

Soviet Wants Its Enemies to 'Go Broke'

During the past score of years, Russian Communism has made tremendous progress in "taking over captive peoples." Since 1945, without engaging themselves in combat warfare, the Kremlin has converted several hundreds of millions of human beings to its form of slave-government.

You probably recall that Lenin, the founder of modern Communism, told his followers that one of the best ways to capture a nation is to impoverish it via the burdens of heavy taxes on its citizens.

Since the end of World War II the United States has given away more than 50 billions of dollars to help other less fortunate nations. (Without, it may be added, having made any enduring friendships for Uncle Sam.)

WITHIN THE PAST two months you have observed how England, France and Israel invaded Egypt—the goal being to restore the Suez canal to international control. You know that such a move cost England, France and Israeli much money

—and that the United States is expected to defray this cost through more loans and/or outright grants of the American taxpayers' money. (Only last week England obtained one and a third billions from the International Monetary Fund to steady Britain's economy.)

All of this merely adds up to a condition that points out the shrewdness of Lenin's reference to taxes as a means of bringing nations to their economic knees—thus easier for the techniques of tyrannical and/or bureaucratic despotism to "take over."

HOW LONG DO YOU think human freedom can last against the clever machinations of current methods of Soviet Communism?

What will happen when the dwindling wealth of Uncle Sam results in domestic economic confusion and paralysis?

Are there not, indeed—as the late U.S. Senator Vandenberg often stated: "Are there not some human conditions that are worse than actual war?"

From The Eccentric's Point of View ...

What an anomalous situation has been developed in that Ellenville, N. Y., town where a bank president illegally manipulated over a half million dollars, as he allowed overdrafts to mount up on numerous accounts. Yet, practically every resident and depositor rushed to his defense, declaring him honest and a public benefactor. What a personality!

Beginning next February 1, no auto driver-licenses will be issued to Michigan youth under age 18, unless they present special certificates showing they have passed an approved course in driver education. About 105,000 boys and girls in the 15-year-old range are affected. This new requirement, however, ought to be a beneficial aid to lowered highway accidents, including youth itself.

Our government says it has reliable information that Russia is sending thousands of Hungary's youth to the Kremlin's slave labor camps in Siberia and other "hammer & sickle" areas. This method is as barbarous as anything recorded in anything written about "man's inhumanity toward man". It is but recurring proof that "he who lives by the sword will die by the sword" . . . as Russian purge after Russian purge already has revealed. Freedom is a commodity, it seems, that so easily is lost . . . so hard to win and keep.

Michigan's Secretary of States James M. Hare recently said that it looks as though he will have to pay up \$18,000 of the \$75,000 stolen by a former female manager of one of his many branch offices. This ought not to be necessary, and would not if all managers were required to provide bonded protection of the state's money they handle.

A former CIO member a few days ago told a group of industrialists and bankers that Walter P. Reuther "is conducting a campaign to become the political power of our nation." And, it may be noted here, that the president of the UAW already has gone a long way toward that goal. In the almost complete absence of counteraction by American finance, industry and legislative leaders, is it any wonder that labor leaders have acquired the tremendous power they now have? Economically

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NATURE NOW

By Lydia King Frehse
Special Writer for The Birmingham Eccentric

Christmas Rose Blossoms in Snow

Christmas has ever been a festival of nature centering around the Christ Child's birth and involving such plants and animals as are indigenous to a given locality and its people.

The first Christmas in Bethlehem town was set in the barren hills of Judea, an arid country where sheep and their shepherds roamed in search of the thin pasture, where the twisted olive trees cling to the dark hillsides and where the fig and palm trees flourished only on the fringe of an oasis or within the confines of a garden wall.

Along the waysides there must have been a host of flowers coming and going with the seasonal rains.

BUT DURING the years that lie between, legend has lent a note of oriental splendor to the manger scene. Here fact and fancy have mingled to make a fitting setting for so royal a birth.

Among these legends is the familiar story of the Christmas Rose, centering on a flower blooming in the snow, so white, so unusual, so fair that it was fit tribute to the little king and his young mother.

The legend originated in the great snow-covered forests of Sweden. Of it one can read and sing in many books, but for those who are interested in the plant which inspired it one must search in old botanists and herbaria. Your scribbles also has first-hand knowledge of it in our own locality from present-day gardeners who have introduced and cultivated the unusual, and from several greenhouses which order new plants for their Christmas trade.

OF IT BOTANISTS can say that it really does bloom at Christmas

time, pushing its blossoms through the snow by reason of the heat which it generates by its own metabolic activity. One can add "that which we call a rose is not a rose" but is named *Helianthus nigerrimus* the genus name from the Greek meaning poison and the species "black" from the external color of its root.

