







# **LEFTIES ARE IN THEIR RIGHT MINDS**

## **Part Two**

**Special Updated Printing and E-Book Version  
October 2012**



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**Part Two**

**Special Updated Printing and E-Book Version  
October 2012**

**Originally Published  
September 2008**

**By Beth K. Lamont**

**With  
A Re-Introduction to  
Corliss Lamont's  
Own Book**

**You Might Like Socialism**  
**First Published in 1939**



**HALF-MOON FOUNDATION, INC.**

**The Half-Moon Foundation was formed to promote enduring international peace, support for the United Nations, the conservation of our country's natural environment, and to safeguard and extend civil liberties as guaranteed under the Constitution and the Bill of Rights.**

**Lefties Are In Their Right Minds**  
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**You Might Like Socialism: A Way of Life for Modern Man**  
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**<http://www.corliss-lamont.org/>**  
**<http://www.humanvalues.net/>**

**Printed in the United States of America**

**In 1939 Corliss Lamont**  
wrote and published his own book,  
***You Might Like Socialism***

**Well, . . .sorry, Corliss;  
they didn't like it then,  
and  
they don't like it now!**

But, here are three provocative questions:

**Who the hell are the “theys?”  
How did we ever get Socialized Capitalism?  
and  
What are WE going to do about it?**

~ ~ ~

**This book is dedicated with love to the memory of  
Corliss Lamont**



## **A note about the new 2012 version of this book**

If you were familiar with the 2008 version of this book, the spine of which was more than an inch thick, you will see that this new version is considerably smaller. The point of its original issuance was, of course, to re-introduce Corliss Lamont's 1939 book "You Might Like Socialism." With the banking "bail-out" and financial chaos, with public concern and the demand for change, it seemed like a perfect time to focus upon methods of modifying the disgraced Capitalist system to bring it into line with the needs and the aspirations of our Democracy. It is quite ironic that the more "Socialistic" remedy that we are suggesting, originally conceived in the 19th Century as a more humanitarian economic alternative to the abuses of the Capitalist system, is also a system that has been publicly disgraced, vehemently and notoriously, for over a Century with fearful overtones. Powerful people are terrified of sharing their loot in a "socially" human way, and are totally freaked-out about laws to protect people and the planet! Would you believe...Republicans have the audacity to accuse Barack Obama of being...Omigod!...A Socialist!

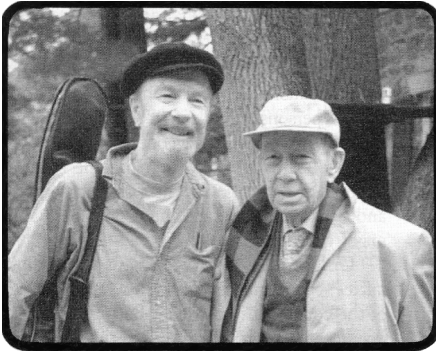
This abbreviated version of the book, published in a pivotal election year of 2012 that will determine the fate of our democracy, still advocates Humanizing an in-Humane system. We hear shrill voices on the campaign trail that are flirting with fascism: the very danger we've been conditioned to fear! But take heart, now. Love and Logic may prevail! Public action in the form of The Occupy Wall Street Movement, is gathering momentum; it's catching on like wild-fire! Springing up in appropriate places, where injustices abound...all across this country, and all around the world, people are risking their lives to express their anguish and their discontent with the lack of freedoms and the lack of respect for their basic Human Rights! Hooray for Bradley Manning and Julian Assange. If this country is honest and ethical in its dealings with others, we should HAVE no secrets! We demand Protection for the Truth Tellers and the Protestors!

We peaceful People of Earth decry the way things are! We can envision the way things can be! We need a Department of Peace headed by Dennis Kucinich! The Occupy Actions further confirm our momentum. The timing and the conditions are just right for making a real impact. TV, the Internet, the broad dissemination and sharing of information, alerting all concerned citizens, is causing many previously impervious power brokers, at long last, to take note of.....that's right! You guessed it!

### **PEOPLE POWER!**

**The time for demanding change is now!**

A little more explanation of why we felt that a smaller update of this book is necessary. This original work of Corliss Lamont is available in its entirety on-line at his own Web site: <http://www.corliss-lamont.org/>, now as an e-book. Please visit there to find "You Might Like Socialism." Other titles are available, such as "The Philosophy Of Humanism," for which he was noted. You will find an account of the terror years of witch-hunting by HUAC, the House Un-American Activities Committee, and of the insane rampage of Senator Joseph McCarthy, who demanded of Corliss Lamont: "Are you now or have you even been....a Communist?!" The book is entitled: "Freedom Is As Freedom Does." For your scholarly research the complete books by Corliss Lamont will be essential, but for this issue, we are limiting this historical information to especially relevant excerpts which we are using freely in this publication. It is also interspersed with much updated information, and if we've learned anything from history, there's an even more urgent admonition to take appropriate action, to exercise our Right to Vote and to safeguard our freedoms now!



There is a very special reason for making this 2012 issue much smaller than the previous one. You may find our reason for this change quite touching...even charming. Here's the story: A copy of "Lefties Are In Their Right Minds" was sent to Corliss Lamont's dear friend and comrade, PETE SEEGER.

Pete and his beautiful Wife, TOSHI, have been close associates of Corliss in Peace and Justice activities and with Civil Liberties concerns for much of their remarkable lives. Pete responded with one of his personal postcards to express thanks for the gift.

I was thrilled to find his signature beside his trademark hand-drawn banjo. I treasure his excellent advice, which we have followed to the letter. Here below is the wisdom of what he wrote: "Beth, if you make the book half this size,...then twice as many people might have time to read it!" Bless your heart, Pete! It sounds like excellent advice! Let's hope that your prediction will come true! There is some information herein that may be new to some Folks, and we do hope that it will be inspiring to action, but if you've known the distinctions between capital and capitalism, also between social and socialism, all along, then please help share this information? In any event,.....please dear Folks,.....read on.



## **FORWARD TO THE 2012 PRINTING OF LEFTIES ARE IN THEIR RIGHT MINDS**

Barack Obama had just been elected at the time of the first printing of this book. I was thrilled with this historical event! As a promoter of Civil Rights and as a Peace and Justice advocate, my fervent hope was on high alert with expectation. I believed then and still believe now, that "Yes We Can" make the changes that are desperately needed in this country, and that actually have adverse affects on the rest of the world. At the time of his election, though I am a Humanist and I do not pray, I actually wished that there might be such a thing as a guardian angel that would watch over Barack Obama, to protect him. I feared that he would be in mortal danger if he began to upset some of those in power, whose vested interests benefited with keeping things just exactly the way they've been. The kinds of change that we voters envisioned, that would benefit all our livelihoods and our well-being, even get us out of wars, would upset a lot of profit-making that benefits only the few. Yes, you're right! Those few are the One Percenters! We ordinary working middle class Americans represent the 99 Percent, and with the "Occupy Movement" we're making our impact felt!

When Barack Obama was elected we Activists were almost giddy with excitement and expectation about what might be accomplished. I voiced my worry about how we would handle disappointment if our expectations were not met. I'm quoting here my own prediction about how this disappointment would be seen. "He will be surrounded with adversity, especially attempting to divert him from his stated wish to make changes. Always, those who benefit from the status quo will resist change. And those of us who are screaming for change, long overdue, will be impatient and see compromise, as instead, capitulation."

This is just exactly what's happening at the time of this writing. Barak Obama has indeed been conciliatory in his dealings with all of the "experts;" overlong, in my opinion. The Wall Streeters and the Generals have had his ear for far too long to suit me; and I grieve about the dashed hopes of so many who had actually voted for the first time, daring to believe that we could make changes. I've heard so many say that they will NOT VOTE AGAIN! They're disgusted with BOTH political parties. They feel betrayed, and feel foolish for ever having believed. At every chance I get, I plead for patience. This man inherited giant un-solvable domestic and financial problems and two wars, besides. Worse, Republicans stood up in Congress and declared as their highest priority, to THWART BARACK OBAMA; NOT to work for their constituents and for this Country!



**Corliss and Beth protesting the first Gulf War in 1991 in Washington, D.C.  
This photo thanks to friend, Ossining neighbor, and fellow Peacenik,  
Joan Indusi.**

**There is so much work to be done, but instead, they wish to make sure that Barack Obama is a one-term president! They've been dedicated also to repealing the despised-by-some "Obamacare," a sadly compromised health insurance bill that actually does offer some remedies to the horrible problems of the Health Care system in this country. But why on Earth should insurance companies be allowed to make medical decisions? Health CARE is what's needed! Single payer for all Medical Care is logical!**

**There's lots of work to be done. It was so delightful to see our President campaigning in Michigan, and enjoying a last laugh about the much criticized "bail-out of the auto industry," that produced good results that benefited, not just the Auto workers themselves, but saved many of the peripheral industries as well. We need more stimulus of this kind!**

**Barak Obama is doing a good job in a tough situation, where US foreign policy, war and peace considerations, presents almost impossible contradictions. Stick with him! He is gaining momentum! He's already beginning to learn that his own wisdom, his own instinct and experience, seem to serve him much better than all of the "expert advice" in the world. His having spoken to Muslims, countering hateful US "Islamophobia," was brilliant leadership, not a sign of weak foreign policy, as Romney asserted.**

**We Peace People give our own EXPERT ADVICE! Please Mr. President, DO NOT BOMB IRAN! Bring our troops home! Don't listen those who would use military muscle! Use wisdom! Threatening war is for wimps! Check-out the new word on the Cuban Missile Crisis; Russian ships were wisely heading home long before JFK's widely-touted ultimatum!**

**Bills that you have signed into law scare the hell out of me! We now have targeted Assassination! Unthinkable! Unconscionable! Why Indefinite Detention? We still practice Torture! Our troops are still killing innocents with the allegation that they are Terrorists! This must stop! Now, Secret Service personnel protecting persons or a space, can arrest demonstrators, exercising our Rights of Free Speech, then charge us with a FEDERAL offense! Redress of grievances be damned! What the hell is going on here?**

**Mr. President, you and your Family must be protected, but please consider that with the erosion of our Civil Rights as Americans, beginning with the so-called Patriot Act, we have been flirting with Fascism! This is when a government is more intent upon protecting ITSELF, than it is in protecting its PEOPLE. We will have become a totalitarian state! And for SECRETS? OI! In a democracy...we need secrets? We Americans become responsible for what is done in our name! And we are not allowed to know? Did the good Germans know about the Gas Chambers? "Classified" is a mere fig-leaf to cover something shameful or maybe, just somebody's butt!**

**Please, dear Mr. President, when you are re-elected, know that you have an urgent mandate to make changes that work FOR THE PEOPLE! Many are beguiled with lies of a corporate raider, who outsources our jobs, and could appoint a Supreme Court Judge to overturn Women's Rights! Voter disenfranchisement is in full swing. Fight for your Right to Vote!!! People Power makes change for the better! But, this is MOST important:**

**FOLKS, PLEASE REMEMBER! VOTE FOR OBAMA IN NOVEMBER!**

**If you don't:.....sheesh! You might get an....Omygod....Republican!**



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## **2008 Introduction to Lefties Are In Their Right Minds!**

Actually, there's no need for you to read this book at all! The title sums up its whole thesis. When I say Lefties Are In Their Right Minds, I'm trying to give a whimsical approach to a very serious subject. The Righties of this world, who still believe that their might makes them right, have been wrong for too long. That's why I'm urging: Lefties, it's you who are right! You need to Unite!

And what perfect timing. Unbridled Capitalism is in disgrace; I picture rowdy, irresponsible teenagers behaving badly and Big Daddy having to bail them out of jail. Ethical control in behalf of the best interests of Society should be the first commandment of a Democracy if it is to flourish, let alone prevail. Might does not make right! Those of you who object to this vision, and actually identify instead with the Righties, might just as well close these pages immediately. Reading any of these words is a total and complete waste of your time!

Especially, if you believe that the Government of the United States of America, in its flaunting of military and economic power, deserves exceptional status, exempt from the laws of human decency, and deserves your own unquestioning obedience. Or worse, if you are convinced that this world is locked into some cataclysmic count-down in a battle between good and evil, then just don't bother reading any further. My contribution to these pages constitutes one long Granny-rant, an extension of my blog. Simply write me off as another Peacenik, a wimp, a bleeding heart, a treehugger, an impractical idealist, completely out-of-touch with the "real dangers" that you believe we face.

But if you believe as I do, that there's hope for humankind, and that, with courage, compassion and creativity, and most of all respect, I repeat, respect, working together, we might interrupt and dismantle all mercenary "empire-building." And that together, we will make the necessary changes that will produce a more humane and Humanistic Culture of Peace. People of the world are crying out for peace and justice!

If you can envision a world that will allow us each to follow our dreams, and what's even more important, to live our lives, completely unmolested,.....then please, Dear Reader, read on.

**Beth K. Lamont, 2008**





# ***Lefties Are In Their Right Minds!***

A Re-Introduction to Corliss Lamont's 1939 book:

## ***YOU MIGHT LIKE SOCIALISM***

Introduction/update by Beth K. Lamont, wife, widow of  
Philosopher, Corliss Lamont

### ***About Lefties:***

We know that the left side of the human body is controlled by the right side of the brain. Therefore, I declare for all the world to recognize, that Lefties are in their Right Minds! And who, in their right mind, could dispute this anatomical, scientific fact? But it is the symbolism that I appreciate. Lefties of the world are still scorned and maligned by the powerful for their Socialistic concepts, but they are the ones who champion the rights of the workers, the minorities, the indigenous, the persecuted, and the exploited. They dream of and demand true equality and a very real Democratic society, wherein all voices are heard and coalitions are formed.

The analogy is even further symbolic in that the left is where the heart is. Hugo Chavez, President of Venezuela, speaking at the United Nations recently, reminded us of this fact, that on the left is the location of the heart. Even the valentine, a caricature of the human heart, is a symbol of love and caring, expressing compassion and nurturance. These expressions are the essence of family, the heartfelt concern for those we love. This heartfelt concern can extend also to the whole human family. The word SOCIAL itself, means family, community, respectful interchange with others and concern for the common good. Some humans are already thoroughly immersed and actively involved in this recognition of Universal Human Rights. If some of the family is in pain, we are all in pain.

What a pitiful paradox it is...that by adding the 3-letters: i-s-m to the word social...you scare the bejeebers out of capitalists and rigid orthodoxies. I can understand this: it happens to me when I add those 3-letters to capital. We desperately need capital to do good works to benefit Earth and Earthlings, but capital-ISM is for making profit! Human well-being be damned! In this present stage of human societal evolution, with its tantalizing potential for using universal peace-making mechanisms that might eventually render old fears and hatreds obsolete, and in this age of instant world-wide personal communications, the ultimate recognition that all Earthlings are of equal value and that all life itself is precious, is inevitable. That is, if we don't blow ourselves into oblivion first! We activists can work together and take responsibility. Corliss Lamont devoted his life to making needed changes!



**Beth and Corliss Lamont welcome visitors and Activists to the Ossining, New York home, wherein Civil Liberties, Human Rights, United Nations, Pro-Labor, Anti-Nuclear activities and fund-raisers take place. Protection of our Natural Environment, the sharing of information, and the practicing of democracy are dedications initiated by Corliss Lamont in his lifetime, now embodied in the dedications of his own Half-Moon Foundation.**

**In addition to continuing the tradition of festivals at the Corliss Lamont Peace and Justice Center, Half-Moon Foundation is immersed in modern dissemination of information never before possible during most of his life. All of Corliss's books and pamphlets will be available to visitors to his Web site <[www.corliss-lamont.org/](http://www.corliss-lamont.org/)> and more and more of his archival works to soon be added. An E-book is now the world-wide magic carpet classroom! Promoting the Philosophy of Humanism must continue to be a central focus of these informational activities. More and more enlightened Earthlings are trading-in traditional Faith in a Hoped-for Hereafter for a more scientific, reality-based Here and Now. And Humanists can reassure them that "God-ness" is not necessarily related to "Good-ness." We actually consider this a primitive us/them vestigial aberration, and long-standing spelling mistake!**

# HUMANIZING AN IN-HUMANE ECONOMIC SYSTEM

An Introduction to 2012 printing of Lefties Are In Their Right Minds

If Corliss Lamont were here today, he would be speaking at the Occupy Wall Street gatherings. He would express in his eloquent way his joy at seeing so many fervent young people carrying the banner of freedom, and boldly expressing their concerns about the inequities of our inhumane economic system. He would be standing right there so near to the very same Wall Street that had produced, in his Father's day, such wealth, and had fostered the success of American industry. The very same Wall Street that paradoxically became the focus of Corliss's own ethical concerns; in his own youth, he too questioned Capitalism's ruthlessness, way back during the teen years of the last century. Here's a little vignette to capture a pivotal moment in a young man's education:

Corliss Lamont, as young as 11, not yet a teenager, surely had the audacity to argue with his father on some very serious economic matters. I can hear his howling protest: "But, Dad, now that factory's shut down and all those people are out of work; what's going to happen to them? What about their kids?" Thomas W. Lamont, who was a partner of J.P. Morgan, was known to be very tolerant of his Son's audacity and of his compassion. He may even have laid a patient hand upon Corliss's shoulder when he answered with the conventional Capitalist wisdom: "Well, sorry Son, but business is business! If the factory can't pay its bills and not enough people are buying its product, it just goes out of business. That's the way it is! That's life!

Corliss may have wailed all the louder: "But, that's not fair! Couldn't you loan them the money, Dad? His father no doubt smiled as he patiently explained how this would not be a good investment, if they weren't making a profit. "How would they ever pay it back if they are not doing well?" he would ask. Corliss was not known to be sarcastic, but he might have retorted innocently that it didn't make sense to him that you only deserve a loan if you don't need one. This paradox still prevails today.

Corliss was born a privileged child of Wall Street, but learned at the family dining table that the Capitalist economic system does not honor its labor force. "Fairness" was not a consideration. Trying to reconcile the disparity between a belief in freedom and democracy and the economic system that seemed to thwart it, began for him, a lifelong passion. Years after this youthful encounter with his Father, his still youthful face appeared on the front page of the New York Times with the caption: "Son of Wall Street Arrested in Labor Strike!" Mayor Hague of Jersey City,

New Jersey had declared: "I am the law!" He had forbidden a labor strike in HIS city. Corliss Lamont with other ACLU observers went to protect the Union's rights to lawfully represent their cause.

Corliss Lamont's conscience was his guide for the rest of his eventful and productive life. These economic injustices were never to be resolved in his lifetime, nor have they been adequately addressed, even to this date.

His tender heart led him to consider the ministry, thinking that he might be a help to the people who were suffering. His mastery of logic and critical thinking soon revealed to him traditional religion's flimsy foundations. His still-burning desire to be of help turned him next to study the law. This pursuit was not satisfying either: too dependent upon flawed precedent and little picky details. The emphasis simply seemed more about winning or losing than about any measure of fairness and justice. This truly dismayed him. He could not have envisioned at this time his future court successes.

His fervent wish to change things, from the way they are, to the way they could be, and to study the larger picture of Humankind, especially its tendency to do nonsensical counter-productive things, in spite of its vast talents and opportunity, then led him directly to, .....you guessed it! Philosophy! He might then have retreated safely up into an Ivory Tower, there to pursue his studies for all of his years, but,.....

This new devotion brought him absolutely no peace of mind, and actually, a whole hell-of-a-lot of trouble!

Corliss was a Maverick! He was a challenger of many conventionally accepted social "truths." He took on many of the most pervasive myths of at least the last three centuries! Sure, controversies about "good and evil" have been raging for thousands of years, but it's only more recently that we've had the scientific know-how and the various communication technologies to begin to truly share, to explore and to overcome our own inherited mythical and myopic handicaps; chauvinistic "us-against-them" prejudices; and even our "previously excusable" lapses of intelligence.

The origins of traditional religions were one of those sticking points that, the more they were explored, seemed to indicate that we Humans had actually invented the idea of god. Perhaps to comfort the bereaved, but also to control. These same principles that he later deemed "The People's Right To Know" prompted Corliss Lamont after exploring all religious teachings, and espousing none, to decide that he was a Humanist! The principles of

ethical behavior, responsibility, compassion and respect, with no "other-worldly" reward appealed to him.

Corliss Lamont, along with so many other courageous, maligned people, recognized the similarities between two powerful and long-range lapses in logic: religion's adherence to a system involving the slavish worship of "unseen prophets" and Capitalism's worship of a system that enslaves workers, denying them the "unseen profits." These are two of the most pervasive and intimidating myths, even outright lies, that are still used "to control the masses." Even more hypocritical, I worry lots about those who really screw-up big-time here on Earth, but seem to have invested in "Celestial Real Estate" for some kind-of escape hatch!

Corliss and I loved looking at the photo of our beautiful blue green Planet Earth, and felt that this view, never before available, would solve many of the organizational problems of us Earthlings. There were no visible national boundaries; no ethnic divisions were apparent; no clearly defined religious regions. We'd always jokingly ponder about the likelihood of intelligent life being discovered, even developed, on Planet Earth!

By some fortuitous happenstance (some still insist that God did it!) our planet became situated at a perfect distance from our sun; then water and oxygen developed to make our evolution possible; and here we are today, some still believing that we are the darlings of the universe and that we are the pinnacles of human development and wisdom, and that the sun and the moon revolve around us, the center of all being. While in actuality, we know that our Earth is but a tiny insignificant dot in a completely indifferent cosmos. Where, succinctly articulated by Carl Sagan's wisdom, there are billions and billions of other stars, and maybe other universes.

If Earth were viewed by an Astronomer from a far distant galaxy and appreciated as a perfect place for life in the Universe, they would find it mind-boggling that, rather than reverence and celebration for this precious planet and its beings, these Earthlings are greedily engaged in exploitation; in killing the planet, and in killing each other.

"Mother Nature gave us birth, But we've near destroyed our Playpen Earth! Mother Nature tried her best, But these careless beings still foul their nest!" (from one of Beth's Evolution poems)

Corliss Lamont was still a teenager when he began to experience a new dimension of awareness, and possibly of fairness: a thrilling People's Revolution. Strangely, in spite of his Father's Capitalist connections, these new Socialistic ideas were inadvertently prompted by his Father's actions.

At Christmas in 1917, Father cabled home that he would be returning from Europe soon, but it was not to spend the Holidays with the Family. Thomas W. Lamont, along with his old friend and schoolmate, William Boyce Thompson, who had become Head of the International Red Cross, were on an urgent mission to visit President Woodrow Wilson.

Thompson had been delivering aid to the tattered forces protecting Russia from the invading Germans, and became interested in the People's Movement, their protests against all repressive forces, even those of the Tzar, that became known as the Bolshevik Revolution. He had convinced Lamont that US support would bolster the faltering efforts to sustain the Russian resistance. Their dynamic leader, Vladimir I. Lenin, had advocated withdrawing from the fight, because he had deemed it to benefit only their "capitalist oppressors." A renewed effort to support any Russian forces would help to keep Germany divided with battle on two fronts, with Russia and with France. Besides, they reasoned, it might be advantageous in the long run, even economically, to be in good stead with this rousing popular movement, and to be on the winning side. This seemed a good strategy.

A visit to David Lloyd George, England's Prime Minister, secured his agreement, and promised Allied support if the US would enter into such an alliance. Alas, this became a tragically failed "diplomatic" overture, that might even have changed the course of history. They were not allowed to speak to Wilson, thwarted, I suspect by his Aide, Colonel House. Wilson was engaged in his own efforts to bring about an Armistice. And by the following August, the US had sent troops, not to bolster the Bolshevik efforts, but to protect the Siberian Railroad and the munitions stored there by the White Russians in Vladivostok, from falling into the "wrong hands."

The ideals of Freedom for the People, "the soldiers, the sailors, the peasants" truly inspired Corliss Lamont. They seemed very consistent with his own strong sense of Justice. He was further inspired by fellow Harvardite John Reed's *Ten Days That Shook The World*.. Corliss's own Harvard leadership on the Student Council was occasion for a principled stand in the interest of freedom of information, that W.E.B. Dubois, the noted Socialist, should be invited to speak on Campus! But, the overriding fear of Socialism is what prevailed, and thwarted his leadership.

Rather than being fully embraced by the workers as a means by which egalitarian democratic principles might be established, Socialism was instead decried by the Capitalists as a force contrary to "free market" principles, and as an organizational tool leading to totalitarian domination by the Socialist State: ideas were promoted, exploited and propagandized

for all the rest of the twentieth Century, even now, still into the 21st. The unfounded accusation that "the plan" was to overthrow the US government by force was a tool that was used to terrorize the populace. Corliss has spotlighted this lie with his description of the "ballot-box" method of "invading" the State Legislature in New York with duly-elected Socialist Representatives of their communities. The shameful treatment of these elected officials is to this day a study in hypocrisy and political propaganda. The greater fear, no doubt, was that this totally democratic idea, that of voting for Socialist leaders would catch-on! The fear felt by the established powerful whose power might thereby be diminished was understandable.

It was true, the Bolshevik Revolution was throwing off the double yoke of the "bloodsucking church" and control of the exploitive capitalists, so it's no wonder that both Capitalist Wall Street and organized religion were properly fearful. This resistance really amounts to an interesting agreement between church and state. The church needs fervent believers, certainly not free thinkers. The state needs patriotic soldiers whom they can send to war, and obedient tax payers, doesn't it?

Today in 2012, union busting, even discrediting of organized labor and of very necessary People Programs, such as Social Security and Health Care; proper support for educational institutions; and urgent respect for our natural environment, are all laid waste in budget-controlling efforts. These hard-earned gains have all suffered as a result of this capitalist, corporate induced paranoia against "government spending." Who lobbies in behalf of The People? Rather than support for any security or freedom for the people themselves, the sacred principle of "freedom" is actually for the most powerful to do as they please, and the rest of us be damned.

The periodic, almost predictable collapse of the Capitalist Casino, starting in 1929, but most recently in 2008, at which time the hard-working tax payers were called upon to "bail it out," should have made crystal clear to the workers, and this nation, once and for all, that this Capitalist economic system is totally capricious and totally exploitive! It is not at all in our own best interests! We need an economic system with a conscience!

My little limerick tells it all: "The Capitalist tide will raise all boats! What a crock, cruel hoax, fallacy! We're mired in mortgage mud on foreclosure flats, while the C.E.O.s, in their yachts, sail out to sea!"

And, what else would we expect, when the whole principle of this system is to extract work at the least expense; and to secure raw materials without ethical consideration; to sell at the highest price; and to share profits with only financial investors, and not with labor and those equally,

or even more, deserving of benefit, simply from their status as powerless and victimized Earthlings, who unfortunately must share the degradation and corruption of our planet. A very simplistic way of solving this dilemma is just a matter of values: that of valuing People over Profits.

A little quote from Humanist Manifesto II is appropriate: "True revolution is occurring and can continue in countless nonviolent adjustments." Efforts to "Humanize" the inhumane systems that endanger and destroy us humans and actually thwart our efforts to live in peace and safety, with freedom and justice and dignity, are truly heroic.

The principles of the Humanist Philosophy that espouses freedom of thought, of respect for the well being of all Humans, here and now; of respect for Mother Earth and all living things, of the dignity and worth of each of us Humans, regardless of gender, orientation, color, national or ethnic origin, or even political persuasion, are now forever embodied in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, to inspire a coherent worldwide humane value system.

Value system is perhaps the operant word, here. What, exactly do we Humanists value? How I would love to see a Six O'clock nightly news report that would describe, not the GNP, nor the stock market ups and downs, which have nothing in the world to do with the well-being of most Humans or the status of our Human habitat. The United Nations in 1995 established Millennium Development Goals that are totally disregarded.

Here's a job for us! Let's inspire the establishment of a report that is concerned with an Index of Universal Human Well-Being! How about a Report on Human Well-Being on the nightly news? This would be a great accomplishment for the Humanists! And what a feather in our collective caps! A news-worthy new criteria for evaluating progress: bringing Human Values via a nightly report into the consciousness and the "conscience-ness" of the general viewing public!

These reports could speak of some statistics that really matter to most of us. How many young people are in schools? How many persons are gainfully employed? How many folks are able to save their homes? How many children, elders, ill and dependent people are safe and protected from harm? What about the plight of the Indigenous People? What about war and other toxic harm to Humans? What about Protestors? Prisoners? Refugees? What about the various species that are going extinct? What about the polar icecaps that are melting at a frightening rate? What about the carbon in the atmosphere that is causing global weather changes?



For all of his years, Corliss Lamont, championed these obviously intertwined causes, but, always, very, very separately! He insisted that Humanism is a PURE philosophy, not to be "contaminated" with political overtones! He was insistent that Humanism not be even remotely construed to be a political movement, or connected to anything remotely political, and thereby automatically suspect of being "un-American or Anti-American."

Considering the circumstances under which it was conceived, this protectionism, though well-intended, has not prevented the demonization of Humanism as a "socialist philosophy," nor has it actually freed this liberal belief system and "life-stance" for further promotion in the political realm.

This rather counter-productive protectionism may seem strange, but unless you lived through the House Un American Activities Committee and the McCarthy eras, you might not realize what a powerful grip, especially through the use of the corporate media, that this hysterically propagandized fear of Social activism had on the American psyche. There was a "Commie in every office!" Corliss was maligned by many for his pro-labor and Civil Liberties activism, for championing the Civil Rights Movement, and for espousing a planned economy instead of a capricious and wasteful, war-oriented economy.

Professor Seymour Melman, of Columbia Engineering School, in his longitudinal studies PROVED that a constant war economy was counter-productive to the best interests of the American People. Our creative talents are wasted! We reluctantly agree to build bombs to keep employed, to feed our families. All government contracts should provide peacetime employment alternatives. This seminal work has been totally disregarded; it seems to have been ground-up in the war machinery itself!

Even some of his own colleagues in Philosophy, failed to respect Corliss's campaigning for the US Senate on the American Labor Party ticket, and for advocating for a more Socialist Democracy. He was criticized for all of his points of view. Even Madelyn Murray O'Hair, the staunch Atheist, took pot shots at Corliss Lamont for his political stands, accusing thereby, because of his contributions, that even the American Humanist Association itself was a "Communist Front Organization."

There was fear of a "Commie under every bed" and behind every progressive political action. The favorite epithet, spoken in derision and disgust, by many, especially patriotic, but propagandized Americans was: "commie-pinko-atheist," as though this were lining up, all in one insult, a whole series of evil intentions! This demonization still prevails today!

The linkage between the rights of "the worker" and of the right to be a Freethinker have had doubly frightening impacts on Wall Street and on organized religion. Orthodoxy of any kind does not like to be challenged! Hence, for the entire 20th Century, into the present, the threat of ..."those damned trouble-makers, who are not obedient and docile, who insist upon economic and social changes and demand the right to strike against alleged dangerous and unfair practices," are demeaned as merely socialists whose ultimate aim is totalitarian control, and who are scheming against all of our American freedoms. Propagandized fear of socialists who would claim the freedom to promote worker's rights certainly sparks some puzzling illogic!

Apparently, it is still quite "un-American" and especially devious to be an advocate of social justice, without also being "god-fearing." Some examples of this hyper-orthodox-religious fanatic point of view still prevails today. Witness a web site dedicated to the critical analysis of the Humanist Manifestos I and II by a Gary Mcleod who was running for Congress in South Carolina. He links Socialism and Humanism in a fearful and fateful derogatory way, as though its whole intent is to corrupt and dominate all of Humankind, rather than to liberate humans from such ignorance and such corrosive prejudice. To view this worrisome Web site go to:

<http://www.garymcleod.org/humanist.htm>

Some great recent news is that in March of 2012 a Reason Rally took place in Washington DC to show that the nation's non-religious are a formidable voting constituency! Our votes will be based on "reality!" And what a joy to be recognized and to link arms with the many progressive religions and organizations that actually advocate Humanistic principles!

There is agreement among even the most optimistic Humanists and Free thinkers that the worrisome trend toward the infringement of our treasured American freedoms has gone too far, especially starting with the so-called "Patriot Act." Corliss Lamont spent most of his lifetime writing and speaking and acting in behalf of Civil Liberties. He would be aghast at the newest technologies used in "Homeland Security" surveillance of our communications, and the decree that Government can control ALL modes of communication in an emergency. Tell me about Civil Liberties...when one can be deemed to be an enemy of the state by some arbitrary body and zapped out of existence here or abroad by targeted assassination drone!

Back to some history and the adventures of Corliss Lamont. After visiting the Soviet Union in 1933, Corliss and his devoted wife Margaret Irish Lamont, wrote about their travels and the apparent improvements at the time for ordinary people, as far as public programs, collective farms,

access to education and to medical care, etc. They were quite impressed, especially with the progress for women, and their elevation to a status that was still only hoped-for in the US. They met women Engineers who were working on massive hydroelectric projects. Remember, at the time of the Bolshevik Revolution, in which women were allowed full political freedoms, women did not even have the right to Vote in the US! No wonder it inspired such hope among progressive workers, women, students!

Corliss Lamont later published in 1939 what he hoped would be an easy-to-read, easily understood, simple explanation of his vision of Socialist Democracy under the title: "You Might Like Socialism." However, this book did not reach a receptive public, nor did it create its intended benefit of enlightening the reader about the attributes of Socialism. Rather, it caused Corliss much personal abuse and much maligning from powerful persons and even from some Family members, though not his more progressive Parents, who remained amenable and proud of him.

There were, of course, thousands in total agreement, reaching out, spreading the word about the need to make necessary "people-oriented" changes in this Capitalist dominated would-be democracy; the hosting of meetings, promoting unions, organizing and recruiting. But back in those dangerous times it took great courage for anyone to take such visible stands. Many, for their courage, in labor organizing, in academia, even in the film industry, were thoroughly maligned, dismissed, intimidated, or even murdered, the total anti-Communist hysteria was so pervasive.

You may not even know that as far back as 1920 five members of the Socialist Party were actually elected to the New York State Assembly, but were expelled on the grounds that as members of the Socialist Party, (as the report of the Judiciary Committee put it), they were part of "a disloyal organization composed exclusively of perpetual traitors." One accusation stated that they were "little Lenins, little Trotskys in our midst." A quite conservative Republican, Charles Evans Hughes, was derided as a possible "parlor pink" himself, for voting against their expulsion.

These members were Louis Waldman, who had also run on the Socialist ticket for NY Governor, Samuel Orr, Charles Solomon, August Claessens and Sam Dewitt. This case was brought before the Supreme Court, which properly recognized that they had been duly elected by the voters in their districts, and the five members were ultimately allowed perhaps grudgingly back into the Assembly.

Besides being truly ironic, to say the least, in our so-called democracy, was the fact that a normal electoral process, in what might have

become a more productive MULTI-party system, was immediately subject to being thwarted! And yet, there prevailed the almost hysterical fear of, and the accusation against, Socialist organizers: that these advocates of change actually planned to "take over the government by violent means!"

Certainly the accusations were eventually proved to be unfounded, but unfortunately, the fears prevailed. Even running for US Senator on the American Labor Party ticket, was suspect, as Corliss Lamont found out years later. He wrote his book, "Freedom Is As Freedom Does," describing all of the illegal out-rages against our Civil Liberties; of our threatened and thwarted democracy during the witch-hunting HUAC and McCarthy years.

Even the celebrated American Civil Liberties Union, intimidated enough with the fear of being labeled a "Commie-Front Organization," that it expelled a founding member, Elizabeth Gurley Flynn, who was a Socialist Labor Organizer from the turn of the Century, when it should have been championing her rights to associate freely with whomever she chose! She had indeed joined the Communist Party, believing that they had a right to organize and promote a candidate. The ACLU did apologize and re-instate her to the Board "posthumously" nineteen years later, soon after Corliss published the transcript and proceedings of the shameful expelling.

The allegation that a bloody Communist Revolution was being planned was an outright lie, and was borne out of fear on the part of the Capitalists. This fear seemed justified in that the Socialist appeal to labor, academia, and minorities was truly powerful! Many were joining the Party believing that this, at last, was a way to make changes in our democracy. Over the decades, it's always the activists who wish to make changes, just as it is now with the Occupy Movement, who are the ones who get bloodied!

## **Overthrow the US Government? What? At the ballot box?**

Take note: The American Communist Party, long generally considered an advocate for revolutionary violence, unequivocally declared in its new 1938 constitution, allegiance to the United States Constitution and to the traditions of democracy.

It is so strange that many Americans will appear to regret these excesses and even shake their heads in disgust about the phenomena of "McCarthyism," without actually acknowledging what it was about! How is it that the knee-jerk response to the ongoing maligning of Socialism itself still prevails among the general public, when one of its most notorious accusers and maligners himself was discredited while still in office, and his

tactics exposed? Even more strange, have been the wild accusations that President Barack Obama, himself, is a Socialist! If this were so, we could actually benefit from a good dose of Roosevelt-style WPA-type government investment in jobs for alternative energies and our decrepit infrastructure.

In Corliss Lamont's own words from his book, published in 1939, "You Might Like Socialism" he asks: "Why are persons from the capitalist class with backgrounds similar to mine today now joining the ranks of the radicals?" He continues on: "Though I can speak only for myself, I believe that I can throw light on this matter by telling you the story of my own transition to a Socialist point of view. And perhaps I can clear up to some extent, what seems to be an endless source of amazement and alarm to so many of our fellow citizens. They cannot understand how anyone who is normal, and economically privileged can become a sincere supporter of radicalism in economics and politics."

"Capitalism in general has become so capricious, so utterly undependable, that even the wealthy cannot be too sure of their future and that of their children. The stock market reaches the heights one day and sinks to the depths the next; businesses both large and small, quickly go from boom to bankruptcy; great fortunes rise and fall; whole nations suddenly verge on economic collapse. Who is really secure? ...Businessmen and capitalist theoreticians more and more openly acknowledge that they DO NOT KNOW a way in which the ever recurring cycle of boom and crash can be halted. They piously hope that the next depression will not be so bad as the last, but beyond this they have nothing to offer a harassed and long-suffering humanity."

"Now I definitely refuse to accept as the fate of mankind the defeatist attitude which condemns us to an unending repetition of the very processes that have brought about such overwhelming catastrophe and misery during the past quarter-century. I have only one life to live and I want to make it count for social aims that reach down to fundamentals. I do not want to waste my time by helping to bring about little improvements here and there and letting the big things go."

"I know of few greater personal tragedies than those of well-meaning men and women who have devoted their lives to the achievement of some ideal, only to find at the end that they were dealing with surface causes and cures. Such are the peace workers who think that war can be eliminated by governments formally agreeing to renounce aggression; such are the charity workers who think that poverty can be overcome by private

contributions to the needy; there are those who think depressions can be avoided by tinkering with the capitalist system."

"Reforms within the structure of Capitalism can result in genuine amelioration, but I do not believe that they can ever resolve our major dilemmas. One severe depression or one widespread international conflict can overnight do ten-fold more harm than all the good accomplished in the reformist gains of decades. I was once asked why I did not give over my entire energies to the establishment of unemployment insurance. I answered that while I naturally in favor of unemployment insurance, its enactment would not solve the problem of unemployment. The way to solve that problem is to establish Socialism and abolish unemployment itself. Socialism gets to the most of things, and solves the basic problems."

Corliss goes on to describe in a paragraph entitled, The Voice of Democracy and Reason: "I hold that the case for Socialism rests primarily on the belief in democracy and the appeal to reason. By democracy I mean the fair and equal opportunity of all individuals in all nations, regardless of race or religion, origin or occupation, to share in the good things, both material and cultural, of this life; and to participate genuinely in the economic and political decisions affecting their mode of existence. Only persons who subscribe to democracy in this inclusive interpretation of the word are capable, I believe, of possessing that passionate sense of outrage over the cruelties and injustices endured by humankind which has ever been an attribute of the world's great democrats. Only such persons are able to give their sincere and abiding loyalty to the happiness and progress of all humanity as the supreme ethical goal."

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Thank you, dear Corliss for this most eloquent description of how to Humanize an In-Humane economic system! More of the works of Corliss Lamont are found in later chapters; but first a few more comments from Beth Lamont. As Corliss stated in the above paragraph, "that passionate sense of outrage" is a vital force that is necessary to correct the injustices brought about by the uncontrolled Capitalist economic system. We need representatives in Congress who will have the courage to stand up to the power of those whose mercenary vested interests allow the shame-faced making of profits at the cost of human misery. We need basic changes in values: that of valuing the People's well being over the making of profits.

In this presidential campaign season, hearing pledges to diminish the rights of workers; of women over their own bodies; of minority voters; of scorning the benefits of equitable health care; the shocking trivialization as "snobbery" of the national need for education, send alarms screaming out: DANGER! DANGER! We can understand the TeaParty's blaming of overbearing government intervention and control for all of our problems, but this misplaced blame is more correctly laid at the door of lax control by government, and of the power of war-mongers to influence US world view and policies, all the while, overriding screaming protests from us Peaceniks.

The Occupy Wall Street Movement, and even better, the Occupy Movement on a Street in every Town, is a logical and passionate counter point that has a much clearer vision of the problems and of the remedies. This is People's direct and democratic non-violent action, seeking redress for grievances. That there is violent police brutality perpetrated upon these protestors is symptomatic of the fascistic fate that endangers us all. Now we have not only targeted assassination and indefinite detention, we will face federal charges if we do not disperse when ordered by secret service agents, and horrors, now we can be legally strip-searched! Where will it all end? I can only hope that concerned citizens will take the initiative to exercise their powers to influence local government and vote to make changes! I want with all of my being to believe we have the power and the wisdom.

The principles of the Humanist philosophy, as I see them, are simply those of our having evolved, and knowing that we are part of the Human Family; having respect for other living beings and for the survival of our Home Planet Earth; with finding ourselves immersed in ethical dilemmas for which we, by conscience, see a need to take some measure of responsibility; and which cause our individual, and indeed, our collective compassions to cry out for freedom and peace and justice, and the right to live out our lives unmolested. These are all principles that are shared by countless other Earthlings, regardless of what name they call themselves, or into which culture they were born. These are shared Human attributes that evolved with us. Let us sincerely hope that we are still evolving!

There are a few evolutionary milestones that really might best be outgrown, such as the once specie-saving tendency to obey...as in "don't go too near the cliff's edge or don't venture over the mountain!" Such blind obedience does not foster innovation or progress. There is a point in baby's development at which experiments show that baby will resist mother's reassurance when coaxed to cross a glass plate that is bridged across a visible drop. This is a marked change from what might have been weeks before, when baby would happily crawl across to mother unmindful of any danger.

The development of critical reasoning must be fostered at every age. The corporate media certainly promotes "group-think," rather than individual analysis. A relative, a raging-Rush fan, excoriating Obama for having "allowed" that Gulf Oil Spill, was surprised at my response: "I'm so glad that you approve of more government regulation!" His angry retort was mystifying: "Hell no! I want the goddam government off my back! All my taxes are too high!" When I dared to point out the inconsistency, a lame response was: "Whatever!" This encounter caused me to suspect specific anatomical defects: humans can take information in the ears and the eyes, and it can pop right out of the mouth totally bypassing cerebral circuitry!

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Referring to a few important documents, you will see similarities between The Humanist Manifestoes I and II and many other subsequent historical documents, such as The Universal Declaration of Human Rights. I love to believe that Eleanor Roosevelt is the one who personally enshrined these Humanist principles in the Declaration. For instance, the following exemplary four Articles, from The Humanist Manifesto I, agreed upon by many educators and theologians, first published in 1933, are bold assertions of human-centered ethical considerations outside of traditional religions, as follows:

**Eighth:** Religious Humanism considers the complete realization of human personality to be the end of man's life and seeks its development and fulfillment in the here and now. This is the explanation of the humanist's social passion.

**Ninth:** In the place of the old attitudes involved in worship and prayer the humanist finds his religious emotions expressed in a heightened sense of personal life and in a cooperative effort to promote social well-being.

**Twelfth:** Believing that religion must work increasingly for joy in living, religious humanists aim to foster the creative in man and to encourage achievements that add to the satisfactions of life

**Fourteenth:** The humanists are firmly convinced that existing acquisitive and profit-motivated society has shown itself to be inadequate and that a radical change in methods, controls, and motives must be instituted. A socialized and cooperative economic order must be established to the end that the equitable distribution of the means of life be possible. The goal of humanism is a free and universal society in which people voluntarily and intelligently cooperate for the common good. Humanists demand a shared life in a shared world.



Later, in the greatly expanded Humanist Manifesto II, written in 1973, after first describing the dangers that we face, this document asserts that: "Humanity, to survive, requires bold and daring measures. We need to extend the uses of scientific method, not renounce them, to fuse reason with compassion in order to build constructive social and moral values. Confronted by many possible futures, we must decide which to pursue. The ultimate goal should be the fulfillment of the potential for growth in each human personality -not for the favored few, but for all of human-kind. Only a shared world and global measures will suffice."

After describing the various "kinds" of Humanism, this document states: "views that merely reject theism are not equivalent to Humanism. They lack commitment to the positive belief in the possibilities of human progress and to the values central to it. Many within religious groups, believing in the future of humanism, now claim humanist credentials. Humanism is an ethical process through which we all can move, above and beyond the divisive particulars, heroic personalities, dogmatic creeds, and ritual customs of past religions or their mere negation." ...It continues: "We affirm a set of common principles that can serve as a basis for united action, positive principles relevant to the present human condition. They are a design for a secular society on a planetary scale. For these reasons, we submit this NEW Humanist Manifesto for the future of humankind; for us, it is a vision of hope, a direction for satisfying survival."

Here are a few further Manifesto II Principles, the 10th, 11th and 15th:

**Tenth:** Humane societies should evaluate economic systems not by rhetoric or ideology, but by whether or not they increase economic well-being for all individuals and groups, minimize poverty and hardship, increase the sum of human satisfaction, and enhance the quality of life. Hence the door is open to alternative economic systems. We need to democratize the economy and judge it by its responsiveness to human needs, testing results in terms of the common good.

**Eleventh:** (in part) We are concerned for the welfare of the aged, the infirm, the disadvantaged, and also for the outcasts - the mentally retarded, abandoned, or abused children, the handicapped, prisoners, and addicts - for all who are neglected or ignored by society. Practicing humanists should make it their vocation to humanize personal relations.

