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The "LET YOUR HAIR DOWN"

Column

A FRIEND of the Journal has sent in a clipping from the *New York Herald-Tribune*, — a press copy of a letter in which Mr. J. Anthony Marcus, President of the Institute of Foreign Trade, let his hair down and told Mr. Amado Hernandez, President of the Philippine Congress of Labor Organizations, who was then visiting the United States, what he thought of certain remarks Mr. Hernandez must have made:

"I have sent the following letter to Señor Amado Hernandez, President of the Philippine Congress of Labor Organizations, who is visiting this country.

"I have read your published remarks about this country. To say that your criticisms of our government and people will be resented by our fellow-citizens as much as by this writer, is to put it mildly.

"On two different occasions and at enormous expense in lives and treasure, our country has liberated the Philippines from slavery. We have spent untold hundreds of millions of dollars to help your economy and still are. We have given you a stable government while in other parts of the Western Hemisphere so-called republics indulged in perennial palace revolutions, disturbing their economies and retarding their progress. We have given you the spirit of Thomas Jefferson and Abraham Lincoln to guide you in your independent living.

"What have you ever done for us? You have not even the decency of being courteous to us while enjoying the hospitality of our country. Had it not been for this country, your people would have been the slaves of Japan; you would not have known the meaning of freedom... You certainly would never have known the feeling of having free labor unions in which you are particularly interested.

"You know as well as I do that you are merely mouthing the Red Fascist (Communist) lie when you stated that the independence we have granted you is 'a mockery', that the leaders of your country are subservient to the dictates of Wall Street and Army officials in Washington.

"If we are so bad, why do you come here to study slum-clearance, housing, and labor conditions? Why don't you go to the workers' paradise in Stalin's empire? I have been there on many occasions and can tell you what you will find. There you will find millions of people in slave-labor camps, other millions—workers and peasants—chained to their jobs in factories, mines, in the fields, etc. There you will find that the people have as much to say about ordering their lives as the animals in the zoo. And as for the labor unions, you will find them mere agents of oppression of the workers and not free as yours and ours are; in the U.S.S.R. they serve the same purpose as the secret police.

"Having read your remarks, I am confident that you have come to the wrong country. Had you gone to the Soviet Union first, you might have appreciated better what we have here or what we have given to your people, unless, of course, you are one of those incurable Red Fascists.

"I seriously question your right to speak in the name of your workers and peasants when you state that they see no threat of Communism in China. It is possible that you refuse to see the threat in China if the Communists take over, all of which convinces me that you don't belong here and what you will learn here will be of little value to you. You are fishing for something else and not the announced purpose."

The following is a letter received by the editor from Jim Halsema, well known in the Philippines, who is now in Washington, D.C.

"I am writing to ask you if you will kindly furnish the library of the School of Advanced International Studies, 1906 Florida Avenue, N.W., Washington, D.C., with recent issues of the Journal. I am a student at the school this year and working on an M.A. in international politics before returning to the newspaper business. It is amaz-

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ing to learn how little people here know about the post-war Philippines. Not that there is a lack of interest,—a number of the students here have been in the Islands with the armed forces during the war, but material is not readily available. I finally found back copies of the Journal in the Library of Congress, but that is hardly like having them available in one's own library. I would be glad to send you a check for whatever is needed to keep the Journals coming a while.

"From this perspective it is apparent, much more than it is in Manila, what a treasure trove of information is available in the Journal, and I would like to tell you again how much I admire your combination of literary talent and hard-headed editing."

The editor said he liked that word, "hard-headed", as he always has a feeling that he is too sentimental. Talking about ex-Philippine newspapermen, Fritz Marquardt, now editor of the Chicago *Sun-Times*, and on a Far Eastern trip, was in the Journal office several times during the past month. He wanted issues of the Journal, and at his suggestion we sent sets of all the post-war issues of the Journal to the following: the libraries of the New York *Times*, the *Christian Science Monitor*, and the San Francisco *Chronicle*, and the Chicago Public Library and the Newberry Library, Chicago. All complimentary, of course.

Dr. Claude A. Buss also was a recent visitor, by the way, and carried off an armful of Journal issues. However, lest anyone should think that he was too deeply inspired by the Journal in the writing of his article on the Philippines which appeared in *Fortune* (so far we have seen only newspaper excerpts), we wish to say that he told us that he had also obtained various issues of *Commerce*, the monthly organ of the Philippine Chamber of Commerce here.

"I suppose that you thought, or hoped, that I was dead, but I am still very much alive. I have not written you because I have felt that as a back-slidden 'liberal' (never trust a liberal), you are hopeless. Mammon has got you. But I must vent my indignation about your editorial, 'Work and Wealth,' in the last issue of the Journal which you so distinguishedly edit, as ordered. You start out innocently enough, as you often do, sneaking up on the reader, with some statistics about farm production in the United States, then comes something about total production, and then you express your admiration for the hard work that must have been done by the Americans in producing such great wealth.

