

nist Party is now in point of enrolled membership the largest party in France. If we include 80,000 youth we now number 315,000. We are growing at the rate of 5,000 a month. That's the French people's answer to fascist treason. But it is not we alone who are gaining. All the Front Populaire parties, including the Radicals, have made vast strides since May and particularly since the latest fascist demonstration beyond the Pyrenees. Were there to be a general election tomorrow, the Communists would probably get two million votes and the Socialists two and a half million. That's the most heartening thing in an otherwise gloomy outlook: the thunderous march of the mass movement. As Thorez predicted when you interviewed him some time ago, the first

Congress of the Front Populaire Committees has now been held in the Paris district. The people are not relaxing their vigilance."

"The masses," I said, "are keeping up their end, certainly. I am less sure of the government. I shall let discretion go hang and tell you that I am frankly disillusioned and disturbed by its behavior, in the Spanish situation particularly. What is your opinion?"

"We are not mincing words in our press. Read Vaillant-Couturier's editorial in *l'Humanité* today. Here's a straightforward enough paragraph:

Let a storm of popular indignation impose its demand that the constitutional government of Spain be treated as such, and that normal commercial relations with it enable it to restore order.

"Our government," Duclos went on, "has not shown all the energy we might have expected of it in the present crisis as well as in some previous ones. The treasonable press should have been suppressed as soon as it began to bark. It gave ample incentive for drastic action."

"On the whole, I take it, the party is not displeased with the cabinet's record," I said.

"On the whole it has done remarkably well," Duclos replied. "It has passed a large number of laws. Some of them are actually executed."

He laughed heartily. "*Allez*, enough questions. Remember the slogan: Everything for the Front Populaire; everything through the Front Populaire."

# The Equilibrists and Mr. Keynes-II

EDWARD MOUNT

AT the end of his book Keynes has some notes on the social philosophy toward which his theory might lead. Although this section is written with qualifications, it can perhaps be expressed thus: The two major evils of modern capitalism are unemployment and the grossly unfair distribution of wealth and income. These can both, thinks Keynes, be solved by state control of investment and a policy of reducing the rate of interest to zero. The latter measure might within a generation cause such a multiplication of capital instruments that a high standard of living for all would result. Profits would remain and some people could make fortunes; but, presumably because interest did not exist, they would not, asserts Keynes, be able to make them grow. In his phrase, the euthanasia of the rentier class would occur. With the disappearance of the rentier class—of those who live on fixed interest-bearing securities without fulfilling any economic function—would go much of the present inequality. True, financiers and entrepreneurs who so love their jobs that they would work for much less than they now get, would be harnessed to the state to oversee the details and conditions of investment. Further, the economic causes of war would be removed—the perfectly necessary struggle for markets, which, in Keynes's view, proceeds from *laissez-faire* plus a gold standard. Other measures of "state socialism" are neither necessary nor desirable, says Keynes, for the partial reforms which he recommends would in effect make the world a place where the classical analysis of competition and its benefits would apply. And since, following orthodox analysis, he believes that, except for unemployment, both pure and monopolistic competition allocate resources in the "best" way, he conceives of his reforms as making workable a competitive system with its attendant virtues, "freedom,"

"individualism," and "efficiency." Without these reforms its evils are so intolerable that it will disappear altogether.

To certain readers a good part of the above is palpable nonsense; but that a man like Keynes, who keeps his fingers in a number of pies besides the academic, can write it, is indication enough that some people will believe it. But how simple, on Keynes's analysis, can the reform be which is to bring this Utopia? Unfortunately Keynes gives no clue as to what he means by "socialization of investment" beyond saying that it can be carried out gradually, that it can include compromises of all sorts "by which public authority will coöperate with private initiative," and that "It is not the ownership of the instruments of production which it is important

for the state to assume. If the state is able to determine the aggregate amount of resources devoted to augmenting the instruments and the basic rate of reward to those who own them, it will have accomplished all that is necessary [p. 378]." "Coöperate" indeed! "Ownership not important" indeed! And "if"!

