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AUGUST 14, 1934

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# Hindenburg

By ARTHUR HELLER

# Mussolini's Art

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# Light: A Short Story

By BEN FIELD

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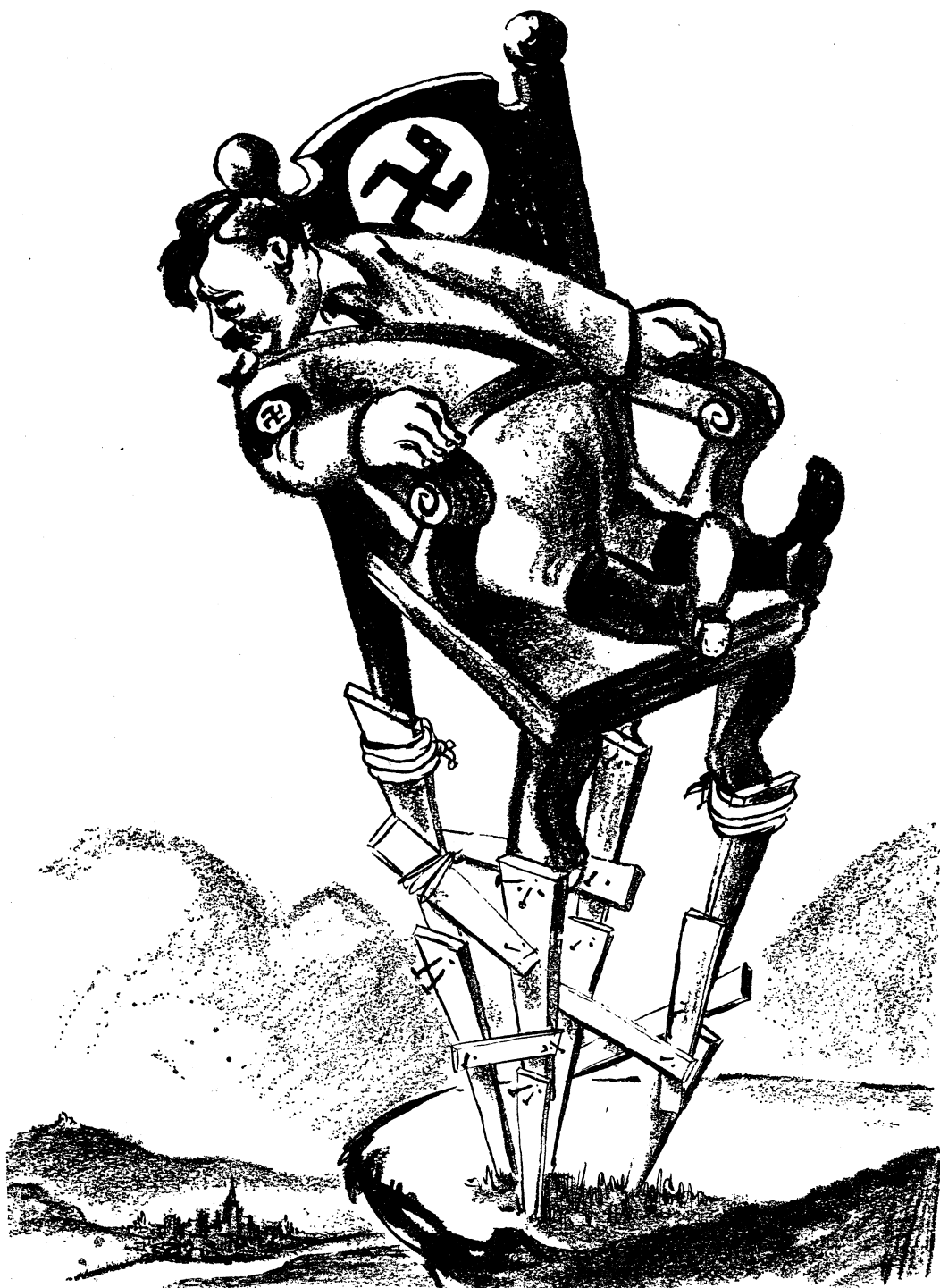
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# new Masses

AUGUST 14, 1934

**H**ERR HITLER has once again released the dove of peace. In his interview with the London Daily Mail and in two speeches Hitler asserted Germany has no reason to go to war. Her only interest is in the preservation of her present boundaries. This is the same Hitler whose rise to power was made possible by the support of the Junkers and industrialists of his hysterical clamor for Greater Germania—the Polish Corridor, the Saar basin, the Germanic districts in Czecho-Slovakia, Belgium, the Baltic states, Austria. “We shall not attack Austria,” Hitler told his interviewer, “but we cannot prevent Austrians from seeking to restore their ancient connection with Germany.” This, after all the irrefutable evidence proving Hitler’s connections with the murder of Dollfuss and the civil war in Austria. Colonies? Why, Hitler assured his interviewer, he would not sacrifice “the life of even one German” for all the colonies in the world. There is no end to the shamelessness of Nazi demagoguery: it was only yesterday that he shouted Germany could not exist without colonies. Through his spokesman Rosenberg, Hitler has time and again declared for an extension of the Aryan empire eastward—including the Ukraine which he intended to wrest from the Soviet Union. Why is he suddenly enamored of peace? From the statements of the Nazi agents in this country we learned that Ivy Lee not only suggests a line, but actually prepares the text of Hitler’s statements to the foreign press, especially the Anglo-Saxon countries. This latest interview was undoubtedly for the consumption of the American and British masses, already considerably aroused by the mad ravings of the “Leader.” Engaged in a battle, today, for his own political and physical life, he must try to allay the apprehensions of the entire world. Unemployment is increasing: prices are rising. Winter is on its way. The Storm Troopers are rebellious. The masses are in a ferment. And outside, Germany is surrounded by a circle of steel. Hitler seeks an outlet: hence his sudden sweet words of peace. Upon his return from Hindenburg’s funeral, he must work overtime to avoid his own.



SITTING ON TOP OF THE WORLD

B. Limbach

**B**ENEATH the comic opera trap-pings of the Long-Walmsley “war” down in New Orleans, where even the Governor’s “partial martial law” edict has a familiar Gilbert and Sullivan ring, there runs a hideously tragic undercurrent. While Huey Long and his band of political locusts who control Louisiana’s government put Louisiana’s historic pirate LaFitte to shame by the manner in which they devour all public funds in sight, the state consistently refuses to appropriate a single cent for unemployment relief. Whatever relief is given is furnished entirely by federal funds. And that is miserable enough—relief in Louisiana averages less than \$7 per family *per month*, constituting a starvation dole even for the few “lucky”

enough to get on the relief rolls. Thousands of others face quick and outright starvation. When, the other day, the federal government dropped 15,000 so-called unemployables from its relief rolls on the ground that the Louisiana legislature had refused to share some of the expense, Governor Allen merely shrugged his shoulders and announced he intended to do nothing about it. Yet, in the midst of widespread suffering, the warring political factions are brazen enough to pour tens of thousands of dollars into the maintenance of state militia and special police (armed to the teeth and lined in battle array on opposite sides of New Orleans’ streets) to decide whether Huey Long’s gang or that of his erstwhile jackal, Mayor Walmsley,



SITTING ON TOP OF THE WORLD

B. Limbach





SITTING ON TOP OF THE WORLD

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shall pocket the political spoils of the city. The unemployed, at whose expense this private condottiere war is being waged, have announced that they are not taking it lying down. They want adequate relief, and they are determined to get it. A truly inspiring example of working-class courage was displayed on August 6th, when hundreds of unemployed workers, led by a Communist-Socialist united front, fearlessly marched between the drawn guns of state troopers and city police to the City Hall, and there held a demonstration exposing both sides as workers' enemies, and presenting their demands to both Walmsley and Long. The wily mayor (who is out to dispute Long's boast that "there may be smarter men than me in this world, but they ain't in Louisiana") undoubtedly issued the permit for the demonstration as a deliberately provocative measure to test the enforcement of Long-inspired martial law edict with workers' lives, probably hoping to draw the state troopers' fire on the latter. The workers, aware of Walmsley's motive, nevertheless carried through their demonstration in splendid, disciplined manner, which in itself stands as an impressive victory.

"**T**HE state, that's me," proclaimed Louis XIV. You and me both, echoes the Kingfish, dictator of the state named after the aforementioned Louis. Huey Long owns just about everything political in sight. He owns the governor, O. K. Allen, a lickspittle tool who dares not breathe or whisper without first consulting his boss-man. The governor's mansion in Baton Rouge is openly maintained as Long's official headquarters, and no bones are made about it. A revealing spectacle was afforded the other week when a court solemnly ordered the Kingfish to order the Governor to order the state troops out of New Orleans. Huey owns the state legislature, lock, stock and barrel. When he strides down the legislative aisles loudly ordering the assembled solons how to vote, the latter click their heels and all but shout "Heil, Huey!" He owned Mayor Walmsley too, until recently, and actually placed him in office to supervise the New Orleans loot. But Walmsley is no longer content to feed on the lion's leavings, and has decided to go spoils-hunting at the head of his own pack, his mouth a-water at the enormous tribute to be extracted from the prostitutes of Dryades Street and roundabout, and from the magnificent gambling emporiums that op-

erate openly throughout the town. Hence the break, and the consequent strategy of the Kingfish to capture the police and taxing power of New Orleans, through his faithful servitor, the Governor, and thus show Walmsley who's boss by rendering him impotent. In the name of law and order, Long and his hirelings do not hesitate to break every one of their own laws. ("I am the Constitution," Huey has admitted more than once.) Not the least of the lessons reflected in the Louisiana situation is that, as capitalist economy disintegrates and starts hitting the toboggan, the thieves who constitute its executive committee fall out, their last tattered remnants of respectability are torn away, and they are exposed in all their petty, mean hypocrisy and snarling viciousness.

**A** FEW days after Mayor LaGuardia's attempt to weed the "respectable" labor leaders from the militants by a czarist system of police registration, he received an encomium from William Green, president of the A. F. of L. These are men who see eye to eye. Green invited LaGuardia to deliver the principal address at the A. F. of L. Labor Day meeting in Chicago. "No executive in this country is held in higher esteem and regard by labor than LaGuardia," Green said. All this occurred at a time when the issue of policed-unions was being fought in New York. Protests were flying thick through the air. Rank and file dissent assumed such united front aspects, raised such a furor of protest that the Mayor backed water. "The issue is closed," he said. "Forgotten." Among the reports of all the protests one searches in vain for Bill Green's. The Mayor's proposal was four-square with the Federation leadership's Red-hunts: the Federation's not-so-dormant Fascistic policies. Green knows of the Mayor's crack rifle regiment of police to be used for labor "disturbances." Nevertheless the Mayor of New York is "held in high esteem and regard by labor."

**T**HE same factors that forced LaGuardia to rescind his registration ruling forced Green this past week to issue a statement which proved highly provocative to the gentlemen of the Herald-Tribune. At the A. F. of L. executive council meeting in Atlantic City President Green, as the Tribune stated, "trotted out a goblin." "Will it be necessary" Green asked oratorically, "for society to take over the means of produc-

tion?" He spoke valiantly of workers "marching into idle shops" and "throwing the levers of machines" . . . "labor will stand on the side of complete utilization of our productive capacities," etc., etc. It was Mr. Green's radical day. But he was fooling nobody. Neither the press or the ranks of labor took him seriously. Labor recalls how he spoke on the question of unemployment insurance in 1932. It knows how he speaks now—a complete reversal. Why? Because in the meantime 2,400 locals and many central labor bodies have endorsed H. R. 7598, the workers' unemployment insurance bill, despite all Green's original thunderings against the bill. The workers also know his role in the San Francisco general strike. Labor not only knows, it is acting. Hence as the New York Times said of the executive council meeting, "considerable attention will be focused on growing 'rank and file' movements that are pressing for 'more radical action'." The Times reporter shrewdly forecasts "an intensive educational campaign designed to place before the masses of workers newly won to the trade unions the constructive aims and policies of the labor movement." The federation wishes to "digest" (how apt the term) the massed groups of workers "newly won to the trade unions." They must be inoculated with the "spirit of trade union discipline . . . so that the new leaders may efficiently represent labor at wage negotiations and before the public." The pedagogical talents of the A. F. of L. leaders are not unknown: in the days to come they, like their counterparts in Italy and Germany, will try to educate with castor oil and machine-gun.

**A**NOTHER American school teacher has been fired for being honest. For thirteen years a teacher in Winston-Salem, the town owned and controlled by the Reynolds tobacco interests, James M. Shields wrote a novel called *Just Plain Larnin'*. In it he showed the hardships faced by a progressive school teacher in the South. "But there is more to the story," Shields told reporters in an interview last March.

I wasn't just satirizing a tobacco town or a factory town in the novel. I used that sort of a community as my locale because I know it best. But the analogy holds for any town or city in America. Our present economic order has a strange hold on education.

It is crushing the life out of the teachers, and turning loose upon a world that

cannot even supply jobs a generation of poorly equipped, maladjusted youth — because Big Business will not pay the cost of a decent educational system, and will not permit us to teach the fundamental truths of a changing social order.

In the interview, published in the New York World-Telegram, March 22, he further told of how “Thousands of teachers in this country are working for from \$8 to \$14 a week, overburdened by huge classes and inadequate facilities.” Of how the children of working-class parents “are being deprived of anything but the rudiments of the three R’s.” Of how “you can’t be a social or economic liberal (in the South) and express yourself openly without losing your job.” Of how “in steel, coal, or tobacco communities, “no teacher can so much as mention the word ‘union’ to the students or teach anything about economics. Then the Church plays a part. In some communities in the South it’s written into the teacher’s contract that he or she must participate in Church life—teach a Sunday school class or the like.” Of how “the rise of Fascistic groups is menacing. We have the green, black, blue, and silver shirts. They exercise a strong influence against the teaching of anything vital in the schools.” Finally, of how industrialists throttle any progressive teaching methods which might make the working-class aware of its eco-

conomic subjection, and of how these men dispose of any teacher who speaks “out of turn.”

**H**ONEST observations like the above are to the industrialists “out of turn” comments. And James M. Shields had made them. It didn’t matter to them that Shields had performed his job well for thirteen years, that he had been President of the North Carolina Elementary School Principals’ Association, that he was now Principal of the Winston-Salem Junior High School. On August 1, W. T. Blackwell, official of the R. J. Reynolds Tobacco Company and chairman of the city School Board, announced Shields’ dismissal. “The way out? Well, as I see it,” Shields had stated in his interview, “teachers must organize and fight cuts in educational budgets, fight for freedom in teaching. That’s only an immediate answer. The real answer will be written when we change the social system completely.” A fight against Shields’ dismissal has already developed. Protests by the Winston-Salem Central Labor Union, by educators, former pupils, parents and fellow citizens have been pouring in upon the Reynolds-dominated School Board. In New York protest has been initiated by the Unemployed Teachers’ Association. Organizations and individuals concerned with teachers’ rights

ought to spread the campaign. Shields’ dismissal is not merely a denial of freedom of expression in the classroom but of a teacher’s civil rights outside the classroom.

**S**IMEON STRUNSKY, the literat behind Topics of the Times, is in despair. Despite his daily slanders against the Soviet Union and his unscrupulous misrepresentation of anything pertaining to Communism, authors persist in going red. This fact must be explained away for the readers of the Times, if Strunsky is to keep his sniping job. Wherefore the literat opined as follows in a recent column:

When a man of letters turns Communist he is no doubt primarily actuated by the desire to build a new and better world for the masses, but to some extent he may be influenced by the silent urge of personal interest. A novelist or a poet finds it so much easier to write about a new world than about this old world which has been written about for so many thousands of years.

It is quite interesting to learn that capitalism dates back to the glacial age. And not surprising at all to find that just as he sees all social systems in the mirror of the one he defends with such venom, so Mr. Strunsky discovers the world of literary men in his own mirror. Accepting Communism is not a matter of reorienting one’s world outlook through action and study, but merely a superficial shift as a result of which a writer eases his labors. For Mr. Strunsky, changing an outlook is as simple as changing his BVDs. Likewise, it is as impossible for Strunsky to imagine an author writing out of inspiration by a new theme as it is for him to be honest enough to notice that practically all the American writers who have gone left still write about the old society. Grace Lumpkin, Jack Conroy, Albert Maltz, George Sklar, Robert Cantwell, Josephine Herbst, Fielding Burke — all deal with the contemporary American scene. There is a difference: they write of the struggles of the class historically destined to destroy the old society and build a new society.

