Editorial Page of The Birmingham Eccentric

A Free, Responsible and Aggressive Press is Democracy's First Line of Defense

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A Labor Dictatorship

If the several large labor unions in the United States effect a merger, as is being currently discussed, such a body of organized labor would constitute a violation of the Anti-Trust laws.

But whether or not the then leaders in government would prosecute them is a doubtful possibility, for such a union would wield tremendous political power, and the current and future crop of public officials would not have the courage to defend the federal statutes.

A merger of labor would, in the end, be the very worst thing that could happen to labor itself. It would result in a veritable dictatorship of the rights and freedoms of men and women who would inherit those evils that always come about when they place their destinies in the hands of a very few leaders.

Obviously, labor leaders are hungry for personal power and prestige. They want to acquire sufficient political power to take over the natural resources of the nation, its industries, just as the Labor Party is now doing in England.

This they would do, of course, through so-called legitimate "political methods", which simply means that having control of Congress, they would pass laws necessary to confiscate private property. In the last analysis there is little difference between confiscation by the "political method" and the use of a gun. In both cases the "loot" gets into the hands of those who did not produce or deserve it.

How could such conditions come about within the boundaries of a nation that boasts of its freedom to work, to worship, to speak and print, to petition its government for redress of wrongs?

The answer is easy: simply because too many Americans today pay too little attention to the serious business of making such freedom work for its very preservation. The owner of a home who pays no attention to painting and repairing that home soon finds that time and the elements decay the structure, and it tumbles down upon his head!

Political Predators

To the professional, career politician, government is just like any other business, i.e.: the opportunity to make a living.

Some officials try to do good jobs, and honestly earn their compensation from the public funds. Others, more predatory and dishonest, use their powers to hijack tax money into their own pockets.

Another device is to defend special economic privileges for one or more groups, which groups get their "loot" from the public through ordinary business transactions.

These predators thus look upon government as a means of increasing their economic opportunities, knowing all the time that the bigger they can make government the greater are their chances of "getting theirs".

Fooling Voters

Not all men and women who reach high places in public affairs are honest and able. Politics includes the art of getting elected. Even quacks and demagogues can and do fool the voters—just like the claims of some patent medicines that have curative powers only on the printed labels, since the pill or potion proves itself of no real value.

Good civic health doesn't come from the thoughts and acts of quacks and demagogues.

To Get, You Must Give

Accept an unexpected gift from another and you place yourself under obligation to him, however little it may be. Accept gifts from government, and you undergo the same loss of independence.

Government power feeds upon the human weakness to accept subsidies. If you would remain free you must be your own Santa Claus, ready to pay the bills when due.

To let government become your Santa Claus is to let it tax you for the "presents" it "gives" you—a tax that always costs more than the article is worth.

More Taxes Are Coming

Efforts by Republicans in the Legislature to eliminate "extravagance and deadwood" from State governmental expenditures is a healthy civic sign.

For many, many years the cost of State government has gone up. Now, faced with the problem of cutting expenses or else increasing taxes, the Republican dominated Legislature is becoming frugal.

Governor Williams, of course, believing in the paternalistic State, wants his new corporation tax. This will give him more money to dole out, and might guarantee him more votes from those of the voters who believe in Santa Claus.

Nex year, we predict, more taxes will be levied, regardless of what political party dominates. After all, in off-election years most politicians respond to the Santa Claus idea—the theory being, of course, that the kids love to open their assorted presents Christmas morning.

From Our Point of View

The Detroit Free Press is conducting a survey to learn just how well youth is being taught subjects. So far, it learns that spelling, English and geography are subjects that most graduates have too little knowledge of for adult life. We've known that for a long time. Kids are taught a little of a lot of things, not enough of a few fundamentals. Even they will admit this.

For the first time in 25 Years Texas has sent a Republican Congressman to Washington. He defeated an avowed Truman Fair Dealer in the election. The Congressman, Ben H. Guill, says he was elected chiefly because "the people oppose the great sums of money Truman is spending. They can't understand why, with taxes so high, we can't stay within the national budget."

Demanding that railroads put on an extra fireman where two Diesel engines are used would be like requiring the housewife to hire an extra washerwoman to run a modern automatic washing machine.

Fifty-eight hundred high school kids gathered in Ann Arbor last week Saturday and took part in a choral and glee club festival. Complying with the laws of harmonics, these youngsters thrilled their audience. Too bad, when they later play at the game of living as adults, they will help the rest of us make plenty of discord in the symphony of life.