What is necessary in order to determine the amount of resources which shall be devoted to producing instruments of production? First, a supervisory body with power to take "resources" and put them where it wants them. The "resources" Keynes means are labor, equipment, and natural resources. You "take" them by giving one firm "money" to buy them with, or, if it has the money, by seeing that it buys what you want it to buy and in



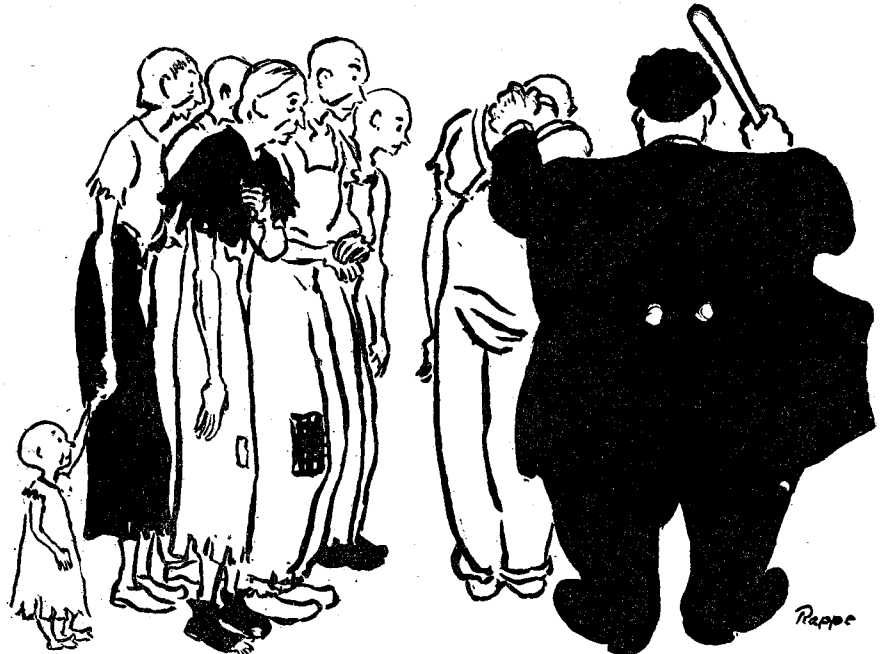
"Please, boys, this 'folded-arms' thing is driving me nuts."

Ajay

the amount you want it to buy. If it hasn't the money, you take it from another firm which has. But from which one? From a profitable one? Or from one which is declining and has no profits but which, you think, ought to decline more quickly? Someone may object that this individual treatment is not necessary—the state will control the sales receipts in whole or in part and determine what new investment is to be. But since wage and capital expenditures vary from firm to firm, the same range of decisions must be made—no flat percentage is possible. Control of this sort must cope with prices and wages. If the state has forced investment in one direction so that goods cannot be sold at profitable prices, it still cannot allow prices to be raised if this would result in unused capacity and unemployment. It must make up the difference from somewhere else and take a hand in the price policy. Nor can it fail to take into account—and supervise—the wages as between firms and industries. Nor is this all. The specific things in which an entrepreneur invests must be supervised. Is it not plain that when the state allocates the funds, it largely determines who shall and who shall not make profits? It would mean saying which firms are to come into and which are to go out of existence, which ones are to grow and which to decline, and at what rates. This, with several hundred thousand corporations, is not a job of the same order as changing the discount rate or buying or selling government bonds or any of the other monetary controls Keynes formerly talked about.

Taken as a group, bourgeois economists have already recommended that the state take over the whole economy—one says, "Take over this part"; another, "More control is needed here"; there is almost no part where one or another has not concluded that the evils call for state control. Nevertheless, each is convinced that the "system as a whole" can and should be retained. But what else, as long as they remain bourgeois economists, can they suggest when they discover certain things which need to be changed? By definition, a bourgeois economist can never advocate the abolition of capitalism, but only certain changes in it. It is curious that none of them seems to ask himself what kind of state it is upon which he relies for the reforms which will make everything all right.

