

Whither the Fellow Travellers?

FOR MORE THAN TEN YEARS they ruled the intellectual roost. They wrote well. They spoke well. And they wrote and spoke with such pontifical aloofness that their words were called wisdom. Their oracular mysticism was accepted as philosophy. The events of the past year have demonstrated that they have neither wisdom nor philosophy. They have merely snide craftsmanship and crass egotism.

We mean the disillusioned fellow travellers who have been kicked off the Communistic train by the Hitler-Stalin conductorship and are now wandering aimlessly and foolishly over the literary countryside.

Granville Hicks, Eugene Lyons, Waldo Frank, Max Lerner, Lewis Mumford, Frederick Schumann, Archibald MacLeish, George Soule, Max Eastman,—to mention a few—and their collegiate stooges who turned the gibberish of Marxism into a salon-philosophy, and profited thereby, are now as silly in their groping for a reason for writing as they were treating the gibberish as if it were reason. Their confessions, self-abrogations and self-psychological analyses are really funny.

What a dirty trick Stalin did to them when he demonstrated even to their befuddled minds that all collectivistic roads lead to Statism! Their phrases became vacuous in the light of his logic. They could not accept his conclusion. Being objectors and fault-finders only, they fear the crushing force of the State as a cramp to their style. Maybe theirs will be the first heads to adorn the city gates.

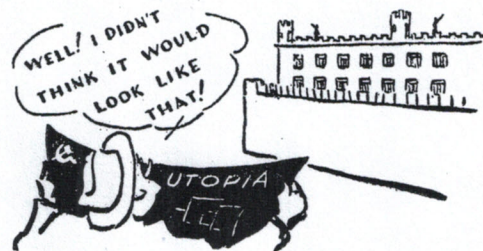
These now wandering minstrels were never Communists. They were far worse. Communists have at least the doubtful quality of consistency. The Party Line is not a philosophy; though it varies with the vagaries of the Kremlin, it at least has the virtue of adherence to whatever that citadel deems expedient. If you can figure out what will benefit Stalin you can approximate the Party Line.

But the fellow traveller intelligentsia attempted to endow the Party Line, which they did not espouse, with reason. Because of their skillful manipulation of words they seduced many, including themselves, and thus rendered service to the Party Line. Indeed, it is evident now that these smart gentlemen were the dupes, rather than the interpreters, of Communism.

Although they have been kicked out by those they served, they are still a danger. They have

been discredited as philosophers, but they have not lost their craftsmanship. And they must live. To what form of profitable seduction will they now turn their talents?

It is not entirely true that these literary vagrants have no social point of view. They did not consciously sell themselves to the Party Line for pay. They were attracted to it by a congenital weakness which made the Communistic totem pole an irresistible magnet.



They are all Planners. They believe that the ills of society can be corrected only by a blueprint economy. While they talk of freedom, they do not know what it is, what economic principles it rests upon, what its essential mechanism is. They do not believe men should be let alone. They still believe that some arch-angled regulatory scheme is needed to bring the world out of its chaos.

Therefore, in seeking a new vehicle for their arts by instinct and predilection (and perhaps because of cupidity) they hop on the "Gradualist" bandwagon. They have not learned the lesson of regulation: it cannot be done by halves, quarters or tenths. Being extreme egotists, as all Planners are, they confidently expect that the regulatory scheme which they and their intellectual friends shall direct can and will avoid the ultimate of Statism.

The name of their bandwagon it now appears is Democracy. As they twisted the word "Communism" into a meaning completely foreign to its content, so "Democracy" in their hands will come to connote something more akin to Marxism than to its Jeffersonian ideal or even its Greek origin. Not because they want to do this, but because they cannot conceive of a society in which the primacy of the individual is the guiding principle. You can teach a Socialist the words of freedom but you cannot wash out of his subconscious mind the dream refuge of the State.

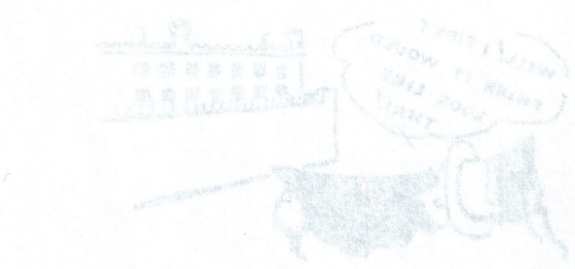
The current of events—the product of a poverty economy—will aid them in mounting the band-

wagon of the new crusade. The format of any kind of planning is nationalism; a blueprint economy for mankind is not even conceivable. With nationalism running rampant throughout the world, with protectionism and isolationism the dominant political religions, the disillusioned but unreformed intelligentsia will find a ready market for their new word mongering.

Patriotism and Planning are first cousins; war is their common playground. How the scribes will flourish in this atmosphere, spiritually and pecuniarily!

To those who have faith in freedom, who identify democracy with individualism, the warning is clear: beware the pen-pushers whom Stalin kicked off his train, for they are of his kind.

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Therefore, in seeking a new vehicle for their acts of instinct and production (and perhaps because of capacity) they hop on the "industrial bandwagon." They have not learned the lesson of regulation: it cannot be done by having gone out or better. Being extreme egoists, as all Planers are, they confidently expect that the regulatory scheme which they and their intellectual friends shall invent can and will avoid the business of business.

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