

241

In Memoriam: John C. Rawe, 1900-1947

A SOCIOLOGIST whose scholarly studies were stimulated by the passionate conviction that science, philosophy and religion, in teamwork, could improve the lot of the average citizen and help society rid itself of the disorders that afflict it, the Rev. John C. Rawe, S.J., gave devoted leadership and faithful service to the movement for ethical democracy in America.

In his books, "Who Owns America," published in 1936, and "Rural Roads to Security," written in collaboration with the Rt. Rev. Msgr. L. G. Ligutti in 1939, Father Rawe put into permanent form his contributions to a social philosophy that one day will realize his ideals. In his teaching at St. Louis University, Creighton University and at the Wyoming Indian mission, and in the active part he played in the rural life movement as a member of the board of directors of the National Catholic Rural Life Conference, he worked quietly and practically to build the Christian and democratic society he envisioned.

I first met Father Rawe through the good offices of his collaborator, Msgr. Ligutti, who had been a formative influence on the young Jesuit scholar's thinking as on so many others, including my own. Father Rawe paid me the compliment of attending a course of lectures I gave before the second world war on "The Origins of the Capitalist Crisis." He was enthused about the project; stimulated by his encouragement and that of a few others, a midwestern sociologist and I undertook to work up the voluminous materials into a comprehensive treatise. The outbreak of the war and the founding of this JOURNAL, however, caused the postponement of the project before it was half completed.

When this JOURNAL was established in 1941, Father Rawe took as active a part in it as any of the other collaborators, although that part was never acknowledged in the masthead by his own modest wish. He helped to plan the investigations through which the philosophical aspects of our social and economic problems were explored, and he advised regularly on manuscripts and on other editorial problems until his health broke down. Even when he could no longer take part in the venture he aided it with his prayers and his encouragement.

Father Rawe was born in Carrollton, Ill., Dec. 4, 1900, the son of Henry Anthony and Lucy Cecilia Selhorst Rawe. He did his undergraduate and graduate work at Boston College and took his bachelor's and master's degree in law at St. Louis University. Entering the Society of Jesus, he

was ordained a priest in 1935. After teaching at St. Louis University in 1937 and 1938, he went to Creighton in Omaha to teach political economy. There he founded a school for rural leadership which combined the study of scientific agriculture with that of the disciplines for rebuilding rural society on the basis of a restored family life. The school was on outstanding success until the war robbed it of its student body. Coming to New York in 1941, he joined the staff of the Institute of Social Order, where he developed programs for aiding the family farmer. Called back to the midwest, he found his services sorely needed. An Indian mission in Wyoming had lost a large source of revenue and he was asked to go and build up the mission farm and train the young Indians in scientific agriculture. He went gladly and his work was beginning to show signs of success when he was stricken by the illness from which he never recovered. After he had passed the crisis, his physician ordered a change in climate. He accepted a call for his services from Ridge, Md., and went East to help train rural leaders, develop co-operative enterprises and aid in rural life institutes for clergy and religious. Although his health failed to improve, he gave of himself to the last until his final illness forced him to enter the hospital. He passed to his reward on Sept. 7, 1947. Burial took place at the novitiate of his order in Florissant, Mo. May he rest in peace. And may all of us who have been touched by his wisdom, his courage and his self-effacing devotion find in his example of practical dedication to the task of improving the condition of men living in society the inspiration to complete the work he helped to begin.

W.L.