How is it that considering the nature of the state under capitalism, Keynes can talk so glibly about the "euthanasia" of the rentiers? He must know that since many rentiers can read they would surely learn of the plan to put them to death. He does not actually think they would help him? No, he presumably thinks the state must do it, against the will of protesting, but law-abiding, rentiers. Now even though Keynes is a liberal, he might ask himself whether any state has in recent industrial times accomplished a like task and how it was done. Germany? Italy? Even an economist can see that fascism is capitalism in a more hideous guise. The



Rappe

"Yer Honor, this Red louse was tryin' to agitate these burns into thinkin' they was hungry."

U.S.S.R.? Yes, there a greater task was accomplished, but not by euthanasia. Aside from this example, which implicitly Keynes writes against, there is no case of a state seriously attempting and carrying through undertakings of the kind Keynes hopes for. In fact, everyone's impression of the state is that it does other things, does not carry through such serious reforms as the elimination of a rentier class—even when through unemployment the capitalist system itself is threatened.

Why? Is not the reason that to ask the state to do away with the rentiers is to ask the capitalists to do away with themselves? Who are the rentiers? Are they not the people who sit on the boards of our corporations, our banks, our newspapers? They own and direct most of the country. If the political leaders are rentiers or are closely connected with rentiers, if the party contributors are rentiers, and the prominent Democrats and Republicans in each district are small rentiers and capitalists, it is clear that a cynical view of what the state is likely to do about rentiers is the honest view. The state can be counted on to kill off the rentiers in the same way as it has "killed off" the monopolies and trusts. In the United States we know that in the forty years during which the state has been acting against trusts and monopolies,

they have multiplied, and monopolization and concentration have pressed on.

Keynes ends on the note that ideas are more powerful than vested interests, and he points out that even the madmen in authority are distilling their frenzy from the academic scribblers of a few years back. The first part of this argument deserves no attention. It is in character that a man who gives no thought to the problem of how great social changes come about should make a statement with such confidence. It seems contradictory, though, that a person with an idealist theory of history should find solace in the fact that madmen in authority are inspired by academic writers. When a Mussolini in power orders, as he did, the construction of a "Fascist theory," much as he would order a new uniform, it is small credit to the academic writers or the idealist philosophy of history. Hitler's use of the scribblers to construct a platform he never intended to carry out, is surely a better example of the use of confusing ideas by vested interests than of the power of ideas over vested interests. The regrettable conclusion is inevitable that Keynes's association with cabinet ministers and other gentlemen who have "made history" has given a bias both to his theory of history and to his theory of the state—let alone his views on the capitalist system.



# Willie Gallacher, M. P.

JOHN DRELLAN

THE train pulls in with an effort; there is a stir among the crowd. Everyone is eager for his first glance of "Willie" Gallacher, only British Communist M.P. In a minute or two everyone will learn why he is always called Willie, never William, even in the press.

There is a shout. He is coming out of the car and people recognize him from his picture. Later, he will tell an uproarious anecdote of how he was met in various English towns after his trial in 1919. But now everyone surrounds him and the platform is a babel of Communists and workers, and also hangers-on, curiosity seekers, and "respectable" people who have come to look.

Reporters fire questions at him. What about the situation in England? The capitalists will sell out the royal family to save their necks if they have to, he says, but first what about a spot of tea for breakfast? With Jim Litterick, Communist M.L.A. of Manitoba, other members of the Party, reporters, and photographers, Willie goes to Jack's Café for his spot of tea.

The photographers ask him to pose. "Sure," he says, and while he poses, he passes around a picture of his wife and children. "You've heard of the dictatorship of the proletariat? Well," he points to his wife, "that's the dictatorship. I'm the proletariat." Everyone laughs, reporters included. They sit down to break bread with this Scotch Communist. It's not easy to leave this warmth. It does the soul good to bask in the volatile good-humor of Willie, so the reporters of the capitalist press sit down.

