THE FIRST LEFTIST

1. "The First Leftist" would make a better showing in a popularity contest in the United States today, February, 1953, than he would have made at the time this essay was published in December, 1951. Do you agree? Explain your answer.

2. You may want to refresh your memory about the French Revolution. If so, you will find valuable help in Chapters VI and VII of Modern Europe by Thomas and Hamm.

3. "Reactionary" is a word in common use today. What meaning do its users intend to convey? How does this meaning compare with its meaning at the time of the French Revolution? See page 38. Also, see page 231 of Wriston's Challenge to Freedom for an interesting description of "a reactionary."

4. Outstanding among the "First Leftists" in France in 1789 were Count Gabriel Mirabeau, the Marquis de Lafayette, and Abbe Sieyes. Prepare a brief account of each of these men, paying special attention to those personal qualities which in your judgment entitles them to be classed as "First Leftists."

5. Some "First Leftists" in the United States in 1789 were Thomas Jefferson, Patrick Henry, and Samuel Adams. Consult The Making of Modern America, Chapters VI - VIII, by Canfield and Wilder for evidence in support of this statement.

6. One of the achievements of the French National Assembly, 1789-1791, was "The Declaration of the Rights of Man and of the Citizen." Consult Modern Europe by Thomas and Hamm for an account of this document. Explain the Marquis de Lafayette's part in the making of this Declaration. Explain how this Declaration was influenced by the American Declaration of Independence.

7. Consult the same book for a description of the Jacobins.

8. Explain why and how these Jacobins -- a minority -- grasped the power of government and began their reign of terror.

9. Revolution in France in 1789, and in Russia in 1917, began as a middle-class, liberal, and constitutional movement; it fell into the hands of the radicals; it ended with a dictatorship. For an explanation of this statement, consult History of Civilization by Hutton Webster - Chapter 35 and pages 896 - 900.