President Truman recently told an audience that he hopes his administration can eliminate deficit spending "when it is safe to do so". (Interpreted in plain English that means "when it is, (in his distorted opinion) politically wise to do so.")

For several years we have contended in these columns that already the United States is operating under a form of Socialism, even though most of the nation's industry still remains under private ownership. We have said that the government, through the use of its tax powers, already annually "confiscates" much of the profits of private business. Added to this are the government's wage and hour controls; plus its interference in labor disputes which often determine the terms of new labor-management contracts. Yes, the Truman democrats definitely are heading the nation to Socialism's objectives.

So They Say . . .

Harry S. Truman:

"Our economy can grow and prosper only if the other free countries grow and prosper also."

Gerald W. Johnson, author:

"Washington is filled with terrified old women—mostly of the male sex."

Katherine Cornell, actress:

"If you have sufficient interest and you care about people, you will never be old."

Clement Atlee, Prime Minister of Great Britain:

"There is room for reasonable and cautious optimism."

Carlton E. Wertz, newly-elected President of Medical Society of New York:

"It is the primary duty of the medical profession to see to it that everyone requiring medical care receives it."

Watch Both Hands, Lefty

Happenings of Long Ago

Bits Of News Gleaned From Old Files Of The Eccentric—The Items That Make Up The Historical Background Of The Birmingham Of Today.

50 Years Ago
MAY 19, 1900

Our Masonic fraternity are plotting on having a most enjoyable banquet and social time on Thursday evening, May 25. Frank T. Lodge, Grand Master, will be present and for an after-dinner speech he is only equalled by Chauncey Depew. A Partridge will be toastmaster.

Little Ethel Hubert was surprised Monday by a small party from Detroit it being the anniversary of her seventh birthday. The party consisted of her several aunts and all had a delightful time.

LOST—May 8th—gold glasses in a case. As it is known who the party is the glasses had better be returned without further trouble and ado. Mrs. J. L.

James McClure wheeled it to Detroit Sunday to spend the day with his aunt, Mrs. Fred White on Milwaukee avenue. He was delightfully surprised to find a group of friends awaiting him there to have dinner on the Island.

Wilson Bros. have the new mill at Warren sheeted and roofed with all steel. Some parties are said to be digging a well for them.

20 Years Ago
MAY 22, 1930

H. D. Crull, principal of Barnum school, will receive the Scoutmaster's Key in a ceremony here tomorrow night. Only 13 other awards of this nature have been made in the United States. Several local Scouts will receive awards, including a number of Eagle Scouts.

An inquest is asked in the death of Sidney Moore, 21, assistant Franklin Hills golf pro and his companion, Robert Moore, 19, year old locker room boy. The two were killed in an auto accident last Tuesday night on 13 Mile road. The two are not related.

A. W. Willson, treasurer of Oakland county, has started the delayed sale of delinquent tax titles in the county building, Pontiac. With much spirited bidding, a great deal of farm property as well as township lands was disposed of the first day of the sale.

Franklyn Allen Whitney of Toledo will begin his duties as basketball coach and physical education instructor in Birmingham next year. Whitney, who is 22 years old, will replace Ernest Engel who will instruct physical education at the new Barnum junior high school.

Robert Sipperly was taken to a Pontiac hospital suffering from burns received as he fought to extinguish a blaze in a gasoline pump at the Bloomfield Highlands service station. Henry Merz, owner of the station said that because of the young man's quick action a serious fire was averted.

5 Years Ago
MAY 24, 1945

Maj. Frederick C. Pew and Lt. Charles T. VanDusen, both serving with the 15th Air Force, arrived home Monday. After landing at an Atlantic base they were sent to Fort Sheridan to await the orders which returned them to their homes here. The two will enjoy leaves here until being recalled for duty.

Frank Allen, Polly Hanson and Lloyd Harvey were named as the three top students for the coming Baldwin high school graduating class. Miss Hanson and Harvey had identical ratings and were named coivaledictorians.

George William DeGraff, son of Mr. and Mrs. William H. DeGraff of 951 Fairfax, will be ordained deacon by the Right Rev. Frank W. Creighton, D.D., S.T.D., at St. Andrew's church, Detroit, Friday. Upon graduation from Seabury-Western seminary in June he will become associated with St. James church in Cheboygan.

Members of the Birmingham Retail Merchants association will hold a general meeting June 20. The occasion will be "ladies night" with a dinner and interesting program planned. A brief business meeting for members will also be held.

