

in power. It is impossible to have a clean government because the wealthy few will always bribe politicians to do their bidding and to maintain the *status quo*, and there will always be those who can be bribed under the present society because that is the ethics of capitalism, under which scholastic ideals become a convenient and hypocritical screen. And in our country all of these things are aggravated and made more intolerable by the vicious influence of American imperialism, which can only perpetuate its control here by the use of such methods."

THE foregoing is an extract from a letter "written in the field" by a Huk leader and sent to Senator Lorenzo Tañada in reply to a recent academic commencement address of his. The Senator published the letter and answered it in another address. The whole exchange is worth reading, but we have space here only for the paragraph quoted which expressed the central theme of the letter and for some comment we desire to make.

The difficulty in this, as in other similar cases, is that an assertion may be made in a few pithy words which, though entirely wrong, may take considerable argument to refute. Logically, all that such an assertion merits is a flat counter-assertion,—for example: "It is entirely possible for a businessman, a capitalist, to make a profit without exploiting and cheating workers of the fruit of their toil". The first assertion may be false, and the counter-assertion may be true, but no proof is contained in either assertion.

And a false assertion may, if it creates a false belief, do considerable damage, though happily it generally fails to gain credence, or if this is gained, it fails to sustain it, truth being supported by the universal integration of fact, while a lie is exposed by every fact.

Nevertheless, propaganda,—particular ideas and doctrines disseminated without reference to their truth but to influence action on behalf of special groups and interests, is a dangerous thing even if it is only temporarily successful, because harm can be done during the period of confusion and obfuscation. It is in fact not so much the aim of propaganda to convince as it is to create such a period during which the plotters and connivers may fish in the troubled waters.

The Huk from whose letter we have quoted, was saying nothing new, was merely repeating political and economic theories exposed as false long ago. One of these was the labor theory of value generally credited to Marx and Engels. It has long been recognized as wholly untenable. It is indeed obvious to anyone that value is not created by labor alone, but by the various elements of production working together, each of which element is rightfully entitled to a share in the fruit of production.

And is a worker "exploited" and "cheated" because he works for a wage? Many a man out of work in this country today would like to be so "cheated". A worker is paid a wage in accordance with the prevailing labor market, the need for labor and the supply of labor. And the need for labor is in turn determined by the demand for goods and services, or rather, the effective demand, that which can be paid for. And to be able to pay, we have to produce. The more we produce, the more there is to be shared.

The absolute animal need and urge to consume and therefore first to produce, lies at the bottom of the economic process, and almost equally fundamental is the necessity of recognizing the right of private property if men are to have any incentive at all to produce beyond their most immediate needs, if there is to be any accumulation at all, any progress and civilization at all. That is the very oldest lesson which humanity has had to learn.

What can be fairer and more just than the free market in which men may bargain freely for their labor, for their produce, for their land, for their capital; buy and sell, lease and loan, seek employment and quit it; enter into this or that enterprise, beneath what they have to their loved ones, all as each may find to his own best interest, without

interference or dictation from master or lord or king or tyrant.

Freedom has been the age-old search and struggle of man,—freedom to live and eat and dress and think and speak and worship and work and build and move about. President Roosevelt spoke of freedom from want and fear; the first we are gaining, as in America, through a magnificent system of production; the second we shall gain when we shall have succeeded in establishing the power of the present United Nations.

The Huk mentioned wealth and power; naturally the two go together, though government is therefore not necessarily plutocratic. There are various types of government, and the general evolution of government has been toward democracy, for, when all is said and done, the many are more powerful than the few. And it behooves the many today to be careful lest they deliberately and foolishly resign their power again to the few, as under every form of totalitarianism.

It was Thomas Jefferson, one of the prime movers of the American Revolution and one of the founders of the great American democracy, who wisely said that the least government is best, but under socialism, and especially under communism, the government is total, and freedom, individual, political, economic, is tyrannically suppressed and reduced to nil. Communism is not truly revolutionary; it is the blackest of reactionism, even more drastically reactionary than fascism.

What the Huk said about American "imperialism" is so patently belaboring a straw man in order to distract attention from that most vicious form of imperialism the world has ever known, that of the Kremlin, that we here, in the Philippines, who know at first hand how noble the American policies have always been, must stand astounded at the effrontery of such openly false propaganda.

True it is that things are not so good with us in the Philippines as they should be. We still suffer from many evils, of which poverty, which carries so many handicaps in its train, including ignorance, is the most fundamental. But the activity of the totalitarian reactionism here, headed by the Moscow-inspired Huks, has surely already sufficiently demonstrated its demonic nature, has surely conclusively shown that it is wholly and inherently criminal, holding out neither dream nor hope.

We must congratulate the Chamber of Commerce of the Philippines on the success of the Second National Convention of Filipino Businessmen held under its auspices in Baguio from April 28 to May 1. It was attended by some four hundred fifty delegates from various parts of the country, a number of excellent addresses were delivered, and over a hundred resolutions were passed. As the *Journal* goes to press, the text of none of these was as yet available, so comment at this time is not possible.

The power of communism as a political and economic ideology has always lain in its idealism,—in the fact that it was believed by many men of goodwill to project a form of social organization which would promote greater freedom of the individual, greater equality between the classes, and greater economic security for all. It was conceived of by many as a system which would provide for economic as well as political democracy.

That this is an error,—that democracy is only to be preserved by checks and balances in the social organization, that a totalitarian government is inevitably tyrannical,

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