**O**F course, one would not expect Strunsky to rise to the high theoretical level of perceiving that it is not the age of the old society, but its decay that makes treatment of old favorite themes, not merely difficult, but impossible. A Richardson, a Defoe could

# new Masses

VOL. XII, No. 7

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write heartily about bourgeois relations when, and because, these relations were living, developing relations. Recently, however, the utter emptiness and decay of these relations have been able to inspire honest, sensitive authors only with the pictures of despair and futility one finds in Proust and Huxley. Today, the imagination turns for inspiration to the struggles of a rising class. Those who remain loyal to a dying class can only decay like the literat of the Times. Authors who turn Communist, he states, are actuated primarily by a desire to build a better world *for* the masses. That authors might themselves be interested in a better world, or that authors turn red in order to struggle *with* the masses for the realization of such a world, is hard for Mr. Strunsky to understand. But Erskine Caldwell, whose books were banned from Teacher's College Library; John Howard Lawson, who was arrested in Alabama for writing an honest account of Southern lynch court procedure; and thousands of intellectuals who find capitalist society a prison house, do understand, and go Red.

**A** DELEGATION of 127 men and women went to Albany a week ago to demand action on relief and unemployment insurance. The special session of the Legislature was sitting; the regular session months away. The 127 delegates represented farmers, white collar workers, mechanics, engineers, teachers, housewives. They planned to march to the capitol. The police made it clear that an attack by gas bombs and other weapons of terror would be made on a march. The delegates altered their plans and elected a committee to see the Governor. Governor Lehman heard their six spokesmen and then delivered judgment: "The question of relief has been in my mind night and day. I won't go beating around the bush. I'll be very frank. I will not introduce this or any other bill that you propose at this special session. We are busy with charter revision. It is the most important business on hand." A few days later he appointed a committee of 32, *including not one worker*, to study the question of relief, and report in December.

**W**ITH unexpected candor, Upton Sinclair has indicated that had he been the EPIC Governor of California, his executive action in the San Francisco General Strike as regards the terror against Communist and militant workers

would have been the same as Governor Merriam's. In response to a request from the Daily Worker that he state his position on the reign of terror, he sent the following epic wire:

As a founder of the Southern California branch of the American Civil Liberties Union my stand on freedom of speech, press and assemblage is well known to you. Like all Civil Liberties people, I encounter difficulties in defending the rights of Communists who themselves repudiate freedom of speech, press and assemblage, and do everything they can to deprive others of those rights. The greatest political folly which men can commit in California today is to repudiate our previous hard-won instruments of democratic consent, including direct primaries, initiative, referendum and recall. By resorting to methods of dictatorship you inevitably give impulse to Fascism, lend power to the reactionary capitalist exploiters and bring down a storm of popular rage upon your own heads, and make it impossible for friends of the workers to help them or you. It is true that blind capitalist greed is responsible for this war in California, but it is also true that blind Communist hate is responsible for your impotence in the struggle. American conditions require American thinking and American methods of action. First and foremost of these is insistence upon democratic methods in bringing about our necessary social changes.

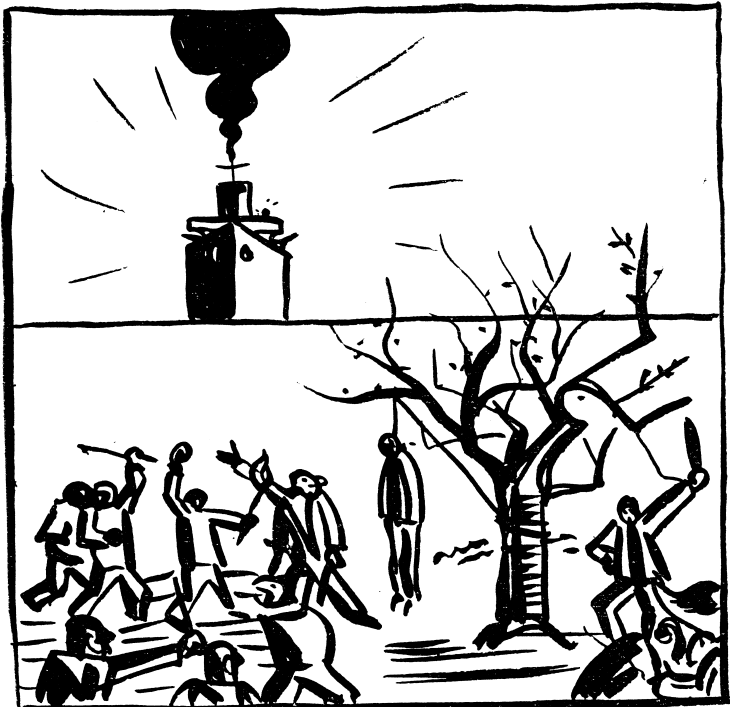
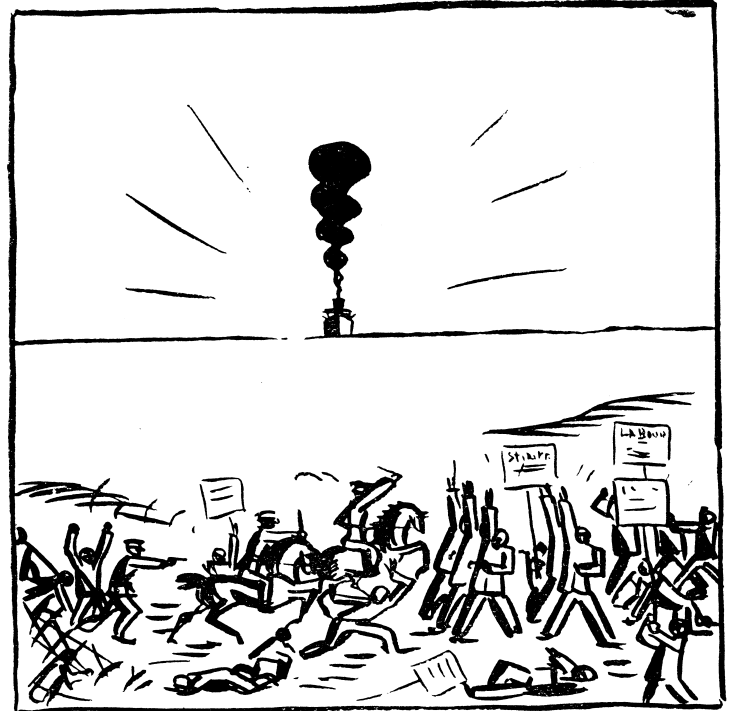
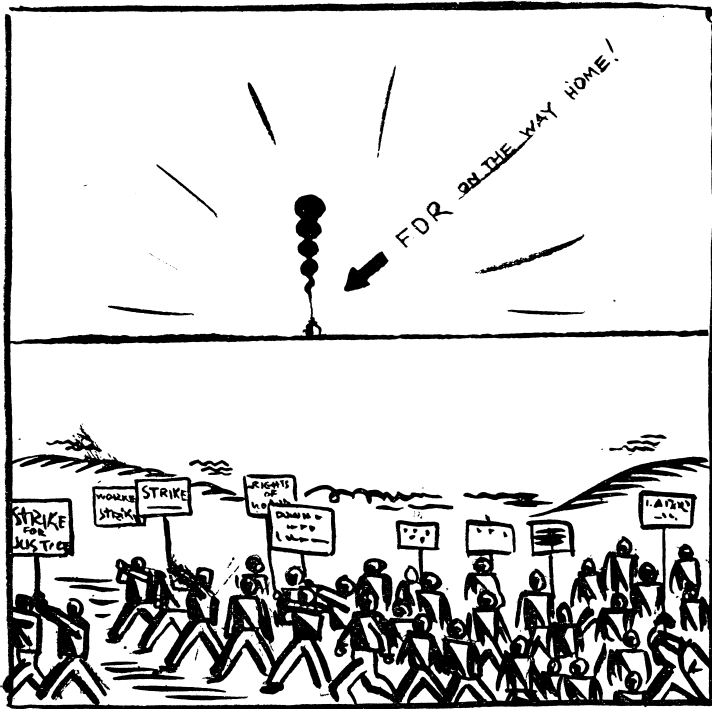
One by one the points raised here are points made by General Johnson in giving the signal for the terror, by Mayor Rossi, by Governor Merriam, and by the other open spokesmen for capitalism. In his central accusation, that Communists are "responsible" for Fascist terror, Sinclair goes beyond the declared enemies of the working-class. He talks of "blind Communist hate." It was not Communist hate that made the General Strike "impotent"—if this, one of the greatest demonstrations of working-class solidarity in the history of this country, was an exhibition of impotency. The treacherous A. F. of L. leaders, supported by the Socialists, plus the terror which Sinclair condones—these paralyzed the General Strike before it reached its full power.

**S**INCLAIR would like to believe that the Communist Party is impotent. As a candidate for governor on that platform of whirling idiocy which he calls the EPIC plan, as a man who has cut himself away from all pretense to a working-class position, he would like to be free of the embarrassment of a Communist Party and movement that challenges and destroys his thesis of class

collaboration. But Sinclair doesn't read the papers, or he would know that the Communist movement on the coast has proved that it could not be destroyed, either by terror or treachery. The Communist Party in California is rapidly emerging from the status of illegality and semi-illegality—and without Sinclair's help, in spite of his open hostility. On August 2 seven hundred workers met at the call of the Anti-Fascist League and were addressed by speakers from the Communist Party and International Labor Defense. On August 5th an anti-war meeting scheduled in San Francisco, then banned by police under the new ruling forbidding "seditious" meetings in municipal buildings, was nevertheless held, in a hall other than the one scheduled; police did not dare interfere. Day after day the working-class headquarters wrecked by the Vigilantes reopen. How can these militant workers' organizations which a week ago were so savagely attacked and pressed underground, today dare to meet again, openly? Because of the mass support of these organizations; because of the militant resistance of their supporters; because such bodies as the Santa Clara Building Trades Central Labor Council passed resolutions condemning attacks on workers' homes and headquarters; because such intellectuals as Leo Gallagher, Sara Bard Field, Charles Erskine Scott Wood, publicly support the workers' fight for civil liberties against Fascism.

**T**HE gist of the matter is this: Upton Sinclair wants to be Governor of California, and he adopts the conception of "justice" of "democracy" of "liberty" of the old-line politicians, representatives of capitalism, with whom he is playing. The workers of California want to be free, they have their own working-class conception of justice, of democracy and liberty. Accepting in greater numbers the principles and program of the Communist Party, they are fighting for their objectives. The class line in California has been drawn more sharply this last month than ever before. Sinclair has taken his position on the Fascist side of that line.

**T**HE August 1 issue of the Western Worker, fighting paper of the Pacific Coast, contains the verses we reprint below. *These Are the Class War Dead!* by Michael Quin, is dedicated to the strikers, Nick Coundeorakis and Howard Sperry, murdered by police on the San Francisco waterfront. During the



Frank Nesbit

ROOSEVELT'S SPEECH

tremendous demonstration that the working-class of San Francisco made of the funeral of Coundeorakis and Sperry, no police could be seen on the streets. Flowers and money, sent by the police department, were rejected and returned by the union.

**These Are the Class War Dead!**

Stop in your tracks, you passer-by,  
Uncover your doubting head;  
The working men are on their way  
To bury their murdered dead.

The men who sowed their strength in work  
And reaped a crop of lies,  
Are marching by. The bosses' doom  
Is written in their eyes.

Two coffins lead the grim parade  
That stops you in your tracks;  
Two workers lying stiff and dead  
With bullets in their backs.

We want no priests or demagogues  
With empty talk or prayers,  
For these were honest working men,  
Not governors or mayors.

The blood they left upon the street,  
Was workers' blood and red;  
They died to make a better world,  
These are the class war dead!

Stand back, you greedy parasites,  
With banks and bellies filled,  
And tremble while the working-class  
Buries the men you killed.

For this is our word to those who fell.  
Shot down for bosses' gain,  
We swear to fight until we win;  
**YOU DID NOT DIE IN VAIN.**

MICHAEL QUIN.



# The Week's Papers

**W**EDNESDAY—South Jersey authorities seek to bar Southern Negro labor from its section. . . . Mayor LaGuardia, facing city-wide protest, orders Police Commissioner O’Ryan to drop plan for police registration of labor leaders. . . . Secretary of the Navy Swanson advocates 20 percent cut in navies of all signatories to London Naval Treaty. . . . 28 Detroit bankers indicted on fraud charges growing out of Detroit’s banking crash. . . . Tommie Stone, 23 year old Negro worker of Sherman, Texas, given 141 years in penitentiary on four charges of “attempting to attack” a white woman after “quiet” trial to “prevent lynching.” . . . Minneapolis troops arrest leaders of striking truckmen and “clean out” union headquarters, claiming strikers held “unlawful meeting.” . . . Steel operations down to 26 percent of capacity. . . . Workers throughout country participate in demonstrations against imperialist war and Fascism.

**Thursday** — National Guard with machine-guns occupy registration offices in New Orleans at command of Senator Huey Long after court ordered Long to dismiss militia. . . . Troopers forced to admit illegality of raid on Minneapolis union headquarters when proof is shown permit was granted for meeting. . . . 90 percent of automobile dealers violate auto code openly, New York court is informed. . . . Kansas Governor Landon says drought soon will force still higher food prices. . . . Following demonstration over arrest of William O’Donnell, former Seabrook Farms (N. J.) striker, Mayor Gassell calls for formation of 500 vigilantes for use in “labor trouble.” . . . Welfare Council says New York’s June relief roll was swelled by 77,000 families over June, 1933. . . . Treasury Department rushes printing of \$24,444,000 silver certificates, issuance of which is considered to foreshadow large scale inflation. . . . Negro section of Philadelphia put under reign of terror by police. . . . Bail of \$15,000 for Angelo Herndon raised in 25 days through efforts of International Labor Defense, Daily Worker and allied organizations. Over 500 aided fund.

**Friday**—Idaho baker reduces bread price 1 cent a loaf on advice of Senator Borah to defy N.R.A. price-fixing. . . .

Government power control promised by Roosevelt in speech after landing at Oregon following Hawaiian trip. . . . Inventing a new tactic, Shreveport, La., authorities blame Negroes for lynching Grafton Page, Negro, killed on the plantation of J. J. Prosper, white landlord. . . . At least 300 codes are monopolistic and oppressive, Federal Trade Commission is told by several firms. . . . Pittsburgh Aluminum Company of America rejects union demand for closed shop and for collective bargaining. . . . Gen. Johnson injects himself into Chicago stockyards strike as “mediator.” . . . Minneapolis truck strikers reject employers’ “settlement” which proposed to retain strikebreakers in jobs. Citizens’ Alliance in Minneapolis, helping employers break strike, raided. . . . Maxim Gorki, Romain Rolland, Mme. Sun-Yat-Sen among those invited to attend second U. S. Congress Against War in Chicago next September 28.

**Saturday**—Stockyards strike in Chicago settled with men winning demand for 48-hour work week in “good weeks.” . . . Silver Shirts are armed, determined to establish Fascism by violence in U. S., drive all Jews from public office, Congressional Committee sitting in Los Angeles, is told. . . . Green asks LaGuardia to speak at A. F. of L. mass meeting in Chicago Labor Day because “no executive is held in higher esteem in this country by labor.” . . . West Virginia lumber camp workers consider strike to enforce union recognition and higher wages. . . . Herndon released from Atlanta’s Folsom Tower in \$15,000 bail. . . . Strikebreaking driver shoots and wounds two Minneapolis pickets; newspapers suppress his picture at “request” of National Guard. . . . Negro and white workers take part in huge anti-imperialist war and anti-Fascist demonstration in New York. . . . Bronx ribbon mill owner summoned before N.R.A. for paying girls an average of \$5 for 40-hour week (minimum code wage is \$13).