**Fifteenth:** The problems of economic growth and development can no longer be resolved by one nation alone; they are worldwide in scope. It is the moral obligation of the developed nations to provide - through an

international authority that safeguards human rights - massive technical, agricultural, medical, and economic assistance, including birth control techniques, to the developing portions of the globe. World poverty must cease. Extreme disproportions in wealth, income, and economic growth should be reduced on a worldwide basis. Then, in its conclusion:

Destructive ideological differences among communism, capitalism, socialism, conservatism, liberalism, and radicalism should be overcome. Let us call for an end to terror and hatred. We will survive and prosper only in a world of shared humane values. We can initiate new directions for humankind; ancient rivalries can be superseded by broad-based cooperative efforts. The commitment to tolerance, understanding, and peaceful negotiation does not necessitate acquiescence to the status quo nor the damming up of dynamic and revolutionary forces. The true revolution is occurring and can continue in countless nonviolent adjustments. But this entails the willingness to step forward onto new and expanding plateaus.

At the present juncture of history, commitment to all humankind is the highest commitment of which we are capable; it transcends the narrow allegiances of church, state, party, class, or race in moving toward a wider vision of human potentiality. What more daring a goal for humankind than for each person to become, in ideal as well as practice, a citizen of a world community. It is a classical vision; we can now give it new vitality. Humanism thus interpreted is a moral force that has time on its side. We believe that humankind has the potential, intelligence, goodwill, and cooperative skill to implement this commitment in the decades ahead.

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Calling attention next, to the similarity of concerns written into The Universal Declaration of Human Rights. This document was shaped with the influence of Eleanor Roosevelt in 1945. First, its preamble: Whereas the peoples of the United Nations have in the Charter reaffirmed their faith in fundamental human rights, in the dignity and worth of the human person and in the equal rights of men and women and have determined to promote social progress and better standards of life in larger freedom.

**The following principles are those most relevant to Humanist issues:**

**Article 21 states in part: The will of the people shall be the basis of the authority of government; this will shall be expressed in periodic and genuine elections which shall be by universal and equal suffrage and shall be held by secret vote or by equivalent free voting procedures.**

**Article 22.. Everyone, as a member of society, has the right to social security and is entitled to realization, through national effort and international co-operation and in accordance with the organization and resources of each State, of the economic, social and cultural rights indispensable for dignity and the free development of personality.**

**Article 23. (1) Everyone has the right to work, to free choice of employment, to just and favorable conditions of work and to protection against unemployment. (2) Everyone, without any discrimination, has the right to equal pay for equal work. (3) Everyone who works has the right to just and favorable remuneration ensuring for her/himself and family an existence worthy of human dignity, and supplemented, if necessary, by other means of social protection. (4) Everyone has the right to form and to join trade unions for the protection of her/his interests.**

**Article 25. (1) Everyone has the right to a standard of living adequate for the health and well-being of her/himself and family, including food, clothing, housing and medical care and necessary social services, and the right to security in the event of unemployment, sickness, disability, widowhood, old age or other lack of livelihood in circumstances beyond their control. (2) Motherhood and childhood are entitled to special care and assistance. All children, whether born in or out of wedlock, shall enjoy the same social protection.**

**Article 26. (1) Everyone has the right to education. Education shall be free, at least in the elementary and fundamental stages. Elementary education shall be compulsory. Technical and professional education shall be made generally available and higher education shall be equally accessible to all on the basis of merit. (2) Education shall be directed to the full development of**

the human personality and to the strengthening of respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms. It shall promote understanding, tolerance and friendship among all nations, racial or religious groups, and shall further the activities of the United Nations for the maintenance of peace. And (3) Parents have a prior right to choose the kind of education that shall be given to their children.

### Commentary regarding the similarities in these Documents

In summing up this connection between the Humanist Manifestoes and The Universal Declaration of Human Rights, I'm drawn back to the wise words of Corliss Lamont, and his espousal of a more Socialistic Democracy, that will moderate and control its own economic system in behalf of the best interests of its citizens and its environment. The stigma still attached to this vision is formidable. Witness the unwillingness of Wall Street and the banks to invest in the very "people programs" that will stimulate employment; education, health care and alternative energies. Note the powerful vested interests of corporations to influence the Media and Congress in such a negative way; oftentimes bold-faced outright lies are being perpetrated. We worry about the Republican stated aim to reduce "entitlements" that are mostly pledges to the people who deserve these benefits, coupled with their reluctance to raise taxes on the billionaires who are SUPPOSED to be the creators of jobs. We need BSDetectors; not GPS!

The simple fact that the word "social" means reaching out to include all of our family members, other relatives, community, clan, co-workers, even association with others with similar interests, seems so natural and normal. But, for the word "Social-ism" to be so misconstrued as to be an accusation, as in "Omigod, Obama is leading us into Socialism!" shows clearly that the stigma of more than a century of propaganda still prevails. This much-maligned word is still linked to the also much-maligned former Soviet Union, long time deemed to be the mortal enemy of the US. The word still congers up the associated sound-bites such as "evil empire," "totalitarian regime," and evil dictatorship. Typical group-think! The need to understand important history prevails! A sad example of lapse of logic.

The sad truth is that any government, no matter how noble its cause, how idealistic its revolution, how eloquent its declaration of independence, when it ceases to protect the best interest of its own citizens, disregarding Civil Liberties and Human Rights, and hunkers down in a protective mode to protect itself from "perceived enemies," automatically becomes totalitarian. It will invest in riot gear and tear gas. It will even send

drones to bomb villages. And feel justified in taking out "terrorists" with targeted assassination! No fig-leaf of homeland security covers this shame.

I wonder how many youngsters born of wealth and privilege today might be questioning the legitimacy of their status. I wonder how many might be asking their Fathers at this moment, as Corliss did, why are there hungry and homeless children around the world, even in the "Land of the Free." I don't believe that being free to eat out of a garbage can, if we're hungry enough, was the intention of those who envisioned this freedom. To our everlasting shame, some of those who are hungry and homeless are Veterans who fought for those freedoms. what can we do to make things better? Here's a good battle cry: "Don't agonize! Let's organize! We can Humanize the in-Humane Capitalist economic system!"

My Daughter Donna urged that I pray for Obama I wrote back: Hi Sweet Darlin' Daughter! For YOU, I'm gonnadoit! I actually know how to pray, and believe me, like chicken soup...it won't hurt! Never has it been more important or necessary! If there is any POWER in the Universe, it needs to be implored to protect Earthlings from the advance of fascism and scary, senseless pro-military world domination by US vested interests, If ever there were an "evil empire," this is where US WOULD BE heading, with power-mongers, war-mongers, "conscienceless casino" Stock Market profit-seekers.....rising to UNFETTERED control! MORE government control in behalf of sanity, decency and human-centered concerns is what's needed...NOT more freedom to exploit workers and to plunder the Earth for profits! War is financially profitable in terms of investment! If Peace were SEEN to be profitable, we'd eventually have Peace! I'm convinced that many of these ruthless chauvinistic individuals, who care nothing for the well-being or even the life and death situations of ordinary people of earth, or who care nothing for the protection of our precious Earth itself, and are engaged in this vengeful "us/them" world domination-pose.....actually have faith in their own "goodness," and they have invested in, their own celestial real estate "escape hatch." This way they can continue to believe in the virtue of their own cause and thoroughly screw-up this world and still believe that THEY can be "saved!" And what's with this obligatory "God Bless America, anyway?" We....above other Earthlings are the GOOD GUYS? Why should any God looking down on the murderous mayhem on this Earth bless US over others? More than others of God's creatures? The church went along with Nazi Germany. We are now the Good Germans of 1933. This is my distrust of "organized" religion. FAITH is GOOD! I've GOT IT! Love and hug and kisses AND HUMANIST PRAYERS for WISDOM from yomama. :)

*Corliss Lamont fervently believed that we could make changes. As a young man he was inspired to research Socialism!*

Corliss Lamont had been so inspired by the actual *Ten Days That Shook The World*, learning of the People's Revolution, the ideals of which appealed to the masses, that he made it a subject of his research. In 1939 he published what he hoped would be a reasonable and appealing explanation of a planned economy with full employment and other features of this new People's Movement that had the potential of sweeping the world.

Thinking that more accurate information for the public would begin to counter the onslaught of propaganda that was pronouncing Socialism to be a frightening specter, and wishing instead, to create a popular appeal, idealist and perennial optimist that he was, Corliss decided to entitle his book.....*You Might Like Socialism!*

I'm prompted to repeat that "they didn't like it then, and they don't like it now!" But, the ideals of a Democratic Socialized Society are needed urgently now more than ever before. If you describe each feature, one by one, and how it will benefit the people, there will be applause! These benefits have their own appeal and might be consistent with the freedom and equality to which we Americans aspire; but once you label them with the dreaded S-word or the despised C-word, you scare the pie out of the brainwashed average person on the street. It's a toss-up; which have we been conditioned to fear more? Communists or terrorists?

### *Capitalism And Democracy Are Not Synonymous*

One of our problems is the widespread confusion over the distinction between Capitalism and Democracy, one of which is clearly an economic system, and the other is distinctly a political system. Capitalism and Democracy are not synonymous, and have nothing whatever to do with each other, although adherents seem to use the words interchangeably, when they are actually describing our cherished American freedom, a totally different attribute! For my part, I maintain that Capitalism and Democracy are not even compatible; our democracy has been sold-out to the highest bidders, not meeting the needs of the people, but meeting instead, the will of those who are completely indifferent to the needs of the people, those who are callous, ruthless, and greedy. And as if that were not already confusion enough, just try further compounding the confusion by introducing the dreaded word "*Socialism!*"

## ***We've Been Brain-Washed!***

This system, Socialism, in both its economic and political sense, has been so maligned over the past century as to equate it in most people's minds as being inflammatorily anti-American, accusing it of advocating an alleged "violent overthrow" of our democracy, even identifying it with totalitarianism, dictatorship, and fascism, and certainly not to be tolerated even on our doorstep. We've been convinced that we mustn't allow, no it's even worse than that, we are terrified to allow, Socialized Medicine, but look what we actually have: we have Socialized Militarism! And now, Yeeegods, it's worse still! With the bail-outs we now have government-backed Socialized Capitalism! What an insult to the American People!

## ***Socialism: A Fearful Failure? What Of Capitalism's Failures?***

Capitalism fails to honor its own workers, fails to nurture the new generation and the powerless, fails to protect and safeguard our one and only human habitat, and creates without conscience, death-machines to sell to the fearful. Constant crisis and destabilization are the forces that have allowed the powerful to dominate us. The idea of a Free Market is free for whom? Certainly not the people. Capitalism's distorted values completely disregards our human need for stability in the workplace, our home lives, and our communities. The ideal of valuing people over profits is a long-range wisdom that must re-invent itself as governments try desperately to deal with the societal problems emanating from an almighty profit motive. Only a political or economic system that meets these needs, especially for compassionate health care and equitable educational access, and most essential, an overall philosophy of respect for its citizens, is going to be acceptable in this more enlightened age. We have progressed light years beyond our heritage of helpless, grumbling toleration of tyrants!

## ***Power And Profits And The Betrayal Of The People.***

How it grieves me to recognize that we have been sharing our precious planet with some incredibly stupid, cloddish and unethical Earthlings who operate with such skewed, unexamined values that they might, metaphorically, slit a bird's throat to extract for sale its beautiful song. Several centuries of conscientious-less Capitalism have totally negated our need to live harmoniously in our neighborhoods, our own homes, our own hearts. The Capitalist power that permeates and fires-up ambitions for pure profit-making around the world has thwarted all of our tantalizing dreams of Democratic societies. For a candidate running for President of the United States to boldly re-assert on national television that the US is

promoting democracy around the world is truly laughable, except that this delusion being promoted, instead, really makes me want to cry.

### *The Profit-Motive Is Totally Contemptuous Of Human Values.*

Consider Maslow's hierarchy that places air and water and food as basic to our survival. Even these are ground-up in the ruthless money-making machinery. Harlow Shapley, the Astronomer, in reflecting upon the threats and fears that pit nation against nation, asserted that we Earthlings would get it together if Mars should ever declare war on us. One would think that the threat of global warming would be enough of an impending catastrophe that we Earthlings would begin to re-examine our values. A graphic illustration of this paradox is picturing a beautiful wood-land that produces oxygen and a lovely setting in which to enjoy nature and restore our spirits, and then imaging its devastation, and the production of a giant load of lumber. Which is of more value? Right! Without a monetary value placed upon our shared worldly attributes, the trees must be killed and sliced-up to be considered of value. I heard this paradox described in a song: I think it was....."Paving over Paradise to Build a Parking Lot."

### *The "Invisible Hand" Caught In The Cookie Jar!*

And now, here we are in September 2008 with the Free Market in Free Fall! The mystical, thought-to-be market regulator, the "Invisible Hand" has been caught in the Cookie Jar! We might even call this event the Capitalist Casino Caper; no, it's more a Catastrophe! The gamblers can't cover their losses. As a result, the house can't pay the winners! Therefore, we ALL become losers for the gambler's losses in the unregulated out-of-control Capitalist Casino! The Free Market in Free Fall. What a shocking event for the Federal Government to be taking over and managing the giants Fannie Mae and Freddy Mac. This clearly indicates that the holy grail of Capitalism, the stock market system, is riddled with flaws, and can't be trusted, but on the other hand, "can't be allowed to fail." Tax-payers, workers, already in debt for a zillion-dollar-war that we didn't need and didn't want; with our jobs in jeopardy; with mortgages on our homes threatened or already foreclosed, we are the ones who are supposed to foot the bill for the gambler's follies? No way!

### *Main Street Not Wall Street!*

Protests are being staged in the streets as I am writing. A sign that I saw displayed was quite succinct, and right to the point of the protest: "Steel Bracelets; Not Golden Parachutes!" Putting things in prospective,



please consider this question: is this truly a country of, and by, and for the people? Or,.....was this country established to promote free enterprise and profits, and to let the people be damned? If, indeed, we will ever have a democracy in this country, the people must be in charge of the market, with a strong advocate in their behalf controlling the market, not the other way around. The market must not control and determine the economic well-being of the people. This is like the tail wagging the dog. Congress, it up to you to have the courage to set things straight. There must be competent oversight and control. If you are working on a logical and long-range Bail Out Package, let it have provisions to protect and to benefit the injured citizens of this country, not just Wall Street corporations and big investors.

### *So, Enough Of This Introduction.*

I'll pick up this thought and many other ideas later on in the book, but now, here follows an introduction to Corliss Lamont, the Man, and a bit of information on how he came to write this serious study with the rather whimsical title, *You Might Like Socialism*, that he had hoped would actually make it more appealing: Passages from Chapters in his own words will be intertwined with my own commentaries on many current topics. Some Chapters regarding very specific plans for establishing Socialism in the US, that are now less relevant than when written, are not included here. We must establish new plans in light of newer technologies. Other breaks will delve into considerations of means and ends, and how any political entity, no matter whether Socialist or Capitalist, deals with dissenters. There will also be many reflections about critical intervening years. Corliss lived to a very active age 93. He worked tirelessly in behalf of the Bill of Rights, and the virtues that he valued. He believed in this country and demanded that it live up to its promise without failing; he was a proud American Patriot!

### *Corliss Lamont, Was Indeed, An American Patriot!*

Corliss Lamont, born a child of privilege in the beginning of the twentieth century, attentively absorbed in his formative years the serious issues of ethics and equality, right at the Family dining table, that would shape his life and his philosophy for nearly the rest of the century, the whole span of his life. And what an exciting and chaotic time in which to develop his principled, ethical, liberal, compassionate point-of-view in listening to discussions of Wall Street and world affairs, and exploring the juxtapositions of labor and capital, of power and poverty, those of respect and contempt, of fairness and indifference.

Corliss became a champion of the underdog, a fighter for Civil Liberties, putting his reputation on the line, even going to jail in support of the rights of union strikers. Following the involvement of his own peace-supporting parents, he served as an enthusiastic guide to the League of Nations in Geneva, the summer of his graduation from Harvard in 1924, on his way to the Fall session at Oxford, where he then delved even deeper into philosophy. He was variously interested in the ministry and then the law, as a vehicle for his altruistic drive, but finally rejected pursuing either of these interests in favor of philosophy itself.

He began to write and to explore the dynamics of the unfolding Socialist movement and to become enthralled with the potential for a more idealistic treatment of the working class and minorities, and a more equitable distribution of the world's assets. Corporate profits will need to be modified by courageous lawmakers, turning some portion of it into much needed "Social Capital" to be used for the common good of humankind.

This may be the most important issue at stake in this 2012 Election year. The Tea Party advocates and Corporate interests are in agreement that most, or perhaps even all, Government intervention serves to violate our cherished American Freedoms, and is counter productive to business and to our American way of life. They will even go so far as to assert that Government intervention is to be feared, and that it is a menacing, stifling, and controlling attempt to turn this country into a totalitarian regime. The knee-jerk propagandized unreasonable fear of "Omigod: Socialism is being used as a tool to destroy our freedoms and to control this country."

Nothing could be further from the truth as regards the concept and the ideal of Socialism. Quite the opposite: capitalist domination is the thing to be feared! At this time in the 2012 Presidential campaign season, all of the crazys are coming out of the woodwork. And the blame game is in full swing! When we are experiencing a depressed economy, the Republicans would have us believe that government CONTROL has caused the joblessness, etc. Well, alright! Let's deal with that accusation! In an ideal Socialist economic democracy, government would be acting in BEHALF of the best interests of the People. It would be doing what Franklin Roosevelt did! He created programs that provided employment for millions who needed work to feed their families, plus Social Security and other benefits! How ironic! With this wise and humanistic move, he was derided by capitalists. And I believe that ever since, a devious plot has been to destroy these measures.

There is a great distinction between the words CAPITAL and the word CAPITAL-ISM. In order for any creative enterprise, development, or

growth to begin...let alone succeed, and to create employment, an essential element is to acquire investment or capital. This is basic. BUT, what is not clearly understood is that this investment need not simply create profit that must be paid to the "investors." The option is for this to be money that the government is investing in behalf of the long range, well-being of all of the People. The People themselves are the beneficiaries of this necessary kind of CAPITAL investment! Instead, "profit-making" benefits only the few! Investing in WAR is especially profit-making for specialized interests.

The Raging Grannies sing this truth to the tune of HavaNagila: "Hali-hali-burton, Hali-hali-burton, Hali-hali-burton!.....Profits for War!"

The thought that goes into a decision to tamper with Corliss Lamont's own judgment in his book's chapter sequence priority is for a strategic reason: The intent for this re-issuing is to inspire new interest and hopefully...new action. Especially, for those persons who might become newly interested, to inform them about how the ideals of Socialism have been completely denigrated in the eyes of the American public. This has been quite unfortunate because Anti-Socialist Propaganda that permeates social discourse in the US has totally thwarted the opportunity to explore these ideals openly and objectively, and to truly understand possibilities.

The whole intent of this re-issue is to invite new activists to collaborate with old activists and to raise their voices and their banners in mutual concern with human values. So many patriotic Americans are disgusted with the disgraceful performance and war-mongering of the Bush Administration, and now, disappointed with Obama. We're concerned with the damage to our Democracy; of the relative inactivity of Congress; of the venality and capriciousness of the stock market; of serious dangers to our environment; and of the unquestioning complicity of much of the media in reporting our military ventures; its cheer-leading almost war-mongering.

We must make changes! This is the time for assessing our options, working together, and making new plans for creating a system more in-keeping with the ideals that we believe in: a government of the people, by the people and for the people! Our problems are right now; the problems are immediate! It would be totally counter-productive to get bogged down in any nitty-gritty planning details from "yester-year" that might have been appropriate then...in 1939. We have problems Corliss never dreamed of!

Today, the necessary planning will be done by savvy much younger activists, with new tools, and will be meeting today's urgent need for drastic change in quite fantastic new, bold and creative ways that were absolutely inconceivable in the so-called "olden days." Corliss Lamont himself would

have been thrilled with the World Wide Web and its potential for the sharing of ideas, and of inspiring and rousing whole segments of the population to work for the changes that simple logic and the demand for Peace and Justice require.

We have at our fingertips the necessary information, and the capacity to share this information, never before possible. Leadership that can stand up to the internal danger of entrenched militarism and Strangelovian visions of World domination, plus a complicit corporate media, is a screaming need!

*This, Of Course, Is The Whole Point In The Re-Issuing Of These Words Of Corliss Lamont After Being Unheeded For 73 Years!*



**Our Seat of Government is BROKEN!**

Next, starting the message of Corliss Lamont, himself, his own introduction.

# **You Might Like Socialism**

## **by Corliss Lamont**

### **Introduction:**

My purpose in writing this book is to give, in simple and understandable language, an inclusive survey of the main reasons that prompt contemporary Americans from every walk of life, including members of the upper and middle financial strata, to adopt Socialism as the way out for this country and the world. As the title indicates, I invite readers in the spirit of free and un-dogmatic discussion to consider the case for a Socialist society and to reach their own conclusions.

It would of course be impossible, simply for reasons of space, to include the many different strands of study, discussion and personal experience which over a number of years have gradually led me to become a radical. Nor could I even recall all the impressions, some of them trivial in themselves alone, which have entered into my intellectual and emotional processes to stimulate and reinforce my Socialist position.

A number of significant questions I have naturally not been able to treat very fully, and many matters of detail I have not been able to take up at all. Other volumes, classics in the field, perform these tasks. My indebtedness is obvious and far-reaching to writers on Socialism such as Robert W. Dunn, L. E. Hubbard, Leo Huberman, George Soule, Sidney and Beatrice Webb, Albert Rhys Williams, and, above all, John Strachey. But the opinions expressed in this book are my own, and I alone, bear the responsibility for them.

I wish to thank especially the following individuals for their valuable co-operation and counsel in the writing and publication of this book: Theodore Bayer, Alice W. Field, Henrietta Weigel, Josephine White, and my wife, Margaret Irish Lamont, whose sharing of common social aims and ideals with me is a steady source of strength and inspiration.

Since throughout this volume and particularly in the last chapter I have dealt to a considerable extent with contemporary affairs, it is quite possible that by the time this study is published, events, which move so swiftly these days, will have swept ahead of or contradicted me on one point or another. Hence it is necessary to say that this book went to press on August 8, 1939.

Corliss Lamont.

This book is dedicated to friends in the Harvard Class of 1924.



**A happy, confident Corliss Lamont in his student years.**

## Chapter I

### Why Members of the Upper Financial Strata Go Left

#### *Why I Am a Radical*

"How does it happen, Mr. Lamont, that a person with your background is a radical?" I have been asked this question an infinite number of times during the past few years and by all manner of people, from incredulous workers coming up to speak with me after a lecture in some Midwestern city to perplexed plutocrats taking me aside for a confidential chat after a formal Manhattan dinner. Needless to say, I have never been able, in a brief conversation to give a very satisfactory reply. But I have always realized that it was a legitimate and important question. And in this book I want to try to answer it simply, honestly and thoroughly.

Yes, I am a radical. I am on the side of labor. I sympathize in general with the achievements of the Soviet Union. I am against Fascism. I want to see a life of abundance for all of the people. And I believe that Socialism can do the job both in America and the world at large.

At the same time there can be no doubt that in origin I come from America's so-called upper financial strata. I mean "upper" only in an economic sense, that top 1 per cent of American individuals and families whose incomes are \$10,000 a year or more. (these were 1939 dollars at the time of writing, remember) From early childhood I have enjoyed certain undeniable advantages that wealth is able to assure. Two members of my immediate family are partners in the banking firm of J. P. Morgan and Company. And since coming of age, I myself have possessed considerably more than average economic security.

I betray no state secrets in citing these facts. And I mention them at the outset, not with any intention of embarking on a series of personal "confessions," but simply because they represent the truth and because they are objectively necessary for an understanding of what I have to say, I think we can take it as settled, therefore, that in the year 1902 I was born into what became soon afterward a prominent capitalist family. It was and is, I may add, a very congenial family. And in democratic, sometimes fiery, but always friendly discussion, with its various members, I have worked out much of the material which appears in this volume.

Why are persons from the capitalist class with backgrounds similar to mine today joining the ranks of the radicals? Though I can speak only for myself, I believe that I can throw light on this matter by telling the story of my own

transition to a Socialist point of view. And perhaps I can clear up to some extent what, seems to be an endless source of amazement and alarm to so many of our fellow-citizens. They cannot understand how anyone who is normal, "Nordic" and economically privileged can become a sincere supporter of radicalism in economics and politics.

But even a cursory glance at the world at present ought to dispel any appearance of mystery in the fact that an increasing number of well-to-do Americans are following a leftward course. Here we are twenty-five years after the start of the Great War and ten years after the start of the Great Depression and we face once more, both nationally and internationally, an economic and political situation overwhelming in its extent and gravity. A vast and bloody conflict is raging in the East; the Second World War is an ever-present possibility; while behind the facade of so-called peace the brute force of Fascism is rampant and bludgeons its way to power in country after country.

And Capitalism in general has become so capricious, so utterly undependable, that even the wealthy cannot be too sure of their future and that of their children. The stock market reaches the heights one day and sinks to the depths the next; businesses both large and small, quickly go from boom to bankruptcy; great fortunes rise and fall; whole nations suddenly verge on economic collapse. Who is really secure? Businessmen and capitalist theoreticians more and more openly acknowledge that they do not know any way in which the ever recurring cycle of boom and crash can be halted. They piously hope that the next depression will not be so bad as the last, but beyond this they have nothing to offer a harassed and long-suffering humanity.

Now I definitely refuse to accept as the fate of mankind the defeatist attitude which condemns us to an unending repetition of the very processes that have brought about such overwhelming catastrophe and misery during the past quarter-century. I have only one life to live and I want to make it count for social aims that reach down to fundamentals. I do not want to waste my time by helping to bring about some little improvements here and there and letting the big things go. I know of few greater personal tragedies than those of well-meaning, men and women who have devoted their lives to the achievement of some ideal only to find at the end that they were dealing with surface causes and cures. Such are the peace workers who think that war can be eliminated by governments formally agreeing to renounce aggression; such are the charity workers who think that poverty can be overcome by private contributions to the needy; such



are all those who think that depressions can be avoided by tinkering with the capitalist system.

Reforms within the structure of Capitalism can result in genuine amelioration, but I do not believe that they can ever resolve our major dilemmas. One severe depression or one widespread international conflict can overnight do ten-fold more harm than all the good accomplished in the reformist gains of decades. I was once asked why I did not give over my entire energies to the establishment of unemployment insurance. My answer was that while I naturally was in favor of unemployment insurance, its enactment would not solve the problem of unemployment. The way to solve that problem is to establish Socialism and abolish unemployment. Socialism gets to the most of things. And I feel that it is more worth while to be the most insignificant worker on behalf of something that provides ultimate solutions than to be a big shot in a system which has terrible difficulty in providing even temporary ones.

These, then, are the main reasons in my opinion why men and women of intelligence and good will are everywhere today earnestly seeking to find a way out for society which will permanently put an end to the intertwined evils of war and poverty, of economic crisis and cultural retrogression. As one of the seekers I have tried to think through the deep-going problems of these turbulent times. And I have come to the firm conclusion that a Socialist order offers the most certain hope for the renewal of human progress. Specifically, to support Socialism means to work for, as the basis of a stable economy and a great culture, the goal of a planned and peaceful and democratic society, eventually on an international scale, in which the main instruments of production and distribution are publicly owned and operated.

### *The Voice of Democracy and Reason*

I hold that the case for Socialism rests primarily on the belief in democracy and the appeal to reason. By democracy I mean the fair and equal opportunity of all individuals in all nations, regardless of race or religion, origin or occupation, to share in the good things, both material and cultural, of this life; and to participate genuinely in the economic and political decisions affecting their mode of existence. Only persons who subscribe to democracy in this inclusive interpretation of the word are capable, I believe, of possessing that passionate sense of outrage over the cruelties and injustices endured by humankind which has ever been an attribute of the world's great democrats. Only such persons are able to give their

sincere and abiding loyalty to the happiness and progress of all humanity as the supreme ethical goal.

In general, it has been simply impossible for members of the upper financial strata to work sincerely for humanity as a whole, because they have always been filled with such profound sentiments of hatred and contempt for what they consider inferior classes, races and nations. They have accordingly felt that these groups were neither deserving of equal opportunity nor fit for it. Conversely, the upper classes have been so certain of their own inborn intellectual, moral and biological superiority that they have enjoyed with a good conscience the various economic and cultural privileges which have gone with their status in the community. Upper-class ignorance of biology and social science often seems downright willful; but more often, I think, due to an unconscious bias which throws up a protective screen of rationalization and pure blindness to shut out unpleasant knowledge. And this is why in increasing measures today perfectly sane and sober capitalists refuse to acknowledge certain facts—commonly known facts—which they feel cast some sort of disrepute on their system.

These considerations explain why so many intelligent and formally well-educated persons uphold reactionary views that work hardship on the masses of the people. If your basic social assumptions are narrow and ungenerous, if you believe in a God-given right of an exclusive aristocracy to rule the world and enjoy its finest fruits, then reason may well lead you to support a social system that cares little for the rights and happiness of the majority. The exercise of reason alone, then, does not necessarily point in the direction of Socialism or any other particular form of society. It all depends upon what assumptions you start from in your reasoning, especially upon what general purpose you have in mind. Unfortunately, reason, as embodied for instance in scientific techniques, may operate on behalf of all sorts of anti-social ends such as aggressive war and unscrupulous profit making.

There are admittedly numerous exceptions among the ruling class to what I have been saying—men and women who are devoted to democracy in the broad sense. Yet surely most of these genuinely democratic capitalists, as even many members of the working class, do not believe in Socialism! True enough. And here is where the appeal to reason comes in. For I maintain that an objective intellectual analysis of the contemporary scene and of the lessons of history shows clearly that those who honestly desire the extension of democracy and the continued progress of human-kind must sooner or later espouse the cause of Socialism. Only unflinching

reason and the democratic feeling working together lead to Socialist conclusions. And those believers in democracy and progress whose faulty thinking takes them in a non-Socialist direction are in the end bound to meet with defeat and disappointment. Hence all liberals, for instance, or at least all liberals with guts, can hardly fail these days to become radicals.

Why Socialism should, I think, appeal to the reason of true democrats, to all those who are both tough-minded and tenderhearted, can be elucidated by reference to one or two of the most pressing problems of the day. We radicals hold, for example, that only Socialist planning within each country and between each country can eliminate the terrific economic pressures which, under Capitalism, and just now particularly in its Fascist manifestations, lead over and over again to the horror of international conflict. I shall later take up in detail the problem of peace and war. The point I want to make here is that the radical thesis on this grave question is a matter of intellectual analysis. It stands or falls on that basis. What Socialism achieves in an international way is inseparably bound up with what it is able to do on a national scale and whether, as I allege, it can establish continuous prosperity and allay the economic discontent and distress of the various peoples. Here again I say that it is reason which must decide whether or not the Socialist analysis is correct, But in, this case it is not reason working merely with abstractions and projecting fine-sounding hypotheses. For the Socialist theory has for the first time been receiving a large-scale test, going through a prodigious pragmatic ordeal, in the Soviet Union. There a planned economy has actually been functioning for a number of years and, as I learned from my two trips to Soviet Russia, has achieved extraordinary success.

Turning to still broader perspectives, I want to bring out as a fact of the highest importance that Socialism is not concerned simply with economics and material things. The Socialist cultural synthesis does not have merely a theory of economics and politics; it has a theory of history and art and science; it has a theory of international and inter-racial relations; it has an attitude toward the universe. In other words it offers the individual an inclusive and rounded philosophy of life and one which provides him with a high and worth-while loyalty during his career on this earth. In Socialism, I and other non-proletarian radicals find an opportunity to fulfill ourselves. This ought to make it plain that, even apart from the hope of escaping death in some frightful Armageddon or economic ruin in some precipitous crash, we are not devoting our lives to Socialism simply as a beautiful, altruistic gesture. While I would not say that we are entirely selfish, we do believe that Socialism has at least as much to give us as we have to give to the ideals of Socialism.

We feel, too, that we are associating ourselves with the most vital thing in the world today, that we are becoming part of a great, ongoing and probably invincible tide in the affairs of humans, that we are casting our lot with the Future. All during the nineteenth century American Capitalism presented many challenging and exciting tasks. There was the opening up of the West, the building of a vast transportation system, the discovery and exploitation of our natural resources, the mechanization of industry and agriculture, the development of mass production and big corporate enterprise, the transformation of our country into a definite World Power. But now it appears evident that Capitalism has seen its palmiest days and that stirring opportunities within its framework are becoming increasingly scarce. The battle for Socialism-and for a long time yet in the United States it will be the uphill fight of a minority-seems to me much the most thrilling and at the same time intelligent movement in which one can participate today.

The general aims of Socialism which I have been reviewing, far from being alien to the spirit of America, are wholly in accord with our traditions. What indeed could be more American than the ideal of complete democracy, of social justice, of economic security, of cultural opportunity, of world peace and of the right of "all men to life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness" ? I am a radical precisely because such outstanding American ideals are daily stamped in the mire by Capital-IsM, whether in its Fascist or non-Fascist forms; and because they can be rescued and fulfilled only through the establishment of Socialism. These ideals, I may add, are sincerely shared-by most Americans, including many honest conservatives and members of the upper financial strata.

Let me illustrate from personal experience the meaning of this last statement. Two or three years ago a red-baiter by the name of Francis Ralston Welsh wrote an agitated piece about me and my parents called "Sowing the Wind and Reaping the Whirlwind," He pointed out that my mother, Mrs. Florence C. Lamont, was on the Board of such terrible "Communist" organizations as the Foreign Policy Association and the New School for Social Research, and that my father aided and abetted her subversive activities and was guilty of some rather liberal doings himself. "And so the wind was sown," the author said. Then came the inevitable "whirl-wind," he concluded, and in no other form than my own humble self!

Now in spite of the absurdities of Mr. Welsh, he has a real point. For much of my radicalism is unquestionably due to my determination to see actualized certain of the ideals which were taught me in my home. I

think especially of the goal of international peace and understanding, always a dominant concern of my parents and one which led my father to depart from his traditional Republicanism in 1920 and support Governor Cox, the Democratic candidate for President on the League of Nations issue.

Indeed, in my general family group there has long been a genuine tradition of independent and progressive thought. My uncle, Hammond Lamont, who died in middle age during the full tide of his brilliance, was managing editor of the liberal New York *Evening Post* for six years and editor of the militant *Nation* for three. Another uncle, John P. Gavit, was also managing editor of the *Post* for several years and later concentrated on the fight for a sane international order. My aunt, the former Mrs. Charles Corliss, is a popular novelist bearing the pen-name of Anne Parrish. A few years ago she wrote, under the title of *Golden Wedding*, one of the most effective contemporary satires on the wealthy American bourgeoisie. And one of my Father's first cousins, Robert Rives Lamonte, was for many years a prominent member of the Socialist Party and a prolific author on the subject of Socialism. All in all, then, I do not feel very much like a black sheep in the family circle.

Of course, if my position is sound on the ways and means of achieving peace and other recognized human values, then all progressive minded and idealistic capitalists, including some of my close relatives, ought to seriously contemplate throwing their energies into the struggle for Socialism. I am convinced that many such members of the upper economic strata would be individually happier in a co-operative society where their social sensitivities would not be constantly outraged and where they would cease to lead lives which so often today are psychologically oppressed, spiritually frustrated, and weighed down by the very bulk of material possessions.

### *Critique of Well-to-do Radicals*

The Marxists believe that the preponderant support for Socialism must come from the workers, because of their numerical strength and psychological cohesiveness, because of their basic and productive function in industrial life, and because their precarious economic situation more readily leads them to recognize a Socialist order as their chief hope. The radical movement has in addition always attracted an impressive number of the middle class, especially professionals and intellectuals, whose training is more prone to make them see the logical case for Socialism.

Members of the uppermost economic strata who espouse Socialism are relatively few and far between. The capitalists economic stake in the present order-or, rather, disorder-makes this understandable, but they have an important psychological stake as well. Not only do they possess on the whole, even in America, a very deep loyalty to their class as such; but also their careers and feelings of self-esteem are so bound up with the present system, that to admit that it is failing or that some other system is preferable would constitute, in their minds, an admission that their own lives had been a failure. That is why, in this era, members of the upper economic strata who come over to Socialism are almost always those of the second generation whose *amour pro pre* is not necessarily tied up with Capitalism.

When, despite all inhibiting economic and psychological influences, members of the upper class do come over to the Left, it is possible for them to be as dependable as anyone else. Like any other types in the radical movement, they may honestly change their convictions or lose their nerve, grow conservative with age or become tired of it all. But they can rarely be bought off, because they already possess a goodly measure of economic security. And they are not likely to be corrupted by the lure of social prestige because they had plenty of that commodity to begin with. There is little danger of their enacting the revolting spectacle of a Ramsay Mac Donald betraying- British Socialism by gradually succumbing to the refined and aristocratic atmosphere of afternoon tea with the nobility.

We well-to-do radicals, however, have our own peculiar problems. There is the problem of what particular job will enable us to function most effectively in the movement, of how to handle the numerous and never-ending financial appeals, of making new and staunch friends on the Left who will give us understanding and moral support, and of adjusting our personal lives in a way that is appropriate to the beliefs we hold. The ordinary uppermost income conservative is quite prone to call us insincere because we do not at once reduce our standard of living to that of the most poverty-stricken group in the United States. I well remember an encounter some years ago with that picturesque blusterer, ex-Vice-President, ex-banker and ex-general Charles G. Dawes, who leapt up from an excellent Sunday dinner and paced around the table chewing angrily on his pipe and charging that I had no right to believe in Socialism until I gave away my last penny! I reminded him that it wasn't Lenin but Jesus who had advised giving away all one's goods to feed the poor. The Christian ex-general, himself a multimillionaire at the time, did not respond to this observation.

The point is, that there are more significant things to do on behalf of Socialism than to make dramatic and half-baked gestures such as flinging away "all one's money or moving to some city slum. It is well for at least a few friends of the radical movement to remain financially solvent. And it may be useful, too, for non-proletarian radicals to keep on working within the capitalist class where they were brought up and to try to win over more persons from it or at least to arouse them against Fascism. It is customary to jeer at what are sometimes known as "Parlor Pinks"; but as a matter of fact very good work can be done for Socialism in parlors both modest and magnificent. Some of the most flourishing seeds of the French and Russian Revolutions were planted in the salons of the high and mighty. And leftists like myself cannot help feeling that it is rather more important for us to be effective on behalf of Socialism than to try to satisfy the pre-conceived whims of upper-income folk as to how we should behave.

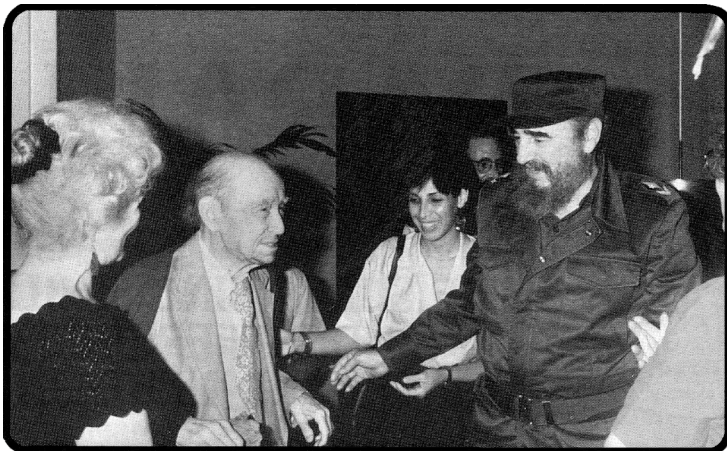
Finally, radicals like myself do not pretend to be either angels or martyrs; it is our unfriendly critics who concoct that myth and then accuse us of being hypocrites because we do not live up to it. Neither are we kill-joys who want to take all the fun out of life, gloomy fanatics who have no sense of humor, nor slaves to work who think that a cause can best be served by physical or nervous wrecks. The unexciting truth is that we are ordinary persons who like ordinary pleasures and recreations, who try to do a good day's work and who wish to provide our children with a decent environment in which to grow up. It would be folly for us, as for anyone else in this capitalist country, to attempt to act now in all respects as if full-fledged Socialism already existed in America.

History records that in times of great social and economic stress it is a common occurrence for a small minority of the ruling class, primarily for moral and intellectual reasons rather than from economic need, to sympathize with and take part in the movements of the under-privileged. Sufficient material is available to write a substantial volume on this phenomenon alone. Thus we upper-class radicals of the present day feel that we are carrying on a long and honorable tradition. While ancestor worship is not a very fruitful thing, a number of us can if necessary summon up the shades of our forebears to bestow a blessing on us; I myself had ancestors who sailed across the Atlantic in the good ship Mayflower and who fought in the American Revolution. We are, then, by no means breaking entirely with the past; we are selecting out of that past what seems to us the highest course of conduct and are trying to follow it through.

On the Left with approval, on the Right with disapproval, we are sometimes called "traitors to our class." But I confess that I do not care for

this negative formulation and find it very inadequate; I prefer to say that in trying to be loyal to humankind as a whole, we are compelled to oppose the economic interests of the capitalist class. At the same time we back the working class and accept its leadership because it possesses the potentiality of creating a new and better form of society, and because the labor movement everywhere is in the interests of the overwhelming majority. Realistic radicals do not nourish the illusion, however, that we can get Socialism for nothing; we cannot take the greatest step forward in history without paying for it. Even where Socialism comes peacefully, as I trust it will in America, a lot of people especially among the capitalists, are not going to enjoy it one bit. And certain traditional values, closely bound up with the rise and rule of Capitalism, are bound to perish. I am sorry that these things have to be; but the universe decreed long ago that evolution, however healthy and desirable, must be a somewhat painful process. As long as mankind continues to grow, it must endure growing pains.

It is my thesis that if growth is to go on, it must be in the direction of a Socialist society. I cannot hope to argue people into that democratic feeling which is the emotional core of the radical movement; most Americans have that feeling anyway. What I aim to do, therefore, in the remainder of this book is to develop the intellectual case for Socialism, and in so doing, to reveal the path along which my own mind has traveled. I intend also to show in detail how Socialism's appeal to reason covers not only the realm of economics and politics but that of culture and philosophy as well. In short, Socialism, whether as a goal to be achieved or as an achievement to be experienced and enjoyed, represents a total way of life.



**Beth and Corliss Lamont meeting with Fidel Castro in Cuba.**



# Capitalism Fails Humankind

## *An Independent Analysis*

I am not an orthodox Socialist, an orthodox Communist or an orthodox anything else. I have never been an enrolled member of any political party either conservative or radical. So far as I can remember, in every election in which I have voted, I have cast my ballot for the candidates of at least three different parties. The most accurate label I can find for myself is simply that of independent radical and worker for Socialism. Being an independent has certain advantages and certain disadvantages, but anyway that is what I am. And in writing about Socialism I am giving my own interpretations and emphases, with both omissions and inclusions which any official account would no doubt consider unjustified.

At the outset I want to call attention to the fact that economics has traditionally been pictured as a terribly difficult and complex subject far beyond the grasp of the ordinary mind. This myth has been carefully fostered by the capitalist class in order to discourage people from asking embarrassing questions about the present system. And it is easy to see that if the capitalists can succeed in setting up themselves and their professorial henchmen as the sacred Priests of Economics, who alone know the inner workings of this abstruse discipline, then the person in the street will have no alternative except to bow down in awe before them.

Indeed, if economics really were as difficult as is often claimed, only a few professional economists would have the intellectual right to hold opinions in this field and it would become all but impossible to develop a mass movement to change the existing order. Now of course there are details and ramifications of economic theory, whether Socialist or orthodox, which only specialists are equipped to follow. But I insist that the fundamental principles which explain the way in which Capitalism and Socialism function are comparatively simple. They can be understood readily by the average American citizen.

## *The Profit System and Laissez-Faire*

Let us go back for a moment to 1776. That was a very important date in the history of America. I cite it, however, not in order to discuss the Declaration of Independence, but because in that same year, Adam Smith, Capitalism's most talented theoretician and probably the greatest of all the Smiths who have ever lived, published his famous book, *The Wealth of*

*Nations*. This work became an international best-seller of the period and constituted, in a sense, world Capitalism's Declaration of Independence.

“It is not [wrote Smith] from the benevolence of the butcher, the brewer or the baker that we expect our dinner, but from their regard to their own interest. We address ourselves, not to their humanity but to their self-love, and never talk to them of our own necessities but of their advantages. The consideration of his own private profit is the sole motive which determines the owner of any capital to employ it either in agriculture, in manufacture; or in some particular branch of the wholesale or retail trade. Every individual is continually exerting himself to find out the most advantageous employment for whatever capital he can command. It is his own advantage, indeed, and not that of society, which he has in view. But the study of his own advantage naturally, or rather necessarily, leads him to prefer that employment which is most advantageous to the society.”

Thus Adam Smith laid down the principle that if each capitalist tried to make the most profit for himself and was permitted unrestricted opportunity in this endeavor, everything would somehow work out in the end to the greatest possible benefit of the community as a whole. Complete liberty in the pursuit of profit implied an absolutely free market in which, Smith expected, free competition among the capitalists would result in the survival and success of the fittest and in the automatic adjustment of prices to the most efficient functioning of business and the maximum return for the consumer. A free market also assumed the right of free contract as between employer and employee, so that there could be unimpeded buying of labor-power by the capitalists and unimpeded selling of it by its possessors, the workers, Such a market, Smith thought, would create ever-extending spheres of economic activity and would stimulate that division of labor or specialization in production as the surest way of increasing wealth.

He advocated the free market not just within countries but also between countries. For he was convinced that capitalist enterprise would reach the peak of prosperity only with the establishment of a market as wide as the world itself, and that international free trade would carry the division of labor to its logical conclusion by encouraging each nation to specialize in the production of those goods for which its particular economy was best suited. So Smith urged the abolition of all the cramping rules and regulations, monopolistic dealings and government restraints, burdensome taxes and duties-whether such practices affected primarily domestic or international trade-which had been the bane of business under the old

system of Mercantilism. The new idea was well summed up in the French phrase *Laissez faire*, meaning Let us alone. Hands off.

Capitalists throughout the Western World hailed with acclaim the principles enunciated in *The Wealth of Nations*. And in varying degrees these principles became actualized in each of the chief capitalist countries. But the point I wish to stress here is that the capitalist does not run a business for fun, for charity, for love, for service, for the social good or any other such purpose; it is run, and must run, primarily for the sake of profit, for the return on the capital which he can earn in excess of all costs. And that holds as true today as in the eighteenth century when Smith wrote his book or in the sixteenth century when the capitalist era first began to come into its own.

