

Rabbi Waldman and the Pope's Encyclical

By I. AMTER.

IN earlier times the documents that today are called the Pope's "encyclicals" were called "bulls." Today, in spite of the change of name, they are still bull.

The Pope has issued a long encyclical in which he argues for the co-operation of labor and capital; calls upon society to grant labor its "rightful" share of the benefits of their (the workers') production; speaks for organization of the workers, provided they have peaceful intention; raises the question of fascist unions (which have already got him into trouble with Mussolini). But the main intention of this encyclical is to place a kindly hand upon the shoulder of the socialists, at the same time warning that a true catholic cannot be a socialist (for reasons which we will later explain), and particularly to wage war on Communism.

The reason for this bull is clear: When Pope Leo issued his famous (or notorious) encyclical fifty years ago, it was directed against the Second International, which had been organized shortly before, against the rising socialist movement, which had struck deep roots in Germany, where the workers had already elected a number of members of the Reichstag, and Bismarck was terrorizing the workers who were under the socialist banner. But since that time many things have happened. The world war intervened, when the socialists and the Pope gave their blessing to the international butchery of the working class. The Russian Revolution also "happened"—the Russian Social Democratic Party (Bolsheviks)—now Communist Party—had been a member of the socialist international, but, under the leadership of Lenin, with the aid of some of the lefts in the international, had taken a revolutionary position, and formulated a revolutionary policy that led to the Russian Proletarian Revolution. Further revolutions developed in other countries, but were crushed, with the aid of social democracy. With ups and downs, the revolutionary movement has grown, and today Communist Parties exist in 60 countries of the world.

The world economic crisis has caused revolts in many countries—Latin America, Spain and other countries. The Chinese and Indian revolutions, the revolts in Indo-China, the revolutionary movements in the countries of Europe, Africa and Asia, have aroused Pope Pius, who is a true apostle of capitalism. In Spain, his "beloved country"; in Italy, where for a long time he has been a "voluntary prisoner," from which he was released by recognition of the Papal State by Mussolini (which is now in question), the workers and poor peasants have carried on a struggle despite the most brutal repression; in Germany, where the Pope has many supporters, the catholic workers, forced by the economic crisis, are uniting with the revolutionary workers under Communist leadership to struggle for a Soviet Germany.

The Pope's heavenly domain on earth truly is in danger—for the Communist movement and organization are growing, and threaten to destroy the whole system of bigotry and fear known as religion. Churches are being burned down in Italy and Spain. "Death to the Pope," "death to the traitor," is being shouted in the streets of Italy; Scottish workers break up catholic parade; Mexican workers years ago drove the priests out of the churches (and afterward the United States imperialist tools restored them to position!).

The Pope, keenly sensitive to the situation—more so than many a capitalist enterpriser—recognizes the danger not only to the church, but to the capitalist system on which it rests. He sees the growing giant in the East—the Soviet Union—which has become a menace to the entire capitalist world. He sees the vast contrast of growing power and prosperity, of the development of tremendous forces of indus-

try, of cultural, social and political life in the Soviet Union, with the growing pauperization, misery, unemployment, degradation of the masses, together with the parasitical, degeneracy of the capitalist class in the capitalist countries. He sees that the workers and poor farmers are responding to the policies and slogans of the Communist Party in the capitalist and colonial countries. A volcano of revolution is erupting in many countries of Europe and Asia—and therefore the Pope comes to the help of capitalism to stay the disaster to the present system that stares it in the face.

The Pope is shrewd: he damns liberalism—and yet he speaks the language of liberalism. This is the maneuver of the so-called "left wing" of capitalism, which tries to counteract the growing wave of revolution by radical phrases, but counter-revolutionary actions. The Murray Butlers, Shipsteads, Pinchots, Brookharts, Borahs are more dangerous to the working class than Hoover, Mellon, Grundy, or the like. The former speak the language of the "liberal," who sees the many "sores" of the present system, and talks about cures—"radical" cures, cures of "democracy." The masses are suffering, and these people take advantage of their misery to create pipe dreams about the possibilities of the capitalist system, which must be "reformed"; and thus they try to bind them to the system.

The Pope repeats the words of Pope Leo about "one class being forbidden to exclude the other from a share in the profits. This sacred law is violated by an irresponsible wealthy class who, in the excess of the good fortune, deem it a just state of things that they should receive everything and the laborers nothing."

Proceeding along this line, the Pope declares that "unless serious attempts be made, with all energy and without delay to put them into practice, let nobody persuade himself that the peace and tranquility of human (capitalist—I. A.) society can be effectively defended against the forces of revolution. . . . Let employers, therefore, and employed join in their plans and efforts to overcome all difficulties and obstacles, and let them be aided in this wholesome endeavor by the wise measure of the public authority." (emphasis mine—I. A.) In working-class language and experience, it denotes: class collaboration with the aid of the government conciliation board—if not the military!

"It is the primary duty of the state and of all good citizens to abolish conflict between classes with divergent interests, and thus foster and promote harmony between the various ranks of society."

These are principles on which the socialists can and do stand—in word and practice. In Germany, England, France, the United States—they preach and practice these policies. Norman Thomas pleads for more tolerance of the bitter enemies of the working class. The Schlesingers, Hillmans, Mustes work with the bosses and accept the intermediation of the government conciliator. Ramsay MacDonald tries to "abolish conflict between classes" in India with guns, in England with the military. In Spain, the socialists in the government shoot down the workers and poor peasants to whom the bourgeois-democratic revolution (the one that has just taken place and with the aid of the workers and peasants has taken power away from the landlords and put it into the hands of the capitalists) was to mean a release from their misery. But it means more struggle against the capitalists and their socialist, anarchist, syndicalist allies.

The class struggle is not only here—but is becoming more acute, owing to the general breakdown of capitalism—its inability to grow and develop—and the acute economic crisis, which is driving the workers to revolt and revolution. And no bull of the Pope, socialists and liberals can abolish it.