**Sunday** — Birmingham greenhouse workers plan to continue their strike against 72-hour work week at \$3-\$6 weekly wage. . . . “Scandalous” investment banking practices by leading bankers, especially in flotation of foreign bonds, caused colossal losses to public,

Senatorial Banking Committee says in denunciatory report. . . . Green declares unless private industry quickly absorbs 10,000,000 unemployed, “society” may take over means of production. . . . Gov. Olson orders National Guard to bar all trucks from Minneapolis streets except those carrying “necessities of life.” . . . John Dean, United Textile Worker organizer, is kidnaped from hotel room in Huntsville, Ala., strike area, driven 32 miles in car by five men, beaten and tossed out of automobile. . . . Matthew Woll urges Secretary of State Hull not to settle Soviet debt question “if it involves loans to Soviet Union.” . . . Disfranchise all persons on public relief, prohibit general and sympathetic strikes, and limit picketing to mere announcements of “disputes,” New York State Economic Council (George W. Wickersham, honorary chairman) urges.

**Monday** — Weekly slaughtering of 200,000 cattle by Government, throwing unexpected large supply of hides on market, causes drop in prices and protest by tanners. . . . Lawrence Westbrook, of N.R.A., tells President Roosevelt 60 percent of country, 27,000,000 persons are affected by drought whose estimated loss is 5 billion dollars. . . . Dr. Robert A. Millikan in radio speech attacks New Deal’s “interference by Government with private initiative.” . . . C. C. C. camps enlistment expected to reach new peak of 360,000 this week. . . . Thirty imprisoned workers, arrested in San Francisco in connection with recent general strike, begin hunger strike against excessive bail.

**Tuesday**—Angelo Herndon welcomed in New York by cheering thousands of Negro and white workers. . . . Roosevelt tours North Dakota drought region. . . . Executive Council of A. F. of L. asks restored Blue Eagle be again taken from Harriman Hosiery Mills. . . . National Labor Board orders Tamaqua (Pa.) Underwear Co. to reinstate 61 workers fired for refusal to join company union. . . . Johnson exempts small town employers from most N.R.A. code provisions. . . . Owen A. Roberts, New York banker, spent \$1,000,000 on Oriental art believing “Communism will overrun country and art objects are the most permanent form of wealth,” wife testifies in separation suit.

# The Hindenburg Myth

ARTHUR HELLER

“**D**ANK dem Geschick, das uns diesen Mann gab!—Thanks be to the Fate which gave this man to us,” raptly orated ex-corporal Adolf Hitler, now Chancellor and “Reichs Leader,” over the dead form of Field Marshal Paul von Beneckendorff und von Hindenburg, twice elected president of the Republic.

Well may Hitler, the terror-stricken terrorist, thank the fate—or the feudalistic system—which ensured power to an individual who, at the historic moment, would sell out, lock, stock, and barrel, the constitution he had twice solemnly sworn to uphold. Obviously, if it hadn't been Hindenburg, it would have been someone else who opened wide the door to the Nazi regime—most ruthless, vicious, and degenerate of the terror regimes which, up to now, have been called in to serve the interests of heavy industry and big business. It might have been another—but we are concerned with reality; “Fate” ordained that this historic betrayal should be consummated by Hindenburg, and Hindenburg dead, no less than Hindenburg alive, is the symbol of a system which led the great, industrious, and intelligent masses of Germany through one disaster after another to the present and final catastrophe.

Hitler is right—the spirit of Hindenburg still walks abroad in Germany, though the senile old hulk is dead. It is the spirit of the upper military, the Reichswehr generals whose acquiescence—and bayonets—permit Hitler to go on with his mummery and preparations for world conflict, though he has alienated and repudiated his mass support.

It is the spirit of the Junkers, the agricultural barons and arch reactionaries, drones and parasites who exist on state subventions, artificially boosted foodstuff prices, and the sweated labor of farm workers who under the Nazi regime have become actual, in place of virtual, slaves to them.

Hindenburg was and remains a remarkably typical specimen of his class—the class which is doomed to extinction along with all the rest of the nightmare anachronisms now riding roughshod over the backs of the real, productive Germany. Hindenburg, the individual, was a good family man—modest in his private habits, fond of wine, a man who never read books. With Hindenburg, the military man and strategist, we need not concern ourselves here. Probably Karl von Wiegand's estimate of the soldier was correct—a man without originality, but with sound judgment. Without the aid of Ludendorff, he would not have cut much of a figure even here.

Hindenburg the politician, now recipient of rhetorical adulation from the pens of the press-lackeys of the world, is the subject of this unmalicious debunking.

Some important deaths bring about the situations—“Now, at last, it can be told.” Occasionally—as in this case—the situation demands—“Now, more than ever, it *needs* to be told.”

The man is dead—long live the myth! This is the development we must fight, uncompromisingly; and the Hindenburg myth—of the stubborn, stalwart, unbendingly loyal old soldier—can best be dissipated by a review of Hindenburg's political life.

He was the son of one of the younger sons of a Junker family, but poorly endowed with the goods or the soil of the world. The hereditary estate, Neudeck in East Prussia, was small, with poor soil and a narrow, inadequate manorial house. In a nearby dwelling, even less commodious, lived and died the current owner's relations—retired councillors of state and majors. Among them was the father of the future Field Marshal.

Feminine members of the family were married off to ordinary burghers—one of them to an army doctor of Jewish descent. Hindenburg's mother too lacked the benefits of Junker blood; she was the daughter of an army doctor.

Hindenburg, before and after the World War, was not a rich man. He had little to leave his family, the insufferable adjutant, Major Oscar von Hindenburg, and his daughters.

The “old gentleman's” eightieth birthday was the formal occasion, but the political situation was the impelling motive, for what followed.

An idea—or rather, a plot—was conceived by the archest of the arch-Nationalists, the hardened old sinner Graf Oldenburg-Januschau . . . the nation must present its President and Field Marshal with an estate worthy of his services (to the ruling class), an estate which would make Hindenburg himself a Junker in fact as well as tradition. In short, the estate of Neudeck, renovated, restored, apotheosized.

Possible advantages of such a scheme were sufficiently obvious to persuade German heavy industry and certain enormously wealthy individuals to raise the necessary sums. (As usual, the Junkers themselves remained deaf, dumb, and paralyzed when it came to giving—or giving up—anything; the industrialists, as might be expected, were more flexible in their patriotic philanthropy.)

So Paul von Hindenburg, of the aristocratic von Hindenburgs in reduced circumstances, became master of a high house and a baronial estate in his native East Prussia, where for four score years he had been a modest guest.

Now the fine wealthy Junkers of the region round, whose doors had not been open to him

before, came themselves to visit him, to talk with him as an equal—as one of them. Hindenburg was a man steeped in tradition and the proprieties. He swallowed it all whole. The rugged, unbending old oak was in fact as impressionable as an adolescent.

He basked in the respect, in the knowing intimacy which these, his neighbors and fellow Junkers, showed him. He was a lord of the land amongst lords of the land, and their cause became his cause, actively as well as implicitly. He was steeped in reaction as never before.

Now when he returned to Berlin after a few weeks' stay in Neudeck, he could hardly conceal his distaste for the plebian and parvenu politicians who happened to be the elected representatives of the German people. He became downright difficult for them.

Years before, after the Armistice, to persuade the millions of war-worn and land-hungry German soldiers to go quietly back to their peasant plots, Field Marshal von Hindenburg had issued a decree pledging his word that his soldiers would get land to till.

Year after year fulfillment of this pledge remained as distant as ever. The various homesteading and land settlement plans came to little more than nothing. The movement grew—if the jobless can't get jobs, at least give them land.

Chancellor Bruening had been ruling Germany and ruining the workers by one drastic emergency decree after another, signed by Hindenburg. To retain Hindenburg and the emergency decree system, the cold Jesuit Bruening became almost an orator, and a first rate campaigner. His energetic efforts and the “lesser evil” policy of the Social Democratic leaders (gallantly oblivious to Hindenburg's sneers at them) reelected Hindenburg as President.

The Social Democrats claimed they had saved the nation from also-ran candidate Adolf Hitler. Bruening and his Clericals felt “the old gentleman” must be grateful to them now and support their shaky structure of emergency decrees, deflation, wage-cutting, relief reduction, exploitation of Social Democratic servility, and rapprochement with France.

Bruening prepared to go through the gestures of carrying out, on a very modest scale, a program of homesteading which was to involve—so it was said—subdivision of bankrupt Junker estates, many of which were in debt to the State and their creditors for many times their possible value.

But he, and the quasi-liberal Germany which stood behind him, reckoned without those chummy get-togethers in Neudeck.

Hindenburg returned to Berlin one fine day in the spring of 1932, incensed with righteous indignation as only a Junker can be incensed

when he has no moral reason to be anything but abjectly ashamed. Bruening approached him for one of the customary signatures to one of the customary Emergency Decrees. The storm broke. Versions vary, but it is certain that Old Senility flared out about "bolshévistic schemes" and administered a gruff drubbing to his Cabinet of "Front Soldiers," in particular to Bruening and to the Catholic Minister of Labor, Adam Stegerwald.<sup>1</sup>

Hindenburg dropped Bruening, his Chancellor and electioneerer, with the same alacrity with which, in 1918-19 he had dropped another man on whose work he had built—General Ludendorff.<sup>2</sup> Bruening was ditched, curtly and callously.

The man whom Hindenburg called to become Chancellor was less than a nobody politically. He was a renegade Clerical, a Junker-capitalist who had demonstrated only diplomatic ineptness, a fervent desire to dicker with the growing Hitlerite "opponents," and the abilities to wear natty clothes, ride horseback, and say nothing in several modern languages.

Franz von Papen was the puppet Chancellor whom the puppet president pulled out of an obscurity so complete that foreign correspondents—and most German journalists too—were sent scurrying to the various Who's Who reference volumes. "Who is this guy?" Now the world knows.

Then began the era of the intrigues, the cross and counter machinations, the wire pulling and back stabbing. Whoever had the old man, had the works. General von Schleicher, schemer of the Reichswehr Ministry, had the strands in his hand. Von Papen was his creation, and—he thought—his creature. Von Papen in short order made himself universally detested and despised with the most reactionary and anti-social series of measures which Germany had ever experienced, and also by his swaggering stupidity. But during this time by his wiles he so endeared himself to the "gruff" and "incorruptible" old Hindenburg that from then on until the latter's death a few days ago, Papen could twist him almost as he wished. The senile president was taken in by the airs and manners of the gray-haired snob. No doubt to Hindenburg, Papen was the acme of poise and verve—all that he had never been gifted with as a plodding young officer of scanty means. Was it this, or was it a second childhood, symptoms of

<sup>1</sup> This Bolshevik once boasted to the writer that only his exertions had held German workers back from protest strikes while Bruening's Emergency Decrees were cutting their wages, their unemployment insurance, their social benefits. . . .

<sup>2</sup> In an article replete with irony too subtle to be of much use, Emil Ludwig has just written: ". . . toward the end of the war . . . Hindenburg's political talent started to manifest itself. During four years he worked daily with General Ludendorff, and even in 1918 he assured the General he would never separate himself from him. But when the war was lost, when General Ludendorff threw his last cards on the table . . . Hindenburg understood he would have to drop his old collaborator. What would one not do for the Fatherland?" What indeed? *Treue um treue!* The same touching loyalty was demonstrated by Hitler as he dropped his Chief of Staff, Roehm, with bullets.



"As you'll note, men, the subject has radical written all over him!"

Gardner Rea

which became more and more frequent?<sup>3</sup>

Papen became completely impossible as Chancellor. He could not hope to gain any kind of a Reichstag majority; his economic revival program, announced in the late summer of 1932, showed itself a flop even faster than the Rooseveltian experiments; and most important of all, resistance of German workers flamed up, militantly in unprecedented hundreds of individual, spontaneous strikes throughout the country against employers who tried to take advantage of the Papen wage-slashing scheme.

So with a heavy heart Hindenburg had to let him go as Chancellor. But Papen did not disappear as the intimate—and manipulator—of the old man. Papen's patron and maker, General von Schleicher, was Chancellor, but Papen's lean form slunk in and out of the Reich President's palace and Papen's agents and toadies were planted in convenient and unbudgeable positions. Most important, slippery Papen had on the string Colonel Oscar von Hindenburg, the president's ubiquitous son and personal adjutant (specially created position, not foreseen by the Constitution or the Reichstag).

Hindenburg received representatives of the Reichs Land Bund, organization of the ever-clamorous Junkers. Only an hour before treading into the venerable presence of their fellow Junker, the Bund had issued a sizzling statement attacking the Schleicher government: "The plundering of agriculture for the benefit of all the all-powerful moneybag interests of internationally-oriented export industry never attained such a scope even under Marxist [read, Social Democratic] Cabinets."

That and more like it, even nastier in tone.

<sup>3</sup> One of the jokes which became current in Germany at that time and afterwards: "I hear they are roping off Wilhelmstrasse from two to four every afternoon. . . ." "You don't say—why?" "So 'the old gentleman' can play marbles." The telling of this anecdote was usually the signal for retaliation with several others of a similar tenor.

It was a slap in the face for Schleicher. As usual, Germany's finest, the Junkers, were biting the hand which fed them—fed them subventions by the hundreds of millions, fed them debt relief and tax cancellation, and exorbitant agricultural prices by means of tariffs which half-starved nine-tenths of the nation for the benefit of their fraction of a percent.

The Junker representatives at the reception greeted Chancellor General Schleicher as though all were well. Not until much later in the evening did he learn of their statement—and was duly infuriated.

Next morning the Chancellor-General presented himself before his President-General, and demanded that Hindenburg repudiate his co-landowners and cronies. But the old gentleman who was always so stoically willing to sacrifice his political principles and his aides when stern self-interest called, was not willing to be budged when self-interest and inclination pointed against principle.

Schleicher—the late General Schleicher, since the massacre of June 30—had cunning and connections; he had reason to believe he had the army; and he had a good hope of getting substantial "lesser evil" sort of support from the Social Democratic trade unions and perhaps the party itself. But he didn't have Hindenburg, whose sturdy old heart of oak beat in perfect time with the Junker-reactionaries deployed by Oldenburg-Januschau and von Papen.

But Schleicher had an ace in the hole—and a grudge to square. For years the wasteful and incompetently administered estates of the Junkers east of the Elbe River had been buoyed up by state "loans" and subventions known as the Aid for the East.<sup>4</sup> The little fellows—the peasants, so outnumbered the Junkers by myriads to one—were supposed to get the benefit of the huge sums; but the East Aid administrators were Junkers and the

<sup>4</sup> *Osthilfe*—a chapter in criminal finance all by itself.



cousins, uncles, and nephews of Junkers, so somehow the big money flowed to them. They sequestered and squandered the money like drunken sailors are supposed to. They snapped their fingers at their creditors, gambled in real estate and the market, took trips to Berlin and the seaports, looked on the wine when it was red and had a few goes at it with the more expensive girls in the bright red-light district. All in the best Junker tradition of conspicuous consumption and corruption. Their laborers and mechanics went wageless. Marster was, after all, legally bankrupt.

Schleicher began to make public the results of investigation of the Aid for the East scandal.

The scandal stank in the winter air of hungering Germany, as day by day new noble names, new prominent personalities were exposed as nothing more or less than common swindlers of the state treasuries.<sup>5</sup>

The dirt was found clinging everywhere amongst the Junkers.—Yes, even at the very top, *right to the Hindenburgs*. . . .

When the Neudeck estate, renewed and improved, had been presented to Hindenburg, the gift tax had been dodged by discreditable means. And a deed giving the property to son Oscar had been executed to dodge the inheritance tax as well.

Neudeck was just as unprofitably run as most of the big estates. Collections had been taken for it twice—once to buy it, again to restore and refurbish its appliances, machinery, and buildings.

Again, a third time, the industrialists collected to wipe off the deficit at Neudeck—the same business tycoons who yammered continually that they were forced to pay their

<sup>5</sup> The German edition of the first *Brown Book* mentions by name several super-swindlers among the aristocrats who pocketed the Aid for the East funds.

workers "impossible" wages, found it feasible and worth their while to pour money into the privately owned and administered unprofitable estate of Neudeck.

The Hindenburgs were involved in the East Help affair—and worried. His crony, Oldenburg-Januschau, was revealed as a nimble-fingered fellow. The investigations into the Aid for the East made the Junkers desperate. Schleicher was obviously determined to use this means to discredit them, break their power. From him they could hope for little.

But there was a way out—a traitor ready to let the Hitler wooden horse through the gates of Troy.