Now there is no doubt that the profit system of *Laissez faire* Capitalism, especially during the period initiated by the Industrial Revolution and the new freedom of, succeeded in developing tremendously, the productive and technical powers of humankind. It subdued to a large extent the forces of nature and harnessed them to useful employment; it accumulated wealth on a scale far more vast than anyone had even dreamt of before; it extended the pattern of economic enterprise and progress to every part of the globe; it greatly broadened cultural facilities in the more advanced nations; and it brought into the realm of possibility, that Socialist form of society which it is the principal objective of this book to elucidate.

I would not deny for a moment that Capitalism has advanced humanity an immeasurable distance beyond the previous system of Feudalism. Nonetheless, the costs of this advance in terms of human suffering and social waste have been frightful and enormous. And *Laissez faire* itself proved unable to survive. The results, of unbridled *Laissez faire* have-everywhere and always been disastrous for the physique, the morale and general welfare of the working class. In England, for instance, during the first decades of the nineteenth century, scores of thousands of men, women and children (from the age of six upward) became broken in health and spirit, toiling in badly lighted, badly ventilated, crowded and unsanitary factories for twelve or even sixteen hours a day. No one has portrayed more truly the spirit of Capitalism in quest of profits than Karl Marx himself, on this very matter of the working day. He writes:

“In its blind, unbridled passion, its werewolf hunger for surplus labor, capital is not content to over-step the moral restrictions upon the length of the working day. It oversteps the purely physical limitations as well. It usurps the time needed for the growth, the development, and the

healthy maintenance of the body. It steals the time essential for the consumption of fresh air and sunshine. It higgles over meal time, incorporating this whenever possible with the process of production, so that the worker receives his food only as one of the means of production, just as coal is supplied to heat the boiler, and lubricating oil to facilitate the running of the machinery. The workers' hours of sleep, of what should be healthy sleep for the collection, renewal, and refreshment of the vital powers, become a spell of so many hours of torpor as are essential to the temporary revival of an utterly exhausted organism. Capital does not enquire how long the embodiment of labor power is likely to live. Its only interest is in ensuring that a maximum amount of labor power shall be expended in one working day. It attains this end by shortening the worker's life, just as a greedy farmer secures a greater immediate return from the soil by robbing the soil of its fertility."

Accordingly, the capitalists have always strenuously opposed limiting the hours of work to a decent length, fearing that such a step would reduce profits. And even when they have been forced by law or otherwise, to shorten the working day, they have in compensation to themselves, introduced into their factories the "speed-up," that is, an almost unbearable heightening in the tempo of the machines, and the "stretch-out," that is, a heavy increase in the number of machines to be tended by each worker. It is no wonder that the spurring on of production by such devices, putting the workers under a most fearful strain, eventually resulted in the well-known maxim of modern industry: "Men over 40 not wanted."

"It is not surprising, either, given the urgency of the capitalist desire to pile up profits, that businessmen have always contended they would be irretrievably ruined by the monetary loss involved in paying minimum wages, doing without child labor, or safeguarding the workers from the more obvious hazards connected with employment. When and where labor is cheap and plentiful, capitalists are only too likely to adopt the motto of "Safety Last"-for their employees. During the evolution of Capitalism literally hundreds of thousands of workers have met death, and millions have suffered permanent disability, through preventable occupational accidents due to neglect and stinginess on the part of management.

One of the worst results of the hard-boiled profit motive operating in its pristine state has been the constant creation of hordes of workers unable to find employment and, until recently, unable to obtain the aid of public, authorities in their plight. When business slackens and a capitalist cannot continue to make a profit on his regular program of manufacturing

and selling goods, he curtails or stops altogether producing and distributing them. And he compels his employees, or a large proportion of them, to join the ranks of the jobless because it is temporarily more profitable for him to leave them idle.

In truth, though the capitalists have grown more and more exercised over the size of unemployment figures, they do not want to abolish unemployment entirely, for they need a substantial number of unemployed as a labor reserve to be available during the sudden expansions and sky-rocketing booms so typical of Capitalism; and, among other things, they are able to use such a reserve to hold down working standards and to break strikes. All the while, in spite of the appalling needs of the millions out of work, the average businessman has been extremely hostile to state aid on their behalf, both because this might mean an increase in taxation, and also might make the unemployed less amenable to wage exploitation.

Indeed, whether we study the history of unemployment insurance or workmen's compensation or some other reform, we see that there has hardly been one ameliorative measure of this sort in any country which has not at first been furiously contested by a large majority of the capitalist class. The movement, however, for eradicating the most glaring industrial evils has been so strong that in all the advanced nations of the West, numerous and far reaching, though usually inadequate, statutes have been enacted, in the field of labor and social legislation, from the British Factory to the Acts of the early nineteenth century to the New Deal reforms of President Roosevelt. The government controls over business which were designed for the protection of the working class and which everywhere accompanied the evolution of industry constituted the first great breach in the system of *laissez faire*. And it is quite likely that even Adam Smith himself, had he lived to see the brutish way in which Capitalism developed, would have favored such measures.

Businessmen have from the start also fought tooth and nail against trade unions, for fear that collective action on the part of labor would cut into profits by forcing employers to make expensive concessions to their workers. This is why in America during the past few years there has been such bitter and often violent capitalist resistance to the campaigns of John L. Lewis and the C.I.O. And it is likewise why one of the first important moves of a Fascist regime is to suppress the trade unions root and branch.

Toward the end of the nineteenth century in most capitalist countries labor had won, though only after long and arduous struggles, the legal right to organize. But many restrictions in law even then remained on

such indispensable trade-union practices as collective bargaining, the strike, and peaceful picketing. Employer recognition of trade unions, which constitutes the very substance of labor's progress, has grown extremely slowly, with our own United States a laggard in this respect, with nations like Great Britain and Sweden in the van. Here again, in the gradually successful efforts of the workers to organize and protect themselves against the intolerable effects of uncontrolled profit-making, there occurred, another significant lapse in *laissez faire*. For the whole idea behind trade unions has violated the *laissez faire* principle of an absolutely free contract between the individual employer and the individual workingman. (The word "free here was always a misnomer so far as the workers were concerned.) At the same time the more powerful the unions have become and the more able to win wage increases and resist wage cuts, the more they have interfered with that complete flexibility in the price of labor-power which, was such an essential attribute of the free market.

Meanwhile another change was taking place under Capitalism which was full of portent for *laissez faire* and directly due to factors inseparably connected with the profit system. I refer to the process of monopoly and concentration. In order to keep, making money, a capitalist business has to compete continually with formidable rivals in the same line. Even during fairly prosperous years an astonishing number of firms-more than 350,000, for instance, in the U. S. during 1937-discontinue operations because they cannot stand the pace. When we take bad times into account as well, it is conservatively estimated that at least one-fifth of all capitalist enterprises fall by the wayside. Up to a certain point, the bigger a business, the more cheaply it can sell its goods on the market and the more chance it has of coming out on top. For, other things being equal, large-scale organization and production, lowers the cost of manufacture by making possible comprehensive technological improvements, the standardization of output, the utilization of by-products, the general elimination of waste and the higher productivity of labor. Accordingly, there is a steady tendency for the bigger capitalist, through greater competitive strength and profit-making ability, to drive the smaller out of the field or absorb him by buying up his business and putting through a merger.

The fact of concentration and centralization in American business life is acknowledged in all quarters, though opinion differs as to its exact extent, and even more as to its exact significance. Adolph A. Berle, Jr., and Gardiner C. Means in their definitive study, *The Modern Corporation and Private Property*, show that out of approximately 300,000 non-banking corporations in the United States, some 200 control one-half of the total corporate wealth. We are all familiar with the names of some of these huge

companies whose assets run into billions of dollars. Who has not heard, for instance, of United States Steel, General Motors, Pennsylvania Railroad, American Telephone and Telegraph, Standard Oil, General Electric, Anaconda Copper, United Cigar, Radio Corporation of America, Liggett Drug Stores, Metropolitan Life Insurance, the Great Atlantic and Pacific Tea Company?

The *Census of Manufactures*, compiled by the U.S. Department of Commerce, informs us that in 1929, out of 210,945 manufacturing plants in America, those with an output worth \$1,000,000 or more, though constituting less than 6 per cent of the total number, and employed almost 60 per cent of the workers, accounting for almost 70 per cent of production. These figures do not reveal the full degree of concentration, however, since many of the plants concerned are simply units in huge industrial combinations or trusts. Even in retail trade, where a small shopkeeper is ordinarily thought to retain such strength, 25 per cent of the stores in 1929 enjoyed the lion's share- 75 per cent-of the business. The ever-growing chain stores alone accounted for 21 per cent of the total retail trade.

Concentration and centralization extend into the banking field where houses such as J. P. Morgan & Company, the Guaranty Trust Company, the Chase National Bank and the National City Bank, wield tremendous financial control Out of approximately 25,000 banks in the US. in 1930, 140, or 0.58 per cent of the total, held almost 50 per cent of the banking resources (excluding those of savings banks). Our whole economic life, whether in industry or agriculture, transportation or retail trade, is indissoluble bound up with the complicated system of credit which the banks administer.

Large-scale industry, with its huge expansion programs and capital requirements, has come more and more to depend on financiers to provide the necessary loans and to float the necessary stock or bond issues. Monopoly in industry and monopoly in finance have grown together; but the ultimate and greater power, exercised both nationally and internationally, now rests in the hands of finance. And this era well warrants being called that of Finance Capitalism.

I need not labor the point of capitalist concentration. While plenty of small business continues to function in America, big business has, without question, come to play the decisive role here. And in its rise to power and subsequent career it has ruined beyond recognition the original scheme of free competition in a free market advocated by Adam Smith and the other supporters of *laissez faire*. For not only does a business reach the

monopoly stage by strangling competitors, but also, once it acquires something of a monopoly in its field, it is prone to boost prices inordinately and freeze them at a level which forces the consumer to take a severe drubbing. The net result is a market inflexibility, making quick and adequate adjustment to changing economic conditions virtually impossible. And that constitutes a major reason for depressions under monopoly capitalism to have become deeper and more acute than ever before. True enough, the government may step in and try to remedy the situation by anti-trust laws and the like. Such measures, however, have had no more effect than King Canute's famous attempt to stop the incoming tide by decree; and, of course, *ipso facto* they have constituted yet another violation of *laissez faire's* principle of: *Hands off*.

Though unrestrained competition in profit-making leads inexorably to the stifling of competition, it is most necessary to add that the different monopolies themselves compete to the death with one another. Since, furthermore, it is the inmost essence of capitalist enterprise to expand or perish, when a business has exhausted the possibilities within a country it looks abroad for further spheres of conquest. Then the battle between monopolies proceeds to take place on an international scale; the giant trusts, which sometimes enter into international price and production agreements, to divide up the world among themselves; and the various capitalist governments, each one representing the profit-seeking urges and the monopolistic tendencies of a national capitalist class as a whole, struggle to obtain, through means fair and foul, peaceful and violent, trade advantages and territorial possessions from one end of the earth to the other.

One of the most common measures of economic warfare to which capitalist governments have resorted is that of the protective tariff. The reader will recall the strong emphasis which Adam Smith laid on the idea of international free trade. Great Britain, which had considerable head-start over every other nation in the new adjustments called for by the Industrial Revolution and which depended on foreign commerce as its very life-blood, naturally favored a free trade system. Thus, during the first sixty years of the nineteenth century British Capitalism, step by step, reduced and finally eliminated its protective tariffs on manufactured goods and foodstuffs.

But other countries wanted to stimulate their own industries and felt, that they must shield them from foreign competition, especially that of England. The United States, under the leadership of Alexander Hamilton, took this position from the beginning. France made only wavering gestures in the direction of free trade. During the last part of the nineteenth century



all of the European Powers except Britain, and most of the smaller nations as well, erected a system of high-tariff walls. This unhappy development continued in the twentieth century, reaching a culmination in the Great Depression of the nineteen-thirties when some tariffs grew into virtual embargoes. It was then that even England, the great and traditional free trade nation, finally succumbed to the pressure of economic self-defense, and enacted far-reaching tariff laws. Indeed, the protectionist idea has recently been stretched to such fantastic lengths that formidable trade barriers, with particular application to farm products, have been set up between different states in the U.S.A. "Today," reports Secretary of Agriculture Henry A. Wallace, "we cannot say that we have free trade between the states."

Though the tariff system has of course swelled immensely the profits of particular capitalists and corporations, its price to the peoples of the world has been incalculably high. It has proved a constant obstruction to the flow of commerce and the interchange of mutually desired goods; it has been a potent factor in causing ill feeling between nations and fanning the flames of international conflict; it has brought about an enormous loss of wealth by leading to wasteful duplication in production as between various countries; and has raised the cost of living by enabling capitalist business, protected from the competition of foreign imports, to push up beyond all reason the prices of goods on the domestic market; it has resulted in the establishment of high-pressure lobbies in all the chief capitals and has notably contributed to the corruption of public officials; and it has fatally disrupted the vast world market envisioned by *laissez faire*.

Since 1929 other changes have taken place in the capitalist system which have lent cardinal assistance to the tariff racket in ripping to pieces *laissez faire's* romantic picture of international free trade. Of primary importance is the fact that the monetary systems of the different capitalist nations have been experiencing extreme vicissitudes, with all the chief countries going off the gold standard and using their depreciated currencies as weapons to gain trade advantages over one another. The result has been that the value of money, at best never very stable under Capitalism, has come to fluctuate more and more on both a national and international scale, with dire consequences for the ideal of the freely functioning market.

What tariffs, export bounties, and all the rest really amount to is intervention by the government, in behalf of certain favored business interests. And the capitalist class, in spite of all its talk about rugged individualism and government coddling, has always enthusiastically backed

those repudiations of *laissez faire* which have seemed to promise bigger and better profits. Professor W. Z. Ripley, formerly of Harvard, estimates that in the days of the great trans-continental railway expansion, federal, state and municipal contributions to construction costs came to no less than \$700,000,000 and that the grants of public lands totaled 155,000,000 acres. Government authorities in America have in effect subsidized the automobile industry to the extent of billions by constructing a vast network of concrete and macadamized roads running to every part of the country. And contemporary capitalists, however loud their outcries over public aid to the sick, the aged and the unemployed, have offered up hosannas of praise and gratitude for the timely loans which the Reconstruction Finance Corporation has granted to ailing banks and businesses.

The American capitalist class, too, has ever been most alacritous in attributing to governmental agencies terrible "wastefulness" and lack of foresight in public affairs. Yet it was this same class, which in its mad scramble for immediate monetary gain, recklessly gutted natural resources right and left throughout the country. That is why here in the United States we have witnessed the irredeemable waste of billions of dollars worth of oil and gas, coal and timber. And tragic devastation of our forests has finally led, because of the interdependency of Nature, to chronic floods and the ruination of huge tracts of fertile land.

All the developments which I have discussed in this section-and I have by no means been able to include the whole story-are the direct outcome of the great and glorious profit motive in action. And they prove without a shadow of doubt that the pure and perfect profit system of *laissez faire* dreamt of by Adam Smith and the others is dead beyond all hope or resurrection and a future life. If you set up the aim of individual private profit as the central principle of economic enterprise, then you should not be surprised when the logical consequences of this principle actually come into being. But there is another consequence which has revealed itself with increasing sharpness during the more recent decades of Capitalism and which brings out most dramatically of all the fundamental weakness of the existing system. That is the well-known and ever more insistent paradox of unceasing want in a world of actual and potential abundance.

## Poverty Amid Potential Plenty

Until the full unfolding of the Industrial Revolution, the many movements of social protest had little chance of achieving a high standard of living for the masses of the underprivileged, since there simply did not exist the productive equipment to, supply to everyone the necessary consumer goods. Hence those movements frequently ended up in a blind alley, though always keeping awake the spirit of revolt and the urge for a better life. Today the situation is very different. Today every schoolboy knows that in industrially developed nations there is enough goods-producing machinery to insure a very fair level of existence to the entire populations of such communities. Today for the first time we have all the means to create that material well-being of humankind which the great Utopia-painters of the past have so vividly portrayed.

In the United States, above all other countries, we possess the natural resources, the mechanical equipment and the technical skill to provide all of our citizens with a thoroughly satisfactory standard of living. Yet President Roosevelt, in his second inaugural address, stated that even during the New Deal recovery one-third of the American people were "ill-housed, ill-clad, ill-nourished." And surely the President was being conservative. This was proved in the autumn of 1938 when the National Resources Committee, a government appointed organization composed of Cabinet members, expert economists and private businessmen, made a report, after painstaking surveys and research, on income levels in the U.S. for the year 1935-36. The scientific findings of this committee were startling and demonstrated, on the most conservative interpretation; that at least one-half of this nation's population, or 65,000,000 people, actually fit the President's description.

The report showed that one-third of all American families and single individuals received during 1935-36, annual incomes of less than \$780, with the average income of this group amounting to \$471 or \$9 a week. One-half of our families and individuals had incomes of less than \$1,070 and two-thirds less than \$1,450. Even this latter figure fell below the sum set by the U. S. Department of Labor as necessary for the average American family to live with a minimum of decency and comfort. Taking the figures for the 29,000,000 American families alone, we find that 14 per cent of them had incomes of less than \$500, 42 per cent had less than \$1,000, 65 per cent had less than \$1,500 and 87 per cent had less than \$2,500.

At the other end of the scale the National Resources Committee stated that a bare 3 per cent of American families received incomes of

\$5,000 or more and 1 per cent \$10,000 or more. But this top 3 per cent got 21 per cent of the total national income and this top per cent 13 per cent of it, as compared with the 16 per cent share of the lowest 42 per cent of all families and the 10 per cent share of the lowest one-third of the families and individuals taken together. The Committee also established the fact that there is an unfortunate sectional concentration in wealth, with average family income in New England at the apex of the pyramid and that in the South at the bottom. Agricultural areas in general also have far less income than urban. The statistics of the National Resources Committee check fairly well, if allowance is made for the changed economic situation, with those on the mal-distribution of American wealth worked out for the prosperity year of 1929 by the respectable Brookings Institution, a private research organization.

The full import of this discussion strikes home only when we contrast what might be with what is. The Brookings Institution published in 1934 an extremely significant volume entitled *America's Capacity to Produce*. This study reported that at the peak of 1929 prosperity in the United States our production of goods was about 20 per cent below the actual capacity of our economic plant. For the five-year period from 1925 through 1929 the loss of potential output was 22 per cent. Using these figures as a base, it can be shown that production in 1932, the worst year of the Great Depression, fell 45 per cent, or almost half-way short of its possibilities; in 1934, 40 per cent; and in 1935-36, 30 per cent.

Reliable estimates show that full use of our economic resources from 1922 through 1934 would have increased the total income of the American people by 248 billion dollars, a sum more than half as large as the entire accumulated wealth of the U.S.A. and almost five times as great as the cost of America's participation in the First World War. Undeniably peace has its losses as well as war. Another way of grasping the terrible waste that occurs under the capitalist system is to look at the unemployment figures.

Even in 1927, a year of upswing and bustling business activity, there were around 4,000,000 unemployed in the United States. At the bottom of the depression the number rose to probably 15,000,000, not to mention the millions of others who were working only part-time. At the height of the first New Deal recovery, in the winter of 1936-37, there were still 8,000,000 without employment in the U. S. And with the recession that followed, this figure went up to at least 12,000,000.

What all this means is that year after year millions and millions of willing and able-bodied men and women are compelled to sit idly by instead of producing the billions upon billions of dollars worth of goods that could serve to enrich both themselves and others. It has been authoritatively reckoned, for example, by Mr. Franklin P. Wood of the Rural Electrification Administration, that ten million unemployed in the United States could, working forty hours a week with two weeks vacation, account for the following in one year: adequate food and clothing for 10,000,000 people, 5,000,000 five-room houses with proper furnishings, 100,000,000 radios, 10,000,000 refrigerators, 10,000,000 automobiles, 2,500 schools, 50,000 miles of rural power lines, 30,000 miles of highways, 10 Boulder Dams.

How much income could the average American family of four expect to earn if the tremendous waste and inefficiency of the present order were eliminated? Some years ago Howard Scott and his technocrats, in the first flush of their enthusiasm, said \$20,000. That is obviously too high a figure. More modest and reliable was the estimate given by Harold Loeb and his associates in the *Chart of Plenty*, a solid and scholarly study issued by the National Survey of Potential Product Capacity. This report, proceeding from the basis of the plant and equipment available in 1929 and making allowance for two or three work-shifts wherever feasible, put the possible income for each family at \$4,370. I do not wish to quibble over statistics. But after giving due attention to the various estimates made, and to the more than 25 per cent rise in labor productivity over the last ten years, (this was 1939) I believe it is unquestionable that under a more rational system it would be possible to guarantee promptly an annual return to every American family of goods and services equivalent in value to at least \$5,000, thus raising the present proportion of families attaining that level from 3 to 100 per cent.

Our economy of abundance, however, instead of being a blessing is turned into a curse. And we are told by the master minds of the capitalist system that this very abundance, in the form of a very strange phenomenon known as "over-production," is the cause of all our troubles. In other words, the real reason for one-half the American people being ill-housed is that there is too much wood and steel and concrete; the real reason for these tens of millions being badly clothed is that there is too much cotton and wool and leather; the real reason for them being underfed is that there is too much meat and milk and wheat. Instead of being thankful for the bounteousness of nature, we dread it as much as a drought. These and similar absurdities have been exposed many times, but they remain as completely repugnant to reason and common sense as before.

The truth of the matter is of course that, except perhaps in a few luxury trades, there is not and never has been an over-production of goods that the people need, but only of goods that they can afford to buy. It is far more accurate, then, to say that the root of the difficulty lies in *under-consumption* on the part of the masses of the population. And this under-consumption is forced upon them by the inexorable operation of the profit system itself. For profit-making, to cite Mr. John Strachey again, is not only the motive of every capitalist; it is also the regulator of capitalist production.

“Under Capitalism it is not only the object, it is the very condition of production that a profit should result. Those things, that is to say, which will yield a profit can and will be produced, but those things alone. For anybody who produces things which do not, either directly or indirectly, yield a profit will sooner or later go bankrupt, lose his ownership of the means of production, and so cease to be an independent producer. Capitalism, in other words, uses profitability as the criterion or test, of whether any given thing should or should not be produced, and if so, how much should be produced.”

This means that no matter how much the people may be in need of a commodity or how great may be the technical capacity for producing it, considerations of profit take precedence. For the capitalist system, general human welfare is merely a by-product which may or may not result from normal business activities.

If a business, especially one of the big monopolies I have described, decides that it can make more money by keeping its prices high and its products scarce, then scarcity there must and shall be in that particular field, even if this entails the actual destruction of goods. Capitalist concerns, furthermore, in spite of the greater efficiency implicit in labor-saving machinery, are as likely as not to get the jitters over the prospect of fresh technological advance, because it may lead to the obsolescence and junking of present equipment and to an increase in that very abundance they fear.

In fact they suppress new inventions by the thousand. Though the Rust cotton-picking machine, for example, promises to bring about another progressive economic revolution in the South, and to eliminate a huge sector of dreary and backbreaking toil, numerous businessmen all over America trembled at the thought of its widespread introduction. Indeed, throughout the capitalist world there has recently sprung up a whole philosophy of retreat from, modern technique, with its adherents crying out

that the "machine is devouring humanity" and repeatedly urging "scientific holidays" and a "moratorium on invention."

The paradox grows even more fantastic during times of crisis when the population is more in need of consumers' goods than ever, but when the creation of artificial scarcity is carried on with redoubled energy. In his masterly book *Man and his Worldly Goods* Mr. Leo Huberman tellingly sums up what happened during the Great Depression:

"Confronted by the paradox of poverty in plenty, capitalist countries devised a plan for tackling the problem. The plan was to abolish the plenty. Who can possibly doubt that, whatever else is wrong with the capitalist system, it has come to represent stupidity incarnate and to be an intolerable affront to a sane man's intelligence?"

### *The Central Contradiction of Capitalism*

Now obviously enough there would be no fear of plenty, nor would business ever slacken, if the capitalists could depend on a steady market for all the goods that they and their workers produce. Unfortunately, however, quite contrary is the actual case. The Stock Market is forever failing and fading away, so much so, in fact, that in the United States during the 150 years since 1790, we have gone through fifteen major and twenty minor economic breakdowns, each of the major ones and several of the minor ones causing large-scale unemployment, hunger and untold hardships amongst the population. On the average during this long period there has been about one year of depression for every year and a half of prosperity. And much the same story of ever-recurring crisis has been true of the other capitalist nations. All of which constitutes an easily readable barometer of the "efficiency" of the profit system.

Now the basic reason for the continual failure of the Capitalist market is simply that the masses of the people do not have sufficient purchasing power to absorb the plenty, to buy the vast abundance, of goods produced and producible. Hence the crucial question for Capitalism is: Why does the purchasing power remain insufficient? That question brings us straight up against the central and inescapable contradiction of the capitalist system; and the answer to it is in a nutshell this: On the one hand, you cannot raise wages high enough to give the people sufficient purchasing power to absorb all the available goods and services, without at the same time so reducing the total amount and rate of capitalist profit that economic crisis periodically results; on the other hand, you cannot hold down wages sufficiently to insure profits without keeping the purchasing power of the

people so low that economic crisis periodically results. Whatever solution of this dilemma the capitalists attempt, supply and demand (the latter of which depends on purchasing power) are certain to become maladjusted every so often to a calamitous degree. And this brings disruption of the market and depression.

For the purposes of this analysis I include, under the heading of wages, 90 per cent of the fine-sounding category of salaries. Wages and salaries are of supreme importance in the picture because they constitute the mode of compensation for four-fifths of the American people and because, as Karl Marx showed so clearly in his *Capital*, the employers make their profit by underpaying their employees and thus exploiting their labor-power. In general, asserts Marx, it is the policy of the capitalists, unless under pressure by a trade union or some other extraneous factor, to pay their workers only the very minimum necessary to keep them alive and functioning and to insure the biological reproduction of more workers who will some time take their place.

But the workers in field and factory, in transport and store and office, turn out goods or services worth far more in value than their own pay, they are able to produce value equivalent to their wages in less than the total working day, say in five out of eight hours. The remaining three hours Marx calls *surplus labor-time* and the value produced in this period *surplus value*. The capitalist employer appropriates this surplus value, the amount of which varies according to circumstances, and it enables him to make his profit. Thus all profit, which includes the categories of rent and interest, has its direct or indirect source in surplus value; and all surplus value is in substance "the materialization of unpaid labor-time."

I would consider it both unnecessary and unfruitful to take up in this book the widespread and unending controversy that has been waged over the Marxist theory of surplus value. I happen myself to believe that Marx is substantially correct. At the very least, however, all radicals must admit that this theory symbolizes most successfully the terrible exploitation to which the working class is subject under Capitalism; and that a very large proportion of capitalist profit, if not the whole amount, has its origin in this exploitation. It also enables us readily to understand that constant strife I have already mentioned between capitalists and workers over the matter of hours and wages.

Even conservative capitalists and orthodox economists must admit that pay-rolls constitute both the largest and most flexible element in production costs, and that the favorite method used by business to



economize, on behalf of profits, is to keep wages from going up or to force them to go down. To quote our old friend Adam Smith once more: "The work-men desire to get as much, the masters to give, as little as possible." I remember during the Great Depression talking with any number of businessmen who bewailed the efforts of both the Hoover and Roosevelt administrations to maintain wages at former levels. They insisted that recovery could come only through lowering wages so that the ball of profit could be started rolling again. I always surprised these capitalists by saying that this analysis was quite Marxian. For it was Marx's contention that a major part of the regular capitalist procedure of recovering, always temporarily of course, from economic crisis consisted of riding out on the backs of the workers by reducing wages; or by stopping wages entirely through dismissing workers from their jobs.

Though America has been able to boast of a rather high wage standard in comparison with other countries, the point about insufficient purchasing power applies here because that standard, in the light of our enormous wealth and economic resources, has never been relatively high enough to properly balance purchasing power and production. "If," as Professor Reinhold Niebuhr so forcefully puts it, "we produced ten times as much goods per capita as Europe and our millionaires were ten times richer than European plutocrats and our workers had a wage ten times higher than European proletarians, our economy would still be subject to violent dislocations if our markets could not absorb our productive capacity because of the faulty distribution of our wealth." The figures I have cited prove how dismally low our living standards are on the basis of even minimum needs. But it also remains true that, while most American businesses could well afford to pay considerably higher wages, and by all means should do so, they would cease to make a profit altogether if pay rolls went up beyond a certain point.

Another way of looking at what I have termed the central contradiction of Capitalism is from the point of view of prices. If prices go down on a widespread scale, then what economists call real wages (that is, wages fairly adjusted to fluctuations in the price structure or currency values) go up, since each dollar is able to buy more than before. An expanding consuming power results. This is the method of achieving economic stability advocated by a number of observers these days, prominent among them being Dr. Harold G. Moulton of the Brookings Institution. It is plain, however, that capitalist businesses cannot keep reducing prices indefinitely without also reducing profits to the zero point. And even if they could all be persuaded to lower prices to that minimum compatible with an attractive

amount of profit, the masses of the people would not thereby sufficiently increase their purchasing power to solve Capitalism's problem.

As a matter of fact, aside from the ultimate implications of the price-reducing policy, it is extremely doubtful whether the capitalist world in the main, and particularly the monopolies, could be counted upon to put it into effect and establish it as a permanent program. Though individual firms may reap huge profits through continual price-cutting, nothing is more full of potential disaster for the average businessman. And regardless of the effect on the country's economy as a whole, he will boost prices whenever he thinks such a course will bring more profits. For example, the inveterate tendency of the capitalists, as soon as trade unions have won any wage increases from them and have enlarged to that extent consumer buying power, is to cancel this gain by pushing up the prices of their goods on the market. This is exactly what has happened in America following the successes of the C. I. O. and the A. F. of L. during the past few years.

The fundamental dilemma of the capitalist system comes to light again when we investigate the question of private saving versus private spending. If we include, in addition to the earnings of those who work for average wages and salaries, the fancy emoluments of the upper-class executives and professionals, the incomes of all the capitalists and the profits of business in general, the total sum is sufficient to buy back the goods which the capitalist system produces. Then why does not this fact counterbalance the lack of purchasing power on the part of the masses which I have already discussed?

The hitch occurs in that the small minority in whose hands the wealth of America is concentrated do not spend anywhere near all their incomes; they quite understandably save a large proportion. And they reinvest their savings or use them for speculation on the stock exchange or, in bad times, simply hoard them by letting them stagnate as deposits in the bank, and the bank in turn is unable to find good investment opportunities for its assets. The more money you have, the more money you are likely to save. In 1929, for example, American families receiving as much as over \$20,000 annually saved more than half of their total incomes. And of the \$15 Billion of individual savings in that year, \$12 Billion came from persons with incomes of more than \$5,000.

There are several good reasons for this phenomenon of saving on the part of the economically privileged. After all, the most opulent plutocrats possess only one stomach, a limited amount of energy and twenty-four hours per day. Even try heroically as they may and gorge on

luxuries as they will, our most consummate spendthrifts can only absorb a certain quantity of consumers' goods-food, drink, clothing, radios, automobiles, houses, yachts and so on-and no more. So even the most extravagant millionaires find it difficult to spend their entire annual incomes, though they sometimes resort to the most fantastic and wasteful extremes in attempting to get rid of their money. Besides, the profit motive, the fun of successful speculation, and ordinary convention spur on the rich to get richer: the lesser try to become millionaires, the millionaires to become multi-millionaires and all capitalists in the upper brackets to increase the family possessions as much as possible.

One of the chief ambitions of the average capitalist-minded individual is to amass enough property in stocks and bonds and real estate so that he can support himself and his family indefinitely simply on dividends, interest and rent. This deep desire to maintain solvency through the magic of unearned increment is shared by the hospitals, universities and other institutions to which capitalists sometimes give a portion of their largess. Such institutions, in order to ensure permanent security, prefer always to be adding to their endowment and to spend only the annual return from it. Another significant item in the sphere of saving is the vast reserve funds, usually in liquid form (that is, in cash or easily convertible into cash), which businesses of every kind, feeling none too secure under their beloved Capitalism, build up for the inescapable rainy day.

Aside from all this, however, and more important than, anything else, is the fact that the very nature of capitalist business compels it to go on forever accumulating, to keep plowing back a big percentage of its profits into self-improvement and self-expansion or to seek outside financing for these ends. In Marx's words: "The capitalist process of production is at the same time essentially a process of accumulation. Development of capitalist production necessitates a continuous increase of the capital invested in an industrial undertaking; and Capitalism subjects every individual capitalist to the immanent laws of capitalist production as external coercive laws. Competition forces him continually to extend his capital for the sake of maintaining it, and he can only extend it by means of progressive accumulation."

The method of accumulation, of what might well be called dynamic saving, is to take profits and, instead of spending them on consumers goods, to use them to expand capital goods, that is, production goods, further and further. Capital goods consist of all the materials, machinery and other equipment produced by heavy industry and used by light industry for the direct manufacture of consumers' goods such as clothing, automobiles and

books. They include of course the various means necessary for the operation of heavy industry, and also most forms of construction and housing. It is generally agreed among economists of all schools that the mainspring of capitalist prosperity lies in continuous investment in a successfully functioning capital goods industry.

For a while, in a country like the United States, the new investment and expansion in capital goods heightens business activity and augments consumer purchasing power. But the fresh profits being garnered by the capitalists are, as always, based on the under-payment of the working masses; pretty soon the increasing supply of consumers' goods which the increasing quantity of production goods makes available starts to outrun demand, since the purchasing power of the population cannot keep pace with the new productive power of the capitalists. A glut of un-bought consumers goods, immediately reacting to create a glut of capital goods, quickly ensues. Light industry slumps and pulls down heavy industry after it; agriculture (in an unmitigated state of doldrums in the U. S. since 1920) sinks to still lower depths; and mounting unemployment and declining pay-rolls decrease ever more alarmingly the purchasing power that has already failed. A slump in heavy industry can cause a ripple affect with suppliers.

Thus over-investment, over-accumulation, over-saving on the part of capitalist individuals, institutions and businesses bring on the inevitable "overproduction." And economic crisis descends upon every section of the population. This tendency of savings to outstrip the possibilities for profitable investment used to be cyclical; the ominous thing now is that in recent times it seems to have become chronic. Year after year billions upon billions of capital has been lying idle in American banks. Such an enormous hoard of unemployed money inevitably leads to unemployed factories and unemployed workers. And it is a phenomenon which has received some well-deserved attention from Senator Mahoney's Monopoly Committee.

Of late, at all stages of the economic cycle, the capitalists have resorted to increasingly desperate expedients in order to evoke consumer demand. Everybody remembers the pathetic "Buy Now" campaigns of the early thirties. Everybody suffers from the high-pressure advertising that continually shrieks at one from magazine and newspaper, from billboard and radio. And everyone is led into the valley of temptation by our ultra-modern and streamlined methods of installment selling.

Previous to both the Great Depression and the 1937-38 recession millions of American citizens had over-extended themselves by installment buying of everything from perambulators to permanent waves, from

refrigerators to radio sets. Of the vast number of automobiles sold in the U. S. A., 60 per cent are purchased on the installment plan. In 1937 total installment sales in all lines amounted to well over \$5,000,000,000. In this way American consumers mortgage to an uncertain future, not just their houses and land; but their wages, salaries and entire means of livelihood.

And when the inevitable crash comes, this mountain of indebtedness topples over to make the wreckage even worse. But the most important device of all in re-animating the dormant pocketbook of the consumer and one which gives another valuable insight into the great quandary of Capitalism has come to be government spending. What a government does in effect in a large scale spending program is to tap the surplus profits of the capitalists through taxes and especially through borrowing and to transform this money into fresh purchasing power by means of public loans and expenditures of a wide variety. But to distribute indefinitely sufficient purchasing power in this fashion for the masses of the people to buy back the output of business either would entail such burdensome taxation on profits (assuming that business was not able merely to pass on such taxes to the general public) that capitalist enterprise might not deem it worth while to go on; or would so strain the whole financial structure of the community through the huge, unbalanced budgets and the constant resort to borrowing by federal, state and municipal authorities that governmental bankruptcy would occur.

Such bankruptcy might well take the form of disastrous inflation, of the government setting its printing presses going full tilt and turning out paper money by the carload. If and when serious inflation comes to a country, the added purchasing power that a state spending program may have brought is quickly offset. For as more and more money is thrown into circulation, its value rapidly depreciates, prices rise sky-high in compensation, and the real wages of the people suffer a drastic decline. Public spending can go quite far, however, before bankruptcy or severe inflation begins to threaten. The federal debt of the United States, for instance, still remains, in terms of proportionate population figures, less than one-third the size of Great Britain's and could be enormously increased without bankruptcy or inflation necessarily drawing near. And income taxes in this country are much lower than in England.

Nonetheless, it is unquestionable that in this era of capitalist decline, the gigantic budgets for unemployment and social insurance, public works and armaments, are proving terrific burdens for the average capitalist government to carry. So it is quite natural for capitalist apologists like the Austrian economist Professor Hayek, to become fearfully worried

over the expanding social services of the modern state. And the time may soon come when most capitalist economies can no longer afford to maintain even the present inadequate standards of unemployment and social insurance. Yet they cannot afford, either, to cut down on these expenditures very far. For to reduce government spending as drastically as Professor Hayek and the ordinary businessman so devoutly wish, would not only cause millions of people-especially the unemployed-infinite hardship and stimulate dangerous unrest, but also would react most unfavorably on business by curtailing mass purchasing power.

Our American economic situation since 1933 provides convincing proof of much that I have been saying. In addition to the payment of the soldier's bonus, the indispensable and predominant factor in the partial recovery that culminated toward the end of Roosevelt's first term was the colossal "pump-priming" program which the President put across through such agencies as the FERA (Federal Emergency Relief Administration), the PWA (Public Works Administration) and the WPA (Works Progress Administration). Mr. Roosevelt, under pressure to reduce expenditures by the very, capitalist interests which profited from his spending, decided that it was dangerous to continue this program. Accordingly, at the beginning of his second administration he started to reduce greatly the governmental outgo. And this was a decisive reason for the sharp recession that began late in 1937. Then in 1938 the Democrats again proceeded to prime the pump to the tune of billions, and an upturn again resulted.

If the "economy" conservatives and the budget-balancers sooner or later prevail once more at Washington, they probably will heavily slash public expenditures in hopes that business will be able to carry on by itself. We can be reasonably sure, however, that their hope will not come true, at least over more than a very brief period. And whether the Democrats or the Republicans happen to hold power, it will finally become plain that temporary primings are not enough for our ailing American Capitalism. For as soon as the new purchasing power due to government spending has become actualized in fresh consumer demand, a disproportionate share of it is promptly siphoned off into profits for the capitalists.

This is exactly what happened during the first New Deal upswing when the rate of increase in real wages lagged far behind that of dividends, interest and other forms of profit; and also behind the increase in labor productivity. Hence the mal-distribution of wealth continued much as before and the customary depression-making processes repeated their natural course.

So our analysis comes full circle once more. Neither extreme government economy, which in its lessening of purchasing power is comparable to extensive wage-reducing or price-raising, nor extreme government spending, which in its augmenting of purchasing power is comparable to extensive wage-raising or price-reducing (practices that the capitalists have never been guilty of over-stressing), nor any moderate program in between, promises any ultimate unraveling of Capitalism's Gordian Knot.

Finally, we discover that Capitalism's basic difficulty reappears, with some additional trimmings on the international scene. Not being able to sell enough goods in the home market to maintain prosperity, the capitalists, naturally try to get rid of them in foreign fields, sometimes going so far as to bolster up foreign purchasing power by lending huge sums abroad. But the desperate search for purchasing power in the world at large necessarily leads to all the characteristic ills of imperialism. And at best it affords but temporary relief. Today, even if a free international market existed or could be assured in the near future (suppositions wildly contrary to reality), so that each nation were at full liberty to find customers in every section of the globe, the same phenomenon of lack of purchasing power would eventually be repeated on a world scale. And a United States of capitalist Europe, for instance, would not necessarily solve any more economic problems in the long run than has the United States of capitalist America.

After studying, then, the central contradiction of Capitalism as it reveals itself in these various forms, I am ready to state definitely that Capitalism in the smallest and poorest country, Capitalism in the largest and richest country, Capitalism in all countries considered together, inevitably leads to an unbalanced and lopsided distribution of income, to lack of purchasing-power, to depression and crisis. To ask why purchasing power under Capitalism is always insufficient is really equivalent to damning the system, since there is no way of eliminating this insufficiency as long as we retain the present order. Therefore all those proposed remedies for the situation which leave the fundamentals of the profit system intact amount to little more than futile fumbling in the dark.

## *Solutions Superficial and Retrogressive*

These observations about profits and purchasing power, wages and prices, private saving and public spending, show why I feel certain that 110 prescription short of planned Socialism can cure the creeping paralysis that has seized upon our contemporary world. The conjuring up of scapegoats such as Jews or Bolsheviks, politicians or trade unions, on whom to load the sins of the capitalist system is on a par with the ancient device of blaming everything that goes wrong on black magic and witchcraft. Coming to more substantial suggestions, I think it is patent that all the fancy currency schemes, with their almost inevitable tendency toward inflation, run afoul of Capitalism's inescapable and inmost contradiction.

The once much-vaunted "New Capitalism," with high wages as its chief ingredient, meets this same insuperable obstacle. And so does the panacea of a single tax on land and rent put forward by Henry George and his disciples. There are those who argue that Capitalism has adequately solved the problem of production and that it falls down only in respect to the problem of distribution. While undoubtedly our present shortcomings become most obvious on the level of distribution,

I hope that the analysis which I have been making shows how impossible it is to divorce the problem of distribution from that of production and the profit system in general. It is for this very reason that we must regard as superficial beyond measure the numerous "share-the-wealth" schemes, from the dazzling proposals of the late Senator Huey Long to the old-age pension plans of the Townsendites and the recent \$30-Every-Thursday idea popularized in California. These promised short cuts to Utopia are one and all variations on government spending as the way out. They at least serve to dramatize the mal-distribution of wealth and the completely correct sense of the people that the American economy ought to be able to do far better by them; but they also shunt the minds and energies of millions into most wasteful channels.

To carve up, for instance, the cake of national wealth, and income into equal slices for everyone would not only be highly impracticable, but would be worse than useless if the underlying characteristics of the capitalist system were left untouched. Confiscating all at once and to such an extreme degree the profits of the more well-to-do sections of the community, would fatally cut the nerve of the money motive so essential to Capitalism. Thus the unplanned, competitive anarchy of the present order would remain, minus its chief driving force. And since the "share-the-wealthers" have worked out no alternative for such a situation, the certain



consequence, as both radicals and conservatives agree, would be complete and fruitless breakdown.

What we radicals want to put through is not madcap projects to divide up the national income, but a program that will release to the utmost our productive potentialities. As a prominent New Dealer, Mr. Adolph A. Berle Jr., puts it: "The underlying and eternal problem is the problem of using our national plant and our resources in such a way that the income of the country may steadily and continuously rise. *The job is to level up, far more than, to level down.* Distribution is one problem, But if the ultimate goal is to be reached, there must be a great deal more to distribute." The millionaire Republican, the late Ogden Mills, Secretary of the Treasury under President Hoover said much the same thing when he asserted that the way to prosperity is not through "the sharing of poverty, but through the creation of new wealth. So Democrats, Republicans and radicals can all unite on this goal, however much they disagree about the requisite methods of arriving there."

What I have already said in passing should have made it evident that the methods of the New Deal are not in my opinion far-reaching enough to solve the economic problems facing the American people. Much of the legislation that has been enacted under the two Roosevelt administrations is all to the good. I give my wholehearted support to the National Labor Relations (Wagner) Act, the Social Security Act, the Securities Exchange Act, the Fair Labor Standards (Wages and Hours) Act and other federal or state measures of a progressive nature. Such laws ought to go a long way in bringing us abreast of advanced European countries like England in the sphere of reform.

I also much prefer government spending of the New Deal sort to government parsimony. For such spending genuinely, if only temporarily, relieves human misery; and an intelligent public works program, designed to fill basic community needs, can bring about lasting improvements and is akin to what a Socialist regime will itself undertake on an infinitely greater scale. Furthermore, the New Deal policy has been able to stave off economic disintegration during a period in which the American people, still being unready to accept Socialism, such disintegration might have brought stark reaction or even Fascism into the saddle. At the same time President Roosevelt's measures have educated the people to realize that only government intervention can cope with present-day problems and that certain standards of welfare are to be considered the unquestioned right of the entire population.

It is, then, a hundred times preferable to have the Roosevelt Democrats holding political power than would be the Republicans. But extensive reform has not prevented economic depression and crisis in other countries; nor will it in the United States. And radicals as well as conservatives, Joseph Stalin as well as J. P. Morgan, know perfectly well that public spending within the limitations imposed by Capitalism can achieve, in an economic sense, little more substantial benefit than the familiar "monkey-gland" recoveries of recent years. On the other hand, the frenzied wail of the businessmen that all their troubles stem from government extravagance is about as far away from the truth as it can be.

A secondary solution for Capitalism which seems to have been intermittently pursued by Mr. Roosevelt is that all would be well if we could replace some certain, malevolent capitalists with certain noble-minded capitalists. This good-man, bad-man analysis of economics and politics will not hold water. It is an unrealistic approach because it does not get down to economic fundamentals.

If the leading capitalists of the world were all able to qualify for the communion of saints, they would still find it impossible to make their system work satisfactorily: This is why appeals for a worldwide revival of religion or for the ethical regeneration of humankind, under the slogan of "moral rearmament" or anything else, cannot do much to eradicate the evils of a cruel Capitalist system, unless they somehow stimulate people in the direction of a Socialist society.

It is a question of economics, not ethics. The capitalist cannot personally be held responsible for all the terrible things that happen under the profit system. That system is cruel, but the individual capitalists inextricably caught in its toils like everyone else, usually are not cruel. They act under the circumstances as psychologist and philosopher would expect the ordinary man to act, their behavior being conditioned by their environment and education. Thus, Karl Marx himself, in one of his prefaces to *Capital* said:

"The persons of capitalists and landowners are not, in my book, depicted in rose-tinted colours; but if I speak of individuals, it is only in so far as they are personifications of economic categories, representatives of special class relations and class interests. Inasmuch as I conceive the development of the economic structure of society to be a natural process, I should be the last to hold the individual responsible for conditions whose creature he himself is, socially considered."