Imagine the distress of a local lady who ran an ad in last week's paper to sell her dog! She looked out the window about the middle of the morning to see the dog out on the lawn, battling with a skunk. She reported the dog was not at his best for display.

People's Column

The Eccentric welcomes letters for this column. All letters must be signed, but signatures will be kept confidential upon request. Letters must be limited to 500 words.

To the Editor:

Just a comment on the constant rise in city taxes. We are like hundreds of other people with fixed incomes. And since we are not in the upper brackets of high wages, we are forced to along with those who are.

And it is working a great hardship upon many of the middle-aged folks who have lived in this town since the horse and buggy days. I'll grant you that a lot of nemcomers will find they are not escaping the high taxes by moving to this town as they thought.

But as long as the city officials are going to great lengths to spend extra money for the taxpayer, it might add there are very necessary things needed that could and would help the people.

Perhaps some clean sidewalks and crosswalks that would be safe to travel at night. Woodward avenue near Bowers and Haynes is a sight and has been for nearly a year. Is this good city government?

There are a lot of people who would agree that if the merchants want to keep the shoppers at home to trade, there are many things more successful than off-street parking that would put the town in debt for years to come.

Also, I might add, if the League of Women Voters would put some of their effort in a public restroom for the comfort of mothers and small children. If necessary, to put it on a paying basis such as parking meters which get so much consideration right now.

Let's give the small homeowner a break, too.

The city officials might remember good government is not how much money you can spend, but how you spend it should be very important to you taxpayers.

Just a voice among many who feel as I do in Birmingham.

MRS. JESSEE J. MUDGE
788 S. Adams

Have You Met . . .

Mr. and Mrs. H. G. Snellings, formerly of Detroit, and their sons, Herbert and Norman who are now residing at 248 Oakland? Mr. Snellings is a structural engineer with the Austin Company.

Dr. and Mrs. John R. Hubert who have moved from Pontiac to 4955 Stoneleigh drive? They have three children, Diane, Karen and Chris. Dr. Hubert is a physician and surgeon.

POLICE ARE CHECKING BRAKES

ONE THING OR ANOTHER

By George Wm. Averill

—A MILLION BUCKS FOR EVERYONE?

"$200-A-MONTH PENSIONS IN 10 YEARS IS REUTHER'S AIM" the headline read. The story said current UAW-CIO pension demands are just the opening wedge in a plan for eventual $200 pensions each month for union members.

"We can build brick by brick so in 10 years we can have the pensions people are entitled to and which industry can afford," the union president declared in a statement last week.

I let the paper fall to my lap, put my head against the back of the armchair and thought of the Fair Deal's program for social security, too.

OLD AGE PENSIONS, medical insurance, subsidies—all these and more to come, the bureaucrats promise us. That is so enticing: no more work, just a good time paid for by the government. Such a soothing thought amid the toil and worry in today's world. . . .

Suddenly I am sitting at my desk in the editorial office of The Eccentric. In my hand is a check for a million dollars. Where it came from I don't know.

Everyone today in the mail got a million dollars. Wonderful! Whoever the Good Samaritan is, I thank you!

Just then our newspaper makeup man walks up to me, waves his check for a million dollars under my nose and declares, "Now I can tell you to go to hell, I've been wanting to for several years, what with all the grief you cause me each week. I've got my million bucks, see, and I don't have to work any more. You can't fire me because I quit!"

HE LAUGHS in my face and slams the front door as he goes out.

The makeup man was followed by the news linotype operator, who departs with the suggestion that "Now you can jump in the lake."

The rest of the employees quit, too. They each have a million dollars.

The office and shop are quiet. Everyone has quit.

"Well, so what?" I say out loud. "I quit, too. I've also got a million dollars. I don't have to work anymore, either."

I decided to stop by the drug store for a pack of cigarettes. As I get there, Joe Murphy is tossing Alec Johnson out on the front door.

"What gives, Joe?" I asked.

"FOR YEARS I have never liked that jerk and I put up with his business cause I needed it. But now I have a million bucks, that so-and-so can go to blazes," he shouted, glaring at me.

His glare looks like he is including me among the so-and-so's, and it is evident he was through filling prescriptions for good.

I go down to the Cadillac agency. They have a new Cadillac there which I think I will spend a few thousand of my million on. Yep, the car is there, but no one else is around. Evidently out spending their millions, too.