What followed is already well known. Papen by this time had completed his plans to stab Schleicher in the back. The necessary concessions had been obtained from Hitler, and from Hugenberg and the Nationalists. Thyssen wanted Hitler in. It remained only for Hindenburg first to drop Schleicher as he had once dropped Bruening for the sake of the Junkers, and finally to appoint Hitler Chancellor—Hitler whom the old gentleman personally disliked to the point of detestation, Hitler, whom he had sneeringly called "drummer-boy" and "that foreigner," Hitler who had himself disparaged the old gentleman's advanced age, and countenanced attacks on him as an associate of traitors. (A charge made by Goebbels against Hindenburg.)

But even loyalty to his own likes and dislikes could not stand in the way of the old Field Marshal's sterling devotion to Neudeck and all that went with it. Hitler was called in. The investigation into the scandals of the Aid for the East were terminated by the Nazis—storm troopers seized the documents, and Hitler acquired with them a hold over the Hindenburgs, old and young, which guaranteed that there would be no interference *from that quarter*.

Since then, Hindenburg has been in truth

the "*lebende Leichnam*"—the walking corpse. Only in the dispatches of glib foreign correspondents has he retained any active real authority or influence on the course of events. He became a mere property of the Hitler mummery, a necessary adjunct of the terror regime, but an adjunct only.

He sanctioned by silence the foulest atrocities and the most glaring breaches of faith and of the constitution which he had twice sworn to observe at all costs.

Regularly, after every outrage—even that of June 30—his stupid congratulatory message could be expected, thanking Hitler for what he had done for Germany.

But he was paid for his final abject surrender. A large piece of state property was "presented" to him. Hindenburg, like Goering and Darres, the Minister of Agriculture, allowed himself to be enriched out of the common property.

In the old days that was known as misuse of office or graft. Now it is the thanks of a grateful nation. The nation, grateful for having been betrayed, humiliated, discredited, and brought to the edge of inflation and chaos.

But the real thanks of a grateful nation are storing up at compounded and recompounded interest. All the semi-pagan mummery of the Hindenburg funeral, all the parading of his memory before the disillusioned masses will not prevent those thanks from gathering and breaking over the head of the regime which Hindenburg ushered into unrestricted power in violation of his oath and pledge.

The old Junker-General's death in that precious house, surrounded and cut off from the world by hordes of spying Black Shirts, will not long precede the showdown in which Black Shirt and General, Junker and Nazi, will be swept into the ashen of history, along with the preposterous legend of the stalwart, the lion-hearted, and beloved Hindenburg, savior of his people.

# Art Under Mussolini

BIANCO CAPRARO

FLORENCE, ITALY.

**A** UNIVERSITY education in Fascist Italy carries with it the privilege, the necessity, of joining the GUF (Gruppo Universitaria Fascista). Upon the GUF is placed the burden of Culture and Art. Its members will become the practicing artists, writers, musicians, and professors of the Fascist era. Their success will be achieved in direct proportion to the degree of ability demonstrated in subordinating art to the dictates of the Ministry of Education.

Vaguely worried notices in the literary and artistic periodicals have referred from time to time to the necessity of creating a new art

based on the principles of Fascism. They have occasionally expressed alarm that the new movement should take so long to get under way. They have admitted, finally, that the thousands of monuments to the war dead can hardly be considered as significant contributions to Fascist art, but are, rather, horrid monstrosities which might much better have been left undone. So now they turn, these, the elderly and worried, to the GUF, the young and sanguine. The majority of university students have lived entirely under Fascism. They have known at first hand no other regime. Their intellect, their emotions, have ripened during the last ten years. The

nation turns to them for confirmation of the faith in the new ideals and in the new leadership.

So the "*Littoriali della cultura e dell'arte*" were called into being. After the first clamour of the press had subsided notices of the various concourses which would make part of the "spiritual Olympiad" begun to appear. Day after day the project grew more vast. Every form of literary and artistic endeavor was to be included. Every practical application was to have its theoretical exposition. Thus, not only were prizes to be offered for the best poetry, the best prose, and the best translation, but also for the best literary criticism. So the

exhibitions of painting, sculpture, architecture, etching, commercial art, photography, were complemented by a series of critical essays. There were amateur films numbering over 20, and a day and a half was devoted to setting forth principles for the development of the film in Italy. There were scientific studies (three-fourths of which had to do with the radio), colonial studies, political studies, and Corporation studies. Music had its composers, its critics, and its performers; more than 40 compositions including trios, quartets, and symphonic poems were presented. Ten string quartets and 2 choruses wrestled night after night with Haydn, Boccherini, Beethoven, Debussy, Monteverde, and Palestrina, and on the whole they made a far better showing than any other group of competitors. Costume and theatrical design, stage setting, dramatic composition, and theatrical criticism were all represented. To top these off the winning comedy was given a performance, and "18BL," ("theater for the masses, 2,000 actors, 20,000 spectators,") unfolded its bloody progress to the accompaniment of machine-gun fire and the deep rumbling of cannon.

It would be futile to attempt a discussion of the principles as they were elaborated, confounded, and contradicted, by the young critics. For the most part the essays were made up of involved quibbling. The only point on which the competitors seemed to agree was that Fascism must break completely from conservative art, from individualist art. We have, they said, become a unified people and we must have a collective art. Someone jumps up and shouts:

"Let us look at the example of Julius Caesar. His Commentaries are collectivist. And the writings of Mussolini. These two have created a great nation here in Italy. It is their example we must follow towards collectivism."

There are loud cries: "Bravo." And this was the clearest statement to emerge out of the hours and days of wrangling. The ordinary idea of collective art was turned topsyturvy and brought into beautiful accord with the laissez-faire of fascist-guided individualism. Collectivism is to apply not to the conception and creation of art, literature, and music, but to the method of its administration in carefully supervised doses to the mass. "18BL" will hereafter become the classic example to follow.

As to the exhibits, they should satisfy everyone. The ardent fascists will be pleased to see a relatively large number of works which are frankly propagandistic. Here is "Mother Love" masquerading in a hundred different forms as the war to increase the birth rate. Here is the "Power of Music," fascists rising out of organ pipes. The bust of Mussolini, sometimes petulant, sometimes merely sullen, peeks out from every corner. The advocates of Art for Art's sake should be none the less pleased with works which derive from masters as far apart as Picasso and Edwin Landseer. Criticism may draw any conclusion it chooses without fear of successful contradiction.

Of course it would be absurd to suppose that there could be any great number of original or significant works in an exhibition which sets no other criterion than membership in the GUF. But bearing in mind that all of the exhibitors have been carefully nurtured during their formative years on the very cream of fascist propaganda—not one of them has ever been exposed to the withering influences of "democracy" and Communism—and bearing in mind also the uniformity of their aspirations as expressed in the critical papers, is it not surprising that the exhibits should be such a heterogeneous mixture? The separate items might have been done centuries and nations apart.

The only exhibit to show any degree of uniformity was organized by the architectural committee. Here a definite problem was imposed on the competitors: the designing of a model university or of a balilla house. Period work was not accepted. Hence a very arid kind of uniformity on modern lines which has no more to do with modern Italy than with any other European country. The movies were depressingly bad. Eisenstein's name was mentioned once in the discussions and so was the word "montage." But in the films there was no evidence that either had been heard of. More about "Mother Love" alternating with travel scenes in the mountains and scenes in summer recreation camps.

The political discussions were probably the most animated of all. A lack of intellectual vigor was compensated for by a display of physical energy. And in the end much the same conclusion was reached as in the literary debate. Corporation stands for collectivism, private property stands for individualism. Here it becomes necessary to re-define private property in Mussolinian terms. Of course the individual (or, as they prefer to say, the unit) is not to have his property taken away. No, no, that would be Bolshevism. He is still to receive an income from his investments, from his lands, from his industries; he must only acquiesce in the promulgation of the corporation laws—not a difficult thing to do as it is a means of guaranteeing his income. So our proprietor and his property become transformed. He ceases to be a bourgeois, an individual; he becomes a unit in the collectivist state of Signor Mussolini. His property ceases to be private although he still remains in possession of all the rights thereto; it too becomes a unit in a corporation.

No little forensic skill was required on the part of the participants in the discussion to draw such fine conclusions without having recourse to dangerous terminology. It was unallowable that the word "plan" be mentioned in connection with any of the projects of il Duce. When it did creep in there were loud cries of protest: "Five year plan, booh! This is Communism! Bolshevik!" We were to assume that the corporation idea sprang full-blown from the omniscient brain of Mussolini and so could be considered a plan no more than divine inspiration could be called a plan. Perhaps they are right. The idea is to re-

ceive its realization through the spontaneous action of all groups concerned and not through the furtive machinations of a central planning committee.

On the jury lists are very imposing, resounding, names. Most of them are from the old guard, men who have been unable to adjust their lives and their work to the vastly altered conditions of Fascism. They continue at the point they left off 10 or 15 years ago. They are tolerated by Fascism not for what they are contributing to it, but for their resounding names—and because they will serve on jury committees. Skimming through the list some of the names stick out: Bonelli, Romagnoli, Ungaretti, Bontempelli, Respighi, Pizetti, Casella, Ojetti, Romanelli. Many an "Onorevole," many a "Sua Eccellenza." To quote the concluding sentences from an article on the literary debates in which Mussolini's *Life of Arnaldo* was put forward as the prototype of future Italian literature: "The young Italians have spoken as they wished about literature; and they have spoken with clear knowledge and fiery consciousness, proud to serve our time. Professional men of letters may know now that a literature is finished. And it is theirs."

And in fact sometimes the elderly professional men did seem bewildered by what was happening in those large university halls crammed with vociferating, restless youths clad in the uniform of the "goliardi": black shirts with blue ties, blue cuffs, blue epaulets, polished boots, gray-green riding trousers, and the fantastically pointed hats hung over with ribbons and medals, all contributed to the savagely militaristic atmosphere of the scene. Students in civilian clothes were not allowed to speak. Every opinion bordering on the unorthodox was quickly shouted down, and speakers who were too prolix in the presentation of their theses were clapped into silence and off the stage. To secure an audition it became necessary to resort to catch phrases and slogans. Most careful attention was given to those who had selected the writings or the politics of Mussolini as their subject, as if the material had not become commonplace long before the "Littoriali" commenced their stormy sessions.

What worried the elderly literary gentlemen was not so much the differences as the complete unanimity of opinion in regard to the established forms of art: they must be abolished. And it was agreed that a new spirit must develop. But from what basis? Using what material? The vague answer was "Fascism," but in fact an impasse was reached at this point. The students seem no more certain than their less courageous predecessors. It occurs to one that they may wish to dispose of the predecessors for the good and sufficient reason of making jobs for themselves.

Marinetti and his group seem to be the only artists in Italy who are bringing to realization the theory of the university students, and yet he was not mentioned. A too close inspection of his results would give the lie to their arid theorization. Under the patron-

age of the combative futurist there has lately been performed on the radio a selection of piano compositions by one of his prodigies. The titles were: Synthesis of the Infinite, Synthesis of the Simultaneity of Battle on Land, on Sea, and in the Air (Marinetti himself has written a long poem with the same title), Synthesis of the Façade of the Revolutionary Exhibition at Rome, Synthesis of the Room of the Fallen Fascists in the Revolutionary Exhibition at Rome. Here is new and fascist music with a vengeance. The pieces conform exactly to all of the principles so painstakingly expounded during this past week. The composer has immersed himself in Fascism, he has made of Mussolini a personal hero, he has discarded all the bourgeois composers. He does everything except create music. So the elderly men are worried, for their reputations as much as for their jobs. And this despite their hardly concealed attitude of condescension to the young students.

Critical sentiment, fascist propaganda, and Signor Mussolini's theatrical ideas, contained in these words: "We must prepare the theater of the masses, a theater which can contain 20,000 persons," all were fittingly expressed by "18BL." For days the press had been preparing the public for something extraordinary. Night after night the ta-ta-ta of machine-gun echoes up from the woods of the Cascine, where they are having the rehearsals. It sounds almost like a real bombardment and everyone is excited. The last notices appear: "And perhaps under the light of the stars, on the bank of the Arno, a new theater will be born this evening."

It is about a mile and a half away. We walk. The way lies through the San Frediano "bassifondi." The children are sitting in the doorsteps, and up above their parents lean out of the windows to watch the gentry going to the theater. Elegant officers and elegant young ladies do not often stroll through San Frediano, so the people sit in their doorsteps and watch them swarm leisurely by to the new theater of the masses. Then we buy our tickets at the first barrier. A long walk past more houses and more people. A second barrier and after five minutes we are there. Jammed. Even the 50-lire seats are all sold.

A deep black gulf separates the audience from the hill in back where the drama is to take place.

The program explains: "18BL" is the number of a type of transport truck used in the World War, and one of these, Mamma Giberna, is to be the protagonist. Whose revolutionary idea is this? Eight names are listed in the author's column, all well-known names of elderly literary gentlemen. They have evidently been persuaded to pool their individualistic efforts in a common enterprise for the failure of which no single one of them can be held responsible. There is to be one actor, one individualistic actor, the truck driver; the rest of the action will be developed by large masses of soldiers and fascists—and by Mamma Giberna.

An immense loud-speaker keeps bellowing at the audience to remain seated during the entire spectacle. The loud speaker will play second lead as well as several subsidiary roles. When the actors have lines to speak, it will speak them. It urges us to silence. It amplifies to gigantic dimensions the sound of machine-gun fire and the neighing of horses and the backfire of Mamma Giberna. It explains what is going on. It bursts into peroration from time to time as the collective voice of the mass. And, when there is nothing else to do, it drones out figures and estimates concerning the benefactions of the Duce as compared with all that the Socialists destroyed during their short term of power.

It begins with a prelude. Music and the sound of explosions mix, creating an effect of indescribable confusion, which was the effect desired before the advent of Mamma Giberna. Star shells go up from the trenches. War! Men charge bravely over the hill to glory and to speedy death. The truck comes lumbering in, order is restored, and the radio voice informs us that these men have remained in the front line for three days without food. After this first bit of rescue work Mamma Giberna dashes back and forth, up and down hill, now carrying wounded to the rear, now bringing up ammunition, now rescuing a group of soldiers cut off from the main body. More star shells go up, machine-guns blaze, bursts of artillery. The radio voice keeps up a running comment. At last the truck figures bravely in the final victorious charge.

The interval is passed shooting off fireworks: brilliant bursting flowering lights in the sky. The words blaze up: Trieste Fiume Trento ITALIA.

Second act. A band of ragged and dejected proletarians drag up the hill. They are carrying large signs: "Viva Lenin," "Abasso la Guerra." In the audience a claque of fascists starts to hoot and whistle. The forlorn little group moves on. They discover Mamma Giberna. The radio voice thunders out that the proletariat recognize in the truck a symbol of their slavery. They attack it, spitting, throwing stones. The dump carriage in back goes up unexpectedly and the superstitious Communists retreat in alarm. Alarm gives way to rage and the mechanic is clubbed to death. When the proletariat goes away the driver jumps into Mamma Giberna and drives furiously away to arouse the fascist fighting squadrons.

While the truck dashes wildly about on its Paul Revere errand we are treated to the spectacle of a democratic congress in session. Drunken Communists, Socialists, and placid clerics wrangle together, following the dictates of three hooded, gesticulating figures in the background. Excited whispers: "Masonry." The truck loaded with ardent young fascists bounces up and overturns the parliamentary session, putting its members to flight and destroying their meeting place. At this point it is to be assumed that the Communists are enraged at the upsetting of parliament and for the vendetta they set fire to factories and

ambush fascists. There follow several scenes of guerilla warfare. The Communists are put to flight.

Many of them even come over to join the fascist ranks. The red banner is captured and torn to pieces. Fascists creep up from every side of the hill to join in a long procession, headed by Mamma Giberna, towards the horizon bathed in light. It is the march on Rome.

During the second interval an aeroplane drops facsimile copies of the Popolo d'Italia: "Mussolini in Power!"

Third act. Reconstruction. We are treated to a ballet which symbolizes, according to the radio voice, the rejuvenation of the people and the reclamation of land. Several hundred young men and women brandish shields and spears. The light glistens on the silver ornaments and on the naked bodies—when they are not out of sight behind the brow of the hill. The cue is lost and after a moment of pandemonium the lights go out and the ballet stumbles away in the dark. A road is being built. We are told, but not why, that it must be put through in three days. Men work feverishly. Poor Mamma Giberna breaks down. The driver delivers a peroration: "Mamma Giberna has gone through the Great War and is ready to go through this one." A huge ditch presents an unforeseen obstacle. It is decided to fill the ditch with the dead bones of Mamma Giberna. Unfortunately for the continuity of the drama, Mamma Giberna refuses to go headlong into her grave, despite all the proddings of the assembled workmen. The lights go off for several minutes, during which time another truck is called up to give the recalcitrant martyr a push. The lights go on to show Mamma Giberna rolling into the ditch and the other truck retreating over the hilltop. But the people had already started to go away. The drama had finished with the aeroplane flight. There had been very little applause before and there was none now. The people filed away silently. A few little boys climbed down and surveyed the ruin of Mamma Giberna. Subdued whispering; jokes at the ballet.

