American railroads by our "robber barons" who functioned purely from the most selfish of motives? What nation on earth has ever made so many cars available for so many people as has that nation which operated purely from selfish motives? America has no natural advantages over other countries. Her resources, without the work of free people, were absolutely valueless in the beginning. Manhattan Island sold for \$24. The billions of dollars worth of tangible wealth which now exists on that island were all created through the labor of free men, all working for their own selfish interests. The iron range in Minnesota, which has meant so much to the development of this country, wasn't worth anything until thousands of people—working for a selfish interest—had built steamships, railroads and billions of dollars worth of other tools with which to make this ore of use to mankind.

China probably has far greater resources than America has ever had and so has India. But they are relatively valueless, because government in those countries has taken so much from all who made any effort that few have the will to work. A thousand of our most ruthless capitalists, given free rein in China for a generation without interference from government, would make it a rich nation. All the government controls and regulations in the world will never make China great. Only the right to keep what one produces will ever do that!

I have often pointed out that the function of government is to prevent one man from stealing what another man produces. Today, in America to some degree and in Europe to a much greater degree, government's principle function is to take from the best producers and distribute to those who are either incompetent or unwilling to work. To the extent that this is done by government, will our civilization become more and more decadent. In the early days of government, those in power could keep that power by dividing what they stole in taxes with a few of the lords and barons who were in key places. By so doing, government made it unnecessary for the most capable people to work at all.

Later—as the democratic idea broadened, it was necessary to divide the "loot" with an increasingly larger group. Today, in America we have the spectacle of a government which steals from the people for the benefit of organized groups numbering into the millions. While the theft in the beginning kept only the lords and barons idle, present day government aims seem to be to give millions the impression that their welfare lies not in greater effort but in looking to government to help them steal from their fellow man. All of Europe is convinced that their salvation lies in that direction. Apparently a majority of Americans are convinced of the same thing!

ONE OF THE last American films shown inside Russia was "Grapes of Wrath", and it was distributed in an attempt to depict the U. S. as a decadent nation on the brink of economic collapse. But the Russian theater-goers were impressed chiefly by the fact that the "Oakies" and "Arkies" traveled around the country freely and in their own automobiles. The Unimaginative commissars never anticipated such a response.

"One of the last news reels exhibited in Russia had shots of Detroit police breaking up strike riots during the administration of Justice Frank Murphy, then governor. They were supposed to convince Soviet audiences of the brutality of American capitalists. But the comrades' comments were: "Look! In the America they don't shoot the workers; they just knock them down. And look at the fine shoes and clothing even the strikers are wearing."

The showing of "How Green Is My Valley", the story of a strike in Wales, caused a curious reaction in Russia. Stalin's subjugated folk were astonished that workers could strike in such a capitalistic country as England and even more astounded that such a subject could be made into a movie for general distribution.

From "National Whirligig," Chicago Journal of Commerce, Nov. 6, 1948.

Friday Evenings at Eight



The Rt. Rev. Msgr. L. G. Ligutti, our candidate for "Catholic Man of the Hour" has promised to speak at the Henry George School soon, on the subject, "Resettlement in America."

As we go to press we cannot get a confirmation on this because the Monsignor's recent appointment

as Official Observer of the Holy See at the U. N. Food and Agriculture Organization meetings keeps him flying from Washington to Des Moines; where he still edits The Christian Farmer for the National Catholic Rural Life Conference, and shepherds the cause of displaced persons for which he has done most enlightened work the past two years. Father Ligutti writes: "hold the date anyway, you can always pick up someone better, and a wiser Georgist." Such provoking modesty!

A prominent New York lawyer and nephew of Dr. McGlynn, Joseph Whelan, will tell delightful stories of the "Rebel, Priest and Prophet" on January 21. On January 28, Philip Cornick, Member of the Research Staff of the Institute of Public Administration, will discuss "Present Trends in Taxation." Should Monsignor Ligutti fail to arrive, Mr. Cornick will, if possible, substitute for him.

The first speaker in February will be Charles Johnson Post, who will tell "How to Cure the Housing Shortage." On February 11, the Eve of Lincoln's Birthday, Herman L. Barbary will give "Selected Readings from Henry George." This will be a biography of George as taken from his own writings and indicating the development of his fine literary style.

New York

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High School, Brooklyn; and the Bryant High School, Queens—as well as in libraries and "Y's" in Manhattan, Brooklyn, Queens and Mount Vernon. This increasing regional work is in line with the current campaign of the New York Adult Education Council (of which the Henry George School is a member) to bring more education to the communities.

The New York School for Social Research, New York's leading adult education institute outside of the regular colleges—is offering a course in *Progress and Poverty* to begin February 12, with an instructor from the Henry George School—George Royal, one of its best and most popular teachers, who will use the school's manual and lesson sheets. The tuition fee will be \$12.50.

The Henry George School is on the air over a new station in Newark—WVNJ. The schools in New York and Newark are sponsoring a 5-minute news broadcast at 10:30 P.M. every day, with Bob Harris as newscaster.

Don't Miss

GOVERNMENT TAKE ALL

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