Putting down the necessary cash, plus a few hundred extra for any inconvenience I would cause, I get in the car and drive off.

THE GAS GAUGE shows only one-quarter full, so I stop for some gas.

"Hey, Roy, how about some gas?" I call to the owner whom I have known for many years.

"Who are you kiddin'? Get it yourself. I'm not pumping no more gas with money like this in my hand," and Roy waves his million-dollar check at me.

As soon as I pull in the driveway, the wife greets me with, "What's the matter around here? I can't get zipper, there's no electricity.

"When I just called the company to find out why, the phone wouldn't work. And the radio has gone on the blink. Everything's happened at once to us!"

NOT TO US, I thought, but to everyone.

Why should a power company guy work if he has a million bucks? Or the telephone operator? Or the radio station engineers and announcers?

They all got a million bucks the same as I have. They all quit their jobs, too, just as I did. No one has to work any more. Isn't it wonderful?

Then I hear the wife say, "Answer the phone, Bill, it's probably for you anyway."

I BLINKED MY EYES and looked around. The phone was ringing, the radio was still going, the lights were on.

"Thank God everyone hasn't got a million bucks!" I declared.

The wife looked up, startled. "What kind of a nightmare have you been having?" she demanded.

"It was awful, just awful—everyone had a million bucks and no one was working, just spending their money—or trying to," I hastily explained.

Speaking of money, how about letting me have some for next week's groceries," the wife asked.

"SORRY, HONEY, you'll have to wait till I get my paycheck cashed tomorrow morning."

I fingered the 97 cents change in my pocket as I went to answer the phone.

LOOKING AHEAD

By George S. Benson

—RIGHTS AND SOCIAL JUSTICE

There are many factors working against continuation of American liberty for the individual but one of the most dangerous is the antagonisms between groups of Americans themselves.

We cannot fight effectively against an enemy within or from without if our society is constantly torn with bitter internal strife, one group against another.

Under such conditions our economic progress slows down and the moral character of our nation is weakened.

ONE OF THE worst blights in America today is the conflict which propagandists have built up between employers and employees.

This war of group against group is actively agitated by Communists and other radical elements working for a "New Social Order."

But the Socialists and Communists couldn't successfully create enduring strife between these important groups if our American population if both groups had a knowledge of basic sound economics and real social justice.

The true interests of both labor and management are identical.

EMPLOYEES OF a business or industry always have a moral right to request an increase in pay when there is increased productivity for which they are directly responsible.

Social justice gives them the right to request it, though not to force it.

Under the capitalistic principles of private property and free enterprise no minority group has a right to take by force the wealth of another, or in effect impose taxes upon others.

WAGE RAISE requests are just, therefore, when the employees themselves helped to boost productivity and, thus company income.

Though social justice may in some instances decree that they be given a share of profits or wealth they didn't help create, they have no moral right to demand that.

The Socialist doctrine, on the other hand, does not recognize the principle of private property.

It gives everybody the right, by force of law, to participate in the fruits of the production of everybody else. That is the essence of Socialism.

PEOPLE WHO invest their savings (capital) in the establishment and operation of a business have the right, under the American system, to keep the profit.

The only moral obligation on them is to accord just treatment to the employees and the public.

Social justice decrees, further, that they reward the employees properly for increased productivity.

When, or if, an attempt is made to establish this economically and socially sound code by force of law—or by any force—real social justice is thereupon violated.

THEREFORE, THE demand of Socialist or Communist propagandists for a share in the profits of a business solely on the basis of **their** so-called "Social Justice" or "Economic Democracy," and ignoring the fundamental rights of the business ownership, can never be harmonized with the philosophy of American capitalism or real human justice.

These are fundamentals: (1) The enforced sharing of wealth is Socialism regardless of what label it may be given. (2) The voluntary sharing of wealth is an American capitalist (and Christian) ideal which has been liberally exercised. (3) And reward measured upon the base of productivity is economically and morally sound.

DAVE BECK, leader of the International Brotherhood of Teamsters, Chauffeurs, Warehousemen and Helpers of America, said in a recent speech:

"There is no problem in human relationships so complex or so grevious that it cannot be solved reasonably, if men of character, men with a sincere desire to cooperate in mutual confidence, will sit down together around the conference table, each respecting the rights and dignity of the other, and all inspired by the will to serve the common good."

That's a good statement. It is in contrast to one made a few weeks later by Emil Mazey, secretary-treasurer of the United Automobile Workers in a speech to Chrysler strikers.

