



## HARD-BOILED

# Babel

Are your children that way? Here's an arresting look at one possible reason

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READING TIME • 10 MINUTES 40 SECONDS

**C**HILDREN can be taught that life is hard-boiled, materialistic, selfish. Children can be made to believe that nothing moves men but money, that there is a constant and permanent war between the rich and the poor, between the "haves" and the "have-nots," and that nothing in this world matters but that war.

That is the Marxian "economic interpretation of history." It is the precept of Marx' Communist Manifesto.

But is it what you want your children taught?

Let me give you an example of the materialistic teaching of history, so prevalent today. I am going to quote from a famous textbook by Harold Rugg, Professor of Education, Teachers College, Columbia University. His books are widely used. His Rugg Social Science Series are used in elementary and high schools.

The book from which I am quoting is entitled *America's March Toward Democracy* and is Volume 4 of the Junior High School Course—for children between eleven and fourteen.

If children of that age are told by their teacher that the fathers of our country were money-grubbing realists who had no ideals save building up fat bank accounts, they are likely

to believe it. And if they do, what kind of human beings do you suppose they will be themselves when they grow up?

Rugg, in his account of *The Making of the Constitution*, says:

"These two classes of speculators were gambling in public lands and public money. They added in no way to the country's wealth. They produced nothing from the earth, manufactured no new goods, suggested no new ideas to benefit the people. They were simply making money by gambling. But to make their speculations profitable a strong central government was necessary. It is easy to understand, therefore, that they would be among those who worked hardest to establish such a government." (Page 110.)

He proceeds to tell how George Washington, James Madison, Alexander Hamilton, John Jay were "determined to bring about a closer union among the states." Then he asks:

"But what of John and Samuel Adams? What of Patrick Henry and Thomas Jefferson? Were these prominent leaders of Revolutionary days at the Constitutional Convention? Not one. John Adams and Jefferson were in Europe, attending to the affairs of the new country. Samuel Adams had not been elected. Since the days before the Revolution, Sam Adams, as he was known about Boston, had been regarded as a 'fiery

radical,' even a crank on politics. Patrick Henry had been elected but refused to attend because he said he 'smelt a rat.' Thomas Paine, the author of the famous Revolutionary pamphlet *Common Sense*, was absent in Europe." (Page 113.)

I maintain that these two quotations, placed only a few pages apart in this book, would be bound to give a child the impression that the group headed by Washington were related to the speculators, even without the next paragraph which ties the knot:

"The convention was made up chiefly of prominent leaders from the more well-to-do and prosperous classes. It was a convention of intelligent, even brilliant, Americans. The records of the convention as well as the histories of the careers of the individual delegates show clearly that many of them were exceedingly careful men. They were, almost without exception, lawyers, businessmen, owners of great plantations, merchants, and manufacturers."

In the same chapter the child is told:

"The fathers of the Constitution feared 'too much democracy.' They were afraid of what the mass of people, who did not possess property, would do to the few who did. . . . The spoken and written words of the men in the convention show very clearly that they regarded democracy as a dangerous thing. Gerry, for example, said that the unsettled condition of the country 'came from the excess of democracy.' . . . The fathers wished to guard against the dangers of too much democracy. How did they do it?" (Page 119.)

Now, we were taught, we old-fashioned adults, that the system of checks and balances was instituted by the framers of the Constitution to safeguard us from despotism and tyranny. We were told that the heroes of the Revolution, having experienced the despotism of George III, of colonial governors, of a Parliament that was out of touch with the colonies, sought a system of government and a way of life that would

forever protect the American people.

But, according to Harold Rugg:

"The fathers of the Constitution wanted the method of changing the government to be a difficult one. Why? If the people of the country became restless and dissatisfied, they would want certain new and, perhaps, dangerous laws passed. To avoid the carrying out of such wishes, the fathers worked out a plan by which the three parts of the government should act as checks upon one another. This form of government would prevent such laws from being made too rapidly or too easily. In other words, *they made it difficult for the mass of the people to get new laws passed in a short time.* This is how they did it." (Pages 119-120.)

**B**UT that is not enough. Professor Rugg goes on:

"By such provisions as these the Constitutional Convention made of the American government a government of checks and balances. Each department—executive, legislative, judicial—was to act as a check upon the others. Thus the fathers of the Constitution provided for a *strong, stable government that would not change rapidly. They gave us one that would protect property, one that would not grant too quickly any sudden desires of the mass of the people.*" (Page 122.)

And then he summarizes:

"The 'commercial' part of the country—the merchants, shippers, manufacturers, and bankers—were greatly in favor of it. Here was the plan for a strong central government, a government which would see to it that debts were paid and that commerce was protected. Under it, uprisings would be put down and the country would be defended against foreign enemies. It was a government which would prevent the common people from making hasty and rash changes.

"Those who opposed the Constitution were principally the small farmers, the frontiersmen, the artisans, and the poorer people, many of whom were in debt. Generally speaking, the well-to-do classes were in favor of its adoption; the poorer debtor classes were against it." (Page 123.)