In San Frediano they were waiting up to watch the people go home. As the paper aptly said, the procession to and from the theater was in itself a spectacle of the masses.

But it did not say what they thought of this other spectacle, the audience down in San Frediano.

The "Littoriali" had very little else to offer after "18BL." The winning comedy of the 60, *The Recall*, proved to be a watered down version of *The Doll's House*. The winning musical compositions were the most conservatively dull performances of the entire week.

What then is one to say of politics and art in Italy? The "Littoriali" have provided an opportunity to see and hear what is being done by young Italians—and the results are pathetic! Indeed, it seems that the art of Fascism can be created only with the destruction of art.

# Refugee Paris

ROBERT GESSNER

PARIS.

**P**ARIS HAS BEEN the mecca of political refugees ever since the era of modern revolutions was ushered in by France. Karl Marx was one of the first to seek Paris from the Rhineland—and one of the first to be ordered on his way. Has France today maintained her reputation for hospitality—followed-by-eviction?

It was politic for France to stretch her arms with motherly compassion toward Hitler's Germany. All kinds of political and non-political refugees came and felt the warmth of non-Fascist France. While every gesture of Hitler was creating foreign enemies, this one pose of France gave her the friendly nods of dozens of countries. It also renewed anti-German hate within the country. France soon learned, however, that her magnanimity was costly. The little money the 30,000 to 40,000 refugees brought with them was quickly consumed by France. And besides there were the refugees from the Russian revolution and from the Eastern European pogroms and from the last World War, all of whom have not been yet absorbed. France withdrew the pose and none of the dozens of countries noticed it. England was too busy keeping refugees out, and Austria was too busy killing her citizens before they became refugees—a much cheaper and convenient process.

Perhaps the most tragic of all the classes of refugees is that of the non-political minded bourgeoisie. They, who through indifference or ignorance were non-combatants in a class war, are now suffering the most because they know not why they are suffering. They considered themselves Germans, not Jews or liberals, and they cannot understand why their country has turned them out; or if they do comprehend, their understanding goes only as far as to say that Hitler is a mad dog. The ones who married Jews or Jewesses are also in this group. These unclass-minded victims of a class war suffer through the declassing of their economic positions and through their pride. This Monday morning while I write some of them are renting taxis to take them around for the day, collecting laundry. Doctors are making and selling sausages. Lawyers are peddling trinkets from house to house. Intellectuals are selling poorly-drawn caricatures of Hitler. Others sit all day at sidewalk cafés over a glass of coffee. Many of them do not think of themselves now as proletarians, selling their minds and bodies for un-buttered bread, although a considerable number are in the provinces doing agricultural work. Their pride tells them this is temporary. They will be doctors and lawyers and dentists and merchants again—just as soon as the mad dog dies of his own bite. And many of them have gone back already.

In sharp contrast to these unchaperoned babes in the wood is the spirit of the political refugees. They too are going back to Germany—but not to set themselves up in business. They know why they are in France, and why they were bled in Germany. It is a war, and they act like soldiers. "What will you do," I asked one Jewish school boy, after he had told me the story of his persecution at the hands of his Nazi classmates, "when you get back to Germany?"

He looked at me, his sensitive face hardening. "I will kill them," he said, quietly.

That is the spirit that keeps the political refugees alive and vigorous, despite the dearth and deadliness of their emigre existence. The relief agencies have done muddled jobs, except the Red Relief which has had less money to spend but which made each sou go further. The Comité Nationale has evaporated a million dollars and is about broke and will close up. They did a notorious job of administration. There lies a scandal there for the investigator who desires to unearth the messy details.

The Comité Nationale has collected a lot of money in America, mostly from bourgeois Jews. The exhaustion of their funds will probably necessitate a new campaign. MacDonald, the League commissioner, will probably make speeches. His salary is said to be amazingly exorbitant for a "relief worker." The Lord Marley committee, however, will probably be staging a campaign at the same time. It is unfortunate that contributors will be confused by these two campaigns, as they undoubtedly were last year. But judging from the work done, how it is done and for whom, I believe the Red Relief should receive more than the lamb's share it got. I hasten to add, for the benefit of those who do not like the alliteration of the two r's, that the Red Relief has helped and is today helping political refugees who are not Communists as well as Communists. The Comité Nationale on the other hand has helped no Communists; and they have badly handled the poor, putting them in barracks while handing out hotel moneys to others. The Society of Friends (Quakers) have been true to their ideals of equality and have given money, both to emigres and police.

Overnight from Paris is the summer camp supported in part by Red Relief. It is on Il de Re, off the coast of La Rochelle, a beautiful provincial island where the sun is healing and the tides roll back and forth. The children of the proletarians of Paris swim and play on the beaches, their rickety legs and under-nourished lungs feeling health for the first time since last summer. The refugee children of German proletarians are there with them. They are not many. The proletarians of Germany had no money to flee toward Paris. But

the camp is well equipped and the campers well fed. The children show it in their faces. Marching from the beach to the dormitory they sing the songs of their fathers, revolutionary songs that their comrades cannot sing in Germany but which echo the streets of Paris.

These children carry scars on their faces which are slowly healing. But the fight goes on, each section having the name of a fighter of Fascism, Dimitrov, Thaelmann, and they play their games under these banners. The red flag leads them when they march singing back and forth. They make a thrilling spectacle and there will be almost five hundred of them in a few weeks. Some observer said that the World War was won on the cricket fields of England (no doubt an English observer), but I could not help feeling what fine fighters those youngsters will make. The German and French proletariat revolutions will be won on the streets, if not on the playgrounds.

Departing, we saluted: "Rote Front!"

"Rote Front!"

The battle of theory goes on in Paris among the refugees. I attended a special session of the S. D. S., the Schutzverband Deutscher Schriftsteller, composed of radical writers. Five hundred of these intellectual refugees gathered to honor the memory of Erich Mühsam, the famous writer who ended his year-and-a-half death last week in concentration camp Oranienburg. They overcrowded the meeting hall and the passageway. I noticed a lady waiting impatiently in the corridor. "One cannot hear poetry read or see writers in Germany," she explained. "Tomorrow I go back to Berlin. I must satisfy this thirst ere I go."

Many distinguished literateurs appeared, most of them in shoes that were sprung and coats that were frayed. Anna Seghers, winner of the highest prose prize in Germany, Kleist, for her *Revolt of the Fishermen of St. Barbara*; and Dr. Friedländer, the well-known Kantist, who writes under the name of Mynona. I followed in English, saying that Mühsam's *Kriegslied* and *Soldatenlied* must be translated so that he will live on in all countries. The character of the German intellect was definitely expressed when Augustine Sonohy read his written speech, ending with a quotation of poetry memorized. The training of the German schools was evident. He was followed by Anselm Ruest, whose long-winded digressions on anarchist theory made the crowd restless and they applauded for him to sit down but he kept on reading. The tone of the meeting was fortunately shattered when Egon Kisch, the well-known Communist writer, began by taking his coat off and getting on the table. His energy vitalized the crowd. So much so that voices began disputing his statements. They were the voices of anarchists, claiming Mühsam. Soon the hall was



in a refreshing uproar. The contrast would have been enjoyable except that it was a pitiable spectacle: factions fighting for the Nazi-tortured corpse of Mühsam. Pitiable because it was eye-scratching and hair-pulling which harassed the leadership of the Communist Party and betrayed the working-class of Germany. Finally, Hans Beimar settled the minds of the renegades by stating that he was with Erich Mühsam in the concentration camp for almost a year and he knows that Mühsam was more of a Communist than an anarchist.

The movement for the freedom of Thaelmann in France is tremendously strong. Last Sunday over 6,000 proletarians held a combination picnic and meeting just outside of Paris. A few days ago the organization headed by Henri Barbusse, the Committee for the Relief of Victims of German Fascism, called a mass meeting at Salle Wagram. Moro Jiafferi, the famous Corsican lawyer, was announced as the speaker. The last time he spoke at Salle Wagram he made the famous declaration, "Goering, you are the Reichstag incendiary!" That night the mobs rioted, those who could not get in the overjammed hall, and those who joined them inflamed with the Corsican's oratory. The cafés that September night were demolished and the police beaten

back with stones and tree pickets; and several comrades were killed along with numerous wounded. And now the Corsican was to speak again. This time the Republican Guard took no chances and lined all sides of the streets with soldiers in steel helmets and with rifles ready. It looked like war on the outside and inside one felt the war spirit, but it was war against Fascism. The mass shouted: "Libre Thaelmann!" The police all the way down the Champs Elysee must have heard it. I sat next to a veteran of the Paris Commune, 85 years old, Armand Brisack, who cheered as loudly as the best of them. Barbusse introduced me as a member of the American Delegation to See Thaelmann, and the mass arose spontaneously with the voice of the *Internationale*.

The American Delegation to See Thaelmann is headed by W. O. Thompson, a former law partner of Clarence Darrow in Chicago, but more important the author of the minority report of Darrow's N.R.A. investigation. Thompson went further than his liberal former-partner and advocated a workers-farmers government. Thompson's sincerity was expressed in his resignation from an N.R.A. job. Edward Lam of Toledo, who was active during the Toledo strike fighting, is the second

lawyer in the delegation. Mrs. Lucille Milner, secretary of the American Civil Liberties Union, is the third member. "Why do you think your delegation can see Thaelmann?" we are asked. We are the first American delegation, and our chances are more than even. Only one previous delegation has seen him. That was almost three months ago when two Saar workers heard Thaelmann say to them, "They are torturing me." Since then no word.

I talked with Mr. Stephan Priacel, a journalist for LU, the *Dans La Presse Universelle*, who went with Mr. Charles Vildrac, the Paris playwright, to see Thaelmann. He was given three versions of the Saar delegation instead of being allowed to see Thaelmann. An official of the Propaganda Ministry told Priacel that Thaelmann was an aristocrat and when he saw workers calling on him he turned on his heel and left the room without speaking. An official of the Foreign Office told Priacel that Thaelmann would be a bad Communist if he did not complain that he was being tortured. Another official in the Propaganda Ministry told Priacel that the Saar delegation did not see Thaelmann at all. "It is bad enough that they lie to me," Priacel laughed, "but they lie to each other as well."

At any rate we go in, and we shall see.

## "Share Our Wealth"... with Huey

HAROLD PREECE

THE irrepressible Kingfish, from his cubicle in the United States Senate, challenges us to a new crusade. The infidels have captured the sacred wealth of the country: Let every true and Christian American knight—whether he be Sir Mechanic de Ford or Sir Grocer de Egg—jump on his steed and away. Pardon me, I am getting my milieus mixed. Let every sovereign American voter gird up his cotton pants, and armed with the ballot (preferably a Democratic one) go forth and expropriate the infidels of their ill-gotten wealth, except for a million dollars per infidel.

When this depression has ended, thanks to the application of the far-seeing policies of Senator Huey P. Long, his "Share-Our-Wealth" circular will undoubtedly replace the Declaration of Independence as the palladium of American liberties.

"Why, there won't be any Rockefellers after Congress passes the Huey Long program," they tell you; and one feels a strange hurt when he sees the sudden luster in their poor, rheumy eyes. "We're goin' back to the principles of our forefathers"—the hopeless nostalgia of a broken and defeated middle-class for Saturday night collections and Sunday chicken dinners. Socialism! Communism! Frightened visions of long-bearded men lurking in the alleys to blow up installment furniture

houses. "Let me tell you somepn', Mister. This ain't Rooshia. This is Ameriky."

Inevitably one is given the Circular, the Sacred Bull handed down from Washington. Little grocers spell out its contents in the long intervals between customers. How beautiful are the feet of those who come in pink pajamas bearing good tidings.

These are the incontrovertible principles of Huey's Circular: the limitation of poverty, the limitation of fortunes, the limitation of hours of work, the issuance of old-age pensions, the balancing of agricultural production and consumption, the caring for of every veteran, and the restriction of taxation. Unfortunately, nothing is said about restricting the output of circulars. Implicit in the program that nobody shall possess more than a million dollars. Here is a flypaper with tantalizing sweets designed to catch the flies little and medium-sized.

"The limitation of poverty." Nothing, of course, about the abolition of poverty. "We are loyal Americans," and a central principle of American economy is that the poor shall always be with us. Hence, we equip handsome lads with blue uniforms and billies to keep the poor in their proper places of poverty. Of course, poverty must be limited—even Mr. Hoover inferred as much—otherwise the very poor might become so numerous that they

would inconsiderately refuse to permit the rotting of food in warehouses. In such cases, the unruly ruffians might deny that poverty has any limitations.

But just watch the statesman-like fin of the Kingfish adjust this trifle. Presto! no one is poor on less than five thousand dollars per year. No doubt, the meanest laborer, paid such a sum, could substitute the latest creation of Herr Kuppenheimer for coveralls. To quote a favorite cliché of the Society's orators, "If this is poverty, then, boy, it would be a treat to be poor." It is irrelevant, of course, to point out that there is an appreciable difference between real income and money income, especially when inflation is such an established practice.

The plank regarding limitation of fortunes may, for all I know, be causing Mellon to toss on his Sealy mattress. I hope that no one will cynically inquire about the money which Senator Long is reputed to have deposited in a Canadian bank, under an assumed name. Champions of the people must expect such vicious calumnies. Did not paid propagandists assert that Bryan had a scandalous appetite for pancakes? The few have the wealth, and Huey asserts that poor old Bill Brown with nothing to his name but forty acres and a hamstrung mule must have some of it. Wake up, Mr. Mellon, and see if all your gold is still

safely stowed away under that mattress.

But if Uncle Andy and his quaking colleagues will read a bit of the royal pronouncement, they can be reassured of continuing their careers with no one cramping their style. Huey avows:

"The wealth of this land is tied up in a few hands. It makes no difference how many dreary rows the farmer has plowed — the wealth he has created is in the hands of manipulators. They have not worked *any more* (italics mine) than many other people who have made nothing. *Now we do not propose to hurt these very rich persons.* (Italics mine.) We simply say that when the rich reach the place of millionaires, they have everything they can use and they ought to let somebody else have something."

When the big hogs have gorged their fill, they should in all decency step aside and give the little pigs a chance instead of bottling up the leavings. All of God's chillun oughta have yachts. Classic economy in a classic period of decline! As for harming the rich—"Well, I been doin' business on this corner for nigh onto forty years, without any trouble; and I ain't gonna risk my chance of Heaven by hurtin' somebody who's been luckier than me."

The Kingfish does not admit that hours of work have already been lowered to the vanishing point for millions of American workers. Again, it would be lese majeste for some subversive radical to point out that there are members of the "Share-Our-Wealth" Society who have not performed an hour's remunerative labor during the past five years. I hope that Comrade X would not resort to the final blasphemy of declaring that limitation of hours under a system, based upon private ownership of machinery, is as logical as bailing out a boat with a sieve. I do not fear, though, for the result of the debate when I read the clinching argument of the Kingfish:

"—Praised be the name of the Lord, Heaven would be coming nearer to Earth." (Infidel astronomers will please take note.)

Under the new dispensation, there would of course be no need for poorhouses. Huey proposes a pension of thirty dollars per month for each person over sixty, in order that the poor may have cash for fatback, pasteboard shoes, and Sloan's Liniment.

Balancing agricultural production and consumption should be an easy matter. Our inspired president has already taken a long step in the right direction by plowing up everything in sight. Since the present consumption of agricultural products is practically nil, then logically the farmers' acreage should be practically nil. If we grow nothing, we shall not be troubled with the problem of consumption, or any other problem for that matter. The Kingfish abjures the manipulators to stand aside and let "the law of the Lord" take his course. Like Joseph of old, he abjures the farmers to turn their surplus over to the government and let that agency store it for them.

Truly if the Lord sends rain in answer to the farmers' prayers, He should send them

checks for their stored-up goods. With the Lord, all things are possible. Did he not raise Huey up from the speakeasies of Shreveport to be a light unto His people?

