

From Time to Time

By Walter Lowenfels

I AM no expert on grass, I just want to report some horticultural facts I learned about grass in our home in the South Jersey pine Woods.

(Please — if you are one of those readers more interested in politics than grass — stick with me until we get to the roots of the matter.)



This area where we live is known as the pine barrens. No part of it was more barren of grass than our sandy acres. Along with the sand around our little house we had all sorts of bugs — gnats, ticks, flies, ants, wasps, et al.

That was a couple of years ago.

Today—we have grass! There are still some bugs, that's true,

but not nearly so many.

How did the grass arrive? Not from heaven, not directly, at any rate.

It began with a bull dozer.

We had to get the bull dozer last fall to clear away some dirt.

The dirt was a big unsightly pile that got thrown up when we excavated a cellar.

The cellar began because we had no place to put any reliable heat. Our plumbing froze in the winter — which was even worse for our comfort than our frostbitten toes.

So—out of the winter solstice, our need for heat and our cellar, there grew a pile of dirt and a bull dozer.

The bull dozer boss told us —“I am sorry but I'll have to charge you for a whole day—even though it will only take an hour or two to spread around your pile of dirt.”

“What about our tree stumps? What about ploughing up the whole sandy lot?”

He agreed to throw that in for the day's rental.

How to Grow Greener Grass

So—out of the cold and the heat and the cellar and the dirt there grew a ploughed field.

What is a ploughed field without seed?

That's another expensive problem. One of our visiting city friends said: “To me the country is a place with grass—not sand—I'll help pay for seeding this sand with grass.”

So—the seed was planted.

What is a planted field without manure?

Early this year—the output of a number of neighboring chickens was distributed over our ploughed and seeded sand.

★

THAT WAS the situation when we left in March for a cross country speaking trip. We were a house surrounded by a well-manured plot of sand. Ah! You could smell it!

We returned a few weeks ago—and what do you think we saw? Grass!

Not tiny tufts, nor smoothly leveled lawn—a mass of high unruly spears, somewhat green.

We soon found out the green

was a top surface illusion. There had been a drought. Our grass had turned brown at the bottom.

It looked as if there was to be no grass on our sandy acres.

However, brown or green the stuff had to be mowed. We hired a mower. With the help of sturdy friends—the grass was cut.

We were then surrounded by a dreary looking brown fringe of burnt up stubble. Even the birds stayed away from it. But we did notice there were fewer bugs.

We had faint plans of starting to water with a hose—a necessity we had been unable to get done during our absence. Days went by—the grass got browner. The hose didn't really get going—we had so many other things to do.

Lol! It began to rain—not a hour or two—or day or a night—it has been raining now for about a week.

And what do you think is outside the window right now, as I type? The greenest grass you ever saw!

Grass, burnt up, will rise!

This is a lesson one learns from the earth.

IT MAKES me think of truth. No matter how often it gets beaten down, it won't stay down..

It makes me think of my Party—the Communist Party!

We are in a bad way, brown and sere. Hardly a day goes by but it is suggested that I slit my throat—that is—that the Party dissolve. (I see no difference between the life of the Party and my own.)

To quit the Party, or for the Party to dissolve is, for me, the equivalent of giving up the earth—the salt of the earth—the working class.

What other physical, real, concrete relation do I have with workers, except through the Party?

Grass — beaten down, dried up, withered and gone, and yet —a few days of rain—and here we are, surrounded by the green stuff.

In fact — by Golly! — it needs cutting right now!