The Christmas Rose is easily placed in our familiar Ranunculus family, along with the buttercup and anemones. Low growing and shrub-like, its toothed evergreen leaves are deeply cleft like a crow's foot, suggesting the common name used for its family.

The three to ten petals are enclosed in small tubular petals, like those of its relative, the columbine. Each of these petals in a many seeded pod. This center is surrounded by a thick circle of pollen-laden stamens.

THAT WHICH COMPLETES the floral envelope and appears to be five more petals is in reality five large sepals, white within and greenish-pink without, so that the bud shows a pale color.

The solitary blooms appear anytime between December to April, forcing their way through the snow. To these eyes they suggest another relative, the pasque flower, an anemone of our southwestern states, which has the same hardy habits, blooming on the fringe of snowbanks at the first hint of spring.

Gray's botany lists a related species, *H. viridis*, which has become naturalized from Europe and now grows wild in restricted areas along our northeastern seaboard. In case you are interested in cultivating the Christmas rose, it will grow in rich soil in a sheltered, sunny situation, preferably one warmed by a wall. It propagates

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.

59 YEARS AGO

December 21, 1896
"All the fairies were present at President Roosevelt's christening except the one who might have conferred upon him the gift of reticence. The result is that very often when he opens his mouth, he ejects truth in common sense."

"Monday morning Fen Weston appeared for duty with a brand new buggy and that day a brother R. F. D. carrier accidentally backed into his new outfit upsetting the carriage and frightening Fen's horse so badly that it kicked the daylight out of the new vehicle. Fen begins to think there's no use trying to have anything at all, . . . ditto, 1956."

"Before we come out again the 25th of December will have passed and we wish one and all a 'Merry Christmas,' and many of them. . . . ditto, 1956."

30 YEARS AGO

December 16, 1926
"A man and his wife are in jail today charged with violating the prohibition law following a raid on their home at 120 Webster street by police and deputies Monday night in which 50 bottles of home brew were confiscated and a 10 gallon crock of beer was dumped."

"Hotels for automobiles, elevated walks for pedestrians, viaducts for trucks—they are the coming things which will help to solve the traffic problem, in the mind of Lee J. Eastman, president of the Broadway association, New York . . . We are attempting to have the restrictions changed so that storage garages from 12 to 18 stories high can be built. Hampden equipped they will handle from 500 to 2,500 cars rapidly. They will be real automobile hotels, doing no repair or service work but getting the machines off the streets."

"Co-operating with school officials of Bloomfield township, the

ONE THING OR ANOTHER By George Wm. Averill

In proportion to its population, Birmingham has more people on the municipal payroll than has the average city in the United States.

This is seen in a report made by the U. S. Census Bureau, covering some 1,300 cities with populations over 10,000. The findings are based on comparable data for a specific test month, October, 1955.

"That's over 13 months ago, by the calendar, but '6n time' as government reports go.

THE BIRMINGHAM PAYROLL, at that time carrying a total of 233 employees, exclusive of teachers and other school workers, had the equivalent of 9.8 employees for every 1,000 local residents.

This, it is shown, was high when compared with the ratio in effect in most of the cities of its size group, 10,000 to 25,000 population, the average being 9.2 employees per 1,000 residents.

It was, however, under the average employment rate for all the cities, without regard to size, 11.7 per 1,000.

As a whole, municipalities have had to enlarge their staffs in recent years to cope with the demands for more and better service. The need stems chiefly from the growth and shift of population in many areas, necessitating large capital investments for schools, roads, sewers and the rest.

IT HAS RESULTED IN a financial squeeze on the pocketbooks of the cities

and a frantic search for new and added sources of revenue. More and more local governments are turning, as a result, to non-property taxes, such as sales, income and gasoline taxes, to keep going.

For Birmingham, the census bureau report shows a monthly payroll for its municipal staff of \$75,500 in the test month. The cost was equal to \$3.22 a month for every inhabitant of the city.

This, however, doesn't jibe with city hall figures. Asst. City Manager Robert Kenning checked, and reported that payroll records for October 1955 amounted to \$70,024.93. This would amount to a \$3.10 per capita cost, he said.

Incidentally, he said October 1956 payroll was \$75,039.12, equal to \$3.20 per person based on an estimated population of 23,520.

IN THE OTHER CITIES of the same size category, the cost of meeting such payrolls came to \$2.30 per capita each month. For all the cities, with the exception of the five with populations over a million, the average was \$2.61 per capita.

In most communities, these costs are steadily rising as local governments, competing with business for workers, are paying the price of wage inflation.

One thing to bear in mind—Birmingham's labor costs are higher than the average city of 25,000 population because of the influence of the high Detroit labor market.

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