NAMES AND ROSES

Under the Bed

Capitalist society has many names, some of these being: the system of free enterprise, the free world, democracy, the welfare state, peoples democracy, peace-loving nation and socialism. Most countries have embraced one or more of these names.

The politicians of the day also have many names: Liberals, Conservatives, Communists, Republicans, Democrats, Christian Democrats, Social Democrats, New Democrats — we seem to be stuck in a groove.

Why then shouldn't socialists be as versatile? No reason at all. So there are socialists all over the lot. And some of them have hit the high spots.

Messrs. Ben Gurion, Nasser, Brandt, Nehru, Eisenhower and Kennedy are all socialists. Lord Attlee, Lord Morrison and Lord Stansgate are socialists. And the queen has just set up a new batch of peers, two of these being socialists.

That's not all. Saskatchewan Liberal leader Ross Thatcher discovered a while ago that the Social Credit government of British Columbia is socialist. He says it is "out-socializing the socialists in Canada," "even making the socialist government in Saskatchewan look pretty far to the right." (Winnipeg Free Press, March 29, 1962.)

Then there is Robert N. Thompson, the national Social Credit leader, who says Conservative Prime Minister John Diefenbaker "is the biggest welfare socialist of them all," "backing into socialism as fast as the socialist can walk in." (W.F.P., March 28.)

Finally, Mr. Diefenbaker may be observed looking sternly at Liberal leader Lester Pearson, flanked by erstwhile socialist stalwarts Ross Thatcher and Hazen Argue, and declaring that the recent election was a struggle between free enterprise and socialism.

Yes sir. The place is crummy with socialists. You have to watch your step or you'll plant a boot on some of them.

Happy thought.

DIssension

Lord Dalton, another of the millions of socialists around us, died recently. He was Chancellor of the Exchequer in the last British Labor government. His passing was noted in the Manchester Guardian Weekly (Feb. 15) by fellow-socialist Hugh Gaitskell, the leader of the British Labour Party.

His lordship, says Mr. Gaitskell, could write excellent English, had great drive and was a man of decision. He was a political realist and despised those more concerned with the emotional satisfaction of expressing minority views. He disliked pomp and circumstance and had nothing but contempt for those who showed signs of becoming seduced by "society." He was prejudiced in favor of the young and disliked the old. He hated illness, loved walking, had a passion for forestry and tree-planting and hated slipshod English. He could be exceedingly bad-tempered, was apt to bully and shout and got angry unreasonably. He had violent prejudices both about people and nations, loathed Germans, loved Poles, Yugoslavs and Italians. He was egotistical and an intriguer. What mattered most to him was laughter and the love of friends.

What interest in socialism bloomed in this barren soil, Mr. Gaitskell forgot to mention — but let's not start becoming doctrinaire.

The Peerless Heroes

For many years the Communists have been trying to look like socialists. In their time they have supported Liberals, Conservatives, Catholics, Nationalists, Fascists, Social Democrats, New Democrats and many other known socialists, not overlooking J. Stalin and N. Khrushchev. In the interest of socialism they have even bumped each other off in considerable numbers.

It is hard to escape from the staggering thought that in all their star-studded career this last activity has been their most helpful.

First Things First

Wenzel Jaksch, a Social Democratic Party member of the West German parliament, visited Winnipeg recently and was interviewed by the Winnipeg Free Press (Mar. 30). He gave this paper some pointers which they were no doubt happy to receive.

Socialism, said Mr. Jaksch, has to grow up. Its old appeal to the worker might as well be scrapped because there is no proletariat any more. Democratic socialists have to realize that there have been great sociological changes taking place in the world. In the socialist mecca of Hamburg, most of the workers now wear white collars. "If you tell the workingman he's going to take over the factory, the manager will ask what are you going to do about him. He's a workingman too."

Democratic socialists in Europe underwent terrible things through the Hitler period and have tried to draw certain lessons out of this, continued Mr. Jaksch. "We have come to the conclusion that what's good for democracy is good for socialism. But democracy must come first."

Of course.

Mr. Jaksch had some unkind things to say about his fellow socialists on the other side of the wall and one gathers that in Mr. Jaksch's mind the next great conflict for democracy will find the socialists giving another good account of themselves against the socialists.

Epilogue

You may draw the bawth now, Emerson. And have two bars of new improved Zest ready. We've been slumming.

J. M.

IN "COMMUNIST" RUSSIA THINGS ARE DIFFERENT?

Vladimir Bogachev and Yurly Kuznetsov, two visiting Soviet Russian news correspondents sent to cover the U.S. — Russia track meet last summer in California — were interviewed by Melvin Durslag of the Los Angeles Herald. In his column of July 23, 1962, he reports his guests as stating:

"Medical and dental care (in Russia) is free. One makes an appointment at his district clinic or hospital. There are private practices in Russia too. Doctors and dentists are required to give the government a certain number of hours a week. After that, they can practice on their own.

"People who wish personal attention, *and who can afford it,* won't go to clinics, but will see their doctor or dentist privately..." (our emphasis.)

"Many individuals in Russia have money. 'Not like your Mr. Rockefeller,' we were told, "but artists, professional men, educators, scientists and others accumulate cash. We pay tokens, which is like your taxes, only less. No one pays 90 per cent token." (Durslag's emphasis.) "... Banks pay 2 per cent interest on earnings. As an incentive to depositors, the banks will pay 3 per cent to those who make no withdrawals for a period of six months. Installment plan buying has swept Russia today. One can buy just about everything on time. The maximum interest charge is 2 per cent. Television sets are available, at prices ranging from $75.00 to $200.00. They, too, can be bought on credit.

"What happens to a buyer who doesn't pay?" we asked.

"The same thing that happens to one who doesn't pay in America. He loses the merchandise, gets his wages attached, or goes to jail. When one owes the government money in our country, he usually pays." (emphasis Durslag's.)

Yes! capitalism stings in "Communist" Russia, too!

CRITICS OF SOCIALISM

We welcome your views in the columns of THE WESTERN SOCIALIST