Check. But then you begin your mental sleight-of-hand. You say that all capital only represents hard work done in the past. And as hard work is so admirable and noble, therefore capital is, too, and so is the capitalist! You even propose to deify either capital or the capitalist, I don't know exactly, for that is where you airily waved a veil, like a circus magician. Deify capital, or the capitalist! Good God! You object to the usual cartoonist's picture of the capitalist. Then, in the back of the Journal, you, following *Fortune Magazine*, criticize the novelists for portraying capitalists for what they are. What a twister you are. I know that you know that capital has its origin in profits and that profits are what the capitalist withholds, steals, from the wages of labor. Capital stands for robbery, not for work.—*Admirer.*"

"No, I wouldn't wish the man dead. He has a right to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness, and makes himself so happily indignant over his wrong economics that it becomes almost a pleasure to listen to him. That's the trouble with economics. It is a difficult science and it requires some brains to grasp even the fundamentals, but it is so close to all of us that all sorts of exciting untruths and half-truths are avidly laid hold of and clung to. Often to account for personal shortcomings and failures. I don't want to be mean, or personal, but the man sounds to me as if he never did an honest day's work in his life, or ever made a profit, or has anything but the pants he walks around in.

"I had a laugh a few months ago," the editor went on, "when one of my sons-in-law, a very stalwart and well-meaning young man, offered to lick 'Admirer' for me if I would point him out. Of course, I couldn't, and I certainly wouldn't if I could. No, let the man live and pursue the good life as he will. I have given up trying to de-misinform him. . . .

"The trouble is, there are so many like him, — fine subjects of the enemies of our civilization to operate with. All sorts of fallacies go round and round in their undeveloped brains. Why don't our schools, even in the lower grades, give pupils some elementary understanding of the work-a-day world they live in? I am sure 'Admirer' will now curse me for advocating 'capitalistic propaganda' in the schools. But capitalism, so-called, is our way of life, an integral part of what we know as democracy, and our youth should be given some understanding of its

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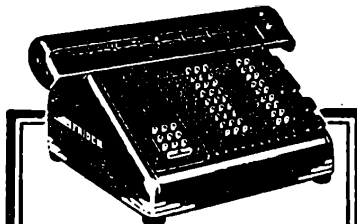
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fundamentals so they will not be misled by what are not only such stupidities but such deliberate lies as are eating on 'Admirer.'

"Capital does have its origin in saving, and a good part of it does derive from profits, though not all, because wage-earners and others can and do also save. Profits are not something that is taken away from wages. The workers alone are by no stretch of the imagination entitled to the whole of the value of what is produced. Wages are the price of labor, determined by the supply of and the demand for labor. Profits are the price or reward of enterprise and good management. Wages are earned by great numbers of people; profits are earned by far fewer, those few who can prove in practice that they have exceptional ability in the initiation and direction of work. Wages and salaries generally in the United States take up some three-fourths of the national income, while profits take up only a part of the remainder. In the majority of enterprises there turns out to be no profit at all, only losses, and they end in failure. What really sensible man can believe that the men who start a business, whether they succeed in keeping it going or not, do no real work and deserve no share in the value of the production or the service? Is that robbery? To call it that is nonsense. Nonsense, even if the idea lies at the bottom of Marx's Labor Theory of Value

and its corollary, the Surplus Value Theory, which would make 'exploitation' an integral part of the capitalist system.

"Is the whole material structure of our civilization, our mills and factories, trains, ships, harbors, roads, hospitals, schools, churches, and homes only a monument, basically, to cupidity, rapacity, oppression, and theft?

"Could men who are such monsters and other men who are such dupes together ever have built anything so great and so fair as is, with all present shortcomings, our modern democratic civilization, its freedom, its abundance, its zest and joy?

"That could have been the thought, that could be the thought only of a baboon; of a hater of his kind and of life itself."

Said we to the editor, "You sure went to town that time!"

"Wait, wait," said he. "If there were no such thing as profits, we would be obliged to invent them. Profits serve as a guide to production, — what goods should be produced at any particular time and in what quantities. If there are no profits in a given enterprise that is an indication that the labor and capital involved are being misused. No government planning or control could ever be so effective as this profit barometer to production needs. Then, of course, the desire for profits serves also as an ever-present check on waste and inefficiency..."

"Well, that's enough for one lesson," said we.

"And that is in the interest, too, of labor. For the greatest possible production is to labor's advantage. High wages can come only with high production..."

We believed him, but we had no more time. After all, we don't have to be told everything.

"That's the real reason why wages in the United States are so high..." he shouted after us.

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