To my mind, more futile than any of the palliatives I have been discussing are those dreams of a return to some far-off Golden Age of Capitalism that supposedly existed sometime, somewhere in the shadowy past. Most of these nostalgic fantasies envision a revival of old-fashioned *laissez faire* or some variation of it. But if we could today somehow wipe the slate clean over the entire earth and begin anew with a *laissez faire* system, the inexorable workings of the profit motive would in all probability create a situation as far removed from *laissez faire* as the present one. The only possible way to have prevented the *anti-laissez faire* developments of *laissez faire* would have been to pass a drastic series of government acts in every nation which from the outset would have constituted a fundamental violation of *laissez faire*. In short, the history of the last 150 years has pretty well proved that Adam Smith, who undoubtedly had the best interests of humankind at heart, far from qualifying as the realist he has been reputed to be, was one of the most Utopian thinkers who ever lived. His blueprint for a capitalist paradise was doomed from the start.

Yet here is a well-known English liberal of the old school, the Marquess of Lothian, present British Ambassador to the United States, in an essay entitled *Liberalism in the Modern World*, naively calling for a reestablishment of the free market and calmly overlooking all those deep-lying capitalist tendencies which led businessmen themselves to whittle away that market with such devices as tariffs and huge monopolistic corporations. This noble lord proceeds to put the chief blame for the perilous state of the world on "international anarchy," especially as displayed in the First World War. Again, Lothian's mind never seems to have the faintest glimmering of the fact that the capitalist classes of the various nations ever ready to fight one another to the death in their imperialist ventures, were themselves responsible for the evolution of international anarchy and the disaster of the Great War. It is easy, but hardly profound, to push the cause-effect sequence back only as far as the cataclysm of 1914-18 and attribute all the current troubles of humankind to that one event.

A slight knowledge of history also plays havoc with Mr. Walter Lippmann's recent book *The Good Society* in which the author, like the Marquess of Lothian, advocates a return to the free market and true liberalism. Mr. Lippmann identifies the root of all evil in "authoritarian collectivism," which he sees as based on the principle that humans can be made happy through the coercive power of the state and centralized economic planning. It was after 1870, Mr. Lippmann claims, that the deplorable collectivist movement came into its ascendancy. Yet long before then, Capitalism was already afflicted with its characteristic ills; and the

free-market phase upon which Lippmann looks back with such longing was not, after all, a very happy one for the great majority of humankind. Like Lord Lothian, Mr. Lippmann almost totally ignores those inescapable aspects of the profit system which made it what it is today. And, fatal inconsistency, he finally outlines a series of social reforms much like those of the New Deal, one of the collectivisms he so despises, though these reforms would entail many of the same governmental controls that he denounces elsewhere in his book.

To put it briefly, Mr. Lippmann's facile remedy for the sickness of modern society is for Capitalism to return to the days of its radiant youth, but miraculously cleansed of all the original sin with which it was born, and rid of all the caprices and crudities of adolescence. An unfolding of nature, however, and the sequence of events in this hard, hard world are irreversible. It is not so simple to turn back the clock of history a hundred years. And I think it is true to say of Lippmann, what he himself says of Herbert Spencer: that he is defending positions which have in fact been abandoned by events.

Akin to Lord Lothian and Mr. Lippmann is that school of Utopian retrogressives-Distributists, Neo-Agrarians and others-who propose a return to a small-business economy as the solution of the world's present woes. Whereas in earlier days the crusade against big business came mainly from agrarian and petty bourgeois sources that feared the growing encroachments of large scale enterprise and which focused upon the limited end of curbing this danger, now we have a pretentious little-business philosophy which brashly sets itself up as an economic cure-all.

The prime defect in this philosophy is the cavalier way in which it ignores how twentieth-century concentration grew naturally, inevitably out of the original competitive capitalist system, and the casual fashion in which it accordingly suggests an utterly impracticable about-face in the dynamics of history, a sudden and hazardous throwing into reverse of the speedily moving machine of modern industrialism. To actualize such a program, for instance, as Mr. Herbert Agar sets forth in his *Land of the Free* would mean scrapping the major portion of our technical improvements during the last 75 years. To overcome the immense economic and political obstacles involved would definitely require something in the nature of central planning and a government dictatorship, both of which loom as horrible spectres in Mr. Agar's mind. A necessary dictatorship would need a huge bureaucracy to keep small business small and to enforce that 100 per cent system of competition so dear to the hearts of our backward-lookers.

Moreover, we must ask, even if the platform of the small business enthusiasts were somehow achieved, where would we be then? Did the small-business era in America, prior to the eighteen seventies, provide a solution for our economic problems? It did not. Beset always by the recurring failure of purchasing power, it brought that same cycle of boom and depression and unemployment that constitutes the worst economic feature of the capitalist system. More than that, the abolition of big business would, as Mr. Agar and his friends readily admit, result in a considerable decline in the American standard of living, a standard which even as it is, actually rates abysmally low from the viewpoint of the masses of the population.

Inadequate or dangerous or both, as are the various proposals which I have been reviewing, I would prefer any one of them to the adoption of Fascism. For Fascism decrees the end of very nearly everything that I, and most other Americans as well, hold dear. Fascism means unceasing violence, in both domestic and foreign affairs; it means war and imperialism and the whirl of bombers overhead; it means the erection of racial and national prejudice into a major principle of government; it means the death of democracy and labor's rights, of civil liberties and academic freedom; it means the burning of the books and the degradation of culture; it means a constant decline in living standards and a sharpening of all Capitalism's economic contradictions; including the central one revolving around purchasing power and profit.

Fascism represents the last desperate attempt, through resort to unprecedented force and savagery, of Capitalism and the capitalist class to survive in a world which has outgrown them. Fascist tyranny stands as the brutal and reactionary essence, undisguised and unashamed, of the capitalist system. Fascism is contemporary Capitalism in the nude, stripped of all garments that hide its ugliness. And neither Capitalist nor capitalists in any country can escape their share of responsibility for what Fascism, that is, Fascist Capitalism, does.

The capitalist supporters of major Fascist governments, those of Italy and Spain, Germany and Japan, may have some mental reservations about the reckless dynamite-hurling of their dear dictators in the international sphere. But the thing that promptly overrules such qualms is that the Fascist regimes put an end to the trade unions and other working-class organizations, shoot or throw into concentration camps all the liberals and radicals who do not succeed in fleeing the country, and check or drive into underground channels the movement toward Socialism. It is for these reasons that a good many upper-class Americans look upon Fascism with

profound sympathy not only in its foreign aspects, but also as a possible program for the United States.

Though it is true that Fascism has been able to prolong Capitalism for a while in the totalitarian lands, the experience of the capitalists in Germany, Italy and Japan ought not to make the businessmen of other countries any too enthusiastic over the prospects of Fascist dictatorship. For in the three main Fascist states there has been an ever-increasing encroachment by the government in the realm of private business, whether finance, industry or agriculture. When Capitalism becomes particularly hard-pressed, it extends its collective controls in order to make itself more efficient. This happened in the big capitalist powers during the First World War, and has been happening again since the Great Depression. The Fascist states being in the most precarious condition of all, capitalist collectivism has gone further within them than anywhere else. We find in the Fascist economies a sprinkling of semi-Socialistic measures designed to head off real Socialism: "a form of planning-to-avoid-planning," as Professor Max Lerner says in his discerning book *It Is Later Than You Think*.

More distressing than anything else to businessmen in the Fascist countries is that they are simply staggering under the load of taxation, mainly for armaments and other war purposes. In Italy Mussolini even went so far as to make a 10 per cent capital levy on all real estate and corporations in order to help pay for his Ethiopian venture. Able economists, both conservative and radical, increasingly agree that the eventual outcome in the Fascist states may well be national bankruptcy, either in a war or during the natural course of peace. So it is becoming more and more plausible to suggest that in Fascism, the capitalists have raised up a Frankenstein monster which in the end will get completely out of control and involve them in an unparalleled economic collapse accompanied by a holocaust of violence. When the Fascist dictatorships start to totter, we may be sure that the domestic scene will not be one of peace and politeness. And if Fascism really does lead ultimately to all this, the capitalists in democratic countries may well ask themselves whether a peaceful transition to a Socialist society, avoiding altogether the hideous Fascist episode, would not be a great deal better for themselves as well for everyone else.

Since none of the programs, Fascist or non-Fascist, conservative or liberal or sheer quack, which the capitalists and their varied assortment of theoreticians have proposed or put into effect, are anywhere near adequate to lead the world out of its economic morass, there can be no question that Capitalism stands today in a most critical state. Hardly anyone, even among

conservative businessmen, can pretend that the future of either the Fascist, semi- Fascist or democratic Capitalism looks very bright. Whatever may be the defects of Socialism, it is impossible to discover any humane or workable alternative to it. And the proverbial observer from the planet Mars might well decide that it is not we radicals who are unrealistic and sentimental, throwing our lives away on behalf of a Utopian daydream, but rather the poor capitalists, those blind, pathetic idealists who will go down nobly with their lost cause singing one last hymn to Rugged Individualism.

Now conceivably, the reader will ask her e whether Capitalism has not always surmounted its difficulties and gone on to better things. This was indeed true up to the Great War and, in the United States, up to the Great Depression. Since 1929 America, however, as well as Europe, has continually been in the midst-of or on the edge-of economic crisis; and the recovery periods between depressions are growing both shorter and less substantial. There is a mass of evidence on hand that henceforth whatever upward movements may take place, the course of Capitalism will be in general, downward in terms of living standards. In the chief capitalist nations and especially in the United States, no great new industries appear to be in the offing to spur-on that expansion of capital goods and productive equipment which formerly used to result in at least a temporary upsurge of mass purchasing power and business prosperity. Moreover, the mechanization of existing industries has already been carried out to a high degree; and in any case further mechanization, under our general conditions of decline, is nearly certain to swell mightily the ranks of the unemployed.

What bodes least well of all for Capitalism is the inter-national situation. Never in the history of the present system has the export of surplus commodities and the profitable investment abroad of surplus capital been attended with such difficulties. It is not simply that the spheres of foreign exploitation have been fairly well exhausted or gobbled up and can be encroached upon only through new economic or military warfare; nor simply that one-sixth of the earth, Soviet Russia, lies outside the orbit of regular capitalist exploitation; nor that the colonial and semi-colonial areas are awakening and threatening to unloose the bonds of imperialist domination; nor that artificial barriers to international trade are more serious and extensive than ever before.

On top of all this there looms a second world conflict, which, if it comes, will probably be even more devastating than that of 1914. This menace of war is everywhere having a ruinous effect. In Europe the big nations, and most of the little ones too, are spending far more on

armaments than at any time except during the Great War itself. In the world at large the sums earmarked for military purposes have trebled during the past four years and during 1938 reached the staggering total of \$18 billion dollars, a four-fold increase over 1913. If indirect military expenditures were added, the figure would probably go up at least 50 per cent. In most countries the huge armament budgets have been financed through government loans, a procedure which tends definitely in the direction of rising prices and perilous inflation.

And it is undeniable, as the English review *The Round Table* reminds us, that in so far as rearmament heightens industrial activity, "it does so only at the cost of distorting the balance of the national economy, driving sound recovery into unsound boom and gathering labor into industries where its future employment depends on the continuance of world-wide political madness."

Even if the much-feared general war does not take place, economic catastrophe threatens. For in most of the capitalist countries of Europe present economic activity is dependent in a decisive measure on the armaments race; and in America also heavy armament orders on the part of our own and other governments have contributed substantially to such prosperity as there has been in the past few years. The ghastly paradox is that when the armaments race stops or even measurably slows down, the effects on European and world economics may well be disastrous. Benito Mussolini himself, one of the chief offenders in the direction of armament and aggression, recognizes the economic dangers involved. To quote an interview from the Scripps-Howard newspapers in May, 1937: "So many people are now employed in the world-wide armament program, Il Duce holds, that if the wheels were suddenly stopped and the armament workers thrown out of jobs, the world might well be set back to where it was seven or eight years ago at the beginning of the depression." Unless, therefore, something drastic is done, "the consequences might easily be as terrible as war itself."

Even supposing, in spite of all these dire portents, that the Capitalist system both in America and elsewhere does some day stage a complete recovery from its recent ills and achieves higher average living standards than before, such an outcome does not to my mind seriously affect the argument for Social-ism. For I know that in any event Capitalism is doomed sooner or later to plunge downward again into another big depression; that mass unemployment, with millions and millions out of work, has become a permanent feature of the system; and that international wars, with their ever more scientific slaughter-fests, will continue to afflict



the peoples of the earth. Progress upward at the cost of so much misery and destruction is too frightful and senseless to contemplate. We have had more than enough of this unhappy muddling through; it is time to discover a better method. I am through with Capitalism because I want humankind once and for all to be through with the wretched cycle of suffering and violence and cruelty that this system makes inevitable.

I recognize the historical function of Capitalism and the important part it has played in the evolution of mankind. But this system no longer has a useful role to fulfill; it is time for it to retire from the stage of history and permit a more competent actor to take its place. In fact, in my opinion, the job which Capitalism alone was fitted to perform, the function in which it was unique and indispensable, was finished close to a century ago. It was thought that once Capitalism had broken through the cramping feudalist bonds and had developed to a substantial degree the factory system and the working class, with a division of labor and the process of mechanical invention, it would have been desirable, I believe, regardless of how far politically possible, to then establish a Socialist system in the "Western World".

Certainly this was the position of Marx and Engels, who in 1848 were calling for the end of Capitalism in *The Communist Manifesto*.

If the chief nations of the West had been operating under Socialism these last hundred or seventy-five or fifty years, I am convinced that they would be far beyond where they are at present in terms of the wealth and welfare of their populations as a whole. And many of the most crushing costs, both material and spiritual, of capitalist evolution, such as the Great War and the Great Depression, would have been avoided. What I want to point out in addition is that equally heavy or even heavier costs face the world in the future unless it gets rid of Capitalism, and gets rid of it quick. Every year, every month, every day that we prolong the hopelessly infirm and decadent life of the present system, we prolong the agony of humanity and consign to limbo an infinity of splendid hopes and potentialities that could otherwise find fulfillment.

This is the most poignant tragedy of our times and perhaps of all times, that the finest and fairest new world that has ever been imagined lies within our grasp, but sadly, that we do not have quite the strength, quite the courage; or quite the intellectual force to make it wholly and indisputably ours. The key that will open up that new world for us, to enable a society that can promote humane and humanistic values, and allow us to live with dignity and in the absence of war, I am passionately

convinced, is only through the adoption, in its ideal sense, of a planned Democratic Socialist Economic System.

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The words of Corliss Lamont will be interrupted again, at this point!

Jumping now, from the 1939 appraisal of the unjust Capitalist Economic System as seen and studied by Corliss Lamont, to the present 2012 Action known as Occupy Wall Street, we can only wonder at the tragic lapse during these past 73 years. We can only wonder at this ongoing profit-propelled phenomenon like a giant juggernaut of greed,....or more like a relentless ice-age glacier, grinding up everything in its path and leaving only rubble in its wake.

We concerned and alarmed people are here at Zuccati Park, right next to Wall Street, protesting in the "Belly of the Beast for good reason! We see this Economic System as an inhumane Corporate BEAST that for the unprincipled amassing of profit, actually provokes the making of WAR, leaving bodies in its wake. This is the same Corporate BEAST that vandalizes our home, our one-and-only Planet Earth, and is indifferent to the anguished cries of Earth's inhabitants!

Listen Up You Corporations! The Ethical People of Earth are angry now! We will begin now to teach YOU how to behave ethically. Your shameful and unethical behavior has tormented us long enough. We see that, first of all, you need a VALUES adjustment! Here's a value that you must recognize and must take to heart; it should be flashing in neon in your thoughts: People themselves are of much greater value than is the making of profit! Simply: PEOPLE ARE MORE IMPORTANT THAN PROFITS!

Secondly, YOU NEED A LESSON IN ECONOMICS 101! A mere Economic System will NOT be in control of the People; the People must be in control of their OWN Economic System! We need an economic system that works for 99 percent of the People, not just 1 Percent of the People!

Take these long-overdue messages to your Board Meetings! Moreover consider the myriad ways in which more humane values can be incorporated into your decision-making! Act upon these values in an appropriate manner! The Ethical People of the World are watching you, and we will be judging you and your activities by these more Ethical Standards.

**HERE ARE THE CRITERIA BY WHICH WE WILL JUDGE YOU! BE AWARE! WE WILL PERIODICALLY ISSUE OUR OWN RATINGS ON YOUR PERFORMANCE! WE WILL PUBLICIZE THE RESULTANT RATINGS ON THE DAILY TV NEWS, ALL AROUND THE WORLD!**

**1. HUMAN RIGHTS:** You will first of all, be observant of, and abide by, the principles of The Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which was promulgated under the direction of Eleanor Roosevelt and the United Nations in 1946. Copies of this Document are available. Treatment of local populations and environments by your industry; its activities, its use of resources; and its security, are all under observation and will be rated.

**2 LABOR STANDARDS:** You will be observant of, and abide by, accepted International Labor Standards. These standards will not vary, as regards the treatment and safety of the workers; however, wages and forms of compensation will vary greatly around the world. Hereby is exercised the fatal flaw in the fickle Capitalist system! Pitting workers against each other, and abandoning the previously loyal, in favor of ever cheaper labor, for the purpose of increasing profit to the investor, is unethical. In time, we will work toward an International Minimum Wage, in the effort to standardize human wellbeing and to eliminate exploitation, starvation and poverty.

**3. PROVIDE EMPLOYMENT:** Stability in the workplace, means stability in the home and in the community. These are important values! Closing a plant because it is not profitable enough is poor judgment; improve its product, instead. Meanwhile, we will judge you and rate you by your own performance in this major arena. Contrary to assertions by those who refuse to tax the rich, there is NO trickle-down benefit to the working people from the distorted profits that are raked-off at the top! This is a fallacy! The major portion of the profits go to non-laboring investors, and to corporate officials. This skew does NOT EVEN provide re-investment mechanisms or provide needed employment. Consider before you move!

**3. STOP POLLUTING** You will be observant of, and compliant with the scientifically established observations and warnings about the imminent dangers of Global Warming and Climate Change. There exists a screaming need for the protection of Earth and its natural systems. This urgency would regard all of the following, and more: the burning of fossil fuels; the desecration and the pollution of Earth's atmosphere, biosphere, oceans, fresh water systems, endangerment of species, the desertification of arable lands, rising oceans that engulf sea level lands; promulgation of toxic chemicals, and ownership and patenting of natural species, etc. Protect !

**4. CONSIDER YOUR OWN CHILDREN.** Each of you in the corporate world, whether an investor, or an active decision maker, have children or family who will tomorrow inherit what is left of this Earth and its worried economic systems. We concerned Ethical People of Earth implore you each to give sincere exploration and consideration to the long-range dangerous, even disastrous, consequences of choices made in your name and by your own corporate decisions, though perhaps an "unintended" consequence.

**5. CONSIDER YOUR RATING.** The Ethical Compliance Rating System that we intend to employ will begin to serve as its OWN BENEFIT, and to give your operation the STAR International Stamp of Approval that will ultimately be of MORE VALUE to you in the eyes of the world than are the required postings of quarterly results that you would hope would boast of tangible monetary profits. But, we warn: don't pretend to be "Green!"

**6. PAY PROPER TAXES:** If you do business of any kind in the US, or you are listed on a US Stock exchange, you will be required to PAY PROPER TAXES in this country. There will be no exceptions. Off-shore bases for US corporations will be a thing of the past. Forget the Cayman Islands or even Switzerland! Also the long-abused legal loophole of allowing Corporations the privilege of enjoying PERSONHOOD in the Courts will be tightened like a noose! Corporations are NOT PERSONS! They are business entities only, consisting of business interests! Joke: try HANGING one in Texas!

**7. REVOCATION FOR VIOLATIONS:** In the US, the various States' Attorneys General, are the bodies that are in a position to actually approve applications for incorporation. These States will establish NEW CRITERIA reflecting the above serious Ethical considerations, and will be in a position to REVOKE corporations for violations. These State bodies will begin also to require a periodic RENEWAL of corporate entities, designed for the express purpose of REVIEWING corporate performance in light of these new Ethical criteria. Even in Delaware!

**8. STAY OUT OF CONGRESS:** "Citizens United" will no longer prevail! Corporations WILL NOT BE ALLOWED, under severe penalty, to thwart our democratic processes by skewing elections for public office. The oftquoted quip that in the US, we have the best form of government that MONEY CAN BUY, IS NOT FUNNY! There'll be no bundling of funds, nor PAC money, nor corporate money, nor flagrant influence peddling via Lobbying. Elected officials are often cowed by the consideration that vested interests will fund the opposition party for the purpose of "taking them out" if they do NOT VOTE IN FAVOR of the corporate vested interests. This maneuver itself affects the balance of powers in disastrous ways in this

country, and prevents the truer best interests of its People from being represented. Laws regarding the regulation of military, banking, energy, housing, health, and innumerable other vested interests can all be adversely affected by this un-balanced influential power. War and threats of War are lucrative industries. American Legislative Exchange Council beware!

**9. ON ALL GOVERNMENT CONTRACTS** you must declare your budget for Lobbying Congress. All government contracts that are war industry related, will require a Peace-Time Alternative for your industry to keep people employed. Like manufacturing Baby Buggies instead of Bombs!

**IF PEACE WERE PROFITABLE, WE WOULD HAVE PEACE!**

**10. Additional Considerations:** Much of the funding used for campaigning pays for expensive advertising, this link must be diffused. With enlightened pressure from the People, Congress will begin to enact Laws that provide **PUBLIC MONEY** for the functioning of the Electoral System itself, both national and state-wide. Public TV, like C-Span, Public Radio and Cable Companies' Public Access Stations will be **REQUIRED** to air campaign speeches, presentations and debates, thereby providing a proper **FREE FORUM** for all campaigning in an equitable manner. This will also thereby deprive the Corporate Media of its vested interest in this very lucrative practice, which now, with its particular skew and sound-bites, unduly and oftentimes untruthfully,....unconscionably, influences **PUBLIC OPINION!**

**11. If a modified Capitalism is to remain the prevailing Economic System in this country, then the Voices of the aroused Ethical People of Earth will be heard!** More specifically, the voting patterns of the aroused Ethical People of the US, will see to it that its Economic System becomes a veritable model of concern for the well-being of planet Earth and for its inhabitants. This system will adhere to ethical considerations, that involve protection of our critical environment and our atmosphere. It will give proper consideration to providing equitable employment, and especially for the development of alternative energy sources. This awakened and more Ethical economic system can be known as "Capitalism with a Conscience."

**Here's an important fact to consider:**

The principles of Capitalism and of Socialism are not necessarily diametrically opposed; instead they describe more of a transition. China is on the rise today, while the US is declining, expressly because they are using what Sidney J. Gluck, a noted China Historian, calls "Social Capital." This is what the Tea Party derides as governmental interference, but is instead, the necessary investment of capital monies into projects that protect and

benefit the public as a whole, such as building schools, restoring rusting infrastructure, etc., rather than rewarding only the investors. This capital can come from taxes, but other sources might be invited to invest, as well.

The idea of cooperatives and employee ownership is the way to preserve and promote our individualistic sense of entrepreneurship...Our cherished freedom, if you will! In the land of the free! Have a great idea! Provide a needed service! Start your own business...but wait! Where will you get the necessary capital, especially if the bank won't lend you the start-up money? This is indeed a paradox. Bail out Wall Street, but the banks won't invest in Main Street. Small business is thought to be riskier and less deserving, and so, is neglected in favor of Big Business! Is this then, a job for government?

I recently heard of a novel way of stimulating small business that really appealed to me. It may have been in operation in Italy before the economic problems encompassing Europe, but would seem to be a model for empowering individuals and for stimulating entrepreneurship. A use of creative capital that would comply with the criteria for "capitalism with a conscience," that might be emulated in better times. Here's the way I was told that it worked:

When workers became unemployed through no fault of their own and were deserving of unemployment compensation, options were available. A projection of 2 years coverage would be available as necessary, BUT, if an individual joined in a reasonable business plan with a number of other laid-off workers, they could each apply for the entire 2 years worth of their benefits in a lump sum for the purpose of starting their own business in a cooperative plan. An extra benefit could even be the employing of more workers as the business succeeded and thrived. How great! Talk about a win-win proposition! This is a role for government to aid small business! In this present climate of accusations it would be considered Socialism.

The knee-jerk prejudice, born of a century of propaganda, against the word "social" is an unreasonable allergy. The word means...including the whole family, or the community. This means taking care of the children, the elderly, the ill, the students, the unemployed, the immigrant, even the prisoner, all who are justifiably considered part of the human family simply by being HUMAN! No one is UN-deserving. Regardless of what name we call our economic system or our political system, adhering to any kind of "ISM," at all, MUST RESPECT individual human beings with regard to their wellbeing. There must be education and health care and retirement.

Various ethnic, race, religious, and regional prejudices still prevail in this Land of the Free! WHO IS THE ENEMY? Often-times we have an "enemy-du-jour!" Who shall we be encouraged to hate today? We insist that no segment of the World's population should be stigmatized! Those who are deemed to be enemies and accused must be brought to a fair trial in a court of justice! No one should ever be a victim of "targeted assassination!" Nor should any one on the face of this Earth be killed as "collateral damage!" No one should be subjected to torture. Perhaps the REAL enemy is a military mind-set, and a shameful bent toward world domination!

As for the century-old FEAR of "Social-ISM" which equates in some minds as totalitarian-ISM or fasc-ISM, was originally a movement of The People against a ruthless regime and its Tzar. A similar movement by The People against a King, way back in 1776, should be familiar to us? The movement launched in 1917 demanded respect for The Workers! It was a revolt against inhumane murderous domination of the Russian People.

Thwarting organized labor, allowing unsafe working conditions, and denying proper pay, in order to secure the most profit, have all been standard operating procedures, and with little interference have been the major focus of the entire Capitalist Economic system for all of the previous century, and into the present. Sadly, CHEAP LABOR is its hallmark! This is the method by which the system increases profits! More sadly, an endless supply of Hungry People in this world are eager to be "exploited" by those with full bellies. They need instead, investment to become self-sufficient by means of cooperative effort, rather than merely becoming slaves of the almighty competitive profit motive. Initiating any or all of these criteria will go a long way to create a more Ethical World situation, and might even help to promote democracy! Employing these more ethical standards could support and promote the ideals of real democracy instead of hypocrisy!

At the time of this writing there are worrisome new state laws, purportedly to prevent "voter fraud" that are actually creating wholesale disenfranchisement of vast segments of potential voters; minorities, elderly, rural and disabled persons, as well as students, all of whom are likely to vote for President Barack Obama. The miniscule instances of real voter fraud expose this move for what it is: actual and intended fraud against the voting Public! There are many more instances of ballot-counting frauds, uncounted ballots and Supreme Court interference. Voter intimidation and disenfranchisement must be challenged, and hopefully to be resolved before November! There's already a help line: 866-Our Vote! It needs publicity!

**We need a Nationwide 800 Phone Number to receive calls and expedite help! An Emancipation Proclamation was issued as a Presidential Decree by Lincoln. We need a new one forbidding such tampering with our Civil Liberties and our Right to Vote!**

In the Civil Rights struggles Voter Registration was a high priority that had many concerned students swarming to the South to help overcome the barriers and intimidation that thwarted the voting rights of minorities. Such a concerted effort is **NEEDED TODAY!** The numbers of voters thus purged from the rolls may be the exact number needed to re-elect Obama, especially in light of the obsolete winner-takes-all Electoral College system wherein a few votes can trigger the loss of a whole state. A more equitable popular vote is now feasible that was impossible in the horse-n-buggy days! If we keep practicing seriously to create a democracy we might get it right! The amazing new hand-held technologies might eventually introduce a new method by which an individual's thumbprint might register a vote. Why not? The tallying, of course, must become tamper-proof in order to provide a true counting of the votes. We could thus create a popular democracy. A crucial factor in shaping voter's opinions is widespread and targeted advertising that may be totally false, even purposeful boldfaced lies, that have been promoted and funded by vested interests or an opposition party. This brings us around to another paradox of our would-be democracy; the education system. "Government spending" is accused of being a problem rather than a solution to many of our societal and financial problems. The move to downsize public payrolls and even eliminate essential community services is totally counter-productive. More spending is what's needed! Unless public schools are properly funded and staffed, using established national standards as criteria for the teaching of basic critical reasoning; the encouragement of exploring various options; doing research, and the taking of initiative; all of which may be ever bit as essential as math and science and history in creating a true democracy, we will never have a sufficiently educated citizenry that can recognize illogic when they come upon it. When one is barraged by outright lies being promulgated in the various media, one almost needs to navigate with a "B...S..." detector. How worrisome that we might go to the polls with an erroneous sound-bite embedded in our head. It is a long-standing mystery that so many of us who seem not to employ our fact-checker facility, who don't openly explore the choices that benefit our own long-range **BEST INTERESTS**, will follow a party line or a rallying cry and will consistently vote against those **BEST INTERESTS**. We hear such laughable and oxymoronic statements like: "Get rid of Big Government, but keep your hands off of my Social Security checks!" The word "Social," as linked to Social Security, with its necessary



**and humanistic beneficial aspects, doesn't even register in the mind of the person who decries, almost automatically, against government spending, big government and government control:..."Omygod... That's Socialism!"**



**And now, Back to the wisdom of Corliss Lamont:**

# **Socialist Planning for Abundance**

## *Everyone Can Live Well*

Like anyone else I want to live well, and I want my wife and three children to live well. I believe in the whole-hearted affirmation and enjoyment of life. There are surely few mortals who appreciate more than myself the simple material things that both sustain human existence and can bring to it such delight. I enjoy good food, comfortable living quarters and surroundings that are pleasant and healthful. I am very fond of sports, especially tennis, skating and swimming. I like to dance. And I enjoy, too, the pleasures of culture: the leisured reading of books and poetry, stimulating wit and conversation, evenings at the theater and concerts and motion pictures, the opportunity to write. Some of my conservative upper-income friends occasionally banter me on the exuberant way in which I relish the sweets of existence, as if such relish showed that I could not really believe in Socialism. But they miss the point.

For it is precisely the destiny of Socialism to bring to the whole community those felicities of living that up to now only a small minority have had the chance to enjoy. I want everyone to live well. And I am convinced that Socialist planning could quickly assure to every American family, not merely economic security, but also a fair degree of comfort. For this reason the idea of a Socialist society ought to attract profoundly not just the more poorly paid workers and farmers, but most of the middle income and many members of upper income as well.

If we attain Socialism in the United States during my lifetime, I fully expect that I and other persons who are at present economically privileged will be able, if we work loyally under the new system, to maintain a very decent standard of living, though not one that is luxurious or extravagant. This Socialist promise, of general prosperity is one of the chief reasons why I consider so infinitely short-sighted and unintelligent those members of the upper class who oppose with such bitter-end stubbornness the passing of Capitalism for they themselves can share to a substantial extent in the abundance which Socialism will make actual. And so long as they prevent this abundance from coming to fruition, they are playing the invidious role of dogs-in-the-manger.

They are saying in effect to the people: "It is true that we cannot ourselves unlock the untold possibilities of this modern economy, but just the same, we don't intend to let *you* do it." Suppose the American people would waken some fine morning and read in the newspapers that every

factory and farm in the country was operating at full blast, that all the millions of unemployed had been able to find jobs, that sweeping increases in wages would shortly go into effect and that for the first time in years federal, state and municipal governments saw the sure prospect of balancing their budgets. One can imagine the sense of relief, the happiness, the positive thrill that would be felt from one end of the country to the other; one can picture the rejoicing that would be called forth in every American home, in every place of business, in every public gathering. It would be like the end of the Great War; indeed, it *would* be the end of a Great War, the war on poverty, on unemployment, on depression and the thousand ills that accompany these major maladies of the capitalist system.

All this I have been depicting is no mere word-mirage. It is a close approximation of what would actually take place under full-fledged Socialism. For Socialist planning means that the American economic system would in fact be kept going at 100 per cent capacity, that its potential plenty would at long last be released, its productive resources and distributive techniques utilized and developed to the maximum for the people and by the people. The almost immediate outcome would be that \$5,000 income for every American family that I mentioned earlier. And as time went on, this figure would steadily rise. These considerations spell out why *Socialism means wealth* fabulous wealth, and eventually tenfold, yes a hundredfold, more wealth than Capitalism has ever been able to bring humankind.

### *The Principles of Planning*

The fundamental principle that lies behind planning is fairly simple and one which we encounter in some form in many different realms of human behavior. It consists of coordinating our activities in the light of our capacities and of the objective external environment, especially its economic aspects. As individuals we all plan to some extent, whether it be for a day or a month, a year or a decade, always keeping a weather eye on the state of our finances.

If we have a family, then planning becomes more complex and essential. The intelligent family looks into the future so far as is possible and plans, according to its resources, or the needs of its various members. If it is wise and has any sort of dependable income, it will make an annual budget, allocating definite sums to food, housing, clothing, recreation, even baby carriages and the like. It will also probably try to set aside certain amounts as savings; and the most prudent heads of families will plan years and years ahead for the particular needs and vicissitudes of old age. Thoughtful

people will take an even further step and, through the process of wills, lay careful plans for friends and family long after they are dead.

Coming to purely economic units, we find that every kind of business concern, no matter what its size and nature, must plan. The larger and more complex it is, the more attention it has to pay to planning. Any big corporation, for instance; with its many different departments, must have central planning in order to coordinate its various activities and to function successfully as a business. This is true whether the U. S. Steel Corporation or General Motors is concerned, whether it is R. H. Macy and Company or American Telephone and Telegraph, whether Standard Oil of New York or the Pennsylvania Railroad. The planning necessary for the efficient management of huge businesses like these reaches out to all parts of America and in some degree abroad as well. And in certain fields where big business has come to be overwhelmingly predominant, the planning of a few large trusts or even of a single monopoly may extend over well-nigh a whole industry.

The purpose of planning in all capitalist enterprise is, of course, to make money. And this means that each business, in the process of continually establishing and re-establishing its own superiority, must plan against its rivals and win away from them more and more customers. Trusts in the same industry have to plan against each other and also, in order to capture a larger and larger share of the general consumer's income, against trusts in other industries. Thus, in enterprise both large and small, the plans of individual businesses and businessmen tend to cancel one another out to a considerable extent. The capitalist theory is that the most efficient and intelligently managed concerns come out on top.

Undeniably this is frequently true; just as often, however, it is ruthlessness and lack of moral scruple that turns the trick, as has been amply illustrated in the lives of our "robber barons." But whether efficiency or ruthlessness or perhaps both together are operative in any particular case, the result for the community is in the end, economic chaos.

In order to mitigate or prevent the disastrous results of anarchic Capitalism in some important field, a capitalist government sometimes puts into effect a species of planning for an entire industry. In most European countries the telephone and telegraph are publicly owned and operated, and in several the railways as well. Then, too, there are public planning schemes in existence over particular localities. A good example of this is the Tennessee Valley Authority (TVA), which is exploiting the power resources of the Tennessee basin on behalf of the population of the vicinity, much to

the chagrin of the private utility companies. These types of piecemeal planning, however, no matter how well they may work in the various sectors, they cannot go far to solve the economic problems of a country as a whole.

It is characteristic that the most far-reaching schemes of public planning under Capitalism should be for profit, or for profit and war. The so-called planning of the New Deal during President Roosevelt's first term was directed, especially in agriculture, toward decreasing production in order to bring back profits by making goods scarcer and prices higher. While the Great Depression was still ravaging the United States, the NRA (National Recovery Administration) and the AAA (Agricultural Adjustment Administration) nobly co-operated, through "planned destruction," with the usual haphazard destruction-for-profit by individual capitalists. Those were the days when almost over-night a fourth of the cotton crop was ploughed under, the wheat acreage reduced by 20 per cent, and five million pigs destroyed. The AAA, doing its best under the circumstances to rescue the American farmer by boosting the price level, actually paid bonuses to all the producers who participated in this wholesale sacrifice to the capricious gods of capitalist economics. And all the while, families went hungry!

During the Great War, America, and more than half the nations of the earth as well, carried out planned destruction on an even larger scale. Not only did this war planning entail the shooting away into nothingness of billions and billions of dollars worth of goods in the form of munitions; even the food, clothing and other supplies for the military and naval forces were for the purpose of enabling millions of men to engage in the entirely unproductive function of fighting to the death millions of other men. In order to wage war more efficiently, the American Government proceeded to coordinate in some measure the economic life of the United States by setting up the War Industries Board, the War Trade Board, the Shipping Board, the Fuel Administration, the Food Administration and the Railroad Administration. Since the railroads under private management could not manage all the added strain of war conditions, the Government took them over entirely and administered them on a unified basis.

Unhappily, today again, the bulk of the planning that is going on in Capitalist countries is for belligerent purposes. This is especially true of the Fascist Powers-Germany, Italy and Japan-in each of which the whole economy has for a number of years been on a war basis. As these Fascist states push farther and farther their present aggressions and prepare for new ones, they are forcing the democratic Capitalisms to introduce ever

more extensive planning for the object of armed self-defense. This brief review of the limited planning that takes place under Capitalism shows how very far removed it is in aim and scope from Socialist planning. The planning under Socialism is for USE-NOT PROFIT, for increasing production, not decreasing it, for peace not war. And it demands as an absolute prerequisite the socialization of production and distribution.

For as long as private capitalists retain possession of a country's natural resources and the transportation facilities of factories, farms, banks and all the rest, they have the power to throw out of gear the best-laid of plans. It's common knowledge that even with the minor public controls established under Roosevelt's NRA, the American capitalists, long before the law was declared unconstitutional, constantly sabotaged, dodged and defied the Act. But Socialist planning puts a finish to that unending tug of war, so characteristic of Capitalism, between the Government, supposedly representing the public in general, and various business interests jockeying for control of it and determined to carry out whatever profit-promising policies seem most advantageous. Under Socialism, politics and economics are thoroughly integrated.

The socialization of economic activity which I have in mind, however, does not necessarily entail either nationalization by the federal government or ownership by state or city governments. Many industries under Socialism the national government will certainly take over. Many other economic concerns, less far reaching in their ramifications, state or city governments will own and operate. But besides all this, there will be a broad sector of enterprise which is socialized yet not governmental. It will be advisable to run some industries through the instrumentality of Public Corporations, which will be subject to control by the government planning authorities, but largely independent in their administrative work. In the non-governmental class will also be collective farms and fisheries, and indeed almost the whole of agriculture; co-operative societies for production and distribution; and much of journalism, art and culture in general. This means that there will be a sizable number, running into several millions, of independent individuals who are not on the pay-roll of any governmental concern. These will include a large proportion of the handi-craftsmen, farmers, fishermen, inventors, teachers, authors, journalists, actors, artists and intellectuals. They will make their living by working in such organizations as I have just mentioned, or by selling their products or services to such organizations, to public agencies or to other individuals. So, in the Socialist state there will be plenty of room for freelance workers of every type.

Socialist planning differs from any sort of capitalist planning, lastly, in that it is not confined to special localities, industries or periods of time, but is continuous and nation-wide. A genuinely planned economy demands not only that all individual businesses in one industry, whether it be concerned with hats, shoes, sugar, coal or anything else, be consciously coordinated, but that each industry as a whole, including the prices of its products and the wages and working hours of its employees, be coordinated with every other industry as a whole.

Think of the increase in efficiency and the decrease in waste that would result from planned, co-ordination among America's big energy-producing industries: coal, gas, oil and electric power. Such co-ordination, however, could reach its high point only when there was complete coordination also among the industries to be served. For only when we know how much energy is required throughout the whole country, and where and when, 'can we accurately gauge how much coal, how much gas, how much oil and how much electric power should, be made available in any given period and in a particular locality. Again, it is obvious that there is so much overlapping in the field of transportation-among railways, boats, busses, tracks and airplanes -that the situation cries out for unified planning. But it is not possible to separate transportation from the things to be transport-ed. A plan for coordinated transportation implies a plan for coal and steel, farm products and finished goods, just as a plan for all these things definitely implies a plan for transportation. And, of course all of agriculture must be carefully correlated with all of manufacture.

The flow of foodstuffs to the cities must be coordinated with the flow of manufactured goods from them. The needs of the farmers must be estimated. Our steel plan, for example, must take into consideration the demand for tractors, combines and other agricultural machinery; and our agricultural plan the particular food requirements of the heavily laboring steel workers. Likewise there must be a well-worked-out plan for wholesale and retail trade, linking up these two main branches of distribution all along the line with industry, transportation and agriculture. The shops in town and city, the restaurants, the warehouses, the gasoline stations and other such distributive units all come into the planning picture here.

Since the planning that I envisage covers the entire socioeconomic scene, it naturally extends into the fields of health and recreation, of education and culture. Socialism is particularly concerned to bountifully provide all the different activities and services in these realms with the necessary equipment and other economic prerequisites. The educational plan of the country, moreover, must be always closely inter-related with the

economic plan, so that there may never be a lack of the needed technicians, scientists and other experts nor a deficiency of suitable employment opportunities for graduating students. Finally, the entire economic and cultural life of the country must be carefully correlated with finance under one vast, unitary budget that takes in all branches of industry and agriculture, or commerce and trade and extra-economic endeavor. This completes, in outline form, the picture of the great National Plan which Socialism sets in motion, a plan which brings into the economic and social affairs of any country that adopts it a closely knit unity, a smoothly functioning team-work, among all the myriad enterprises and individuals involved, making each one count for infinitely more, and lifting the collective achievement to new and unheard-of heights.

Because of its controls over production and distribution, currency and capital investment, prices and wages and hours, Socialist planning is able to overcome totally and permanently the central capitalist difficulty of lack of purchasing power. As more and more goods come out of the factories, wages go up throughout the land or prices decrease or the working day grows shorter. To take care of the increased turnover in commodities, currency may, depending on its velocity of circulation, be expanded. Since there are no capitalists to appropriate a large proportion of the value which the people produce, the full instead of only the partial value of their labor returns to them in one form or another. Thus, the unceasing abundance of goods is matched by an unceasing abundance of purchasing power. And this results in that depression-defeating, prosperity-ensuring, balance between production and consumption, supply and demand, which every orthodox economist and capitalist has fondly dreamed of seeing Capitalism itself attain.

The United States and other capitalist nations are only as rich as the amount of goods that can be sold for a profit during any given period. But Socialist planning makes a country exactly as rich as its entire productive capacity during any period. This is why I say without hesitation that Socialism, in terms of sheer economic efficiency, is sure to far outstrip Capitalism. Since finance is the most important single element in Socialist planning and more crucial, if anything, than in a Capitalist economy—a fact which ought to give some slight consolation to Capitalist bankers—I want to discuss the subject in more detail. In a Socialist state the banking system, operates under and administers an all-embracing Financial Plan for the nation as a whole. This Financial Plan is the counterpart of the Material Plan and translates all the production and distribution schedules of the latter into dollar units. The dollar is the common denominator in which the various aspects of the National Plan can be accurately expressed and clearly



related to one another.: The Financial Plan and the Material Plan are, in effect, two versions of the National Plan and each serves as a check on the other.

The Government Treasury Department, together with the State Bank and its numerous branches, acts as a great central pool for the national income. This it does not only through taxation of Socialist business concerns and of individuals, but also through receiving a substantial share of whatever surpluses the different businesses, including those involved in foreign trade, succeed in accumulating. A considerable portion of such surpluses, however, are retained locally by the factory or other unit earning them and are used collectively for expansion, improvements or social benefits connected with the same enterprise.

The Government also raises a certain amount of capital through savings banks and through the flotation of public loans, which continue to be necessary during the first stages of Socialism. The surpluses or "profits" which economic enterprises build up under Socialism have a very different status and play a very different role from what we have been accustomed to expect under Capitalism. They are, in fact, mainly a book-keeping device. Socialist business is run, as I have said, not for the sake of making profits, but in order to provide goods and services to the community. The most convenient process of accounting and of distribution, however, demands the mechanism of buying and selling, of money and prices.

Furthermore, identifiable "profits" are necessary so that our Socialist planners can set aside a certain proportion of the nation's income in order to meet depreciation and obsolescence and, above all, in order to expand the means of production. Soviet Russia, for instance, put into social savings for such purposes an annual average of one-third its total income during the first two Five-Year-Plans, a feat which stands out all the more, owing to the fact that capitalist economists have always argued that a Socialist government would act like a reckless spendthrift and could not possibly exercise the foresight and intelligence to accumulate capital.

Whereas under Capitalism, money and prices control the output of goods; under Socialism it is the output of goods that controls money and prices. Money is on a goods standard, not a gold standard. No real need exists for gold unless to make the initial transition from Capitalism psychologically easier in the minds of the people. There can be no such thing as financial bankruptcy unless the supply of commodities proves inadequate; the value of the currency does not depend on any gold reserve, but on the quantity and quality of goods that nationwide planning has made

available. Money ceases to be a commodity in itself, as under the capitalist system. It simply serves as the recognized unit of economic measurement and exchange, a function that some medium will have to perform in any future stage of society.

The most obvious advantage of a Socialist financial system is that it enables the public authorities to distribute and. redistribute the nation's capital resources according to the needs of the entire economy. The surpluses acquired in one sector of business can be transferred to other less developed and less lucrative branches of economic activity. This is analogous, on a national scale, to the various allocations within the huge budgets of some of the bigger capitalist corporations. Under Socialism a number of enterprises, particularly in the sphere of education and social services, will continue to show financial loss, perhaps permanently. And there will also be deficits in the industrial field, especially when some great new project; is getting under way.

Socialist financial planning requires that there be an ordered flow of capital investment all along the line in place of the slap-dash, haphazard methods prevalent in capitalist countries today. Instead of over-investment in some directions and under-investment in others, with inevitable crisis-causing disproportions as the certain result, Socialist planning ensures a balanced and even distribution of capital resources, that is, social savings, in the directions most useful and important. It would be inconceivable, for example, for vast quantities of capital to go into the building of palatial homes, yachts and other super-luxuries for a small class of the economically privileged, while millions of families lived in houses beneath even a minimum standard of decency.

