

Purges Have Their Proper Place

By Frank Chodorov

Franklin D. Roosevelt, as an American citizen, performs a desirable duty in calling to the attention of voters the political ideas of candidates which, to him, seem detrimental to the common welfare. One good way for voters to judge the qualifications for office of these candidates is to weigh the expressed opinions of men acquainted with them and their political ideas. Opponents stress what they consider weaknesses, proponents point to virtues; the citizens are the jury. The jury may decide wrongly; in the next election they correct the error. That's the way of democracy.

Franklin D. Roosevelt, as President, threatens democracy if in advocating the election or rejection of certain candidates he uses, no matter how slightly, the power of his office to persuade voters toward his will or judgment. And with the tremendous power that he now wields, because of the many job-giving and money-lending agencies at his command, and because of widespread poverty which he can temporarily and in a few cases assuage, there is no way in which he can perform his duty as a citizen without employing the weapon of tyranny.

By implication alone, by the hungry inference of the voters, the President's advocacy of or opposition to a candidate is an unconscious use of power. The use of coercion in the election of public officials is a greater danger to our form of government than even the election of bad officials. For, with free suffrage we can turn out the bad officials; but coercion, whether wielded by thugs, plutocrats or politicians, is a denial of free suffrage.

All this Mr. Roosevelt, a good American, must be aware of. As a democrat he must be averse to the principle of the "purge." But, Mr. Roosevelt is something more than a democrat—he is a Planner. And in any politically planned scheme of things an essential for its functioning is complete conformance. Which means the elimination of any dissi-

dent opinions, the purging of opposition.

The assumption of the planning to which the world is being conditioned (by both politicians and professors) is that some of us are gifted with greater knowledge and vision—to say nothing of integrity—than the rest of us, and should therefore be vested with the power necessary for our guidance. This is a throw-back to Plato's oligarchy of wise men. It is a sort of divine right of Planners.

The difference between Planners and tyrants is that the latter avowedly run things for themselves and their friends. The Planners are altruists. But the methods of both follow the same outlines. The excuse that the Planners use for their existence is that other political schemes have not succeeded in securing the "life abundant" for the masses. That these other schemes have always been characterized by some sort of planning for the good of the people, that never have the people been left alone to work out their happiness, does not occur to them. All other plans—from Pericles to Wilhelm—have failed, they say, because the plans were faulty. Theirs only is the Perfect Plan.

Economic planning necessitates not only control of production and distribution, but also of desire, since production starts only when human wants manifest themselves, and distribution is merely the object of production. Labor is exerted toward the making of things only because laborers desire those things, and the direction toward which labor will be exerted (in an uncontrolled economy) is determined by the demand. Therefore, in order to effectively control production it is necessary to curb, either by propaganda or coercion, the appetites of man.

Now, all desires arise in the mind. You want tooth paste because you have acquired the idea that cleaning your teeth is beneficial to your health. The idea gives birth to desire, to demand. Or, you worship according to a given ritual because the idea of spiritual salvation, attained by way of that ritual, is satisfying, and your idea finds expression in the demand for a church building or a religious order or an organization. Mental concepts precede the expression of will, or desire. Nothing appears in our economic or social order that human mind has not conceived in thought.

Therefore, in order to effectively plan our economic or social order it is necessary for the planners to shape or control thought before it is expressed in desire.

New desires, whether for things or for intellectual gratifications, make for what we term progress. They stimulate production, call for new services, give birth to invention, and aid in the pursuit of happiness. But to the Planner every new desire presents a new problem. To keep adding details to a blue print is eventually to make it unintelligible, useless. Besides, if group desires arise the possibility of group action to seek gratification is a danger; minority groups may become majorities. Not only the plan, but the political control so essential to planning is threatened by every group of people whose thought area is not predetermined by the Planner. Therefore, such groups must be discouraged, prevented, purged.

Civilization cannot be planned. It is too big for any human being, any parliament of mortals. There are no minds so great as to be able to envisage the manifold desires of which man is capable, let alone to work out the means of production and distribution for the gratification of those desires. A list of the occupations that have developed in our highly complicated civilization, occupations which owe their origin to the fathomless wants of man, and which seem to multiply with every new satisfaction, would take a lifetime to compile; and then it would be incomplete, because every generation seeks new satisfactions and devises new means of gratification.

How have we been able, even with interfering political schemes, even with legalized robbery, to get something out of life? Merely by the exchange of goods and services for goods and services. Under any system of planning it is only by this natural exchanging of labor products that man will live. The more exchanges the better will he live; and the "life abundant" will come only when these exchanges are free—free of tax-gatherers, rent-collectors and planners.

But that is not the way of the Plan. Its paternalistic heart throbs with the assurance that it knows best what is good for all the people. It therefore attempts to record on its monster blue print every desire of man, every means of gratification. When this job becomes too colossal, when the finite mind runs smack into infinity, it merely attempts to cut down the opposition to its own size.

That is why we have purges. That is why we must accept the principle of complete conformance if we accept the principle of Planning, in politics or in economics. If we decide that it is for the public good that butter should be had only on Wednesdays, then he who seeks to gratify his desires for butter on Friday destroys the efficacy of the Plan. He must be liquidated. If we decide that the "broad principles of the New Deal" is the Plan by which we should live and work and play, then anyone who advocates a different Plan, or no Plan at all, is a disturbing element in our body politic.

The purge is properly a part of planning.

pay-for-itself plan—that indigent students can provide for their tuition and their "keep" by production. They and their followers have proven the theory. The college derives its entire income from student-produced wealth.

Those 400 acres have been converted into a truck garden of 60 acres, an orchard of 70 acres, a corn field, a wood lot—in other words, turned productive by the labor of the students. A cannery (built by student hands) produces a high grade product from the college farms and orchards which retails over the entire country. The corn field supplies the material for high grade brooms made on the campus. A light weight tile has been developed, being used on the roofs of their own buildings as well as "exported."

These are merely examples of direct production from the land. Other accomplishments include the Madison Rural Sanitarium where students learn and carry on the profession of nursing; the school chemistry laboratory which has developed many new and valuable food products, particularly those from the soy bean; the saw mill, where all lumber for the school buildings is produced; the laundry and the cafeteria. All of the capital needed in these various enterprises was produced by student labor, as the school had no original endowment. Continued production can only be by student labor.

Why can this labor continue to be so productive? Because the land remains free. The element of rent of course entered the picture with the original purchase of the farm land, but as productivity increased the rising rent merely accrued to the benefit of the college. Had these students been compelled to run the double gauntlet of privately collected rent and taxes levied on their productivity, the enterprise would undoubtedly have suffered all the vicissitudes to which any tax-and-rent-ridden enterprise is exposed.

Now consider. If untrained students (at least as they matriculate) can become self-sustaining on 400 acres of worn-out farm land, what could skilled labor, aided by abundant capital, produce on the good land now being held for a price? What is the cause of unemployment?