He is not a big man, although his reputation has led people to expect a giant. Five feet seven and a stocky, tightly knit figure, that's Gallacher. His face is forever beaming. It's round and chubby and red. His forehead slopes back gradually into a high bald pate that comes to a ridge and drops shortly down into his solid neck. His chin is pointed and his eyes are the small piercing eyes of the shrewd Scot. They take in a dozen things at once.

And, man, how alive is this "stormy petrel of Parliament," which is what they call him overseas. When he says something, he says it with his whole body. His gestures sweep the speaking platform. When he drives home a point, he bends at the knees, clenches his fists, and rises to his climax like a rocket; and the audience catapults upward with him. One minute his bitterness, his hatred of the shams, the corruptness of capitalism has him tightly bound in a knot which opens into eloquence with tensed entrails.

"I have told the government in Parliament," he says, "that if they had the slightest trace of decency they would remove the Cenotaph from Whitehall. It is a mockery

of the living and a still greater mockery of the dead. . . ."

The next minute, after the hush has sunk into the depths of those assembled, he has them out of their seats with laughter, imitating Sir Walter Runciman's sheepish smile in answer to his, Willie's, accusations of fraud in the shipping business after the war and now. "Baa, baa, baa," he mimics, making sheep's eyes and rocking his head foolishly from side to side. The roar of laughter is more than that. It is a release from the pounding of the blood, from the thrilling and contagious vitality that pours down from the stage. The audience would rise as one to immediate action if the call came.

He loves a show, this Willie Gallacher. At a social given for him by the Party here, he opens his remarks very solemnly. "A reporter from your *Try-bune* came to me today and said that the people of Winnipeg (the *best people* I suppose) were astounded . . . astounded!" Roundly he mouths the quoted words. "They were astounded to find me such a soft-spoken, well-educated *gentleman*!"

Oh, there is fun in this tireless fighter, who stands for no nonsense in Parliament. As a contrast to the above anecdote, he tells of an incident in England after his trial. Three policemen, six-footers, testified to his ferocity, how he tore and fought and butted. After his imprisonment, he went on a speaking tour. At one small town a considerable turnout was there to meet him.

As he speaks, he imitates (he is an actor) the crowd, craning necks and looking past him for some Cardiff giant. He dismounts from the train, approaches one of the crowd.

"Maybe you're looking for me?" he says, turning and imitating the ogler looking down at him from a great height. "You? Naw! Don't bother, will ya?"

"But it's Willie Gallacher y'want noo?" "Aye, leave off, I sez."

In a timid voice, looking up on tiptoe: "But I'm Willie Gallacher." In astonishment: "Wot, not *the* Gallacher?" "Aye, *the* Gallacher."

Then, still in mimicry, the speaker turns to the crowd, points a finger, overcomes his speechlessness and says, "Look—him."

In a way, he is a giant, a fighting gear with a mind that is wise and trigger-fas. But there is more sting (and fun) in one bit of this man's lovable acting than in a month of intellectualizing. He is the British Will Rogers, and a fighting, pugnacious Communist, whom the "best people are astounded to find a soft-spoken, well-educated *gentleman*"—who looks more like a Presbyterian minister, says the surprised press, than like a Communist. And this is the man whom the American government refused to admit solely for the purpose of visiting his sisters in Chicago. He hadn't seen them for twenty-two years. A man whom Will Rogers would have welcomed as a brother, in spite of differences in political faith.

We approached him to ask about this American business. When you speak to him, you put your arm on his shoulder.

"The American consul?" he says in his rich brogue. "Well, y'know how those things are. Section blickty, sub-section tahoot—they spring up overnight." And his eyes twinkle merrily.



"I hear Landon thinks public golf courses are communistic."

Kruckman