Now, there may be those who will say that this is accurate history. And yet, what does a modern child get out of this story? Let me translate it into words a boy would use:

"After the farmers and workers, the Minutemen and Liberty Boys, made the Revolution, rich lawyers, landowners, and manufacturers grabbed the power, wrote a Constitution in such a way that they kept the power, kept the masses down, prevented real democracy from being born and growing in this country. The Constitution is a rich man's document. To hell with it!"

I do not see how a child can reach any other conclusion from these paragraphs. Read them to your own child and ask him or her what it means.

Was there nothing of religion in

the heart of George Washington? Was there nothing of a regard for the welfare of his fellow men? Did old Benjamin Franklin forget his moral and ethical creed? Even Jefferson, often called the "father of democracy" in the United States, is debunked in this textbook:

"After all, Jefferson was a Virginia 'gentleman.' In spite of his carelessness in dress and informal manner, he held many of the views of the Southern aristocracy. For example, he distrusted the common people of the cities—the artisans and workers generally. He believed that *upon the farmers rested the happiness and welfare of the country.*

"To a large extent also the Republican party stood for the farming interests, particularly for the interests of the large plantation-owners of the South. Thus *the change that was made in 1801 was not so much from less to greater democracy; rather it was from the party representing the business and commercial interests of the North to the party representing chiefly the Southern-plantation interests.*" (Page 155.)

In a word, there is no one among the founders of this country to hold up as ideal—no one who really cared for the general welfare.

Yet in Volume 2 of this same Junior High School Course, in the book entitled *Changing Countries and Changing Peoples*, Rugg has this to say of the Russian Revolution:

"It is true, however, that many of the farms have changed little. On these the peasants still work the same strips of land. In some places the same bony, undersized horses drag clumsy plows. . . . However, if you were to stop to talk with one of these farmers, he would probably say that his life has changed in many ways. Perhaps these would be his words: 'We peasants still toil long hours and earn little, but we are freer, and some are richer. In the old days I was yoked to the plow, like my horse here. Today I still work hard, but now my neighbors and I own much good land. We are not driven like horses, as we were under the Czar. We feel more like men now, not driven beasts. We work to feed ourselves, and work means bread. But we feel that it is our own land we are working.'" (Page 414.)

I cannot help feeling that few Russian peasants, enslaved to the Communist regimentation, living in fear of the O. G. P. U., dreading the constant espionage which leads to deportations and purges, borne down by high taxes, remembering the great man-made famine, feel as enthusiastic as this picture makes them out to be. I cannot help feeling that the author has some sympathy for the collectivization of agriculture in Russia; whereas in his volume that deals with the making of the American Constitution there is nothing but materialistic realism.

Let me contrast paragraphs from Rugg's description of current Soviet Russia and of current Fascist Italy.

Here is current Russia as he sees it:

"Today Russia, with about 170,000,000 people, growing by 3,000,000 a year, is a strong industrial nation and a world power, extending from Poland in Europe across Asia to the Pacific Ocean. Great coal fields have been opened up. Enormous dams have been built on rivers to provide for electric power and irrigation. Giant steelworks have sprung up in several centers. Industry and agriculture by machinery have swept eastward from Europe into Siberia. . . . Today, instead of importing many raw materials, such as cotton, Russia is able to produce almost everything she needs for a fine civilization. . . . Thousands of schools have been started, and all the children and most of the grownups have learned to read and write. In recent years a 'backward' agricultural civilization has been rapidly changing into a modern one!"

And here is Italy:

". . . Outwardly at least Italy seems to have recovered from the crushing effects of the World War. But inwardly many of the people are greatly troubled. Like the French, the British, the Germans, the Japanese, even the Americans, they feel uneasy, uncertain, a little afraid. Afraid of what? Of not having jobs; of not being able to earn enough to keep alive. Of war with other peoples. Of being thrown into jail or killed or sent out of the country. As in certain other countries, something is wrong with the smooth running of the lives of the people.

"What is it that is wrong? It is very difficult to understand what is wrong, and we shall not be able to explain it fully in this book. We shall continue to study this problem year after year in our social studies. About all we can do now is to learn something of the history of how things became as they are."

**A**ND when your child comes home and tells you Soviet Russia is a heaven on earth and most of the rest of the world, including the United States, is a land of fear—and explains, "Teacher told me. It's in the textbook we read"—what will you say? What can you say? You're not a historian. You're not an economist. But you know that we Americans do not live in fear, and that all Russians do live in fear of purges leading to death. You will know your child is being "indoctrinated" against your every conception of what is right.

Yet, when you go to the principal of the school and complain, he is likely to tell you how badly taught you were when you went to school.

You wonder why he talks that way. You wonder why teachers paid with your money and mine, entrusted with the minds and spirits of our children, should be giving them such a brutal picture of our own country and such an idealized picture of Soviet Russia.

That I shall tell you in my next article in Liberty.

THE END