And the Lord will also look with compassion upon the veterans of the Holy War for Democracy, provided they believe in His personal representative in the United States Senate. The plank for the veteran consists of one short pithy sentence: "A restoration of all rights taken from them by recent laws and further, complete care of any disabled veteran for any ailment, who has no other means of support."

Unfortunately, the Kingfish is rather vague about this taxation business, except that it would start from the top. Comrade X might point out that the imposition of surtaxes in various European countries has done little to relieve the masses, that the capitalists have the money to spend, and will spend it for the maintenance of their governments. Nor would the Comrade know that the Kingfish is being impugned in his own state on this very question of taxation. Certain impious Louisianans have begun to ask embarrassing questions regarding the tax policy which Huey instituted during his administration as Governor. A few of them became so angry that they defeated Huey's candidate for Congress from the district which embraces Baton Rouge, the state capital.

One drives down the paved highways of the state, unaware that the small property owners of the state have been saddled with a debt of eighty million dollars, at least three times the actual cost, to pay for the roads. At each of the numerous river crossings, one must give a ferryman or toll bridge keeper from five to fifty cents before he may transfer to the other side. If one votes the straight Long ticket, he stands a good chance to have his assessments reduced by Long's Tax Commission. But if one exercises an independent judgment about matters political, those same tax commissioners will pauperize him or know the reason why.

A sack of tobacco costs six cents in Louisiana, the extra penny supposedly going to the support of the public schools. The legislature also went through the motion of appropriating additional funds for education. But until recently the schools were in imminent danger of closing because Long's State Treasurer had illegally withheld some three million dollars of their funds. Apropos of Huey's interest in culture, it should be noted that twenty-five million dollars was spent for a new capitol building, with Huey's name smeared all over the front.

"Things cannot continue as they now are." And here are our choices as outlined in the Sacred Circular:

1. A monarchy ruled by financial masters—a modern feudalism.
2. Communism.
3. Sharing the wealth and income of the land among all the people, by limiting the hours of toil and the size of fortunes.

According to Huey, "the Lord prescribed the last form." Eventually we will be given to understand that the Lord revealed it to the Kingfish as the latter lay on his luxurious couch in the Roosevelt Hotel at New Orleans, and also prescribed to him the form of the "Share-Our-Wealth" societies.

The structure of these organizations is, for the present, comparatively simple. A few disgruntled citizens get together, elect a president and secretary, and order some copies of the Circular. (Dispensed, naturally, by the Kingfish, 60 cents per hundred, \$4 per thousand, copies.) Thenceforth, the lid is off to praise the Lord and cuss the capitalists.

Comparisons between Hitler and Long are frequent. Certainly, like Hitler in his early days, Long is developing an immense following. The Nazis of this country may not get to first base because Long, heading a homogeneous fascist movement, having the prestige which is associated with the office of United States Senator, may appropriate all of their thunder. By virtue of his office, Long has unlimited and gratis mailing facilities which the other embryo dictators do not possess.

Has it not been the cherished ideal of every middle-class American to make a million dollars? Imitating Hitler, Long does not attack the idea of production for profit, the cornerstone of the whole bourgeois structure. If the spread of the Long movement were confined only to shopkeepers, it would not represent such a potential menace. But it may sweep some backward proletarian elements along with it.

Nor is it a mere coincidence that the Long movement should have found its principal roots in the South and West. It is precisely in those sections of the country that the social differentiation between the haves and have-nots is least marked. Culturally, the practices of the two classes are startlingly similar. In the small agrarian centers of this section, the officials are still addressed as "Bill" and "Jim," and marriage between the two classes is not uncommon. Where the poor class has not learned to detach itself as a separate grouping, it accepts the hope of salvation within the limits of familiar and accustomed institutions. It views as its hope of liberation, the wish fulfillment of a doomed class, and joins with the shopkeepers in whooping it up for some klaxon-mouthed politician.

The Kingfish refuses to divulge the source of his financial support. On the Circular, he states:

"I will go to people who know me and who personally know of the work I have done, for the money that it will take for the expenses I will have to bear. In this work, because if any such things as dues were collected from members for such expenses, the thieves of Wall Street and their newspapers and radio liars would immediately say that I had a scheme to get money."

Is this not reminiscent of Hitler who received subsidies from the very industrialists whom he assailed on the rostrum?

# Light

BEN FIELD

THE SPRING after the war when Flint Sherman left the farm the other Shermans began their fight to get light up on the hill. The company was installing electricity in the village. One of the company men guessed it would cost about \$800 to put lights into the house and barn. Ida wrote to Flint that milk, potatoes, and apples were still high, but didn't he think \$800 was a heap of money. Flint wrote back yes. What were the other farmers like Tom Lucy and Steve Titus, that old shagbark hickory, doing about it?

But what the other farmers were doing didn't cut any ice with Ike. He would wait and then the cost would go down. It always did.

That winter most of the cows were calving. Ida had to spend a couple of nights pulling calves out with young Jesse and Ike. Little Essie was left watching the baby. Somehow or other she knocked over the kerosene lamp. Both children were burned to sticks of ash.

The insurance company found all sorts of excuses to give them only one-third of the insurance. This clause said this, the other clause said that. Steve Titus came down to see if he could help. "Claws," he cried and stalked from the toolshed where the Shermans were living hawking his hate.

The bank wouldn't lend Ike any money. Instead of building a new house, he had the old one patched up. After wrestling for a month of Sundays, he went down to the town to find out about the lights again. He talked to Pie Johnson, rich farmer, electrical contractor, and chief politician of the county. Johnson was called Pie by some farmers because he had his finger in every pie, by others because he had a perpetual smile as if some one were cutting pie for him. He told Ike the company couldn't afford to run wires up to Gun Hill without a deposit of \$1,000.

Ike told Johnson to string himself up on a light pole. But it was hard facing Ida. She woke up nights moaning, brooding over young Jesse. She padded from room to room to room to see that no lamps were burning. She could not eat, saying everything tasted of kerosene. And so Ike stormed to the company town office, his great fist working over the hogshead of his belly.

The little manager said they couldn't come down a cent because of the terrible lot of poles that would have to be run along the poor road and the risks the company would be taking. Why in hell didn't they make better roads for the poor farmers? Ike shook the manager till he must have had the jacks and then threw him over the desk. The two wasp-waisted stenographers were pinned to their seats, their faces pulsing in fright. Ike

broke out of the office without being arrested.

Ike decided to get himself a generator and make his own electricity. But he couldn't get a permit. The company had all the local politicians feeding off it. One night Ike stormed down Gun Hill with his axe on his shoulder. When the village woke up next morning a dozen poles were smashed down across the pike. No one could nail it on Ike. The company put up new light poles and still had Ike where the hair was short.

Ida had written Flint about the fire. No answer. She wrote again. A telegram from Flint working on a steam shovel in the mountains. He sent money. Let her keep her tail up. Let Ike stop being one goddammed fool, but get together with the neighbors to fight the company.

Ike was sure if the company could be handled, he could do it alone. A tremendous man with muscles on his neck like the bulging bags of a boar hog, he had no use for the farmers round about him. Some of them were tenants who couldn't do the work with both hands he could do with one thumb. All they could think about was cars and burning up the road. As for Steve Titus, he was an Irishman. To Ike who hadn't been away from the farm more than a day since he had been dropped, there was no difference between an Irishman and a nigger. Only a nigger was an Irishman turned inside out.

"The same old Flint," he snorted. "The same fly-by-night. Everything's a gang. The farmers got to gang together like he done with Steve and the rest gambling. The farmers got to get together like he and the others when they went to town to get their horns scraped."

There was no way out for Ida but to swallow and be patient. She could wait, but let Jesse get married and there would be lights blooming in his bedroom.

Jesse was a quiet rawhide whip of a boy. He was built like Flint, the farmers said, but none of his crack in him. Maybe it was because he was burned badly trying to climb up the porch to get at Essie and the baby. When he was 17 he started visiting the town Saturday nights. And then one Sunday he showed up with a husky girl who worked in the woolen mill. Toss was an orphan, lively, a hard worker who was eager to help with milking and housecleaning and stuck to her man like a sweat bee. Only Jesse had promised to rig up the house with lights, put in a radio, and make the farm built on top of Gun Hill a livable place.

It was just at this time that the depression swept over the country like a line storm. Milk dropped like lead, you couldn't even get 10 cents a bag for cider apples, feed and taxes shot up like a kite. Ike wouldn't hear of

spending an extra cent or fiddling around with damned fool lights even if the company no longer asked for the \$1,000 deposit. He went down to the postoffice to get his paper and the potato report. The farmers gathered in the village with eyes bloodshot as if from all the dust kicked into them. Steve said, "We got to punch one of them cannon metal rings through Wall Street." But that's as far as anything went. Ike got home to say the farmers were ganging and blowing.

Toss worked in the mill again. She saved every cent for the lights. Ike cursed the Irishers and the chickenhaw niggers who were on town relief and grieved over his potatoes. Potatoes had dropped. More important, they weren't growing. Some farmers said the ensilage manure was too strong, others said liming was no good. Anyway, here was another crop going to the dogs. You did everything you could. Gave up the hired man, worked yourself until your heart ached, and it did no good.

Now Ida did not only housework, but work in the field. She hoed, hilled, and sprayed the potatoes. She carted them into the dark cellar. A lamp hung in the corner swaying the shadows. The steps creaked, the potatoes rumbled and smoked. She wiped potato after potato studying the scabs. She wondered how many seconds they would have. And going down the steps heavily, she gulped. She fell headlong. It was a miracle she hadn't broken her neck in the dark. One leg from thigh down was hard and black as a whetstone. She was cooped in bed all winter.

Toss dropped her job. They were firing girls in the mill, and anyway they had her on the firing list. She had managed to save \$150. Because of the accident, Ike gave in about the lights.

It was Toss called up Johnson. Pie drove around in his swell car run by the three-hipped chauffeur. The farmers called his gun the third hip. Pie said, "So ye've changed your mind, hey Ike?"

Ike had his thumbs roped in his belt. He rumbled, "You got us licked and bulled this time."

Johnson went over the house and barn looking the floors over as if he had dropped a cent. He said if Ike would get a milking machine, an icebox, etc., he would cut down his charge.

Ike squinted at him, taking a bead. "No you don't blast it. Light's all we want. We got power enough here in our ass and muscle."

Johnson showed up again next day with his chief electrician and a high muckymuck from the company. He brought a lot of bulbs and shades to dazzle the women. He talked washing machine, icebox, electric iron. He showed

how he would take the old Syracuse lamp with the beaded skirt and string a wire through it to the best room. He would give it to Mrs. Sherman as a present, free gratis. Now an icebox is like a servant girl, the greatest help, cheap, and no back talk.

Ida held on to the door. She whispered to herself, "No more worrying about chimneys cracking and cleaning and straining yourself working your snoot like a mole in the dark. It—it ain't a sin to bring up children and no acting all the time like you was sewed up." She looked at Toss eagerly.

But the girl wasn't swept off her feet by Johnson's shades. "Some of these look like cowbells. We got enough of the farm tracked into the house as it is."

Ike had been reading the contract very slowly. He pushed away again and again Johnson's big-barreled fountain pen. He slammed the paper down. "Like hell I will."

The high muckymuck and Johnson followed him out into the yard. They tramped from one end of the farm to the other end and to the road. Johnson kept smiling and stroking air. "Lookee, Ike, we give you all the outlets and plugs for less than anywhere else. We give you a 60-watt bulb up in your silo so you'll be able to see a horse ant with half an eye. We put a light inside the backhouse so you see what you're doing. But we got to set 30 poles. We got to have a gang of men. We got to have trucks. We'll do it for \$25 a pole."

Ike brandished his head.

"We'll make it 20. I'll advance ye the money for the company and take a note."

Jesse kicked up a stone and studied the sowbugs. "We'll put them up oursels."

The company men looked at each other. Johnson's smile died for a moment. They changed the company contract. Johnson's contract read: \$375 was to be paid the day all the work was finished, and \$200 a month after the lights were in.

The women's faces glowed as if the lights were budding from each ceiling already. Ida hurried off a long letter to Flint.

Ike and Jesse spanned the fields discussing where to set the poles. Cedar wouldn't last more than 3 foggy nights. Mulberry was good but like a bone, you had to handle it green. Locusts—Christ, there were hundreds of them in the woodlot. They'd last any man's life. The longer they stay in water and snow the strangier and harder they get.

They went to it with crosscuts and axe. Jesse worked like an iron pike without a word. The old man would spit on his pocket wedge and glory in every crashing locust. "We'll show them electricians. We'll finish up before them jenny cats fussing round ratholes."

As they were logging up the last of the locusts, Johnson belched in with his big car. He kicked a log. "Fine fence posts."

Ike butted his head up.

"The devil, Ike, don't you know the linesmen won't dig an inch in these locuses? Didn't



the company fellow tell ye they want chestnuts?"

They stormed into the house. Pie bawled out the company manager over the phone. The company manager in turn bawled him out. They passed the buck. Toss tore the phone from Pie's hands. What kind of a game was it they were playing? Johnson tried to shush her, saying he would let them have chestnuts dirt cheap if—. Here Ike spat at his fist and bellowed at Pie to get the hell out. Ike rushed into the yard and roared the electricians out of the silo where they were finishing up. The transmitter was no bigger than a watch charm anyway. They had this chestnut thing all foxed up from the beginning.

In his rage no one dared say anything to him. Ida limped around, gutted. But Toss spoke up to Jesse. Ike was as much to blame as Johnson. Jesse hadn't the spunk of a deer-fly. If he wouldn't speak up for himself and the old man was still bullish, let them both leave. Men were needed in the sawmill and in the brick kiln.

Jesse went to the toolshed, cracked his knuckles, and faced his father.

Ike said, "Not on your life, boy."

"What's the use of being sot like a plug mule."

"Every tener we'll have to be jackassing up poles for those skinniers. We been slaves to milk company, feed guys. Now you want the light company to ride us."

"Chestnut's so hellishly soft the worms don't seem to have nothing to eat. They leave it alone. They'll eat hard wood, say hickory or oak like cheese. The blight ain't killed off all our chestnut. Steve ought to have some. If we got to use chestnut, we got to."

"There ain't no more chestnut in the country. You want some, get a bushel of horse-chestnuts and plant them. Your kid's be able to chop down the trees."

"Kids! When grownups can't bear this hole the way you're running it."

Ike's huge face reddened as if it were being stoked. "That woman of yours, that young snipe won't—."

Jesse flung his fist under the huge nose.

"Shut up, shut up, blast you. You want more kids to be burned out here. You got no mortgage on me, goddamn you to hell."

The old man roared, the cobble of his fist pounding air. He gasped. He sank back against the barn wall. A black spot stung him over the eye like a black widow spider. His left leg seemed to end suddenly in a ball of lead. He hung on to the pasture barway for an hour. Then dragged himself to the woods.

Jesse's face twitched as he watched from the kitchen. Toss egged him on and his mother whispered he go immediately to Steve. They knew what Ike would say. That six-incher always poking into other people's business, always shooting his mouth off. Ike was mostly set against Steve because Steve had girdled the birches along the line fence whose roots spread out into Steve's fields and stopped his plowing. Steve had asked Ike to get together about it time and again.

"Sure, Jesse old boy, help yourself. My place is full of rocks and trees. I'll borrow your cornplanter or make up for it one way or t'other."

Again the men went into the woods. Not a word from Ike about his leg. They logged through snowdrifts, woods, fence gaps. They stumbled under a frozen butt of a moon to chores and then to fall asleep over warmed-over spuds and coffee. And when the thaw came, they had to fight rain, ploy and reset potatoes that the worms had gotten, worry about apples nipped by the cold, and then turn to haying. It wasn't until the dog days in August they could get to the poles again.

The light company used derricks attached to trucks to set the poles. The Shermans had to use handpikes and the steady old mare with pulleys and chain to raise the 30 foot poles, and have them slip into the holes 6 feet deep the two men and Toss had dug in the ravine, swamp, and pasture. The pasture was alive with ground bees and yellow jackets. That didn't stop them. They stuck handpikes into the chestnut pole. The old mare obeyed Toss' cluck like a chick. Toss grabbed a pike. The mare reared suddenly and bolted. A blast of yellowjacks. The chestnut soared and swung round. Jesse slipped. Ike sank to his knees. His pike bent like the egg needle of an ichneumon fly. The pole crashed.