HE WAS QUOTED as saying: "When we grow a little stronger we will demand all that we produce."

This goal ignores the "rights and dignity" of the investors who build the plants and finance purchase of the machinery, raw materials and, managerial skill to provide the jobs.

It is a disruptive statement, not a harmonizing one.

MICHIGAN MIRROR

By Gene Alleman

—HARD-HITTING CAMPAIGN BATTLE FORESEEN

A hard-hitting political campaign is in prospect for 1950, according to spring trends in Michigan.

Governor G. Mennen Williams caused no raising of eyebrows among Republican legislators when he accused them in a speech before the Michigan CIO Council of being controlled by "big business".

The heir to the Mennen soap millions charged that "special interests have been served and the people's interests neglected" by Republican domination at Lansing.

The "do-nothing" record of the legislature, he said, included inaction on a fair employment law, failure to remedy "outrageously unfair" disqualifications in unemployment compensation law, hostility to public housing needs and wooing of private utilities by granting them higher rates.

It has been the consistent contention of the Democratic governor that $112 more millions in government spending should be raised solely by a tax on business profits.

WILLIAMS HAS persisted in the socialistic belief that corporations should be made to dole out postwar profits for public benefits.

In fact, corporations would readily absorb the cost, he added. The cost would not be transferred to the consumer in the form of higher prices. It would be added expense of doing business in Michigan.

This "no consumer tax" plank in the Williams platform was unveiled one year ago. Republican legislators were not impressed. The reply was "socialism" for personal political propaganda.

And so when the governor called a special session of the legislature in 1950, recommending $112 more millions to be spent by governments, the stage was obviously set for a ready-made campaign issue. The Republicans would be counted on to oppose a business profits. They did just that.

Williams neatly created a situation whereby the G. O. P. could be attacked for "reactionary" negligence of the people's interests.

ACTUALLY, AS HIS critics see it, the special session was about 90 per cent window dressing for Williams's campaign of re-election.

With the session about ready to adjourn, the governor appears to have his issue: Republicans are subservient to "big business".

August Scholle, president of the Michigan CIO Council, criticized the newspapers of Michigan as being "controlled" by big advertisers. The press is in the doghouse, too.

And so the stage is being set for a red-hot name-calling campaign.

Until the Republicans agree upon their nominee at the September primary, the Republican replies will be voiced by legislators and by Owen J. Cleary, state central committee chairman.

Since the governor has chosen the familiar class lines of "rich vs. poor" for his campaign, the Republicans may be counted on to answer with an attack on the "Truman-Williams welfare state" and the "growing menace to state socialism".

CLEARY CALLS the Williams corporation tax "one of the most flagrant examples of intellectual dishonesty that has yet been presented to the people."

Williams counters: The Democrats have prevented "the imposition of new consumer taxes directly on wage-earners, farmers and small businessmen."

When Chairman John H. McCarthy of the Public Service Commission lost his temper and called Schuyler C. Marshall a "liar", he started something which will probably not be to Governor William's political advantage. Marshall, former newspaper publisher at St. Johns, is the senior member of the commission.

Romaine McCall, editor of the Gratiot County Herald at Ithaca, is among the many newspapermen who know Marshall well. Here is an excerpt from an editorial by McCall:

"Marshall is one of those rarities in public office. He accepts his job as an obligation and responsibility to the public with very little regard for purely partisan politics. He works at any job he undertakes, trying to get down to basic facts and figures on which to form an opinion."

Internationally Speaking

By Eugene Hess
Instructor, Univ. of Detroit

Last week we took a look behind the Iron Curtain in Germany.

Today I suggest the same for a large country on the Balkan Peninsula. I am forced to write "a large country" as my correspondent, now living in Michigan, has fled not long ago from behind the Iron Curtain and is afraid of new mishaps that might befall his family.

Instead of repeating a sad long story of the inhuman and criminal treatment of the entire population with special attention to the entire middle and upper classes, I only wish to make one statement here.

THE ENTIRE information submitted by this refugee about who's loyalty and dependability there cannot be the slightest doubt, confirms fully the terrible facts published by the international and by the American press regarding the abominable behavior of the Russian Communists and their Communist Quizzling friends, once they have gotten hold of a so-called Friendly country.

May it, in addition, be sufficient to say that my correspondent has joyfully left all his human possessions behind in order only to save his life and that of his closest family and start a new life, beginning from scratch, in this country.