

1971 — the Second World Depression.

Birnbaum: There are people who said that the depression would have come 40, 30, 10 years ago.

IPS: What is happening is that the interest on the debts to Rockefeller must be paid back.

Birnbaum: Which debts?

IPS: Debts and credits of the international credit system.

Birnbaum: And what do you propose?

IPS: A debt moratorium against Rockefeller.

Birnbaum [laughing scornfully as he launched into an apologia for Rockefeller and "free enterprise"]: ... Chase is the bank of detente Rockefeller has financed institutes for social development

IPS: The institutes for brainwashing?

Birnbaum: No one has been brainwashed in these institutions.

IPS: Some of our members have been brainwashed there [referring to the January 1974 discovery of the brainwashing of Labor Committee member Christopher White].

Birnbaum: You who say these things have been brainwashed! I think that Communism is a beautiful idea, but it is not realizable...Allende in Chile was a man impelled by good intentions, like Rockefeller, but he provoked inflation, chaos, even if he nationalized the multinationals...I think that the same will happen in England and Italy...I like freedom...The problem is that today

freedom is denied, today everywhere there is control through the microphone...There is one in every toilet...

IPS: You cited England, saying that it is traveling the same road as Chile. What do you mean?

Birnbaum: In England there is a tendency towards socialism. They go ahead with the the distribution of taxes and wages. This means that they take away from the enterprises the possibility of making any profit. What is more, now Wedgewood Benn [see IPS No. 17 — Ed] has threatened to nationalize the enterprises if they do not make investments. But how are the enterprises going to make investments if there isn't a minimum of profit? This is contradiction that will bring chaos to England.

IPS: What about Italy?

Birnbaum: Italy can take loans any time if it uses them in a productive way. Now it distributes them to workers in the public employment sector, not productive. This must be eliminated if any economic development is to take place.

IPS: But there are political and economic forces that represent these social strata [public-sector workers], which must be politically and economically destroyed [if the public sector is to be eliminated].

Birnbaum: The time allowed is ended; it has been nice talking with you.

PCI Laments Agnelli Switch on "Historical Compromise"

Sept. 5 (IPS) — The Italian Communist Party (PCI) paper *L'Unita* covered an interview today with FIAT magnate Gianni Agnelli in the Italian financial daily *Il Sole-24 Ore* merely to say that he backed down from his previous support of the "historical compromise," the PCI plan for collaborating in a bourgeois government. Said Rockefeller's playboy crony: "I am certain that I speak for private industry as represented by Confindustria [the industrialists' Confederation of which he is President] when I say that the new compromises of which there has been so much....[would] distance our country from the Western world."

To reassure Agnelli of the Communist Party's willingness to prostitute herself to the so-called Western world, party hack Galluzzi is quoted by *L'Unita* in the same article: "While we have some criticisms to make and we are not favorable to the Atlantic Pact, we do recognize that Italy has a geographical situation...and international relations and alliances which the PCI cannot disregard.... There are two military blocs that ... cannot be overcome unilaterally in a way to put one at the disadvantage relative to the other."

What *L'Unita* ignored is the major portion of the

Agnelli interview reported in the FIAT-controlled Italian daily *La Stampa*. First of all, Agnelli claimed that the economic situation is not so bad (echoing *L'Unita's* insistence that talk of general collapse is mere "alarmism"). All private industry needs, Agnelli offered, is a free hand in "restructuring" — in other words, recycling the labor force in exactly the way the Agnellis have planned for FIAT. (FIAT's offer to trade off job security for the destruction of all union protection already has been rejected flatly by FIAT workers.)

Agnelli then touted the "dump the parasites" line, lamenting that the "bottomless pit" of the unproductive State sector still soaks up most tax money. Finally, on the universal cost-of-living escalator demand now being raised by some trade unionists, Agnelli warned that such measures would bring down the whole Italian economy.

Agnelli's proposals to lay off the parasites in Italy's state bureaucracy have been espoused editorially by *L'Unita*; but reportedly the proposals are not getting very far with Italian industrial workers. Clearly, if Mr. Agnelli wanted to rid Italy of parasites (and the PCI must know this), he would aim at lopping off the largest in his own class.