His eyes goggled. They rolled the log off. They laid him across the mare. Toss held his boots, Jesse his head.

Ida was near the cookstove. She mouthed her hands. Toss had to hold her. Jesse dragged the body like a great dripping sack upstairs.

The doctor said the stroke inside him was worse than the crash. He was numb in the lower quarters like frost had set in. The doctor set leeches on his swollen eyes. He'd make them drop off by sprinkling salt on their heads. The bleeding helped.

Hearing about the accident, Pie Johnson drove up with ice cream. They wouldn't let him in the sickroom. Johnson said: "Now







there's Ike yelling upstairs he won't pay me a brass plug long's he lives. I can get the deputy down and sell the whole herd for the money he owes me. It ain't my funeral things are tight all over the country. I sunk money into this. I'm going to take it out. I don't have to wait until lights is in to ask for all. If Ike's so Christ unreasonable, he'll lose his last shirt."

Toss drew Ida into the next room. Ida shook her head vigorously. But the girl brought out a roll of bills wound up in a sock. She faltered and thrust \$75 into Johnson's hands. Pie saluted with two fingers and was gone. Jesse said bitterly, "Bet you he's even whistling through his tail at us now."

Couple of weeks later Ike dragged himself out of bed. He got hold of a rushbottomed chair and nailed it down to the stoneboat. He hitched the mare and drove around. He would show Johnson he could still fight him. The poles lay in the field. And so another dark winter faced them.

They were like four cats in a bag beaten with a stick. Endless quarrels. Milk dropped another cent. Toss got caught. She had sworn she would be childless till things were fixed

on the farm. While she was doing a man's work in the barn and fields, she surely had to be careful. She used to stride herself into the village drugstore, shocking the clerk. When the last of her money was gone, her need seemed to grow greater. Jumping from the haymow and hot mustard couldn't knock the seed out of her. Soon as the baby was born, she would leave the farm and be darned glad of it.

Ida whipped letters halfway across the continent. She went to Steve. Steve rubbed his chin and said he didn't know Flint's whereabouts. And then a letter postmarked State Penal Farm. On top it read, "Candy, Nuts, & Fruit Not Receivable . . . Register 76618 . . . Dear Ida, I am writing a few lines to let you know I am OK. This is the first letter they's allowed me to write since I've been here.

"I suppose you've been wondering about me. I hope everything is OK. We've just had another sermon by the chaplain, something about the Black Camel kneeling unbidden at every gate. I am sick to death of such nonsense. Have you been reading in the papers about the church backing the banks against the Iowa

farmers. The church and the militia hands in hands. Because they had the spunk to fight for their homes, the militia locked the farmers in a goatshed. Here one rainy Sunday the ministers preached sermons to the cold and wet farmers on sowing wild oats.

"I hear Ike's the same old stubborn cuss skinning back end up the old tree. How's Jesse and his woman?"

"Well, Ida there isn't much to say and the pencil I am writing with is too short for comfort so I'll close.

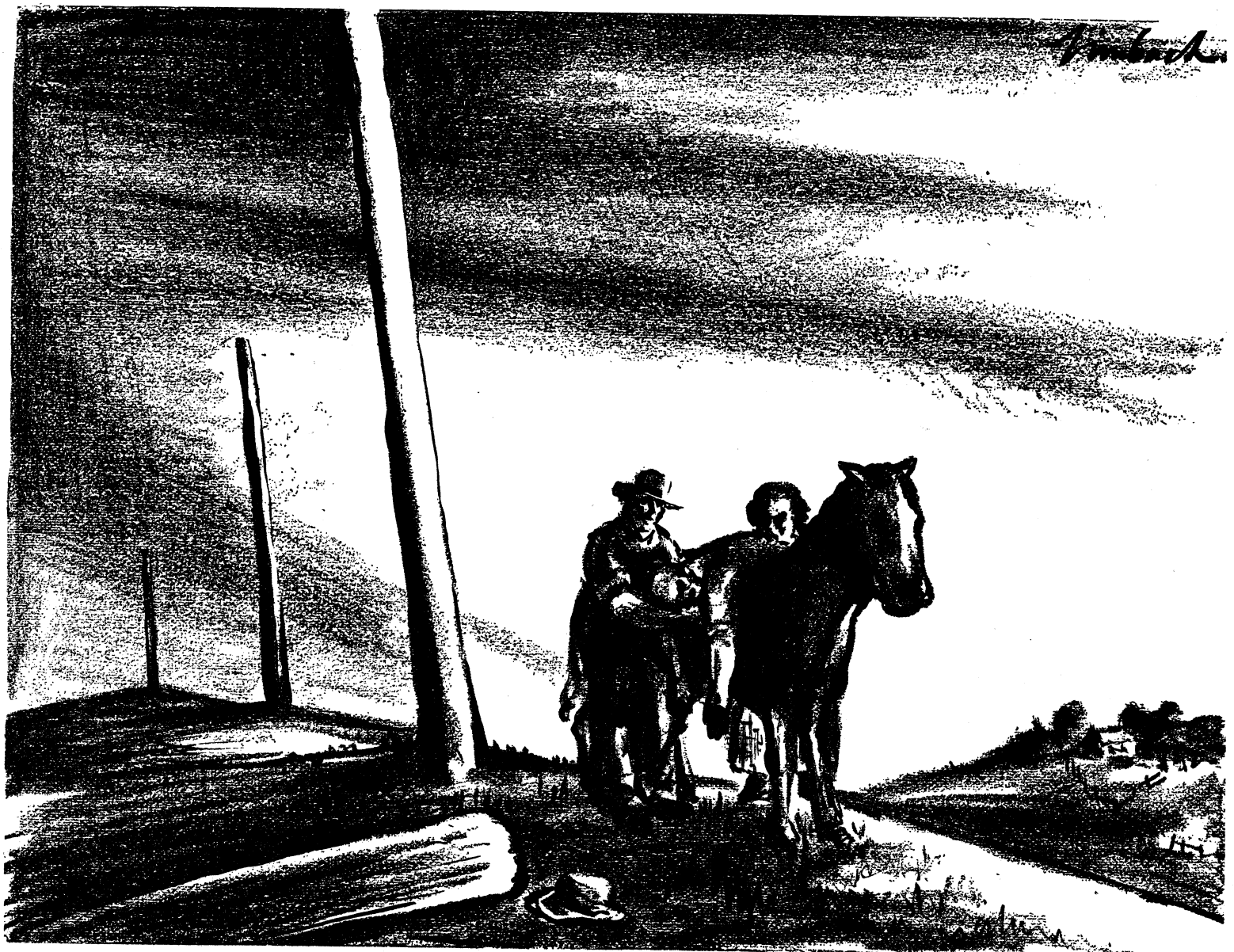
With love,

Flint.

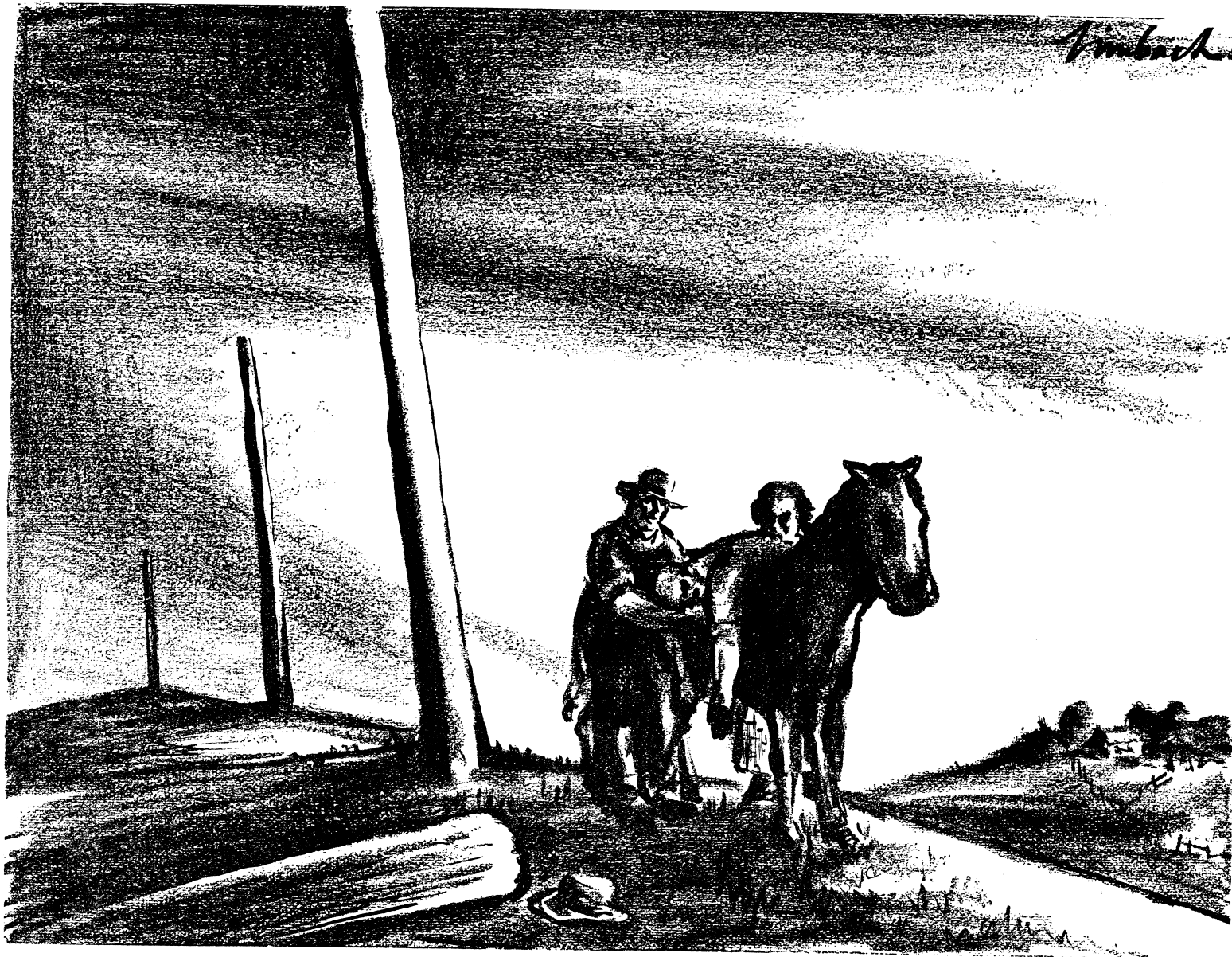
P. S. I am reading a book and am eager to get back to it. Goodby."

Ike tore the letter from Ida's trembling hand. He read again and again and muttered heavily nothing in particular.

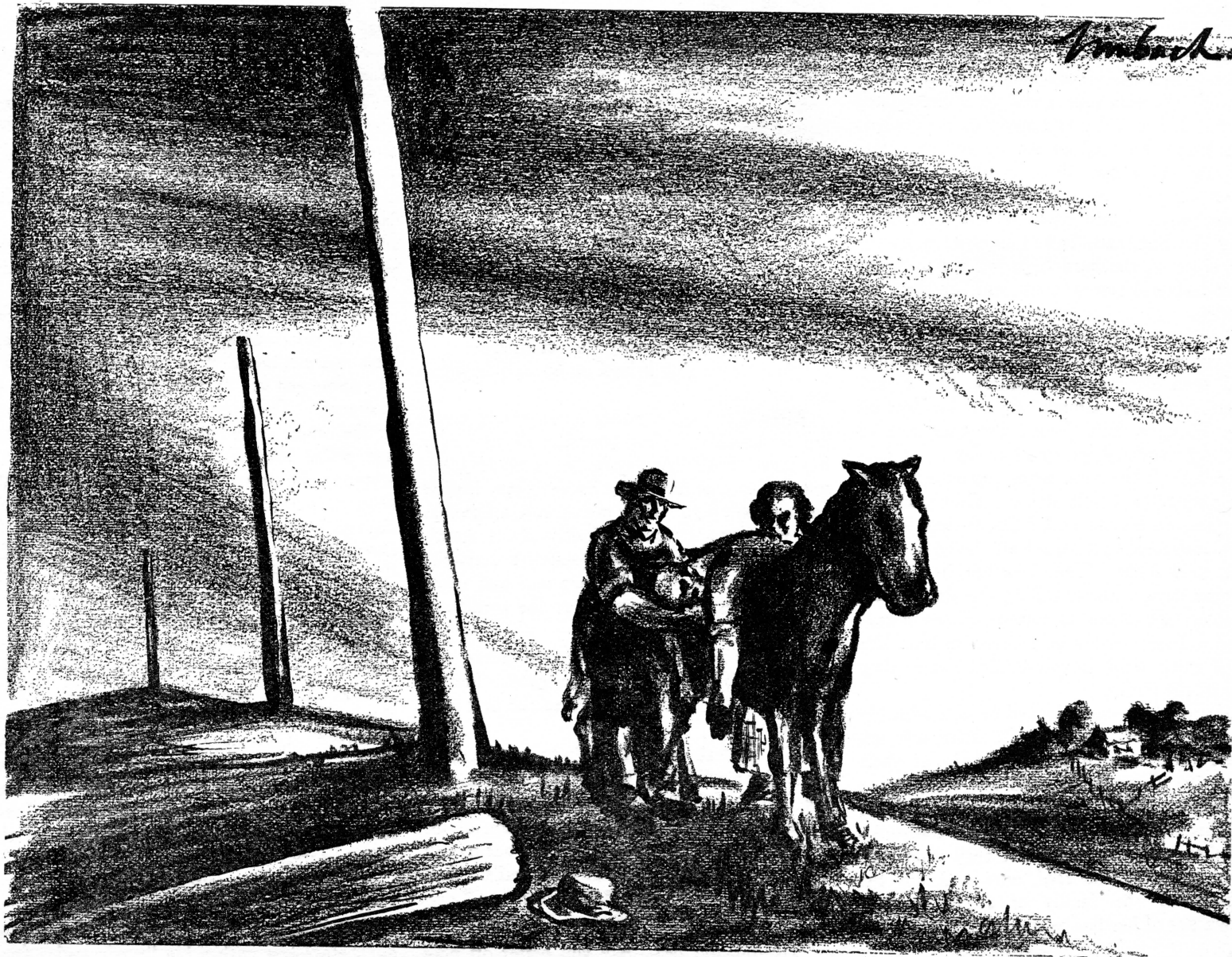
It was late spring. Ike was still hobbling around with a stick. They hired a man. He was a hollow-chested bearded hobo who had knocked at the door for a handout one wash day. He had coughed behind his gaunt hand, "I'll work for grub and a couple of cents if



*Frank*



Vincent





the Eagle ain't taken it out of you yet."

The man was a hard worker, lean as a pickaxe handle, but with the iron loose in him when he talked. He pointed through the kitchen once at the line fences barbed wire, stones, Titus place, and the other farms. "Like a war with dugouts, wire, and the whole earth torn up. Farmer against farmer. But that Johnson fellow you always bat about, he gets away with it."

Ike belched angrily, "You're crazy."

But the rest of the family took to him, Jesse especially. They seemed to have some secret between them, went out nights together to Steve Titus. The end of the second week the hired man came down shaved. He grabbed Ida and began hugging and kissing her while Jesse slapped his knees. It was Flint.

That was the first real Sunday to her, the first, Ida cried hysterically, since he had left.

Oh, he hadn't hidden his identity as a joke but to see from the outside what was really going on in this part of the country. He held her hand, studying the big earthy woman worked to the bone so that she looked like a canner cow. "I should a married you the way I could and stayed on the farm. Ike—hell, it ain't altogether his fault. The tree's the system, and he's only the pignut that got you in the belly. I'm digging in her now for to stay. The farm's half mine, Ike."

Ike muttered, "Ain't never said it wasn't."

Soon the whole village knew Flint was back. Though Ike was sour about it, Flint invited Steve and Tom Lucy and others of the farmers with whom he used to rip up sod and play ball and also the little schoolgirls whose dresses he used to pick up, long grown to womanhood. These get-togethers were something the Shermans hadn't enjoyed since the war, since all the hard luck and the fight for lights had embittered them and set them all on edge.