It would also be inconceivable for socialized capital to go into the production of things clearly harmful to health and well-being-such, as noxious drugs, patent medicines and deleterious food-stuffs-for which there might be unintelligent and perverse demand. It would be impossible, too, for capital to create manufacturing plants and services that would be continually duplicating one another, ruining one another through cut-throat competition, spending huge fortunes in misleading advertising, and inundating a locality or even the entire country with a bewildering flow of practically identical goods. The huge sums of money and the very large personnel involved in speculative activities in commodities, in land, and in stocks and bonds would also become a thing of the past. And, alas for the gamblers of high finance, that symbol of Capitalism at its worst, the stock market, would be no more.

The perfect synchronization between savings and capital investment that Socialist planning makes possible is one of the weightiest arguments in its favor. Since the decision of how much and where and when to save and the decision of how much and where and when to invest rests in the hands of the Planning Commission and the Government, there is no danger that these important decisions will be at odds with each other as they so often are under Capitalism. The unplanned capitalist method means that two sets of different people, frequently with conflicting interests, save and invest as they see fit, with the result that the relations between saving and investment are always becoming maladjusted. Either savings cannot find an outlet in profitable investment or needed investment cannot find sufficient savings to put it across. In either case economic troubles are the outcome.

Under the financial system. I have been outlining, every producing and distributing unit in the country has an account in the central State Bank or one of its branches. And it is the duty of each bank to check up on the use of the credits, long-term, short-term or emergency, which it issues at any time. It must make certain that the automobile factory, for instance, to which it has advanced a certain amount of credit, actually produces the motorcars called for by the Plan and supposedly made possible by the credit. The factory has the obligation of giving the bank definite reports on definite dates showing how it is fulfilling its program. If the bank discovers that the credit is being wasted or used inefficiently, it will at once stop further credits until the matter is cleared up, even instituting a special investigation if necessary.

Thus, under Socialist planning, the banks become the watchdogs of the whole economy by carrying on what amounts to a constant audit of all business enterprises. They act as the vital link between the various sets of plans drawn up on paper and the fulfillment of these plans in terms of concrete goods and services. Their vigilance means that there can be no let-down on the part of either management or workers in a concern without the whole personnel being called to task. In this function the banks are aided by a system of accounting which penetrates into every nook and cranny of economic activity. Socialist accounting, organized on the strictest basis, aims to cut production costs and to attain the greatest possible results for the least possible expenditure. Book profits enter again into the picture here as a partial test of whether or not a plant is being operated efficiently. So the idea sometimes advanced that, under Socialism, extravagant executives will fling away heedlessly and without restraint the financial resources of the community is merely a caricature.

Furthermore, besides the checks and balances inherent in the technical set-up of Socialist planning, there is always the control exercised by the people themselves through regular democratic procedures. At established intervals they can approve or disapprove of the planning schemes in effect or proposed by electing representatives and officials committed to carrying out the popular will. And at all times they can bring pressure to bear by criticisms and suggestions through public meetings, the organs of opinion, individual or organized lobbying, and other such processes of democracy. Of paramount importance in this connection, will be the role of the trade unions, to which virtually all working persons will presumably belong. There is nothing, then, in the nature of Socialist planning which prevents it from being administered in a thoroughly democratic manner.

One can easily imagine some of the big public issues which are almost certain to emerge in the natural course of collective economic planning. Since the standard of living under Socialism goes steadily up, the question will arise as to how the people can most benefit from the increasing wealth. Shall our planners put the emphasis on continually raising wages or on providing more and better free services like libraries, parks and public concerts? How much of the national income shall be saved for the purpose of new capital construction? And in this connection will the time come when the population will prefer to stabilize the standard of living at a certain point and concentrate on enjoying the consumers' goods producible at that level rather than to continue with vast expansion programs?

For under Socialist planning there is no categorical imperative, as under Capitalism, for an economy to keep on expanding indefinitely. These particular issues might well develop in relation to the matter of the average annual working time. In order that more leisure be secured, one political party might advocate reducing the work-day by a third or augmenting the number of holidays or cutting the age of retirement to fifty; another party might call for the maintenance of existing work-time schedules and for a mighty increase in production that would lift the standard of living to even greater heights. Or another burning issue might come to the fore, once the necessities of life had been provided for everyone, over whether to stress the provision of cultural amenities as distinct from material goods and services.

The exact planning techniques which I have been describing will certainly not be used in all stages of Socialism nor in all countries adopting the new system. For it is crystal clear that each nation will use somewhat different methods, adapting Socialism to its characteristic traditions,

political institutions and degree or economic development. It would be foolish to imagine that if central planning were introduced in China at the same time as in the United States, it could be put into effect by precisely the same measures or at the same rate. Indeed, there will be plenty of differences even between two countries both as highly evolved industrially as America and Great Britain, one obvious reason being that the latter is in so many ways economically dependent on the outside world. But just as the general principles of the capitalist system were potentially applicable in every quarter of the globe, so the general principles of Socialist planning are applicable to the United States and all other nations.



**Corliss Lamont toasting Civil Liberties and raising his glass of Champaign, celebrating with others at a Westchester People's Action Coalition Festival.**

## *Toward Greater Democracy; What Democracy Is and Is Not*

I have found that most Americans tend to think of democracy mainly in terms of free political activity and traditional civil liberties. Democracy does include, of course, as most essential elements, complete political democracy and complete civil liberties. But it means in addition economic democracy, in which no class can exploit another class, in which everyone possesses material security and in which all adults have a voice in the conduct of economic affairs: cultural democracy, in which everyone has an equal opportunity to share the fruits of culture; sexual democracy in which legally and in all other relevant ways women stand on an equal plane with men; racial democracy, in which all racial groups, whether they be minorities within a state or nations in themselves, are on a par with other racial groups and not subject to any sort of discrimination; and, finally, international democracy, as defined in the preceding chapter.

The emotional drive behind the ideal of full democracy is distinctly not a sentimental or condescending sympathy for the underdog as such; when it comes to Soviet Russia, I, along with most radicals, support and sympathize with the top-dogs, the workers and their leaders who have built a Socialist society in the face of tremendous odds, Nor is this feeling for democracy quite what Christianity means by brotherly love, though it is akin to it. Rather, the democratic attitude that I have in mind is best expressed as a general one of well-wishing and friendliness toward all humanity and of faith in the ultimate common sense of the common man to make reasonable decisions in the adventure of self-government.

As far back as I can remember, my natural feeling toward people, whether as individuals or en masse has been one of warmth. That was always the way I felt toward everybody: toward members of my own economic strata, toward the workers, toward foreigners, toward unjustly treated racial groups such as the Negroes and the Jews. From the start I followed the principle that every man was my friend until he proved himself my enemy, and that is still my philosophy today. When I went away to the Phillips Exeter Academy, probably the most democratic private school in the country, my equalitarian feeling was strongly reinforced. But even at Exeter there were snobs; and I constantly felt offended by their haughty, anti-democratic attitude and by the upperclass boys I later met at Harvard College. The parents were usually even crasser in their Bourbonism.

Equally repulsive to me was my discovery of the inveterate propensity of the American capitalist class for social-climbing within its own ranks. This phenomenon it was easy for me to observe during my

college days when so many of my fellow students, egged on by expectant relatives, nourished as their dearest ambition election to membership in Harvard's exclusive clubs and an entree into Boston high society. Since then I have witnessed time and again the fatuous competition for social prestige among different individuals and groups in the "upper class." The topmost stratum of American capitalist society itself does plenty of climbing in the direction of the much longer established European, especially British, aristocracy, which social climbs in its turn, toward King and God. Not a few of our society leaders, both male and female, look wistfully across the water at the highly stratified English social system, ever feeling homesick for that deferential subservience to name and money which so disgusts democratic minded Americans traveling in the British isles. Many an American magnate, in the full flush of wealth and success, has sighed sadly to himself, "Oh that this were England where they would make me Earl." The marital scramble after titles is the most brazen example of American social-climbing under foreign inspiration, with the racket of being presented at the Court of St. James running a close second. The inferiority complex of the American bourgeoisie also takes more subtle forms such as the continual kowtowing to old-world culture and the acceptance of old world leadership in the intricacies of international diplomacy.

For example, it would be impossible to exaggerate the effects that the slightest whispered hint from an English Lord or Lady has upon members of the American ruling class and its representatives in the diplomatic service. I first began to recognize the extent to which the spirit of democracy is violated in America when A. Lawrence Lowell, Boston blueblood and former President of Harvard, ruled that a Negro boy I knew could not room in the Freshman Dormitories with the other members of his class. This act of discrimination was later reversed by the University authorities; but in the public uproar over the incident and the many arguments back and forth, I learned a lot about racial prejudice in the United States. Soon after graduating from college I spent several weeks in the South studying the "Negro question" at firsthand from Washington to Atlanta. And I later served on the Board of Directors of the National Urban League, an organization devoted to the social betterment of the Negroes.

The position of the Negro in this country and particularly in the South, excellently illustrates how the different types of democracy, or rather un-democracy, are linked together. The Negro minority, originally introduced into America on account of the lust for profits of planters and slave traders, has remained a subject class economically from the beginning; and has therefore naturally been unable to establish for itself political, cultural or racial democracy. Though the Negro race supposedly

won political freedom almost seventy years ago through the ratification .of the Fifteenth Amendment, it has in actuality largely been disfranchised in the southern states right up to the present day.

As for sharing equal rights under the law and the advantages of ordinary civil liberties, everyone knows that the Negroes below the Mason and Dixon Line have had less than a beggar's chance. Thus we have a group of native-born American citizens in the South numbering no less than nine million, to whom the ruling class openly refuses to grant the political guarantees of the Constitution. Turning to the sphere of culture, we find that the allocation of funds in the South as between public educational facilities for Whites and for Negroes is nothing short of scandalous. Throughout the fourteen southern states the expenditures for each white child range from three or four times to ten times as much as for each Negro child.

In a recent study the National. Education Association reports: "In South Carolina the annual expenditure for education is \$4.48 per child for Negro children and \$45.45 per child for white children. In Georgia, where the Negro population is 36.8 per cent of the total, the figures are \$7.44 per year for the Negro child against \$35.34 for the white child, while the figures for Florida are respectively \$11.41 and \$75.07." These figures show why the "Jim Crow" schools of the South are generally rundown and badly equipped, why the teachers are usually poorly trained and atrociously paid, and why the school terms are anywhere from two to six months shorter than those for white children.

Racial prejudice in the United States extends to other minorities such as our indigenous Indian population, the French Canadians in New England, the Orientals in the West, the Mexicans in the Southwest, various immigrant groups from Europe, and especially the Jews. Unquestionably this country has of late seen an alarming growth in anti-Semitism, fanned by our continuing economic pressures and the heightened race consciousness caused by Fascist persecutions and the emigration of Jews from their homelands.

The Institute for Propaganda Analysis estimates that there are some 800 Fascist or semi-Fascist organizations in the U. S. carrying on anti-Semitic propaganda at the present time. Yet there has long been a strong anti-Jewish feeling in America which has expressed itself in various ways, from discriminating against Jews in business and the professions to excluding them from hotels and educational institutions. Again, Harvard taught me a good deal about the educational angle of the Jewish question



when the reactionary Lowell regime tried to put through a percentage limitation on the number of Jewish students attending the College.

Let us make no mistake about the fact that the leaders and pace-setters of anti-Semitism in the United States have been the ruling capitalist class of native-born Anglo-Saxons. This class seldom considers even those Jews who are most useful to it, such as certain reactionary columnists, above the status of rather bright lackeys. Though many American capitalists have been repelled by Hitler's excesses against the Jews and by his expropriation of their private property—a most dangerous precedent—it remains true that they themselves share a large measure of moral responsibility for American anti-Semitism.

Years before the hideous Nazi ideology arrived to plague the world these same capitalists were trying to lay the foibles and failures of the present system at the door of the Jews. And as part of its strategy of "Divide and rule," the capitalist class has ever tended to encourage anti-Semitic and other racial prejudices. In view of the position of racial minorities in this country, it always amazes me to hear upper-class Americans who talk about keeping Negroes and other "inferior" people "in their place" railing against the iniquities, of dictatorship in the Soviet Union, where the principle of racial equality is the lay of the land and the practice of the people. The same illogical stand is invincibly maintained by the small British aristocracy which throughout the Empire controls, on the basis of armed might and highly undemocratic government, colored subjects numbering more than four hundred million.

The fact is, of course, that the white ruling classes shudder at the very suggestion of extending the concept of democracy to include the black, brown and yellow peoples of the earth. Yet Christian ethics, which the capitalist classes profess to uphold, as well as any other genuine moral philosophy, cannot do otherwise than condemn racial prejudice as one of the most despicable things in our present-day world. For this insidious and illiberal attitude dooms, for the accidental quality of mere color or physiognomy, hundreds of millions of innocent persons generation after generation to an atmosphere of hate and humiliation and to a status of inferiority in the national and international community.

Coming to another important form of democracy, I think it is incontestable that no democratic system can be complete until women possess full and equal rights with men, both in law and established custom. In America the female sex did not win the suffrage until 1920. And though in general women have been relatively free in this country, there is still a

long way to go. In the field of Education, for example, the opportunities for girls and young women are far less than for members of the male sex. Pitifully small sums are spent on women's institutions as compared with men's; and only a small proportion of the universities have opened their professional schools to the female sex. In most of the capitalist countries of Europe, and in all the countries of Asia, the significance of women achieving equality would be simply immense.

When we examine the question of cultural democracy, which I treat more fully in the next chapter, we see what very great inequalities of opportunity exist in America. In a recent book entitled *American Business Leaders* Professor F. W. Taussig and Dr. C. S. Joslyn, both of the Harvard faculty, analyse the 1927-28 edition of *Who's Who in America* and find that only 6,7 per cent of the persons listed have working-class fathers. And they add: "Most of the persons in 'Who's Who' (about nine-tenths) won their places by distinction in the professions, in the arts, or in letters--the very callings from which laborers' sons, by reason of the educational requirement, are virtually debarred." Thus Professor Taussig and his collaborator admit with entire frankness the lack of democracy in the realms of cultural and professional endeavor.

Yet for some strange reason, when through other studies They discover that the sons of working-class fathers constitute only slightly more than ten per cent of *business* leaders in the United States, they "strongly suggest" that this situation is due to lack of innate ability on the part of the proletariat. While I cannot undertake to endorse the statistics of Messrs. Taussig and Joslyn, their tabulation sounds reasonable. But what their elaborate figures strongly suggest to me is not that labor is wanting in native talent, but that the traditional claim that every American enjoys a fair and equal opportunity of working his way to the top is without foundation, which is what the radicals have been saying all along.

How, indeed, can we possibly pretend that there is equal opportunity in any sense when, millions upon millions of able-bodied and able-minded Americans can find no jobs; when millions more are working only part-time, and when millions of others simply do not possess the financial means to obtain the good things of life? Decades ago, with the disappearance of the frontier, it became impossible for individuals and families to solve their economic problems by moving to the rich open spaces of the West.

Now a man has little choice but to stay where he is and fight it out in the economic wilderness of his own hometown. And with the omnipresent

concentration of business enterprise it is not so easy, even if you do have a little capital to start with to set up on your own either in city or country. American class relations, which once were marked by considerable fluidity, have become, like those in Europe, more and more "frozen."

Clearly the old economic basis for American democracy, that of individuals owning their independent means of livelihood, has grown to be the exception rather than the rule. And no new form of economic democracy has become established in its place; nor can it become under the present system. True enough, the organization of all America workers into trade unions would constitute a most important step in the direction of real, economic democracy, But out of some 35,000,000 potential members only 8,000,000 are yet unionized: approximately 4,000,000 in the C.I.O.; 3,500,000 in the A. F. of L.; and 500,000 in the Railroad Brotherhoods.

As regards political democracy, the underprivileged elements in this county are very far from having attained it in full measure. In the vital matter of elections, the substance, as distinct from the form, the power rests on the possession of sufficient economic resources to buy radio time and newspaper advertisements; to rent meeting halls and print pamphlets; to do the thousand and one things that vigorous and effective electoral campaigns demand. No one can suppose that the workers have anywhere near the funds which the capitalist class can make available for these purposes. Lack of financial strength is by no means the only thing which handicaps the political activities of the workers and of anti-capitalist minority groups. For the suppression of ordinary civil liberties has long been one of the outstanding features of the political scene in the capitalist democracies.

And nowhere in allegedly democratic nations has this phenomenon been so marked as in our own United States, with its much-vaunted Constitution, including the famous Bill of Rights embodied in the ten original Amendments. Most crucial of all for civil liberties is the First Amendment, which reads as follows: "Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; or abridging the freedom of speech or of the press; or the right of the people peaceably to assemble and to petition the Government for a redress of grievances." Other Amendments establish the right of trial by jury and give assurances against illegal search or seizure, excessive bail or fines, and cruel or unusual punishments.

The Bill of Rights was implemented by a section in the Fourteenth Amendment providing that, "No State shall make or enforce any law which shall abridge the privileges or immunities of citizens of the United States,

nor deprive any person of life, liberty or property without due process of law." The Civil Rights Act of 1871 reinforced the constitutional provisions already cited. And in addition the various state constitutions also lay down guarantees for the maintenance of civil liberties, yet in spite of this galaxy of laws, American citizens have had to wage, from the earliest days of the Republic, a constant battle for the preservation of their constitutional freedoms.

One organization, the American Civil Liberties Union, was founded in 1920 for the sole purpose of aiding in this cause. As a member of its Board of Directors since 1932 I have had a particularly good opportunity over the past few years to keep abreast of the civil liberties situation in the United States. Let us now consider specifically this sector of affairs which is of such paramount importance to the future of democracy in this country.

### *The Violation of Civil Liberties*

It is a sad and ironical fact that the majority of those Americans who have recently been most vocal about "saving the Constitution" have never, in their lives raised a finger to protest against the continual violation of the civil liberties guaranteed in the Bill of Rights. Year after year, while workers have been shot down in cold blood, while Negroes have been lynched, while freedom of speech in every part of the country has been abrogated, these self-appointed defenders of the Constitution have kept silent as the grave. More than that, many of them, reactionary in their views and hard-boiled in their methods, have actually encouraged the use of violence against American citizens with whose opinions they happen to disagree. But let so much as a legislative whisper be heard implying some slight curtailment of property interests for the public good and these worthy gentlemen spring into swift and noisy action. They then suddenly discover the Constitution, and that it was drawn up for the sole and glorious purpose of protecting the rights of private property.

One of the reasons why these American capitalists care so little about civil liberties is that their civil liberties, are hardly ever infringed upon. Violation of the Bill of Rights revolves around labor, liberal and radical groups, because they are the ones who are urging reforms or fundamental changes in the social system which seem dangerous to the capitalist class. These and other such groups clearly add up to a majority of the population. It is on this account that Max Lerner, in his recent book on democracy, says quite -correctly that the biggest problem is to preserve the civil liberties of the *majority* rather than of the minorities. For in the United

States it is the ruling-class minority, attempting to impose its will on the rest of the people, which has been the chief offender against the Bill of Rights.

Unquestionably the most serious and frequent violations of civil liberty in the United States have taken place over labor's right to organize, strike, picket, demonstrate, meet, and bargain collectively. The suppression of workers' rights is usually carried out in the name of "law and order," but in an overwhelming majority of cases this means in fact, anti-legal or extra-legal violence and intimidation on the part of employers, vigilantes, troops, special deputies, private thugs or police officers who neither know nor care about the Bill of Rights. Such attacks are far more serious than the restrictions imposed on civil liberties by ill-advised legislation. Now I do not for an instant claim that American workers are a lot of white-winged angels, always gentle and perfect in their behavior. Like American citizens in general they are proud, freedom-loving, quick to sense unfair tactics, and ready to fight back if pressed too far. Yet it is also accurate to say that 95 per cent of the violence that so often flares in labor disputes is started by the employers or their agents or by government authorities. In many situations the government authorities themselves are nothing more nor less than the "agents" of the employers, who are experts on ways and means of getting others to do their dirty work for them.

The revelations of the Senate Civil Liberties Committee, headed by Senator Robert M. LaFollette, Jr., regarding the methods used by big business and little business alike in fighting trade unionism and breaking strikes are as shocking as they are dramatic. The testimony of labor spies, of professional strikebreakers, commonly known as "finks," and of employers themselves has definitely established the fact that much of the violence attributed to strikers is purposely fomented, in order to discredit them, by agents provocateurs of various types.

Take, for example, the story sworn to on the witness stand by professional strikebreaker Edmund B. McDade, in the employ of the Wisconsin Light and Power Company: McDade described how a building was dynamited by strikebreakers and the blame placed on the strikers; and how the home of a company official was painted red by strikebreakers, and the strikers and their sympathizers then accused of the deed. To quote a representative passage from the report of the Senate Committee: "A Corporations Auxiliary spy sat in the meetings of the strike strategy committee of the Dodge Local of the United Automobile Workers in 1936 and urged the use of force and violence.

A Pinkerton spy in the International Association of Machinists in Atlanta sought to provoke a general strike. A National Metal Trades spy in the Black and Decker strike at Kent, Ohio, in 1936, urged his fellow unionists to dynamite the plant. The fact that strikes and violence increase the business of detective agencies is a contributing cause to this sort of conduct.

The LaFollette Committee found that labor spying is "a common, almost universal practice in American industry. . . . The known total of business firms receiving spy services is approximately 2,500. The list as a whole reads like a bluebook of American industry. Large corporations rely on spies. No firm is too small to employ them." The sums spent on spies are immense. For instance, the General Motors Corporation paid almost \$1,000,000 to detective agencies for spy services from January of 1934 to July of 1936. The Committee also revealed that many spies succeeded in worming their way into positions of high responsibility in the trade unions. Thus approximately 100, or one third, of the spies employed by the Pinkerton agency were officials of unions, one being vice-president of an international union. Hand in hand with the spy racket has gone the expenditure of huge amounts by capitalist business on munitions, tear gas, and other forms of industrial armament.

This is one of the main reasons why in labor troubles it is always the workers who are the chief sufferers. One never hears of an employer being injured or killed in a strike. During the steel strikes in the first half of 1937 many newspaper readers received the impression that the workers were resorting to widespread and illegal violence. The American Civil Liberties Union, however, made a careful survey of the entire situation on the basis of the available reports. It found that throughout America, from January 1st to the end of July, that twenty-four strikers and sympathizers were killed and 490 injured, chiefly on picket lines, and while not engaged in any act of violence. During the same period one police officer was killed and seventy injured. No non-striking workers were killed, and only thirty-one injured and 140 persons whose affiliation could not be determined were also injured.

These proportions of the affiliations of those killed and injured are typical of the whole of American labor history. Almost half of the strikers' fatalities mentioned above occurred in the fearful "Memorial Day Massacre" at South Chicago in which police brutally attacked a peaceful parade of workers on their way to demonstrate before a plant of Mr. Tom Girdler's Republic Steel Corporation. The police fired their revolvers point blank into a dense crowd of men, women and children, and then pursued

and clubbed them unmercifully as they frantically tried to escape. Ten strikers were killed instantly or died later and ninety seven other persons were badly injured. More than half of those killed or injured by bullet wounds were found to have been shot in the back.

While such incidents have happened again and again in this land of liberty, we are fortunate in this instance in possessing thorough and indisputable documentation in the form of a newsreel. Paramount News at first suppressed this film for fear that it would lead to riots, but later released it to the general public. The picture gives a gruesome and graphic presentation, accompanied by the roar of pistol shots, the thump of police clubs and the screams of the victims, of one of the most atrocious episodes in the long life of the American commonwealth. All of the policemen involved in this cruel and cowardly blood-fest were later completely whitewashed by a politically controlled Chicago grand jury.

What happened during the steel strike at Massillon, Ohio, in July of 1937 was, despite a much smaller death toll, in some ways even more revealing. For it showed undeniably the direct tie-up between capitalist business and illegal violence of the most brutal sort. As Chief Switter of the Massillon police force later testified before the Labor Relations Board on June 29<sup>th</sup>, Carl Meyers, district manager for Republic Steel in the Canton-Massillon district, sent for him. According to Chief Switter, "Meyers wanted to know what the hell was going on over there-letting those hoodlums run the town. He wanted to know why we hadn't done like the Chicago police had done. They knew how to handle a situation he said. He told me if the mills closed down, Massillon would be nothing but a junction point, with no need for a mayor or a chief of police or any other city officials."

Meanwhile a Law and Order League, composed of some leading businessmen, was urging Chief Switter to commission extra policemen who would be paid and equipped at the League's expense, Chief Switter declined the offer and emphasized that there had been neither loss of life nor serious disorder. But later, under added pressure from General Marlin, who had quartered two companies of the Ohio National Guard in the Republic plant, Switter gave way. On July 7 thirty to forty "loyal" Republic employees were sworn in as special policemen. On the evening of July 11 Chief Switter drove out of town on a picnic and Harry Curley, a retired army officer, took unofficial charge of the police department. Later that, night from fifteen to twenty of the new special policemen, armed with guns and tear gas, approached strike headquarters- where a considerable number of workers were standing around in front of their building. Without any more

serious pretext than that they felt annoyed by the lights of a striker's automobile which happened to draw up, the police opened a murderous attack of gunfire and tear gas grenades, killing two workers and wounding fifteen.

The scandalous outlawry of civil liberties in Jersey City by Mayor Frank Hague has centered, like so many other such situations, around labor's right to organize and the characteristic activities which that right involves. As far back as 1934 Boss Hague had conceived the bright idea of attracting new revenue yielding business to the city by promising employers that he would prevent trade unions from bothering them. During that spring and summer Hague's police made a regular practice of arresting peaceful pickets on trumped-up charges and throwing them into jail.

I myself at that time went over to Jersey City to make a test case on behalf of the Civil Liberties Union at a factory where members of the Furniture Workers Industrial Union were on strike. I was also interested in the matter as a trade unionist belonging to the New York Teachers Union. For the high crime and misdemeanor of walking quietly up and down in front of the plant in question and displaying an appropriate placard, I was arrested, arraigned, finger-printed and put behind the bars in a cell of the main city jail for some five hours while waiting to get bailed out.

Though the whole episode was over and done with in a few hours, I want to make clear that my day in Jersey City was distinctly not a lark, but rather constituted a grueling psychological experience. As a matter of fact, my case never came to trial, because the resultant publicity, first-class legal work, and other factors brought about the reversal of previous anti-picketing decisions, though not until they got beyond the lower courts. One of the most sinister things in the picture is that Hague's puppets sit on the bench and do his bidding.

And in 1939 his son, Frank Hague, Jr., with little or no judicial experience, was appointed by a faithful Hague man, Governor Harry Moore, to the New Jersey Court of Errors and Appeals, the highest court in the state. So when Mayor Hague publicly stated, "I am the law," it was not mere bombast.

For a short time after the 1934 skirmishes Hague allowed picketing, but before long he was again violating the law, and his police were throwing strikers into jail and deporting sympathizers beyond the city lines. The situation reached a climax in the fall of 1937 when Hague decided to bar out completely the organizing efforts of the C.I.O. in Jersey City, He



termed the C.I.O. organizing campaign and the attempts of the Civil Liberties Union to uphold the C.I.O.'s legal rights as a "Red invasion."

In a public speech Boss Hague declared: "As long as I am Mayor of this city the great industries of the city are secure. We hear about constitutional rights, free speech and the free press. Every time I hear these words I say to myself, "that man is a Red, that man is a Communist." You never heard a real American talk in that manner." Later he advocated the exile of all whom he considered "Reds" to a concentration camp in Alaska. Hague's suppression of civil liberties and the counter-offensive of the C.I.O. and the Civil Liberties Union went on at full blast all through 1938.

Interference with the Bill of Rights by the Jersey City administration extended to stopping and searching automobiles not having New Jersey licenses, prohibiting the distribution of leaflets on the streets, and by refusing to issue permits for outdoor meetings or demonstrations by "undesirables," and intimidating local hall owners so that they would not rent their premises for indoor meetings under the auspices of labor, liberal or radical groups.

Meetings sponsored by the C.I.O., or the Civil Liberties Union were the first to come under the ban; later the same fate befell meetings organized by the Hudson County Committee for Labor and Civil Rights, the Socialist Party and the Catholic Worker, a religious periodical.

Highlights in the situation during 1938 were the successive "deportations" by Hague's police of Norman Thomas, head of the Socialist Party, and Representative Jerry O'Connell, Montana Democrat, both of whom journeyed to Jersey City to test the free speech ban. The Federal courts, including (in June of 1939) the United States Supreme Court, finally declared unconstitutional Hague's ordinances and actions violating labor's rights and civil liberties in general, and granted a restraining injunction against the Jersey City administration. But the fact remains that for five years Mayor Hague was able successfully to defy, through the use of physical coercion, both the American Constitution and the Constitution of the State of New Jersey. And one cannot be too certain that even now Mr. Hague, with the full authority of the judiciary against him, will condescend to keep within the law.

In view of the fact that Boss Hague, is one of the most prominent Democrats in the country, controlling the state as well as the Jersey City Democratic machine and sitting on the Democratic National Committee as a Vice-Chairman, his behavior placed the Party of Franklin D. Roosevelt in a most awkward light. One of the salient features of Hague's onslaught on

constitutional liberties is that he has enjoyed the enthusiastic support of local business, as represented by the Jersey City Chamber of Commerce.

There can be no doubt, either, that reactionary capitalists in other parts of America looked with favor upon his tactics. Governor Aiken of Vermont underscored this point at the Lincoln Day Dinner of the National Republican Club in 1938. "Would not Lincoln have been ashamed of us," he asked, "when Frank Hague, the Democratic boss of Jersey City, forbade free speech and free assemblage and no responsible voice in the Republican national leadership was raised to protest about his highhanded procedure?"

The reason was that free speech and free assemblage were being denied the C.I.O., and the Tom Girdlers of the Republican Party want the C.I.O. crushed even if a corrupt political boss of the opposing party has to tear up the Bill of Rights to crush them!" It is noteworthy that throughout the United States the Bill of Rights fares worst where the underprivileged make some sort of conscious effort to limit the exploitation of the capitalists. Since the deepening tensions brought about by the Great Depression, reactionaries in widely separated parts of the country have resorted increasingly to the organization of vigilante groups and to the violent tactics formerly associated with the Ku Klux Klan.

Thus in certain sectors, the embattled businessmen have outdone even Hague, setting up local reigns of terror with kidnapping, flogging and murder as the regular order of the day. This is or has been true in such places as Harlan County, Kentucky, and Gallup, New Mexico, where the coal miners have been attempting to organize; the Imperial Valley of Southern California, where the fruit and vegetable workers have been attempting to organize; and the cotton and farm area of eastern Arkansas, where share-croppers and tenants have been attempting to organize.

The Klan itself, originally founded in the South to maintain white domination over the Negroes, has extended its persecutions to all racial and religious minorities and to alleged Communists and radicals in general. Thus in 1933 Klan mobsters at Tampa, Florida, kidnapped from his home Frank Norman, an organizer for the International Labor Defense. His wife heard shots, and no trace has ever been found of him since. One night in 1935, Tampa Klansmen and city police officers kidnapped and "took for a ride" Joseph Shoemaker, an ex-manufacturer who was head of a progressive group known as the Modern Democrats, and two of his co-workers in the organization, Eugene F. Poulnot and Dr. Samuel J. Rogers. This mob in miniature stripped the three men, severely flogged them with chains and whips, and covered them with hot tar. Shoemaker was later

found at the side of a road stripped of all clothing but a shirt, unconscious and half-frozen, his body bruised and burned. He died a few days later. Though the perpetrators of this crime were well known and were put on trial, they were all finally acquitted, due to their intimate connections with Klan dominated government authorities in city and state.

An organization closely akin to the Ku Klux Klan was exposed in 1936 in Michigan and neighboring states; when it was discovered that the Black Legion, a secret terrorist society, had brought about the murder of Charles Poole, a white W.P.A. worker. On joining the Legion, members took an oath to protect Protestantism, Americanism and Womanhood and to wage war indiscriminately against Catholics, Jews, Negroes, Communists and aliens. Eight members of the Legion were indicted and sentenced to life imprisonment. On the stand they admitted that the Legion had kidnapped, beaten, or killed a number of others besides Poole. One Negro they shot to death "just for the hell of it." The Legion higher-ups, who were thought to include government officials, and the source of the organization's funds remained undisclosed.

Most of the vigilante bands operate on a local basis; but seemingly it has become apparent that the vigilante spirit in America is countrywide. And in the reactionary programs and "pronouncements" of a number of organizations formed on a national scale, we find the outlines for what would be in essence an American Fascist revolution. And the high-sounding names taken by a few of the more prominent organizations of this type: the American Alliance; the American Coalition of Patriotic, Civic and Fraternal Societies; the American Defenders; the Associated Farmers; the Christian Front; the Crusaders; the German-American League (the Bund); the Knights of White Camellia; the National Civic Federation; the National Republic; the Patriot Guard of America; the Paul Reveres; the Sentinels of the Republic; the Silver Shirts; and Vigilantes and Affiliated Organizations.

On June 6, 1937, the last-named organization issued a warning, quoted by Dorothy Thompson in her column in the New York Herald Tribune, which denounced President Roosevelt and John L. Lewis, head of the C.I.O., as Public Enemies Numbers One and Two. They threatened Mr. Lewis directly with "appropriate action that will let loose the dogs of civil war," and Mr. Roosevelt indirectly by stating that if certain legislation proposed in Washington passes, "an indignant army of citizens will be taking things into their own hands." The Key-Men of the Vigilantes and Affiliated Organizations [it is declared] have a large number of twenty-four-hour men who are ready to respond when called.

These men have already received instructions and could converge on any designated point in overwhelming numbers. When the time comes no quarter or consideration will be shown to the traitors to American democracy. Methods will be ruthless, swift, and sure, for when we start we must at any cost rid the nation of the subversive elements who today think they are riding the crest of the wave. When the zero-hour arrives, there will be no polite knocking upon doors.

Manifestos of this sort, strained and fantastic as they sound, can no longer be laughed off, as some worthy citizens seem to think. Against the general background of violations of civil liberties they have an ominous aspect. And taken in connection with public statements by persons in positions of power and influence, they make considerable sense. The anti-Semitic, Fascist outbursts of the Reverend Charles E. Coughlin have become a national scandal. In New York City we have George U. Harvey, leading Republican and Borough President of Queens, advocating in speech after speech that the police go out and beat up Communists with the well-known instruments of the rubber hose and the ax handle. At one American Legion Convention he ranted: "If the Communists push easygoing Americans too far, there won't be enough telegraph poles in the City of New York to take care of them."

Then there is ex-Ambassador James W. Gerard, a Democrat, who prophesies that Communists "will soon be hunted like mad dogs in our streets." The publisher, Bernarr McFadden, who in his social and economic views is a twin brother of William Randolph Hearst, openly suggests wholesale lynching of radicals and Communists: "Public enemies," he writes, referring to members of the Communist Party, "must be treated like man-eating tigers. The order given recently to policemen in many of our cities to shoot first and question afterward is a good policy in this dire emergency. 'Death to traitors' should be the slogan from now on."

And Major General George Van Horn Mosley, retired, before a select audience of businessmen attending an annual meeting of the New York Board of Trade, publicly warned those whom he termed "domestic enemies" of a patriotic uprising against them which would "make those massacres now recorded in history look like peaceful church parades." Such statements on the part of reactionary organizations and individuals obviously amount to direct advocacy of violence, not at some vague, far-off, future time, but quite definitely, here and now. Yet no one ever hears of prosecutions on account of these incendiary exhortations. If labor leaders, Communists, or radicals in general ever talked this way, we can be certain that they would receive short shrift at the hands of the governmental

authorities, who as it is are constantly prosecuting them for legitimate opinions and peaceful actions which in no sense constitute, in the late Justice Holmes' words, a "clear and present danger" to law and order.

So we see that the capitalist classes are able both to advocate and to practice violence with little fear of prosecution; and at the same time, through the officials whom it controls, to terrorize labor and minority groups through illegal use of the law. Today it is possible to identify the capitalists and their agents as aggressors in the local or national community just as certainly as the Fascist governments in the international sphere.

In addition to the instances of violence and the development of fascist tendencies that I have been describing, there has gone on in the United States year after year the horrible lynching of Negroes, chiefly of course in the South. Since 1882, 5,120 of our fellow Americans have been lynched. The average annual number of lynchings over the past ten years, though showing a drop in comparison with the previous decade, stands at the shocking figure of sixteen. While some state administrations have recently been taking a determined stand against lynch mobs, government officials have as a rule, either openly sympathized with lynching parties or made no attempt to bring the guilty, whose participation is almost always a matter of public knowledge, to book. Twentieth-century lynchers kill their prey as often by a volley of bullets or by burning alive as by actual hanging. Another modern feature is the usually sizable audience, frequently including women and small children.

Entirely aside from the inhuman fate of the lynch victims there are the terrible psychological effects on the perpetrators and the spectators, whose most cruel and bestial impulses are given a powerful stimulus. The customary charge against Negroes who are lynched is that they have been guilty of criminal assault against a white woman. If prisoners arrested on this charge are not taken out of jail and slaughtered, it is only too likely that they will be railroaded to death through a trial that amounts to little more than a judicial farce. This is what was attempted in the celebrated case of the nine Scottsboro boys, who in 1931 were apprehended at Scottsboro, Alabama, and accused of criminal assault against two white girls of doubtful reputation who happened to be stealing a ride on the same freight train. They were quickly tried, in an atmosphere of passion and hysteria, and all but one, who was aged fourteen, sentenced to die.

Impartial investigation showed that beyond doubt the boys were innocent victims of a conscienceless frame-up. Seven years of legal struggles in the courts of Alabama and in the Supreme Court of the United States resulted in July, 1937, in the acquittal of four of the defendants. Since the

original charges were made without discrimination against all of the nine boys, it is impossible to understand how some could be innocent and some guilty. The defense is still making strenuous efforts to obtain the release of the five remaining prisoners, all of whom are under what amount to life sentences. The Scottsboro case has at least had the good effect of causing an unprecedented publicizing of the wrongs perpetrated against the Negro people of the South and of making some dent in the southern custom of barring Negroes from juries.

One of the most vital spheres in the struggle for free speech is that of education. Unhappily, it would be possible to write a whole chapter or even a book on violations of academic freedom in this country. It was back in 1925 that there occurred the famous anti-evolution trial at Dayton, Tennessee, in which the biology instructor, John T. Scopes, was convicted and fined for disobeying the State law against the teaching of the theory of evolution in tax-supported schools. The State Supreme Court upheld the law, but purposely prevented a test in the United States Supreme Court by dismissing the charges on a technicality. The vast majority of academic freedom cases, however, arise over unorthodox views of teachers or students on social and economic affairs, or their participation in labor or radical activities. One would think that our educational institutions, with the labor movement and Socialist doctrines playing so important a part in modern life, would make special efforts to secure teachers who could discuss such matters with knowledge and authority.

On the contrary, our schools and colleges and universities make special efforts to keep out such teachers, but to get rid of those whom they already have. The prevailing attitude among those middle and upper-class groups who control America's educational system is, I fear that to which Mr. Silas Strawn, former President of the American Bar Association, gave expression in a commencement address at Middlebury College in 1935, "I am unable to sympathize, he stated, "with the elastic conscience of those who inveigh against the capitalist system while on the pay-roll of a college whose budget or existence is due to the philanthropic generosity of those whose industry and frugality have enabled them to make an endowment. No one who is not a thorough believer in the soundness of the fundamental principles of our government should be permitted to teach either political economy, economics, social science or any other subject."

With scores of cases in which the spirit of Mr Strawn's admonition has been applied, let me recount some typical examples: In 1931, Professor Herbert Adolphus Miller, prominent Sociologist of Ohio State University, was refused reappointment because of his support of the nationalist

movement in India; his opposition to compulsory military training and his sponsorship of progressive causes. In 1934 Dr. Ralph E. Turner, Associate Professor of History at Pittsburgh University, was dismissed because of his activities on behalf of labor legislation. This was the same institution which some years earlier had disbanded the Liberal Club and expelled two of its student officers for holding a meeting to urge the release of the California labor organizers, Mooney and Billings. The spirit of Pittsburgh was once well illustrated to me when, attending a social function there, I asked a prosperous-looking guest what all the trouble was about at the University. He replied, "Oh, don't Worry about that. We're just getting rid of the damned Reds."

In 1935, Granville Hicks, Assistant Professor of English at Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute at Troy, N, Y., was dropped for reasons of "retrenchment," but as indiscreet statements by the Institute authorities made clear, and as the American Association of University Professors later confirmed through special investigation, Mr. Hicks, acknowledged on all sides as a brilliant teacher, and writer, really lost his position because of his well known Communist views. In 1936 Yale University refused to renew the appointment of Associate Professor Jerome Davis of the Divinity School, after twelve years on the faculty, because of his sympathy for Soviet Russia and Socialism.

And in 1937 Harvard faltered when it decided to drop two crack economics instructors, Drs. Alan R. Sweezy and J. Raymond Walsh, who had been active in the formation, of the Teachers Union and labor causes. Of the older and more revered institutions of learning in America, Columbia University has undoubtedly made the most unsavory record in matters of academic freedom, particularly during the incumbency of President Nicholas Murray Butler, who has always posed as a great liberal. Dr. Butler had failed the crucial test of the war years by expelling Professor James McKeen Cattell and Professor Henry Wadsworth Longfellow Dana. The latter "cause celebre" induced the noted historian Charles A. Beard to resign from the faculty in protest.

In a number of cases during the last decade Columbia has done much to re-establish its bad reputation. Especially scandalous in my opinion was the expulsion from the Columbia Medical School in 1935 of six students and three technicians for anti-war activities. In order to give some semblance of justification to their illiberal conduct, President Butler and his associates had pulled out of the hat a trick qualification of academic freedom to the effect that it does not allow the right to act contrary to "good manners." If a student or teacher says something or does something

that the authorities do not like, it is always easy to rule him out on the ground that he has not lived up to Dr. Butler's definition of a gentleman.

When I was teaching philosophy and economics at Columbia, I well remember being warned by the higher-ups that to take publicly certain unorthodox and unpopular positions was equivalent to "bad manners," in fact, "like going to a dinner party in a golf suit." In 1932 "discourtesy" was one of the main charges that the administration brought against Reed Karris, militant editor-in-chief of the *Columbia Spectator*, which under his leadership had waged a constant battle for liberalism on the campus and had finally made a too, too telling attack on the management of certain dining halls. When I and fifteen other faculty members were about to make public a statement protesting Harris's summary expulsion, the College Dean's right-hand man, a full professor of long standing, summoned me and insisted that the protest should be quashed. When I absolutely refused to countenance any such move, he resorted to the bad manners argument and called me a "mucker."

That was an unforgettable moment in my life. I walked out of the Professor's office tense and shaking, and personally issued, the statement to the press. My first experience in the ups and downs of free speech within academic walls had occurred years before when I was a Senior at Harvard College in 1924. At that time a movement was launched to invite some radicals to address the students at the Harvard Union, which provided its members with an annual program of lecturers. The Union's Undergraduate Committee, of which I happened to be Chairman, recommended that the organization ask as speakers Eugene V. Debs, the leader of the Socialist Party; W. Z. Foster, organizer of the great 1919 steel strike and later Secretary of the Communist Party; and Scott Nearing, radical economics professor who had been dismissed from the University of Pennsylvania. The Governing Board of the Union, with six out of eight members officers in the University administration, opposed this move with all its power. And its course was strongly supported behind the scenes by President Lowell.

In view of the fact that the University authorities kept claiming that they were wholly in favor of free speech, I thought that their attitude was rather strange. A little later I felt somewhat enlightened when one of the college deans suggested to me that I was being decidedly untactful in stirring up such an issue when Harvard was just launching a campaign for \$10,000,000. Needless to say, Debs, Foster, and Nearing were never invited to speak. When this episode took place back in 1924, I was very far from being a radical or a believer in Socialism. Along with many other students, however, I honestly wanted to hear the left-wing view of things. After the



Harvard powers-that-be put up such a battle to prevent this, my suspicions became aroused and I started to study Socialism seriously for the first time. From then on I, became increasingly interested in and impressed by the radical analysis.

Over the last two decades or so only a handful of American colleges, such as Smith under President William Allan Neilson and Dartmouth under President Ernest M. Hopkins, have been really faithful to the principles of academic freedom. The sort of cases which I have cited are not only deplorable in themselves, but also result in the intimidation of thousands of teachers-not to mention students-who decide that silence is the better part of truth. During my association with Harvard, where I was a student for more than five years, and with Columbia, where I took a Ph.D. degree and taught for four years, I knew personally many teachers who, on all sorts of issues, felt it unwise to reveal openly what they actually thought. Most of the younger men, with impermanent appointments as instructors or lecturers, wanted to put off taking unpopular stands on controversial matters until they reached the rank of full professors. I have found, however, that one of the chief troubles with this strategy is that by the time such teachers achieve professorships, the habits of timidity and respectability are likely to have grown so ingrained as to be absolutely permanent.

There are a number of other important sectors where civil liberties are violated which I can do no more than mention. Such are the prosecutions under unconstitutional state syndicalism and sedition laws; the deportation of aliens for radical political beliefs and labor activities; the use of injunctions against the rights of labor; the forbidding or breaking up of meetings and demonstrations; the practice of police brutality and third-degree methods; the censorship of newspapers, magazines and books, of the theater, the motion picture and the radio; the arrests for disseminating birth-control information; the persecutions for religious scruples, such as refusal to salute the flag; the legal discriminations in many states against atheists and persons disbelieving in religion; and the unjust treatment of our Native American minority and our colonial populations.

It is not difficult to see that violations of the American Bill of Rights extend to practically all cultural, political and propagandist activities and to all sections of the nation and its territorial possessions. This means a constant abrogation of those principles and processes which are the very life blood of a healthily functioning democracy. And those Americans who make a habit of denouncing the lack of democracy in other parts of the earth would do well to examine more closely the glass house which they themselves inhabit. But there is, I feel, little ground for

pessimism; for there are ways and means through which we can control this anomalous situation of undemocratic behavior within a democracy, though under Capitalism we can never put a complete end to it.

