

Minister's "Social Vision"

Is the Vision of a Parasite

Father of St. Philips Wants Good Return On Investment From His Tenants

By SOL AUERBACH.

VIII.

(This is the eight of a series of articles exposing the conditions under which Negro workers are forced to live in Harlem. Yesterday, the Daily orker described "Rats and Cats Row" a block of tenements on W. 135th Street, owned by the St. Philips Church. The present article acquaints you with one of the fathers of that church.)

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AS you wait in the Parish House of St. Philip's Church for Father Shelton H. Bishop to arrive you notice that the walls are in good condition, well painted and clean. No cats are needed here to chase the rats.

Father Bishop, a brisk and well-preserved man who would pass for an efficient business man if it were not for his clerical collar, comes late and brushes in bubbling with excuses.

"Oh, it takes me so long to get over here. They keep me so busy until late - night. . . ."

A Clever Minister.

As you sit opposite the trim Father Bishop you think of carpeted floors, wide sunlit rooms, a butler, servants and a cook.

"Yes, conditions are bad in Harlem," begins Father Bishop, after listening intently to our introduction and the purpose of our visit. (We have not told him that we know that his church owns a block of tenements.) "Some of the landlords—not all of them—refuse to make repairs unless they get rent raises. Conditions are unsanitary, the people live in unventilated and disease-breeding rooms. Not all the houses are bad, however. There are some good houses and some bad ones."

"Where are some of the good ones located?" we ask, hoping that he will mention among the good ones the row of rat and vermin-breeding

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UNION PREPARES FURRIERS STRIKE

Cloakmakers General Meet Today

The mobilization of furriers is proceeding rapidly in preparation for the coming general strike of the fur workers. A number of mobilization meetings have been arranged by the Joint Board of the Needle Trades Workers' Industrial Union.

Last night a conference of registered furriers was held at the office of the union, 131 W. 28th St., right after work.

• Today, right after work, there will be a women's meeting of the furriers, at the union's office, where the women fur workers will be mobilized for the coming strike.

Minister Finds a "Social Vision" for Exploitation

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tenements owned by his church. But Father Bishop is a clever man.

The Good Ones.

"Well," he says after some thought, "75 St. Nicholas Place, 853 St. Nicholas Ave . . . 187 W. 135th Street—that is where I live and it is owned by the church."

"Oh, the church owns property? Does it own more?"

"Yes, it owns the whole block on the north side of West 135th Street with the exception of the library and the Y M. C. A."

"Of course these houses are in as good condition as yours," we throw in expectantly.

"Oh no," says the clever Father Bishop. "They are pretty bad. They are kept in bad condition."

A "Social Vision."

"How is that? One would think that property owned by the church would be somewhat better." We did not think so, but we said it only to draw the Father out more.

"Well, you see, I am not the rector of the church, my father is. And the vestry board actually runs the property. The trouble with the vestry board is that they are not accustomed to look at the problem with a social vision. They have to be educated up to it."

"What do you mean by a social vision, Father Bishop?"

A 5 Per Cent Investment.

"Well, looking at the problem from both sides. You will agree with me, won't you, that anybody is entitled to 5 per cent on their investments? We try to give all we can for the money we get."

We could not grasp the profundity of this "social vision" on the part of the minister of a church which tries to get all it can out of tenants living in its property, while refusing to spend a cent for repairs and renovations. About all the tenants get from their clerical landlord for their rent is good rat meat for their cats.

A Spiritual Return.

But let the minister himself enlarge upon this "social vision."

"What we make in profits out of the property we own we return to the people in some form or other. Besides our spiritual help we have a home for the aged, a camp for children and a playroom for boys. If it were not for the apartments we would not be able to take care of the boys who come to play here, who also come from poor families. Nor could we distribute a few hundred Christmas baskets, as we did last Christmas."

"But do you not feel it to be

contradictory for a church to own a tenement block where conditions are at their worse and from the pulpit of that church preach the creed of 'good will'?"

"Why so? We are just like the owner of a factory who returns to its employees, in some form or another, all its profits."

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Vision of a Parasite.

THAT is the "social vision" of a minister for a landlord church! His appearances are not so deceiving after all, for he is certainly a good business man.

To him the suffering of tenants living on a block in Harlem is a matter of dollars and cents. If the church can get 5 per cent on its investment—the vestry board sees to it that it gets more—then the tenants can go without renovations and have all the rats they want. If necessary, the tenants must take rent raises and be served with dispossession notices. The Bishops, father and son, will continue preaching from their pulpit, assured that their income is certain and that the vestry board feels safe.

But the ministers play a more double-faced role than that. Out of the profits they grind from their tenants living in the rat cages on 135th Street, they take a small fraction and make up Christmas baskets. Then they go to the homes of the workers, smiling in Christmas fashion, with Christmas basket in hand, and say, "Now, see how good we are."

Trick of Charity.

It is certainly a charitable institution! They grant asylum to a few old women whom members of the church and other exploiters in Harlem have worked to death at a starvation wage and diseased in tenements. How kind they must be to allow some thirty boys to play in a room in their parish—under the supervision of the Boy Scouts—while thousands of other children, victims of church exploitation, make the best playgrounds they can out of dirty streets and cubby-holes, sleeping two or three in a bed in some unventilated room.

That is the "social vision" of the church. It is a business vision, which means that it looks upon the great mass of Negro workers as so much material from which to make money and at whose expense clergymen and other "respectable citizens" can live in ease and luxury.

Segregated Segregation.

Not only do they believe in segregation for the Negroes—for it

means that they have reserved a whole group of workers to themselves over whom they hold the privileged position of parasites—but they also believe in splitting the Negro workers among themselves so that they can exploit them all the better.

It is in this church—St. Philips—that the ushers are instructed to reserve the first few rows for lighter-skinned Negroes!

This is social vision for the parasites—both Negro and white—for the exploiters and the robbers of Negro workers.

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Tomorrow the Daily Worker investigator will take you to a "model apartment" which has been heralded as a solution for the housing conditions. Come along, and we shall see.

Tenants, write in to the Daily Worker, describing the conditions of your apartment and treatment at the hands of landlords.

Steel Trust Sells New Stock; Dodges Tax; See \$1,500,000,000 in Sales

The United States Steel Corporation will sell additional stock to holders of record May 1 at \$140 per share in the ratio of one new share for each seven held, directors decided at their meeting here yesterday.

Directors simultaneously called the 50-year bond issue of the corporation for payment September 1. No action has yet been taken on calling the 10 to 60 year issue. The 50-year debt amounts to \$134,830,000.

The new common stock to be issued will amount to 1,016,605 shares. President Farrell told the stockholders' meeting the plants were operating at 96 per cent capacity and sales in 1929 would probably amount to \$1,500,000,000. In 1928 they were \$1,374,000,000.

This bond redemption program is the largest the corporation has ever undertaken, but is largely a paper transaction, as the inner ring controlling the steel trust, mainly the group around J. Pierpont Morgan, owns most of the bonds too. The purchase of the bonds out of profits of the company is one way to avoid paying income tax and to avoid the appearance of granting big dividends.

BOY, 12, BURNED TO DEATH
COLUMBUS, Ohio, April 16.—(U.P.)—James Harris, 12, died here, the third victim of a fire at the Harris Home at Harrisburg, last night.

The lad's brother, Harold, 4, was burned to death and his mother, Mrs. Wanda Harris, 32, was so badly burned she died this morning.