### *The Preservation of Civil Liberties*

The free competition of ideas in the market place of public opinion is the best guarantee that truth and right will in the long run prevail. Any system of civil liberties worthy of the name, means therefore, that there must be civil liberties for everyone, without exception, whether we are considering persons as individuals or as members of specific groups. It also means the uncompromising maintenance of Voltaire's famous principle, which no one has ever formulated better: "I wholly disapprove of what you say and will defend to the death your right to say it."

The position of the American Civil Liberties Union since its founding over twenty years ago is, I believe, the only sound one to take. This organization supports freedom for all forms of agitation and propaganda not clearly associated with violence or other unlawful acts and which do not constitute direct incitement to violence or other unlawful acts. No practical joker, for instance, has the right to yell "Fire" in a theater, since that would be a direct incitement to riot. And no one has the freedom to indulge in libel or slander as defined by law. The Civil Liberties Union has defended on occasion individuals or groups varying as widely in their out-look as Communists, Republicans, Catholics, Ku Klux Klanners and even Fascists. It has publicly come to the support of its bitterest enemies, even William Randolph Hearst and Representative Hamilton Fish, when it seemed that their constitutional prerogatives under the Bill of Rights were being violated. It protested to the National Labor Relations Board over a ruling against Henry Ford which appeared to go too far. And it has deplored lawlessness and violence on the part of organized labor on precisely the same basis as on the part of labor's opponents.

Those who say that, yes, they are in favor of free speech, except for Communists or except for Fascists, are playing with very dangerous doctrine. Whatever minority may be concerned, the violation of its civil rights and the use of illegal violence against it is not only an evil and a disgrace in itself, but necessarily builds up habits that threaten the liberty and welfare of everyone in the community. If Negroes are deprived of their privileges under the Bill of Rights, then sooner or later whites are too; and it is a significant fact that well over one-fourth of the total number of lynchings which I cited earlier were of white persons. If Communists are deprived of their constitutional guarantees, then sooner or later so are

liberals, trade unionists, and, indeed, any persons who dare lift up their voices on behalf of social and economic justice. If Fascists are deprived of their freedom of expression, then sooner or later so are a host of other honest and well-meaning citizens who happen to hold conservative views. And if Jews are discriminated against under the law or outside of it, then in due course other religious groups such as the Catholics (take heed, Father Coughlin!) are likely to suffer the whips and scorns of insatiate fanaticism.

A good example of how legislative limitation of any group's freedom of speech is likely to react against groups very far afield has occurred in connection with an anti-Nazi law passed in New Jersey making illegal all statements which would tend to incite hatred or hostility against any religion. The first person arrested under this law was not a Nazi, but a member of the religious sect of Jehovah's Witnesses who had given utterance to anti-Catholic sentiments. And it is easy to see how ignorant or malicious officials could stretch such a law to gag legitimate and scholarly criticism of the Church and of religious theories by persons or groups even bitterly opposed to Nazism.

When it comes, however, to members of the Bund or any other political group participating in threatening acts such as parading and drilling in uniforms or with weapons, then it is high time to call a halt. I am in favor of enacting state or federal laws prohibiting private organizations from carrying on military drill or distributing uniforms that have a military significance. In general I believe that our American democracy and its organs of government should take a vigorous and affirmative stand on behalf of civil liberties. I agree with Lewis Mumford's proposal in his militant *Men Must Act* that when, as in Jersey City, a local political organization, year after year, suspends the Bill of Rights and defies the courts, the Federal Government should intervene and restore, under martial law if necessary, the constitutional liberties of its citizens.

If it is justifiable in some great emergency such for a flood or hurricane to invoke martial law to save life and property, it is surely justifiable to invoke it to save our democratic institutions! During the period subsequent to 1932 when the Democratic Party was strongly entrenched in nation and state, it can be said that governmental authorities, even to some extent in the lagging South, were on the whole more sympathetic to the cause of civil liberties than at any time for decades past.

The enactment in 1935 by a Democratic congress of the National Labor Relations Act, guaranteeing the right of labor to organize and the setting up of the National Labor Relations Board to adjudicate disputes in

the trade-union field, constituted a noteworthy step forward in that very sphere where civil liberties are subject to most frequent suppression. Indicative of a more alert attitude on the part of the Federal administration toward the Bill of Rights was the establishment in 1939, by Attorney General Frank Murphy, of a special Civil Liberties Unit in the United States Department of Justice. Similar Civil Liberties Units, it seems to me, ought to be a part of every State government.

Another most important contribution by public authorities toward sustaining the Bill of Rights was the work of the Senate Committee on Civil Liberties, with its sensational exposures of industrial espionage, violent and underhanded strikebreaking, and infringements of civil liberties in general. I hope very much that Congress will pass the legislation recommended by this Committee banning the possession or use of industrial munitions, restricting the zone of private guards to company property, and outlawing labor spies and strikebreaking activities. I am also in favor of a national Anti-Lynching Bill designed to wipe out, with the aid and stimulus of Federal initiative, the utterly barbarous practice of lynching. If such a law would be an interference with states' rights, then so much the worse for states' rights! In non-governmental circles, one of the most significant moves of recent years was the establishment in 1938 by the American Bar Association, of a new Bill of Rights Committee, with Grenville Clark, conservative New York corporation lawyer, as Chairman.

Of equal moment has been the progressive trend of late within the American Legion, long an organization deplorably zealous in urging repressive legislation and in extra-legal violence against labor and radical groups. The highest officers of the Legion have recently condemned participation by Legion members, officially or unofficially, in doings calculated to violate the Bill of Rights. In 1938 a Committee of the New York County American Legion issued a notable booklet on *Americanism* written by Mr. Cyrus Leroy Baldridge, Commander of the Willard Straight Post. Among other things this booklet stated that "Liberty demands Freedom of Speech because without Freedom of Speech there can be no search for the Truth.

This search is vital to Americanism; for unless great numbers of people constantly seek and discover new Truths, we cannot know how to make our world a better place in which to live. Freedom of speech includes freedom of inquiry, freedom of discussion, and-most important-Freedom of Education. The freedom of teachers to teach facts without bias and of scholars to learn facts without bias must never cease. Never was it more necessary than now for all Americans to support their right to Freedom of

Speech and Freedom to Listen and Learn. The reactionaries in the American Legion raised a tremendous hue and cry over this booklet. But the civil liberties principles enunciated in it have won more and more backing in the Legion as a whole. In spite of the many and ugly violations of the Bill of Rights, I think that since the Great War, its defenders have, by and large, more than held their own.

While a number of deplorable episodes, such as the Chicago massacre and the Hague rebellion, have taken place, an equal or greater number of important victories have been registered, particularly in situations where there have been time and opportunity to join the issue. An out-standing case in point was the final pardoning, in 1939, of Tom Mooney by Floyd Olson, the Democratic Governor of California. Mooney had been in prison for twenty-two years, as compared with the five-year incarceration of Captain Alfred Dreyfus, whose frame-up rocked France at the close of the last century. It will be recalled that Mooney and another labor organizer by the name of, Warren Billings were framed up and sentenced to life imprisonment for their alleged guilt in the fatal bombing of a Preparedness Day parade in San Francisco in 1916. It was repeatedly proved that Mooney, around whom the basic issues in the case revolved, was convicted on perjured testimony and through the collusion of public officials and private businessmen who wanted to "get" him because he was an effective labor leader. Mooney and Billings, however, remained behind bars, partly because of legal technicalities and partly because of the reactionary attitude and proud stubbornness of California's capitalist class.

It was much the same sort of situation that led to the judicial frame-up and execution of the anarchists, Sacco and Vanzetti, in Massachusetts back in 1927. Before Governor Olson can issue a pardon for Billings, certain legal proceedings must still be gone through. American public opinion, then, especially since the minions of Fascism have begun to assert themselves so blatantly on the domestic scene, has been reacting more and more strongly against violations of civil liberties. While the anti-democratic drives of the Hearst press and of red-baiting agencies like the congressional committee of Representative Martin Dies have achieved minor gains here and there, they have succeeded mainly in arousing an alarmed citizenry to the menace confronting it.

Americans have been in the habit of taking for granted that the United States of America is a really democratic country and that the Bill of Rights is the actual law of the land. When they suddenly wake up and find that this is by no means the case, they usually make their feelings of protest and disillusionment effective. It seems to me that sincere conservatives as

well as liberals and radicals ought to be able to unite on the wisdom and necessity of preserving intact the guarantees on civil liberties which our forefathers wrote into the Constitution. Freedom of speech and opinion is something that may well be called an eternal principle of mature civilization. It will be an evil day if the people of the United States are ever forced to surrender this principle. However drastically conservatives and radicals may disagree about current measures and ultimate ends, they surely can agree on the advisability of using the method of democracy.

For this is the method of freedom and of reason. It is during times of social and economic stress that the upper class, feeling that its position is growing shaky, is most likely to succumb to the temptation of abandoning the democratic process. Accordingly, it is not surprising that recent violations of American civil liberties reached their high point during the economic low point of the Great Depression. Yet it is precisely during such periods that freedom of speech and opinion become more essential than ever for the working out of our basic problems. Unlike other nations which have possessed practically no democratic institutions, we in America are fortunate in having behind us a long and powerful tradition of democracy and civil liberty. Unlike other nations which have abolished the democratic institutions which they had, our parliamentary form of government is still in a relative state of vitality.

As long as civil liberties and the other procedures of democracy are strictly upheld, there can be no logical reason for a people resorting to violent revolution and running the gauntlet of adversities that inevitably come after. For with complete freedom of opinion the will of the majority is able to prevail, and extreme elements can let off steam in passionate oratory and tracts for the times. It is only when the free play of ideas is repressed that violence becomes a necessity for agitators, and revolution becomes the only way out for the underprivileged.

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## *The Transition to Socialism*

Now it is possible that in the future there will occur in the United States a tremendous swing to the Right, bringing with it rigorous Fascist-tending suppression of labor's rights, and of civil liberties, but as long as any chance remains of resolving our problems of the country through democratic and peaceful means, I am in favor of abiding by such means. Some radicals have taken the position that in every capitalist country Socialism can be achieved only by means of bloody revolution, since they claim that the capitalist class is sure to resist by force, the coming of a new social order. No class in history, the argument runs, has ever surrendered its power without a violent struggle. Hence, it is said, that the capitalist class today can be counted on to follow the example of its predecessors. This thesis, in so far as it refers to organized, large-scale violence distinct from sporadic outbreaks, overlooks the fact that democratic processes and habits have never before been so highly developed as the capitalist democracies are at present.

Karl-Marx himself declared in a speech at Amsterdam in 1872:

"We know that special regard must be paid to the unions, customs, and traditions of various lands; and we do not deny that there are certain countries such the United States and England, in which the workers may hope to secure their ends by peaceful means."

Many followers of Marx have tried to explain away this statement, but it is clear to me that in it the founder of modern Socialism was merely being realistic and recognizing the facts. Since the aim of Socialism is the greater welfare of all mankind, the proponents of this new system naturally wish to bring it about with the least possible cost in suffering and not to repeat the awful violence which, for no less than five hundred years, accompanied the conquest of power by the capitalist class. It is an absurd and malicious caricature of Marxist policy to picture it in terms of armed workingmen dashing about and shooting down all well-dressed citizens.

Even the most extreme Communists would prefer to win control of the state through the ballot; and no sensible radical, unless the necessity is absolute, wishes to initiate a violent revolution and to run the serious risk of giving up his life just as the vision he has worked for may be coming true. A severe civil war, moreover does not only cause untold human misery and snuff out a vast number of human lives; it dislocates the whole economy of a country and sets back economic health and equilibrium for years or even decades. To attempt the establishment of Socialism upon the smoking ruins

of a devastating civil conflict is a most unpropitious way of starting a new social order, and creates handicaps of the most serious nature. During the change to a Socialist society, radicals will have enough problems on their hands without looking for trouble in the form of unnecessary quarrels.

My hope is that in Great Britain and its Dominions, in the United States and France, in Belgium and Holland and the Scandinavian commonwealths—all countries in which the democratic tradition is lengthy and strong, the transition to Socialism will take place through constitutional means. In spite of the enormous advantage which the capitalist class possesses in controlling most of the instruments of education and propaganda, that is, the bulk of the schools and colleges, the newspapers and magazines, the theaters and: movies, the radio and publishing business. And in spite of the constant suppression and distortion of facts unfavorable to Capitalism and favorable to Socialism, a good deal of information helpful to the Left does manage to seep through, often by way of extremely conservative mediums. Then, too, the liberal and radical organs of opinion are quite numerous and exercise a wide and growing influence. In the United States even that bulwark of conservatism, the Supreme Court, under the invigorating influence of public opinion and the liberal justices appointed by President Roosevelt, has become increasingly sensitive to the needs of the time in its interpretation of the law. (Commentary: this was 1939, not 2012.)

Such factors as these, together with the pressure of the economic situation and the ever more convincing example of Soviet Socialism, lead me to believe that if the present degree of freedom is maintained, the Socialist program will eventually win the right of way in the democracies. But many capitalists, as soon as they sense such a result in the offing, become bad sports about democracy. They refuse to keep on playing the game when they see that the score is going against them. As long as they can control in the main, public opinion, the elections, and governmental policy, they feel that political democracy is all right. The moment, however, that the people show signs of choosing for office enough radical and labor candidates to enact fundamental changes in property relations, these reactionary capitalists become frightened and decide that perhaps the time has come to dispense with democracy.

An excellent example of this tendency, carried out under the cover of legal forms, was what happened to the five members of the Socialist Party who were elected 1919 to the New York State Assembly. As soon as the Assembly met in 1920 the two major parties, controlled by different groups of capitalists, got together and proceeded to expel the duly-elected



Socialists from the legislature on the ground that because of their radical opinions, they were unfit to sit in that august body. This was, of course, at the height of the post-War reaction and the Bolshevik scare; but it showed how scandalously the Capitalist class, when it feels itself threatened, can treat the very essence of American political democracy. Since that time several states have barred the Socialist or Communist parties from the ballot or have put almost insuperable obstacles in the way of their getting on it. Such considerations demonstrate quite plainly how in these urgent times the continuation of democracy can easily become a class issue, with the capitalists trying to suppress democratic institutions and the rest of the people trying to conserve them.

It is not sufficient to say that the American capitalists have permitted all sorts of reform measures, such as the income tax and unemployment insurance, to go through without attempting to overturn democracy. Such elementary reforms have all taken place within the general and accepted framework of Capitalism. When, however, it becomes a question of doing away with the capitalist system itself, a very different situation arises. Then there is danger that the ruling class of today will follow the example of the southern slave-holding aristocracy which precipitated the Civil War when it felt that its power and its cherished institutions were threatened.

Even the advance of trade unionism at present provokes a considerable amount of violence on the part of the capitalist class. These current episodes give a hint of more serious happenings when Socialism itself would draw near. In other words, nothing can prevent some violence from taking place; in fact it has taken place and is taking place. But we can hope, by constant vigilance, to limit and localize that violence.

If and when a President, a Congress, and state legislatures are elected in the United States pledged to put Socialist economic planning into effect, I expect that capitalist groups here and there will attempt to thwart the will of the people by resorting to force. Especially our budding Socialist government must be on the watch for just such an eventuality and be fully prepared to crush the aggressor capitalists with swiftness and severity in order to keep scattered violence from developing into full-fledged and nation-wide revolt. If the die-hards start trouble, it will be their own fault if they get hurt. In any event, the first Socialist government in America cannot permit a repetition of the Spanish experience, in which a lax and unrealistic People's Front regime dozed in dreamy siesta while the Fascists and their generals went about blithely organizing a formidable and large-scale insurrection.

I doubt, however, if the American plutocracy will ever try anything on the scale of the Spanish Fascist rebellion. Spain, after all, was in 1936 just emerging from semi-feudal conditions and had about as little background in democratic institutions as the Russia of 1917. In fact, it can be definitely stated that in all those nations in which Fascist revolutions either have been successful or have developed into a major threat, democratic traditions were relatively weak and of short duration. But there is certainly a possibility that such movements will in the future grow powerful in the democratic countries.

Hence, while I am in favor of the working class and the radicals in nations like England and America relying on democratic methods, I also say that they must ever be on the lookout. In countries where Fascist or other types of autocratic dictatorship exist, the means of attaining socialism is a very different matter. Such a country was Tsarist Russia at the time of the overthrow of Nicholas II in 1917. There no other method was possible for the liberals and the radicals but revolution. There, no other form of government could possibly have brought Socialism into being, but a Left dictatorship.

The other alternatives were the continuance of the iniquitous Tsarist autocracy, a military dictatorship of the Right; maintaining the same inhuman systems under slightly different forms; or complete and awful chaos. With such alternatives on the agenda of history, what intelligent or humane person could fail to choose a radical dictatorship which would certainly be no more violent than other kinds, and which would lead Russia forward to a new and better social order? Some Americans claim that persons like myself are insincere because we have sympathized with the Communist revolution and dictatorship in Soviet Russia, and at the same time have been agitating for civil liberties and democracy in the United States. But our position is perfectly logical, it seems to me, when we take into consideration the vast differences in social structure between the Russia of 1917 and modern America.

The same logic must lead progressive-minded people to recognize revolution as the necessary path to basic change in Fascist states, where democracy has been wiped out. If, for instance, liberals, radicals and labor combining in a united front were able to oust by force the respective governments of Hitler and Mussolini, they would have to take the next step and set up temporary dictatorships, perhaps of very short duration, in order to stabilize their power and institute the proper measures for the creation of democratic Socialist republics, dedicated to the policy of domestic and international peace. In Germany and Italy the chief practical

alter-native at present to such regimes is the persistence of the brutal Nazi and Fascist imperialisms. Especially applicable to these lands is Strachey's trenchant generalization:

"The alternative to the violence entailed by the lifting of human life to a new level is the violence entailed by the decline of human society, the break-up of such world civilization as exists, the dawn of a new dark age of perpetual conflict."

In the Fascist nations the only chance of a return to civilization, and democracy is an advance to Socialism. Again, what civilized man could fail to choose in favor of the Left? However, let no one think for a moment that I like dictatorship of any variety as a form of government. In fact I sharply dissent from these radicals who sometimes portray a Left dictatorship as a lovely and beautiful thing in itself. But when it is obvious that dictatorship is essential for progress, I cannot do otherwise than to grit my teeth and support it, bearing as best I can the many cruel and violent things that it implies. I do not expect a dictatorship, even when managed by the most idealistic radicals, to avoid becoming involved in very un-idealistic actions. And that is why I have never been greatly surprised at the violence which has taken place in the Soviet Union, much of which I am convinced is an integral part of dictatorship as such, whether proletarian or otherwise.

As I have shown elsewhere in this book, the trend toward democracy has been very marked in Soviet Russia. There, in the world's one Socialist country, the people already enjoy economic, cultural, sex and racial democracy; they are well on their way toward full political democracy, and they stand unwaveringly for international democracy. This outcome of events in the U. S. S. R. is by no means the first example in history of democracy being advanced through revolution. It is, indeed, only the latest instance of this phenomenon. For it should not be forgotten that the democratic privileges and the civil rights to which we have grown accustomed in the West were the result of centuries of bitter and violent struggle against monarchical and religious absolutisms upheld by intransigent ruling classes. We mustn't forget our own revolutionary past.

I was once cut off the radio when I came to a passage in an address in which I made a mild and qualified comparison between the Russian and the American Revolutions. But I think that I can safely state here that the American nation actually did win its characteristic institutions of democracy through a revolutionary war of five years duration. And for many years following the end of that war in 1781, the American Government did not treat at all gently the Tories who had sided with King

George III or who still wished to see the newly founded Republic return to the King's rule. Americans, therefore, cannot with consistency deny the present right of oppressed peoples to throw off the yoke of twentieth century autocracies, even if revolutions are essential to do the job; nor criticize too harshly drastic measures on the part of recently liberated nations to secure their gains against domestic and foreign enemies. We should not forget, either, that the defenders of the *status quo* always tend to minimize the amount of violence which is implicit in the functioning of the ordinary capitalist state.

Without repeating my story of extra-legal violence on the part of government officials and of international war on the part of whole governments, I want to call attention to the fact that coercion or the threat of it, on behalf of certain socially recognized purposes, has been a necessary element in every state that has ever existed. The majesty of the law is only a shadow unless there stands behind it the physical power of enforcement. And the Marxist theory is that the coercive power of the state has on the whole been used, and often very harshly, on behalf of the ruling class in the community. Since radicals are in general idealists and, in the ultimate sense, pacifists, they have often played into the hazels of the reactionaries, who are almost always hardheaded, realistic men who do not hesitate to use force whenever convenient. What Marx and Lenin and Stalin have taught the radical movement is that in order to succeed, or even survive, it must on occasion fight fire with fire and employ some of the traditional capitalist methods to defeat the capitalists. This does not imply the principle that the end justifies the means; what it implies is that *some* ends justify *some* means.

Those liberals and radicals who have become disillusioned with the Communist dictatorship in the Soviet Union have in my opinion overlooked the fact that until we have a perfect society, we cannot expect to arrive at new social and economic forms through perfect methods; that until we have a perfect democracy, we cannot expect to bring about fundamental changes through perfectly democratic means. Communists and Socialists, who are in accord on most of the chief *ends* of Socialism, have disagreed primarily on the *methods* of attaining it. The traditional policy of the Socialist Party and its equivalents, such as the Labor Party in England and the Social Democratic Party in pre-Hitler Germany, has been to rely entirely on peaceful and parliamentary means for achieving a Socialist order. The Communist Party, on the other hand, has been more realistic by coming out forthrightly for revolution and proletarian dictatorship in those particular situations where no less drastic alternatives have seemed feasible.

The German Social Democratic Party threw away a magnificent chance, the Communists believe, when, having attained state power with the overthrow of the Kaiser in 1918, it made the mistake of permitting the capitalists, the land-owners and the militarists to retain most of the key positions in the economic life of the country and many important posts in the governmental apparatus itself. Had the Social Democrats followed through with the revolution at that time, and seen the necessity of employing uncompromising measures against the capitalist class, there might well have been a highly developed Socialist economy in Germany today in place of Fascism. Instead, they dilly-dallied with technicalities and reform, and threw away their one great golden opportunity.

Exactly the same holds true of the Social-Democratic Party in post-War Austria. And the Socialists in Italy likewise met disaster, at the hands of Mussolini, through their excessively pacifistic course. As the sad case of Great Britain has demonstrated, however, it is not merely a very naive and mystic faith in democratic and legal forms that has afflicted the Socialists. They have also on critical occasions exhibited an appalling lack of principle and courage. The most flagrant instance of this was, in my opinion, during the British financial crisis of 1931. In August of that year the late Ramsay MacDonald, leader of the Labor Party and Prime Minister, together with two other prominent members of the Labor Government, Philip Snowden and J. H. Thomas, deserted to the capitalists, joining with the Tories, of all people, to form a coalition National Government. MacDonald remained Premier in name for four years, but the power went to the Conservative Party and Mr. Stanley Baldwin. British labor stood betrayed by its own leaders, and Mr. MacDonald became even more than before, a pathetic prisoner of the London "social lobby." Fortunately, the Socialists themselves have learned a good deal from the inglorious examples of the MacDonalds and their opportunistic, ever compromising policies.

Their education has been further stimulated by the rise and triumph of the German Nazis in 1933, by the slaughter and suppression of the Austrian Social Democrats in 1934 by the success of the Franco-Hitler-Mussolini revolt in Spain and by the alarming gains made by Fascism in the world at large. At the present time the Socialists and Communists are much closer together than ever before in their general strategy of achieving power. In Spain they stood side by side on the firing line and in the Loyalist government. In all the Fascist nations they both work in underground movements which assume from the start that the only way to get rid of Fascism is through revolution. In the democratic commonwealths they both are in favor of proceeding through constitutional means.

The American Communist Party, for instance, long generally considered an advocate for revolutionary violence, unequivocally declared in its new 1938 constitution, complete allegiance to the United States Constitution and to the traditions of democracy. But whatever method, whatever the strategy of transition, Socialists, Communists or other varieties of radicals adopt in particular countries or in particular situations, they all agree that only through Socialism can the democratic promise be fulfilled, and that only a society which ultimately brings democracy in the broadest sense has the right to call itself Socialist.

### *Socialist Democracy*

None but those who make their observations in the manner of the familiar ostrich can continue to think that Capitalism and democracy are synonymous. It is impossible to achieve democratic tranquility within nations, any more than peace between them, as long as Capitalism prevails. The riots and revolutions, the brutal violations of civil liberty and ordinary humanity, which keep taking place all over the capitalist world are, I am convinced, directly or indirectly due to the class struggle inherent in the capitalist system- a struggle, in which the ruling class constantly tries to suppress the efforts of the proletariat and the other exploited sections of the people to obtain economic justice and a proper share in the abundancies of life. Radicals believe, in fact, that all through history the central role has been played by class struggles, revolving around conflicting economic interests and often expressing themselves in religious or nationalist manifestos and movements. One does not have to be a follower of Karl Marx or a supporter of Socialism to believe in some such economic interpretation of history and politics. Before Marx was born, James Madison, the fourth President of the United States and justly called "the father of the American Constitution," wrote:

"The most common source of factions has been the various and unequal distribution of property. Those who hold property and those who are without property have ever formed distinct interests in society. Those who are creditors and those who are debtors fall under a like discrimination. A landed interest, a manufacturing interest, a mercantile interest, a moneyed interest, with many lesser interests, grow up of necessity in civilized nations and divide them into different classes actuated by different sentiments and views. From the protection of different and unequal faculties of acquiring property, the possession of different degrees and kinds of property immediately results; and from the influences of these on the sentiments and views of the respective proprietors, ensues a division of society into different interests and parties."

Now it is the general status and relationship of the "different interests and parties" that determines the extent and form of democracy in any country. A completely democratic society will require appropriate economic foundations. Democratic rights, whether in a political or some other sense, follow upon the possession of economic power. The bourgeois class was able to overthrow the absolutisms of feudalism and to establish democracy for itself, only when its economic power, as evidenced in the ownership of the means of production and distribution, had reached a high state of development. Similarly the working class in capitalist nations, though it has the strength to exert considerable pressure and win significant concessions, will not be able to attain full democracy until it achieves ultimate economic power through collective ownership of the processes of production and distribution. And that, of course, means Socialism.

It also means the end of the class struggle, which has reached its final phase in the opposition between the capitalist class and the working class. For Socialism eradicates the class struggle by setting up a classless society in which the proletariat disappears as a separate class as well as the capitalists. Though the apparatus of government as an administrative agency continues, the state, as a super-policeman wielding a big stick for one class as against another class, "withers away." And there no longer remains any occasion for the curtailment of democracy or the violation of civil liberties. As an instance of how the class struggle dissolves in the new order, consider what becomes of that apparently unceasing antagonism between workers and employers which manifests itself in strikes and results in the most frequent infringements on democratic rights. Strikes, which inevitably cause a temporary crippling of production, are not regarded by radicals as an eternal principle of things. Today strikes are a necessary part of labor's uphill fight, the most effective weapon in the trade-union arsenal.

Tomorrow when the working class itself is running the economic machine, when there is no longer a capitalist class from which it has to wrest the very necessities of existence, when material security and growing prosperity are the sure possession of everyone, strikes will be few and far between. Accordingly in a Socialist America though, practically the entire working population will belong to trade unions and regular collective bargaining will go on with the managements of factories and other enterprises, there will be no great difficulty in arriving at satisfactory labor agreements. And most of the bitter bickering and long drawn-out disputes of the present will disappear. Socialism's unlimited abundance in material goods lays the basis for a like abundance in democratic as well as cultural desiderata.

A Socialist republic in the United States will not only preserve our democratic form of government, but will vastly enlarge our civil and political liberties by enforcing all constitutional guarantees in every corner of the land and by assuring equal political opportunity to individuals and groups through an equitable distribution of wealth. Religious and racial minorities will enjoy full political and social rights. Women will be equals and see the dawn of a new day for their sex. The extension and qualitative improvement of education will create such a high level of enlightenment that at last democracy will possess the proper intellectual bases. Socialization in the realm of culture does not mean that government authorities take over all cultural activities. Newspapers and magazines, for instance, while they will not be owned by individual proprietors, will be for the most part organs of trade unions, professional associations, co-operatives and other non-governmental bodies. And many such organizations will have their own educational institutions.

Under Socialism, as under any other, system, novel and unorthodox ideas will meet a certain amount of resistance and will be required to prove themselves. Undoubtedly, too, whenever the new society is forced to come into being through revolution and violence, there will be a transitional period during which rather strict controls will be maintained over opinion. But eventually and on the whole, the socialization of culture will usher in a milieu far more favorable to the reception of innovations in every field than has ever been known before. With the material security of workers and of nations established on a firm footing, there will no longer exist the haunting fear that new theories will lead to catastrophe. Nor in the classless society will there be any privileged class interested in suppressing new truths. The individual in a Socialist democracy, far from being regimented or permanently confined to the some particular job, has a much better chance of proving his worth than under any other system.

Since economic advantage or disadvantage due to accidents of birth and environment is no longer a consideration, true equality of opportunity comes far nearer fulfillment. The old distinctions grounded in property and caste fade away; men are judged by what they are instead of by what they possess. And there results the closest possible approximation to a society in which there can emerge what the great American democrat, Thomas Jefferson, called "the natural aristocracy of talent and virtue." Of course, young men and women must prove their worth if they wish to rise; must take and pass examinations; and go through other tests of intelligence and ability. These are necessary salutary processes in any kind of society.



There can be no doubt, then, that Socialism, reared on the firm foundation of economic democracy, will secure for us those other forms of democracy which are so essential to complete the picture. Right here in the United States it will bring to final fruition that deep-lying democratic tradition, often thwarted but never downed, which has been so central a concept in American life since the founding of our Republic. Furthermore, if we do not reconstruct our democracy on a Socialist basis by implementing it with an economic system that works, and provides the material prerequisites for democratic privileges, there is grave danger of tensions becoming so aggravated that American constitutional government will be completely done to death in the resulting melee.

Indeed, as long as Capitalism exists in any form, there remains inherent in it the threat of anti-democratic Fascism. Thus the issue is likely more and more to become Socialist democracy or no democracy at all! Yet even under Socialism we must remain vigilant. Human liberty is not something that can ever become automatic. And no matter what social-economic system governs this country or the world, men will need to exert effort to maintain freedoms already won, and to win others we know not of.

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Commentary: In this present year of 2012 we see that these prophetic words of warning by Corliss Lamont in 1939 have come to pass. Not only has this nation been flirting with Fascism, it is now edging closer to a full frontal embrace. Homeland Security is girding itself to respond to massive People's Protests on the scale of the Arab Spring uprisings. The Patriot Act was the harbinger of things to come. Our cherished Civil Liberties, that Corliss Lamont devoted so much of his life to champion and to preserve, are now in greater jeopardy than ever before. Murdering the Rosenbergs was a heinous crime; now, publishing of State Department cables may be a crime punishable by death. What about the "People's Right To Know?"

What about indefinite detention? What about targeted Assassination?

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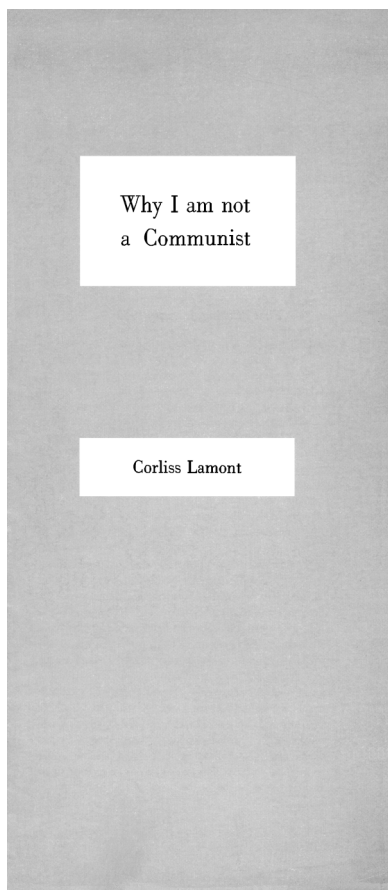
## *Stereotype Labels Evoke Negative Reactions*

Terminology is always a problem especially for those who would promote change. Whether the terms are favorable or unfavorable, we call them "stereotypes." Any system of thought, even a whole philosophy, not widely articulated by the dominant society is automatically labeled "propaganda." Also become "code words." Those who would resist change soon learn the negative phrases which evoke quick, deep and even unthinking reactions. The average person will often react emotionally to the stereotype rather than rationally to the idea originally associated with it. In recent years we have become very familiar in the United States with such stereotypes as "un-American," "Communist," "Fascist" "reactionaries," "Reds," "economic royalist" and "the preservation of the Constitution."

Radicals and conservatives hurl terms like these at each other with equal vehemence and sometimes with good results. Stereotypes, however, can be overworked. During the presidential campaign of 1936, the Republicans tried in vain to pin the label of "Communist" on President Roosevelt. Only a year later, in the New York City election of 1937, Jeremiah Mahoney, Democratic candidate for Mayor, absurdly attempted to make Mayor LaGuardia's alleged "Communism" the chief issue in the campaign. He charged that the American Labor Party, which was supporting LaGuardia, was "Red" and that LaGuardia himself had insidious tie-ups with Soviet Russia. In both cases the candidates who were accused so vociferously of being Communists won by unprecedented majorities. It is apparently becoming less easy to stampede the American people by means of artificial Red scares, and the right-wing forces will have to look hard for other electioneering methods.

Some expressions habitual to the proponents of Socialism are in their very nature conducive to a great deal of misunderstanding. For instance, "the abolition of private property" is frequently interpreted as meaning to embrace personal property, so that many an American citizen is sincerely convinced that a Socialist system entails the nationalization of household furnishings and one's intimate belongings. "The elimination of the profit motive" is wrongly taken to imply absolute equality in wages, and the Marxist "withering away of the state" as equivalent to complete anarchy in the realm of government. I consider affirmative slogans such, as "production for use;" "Socialist economic planning;" and "an economy of abundance" much more effective than some of the older phrases. On the other hand, if we on the Left are to be clear in our own minds and make ourselves clear to others, there are some basic words, like some basic principles, that we cannot afford to desert.

Again, a number of peace-loving and democracy-defending radicals like to talk eloquently about "the Revolution" and evidently get quite a thrill from drinking loud toasts to it. What they mean by the term is the transference of political power from the capitalist to the working class and not necessarily any sort of bloodshed or violence. But the vast majority of Americans understand "revolution" as implying civil war, with force and violence sweeping the nation. I recommend this fact to the serious attention of our more exuberant Comrades. Because of my own faith in the American democratic process, and my desire to be strictly accurate, I have never come out for Revolution and have never called myself a "revolutionary." A radical, yes!



**Cover of the self-published 20-page January 1952 pamphlet,  
*Why I am not a Communist***

## The Philosophy of Socialist Humanism

The inclusive philosophy of Socialist Humanism has as its supreme ethical aim the welfare and progress on this earth of all mankind, irrespective of race or nationality, religion or occupation, age or sex. Its methods for achieving this goal-and here is where it differs most radically from other kinds of Humanism-are reliance on the principles of experimental science, of Socialist planning, and of democracy in the broadest sense. Extending the scientific outlook to the universe as a whole, Socialist Humanism maintains a world-view (in technical philosophical terms, a cosmology or metaphysics) which rules out all forms of the supernatural and looks upon humans as a fully natural part and product of the Nature that is their home.

Since at the outset the principal field of my more serious studies and at my teaching was philosophy, it is not astonishing that I first became convinced that Socialism is right in its philosophical position and only somewhat later adopted its outlook in economics and politics. The emphasis of Socialist Humanism is positive, not negative. It stands for the full-hearted enjoyment and affirmation of life, for a forward-looking and socially-minded attitude in relation to the problems of society, for the co-operative endeavor of liberated individuals toward making human, existence in this world attain those noble possibilities which have been the dream of every great prophet and statesman from Jesus and Plato to Lincoln and Lenin.

To paraphrase Karl Marx, the philosophers of the past have only *interpreted* the world; but the point is to *change* it. Humanism carries out the most important function of traditional religion by giving to men and women a central and compelling purpose, around which to integrate their lives and through which to rise above their personal difficulties and dilemmas. And it offers, as a basis for happy and harmonious living, a philosophical and psychological outlook which is completely relevant to the conditions and spirit of modern civilization. Socialist Humanism takes the position that Nature, as it discloses itself in the facts of science and especially of biology and astronomy, does not show favoritism to humans or any other of its creatures. This little world of ours is only a tiny speck in an immense and unbounded universe, as vast in its spans of time as of space; and there is no reason to suppose that Nature cares more about our puny earth and what transpires upon it than about any other spot in the cosmos. That which is primary, fundamental and prior in Nature is matter or energy.

Mind appears on the scene only when, as on our planet and in the human species, matter has become organized in a certain complicated manner after millions and millions of years of evolution. The truth of this world-view is not dependent on the definition of matter or energy in terms of a particular stuff, such as atoms, electricity or anything else. It is based simply on the proposition that there is objective reality existing independent of any sort of mind or minds. In adopting this world-view, contemporary Humanism takes over and brings up to date the great tradition of Materialism and Naturalism in philosophy.

This tradition started in the ancient world with Democritus, Aristotle and Lucretius, then came down in modern times to Hobbes and Spinoza, Feuerbach and Marx, and is supported in the twentieth century by noted American philosophers like George Santayana, Morris Cohen and John Dewey, as well as by all schools of Marxism. So Humanism throws into the discard every variety of metaphysics, which reads into the universe-at-large, human traits, whether they be mind or personality, love or even purpose. And it definitely repudiates the religious bias running through most philosophies of the past. For "Divine philosophy," as Plato called it, has only too often been the philosophy of Divines.

Humanism puts the outcome of human's career in this world entirely up to humans and does not postulate any All-Guiding Providence or Cosmic Purpose that guarantees the ultimate triumph of humanity or its values. This philosophy, incorporating the indomitable spirit of Stoicism, encourages us to play the game boldly and well, come what may, it also contains an element of Puritanism in the sense that it recognizes the necessity, in times of great crisis, for humans to concentrate all their energies on the accomplishment of a certain task to the temporary exclusion of almost everything else. But Humanism does not coddle us like pampered children by saying that we are sure to enjoy victory in any particular mundane aim or as individuals in some other-worldly realm of immortality or as a society in some paradise on earth. This is why Humanism is pre-eminently a philosophy of sportsmanship. It never loads the dice by assuming in advance the actualization of its ideals in the anthropomorphic operations of some omnipotent God.

Nevertheless Humanism is basically optimistic and is confident that humans have the courage and ability and intelligence to gain the day. In the tremendous achievements of the race so far, in the brilliant course of Socialism in Soviet Russia, it sees the promise of almost infinite progress. Looking very far into the future, it refuses to accept that doom for humans and this earth predicted by both Christian prophets and modern astronomers. It has

faith that the advance of science and of social-economic planning on an international scale-bringing into being a sort of 'world mind' which is the nearest thing to divine omniscience that Humanism can imagine as existing-will result in such further conquests of Nature that human life and culture will be indefinitely and perhaps "immortally" prolonged on this planet. Here again it is up to us humans. We may lose out. In any event the future is open and there is a good sporting chance of success. Thus Socialist Humanism presents an unending challenge to what is best and bravest in the human race.

Since humans are at least as much emotional as intellectual beings, one of the important functions of writers and artists in the new society will be to work out rites and ceremonies that give adequate and artistic embodiment to the central tenets of Socialist Humanism, and which appeal to the hearts as well as the minds of the people, capturing their imagination and giving their feeling for pageantry an outlet. Humanism definitely encourages intellectual and emotional activities which express our kinship with the Nature that produced and sustains us. It definitely discourages the attitude of shaking one's fist at the universe, as some disillusioned and despairing philosophers have done. Though Nature is neutral toward human aims, it can be well utilized on behalf of those aims, as the whole history of science demonstrates. Nor does Humanism belittle those natural reactions of awe and wonder which we all feel so keenly from time to time; Humanists, like others, look up at a beautiful night sky of stars and are overwhelmingly impressed with the sweep and majesty of the heavens. And they do not think that disbelief in the supernatural in any way detracts from the depth of such feelings.

In the Soviet Union we find the only nation in the world where Socialist Humanism, including the technical Marxist philosophy of Dialectical Materialism, is the prevailing doctrine and where the governmental authorities officially side with and support the campaign to substitute the procedures of modern science for those of old-time religion. It is essential to remember that the dominant Greek Orthodox Church of old Russia was in almost all respects, intellectually as well as morally, inferior to the Catholic and Protestant Churches of the West. As Professor Julius Hecker puts it, the ascetic outlook on life of the Orthodox Church "was directed not merely toward the mortification of the flesh, but equally toward the mortification of the mind." In Holy Russia before the Revolution, unlike as in Western Christianity, there never took place, any movements that were successful in substantially reforming or liberalizing the Church, all such attempts being promptly and harshly suppressed.

Indeed; in 1917 the Russian Church had reached the very depths of decadence, with the corrupt, licentious and half-illiterate monk Rasputin controlling it through his personal sway over the Tsar and his court. Most of the superstitions which the Soviet Union has been trying to eradicate are of a sort which the bulk of church members in America would consider relics of the Dark Ages. For example, part of the old agricultural protection ritual in Russia was to have a procession march through the fields led by a Greek Orthodox priest, who would sprinkle holy water over the earth to the accompaniment of a chant such as the following:

"Worms and grass-hoppers! Mice and rats! Ants, moles, and reptiles! Flies and horseflies and hornets! And all flying things that wreak Destruction. I forbid you in the name of the Savior come on earth to suffer for men. I forbid you in the name of the all-seeing cherubim and seraphim who fly around the heavenly throne. I forbid you In the name of the angels and the millions of heavenly spirits standing in the glory of god, I forbid you to touch any trees, fruitful or unfruitful, or leaf or plant or flower, I forbid you to bring any woe on the fields of these people."

No one can doubt that the Soviet farm program would have ended in failure had the peasants continued to rely on such primitive mumbo-jumbo. The Russian Communists have naturally utilized every conceivable device that might help uproot the superstitions of the workers and peasants, including the very interesting and effective anti-religious museums, which are equally pro-science in many of the big cities. But most far-reaching of all in its consequences upon religion has been the great social and economic progress of the U.S.S.R. The Marxist theory is, in Lenin's words, that

"In modern capitalist countries the basis of religion is primarily *social*. The roots of modern religion are deeply embedded in the social oppression of the working masses and in their apparently complete helplessness before the blind forces of Capitalism. Fear of the blind force of capital-blind because its action cannot be foreseen by the masses-a force which at every step in life threatens the worker and the small businessman with a "sudden," "unexpected," "accidental" destruction and ruin, bringing in their train, beggary, pauperism, prostitution, and deaths from starvation-this is THE tap-root of modern religion."

The truth is that the social-economic roots of religion are well on the way toward being totally abolished in Soviet Russia. With unemployment non-existent and economic security guaranteed, with health and education and old age all properly provided for, with art and culture constantly expanding and increasingly available, the masses of the people in

the U.S.S.R. no longer have their old need for the consolations and escape mechanisms of supernaturalism. And they no longer require the moral sanctions of traditional religion because the newer principles of Socialist Humanism are providing them with an inclusive code of life that unifies the country as a whole and also the individual personalities within it. In general it is possible to say that the situation in Soviet Russia indicates the prospect, for the first time in history, of a great and populous nation becoming totally free from supernatural distractions and able to concentrate wholly upon human welfare on this earth.

In other words, lip service in the supposedly Christian nations of the West to an outworn faith and to an outworn code of morals derived from it, prevents the development, which has taken place in the Soviet Union, of a positive philosophy and ethics appropriate to a modern civilization based on science and the machine.

It remains to be said that the progress of Socialist Humanism in the U.S.S.R., has not, as hostile reports would indicate, been tied up with the persecution of religion. In Tsarist Russia the official and government-supported Greek Orthodox Church was extremely active in persecuting all minority religious groups, whether Roman Catholic or Protestant, Hebrew, Buddhist, or Mohammedan. Today all religions in the Soviet Union are on an absolutely equal basis. And though localized excesses against the Church undoubtedly occurred in the first tumultuous years of the Revolution, the Government has from the start upheld principles of freedom of conscience and religious worship, which are guaranteed in their Constitution. The bitterly hostile attitude of the Church toward the Socialist state since its inception shows clearly enough why priests and other religious persons have not infrequently been punished, and even shot, for counter-revolutionary activity against the Soviet Republic. In such cases they have simply been treated the same as others committing the same offence.

The Soviet Government, heeding the example of countries like the United States, early decreed the separation of Church and State, thus ending the special privileges, including public subsidies, of the Greek Orthodox religion. The government also took control of the schools away from religious organizations and ruled that the Church should confine itself to strictly religious activities. Parents can teach what they choose about religion to their children at home, and religious rites are freely permitted for births, marriages and burials according to the desires of the family concerned. Of course, a great many churches have been closed and either demolished or converted into such secular institutions as schools, recreation centers or museums. No mere majority vote of the people in a community



leads to the shutting down of a church; before this step is taken an overwhelming proportion of citizens must be in favor of it. The number of churches, synagogues and mosques still open in the Soviet Union is as high as 60 per cent of the total prior to 1917, with more than 50,100 priests, rabbis, and other religious officials carrying on their accustomed duties. Those who travel through the U.S.S.R, can attend church services wherever they go and see for themselves, as I have done on numerous occasions, that religion, rather than being "officially" suppressed, is functioning freely and widely in Soviet Russia.



**Painting of Corliss Lamont by Diego Rivera**

Corliss Lamont was denied a Passport because of his political activities, so he went to Mexico where none was needed. There he did the normal thing: he met with like-minded persons, one of whom was the famous Muralist, Diego Rivera, who painted him at his desk with the 1961 pamphlet "Crime Against Cuba" visible. Sad note: the Lilies are from Frida Kahlo's funeral.

## CORLISS LAMONT'S ESSAY ON HUMANISM AND DEMOCRACY

Humanist principles demand the widest possible extension of democracy to all relevant aspects of human living. The Humanist conception of democracy naturally incorporates earlier contributions to the democratic ideal such as the guarantees embodied in the American Bill of Rights, and the stirring battle cry of the French Revolution, "Liberty, Equality, Fraternity." Also Humanists the world over subscribe to the internationally valid tenets of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights adopted by the United Nations General Assembly in 1948.

Democracy is of course a method as well as a goal. It is the most intelligent method of conducting political life, of carrying through social changes, and of settling disagreements in the realm of public affairs. The life of reason-the appeal to the supreme court of the mind for which philosophy stands implies in its very essence peaceful persuasion through the free exchange and competition of ideas in the wide arena of social discussion. The philosophic ideal is the transformation of our bitter social and economic disputes.

As a minority position at present, Humanism must defend democracy on the grounds of both the social good and sheer self interest. Only if the channels of opinion are kept open can the Humanist viewpoint hope to win a majority in the nation and the world.

A true democracy welcomes differences and disagreements and cherishes, as a creative force in society, minority criticisms of existing customs and prevailing patterns of thought. The democratic spirit is not dogmatic, for it recognizes the value of constant challenges to basic assumptions. The crackpot may turn out to be the trailblazer; the genius usually starts off as a dissident minority of one; and many outstanding leaders of the human race spent much of their earlier life in a jail or prison camp.

Humanism, then, urges complete democracy as both an end and a means; and insists that the idea of democracy has great Platonic dialogues carried on in legislative bodies and the organs of public opinion-dialogues, however, that in due course have a definite outcome and therefore do not end as inconclusively as most of those in which Socrates took part.

Humanism's support of the democratic way is a matter of both idealism and realism. To quote Professor Reinhold Niebuhr's epigram, "Man's capacity for justice makes democracy possible; but man's inclination to injustice makes democracy necessary." Democracy is a

comparatively new thing in the world; and a very radical thing. Violence, bloodshed, coercion, and war-both civil and inter-national -are the old, traditional methods of resolving deep-going conflicts of opinion and interest. Such methods have been wasteful, in terms of human life and economic dislocation, beyond all computation. Often they have succeeded in curing one evil only by substituting another.

Since Humanism as a functioning credo is so closely bound up with the methods of reason and science, plainly free speech and democracy are of its very lifeblood. For reason and scientific method can fully flourish only in an atmosphere of civil liberties and the free flow of information.

Humanism envisions an equitable society where Humanists and everyone else can express unorthodox ideas on any subject without risking persecution, prosecution, execution, exile, obloquy, or loss of employment.

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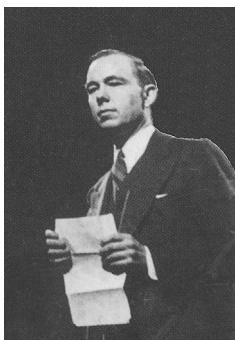


Photo taken in 1941 at Madison Square Garden in New York, during a speech in support of American-Soviet Friendship, at which Corliss's father, Thomas W. Lamont, of J.P. Morgan, also spoke, supporting both his son and the issue at hand.

This following description of the Philosophy of Humanism was written by Corliss Lamont for *The Humanist* magazine.

## **What is Humanism?**

**Humanism** is a philosophy of joyous service for the greater good of all humanity in this natural world and advocating the methods of reason, science and democracy. There are TEN central propositions in the Humanist philosophy.

**First**, Humanism believes in a naturalistic metaphysics of attitude toward the universe that considers all forms of the supernatural as myth; and that regards Nature as the totality of being and as a constantly changing system of matter and energy which exists independently of any mind or consciousness.

**Second**, Humanism, drawing especially upon the laws and facts of science, believes that humans are an evolutionary product of the Nature of which we are a part; that our minds are indivisibly conjoined with the functioning of our brains; and that as an inseparable unity of body and personality we can have no conscious survival after death.

**Third**, Humanism, having its ultimate faith in human beings, believes that we possess the power or potentiality of solving our own problems, through reliance primarily upon reason and scientific method applied with courage and vision.

**Fourth**, Humanism, in opposition to all theories of universal determinism, fatalism, or predestination, believes that human beings, while conditioned by the past, possess genuine freedom of creative choice and action, and are, within certain objective limits, the masters of their own destiny.

**Fifth**, Humanism believes in an ethics or morality that grounds all human values in this-earthly experiences and relationships and that holds as its highest goal the this-worldly happiness, freedom, and progress-economic, cultural, and ethical-of all humankind, irrespective of nation, race, or religion.

**Sixth**, Humanism believes that the individual attains the good life by harmoniously combining personal satisfactions and continuous self-development with significant work and other activities that contribute to the welfare of the community.

**Seventh,** Humanism believes in the widest possible development of art and the awareness of beauty, including the appreciation of Nature's loveliness and splendor, so that the aesthetic experience may become a pervasive reality in the life of human beings.

**Eighth,** Humanism believes in a far-reaching social program that stands for the establishment throughout the world of democracy, peace, and a high standard of living on the foundations of a flourishing economic order, both national and international.

**Ninth,** Humanism believes in the complete social implementation of reason and scientific method; and thereby in democratic procedures, and parliamentary government, with full freedom of expression and civil liberties, throughout all areas of economic, political, and cultural life.

**Tenth,** Humanism, in accordance with scientific method, believes in the unending questioning of basic assumptions and convictions, including its own. Humanism is not a new dogma, but is a developing philosophy ever open to experimental testing, newly discovered facts, and more rigorous reasoning. Human beings, using their own intelligence and cooperating liberally with one another, can build an enduring citadel of peace and beauty upon this Earth.

By Corliss Lamont, 1990.

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## **Note:**

It seems appropriate at this point to comment about the missing Chapters. The entirety of the Chapters that would normally follow here, from the book "You Might Like Socialism," can be found on the Corliss Lamont Web site at [www.corliss-lamont.org](http://www.corliss-lamont.org). Many of the Chapters contain extremely detailed expansions on how Socialist planning might someday have been organized in the United States. Also, some Chapters describe in glowing detail the progress regarding the development of Socialism in the Soviet Union: the USSR's amazing accomplishments in turning an agrarian society into a major industrial country against great odds, while defending itself against enemies within and without. That it became totalitarian was not foreseen or even inevitable. Sadly, leadership that brutalized whole segments of its own population in its fearful attempt to safeguard its own power, must be held responsible. Many were accused; ultimately, who shall we say....actually betrayed the original intent of the People's Revolution? Perhaps, more relevant to present day worries is the attention he paid to the rise of militarism and fascism and worrisome world situations preceding WWII, that are included in his complete work.

Corliss Lamont was exploring, in 1938, the thorny questions regarding the rise of Fascism and issues of resistance to Socialist collectivism, treatment of dissidents, and philosophical and political challenges to Stalin's leadership. Remember, there was no Google or nor even WikiLeaks in those days. Witness accounts and unbiased information were difficult to obtain, and slow in delivery, by steamship or by cable.

With this re-issuing, in the editor's judgment, the detail of these chapters seems much less relevant to the present day discussion, except to benefit us in hindsight knowing how these issues played-out historically. The intent of Corliss Lamont was certainly to offer something concrete and tangible in the way of details, but after 70 years, these details might now be perceived as a little rigid in their specificity. We now have organizational tools that Corliss Lamont could never have imagined at the time! Remember, this was written in 1939.

Therefore large portions of his book are not included here. We refer you to the entire original work "You Might Like Socialism" that can be found on Corliss Lamont's own Web site: [www.corliss-lamont.org](http://www.corliss-lamont.org)

Here follows Beth's Commentary on some philosophical and historical considerations regarding "Means and Ends," loyalty, and justification of violence as regards Socialism: These following selected paragraphs, also found elsewhere in his book, describe the thoughtful

considerations in the writings of Corliss Lamont regarding whether a “noble end” justifies a “violent means.” Remember, he was dealing with the ideas of dictatorship, repression, revolution and violence, all of which, regardless of the cause, many will still find repulsive today. At that time the world was hearing about executions in the Soviet Union!

*How Was Corliss Lamont Responding To Those Who Were Asking These Serious Questions? One Three-Paragraph Response By Corliss Lamont Is As Follows:*

“What about the recent purges in the U.S.S.R., and do they indicate a trend away from democracy? I do not think so. The purges are now definitely over, it seems. In any case they were transitory phenomena which do not represent the fundamentally democratic direction in which the country is moving. I do not like violence, I do not approve of executions, I do not like any sort of bloodshed. But I can hardly blame the Soviet Government for dealing sternly with the plotters and wreckers who aimed to pull down the structure of the first Socialist society.

Whether these enemies were out-and-out Fascist agents from abroad; followers of Leon Trotsky or Nicolai Bukharin, aiming to overthrow by force, the present Soviet regime; generals with Napoleonic ambitions; or White Russians seeping over the far- eastern border from their big emigre settlements in Manchuria; it seems to me that they may have deserved the utmost severity.”

“I, like so many others, was deeply shocked and troubled by the series of treason trials at Moscow. But after reading the long and detailed verbatim testimony of the three big trials-a check-up which few critics of Soviet justice have bothered to make-and after careful consideration of the main factors involved, I felt no doubt of the defendants’ guilt and of the genuineness of their sweeping and frequently surprising confessions. For years Trotsky, burning with resentment because the Soviet people refused to follow his hair-brained policies, and driven to the most fearful extremes by his megalomaniac itch for political power, has been openly agitating on behalf of a violent counter-revolution against the Soviet Government. Both he and his followers have made it clear that they consider any means toward this end justified, And they actually succeeded in 1934 in assassinating Sergei Kirov, one of the top Soviet leaders. Since Trotsky and his fellow-conspirators could count on no mass support in Russia, it is easy to see why the natural result was terrorist plotting and, as a last desperate measure, even co-operation with foreign governments interested in bringing about the downfall of the Soviet regime.”

*Another Relevant Quote, Regarding Violence, from Corliss Lamont's Writings is as Follows:*

“However, let no one think for a moment that I like dictatorship of any variety as a form of government. In fact I sharply dissent from these radicals who sometimes portray a Left dictatorship as a lovely and beautiful thing in itself. But when it is obvious that dictatorship is essential for progress, I cannot do otherwise than to grit my teeth and support it, bearing as best I can the many cruel and violent things that it implies. I do not expect a dictatorship, even when managed by the most idealistic radicals, to avoid becoming involved in very un-idealistic actions. And that is why I have never been greatly surprised at the violence which has taken place in the Soviet Union, much of which I am convinced is an integral part of dictatorship as such, whether proletarian or otherwise.

As I have shown elsewhere in this book, the visible trend toward democracy has been very marked in Soviet Russia. There, in the world's one Socialist country, the people already enjoy economic, cultural, sex and racial democracy; and they are well on their way toward full political democracy, and they stand unwaveringly for international democracy. This outcome of events in the U.S.S.R. is by no means the first example in history of democracy being advanced through revolution. It is, indeed, only the latest instance of this phenomenon. For it should not be forgotten that the democratic privileges and the protective civil rights to which we have grown accustomed in the West were the result of centuries of bitter and violent struggle against monarchical and religious absolutisms upheld by intransigent ruling classes.

I was once cut off the radio when I came to a passage in an address in which I made a mild and qualified comparison between the Russian and the American Revolutions. But I think that I can safely state here that the American nation actually did win its characteristic institutions of democracy through a revolutionary war of five years duration. And for many years following the end of that war in 1781, the American Government did not treat at all gently the Tories who had sided with King George III or who still wished to see the newly founded Republic return to the King's rule. Americans, therefore, cannot with consistency deny the present right of oppressed peoples to throw off the yoke of Twentieth Century autocracies, even if revolutions are essential to do the job; nor criticize too harshly any drastic measures on the part of recently liberated nations to secure their gains against domestic and foreign enemies.”



### *Another of Corliss Lamont's observations:*

“History clearly shows, not only that the defenders of the *status quo* always fight a new social order to the last gasp, but also that bitter dissension usually develops among the makers of far reaching revolutions. The Revolution in Russia is the most far-reaching that has ever occurred, since it abolishes and not just re-arranges private property in production and distribution, the struggles revolving around it are inevitably bound to be more ferocious than in other cases.”

### *Another quote follows:*

Corliss Lamont then goes on to say that a counter-revolution against the established Socialist government in U.S.S.R. is not likely to be successful, because of “the progress of the people. These things are simply not going to happen in the Soviet Union. And I for one am glad that at least in one land violent revolution is once and for all over and done with.”

What a shame that this turned out not to be true. But, at the time, this is what he truly believed. Further, he points out his disappointment, especially in the US, with those whom he expected to be idealistically open to a more long-range view of the situation, in these next three paragraphs:

### *Corliss Lamont was disappointed in Intellectuals*

“Unfortunately, however, many liberals and radicals in foreign countries have become quite confused over the internal troubles which the U.S.S.R. has experienced. A number of them have joined either the international brigade of Soviet-haters or the association of fair-weather friends. Intellectuals such as my former teacher and colleague, Professor John Dewey of Columbia University, have aligned themselves with the professional enemies of the Soviet people and have allowed themselves to become regular publicity agents on behalf of the Trotskyites. Most of Trotsky's defenders in America, are, like Dr. Dewey himself, New York intellectuals. Trotsky as an individual seems to have a fatal fascination for such people. They view him as a brilliant, dashing, heroic, misunderstood intellectual, quite similar to themselves, whose dramatic role as Lucifer of the world revolutionary movement arouses all their sentimental impulses. To these incurable romantics Stalin appears prosaic and unexciting in comparison, despite the fact that in a quiet and unspectacular way he has played the outstanding part in the consolidation of Soviet Socialism.”

"I am convinced that today the chief factor holding back the full flowering of Soviet democracy and especially of the proper psychological atmosphere for it, is the constant threat of military aggression on the part of foreign powers, together with their constant attempts within the borders of the U.S.S.R. to sabotage and carry on espionage work and enlist for their own hostile purposes whatever dissident individuals they may still discover. With spies of the German War Ministry developing into a regular plague in the United States and all over South America, we can be sure that the Nazis are stopping at nothing in nearby Russia, which they still regard as their foremost enemy."

"The ultimate aim of the Fascists and their allies in every nation is to crush the Soviet Republic, to put an end to the ever more successful Socialist commonwealth whose stirring example fills the masses of people in capitalist countries with what the Japanese so charmingly call "dangerous thoughts." As long as the foreign situation remains as menacing as it is today, one can hardly expect the Russians to act as if they were surrounded by nothing but sweetness and light. Toward the enemy within the gates and the enemy outside they must necessarily maintain an attitude of stern vigilance."

*Another observation by Corliss Lamont, in commenting on his 1938 trip to the Soviet Union is as follows:*

"And in all our contacts we found hardly a trace of that psychology of fear which certain observers have claimed was ruling the Soviet people on account of the recent liquidation of counter-revolutionary elements. Nor did we meet suspicion or hostility because of our status as foreigners."

It might be appropriate to mention here that materials and posters and research writings were confiscated upon their return to the US. As Corliss Lamont was deemed, unjustly, to be a subversive, it was assumed that he would be carrying propaganda materials from the USSR.

A complete accounting of his trips to the USSR and of accusations by the House Un-American Activities Committee and assertions by Senator Joseph McCarthy can be found in Corliss Lamont's book "*Freedom Is As Freedom Does*." This history describes in detail outrageous infringements upon the Civil Liberties of Americans by these Congressional entities. And, Corliss Lamont, himself would be so outraged and dismayed to know that for all of the heroic efforts of millions of patriotic Americans through public and military service, protests, lawsuits, and attempts to modify and nullify laws that deny our precious Freedoms, that they are still in jeopardy!

**Note: In 1938, Margaret and Corliss Lamont traveled to the USSR for the purpose of observing first hand, and studying the various points of progress in the development of Socialism. Corliss wrote favorable reports about the experiences in his book: *Russia Day By Day*, describing their encounters in interviewing people, as they freely toured cities and collective farms.**



**This lovely Lamont Family portrait, taken many years later, shows Wife Margaret; Daughters Margo, Anne, Florence; and Son Hayes with Corliss.**

## *Now follows Commentary, from Beth's Human Values Blog:*

For Corliss Lamont to have made, even at the above date, such an accepting and even blasé comment about “liquidation of counter-revolutionary elements,” sounds to me quite shocking, now, looking backward, and even understanding his passion and fervor for the cause. Today, we might shrug and say that, obviously, “he had drunk the Kool-Aide.” This poses an interesting paradox: the man who continued to champion our own Civil Liberties and later, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights for all of humankind, to be beguiled into believing that executions were essential in order to protect the newly-developing system that he passionately believed would in-time promote human progress and equality. There is something definitely discordant in this disconnect between “means” and “end.”

Strangely, in 2008, we've not progressed in the matter of ethics as a nation. This is still a popular and patriotic stance: kill those whom you deem to be enemies. I heard the words, “find and kill Osama bin Laden” from the lips of one whom I expected, instead, might use the words, “bring to justice,” in a more statesmanly pronouncement. Unfortunately, one must not be seen as a “wimp” when running for office in the country whose leaders have been hell-bent on military domination of selected sovereign nations, and whose citizens have mostly been beguiled into believing the stated “irrational” (new word?) for doing so.

## *No Google in those days!*

We must remember that Corliss Lamont did not have the luxury of instant information resources that today we have at our fingertips. There were official observers and writers about these trials-for-treason who had vouched for their authenticity and the confessions of those accused. Corliss must have had much difficulty in determining and searching-out what he believed to be the truth and weeding-out what he surely believed to be pure anti-Socialist propaganda. Realizing that information came by steamship or transatlantic cable, not available on Google or even WikiLeaks, searching out the truth was a formidable challenge.

So very much has transpired since Corliss Lamont wrote this book in 1939. First of all, he himself, during his lifetime had wisely begun to re-appraise many of the events that had taken place in the Soviet Union. For instance, his previous comments about Leon Trotsky and Nicolai Bukharin as surely being guilty—years later he acknowledged that the “show-trials”

as they came to be known, were unjust violations of the civil liberties of those who were accused, during that specific time, and even subsequently.

### *"Strangling the menacing infant of Socialism in its cradle"*

I can certainly understand his mind-set and the rationale, and his recognition that the Soviet Union had been militarily attacked explicitly for the purpose of "strangling" the menacing infant of Socialism in its cradle," with tragic loss of lives. The threat was not imagined; it was real, since, in 1918 the United States and its allies had actually sent troops into Russia to fight against the Bolsheviks, who had since established themselves as the legitimate government of Russia. The Allies, and including U.S. President Woodrow Wilson personally, were fearful that the Russian Revolution would inspire similar actions by the workers of other capitalist countries.

Corliss Lamont, only 20 years later, was dealing still with these realities. On the one hand he envisioned the ideal of Socialism as a shining beacon in the darkness toward which to aspire, with it necessarily needing to struggle and to protect itself against all obstacles that it was encountering on the way. On the other hand he placed undeserved trust in Joseph Stalin, who had risen ruthlessly to the top leadership position. Hind-sight allows us to call it naiveté, but when immersed in the movement, we call it steadfast and unwavering belief in the cause. Some in the Russia of today will still champion Stalin, believing that his heroic efforts in the "great patriotic war" saved the nation.

### *Struggle for power! Who betrayed the Revolution?*

Other students of U.S.S.R. history, as the extensive writings of Nicolai Bucharin eventually began to come to light, and he was somewhat rehabilitated posthumously by official recognition, know that he is fully vindicated and was faithful to Socialist ideals, but differed in leadership decisions. Had Lenin lived, or Bucharin been able to prevail, the ultimate damage and the mistrust that was generated by Stalin's fears and over-reaction to all threats perceived and real, and that moved the country into totalitarian control, might have been averted. We can never know.

Nicolai Bucharin was perceived to be a threat. He became an "enemy of the state;" therefore he must be eliminated. Leon Trotsky must be tried, even in absentia, to show that he was an "enemy of the state." Both of these men were very intelligent, charismatic leaders with strong ideas and who constituted a real challenge to Joseph Stalin. I truly believe that Stalin was responsible for Lenin's death as well, seeing Lenin as being the

ultimate obstacle to his own leadership. Lenin, himself, had even warned that Stalin was untrustworthy. But, none of this information was available at the time that Corliss Lamont was appraising the situation.

### *Continuing threat to Russia:*

Observing world situations in this year of 2008, ninety years later, it occurs to me that even after the Soviet Union has been dissolved, that Russia is still under assault from hostile forces that surround it. NATO is designed to protect whom from what? I would feel terribly threatened if I were Russian. The installation of radar in the Czech Republic; creating missile bases in Poland; the meddling by the US in Georgia to secure a pipeline that by-passes Russia? All of these instances are of a provocative nature. How should Russia respond?

### *That old ploy: "he did it first!"*

Try as I might, I simply cannot advocate or condone the use of violence as justified when threatened or even assaulted. To defend oneself against an aggressor is one thing, but then, at what point does the defender become the aggressor? My kids learned that they couldn't use that old ploy: "But, he did it first!" The ethical answer is still the same: if you judged it to be wrong, then it's twice as bad to repeat it! The one-upsmanship tactic is rendered obsolete in the same way. Ask the International Criminal Court!

### *Negotiating with power?*

Being a staunch supporter of the potential for peace embodied in The United Nations, I keep saying: negotiate! Negotiate! Negotiate! But then, whoa, wait a minute! A picture of the murderous Siege of Stalingrad pops into my mind! How do you negotiate with the onslaught of an advancing army? Or consider facing an overwhelming, devastating power, as in Rwanda? How do you negotiate your way out of the torturous Gulags? Treblinka? Auschwitz? Guantanamo? We need the interception of a Real Peacemaking and Peacekeeping Force to intervene in behalf of the People; protecting those who cannot protect themselves! Responsibility to Protect!

### *Would I have killed Hitler?*

When I even speak of negotiations, I'm accused of being a "wimp." My accuser challenged me with this question: "If you had a crystal ball and could have seen into the future in 1933, would you have killed Hitler before he could commit his heinous crimes?" Well, besides being a metaphysical

nightmare, in which the necessary hindsight after a “future” fact was not available, nor could there have been clairvoyance in which the crimes might have been anticipated, no crime would yet have happened. I had no definitive answer. This amounts to "Thought Police." To base an execution on your belief that someone WILL commit a crime is in itself, a crime. Isn't this what happened to Nicolai Bucharin? How many die for their "beliefs?"

### *Unethical to willfully kill!*

My son, at age seven, was questioning capital punishment, saying, “If killing is bad, then the guys who kill the killers are bad, too!” Seemed like perfect logic to both of us. I was privileged to be in Rome to attend the founding of the now newly operational International Criminal Court which opts for no death penalty, even as punishment for Crimes Against Humanity, but imprisonment and restitution, instead. I listened intently to all the arguments preceding this decision that was finally taken after great debate. The worries were that the Court would be a “toothless tiger” without a death penalty. The majority of nations represented there opted for a more ethical approach of not killing convicted killers but sentencing them to life imprisonment instead. The US position favored capital punishment. US Ambassador Scheffer did not sign the founding document, citing another concern: that American military personnel might actually be accused of War Crimes, as the US meets its military obligations around the world!

One of the last things that Bill Clinton did before leaving the Presidency was to sign the International Criminal Court Protocol. One of the first things that George Bush did after the Supreme Court put him in the White house was to UN-sign it! Never before in the history of the United Nations had a document been UN-SIGNED.

It is not enough for the US to cause ‘collateral damage’ by accidentally bombing villages or "inadvertently" starving children with sanctions. Apparently the US reserves the right to, and fully intends to, Commit Crimes Against Humanity, for which it does not wish to be charged! Why else would our US Leadership take this shameful stand?

The rules of engagement in the War on Terror are so confusing to me. Apparently the US can bomb whole villages and murder families, but Soldiers cannot pee on their dead bodies? We can blow up a mosque, but we must not burn a sacred book? Obviously these rules must have been adopted from a Monty Python skit!

My own personal Code of Ethics reminds that there are things that I would die for, but there is nothing that I would kill for, regardless of what the perceived benefits might be.

All Human Rights are literally ground-up and destroyed in the ruthless and conscienceless machinery of war. War is a for-profit Racket!

*Corliss Lamont said he “stayed loyal over-long.”*

Corliss Lamont was subject to much criticism when he tended to justify the “show-trials” of dissidents, under Stalin, as they have come to be called. I can certainly understand his “believing over-long,” as he put it,” that the show-trials were legitimate. With the luxury of looking backward and reviewing more information that has come to light, we can confirm that the bedazzlement and continuing faith in the ideals of the 1917 Bolshevik Revolution, envisioned as a means of promoting the democratic rights of the people, the “soldiers, the sailors and the peasants” to live in peace and prosperity, actually became its own litmus test of one’s ability to remain steadfast in an atmosphere of hate and fear.

*Sidney Hook’s Erroneous Statement about Corliss Lamont in his book “Out Of Step”*

Appropriate here is a little vignette from personal conversation with Corliss Lamont. One of his cohorts and critics was fellow philosopher, Sidney Hook, whom he actually admired, although Hook ultimately and vehemently renounced his original approval of Socialism, even Party membership, almost to becoming a right-winger. When Hook’s book *Out Of Step* was published, Corliss laughed aloud at reading the description Hook had written about him. Hook had boldly stated that he had recruited Corliss and his wife, Margaret Irish, into the Communist Party. Corliss thought that this was immensely funny and was shaking his head, saying that this was utterly preposterous! When we urged him to publish a response, since he was already in his nineties, and it seemed very important for him to do so during his lifetime, he literally boomed out his reply: “Why should I bother refuting such an allegation? It is total nonsense, but it doesn’t make much difference now, does it? Besides, anyone who knows me, knows that it isn’t true. I was, and still am, an Independent!

Corliss Lamont's steadfast commitment was to ideals of Socialism as stated by Vladimir I. Lenin in describing the tasks at hand: "In every socialist revolution,...and in the socialist revolution in Russia which began on October 25, 1917—the principal task of the proletariat, and of the poor



peasants, is the positive or constructive work of setting up an extremely intricate and delicate system of new organizational relationships extending to the planned production and distribution of the goods required for the existence of tens of millions of people. Such a revolution can be successfully carried out only if the majority of the population, primarily the majority of the working people, engage in independent creative work as makers of history." Corliss Lamont saw this as an extremely exciting challenge!

*The following paragraph is commentary written by Beth Lamont regarding Corliss Lamont's stand on these issues taken from the Preface to his Eighth Edition of The Philosophy of Humanism that was re-printed 1996.*

"In these recent years some earth-shaking events have taken place. One of them was the end of the Cold War between the U. S. and the Soviet Union, strangely leaving those persons who had long promoted friendship between the two countries still unforgiven for their "un-American activities" -among them, Corliss Lamont. He deplored the artificially induced anti-Communist hysteria which still prevails in the U. S., still shaping our foreign policy and eroding our own democracy. Corliss Lamont had been intrigued with the concept of a planned economy guaranteeing full employment and equitable access to health care and education, and in the interest of human dignity wanted to see the "great experiment" succeed. But if Socialism has failed, what of Capitalism?

Capitalism fails to honor its own workers, fails to nurture the new generation and the powerless, fails to protect and safeguard our one and only human habitat, and creates without conscience death-machines to sell to the fearful. The ideal of valuing people over profits is a long-range wisdom which will reinvent itself as governments try to deal with the societal problems emanating from the almighty profit motive."

*Father and Son at the same podium in support of the Soviets!*

Corliss Lamont's participation in support of Socialist ideals over the years never wavered, even though he suffered accusations from Joseph McCarthy and surprisingly, insults from his philosopher peers. In 1941 at Madison Square Garden in New York City both Corliss Lamont and his Father, Thomas W. Lamont, a J.P.Morgan partner, spoke on the same podium in behalf of American Soviet Friendship. This was doubly supportive, in that an "Ambassador" from Wall Street was acknowledging the need to support the Soviet Union while publicly endorsing his own Son's pro-Socialist stance.

Corliss Lamont, throughout his full lifetime, continued supporting Leftist ideals, especially his Leftist friends, and Leftist publications and their courageous and heroic informational efforts. Still on Corliss's agenda were many Socialist oriented activities and even Communist Party appeals, for instance, but, in his role as a fiercely "Independent Thinker," he often voiced disapproval of some "bungling and inappropriate" organizational efforts, plus some ineffective, strictly top-down leadership and planning.

### *Socialism in the State of New York:*

Corliss Lamont identified more with the American Labor Party, even running as a Candidate for United States Senator from New York State in 1952 on the ALP ticket. Always, Corliss continued to be extremely sympathetic and supportive to all who were being maligned and accused, even coerced and intimidated, during the height of the fearful, reactionary anti-Communist hysteria in the United States.

Most Americans know nothing of the fact that in 1920 five members of the Socialist Party were elected to the New York State Assembly, but were expelled on the grounds that as members of the Socialist Party, (as the report of the Judiciary Committee put it), they were part of "a disloyal organization composed exclusively of perpetual traitors." These members were Louis Waldman, who had also run on the Socialist ticket for New York Governor, Samuel Orr, Charles Solomon, August Claessens and Sam Dewitt. This case was brought before the Supreme Court, and the five members were ultimately permitted back into the Assembly. One accusation stated that they were "little Lenins, little Trotskys in our midst." A quite conservative Republican, Charles Evans Hughes, was derided as a possible "parlor pink" himself, for voting against their expulsion.

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Corliss Lamont's political campaign headquarters  
on Upper Broadway in New York City.

*Again, now in the words of Corliss Lamont:*

"We should not forget, either, that the defenders of the *status quo* always tend to minimize the amount of violence which is implicit in the functioning of the ordinary capitalist state. Without repeating my story of extra-legal violence on the part of government officials and of international war on the part of whole governments, I want to call attention to the fact that coercion or the threat of it, on behalf of certain socially recognized purposes, has been a necessary element in every state that has ever existed. The majesty of the law is only a shadow unless there stands behind it the physical power of enforcement. And the Marxist theory is that the coercive power of the state has on the whole been used, and often very harshly, on behalf of the ruling class in the community.

Since radicals are in general idealists and, in the ultimate sense, pacifists, they have often played into the hands of the reactionaries, who are almost always hardheaded, realistic men who do not hesitate to use force whenever convenient. What Marx and Lenin and Stalin have taught the radical movement is that in order to succeed, or even survive, it must on occasion fight fire with fire and employ some of the traditional capitalist methods to defeat the capitalists. This does not imply the principle that the end justifies the means; what it implies is that *some* ends justify *some* means.

Those liberals and radicals who have become disillusioned with the Communist dictatorship in the Soviet Union have in my opinion overlooked the fact that until we have a perfect society, we cannot expect to arrive at new social and economic forms through perfect methods; that until we have a perfect democracy, we cannot expect to bring about fundamental changes through perfectly democratic means. Communists and Socialists, who are in accord on most of the chief *ends* of Socialism, have disagreed primarily on the *methods* of attaining it."      end of Corliss Lamont's quote

The difficulties of trying to create a radically different society in the face of opposition by the various vested interests was staggering! The new Union of Soviet Socialist Republics was faced with difficult, perhaps unsolvable dilemmas, in order to carry out its idealistic groundbreaking plans to create a society, never before in the history of Humankind, that will benefit the ordinary citizens...the peasants, the farmers, the People! The great dilemma posed a clear-cut differentiation between acquiring the needed capital to boost the new economy and to fund industry, or the worry of reverting to the old trap and enslavement of capital-"ism," betraying the revolution dedicated to eliminating the exploitive profit-making system.

## *Trying to insulate from a Barrage of “anti” propaganda:*

When immersed in a movement, it is difficult to evaluate all criticisms from the “outside” for any grains of truth. One is apt to ignore such criticisms completely, as merely constituting anti-movement propaganda, thus it would seem essential for fervent adherents to simply disregard all unfavorable observations, even to steel oneself against such maligning, and to shrug off all caustic commentaries that will come to be seen only as blatant attempts by the “enemy” to undermine the effectiveness of the movement.

## *De-humanizing “the other”*

Justification of use of brutal tactics or extreme measures seem always to abound; it doesn’t matter which side of any struggle is using them. Witness the Gulag 1953! Witness Guantanamo 2008! The great cause, whatever it is, demands dominance! Enemies are almost essential to the cause! Demeaning, racial, religious or ethnic slurs help to dehumanize the other, and to focus attention on their inferiority or their dangerous beliefs. Kill them before they kill you! State-sponsored violence can fan ethnic animosities, even hatreds, and can turn genocidal. Some brutality that is instigated, even covertly, against an alleged, illusory enemy by government or military, soon becomes officially entrenched and subsequently becomes a matter of policy. What of the wave of Islamophobia? Muslims are evil?

## *Kill them before they kill you!*

Some actions of the individual might seem a little more spontaneous in the heat of battle. When the passions are aroused and the adrenaline is pumping and you feel that your life or your cause is on-the-line; powerful issues are at stake; you do not hesitate; courage sustains you and enables you to do what is expected of you. Just think how this principle plays out in millions of situations. This is not the time to stop and think things over, is it? No way! What are you? A shirker? A coward? You don’t desert your comrades or your cause! Your basic beliefs are threatened!

## *“Trained” to cancel our human connection*

It is happening at this very moment in hundreds of places around the world. The efforts of our US troops in Iraq and Afghanistan, the retaliation of “insurgents” or “terrorists;” all these responses are determined by the circumstances in which one is immersed, and what one believes. How can we know the Freedom Fighters from the “terrorists?”

Would I “take out” a suspected sniper who might, or might not, be firing on my unit? Would I shoot an intruder who might threaten my own children? Would I fire on a car that defied my authority and raced through my checkpoint, believing they were terrorists, learning too late it’s just a family rushing to the hospital, or would I neglect “my duty” to kill?

### *How to be a hero?*

For my own part, personally speaking, there are many things that I would die for, but there is nothing on Earth that I would kill for. The very idea of strapping explosives onto one’s own body for the purpose of killing others in a desperate valiant effort, believing fervently that it will “further the cause,” is to my thinking, an act of total insanity. Giving one’s own life to actually save others would be more understandable, and is an act that we could, under any circumstances, consider truly heroic. But to be so immersed in such belief that killing for the cause gives one heroic stature in the eyes of one’s fellows, or in the approval of a deity that is believed to have the power to confer immortality or special privileges, is incomprehensible to me and most other Peaceniks. I’m focused only on this precious world.

### *The struggle to Humanize our Democracy*

Someone always seems to suggest that you can’t make an omelet without breaking some eggs. For creating breakfast this is certainly very necessary advice. For creating a just and peaceful world the advice is a bit counter-productive, not to mention hypocritical. And, in the US for more than a century now, despite heroic efforts by hundreds of thousands of political and labor organizers and workers in behalf of justice, equality, labor rights and human rights, many of whom have been beaten, jailed and killed, remaining defiant in the face of sometimes armed and violent over-reaction in opposition to their efforts, the struggle still continues.

So much for democracy! Some say that especially in light of our “exporting of democracy” often at gunpoint to other countries, that the word should be pronounced, instead: hy-poc-racy. And with apologies to Emma Goldman, I say, if I can’t vote for Socialist ideals in this country, you can keep your democracy!

Even today in 2008, as we are witnessing a presidential campaign in the US, trying to promote the ideals of peace-lovers in the face of war, and struggling to establish any true semblance of democratic process for providing continuity of leadership is tenuous. Both candidates promote the

use of military might rather than the wisdom of statesmanship and differ only in where the troops should be sent.

### *Making War for fun and profit!*

The incongruity of using military might to foster democracy or to further the progress of humankind, I fear, is totally absurd! You simply cannot foster Peace by making war! It's rather like sponsoring a sex-orgy as a fund-raiser to support a program to promote chastity. You might have heard this strange paradox described more bluntly in street language. Some other crazy ironic juxtapositions pop into my mind. Forget such creative advice as "Making Backyard Gardens for Fun and Profit." The corporate powers-that-be...are more intent on "Making War for Fun and Profit." Just invest in the military industrial complex corporations and make a literal killing! Be all that you can be! Join the Military; kill people with whom you have no quarrel and get your college education! Such absurdities as putting these two words together: "war" and "games," no doubt was originated to teach strategy in the various war colleges, but has permeated the general culture. Children, practice your eye-hand coordination skills now; learn to kill "the other" (whatever it might be) quickly, before it kills you; you needn't bother discriminating between friend and enemy, just eliminate all threats immediately, the moment they appear, and be a winner!

### *Watch dogs? Lap dogs?*

The nightly news on all channels promotes "The War" as sensation, glitzy excitement in a cheer-leading manner, all reporting from "embedded journalists" Even tolerating government bans on photo coverage of the coffins of our own war heroes returning home; never acknowledge losses by "the enemy-du-jour." At all costs to the public's Right-to-Know, this information is not consistent with the illusion that must be perpetuated in the patriotic American mind-set, especially to insist that Congress keep funding THE WAR: The message is always: "We ARE the good guys; and you'd better believe it! The enemies to fear are terrorists, Muslims and immigrants!"

### *Who are the Good Guys?*

In 1945 I was already attuned to a Universal Ethics, but it was still expressed in religious terms, as I hadn't yet learned that I am a Humanist. When upon hearing of the bombing of Hiroshima, I knelt to "ask god's forgiveness." I had already suspected that our reputation as the good guys might be flawed or had been sacrificed upon the altar of vengeance with

bombing, not just munitions plants, but the fire-bombing of civilian non-industrial cities like Dresden.

So, where are we, as a nation, positioned on the stage of world leadership? You, Dear Reader, may have a completely different perspective on this matter. I have been participant and observer of activities at the United Nations enough to know that our position, as well as our reputation, tilts toward profit-making rather than protecting the vulnerable people of the world. This is not the stance of a promoter of Peace! The good people of this nation are unaware of the Peace possibilities that are squandered with our coercive participation in the forum of the United Nation's so-called "Security Council." This position is actually more the stance of a ruthless, conscienceless, chauvinistic, arrogant flexer of just mere muscle. Rather than an exerciser of long-range wisdom, the US participation there is more a plotter of strategy, a power-monger, a war-monger, un-heedful of all consequences to the rest of the world, unintended or otherwise.

### *"Civil" Society versus Un-Civil Sovereignty*

What is needed is real reform of the United Nations, in which the General Assembly of the whole 192 nations will make decisions that are in keeping with the best interests of the majority of Earth's inhabitants. The now seldom-used Trusteeship Council Chamber of the UN needs to become the People's House, wherein Civil Society will discuss issues that transcend sovereign borders and recommend solutions that will make much more sense than the present dangerous power-posturing of the nuclear nations.

The US must make the moral and financial commitment to support the UN Millennium Goals to eradicate hunger and poverty. This universal Goal is the only proper way for this country to assert Ethical Leadership



Screenshot of the Human Values Weblog (blog) logo.



*The following essay is from a blog post on our Human Values Network Weblog (blog), entitled: How Tolerant shall we be of other's Intolerance?*

<http://www.humanvalues.net/blog/?p=23>

An abiding dilemma for Humanists who are in the “ecumenical” position of working closely with people of all faiths, is how patient and understanding we need to be in our relationships with the rest of the world. There is the especially perplexing dilemma of how tolerant to be of other's intolerance. An old and reliable admonition that flashes in my head like neon, simply states: Do not alienate those whom you might persuade!

Those of us who are working toward a goal with other dedicated activists, are often in the position of censoring our own comments so as not to blow away our colleagues. We understand so very well that the only way that this old world is ever going to improve at all, is through cooperation and respect among those of all beliefs, cultures, and traditions, so simply out of respect for these differences, we may find ourselves limiting our own exercise of free speech. I say to myself: Try not to criticize! Be constructive! You know, the old...don't throw the baby out with the bath water routine. Do the Mommy-thing: encourage others to become aware and involved in the project or activity at hand. This is all well and good for the shared goal...up to a point!

But what can we say or do about those practices and beliefs that are completely beyond comprehension? How long to ignore or look away, or bite your tongue, and wish that you didn't have to know or feel this shame or anger. How can we contain our anger at those who refuse to acknowledge and respond to whatever “emergency” we may be dealing with. I picture some of us bailing frantically in our sinking ship, while some of our fellow passengers are outright denying that the water's even rising, and treat our concern with contempt, while still others feel there's no need for them to worry because god will save them. Yet we can't simply write-off those whose beliefs clearly endanger us; we share our sinking lifeboat with them! Not only will they not bail, some are even shooting more holes in the boat!

No wonder we get frantic and impatient! They've got to come to their senses! How can we get them to come around to a more logical way of thinking? How can we get them to recognize the real danger that we're in, instead of their mistaken constructs of how to deal with world problems? How can we persuade the powerful to relinquish a portion of their power? How can we intervene to stop the inhumane militarized mentality that

prevails on this Earth? How to stop bullying, hatred, murder, torture, ignorance, greed? Then, how to stop fear and hunger and homelessness?

Our expectations that those in power will recognize their errors and set about correcting the horrible mistakes that they've set in motion are continually dashed in disappointment. What a shock it can be to learn that those whose opinions you might once have valued, simply no longer meet your standards or your expectations. Whose vision can we trust?

You can shrug off the stupidity of a complete stranger, but what an extra shock when a member of the clan or the club fails you. What about a public official that you voted for, hoping that person would act logically, condoning. That really angers you; how could they be so stupid? Perhaps it's human nature for us to expect those in whom we place trust, or those closest to us, to think and behave "normally" as we do; they, of all people in the whole world, should know better!

The principles delineated in the Humanist Manifesto say it all! What more is there to ask than respect for all human beings and life on Earth? So then we're back to the issue of first needing to be true to and to respect our own differences: a principle which is essential to our own integrity and our own code of ethics. Courage? Conscience? Compromise?

We feel the urgency for making changes, but this heavy responsibility is indeed fraught with complex dilemmas. When shall we be courageous and uncompromising? When shall we be patient and conciliatory? Speak-up! Shut-up! The ideals of freedom of speech and democratic participation are precious and need to be fostered and protected, but unless they get a lot of exercise, they're going to get flabby. We will no longer be able to protect these freedoms.

We who recognize this syndrome of self-censorship may remember that in our own first declarations of independent thinking, we drew some negative responses, even shock or derision from our more traditional relatives or co-workers. We gathered courage over a period of time to begin to articulate the logic of our point of view more persuasively, and perhaps we learned that some even agreed with us in our Humanistic values. And what a joy it is to connect with like-minded truth-seekers! How delightful to find others who reject the so-called "authority" that has been thrust upon us, and who acknowledge that the universe is totally indifferent to us, and that respect and the exercising of moral responsibility are up to us humans.

From whatever source we draw our strength and wisdom, we know that it will take human interaction only, right here and now, for us to create

our own purpose and our own peace! In the arrogance of my youth, I had pasted onto my old manual typewriter these urgent and altruistic marching orders: "Words that might help to create Peace on Earth are trapped inside this machine! Get them out!" Now that I am elderly I feel an even more urgent admonition: "Elders Off Our Rockers! Don't Just Sit There! Share Your Hard-Earned Wisdom! In all of our interaction with others please be mindful of their own experiences. A creative rule that I always find helpful: "please don't alienate those whom you might possibly persuade."

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This completes this edition's presentation of selected paragraphs and chapters of Corliss Lamont's *You Might Like Socialism*. You are invited to read also the next Book: Lefties Are In their Right Minds, Part Two.

Its chapters will comprise more of the works of Corliss Lamont, especially containing copies of all the Pamphlets that Corliss Lamont created during his activist lifetime. Also many essays by him that appeared in print. There will be additional material about him, and excerpts from many relevant works, including addresses by other activists presented in his honor at a special Civil Liberties Forum in 2002 at Columbia Law School marking the Centenary of Corliss Lamont's birth.

There will also be some updating commentaries from this Raging Granny, who loved and worked with him. We wish for his works to be remembered and to inspire others to devote their lives to helping to create a more just and humane Democracy that cares for the needs of the people.

We are especially thrilled that his name and life's work appears for all the world to read in Philosophedia, Wikipedia and on Google. The fact that Corliss Lamont may be more known and respected among his present day new generation readers, than in the last century is a tribute to technology. His name is entered in the hallowed ground of Philosophy among his peers who may have snubbed him to his face for his political activism and for his fierce insistence upon protecting our cherished Civil Liberties against an ever creeping encroachment.

This creeping encroachment today being perpetrated upon the American People by "enemies," more domestic than foreign, I fear! What with targeted assassination, indefinite detention, torture, the new HB 347 that makes demonstrators and protestors subject to Federal arrest if prohibited by Secret Service persons.

Are we still Flirting with Fascism or have we been,....ahem,.....seduced?

*Here follows a relevant brochure published by Beth Lamont. This is written as a pledge that invites others to consider signing and is distributed freely*



## *Humanist Healing for the Woes of the World*

Planet Earth, the home of all living things and life as we know it, is in mortal danger. Fundamentalist religious fanaticism, greed, and exploits of empire, have brought us to this brink.

The Humanist Philosophy respects and embraces the efforts of all caring persons, of all faiths, of all ethnicities, of all traditions, of all nations, who take responsibility, for trying to make changes to improve the perilous conditions of Humankind, working together to foster understanding among the diverse Peoples of Earth, working toward the development of a respectful, lawful, equitable, compassionate and care-taking Culture of Peace that most of Earth's Peoples long for.

Strangely, some beliefs hold to ancient notions of vengeful deities that champion one segment of humanity over another, giving rise to fears and hatreds, militarism, fascism, violence, vengeance, exploitation, inequities, and injustices that still abound, endangering our survival as a species, jeopardizing the lives of our children, grandchildren and all the future generations.

I am concerned about this danger and, as an individual, I have the power to raise my own voice in protest. I value Life; I love my own Family and the larger family of Humankind. I revere the Human Species, and believe in the right to peaceful pursuit of individual and societal happiness. I pledge to support the ideals of a Culture of Peace, and will encourage others to do likewise. I, therefore, pledge to take responsibility to promote the following Human Survival Principles:

I, personally, and as a representative of my own ethical perspective, life-stance or faith, pledge to act with courage, in all ways short of violence, to renounce and thwart the various adverse forces that have gained the power to dominate Earth and its inhabitants. I renounce all systems of repression, whether by governmental or economic control. I support only systems that are in the best shared-interest of all of Earth's Peoples and of Earth itself.

I, personally, renounce violence and vengeance as an option to redress grievances for wrongs done to me, my people, or my ancestors. I pledge to seek justice and compensation, never before feasible, through pursuit of new lawful means, consistent with the recognized principles of the United Nations and the newly established International Criminal Court. These new tools must be fostered and ultimately established, for all times, promoting the pursuit of justice in every village and in every community.

No longer will there be impunity for the perpetrators of Crimes against Humanity. There will now begin to be justice in the Courts! I pledge to support this goal.

I agree that technology, medicine, science and biology must be harnessed to serve only the best interests of all Humankind, whether it be our means of communicating freely with each other in the pursuit of truth and democracy, and the sharing of information regarding our common interests, or for the creation of power sources that do not damage Earth's ecosystem or harm living things.

Biotechnology must not modify or claim ownership of Earth's bounty, and the benefits to Humankind in all of these areas must not be tied to a corrupt and capricious profit motive, enslaving the many and ignoring the most needy.

I pledge to work in behalf of the survival and best interests of Humankind right here and now, because I believe in the basic goodness of other human beings. I will willingly join with them in order to help to create a Culture of Peace, regardless of any known traditional beliefs that aspire to other worlds or any belief in endtimes scenarios.

I will not allow my name or my belief to be used to endorse actions that are contrary to my own personal beliefs. I will not allow my faith to be conscripted or construed in order to justify support for actions that are harmful to others, such as seeking retaliation and vengeance, or to justify terrorist acts, or the making of war against alleged and illusory enemies, with whom I have no quarrel.

If my tradition aspires to a Hereafter elsewhere, I will surely have earned my place in it as a Peacemaker. Meanwhile, I will do my best to help make Peace on Earth, and to keep my pledge in behalf of the Human Survival Principles. In doing so, I reach out my hand in respect for others of good will, showing that I hold no weapon or animosity, and expect that others will do likewise, in recognition that we humans are more alike than we are different.

These Human Survival Principles are logical and important to me and I will do my best to promote them.

Signature \_\_\_\_\_

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*Here follows a tribute to Corliss Lamont written in 1995 for the Humanist Magazine by Fred Edwards, then its Editor.*

On Wednesday, April 26, 1995, the humanist movement lost its most prominent philosopher and social activist. Dr. Corliss Lamont, age 93, died peacefully at his home in Ossining, New York. A humanist funeral was held for close family and friends in New York City on April 29. Then on May 19, humanists celebrated his life at a special memorial service held during the fifty-fourth annual conference of the American Humanist Association.

To Lamont's assembled friends and admirers, his wife Beth read a letter she had received a few days prior from Bill Clinton, who had met Corliss in 1992 and was familiar with his accomplishments. The letter read in part: Corliss gave a great deal to our country during his long, rich life. As a tire-less advocate for America's civil liberties, he challenged our nation to honor its most basic covenant with its citizens. The many struggles he fought throughout his career have helped to preserve our precious freedoms for the generations to come.

Corliss Lamont was born March 28, 1902, in Englewood, New Jersey. The day happened to be Good Friday - a coincidence his mother hoped would prove an omen of future religious devotion. However, despite his regular attendance during his youth at the Presbyterian Church of Englewood, his study of the New Testament, and his tenure as a Boy Scout, Lamont gradually came to reject his family faith. What he considered "the first big civics battle" of his life took place in 1919, when he was a student of 17 at Phillips Exeter Academy.

He had learned that, on each night before a game, the coach of the academy's baseball team was cooking the balls that would be pitched by the opposing side. Because these oven-baked projectiles were harder, they flew further when struck by Exeter batters, accounting for his team's rising number of victories. Lamont reported the unethical practice to the principal, resulting in the immediate dismissal of the coach and Lamont almost being thrown into the river by some of his disgruntled fellow students.

Corliss Lamont's father, Thomas, was a business partner of J.P. Morgan in what was then the leading banking firm in the United States. But, as Corliss declares in *Yes to Life*, his father's positions and actions on social issues "effectively contradicted the widely accepted stereotype of rich

people and Republicans as conservative or reactionary plutocrats opposed to all forms of progress and liberalism." In November 1917, after the United States had entered World War I, Thomas Lamont became an unofficial adviser to President Woodrow Wilson, proposing that limited cooperation with the Soviets could help defeat Germany. Wilson, however, would hear none of it and, a few months later, sent troops into the new Soviet Union in an ill-fated attempt to topple Lenin's government.

After the war, both of Lamont's parents were active in the peace process and the League of Nations. It was therefore not surprising that, while Corliss was at Harvard during the early 1920s, he also supported the League of Nations, debating in print his classmate Henry Cabot Lodge, Jr., son of the U.S. senator most responsible for maintaining America's isolationist policies. But Corliss stirred additional controversy when, as student vice-chair of the Harvard Union, he proposed that Socialist Party President Eugene V. Debs, communist labor organizer William Z. Foster, and radical economist Scott Nearing be invited to address the student body. His aim was simply to get an equal hearing for the viewpoints of the left. But when the governing board of Harvard Union bitterly fought his proposal, Lamont decided there might be some merit to socialism after all and launched into a serious study of the subject. Meanwhile, the speaker program at Harvard Union liberalized to a degree.

After graduating magna cum laude, Corliss Lamont studied for a year at New College in Oxford, England, living during that time in the home of Juliette and Julian Huxley. In the fall of 1925, Lamont began his doctoral studies at Columbia University and took a course under John Dewey. Then in 1928, Lamont became an instructor in philosophy at Columbia. One of the courses he taught used John H. Randall's *The Making of the Modern Mind* as a text. It was the reading of this book and the teaching of this course that turned Lamont from liberalism to democratic socialism.

Later that same year, he married Margaret Hayes Irish, a writer and researcher who held convictions similar to his own. In 1929, Lamont took up the cause of 20 scrubwomen who had been fired by Harvard when the Massachusetts authorities caught the university paying them only 35 cents an hour - two cents under the minimum wage. As the secretary of the Harvard Alumni Association, Lamont raised \$3,000 from his fellow alumni, which was paid to the women in lieu of back wages. A few years later, Harvard adopted a more enlightened labor policy.



Lamont completed his doctoral dissertation, *Issues of Immortality*, in 1932 and received his Ph.D. in philosophy from Columbia. This dissertation led to his 1935 book, *The Illusion of Immortality*, a work which, over time, became accepted as a prime reference on the nonexistence of a hereafter.

When *Humanist Manifesto I* was issued in 1933, Lamont felt that the document was too vague and incomplete to adequately express his own emerging humanist outlook, and he recoiled at its references to religious humanism. Nonetheless, he concluded that the Manifesto's formulation was the best expression of his own beliefs he had seen so far. It enabled him to clarify his personal conclusions, which became thoroughly humanist and agnostic shortly thereafter. When many of the Manifesto's signers founded the American Humanist Association in 1941, Lamont immediately joined.

After receiving his doctorate, Lamont was elected to the board of directors of the American Civil Liberties Union (a position he held for the next 20 years) and traveled with his wife Margaret on his first trip to the Soviet Union. Upon their return, he became chair of the Friends of the Soviet Union, an organization dedicated to Soviet-American cooperation.

From the start, his activism, writing, and teaching regarding the U.S.S.R. was misinterpreted. Red-baiting reporters and politicians accused him of being a "silk-shirt communist" - a falsehood he would find it necessary to deny repeatedly throughout the rest of his life. But many of his critics later admitted he was right when, in 1941, contrary to conventional wisdom, he correctly predicted that the Soviet Union would never fall to the Nazis, but would, instead, thoroughly defeat them.

In November 1942, Lamont and his father shared the podium with U.S. Vice-President Henry Wallace at a major Madison Square Garden rally in support of the U.S.S.R.'s war effort against Germany. But Corliss Lamont erred in some of his sympathetic views of the Soviet system. During the late 1930s, for example, he defended the Moscow Trials, a judicial frame-up of certain Soviet leaders who Joseph Stalin wanted out of the way.

Years later, Lamont corrected his mistakes. His first civil-liberties case began upon his arrival home from his 1932 Soviet tour. Lamont had brought back what he described as "a number of lively posters, which illustrated public health work, reproduced works of art and ridiculed the capitalist system." U.S. Customs seized the posters as seditious material. After two months of legal protest, all but three were returned, these latter being retained because they included tiny photographs of U.S. currency.

Lamont's most significant civil-liberties battles, however, commenced after the end of World War II. Anti-Communist hysteria was rife in the United States, and FBI Director J. Edgar Hoover ordered in January 1944 that Lamont be fully investigated. So in December 1945, the House Un-American Activities Committee served Lamont, as chair of the National Council of American-Soviet Friendship, with a subpoena demanding that he hand over "all books, records, papers, and documents showing all receipts and disbursements of money" by the council and its affiliated organizations, as well as "all letters, memoranda or communications from, or with, any person or persons outside and within the United States of America." In response, Lamont called a meeting of the organization's board, which voted that the subpoena should be opposed as a violation of the First and Fourth Amendments and because the organization's members and contributors might be harassed.

On February 6, 1946, Lamont testified before the committee; a month later, Richard Morford, Executive Director of the Council, also testified. Both refused to turn over any documents. Their cases went to the U.S. District Attorney in Washington, D.C., but only Morford (as the custodian of the records) was indicted and subsequently found guilty. The U.S. Supreme Court refused to hear Morford's appeal, and he ended up serving a three-month jail term in the fall of 1950.

Nearly identical contempt cases during this time period put leaders of the joint Anti-Fascist Refugee Committee and the National Federation for Constitutional Liberties in jail. And the infamous "Hollywood Ten," citing the First Amendment in 1947, ended up serving one-year jail sentences. As Lamont later wrote in *Freedom Is As Freedom Does*: [They] all deserve the gratitude of civil libertarians for their principled action in challenging the "Un-American Committee" on constitutional grounds. Although they did not achieve their ends, they set a splendid example and helped to educate the American public and the courts as to the true meaning of the Bill of Rights.

Though the government and press took notice at this time of Lamont's political views, his philosophical conclusions went largely ignored. From 1946 to 1959, he taught a lecture course at Columbia called the Philosophy of Naturalistic Humanism. This developed in 1949 into his book, *Humanism As a Philosophy*, later re-titled *The Philosophy of Humanism*, which became and remains the definitive study of humanism.

With the deaths of his father in 1948 and his mother in 1952, Lamont came into control of a vast fortune. Over the years that followed,

he contributed huge sums to Columbia and Harvard universities, as well as to the numerous causes he valued. Because of his commitment to civil-libertarian principles, and because the ACLU had too often given in to the government's efforts to hunt down leftists, Lamont left the ACLU board and, in 1951, founded the National Emergency Civil Liberties Committee, becoming its chair.

Corliss Lamont's next great civil-liberties battle began in 1953 when he was subpoenaed by Joseph McCarthy's Senate Subcommittee on Permanent Investigations. As Lamont later explained in *Freedom Is As Freedom Does*: [McCarthy] had uncovered the remarkable fact that the United States Army had included my book, *The Peoples of the Soviet Union*, in a bibliography. The listing had appeared, without my knowing about it, in an Army manual entitled *Psychological and Cultural Traits of Soviet Siberia*, published in 1953 by the Intelligence Section of the U.S. General Staff. The subcommittee sought to prove that the U.S. Army had been infiltrated at its highest levels by communists and cited this reference to Lamont's work as evidence (this despite Lamont's publication earlier that year of a pamphlet, *Why I Am Not a Communist*).

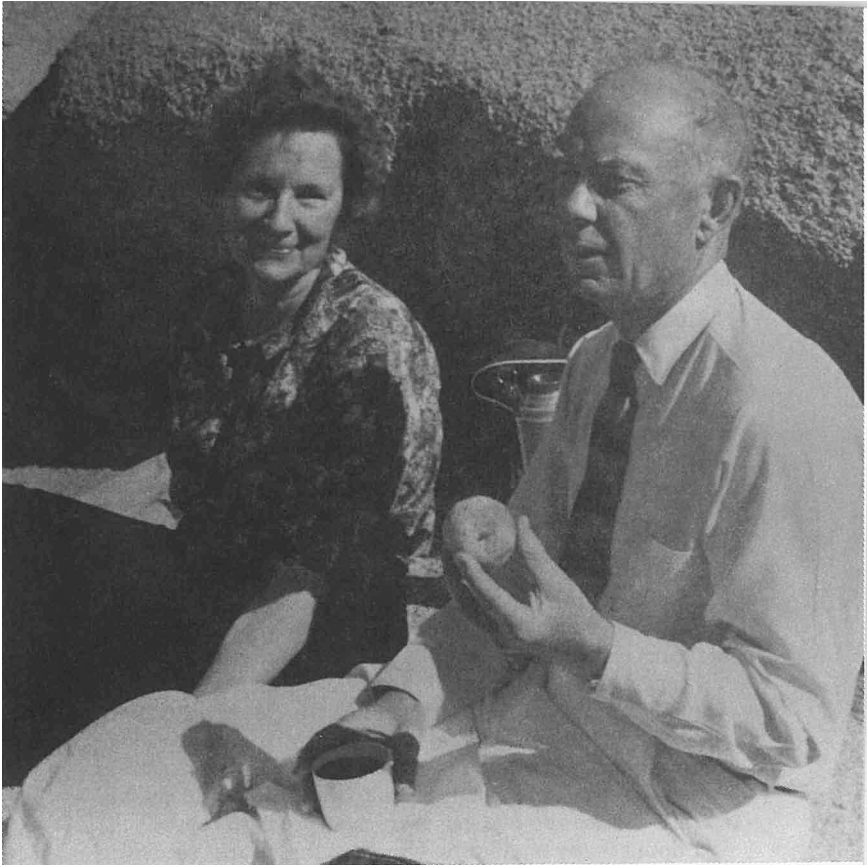
Understanding that taking the Fifth Amendment in similar hearings had not fared well in the courts, Lamont took a different tack: after affirming to tell the truth (but refusing to be sworn in and to state his reasons for such refusal), he began his testimony by making an objection to jurisdiction; this allowed him to read into the record a statement prepared by his attorney challenging the legal and constitutional power of the subcommittee to inquire into the political and religious beliefs, the associational, personal, and private activities of private citizens. He also stated that he was "not now and never had been a member of the Communist Party." He then refused to answer most of the questions put to him, referring back each time to his prepared statement.

The hearing netted McCarthy no new information, so he demanded that Lamont be cited for contempt of Congress. The Senate voted in August 1954 and a federal grand jury handed down an indictment. Lamont was arrested, pleaded not guilty, and was released on \$2,000 bail. In the two years that followed, *United States of America v. Corliss Lamont* went as far as the U.S. Second Circuit Court of Appeals before a unanimous decision came down in Lamont's favor. The precedent set by this case was successfully utilized by others.

In the summer of 1951, using his political views as justification, the U.S. State Department denied Lamont the renewal of his passport, thereby

limiting his foreign travels to only Canada and Mexico. He battled the government on this issue, ultimately filing suit. Lamont's friend, artist Rockwell Kent, had previously sued on similar grounds; so when Kent won his case in the U.S. Supreme Court in 1958, Lamont automatically won his, and was finally reissued his passport.

The 1960s saw Lamont's first marriage end in divorce. He then married author Helen Boyden Lamb. And there were new battles for civil liberties, as both husband and wife were put under surveillance and (years later) included on the Nixon administration's "enemies" list.



**This charming photo of Helen and Corliss on a picnic was taken in Maine.**

Note: Helen was a teacher and author of "Vietnam's Will To Live" also a history in her special area of expertise, entitled: Studies On India and Vietnam. Together, Helen and Corliss worked as a team in opposing the brutal invasion of Vietnam; wrote letters to JFK; put ads in the NY Times.

In 1963, Congress passed a law requiring the U.S. Postmaster General to screen all non-first class mail coming in from foreign countries and to issue postcards to the intended recipients of communist propaganda, asking if the literature was actually wanted. When Lamont received such a postcard regarding an unsolicited copy of the *Peking Review*, he filed another lawsuit. He lost in federal court but appealed to the U.S. Supreme Court, which decided unanimously in his favor in 1965. *Lamont v. Postmaster General* was a landmark decision: it was the first time the Supreme Court had struck down a congressional law because it violated the First Amendment.

A decade later, Lamont learned that the FBI maintained a 2,788-page file on him and secured a copy under the Freedom of Information Act. He discovered that for 30 years agents had monitored his radio speeches, copied his articles and his pamphlets, questioned his staff and friends - even his tennis partners -tapped his phones, inspected his tax returns, and even reviewed his cancelled checks. These revelations resulted in yet another lawsuit, *Lamont v. Department of Justice*, which secured a federal ruling in 1979 that the government had failed to show how the FBI's surveillance was "related to the FBI's duties to enforce federal law." This case set a major precedent regarding adequate grounds for government surveillance of its citizens.

Next, Lamont sued the CIA in 1976 for damages in connection with its opening of 155 of his letters. The CIA admitted that its actions were illegal under the Fourth Amendment but contended that they were justified for "national security" reasons. In 1978, the federal district court in Brooklyn, New York, found in favor of Lamont and ordered the government to pay him \$2,000 and send him a "suitable letter of regret." The court was particularly incensed over the opening of two love letters Lamont had written to his wife. It declared: "Illegal prying into the shared intimacies of husband and wife is despicable." (Helen had died in 1975 of liver cancer.)

Throughout its history, Lamont was active in the American Humanist Association and was named its president emeritus. His services were many, including representing the AHA in 1970 at the funeral of Bertrand Russell. In 1973, he was one of the original signers of *Humanist*

*Manifesto II.* In recognition of his contributions to humanism and his commitment to civil liberties, the AHA bestowed upon him its highest honor in 1977: the Humanist of the Year Award.

In 1986, Lamont married Beth (Elberta) Keehner, longtime fellow Humanist activist who shared and was devoted to advancing his ideas. And it was not long after this that Lamont's Humanism and legal aggressiveness came together in one of the most important church-state battles of recent history. In February 1988, at the end of the Reagan administration, Lamont sued the government over its federal tax aid to sectarian schools overseas.

*Lamont v. Woods* was sponsored jointly by the ACLU and Americans for Religious Liberty and included such plaintiffs as AHA President Isaac Asimov, Reformed Rabbi Balfour Brickner, Unitarian-Universalist minister Bruce Southworth, and Florence Flast, president of the National Association for Public Education and Religious Liberty. Despite the Bush administration's argument that the \$14 million in sectarian aid was part of foreign policy and, therefore, a political rather than religious issue, the U.S. Second Circuit Court of Appeals ruled in September 1991 that such aid was unconstitutional.

In June 1993, under the auspices of the Center for Cuban Studies, Corliss and Beth Lamont traveled to Cuba. Fidel Castro, who was well aware of Lamont's campaign of many years to lift the U.S. embargo of his country, gave him a lengthy audience, during which the two discussed the legal possibilities of Castro suing the U.S. government over the well-documented CIA assassination attempts on his life.

Lamont's last two years were spent in active critique of U.S. government policies he opposed. In the closing paragraphs of his memoirs, *Yes to Life*, he summed up his never ending commitment to such activism:

My final word is that in the battles that confront us today for America's freedom and welfare, our chief aim as public-spirited citizens must be neither to avoid trouble, nor to stay out of jail, nor even to preserve our lives, but to *keep on fighting* for our fundamental principles and ideals.

With such an outlook, Corliss Lamont earned many famous friends and enemies. And because he truly lived his values, he was proud to have both.

Fred Edwards  
1995

~ ~ ~

If Corliss Lamont were still with us here in New York at this time, he would indeed, be participating in the Occupy Wall Street Movement. He would certainly champion the demonstrators' Rights to make their voices heard and to call attention to the injustices and the inequities perpetrated by this cruel economic system...that grinds up workers and would-be home owners in its callous machinery and spits them out...not caring whether we live or die, or have a job or a home.

We become just so much collateral damage, hardly distinguishable from the war machinery that likewise lays waste to human lives. On earlier pages you found the appeal to Humanize the In-Humane Economic System by Beth K. Lamont. Here follow more details of some urgently needed interventions and changes, not just in our economic system, but also in our political system, as well.

Please explore these options and give some thought to the changes that you'd like to make. Don't agonize! Organize! What are you ideas? Please e-mail; <[beth@corliss-lamont.org](mailto:beth@corliss-lamont.org)> with comments and actions that you are suggesting and/or taking! We're in this together! Thanks !



**Beth Lamont at an Occupy Wall Street protest event.**

# **A Law To Protect Peaceful Protestors**

**Witnessing the over reaction to peaceful protestors by police across the nation is alarming to concerned citizens who recognize that this most inappropriate response is contrary to the United States' First Amendment Rights of Free Speech and our Right to Peaceably Assemble in Redress of Grievances that are insured by Law.**

**A new Federal Law is needed to ASSURE that these rights to "Peaceably Assemble" are respected, especially against all threats, abuse, attacks with weapons and pepper spray by local law enforcement, against protest marches, and the endangerment of persons and the blatant destruction of the property of non-violent protest encampments. Reminding of the Supreme Court Decision favoring Shuttlesworth.**

**Protection must be reinforced by a Federal "Law of the Land," such as was necessary during the Civil Rights struggle. At that time it was snarling dogs and fire-hoses! This Federal Law must override local options to VIOLATE the people's Rights for any asserted reason, that will and must result in injunction, or punitive action by the Justice Department for local police blatantly violating the Constitutional Rights and the protection of peaceful protestors.**

**Some of the hazards to the expression of Freedom of Speech have been noted with local police asserting their authority to control crowds; to protect law and order; to presume to protect the public by acting on what often turn out to be blatantly false allegations of protestor's wrong doings, such as: creating a sanitary hazard with waste products; the creating of a fire hazard with electrical usage and heaters; illicit sexual conduct in a public place, even charges of rape; the use of illegal substances; the blocking of traffic; the interference with normal transaction of local business; etc. Perhaps these are "good reasons" not REAL reasons? The obvious action here is a basic us/them power assertion over a potential unruly mob! In September 2012 millions of bullets were purchased for use by "Homeland Security Forces." Plans to.....put down Protests?**

**Upon analyzing many of these assertions and allegations it is learned that, contrary to the declaration of non-violence and non law-breaking dedication of the main constituents of a peaceful protest, there are some who chose to act as PROVOCATEURS to purposely, defiantly, or even carelessly bring such disgrace and resultant punishment to the declaredly non-offensive peaceful movement such as "Occupy Wall Street!"**



Such offensive persons or such offensive unsanitary conditions are not welcomed by the majority, and when, and if, someone calls attention to such provocative behavior, it will be dealt with effectively in a democratic, ethical and non-violent manner by consensus and by evicting the offender. This would amount to a "self-policing policy." To punish an entire movement for the actions or an allegation against one or several offenders is more typical of a TOTALITARIAN system and is unconscionable in a democracy.

In extreme cases, where the movement's leadership's attempt to ban or shun or clean-up after such an offender or offenders would still not effectively ostracize them from the group, this would then paradoxically, be seen, as a reason to CALL UPON the local authorities to remove such an offender, who has defied the wishes of the majority and thereby assumes the position of jeopardizing the well-being of the Movement itself.

We need Police Departments that are sensitive to and responsive to the varieties of people that a democracy consists of. Police are trained to counter "the enemy." Police Commissioner Ray Kelly in NYC is training recruits to be wary of Muslims and to infiltrate Mosques. Who is the enemy? Police must be required to respect the needs of the people to engage in non-violent demonstrations, and to not restrict, yea even to protect their Constitutional Rights of Free Speech. Let's make it a Federal Law!

## **Some Suggested Criteria for Ethical United States Leadership:**

First of all, we need in this country, a Cabinet Level United States Department of Peace! That we do not have one is a grave omission! Don't tell me about the Department of "Defense!" It has imbedded Warmongers! An appropriate Head for a new Department of Peace would be the most courageous of Senators: Dennis Kucinich! His voice has been the strongest in behalf of not manufacturing reasons to make war. He stood alone to read Articles of Impeachment against those who had done so.

The simplistic concept of good and evil is not a proper focus for ethical world leadership; it establishes an absolutist, arrogant and reckless mindset for determining courses of action that have proven to be counter-productive to the well-being and protection of not only Americans, but the citizens of other nations. This mindset creates unlimited enemies du jour, designed to create fear in the public, which then is likely to acquiesce rather than to realistically evaluate a non-military response to a difficult situation.

The pursuit of empire by vested interests, commercial and military, with visions of dominating Earth and Space, is definitely not in the best interest of Americans or other nations, or even of Earth itself; this power-grab will necessitate violence to enforce. Uses of torture, terrorism, targeted-assassinations, bombing of civilian populations, indefinite detention, imprisonment without trial, are all unacceptable methods of treating any and all human beings, whether or not they are deemed to be "enemies."

The United Nations' concept of "eliminating the scourge of war" by peaceful means, respecting the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, and up-holding the International Criminal Court, all need strong United States' support. Domination by the so-called Security Council and its veto-wielding nuclear nations has hampered the fulfillment of the original aspirations of the "Peoples of Earth." Sovereignty must be balanced with the common good of creating peace. The UN General Assembly of ALL Nations (now numbering 192) may be the proper structure in which to place our faith!

The United States is fully responsible for unleashing the threat of nuclear annihilation; it must take the initiative to curb the proliferation of nuclear weapons by its Own Leadership, to help reverse an ever escalating "doomsday" one-upmanship. No nation can be blamed for wishing to claim the right to develop its own nuclear deterrence when surrounded by hostile neighbors. We can't expect others to renounce nuclear weapons 'til we do.

The production of so-called "conventional arms" and other lethal instruments of war, benefits only the arms manufacturers, and must be

brought under control, with the ultimate aim of phasing out such primitive means of pursuing national, regional, tribal or even personal objectives, or settling disputes. Violence is not in the best interest of any of the Peoples of Earth. "Standing one's ground" with a weapon is merely a license to kill: witness the murders of Trayvon Martin and Kenneth Cunningham! A fear of government, itself, sustains fierce promotion of the Right to Bear Arms!

Terrorism is Terrorism, regardless of who engaged in that tactic **FIRST!** The argument of "necessity" is invalid; basic logic dictates that one does not counter a wrong with a greater wrong, thinking to overcome it. If it was deemed to be wrong in the **FIRST** place, by having judged it so, then it is an even **GREATER** wrong in the **SECOND** place, to willfully proceed to do the very same thing, or worse! Vengeance begets vengeance; there is no logical end.

Most of the American People are patriotic and very proud of what they have believed to be their tradition of being rescuers and "defenders of freedom." More and more, upon examining previously-secret historical documents, we're learning that some of our leaders have sometimes been provocateurs and instigators of unscrupulous domestic and foreign actions. This is no way to uphold a democracy; this is more indicative of the very totalitarianism that we have been conditioned to denounce! Such secrecy is always to cover some shameful act! We have a legitimate Right to Know!

The American People have allowed this patriotic passivity to cloud their collective judgment, and even when periodically aroused in massive anti-war demonstrations, they are rendered impotent in the face of the war machinery mindset. Worse, they are considered anti-American, non-supportive of "the troops," and even subject to arrest, for exercising their "Right to Peaceably Assemble for Redress of Grievances."

The vested interest of corporations, including the corporate media, are complicit in the thwarting of democracy. Billions of dollars are spent to Buy Elections and influence Congressional decisions. The voices of the people, offering alternative scenarios, and promoting potential candidates for public office must have Free Access on Non-Commercial TV and Radio. The "airwaves", such as they were then, were deemed to belong to the American People according to The Communication Act of 1934.

The anti-Communist hysteria that has dominated US foreign policy for a hundred years, causing irrevocable damage to humankind, has run its course, and has become exposed as a frightened pose. The People will make laws to share the wealth and well-being created by their labor; a ruthless monetary system will be modified to benefit all.

**The American People demand ethical leadership on the world stage, and drastic change in the leadership at home. We need uniformly non-tamperable elections, with tallying systems that are impervious to fraud; an end to the 2 party system and its repression of the alternative political parties; the abolishment of the antiquated electoral college; firm 2-term limits in Congress to prevent entrenched power; national laws to protect voters rights from political gerrymandering and prohibitive local restrictions that hamper the elderly, the poor and minorities from fully participating.**

**The so-called "Patriot Act" must be rescinded by Congress and the People demand the full restoration of our Bill of Rights;**

**Government agencies that purport to protect us are sometimes engaged in secret domestic and foreign actions that have no Congressional oversight. We demand full disclosure on these relationships that affect us and our reputation as a nation. Hooray for "WikiLeaks!" Bradley Manning and Julian Assange are heroes in behalf of The People's Right To Know! We demand the establishment of absolutely transparent and accountable domestic and foreign "surveillance" systems for information gathering only. They must have no power to execute actions. By what criteria are persons targeted for ASSASSINATION! Or death by drone! How dare any entity make such judgment to KILL in the name of the American People!**

**What we really need is a long-overdue US Department of Peace! I would love to see President Obama create such a Cabinet Level body and name Dennis Kucinich as its head. He has urged not only the creation of such a Department in the US, but has urged at the UN, that all nations, as well, create a Department of Peace that will actively work together engaged in positive peace building efforts, and to increase productive interactions.**

**The American People demand that care and relief be given to their own needs. The tyrannical banking, mortgage, and credit-rating systems must be curtailed. Universal Health Care (thank you Supreme Court!) and equitable access to all educational levels must be mandatory nationwide.**

**The need for innovative new energy sources, and the restoration of our neglected infrastructure must be subsidized by our government, since private capital fails to do so. The profit motive does not provide for the necessary shared attributes of our society. We must issue government bonds to raise the needed capital to create work programs that will benefit the people, the environment and our infrastructure. In the 1930s, Franklin Roosevelt had it right! Put People to work! This stimulates the economy!**

The counter-productive move toward "austerity" cutting back on government spending for teachers, police and firefighters and other necessary jobs is a total disaster and completely illogical. Also it is an excuse for union-busting, as though decent wages are hurtful to the economy. Forbidding the use of collective bargaining and union representation must cease! It under-mines the very stability of our middle class American workers. Factories, schools, hospitals, civil service: all employees have a right to negotiate.

People of the US, will see to it that its Economic system becomes a model of concern for the wellbeing of planet Earth and for its inhabitants. The new system will adhere to ethical considerations, that involve protection of our critical environment and our atmosphere. It will give proper consideration to providing equitable employment, and especially for the development of alternative energy sources. This alerted, responsive more Ethical economic system might even begin to be known as "Capitalism with a Conscience."

The knee-jerk prejudice, born of a century of propaganda, against the word "social" is an unreasonable allergy. The word means...including the whole family, or the whole community. social means taking care of the children, the elderly, the ill, the students, the unemployed, the immigrant, even the prisoner, all who are justifiably considered part of the human family simply by being HUMAN! No one is UN-deserving. Regardless of what name we call our economic system or our political system, adhering to any kind of "ISM," at all, MUST RESPECT individual human beings with regard to their safety and wellbeing. Various ethnic, race, religious, and regional prejudices still prevail in this Land of the Free!

WHO IS THE ENEMY? Often-times we have an "enemy-du-jour!" Who shall we be encouraged to hate today? We insist that not a single segment of the World's population be stigmatized! No scapegoating of Muslims or of Insurgents! Those who are deemed to be "enemies" and accused must be brought to a fair trial in a court of justice! Osama bin Laden should have been captured not murdered! No one should ever be a victim of "targeted assassination!" Nor should any one on the face of this Earth be killed as "collateral damage!" Perhaps the REAL enemy is a military mind-set, and a shameful bent on world domination! Perhaps, "testosterone poisoning?"

As for the century-old FEAR of "Social-ISM" which equates in some minds as totalitarian-"ism" or fasc-"ism," was originally a movement of The People against a ruthless regime and its Tzar. A similar movement by The People against a King, way back in 1776, should be familiar to us?

The movement launched in 1917 demanded respect for The Workers! But, in the USA thwarting labor and denying proper pay has been the major focus of the Capitalist Economic system for most of the previous century, and into the present. Unfortunately, CHEAP LABOR is its hallmark! This is one of the methods by which this system increases its profits! Sadly, an endless supply of Hungry People in this world are eager to be "exploited" by those with full bellies. They need instead, investment of enough capital to become self sufficient, sustained by means of cooperative effort, rather than being vulnerable wage-slaves of the exploitive corporate profit motive.

Initiating any or all of these criteria will go a long way to create a more Ethical World situation, and might even help to promote democracy! We surely should have learned by now that we do not promote democracy at gunpoint! This has been shown only to promote HYPOCRISY. Our actions speak much louder than words. We want to believe that we are the Good Guys, coming to the rescue of all who need our help. I grieve especially for our Veterans who have themselves been brutalized by the military system and have been required to brutalize others. A shocking suicide rate among active military personnel and Veterans may be a result of having been required by the system to compromise their own ethical standards and their own integrity, and thereby face living with unbearable grief.

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Initiating any or all of these criteria will go a long way to create a more Ethical World situation, and might even help to promote new peaceful green industries that will protect the planet, enhance human well-being and even help to make war obsolete.

The Corporate world, if ethically motivated, can rise to meet the greater needs of a sustainable life on Earth, and to fully meet the needs of all its inhabitants. This inspiring transition may constitute its own propelling and enduring force! Valuing Human wellbeing might become contagious.

It might prove, once and for all, that there CAN exist a new kind of non-exploitive humane economic system: A Capitalism With A Conscience! Some of those who have heard me use this expression have countered with the assertion that just putting those two words together constitutes an oxymoron! Well, those who are here in the Belly of the Beast to "Occupy Wall Street," truly believe that this Beast can be tamed! Congress has this option within its power. Your own influence can help to tame the Beast!

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## HOW TO FORM A MORE PERFECT UNION

Here are some thoughts and ideas on how to enhance and improve the original intent of our Founding Fathers. Though the Birth of our Nation was highly celebrated, we must admit that it has suffered from some major Birth defects. We recognize that our Mothers and other minority persons were not even consulted in this Birth process, causing some of its major flaws, that are still in process of being rectified. This is an ongoing process. Ideals of a true democratic society are gaining momentum! Have hope and remember: our would-be Democracy is still a work in progress.

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### THIS IS HOW WE CAN FIX CONGRESS!!!!

In an e-mail message from Andi Vaida, <andi.vaida@gmail.com> he reminds: the 26th Amendment (granting the right to vote for 18 year olds) took only 3 months & 8 days to be ratified! Why? Simple! The people DEMANDED IT. And, that was in 1971...before computers, before e-mail, before cell phones, etc. Of the 27 Amendments to our Constitution, seven (7) took 1 year or less to become the law of the land...all because of public pressure. Here are suggestions for a Congressional Reform Act of 2013!

1. No Tenure / No Pension. -- A Congress member collects a salary while in office and receives no pay when they are out of office.
2. Congress members (past, present & future) participate in Social Security. All funds in the Congressional Retirement Fund move to the Social Security System immediately. All future funds flow into the Social Security System and Congress members participate with the American people. These funds may not be used for any other purpose, nor "borrowed from!"
3. Congress members can PURCHASE their own retirement plan, as some Americans do, or just participate in Social Security as most workers do!
4. Congress will no longer vote themselves a pay raise. Congressional pay will rise only by the Cost of Living increases that affect all of us Americans.
5. Congress members lose their special current health care system and participate in the same health care system as the American people.
6. Congress members must equally ABIDE BY ALL LAWS they impose on the American people. They will have NO special privileges.

7. All contracts with past and present Congress members are void effective Jan. 1, 2013. The American people were not consulted in making these contracts with Congress members. Congress members made these contracts for themselves and not their constituents! Serving in Congress is an honor, not a career. The Founding Fathers envisioned citizen legislators, so ours should serve their term(s), then go home and go back to work.

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Some important suggestions that should be part of the NEXT Reform Act:

1. Congress members' terms shall be limited to ONE TERM only; they may run for the same, or another office again, after 4-years out-of-office. This is to prevent entrenchment of power. A Representative should concentrate on acting in the best interest of their constituents and the American People, and not have to worry about re-election, or fear that the opposition will be targeting them! We need a Citizen Congress not lifetime "Professionals."

2. The writers of the United States Constitution gathered by horseback from great distances to convene for lawmaking. Representative government was the necessary choice. Today almost everyone has a hand-held electronic device, that would enable those who are eligible and registered, to cast their votes with a Social Security number or perhaps even a simple thumbprint. This option must be equitably accessible by all. These votes would then feed into an UN-TAMPERABLE electronic tallying system. We can develop, at long last, a DIRECT DEMOCRACY, of, by and for the People, in this way. This is an ideal, a vision of democracy that can be nurtured: the ideal of the Town Hall, wherein we will each make our voices heard, that sadly, has been corrupted by powerful corporate and moneyed interests that stifle and override the will and the wishes of the People.

3. For the same reason...that of time, distance and extreme difficulty of communication...the ELECTORAL COLLEGE SYSTEM was devised, in which a state-by-state, "winner-takes-all" tallying, totally thwarts the people's popular vote, and completely upsets the true wishes of the voters. It is obsolete! It will be discontinued in favor of a DIRECT POPULAR VOTING SYSTEM. It's the only process by which we'll have a democracy!

4. The amassing of campaign contributions does NOT insure the nomination or ELECTION OF ETHICAL LEADERS; worse, it has shown to be absolutely counter-productive! Contrary to the "Citizens United" Supreme Court decision, unlimited and foreign investment into our precious electoral system will NEVER AGAIN BE ALLOWED! Contributions must always be limited to modest amounts...to be



determined,....(perhaps \$200?) from individuals **ONLY!** There must be severe penalties for skewing the process with deceptive "funneled" PAC or Corporate moneys.

5. The prevailing **TWO-PARTY SYSTEM** has never been in the best interests of a true democracy in which varied points of view must be addressed. No Alternative Parties can never **GAIN A MAJORITY** because voters rightly fear that diverting votes from one major party will, of course, allow the opposition party **TO WIN!** This is basic mathematics. An interim remedy to this problem could be a Federal Law prohibiting unreasonable state and local requirement barriers to Alternative Parties, and further, requires some purposeful coalition-building by allowing a voter to indicate an **"UMBRELLA CHOICE.** "This would consist of a **FIRST CHOICE** under a specific banner such as Labor Party, Green party or Anti-Nuclear Party, etc., and then indicate a **SECOND CHOICE** major party on the same ballot without **WASTING** a precious vote. Theoretically, this way an Alternative candidate could actually win! Until then, in their representation in Congressional bodies, an elected official will now be completely cognizant of, and directly responsive to, the various **COALITION PARTIES** that put them into office. This will create an ideal multi-party win-win democracy!

6. Another prevalent problem is gerrymandering the boundaries of a representative's district for the purpose of breaking up strong voting blocks, such as an ethnic enclave, of an "opposition party" to prevent them from exercising their collective voting power to influence an election.

7. The purging of voter registration rolls frequently without legitimate cause and requiring government issued ID, creates great disruption of continuity of access to the polls. This impacts heavily on minorities, the poor and the elderly, oftentimes requiring money and transportation to conform. Persons who are likely to vote for a Democrat candidate, rather than a Republican, are dis-enfranchised in this way, skewing the vote. I've heard about **FAKE Sign-up** groups who destroy Democrats' applications!

8. Another trick that should be outlawed is padding the constituency count in a district by adding an entire prison population as though they were voting citizens, when nothing could be further from the truth, They are not allowed to vote. Worse, "convicted felons" even after having served their time, are still prevented from voting. And in purging the voter roll, names that even look similar to those of felons are removed as well. So unjust!

These more democratic measures will be a starting point in helping to at last create a more balanced form of government. We might even, in time and with a lot of practice, achieve the creation of a real democracy!



**A smiling Corliss Lamont at a Bill of Rights Dinner  
sponsored by the National Emergency Civil Liberties Committee.**

**Note: And now to resume below, Corliss Lamont's wisdom in his own words, in which he is describing what he terms the Challenge for America.**

**With these following closing words of Corliss Lamont we end this partial reissue of his book: *You Might Like Socialism*, that contains additional and relevant commentary as written expressly for the second printing of this book *Lefties Are In Their Right Minds*.**

### **Socialist Planning for America**

**"The extent to which any blueprint of long range planning is written into Congressional Bills, however beautifully conceptualized, the actual accomplishment of any material and cultural achievement will rest upon the initiative, intelligence and energy of the workers, the farmers, the technicians and professional people, throughout the length and breadth of America. Without a comprehending vision by the American People themselves, the cooperative support of any and every plan is doomed to fail.**

**Hence the tremendous responsibility of public relations for any national plan has the vital task of educating every category of the population on the fundamentals of the need for planning and of arousing the people's interest and enthusiasm concerning objectives and possibilities of any long-range plan. It must bring to every individual an understanding of his part in the total planning set-up and the connection between his own function, and that of others. And this in itself constitutes one of the out-standing benefits of Socialist planning, since everyone in the community becomes able to see how and why his job fits into the larger scheme of things. He can feel a new significance and dignity in his work that was seldom present before.**

**In this way central planning for the whole nation brings such cohesion with its principle concept, that everyone will benefit thereby, that central planning becomes integrated into the sights and activities of each person, a matter of pulling together the conflicting strands of a person's own life experiences, their natural inclinations, and creating a potent unity. Socialist planning, that can be carried out in America in the very characteristically American way, will present to the citizens of this country the greatest challenge they have ever had. Limited as war planning was in the U. S. and destructive as was its objective, it did show that the theory and practice of nation-wide planning is certainly not something entirely alien to the American genius.**

**It is my firm opinion that under Socialism all of the idealism, creativity and practical engineering technique for which America is so noted, freed at last**

from the limiting shackles of the profit system, will have unprecedented opportunity for fantastic fulfillment in projects of almost unlimited scope, and grandeur.

There will be no lack of tasks to appeal to the imagination and ambition of the new generations. And the American people in their bound-less energy will sweep forward to conquer new heights of economic and cultural achievement.  
Corliss Lamont, 1939

**This is the END of this presentation of Lefties Are In Their Right Minds**

**BUT,**

**May this be the Beginning of beneficial change in the U.S....the kind of change that we who first voted for Barack Obama envisioned!**

**May there rise in this country an inspired People's Movement that will, by the power of the ballot box, seize the moment and display the courage needed to tame the corporate beast, and to make it do the bidding of the people! Together we can create a unique economic system that no longer depends upon war to stoke its fires. Working together we might create a new ethical economic system: Capitalism with a Conscience!**

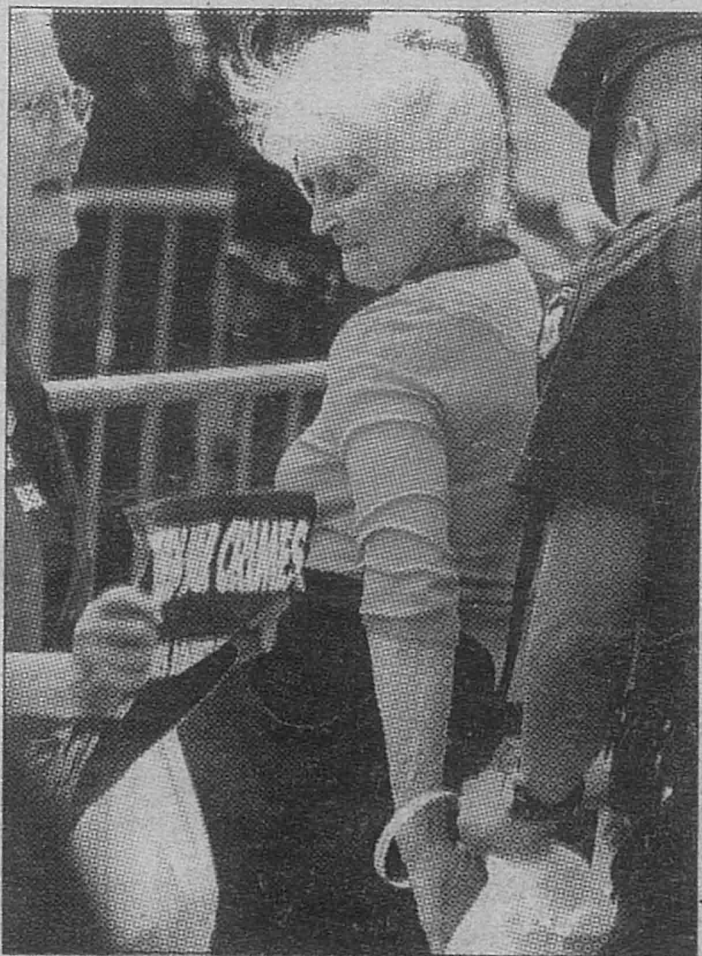
**Voting is an act of Patriotism!**

**Please be Patriotic!**

**Please Vote!**

**Our form of government, wherein we're practicing to become a democracy, will continue to take our vigilance, our knowledge of history, our wisdom, our patience, our perseverance, our voices, our skills and human concerns, in order to make needed changes and to make progress. But mostly, and perhaps, above all, we must summon the courage to take risk! A turtle may be a more logical inspiration than the soaring Eagle! We can't make any progress 'til we stick our necks out. Staying timid in our shell won't work!**

**Have Courage! Take Risks! Run for Public Office! Inspire! Teach Others!**



SETH WENIG/AP

## **AN UNIDENTIFIED WOMAN is handcuffed in front of United Nations headquarters**

**This "unidentified woman" and 15 others were arrested for demonstrating as Bush was telling lies about Iraq inside the UN. US commits war crimes!**





**HALF-MOON FOUNDATION, INC.**  
**P.O. Box 1080, Ossining NY 10562-0995**

Dear Friend,

This description of the efforts of the Corliss Lamont Half-Moon Foundation is to let you know that we are continuing to publish the books of Corliss Lamont as he intended when he set this visionary organization in motion.

Surrounded all his years with the printed word on paper, he could not have begun to envision the far reaching impact of his lifetime efforts with today's amazing Internet technology. Visit his Web site: [www.corliss-lamont.org](http://www.corliss-lamont.org)

If you are part of Corliss's extended family, a friend or a co-worker, the goals of the Half-Moon Foundation are surely dear to your heart as well as they were to his. That is why we are appealing to you for your help.

Funding that was available to Corliss Lamont during his lifetime that enabled him to pursue his philanthropic Humanist good works ceased at his passing and are no longer available. New funding will help us carry on!

He left his beautiful wooded estate in Ossining, New York, high overlooking the Hudson, into the loving care of myself and Half-Moon Foundation, knowing that both would continue. He chose his torch bearers well.

On the sad day of his death, in April 1995, outdoors in his garden, warming in the sunshine, enjoying and even nodding acknowledgment of the birds' song, he was tormented with great difficulty in speaking, so tragically uncharacteristic of his lifelong eloquence.

We all tried to comfort Corliss in his frustration at having his powerful voice muted. I hugged him and pledged to him that his voice, rather than being stilled, would continue to be heard forever.

Help us keep this promise, please? We thank you for your patience reading this account of our activities, and for your friendship. If you'd like to help, please make your check payable to *Half-Moon Foundation, Inc.* *This is a 501(c)(3) Tax Exempt Organization, that offers a tax benefit to donors.*

Sincerely yours, Beth K. Lamont