Flint wanted to listen more than talk. But the farmers broke piece after piece out of him. He'd been all over the country, like a jack under everything. Couple of years ago lost his job. Hungry, he'd joined up with one of those city workers' groups that fights for jobs and relief. They even went out once to help some farmers in a milk strike. They won too. That scar on his old neck? Oh, he was in jail which they made into a school, jailed because of the milk strike. They kept him in a cooler for nine days without taking the slop bucket out once. Food was so rotten he grew a carbuncle. It got so big he'd begun to look like one of them freak double-headed horses they show in the circus.

Some of the women looked at him with big eyes. He smiled. In that milk strike, a bunch of the farm women made a chain of their bodies, lay down in the road and stopped the scab trucks. They fought the police and put on lights when the gas and electric companies shut them off. In one street they even connected up with the feed wire and did the washing for the family of a poor widow thrown out of her flat because she couldn't pay rent.



Some of the farmers looked big-eyed too as if behind Flint lay a new force, searching behind his shadow and his hand for the tremendous body slowly stirring the country.

"And again this brings us up to the Johnson question."

After every get-together or crossroad meeting or bunching in the postoffice or chat over the fence, Flint brought in the name of Johnson. This was the policy Steve, Tom, and he had agreed upon. They even wrote a letter to the Farmers National Weekly about conditions of the farmers and Johnson's activities and sold dozens of copies that way and made a number of subscribers. But Ike could not be moved.

"What's the difference between Steve and Johnson. They both ain't no good. Steve's oldest girl, she peddles herself to the first man on the road."

Flint said slowly, "I don't know anything about Jennie Titus. Maybe she does, maybe she don't. That's her look out. But what Johnson does hurts every mother's son of us. He and his gang got their fingers in our mouth and back like we're their bowling balls. And he's one of your Roosevelt drummers too."

"Roosevelt saved us from a revolution."

"He did, did he? Are you better off now

than you were two years ago?"

"No."

"Jesse tells me your apple dealer wrote you your apples went down the river with the apples from Roosevelt's farm."

"Ya, but I didn't get anymore for them. I got 24 cents a bushel less."

"There you are."

"Roosevelt's all right, it's his advisers. Wallace giving in to them wheat farmers. It's the wheel that squeaks most gets the grease and—"

A car banged into the yard. Out jumped a deputy. Before he could take a dozen steps, Toss was out. "Ike Sherman went to Florida on his vacation." She picked up the old axe still covered with blood from the chicken they had killed Sunday. "Now git off the place and git quick."

Flint slipped out the back way and headed for Steve's where they were going to hold a meeting that night. Steve roared when he heard how Toss had sailed into the big deputy man who almost dropped his stickpin in fright.

About a dozen men were present. Only three were farm owners, the rest tenants, a hired man from Johnson's farm, backyard or Sunday farmers, Lucy who couldn't get back his job of switchman after being sold out and was now working on the road. When Flint saw Al, the hired man, he said to Steve, "Good work, old fellow."

They crowded into Steve's kitchen against the walls where the lathes showed and the rain drove in. One of the Sunday farmers was saying how down in the brick works the conveyor had ripped off Russ Lingle's two fingers day before yesterday. Russ Lingle Sunday-farms on five acres. Zachary Smith, one of the farmers, grunted. Russ did some work for Johnson and the other mugwumps by coralling votes in the kiln for the Roosevelt election. He was promised a job as watcher at registration and elections. You get about \$10 a day. He never got it. Instead they treated him to a dinner. There were thirteen seats. None of the others would take seat thirteen. They had coffee black as a wedge, and the Puckit woman, the town clerk, all she could talk about was empty barns. She was renting them out to bootleggers. Russ was hot as a 6-shooter at them. Tom Lucy pared his nails. They been making rings around more than Russ. The day after the road work was cut down to 40 cents an hour a whole bunch of the men were trucked over to Hen Finger's place to dig a ditch for him because he's school trustee. If you say a word, you're fired. Tom shook his head and winked at Al, "Get a piece recently?" Old Al with the swollen twisted fingers, working only for board, out on probation from the penitentiary with five other men, all placed on Johnson's farm where Johnson keeps as housekeepers two girls from the reformatory.

Al picked an oat mite from his shaggy arms. "Ain't got time for it. I been keeping an eye on Johnson like Steve told me. He come in day before last with a big 'lectric cooler from

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twenty-five miles down the line. This feller, a Jew chicken farmer, keeps a stand. He paid up only one installment. He took it off'n him."

"Oi, oi," said one of the Sunday farmers.

Flint shifted his chair. "Listen, boys, glad you brought up this Jew farmer. There's Wash, who's living with that other bunch of Negroes near the viaduct on the Puckit pasture. Says he'd like to be in on this, says he can get some of the others in with us."

"They ain't farmers," said the Sunday farmer.

Zachary Smith said, "Wash cut grass regularly for the railroad on the embankments last twenty years. He's a good nigger. I don't care for the rest."

A couple of the others nodded.

Zach said, "Maybe they got good principles. But hell, this is the way I feel: I wouldn't sleep in bed with a nigger."

Steve said, "No one says you got to sleep with a nigger woman. But I'm dodarned sure you get home and find one in bed you wouldn't throw her out."

They laughed.

Zach grinned, "Mebbe you're right."

Flint said, "Boys, we're all on the level here, square shooters. We can use them, they can use us. What about it?"

They shuffled their feet. "OK."

"Now let's get between the handles." He coughed. The large adam's apple in the rosy neck moved quickly. "We been hawing and geeing around, hogging the bit. We know what we all want. We can get all that by starting to work on Johnson and the light company. A number of you fellows were members of the Dairymen's League, the D.L., devil for short. It scabbed during the last strike. Johnson's milk went through with that three-hipped chauffeur on the truck with a rifle. Some of you farmers lost your market, some we know had their power shut off so that the milk turned sour, slop for the pigs. That was all accidental on purpose. The issue ain't saving Ike, but ourselves. The deputy was over this afternoon. Ike got everything bawled up because he wouldn't call on you. We can't get together on other issues now. We can on Johnson. That's the one. We work out from that."

"Let's go." Zach shoved closer.

A tenant farmer with a mole like mud splashed up by a wagon wheel crouched over his hard hands.

Ham-fisted Tom Lucy began reading from the "map" the agenda: 1, Delegation to the Company; 2, Flint and a few more to sound out Johnson; 3, If that doesn't get them anywhere, as many farmers as possible to surround Johnson's farm maybe with "swatters" (signs); 4, Massing of farmers on the Sherman place to stop the deputies.

The meeting broke up in time for the morning's milking. The same day Tom, Steve, Flint, Jesse, and a couple of the Sunday farmers went down to town. The little manager

was there looking as if he had the pip, a horse hair screwed down his throat would bring up worms. He listened nervously while Tom hammered home the points. How is it the company charges 2 cents a hundred here in the hills while in the next county under a different name it charges only 1½ cents a hundred? Why this minimum of \$8 a month? That punishes the small Sunday farmer. They're sick and tired of the company letting Johnson use it as a skirt to gyp the farmers. And why in hell wasn't the company rigging the feed wires up for the Shermans? If farmers been striking about milk, what's going to stop them striking about lights?

The manager's little white hands made paties. "But the poles aren't up yet."

Flint said, "We'll put them up. We got a copy of a letter here to every paper in the county. We got enough here to burn up the township at the next meeting. We're going to get immediate action from you."

The farmers trooped out. Jesse said, "Pa had to throw him to give him the jacks."

"That's another difference," said Steve.

They drove back to the farm, picking up Wash on the way. In a couple of hours they had the rest of the poles in. Flint asked Wash to stay over for supper. He wanted to talk to him.

Ike almost burst.

Flint said, "Here's a man helping you, and just because he's black you won't grub with him. Think because you were born ten minutes before I was that give you time to become a hardboiled egg and terrify everybody."

Ike remained out on the kitchen porch, mouth open as if a wedge had been knocked in, not a sound out of him.

Ida was a little slow, but Toss made Wash feel at home. Flint reached over and patted her on the raised belly.

There was a phone call from the company

that night. Early next morning the linesmen arrived. The cables were strung up from the road like catgut. But there was still no light. The fellow bossing the crew said there was trouble brewing. He saw Johnson slam into the office.

Flint decided to beard Johnson immediately. Ida was a little shaky. She felt they would never get the lights now. She said Ike should go too. He'd handled Johnson all alone once. And then you couldn't leave him outside this altogether.

From Al they found out the afternoon Johnson would be in. They drove down in the old truck. Jesse knocked at the door of the spacious white house with the creamy white pillars. A girl opened the door a little. Flint shoved his foot in quickly and announced himself. Johnson came down the stairs with a big meatpie smile. "Y'ought to be ashamed of yourself, Flint. Home so long and ain't been in to see an old friend."

Flint ignored his hand, said, "Nice place you got here."

The old smile again washed Johnson's face. "It's better than boarding in a state hotel like I hear you done. They say you cut the country four ways."

"The farmers sent me out to learn a thing or two. They sent me out to learn how to stop fellows like you from deviling us. Ike—"

Johnson said, "The only way Ike can talk to me about putting in light is \$500. Money talks. I been carrying Ike long enough."

Ike heaved up from the chair, his stick going.

Flint said, "I'll take care of this, Ike. You mean the people round here have been carrying you long enough. Hell, down in Connecticut the power company'll put in lights if you buy \$500 worth of equipment. Even that is too much for us up on Gun Hill. You're a shameless crook."





Timbach



Johnson held up his arm, smiling. "You're a real dust devil. A fellow like you oughtn't be mixing up with all that trash like Steve Titus who ain't got a pot to sit on. You and Ike once had about the best farm up yonder. Keep away from this organizing business. Now the town needs a foreman on the road and—."

Flint got up. "Do you understand English?" Johnson smiled.

"You can go plumb to hell."

Sure enough when they got to the farm, there was the deputy waiting for them. Flint let Ike do the work. Ike took the notice, tore it into a hundred pieces without reading it, and scattered it on the manure pile.

Some of the farmers shook their heads. They didn't see how you could handle that fellow Johnson. He was a bastard, sure, but he hadn't been licked yet. Admiration was evident in their cussing.

That didn't discourage Flint and Steve. They emphasized over and over the important point they hadn't tried pressure of a whole bunch of farmers on Johnson yet. Mass pressure had worked on the company. Jesse got up at a meeting to give the whole story of the Sherman fight—the death of the two children, the chestnut business, Ida's fall, the pole crash—all this to fatten the pockets of Johnson and his gang. And now he was talking of attaching the herd. If he gets away with it, other creditors will try the pickings. After Jesse sat down, they had a surprise—the little Jew chicken-farmer who came from twenty-five miles down the valley, the one whose icebox had been taken away. He was a small rooty man with a big nose that reared back from a dirty moustache. The farmers smiled but not for long. He was intense and had the gift of gab. "Found out he's one of our gang," Flint whispered to Tom Lucy. And little Bergdorf told how the loss of the icebox meant shutting up his small stand where he sold broilers and eggs. It meant ripping the bread and butter out of his belly when it was half down. He was going to stay a couple of days with the Shermans to go down to Johnson. He was ready any minute, even now if they were. If they struck while the iron was hot, they could bend Johnson to their shape and use this fight to build a real organization.

As a result of the Bergdorf meeting, thirty-five farmers, tenants, Wash, his boy, and a cousin lined up to visit Johnson. Toss and Jennie Titus went along too. They drove up to Johnson's store. He was out. They drove down to the farm. The powdered little split-tail snickered Johnson was out, gone to the big city. They drove back a couple of miles in their old cars and trucks beating like battered drums. They stopped at a gas station where there was a phone. Jennie called up to speak to Al. Said she was a niece who hadn't seen Uncle Albert in a long time. Al answered Johnson was hiding around the farm.

They held another meeting right there at the gas station. They decided to catch Johnson in the pincers. One half would follow the road to the bend and wait for Flint's sig-

nal. The rest would retrace their steps and swing down to the northside of the place.

Flint walked down the road alone. He stopped at the gate and waited. In about a half hour Johnson appeared with the chauffeur. He saw Flint and saluted with two fingers. Right behind Johnson ran Al keeping his eye on the chauffeur. Flint stuck his fingers into his mouth and whistled.

Before Johnson could turn back, the battered cars from both sides were down upon him. Bergdorf was the first to hop off. He ran, his whole little body bunched behind his head. The chauffeur flung his hand down. Al tripped him. A bunch of the younger farmers piled upon him. Bergdorf grabbed hold of Johnson.

Flint grinned. "Well, Pie, you didn't dream that we could do it. We're doing things in a business-like way round here from now on. You guys have always been acting like a gang to get us. We been fighting you, only too few of us, single-handed. The farmers round here like Steve that ain't got a pot to sit on, Zach, Russ, and even bull-headed Ike have got your number. We ain't going to be no more greenbacks for you, and yellowbellies."

Johnson shook himself off from Bergdorf. The old smile flowed back. "Regular dust devil," he said through his teeth.

"You got the wrong end of the horn. It ain't me. It's all of us. We've come to see you take care of this."

"I'll take care of you," said Johnson shoving out his jaw.

Flint said amiably, "Sure, you'll take care of us."

The chauffeur swung out quickly with his fist. The farmers ripped his shirt off and trussed him up. One of them jumped on his back and ground his face in a cow cake.

Flint took out his watch. "Johnson, we're just leaving our visiting cards this time. This watch is going, so are we. But we give you until Saturday evening, seven o'clock on the dot, to do your job. If you don't, we'll come back with two hundred farmers."

They trooped back to their cars. They left Johnson standing in the road a sneer spread over his face. Al bent over the manured chauffeur.

That night the whole township knew what had happened. Everybody was rooting for the farmers. But Johnson might curl up like a rattler only to strike back better.

Saturday afternoon there were more men on the farm than there had probably ever been all together before during a life time. The phone kept ringing. Some of the men from the brick works, headed by Russ Smith, stopped off for a couple of minutes with the company truck. Al had been arrested and sent back to the penitentiary. The split-tail charged he had tried to rape her.

Flint grew white. Little Bergie humped up in pain. Zach said slowly, "That was a mistake. Plain as daylight Al was working with us. We should a taken him back with us."

Steve muttered, "He was on probation."

Flint said, "We'll get him out. One thing at a time."

Russ with his bandaged hand cried, "Where in hell did you hide the gun you took off'n that chauffeur?"

Flint patted him on the shoulder. "We planted it in a manure pile where more will grow."

The men hung around the woodpile as the sun plowed west. Some of the Sunday farmers read the Weekly. Ike kept watching some sexton beetles mewing under an old chicken head. Jesse cracked his fingers, his cheekbones showing out like knuckles from his twitching face. Tom Lucy took out his knife and pared his spade-shaped thumbnail. Toss was moving from the yard back and forth into the house. Ida kept trying the lights tirelessly.

By milking time, some of the men had chopped wood, a couple had gone out to mend a fence with Jesse. Had to be doing something. Flint and Wash were talking about the Negroes who rented shacks on the Puckit pasture. Why shouldn't they organize for lower rents? Every once in a while Flint took out his watch. "Still going, fellows."

Little Bergie was talking about the time when they'd have cheaper light like in Russia where the farmers and workers cluck and hold the lines. Zach had a smile on his broad burned face but listened. The time would come when they'd have cheaper lights from ocean tides, from machines worked by sun. In this country where they plow under cotton and wheat, the boss class also destroys inventions and machines as soon as they cannot make big profits on them. They fool us with talk of surplus. They stand us on our heads so the little money we got should fall from our pockets. In Russia the farmer stands on his feet, the earth is his. Now in what Holy Book, what in nature says there should be strangling companies and Johnsons handing it out in a teaspoon like a favor after you pay them in sweat and blood? Electricity is like air and sunlight, like air and sunlight it should be free.

Tossie burst into the yard. The men leaped to their feet. Her belly shook as if the child had given her a last powerful kick.

The men broke through the door. Jesse ran through the rooms flooding the whole house with light. Ike held on to a chair, bowed over his fists. Ida was in the living room clutching buttons, snapping the lights. She dropped on the sofa, the tears riding her wrinkled face. "Oh Essie, oh baby, baby."

Flint tightened his belt. His voice broke a little, he laughed. "It's our first shot only."

Ida wiped her tears. Even Ike, still caught like a bull in the fence, flung up his head. And here and there, face after face was flooded with the realization that this was indeed only the beginning and the long struggle still lay before them.

Flint looked at the lights. "The dynamo and switches is still in their hands."

# "Greater Britain"

HAROLD WARD

WE BELIEVE in the authoritarian State. . . . We claim that the individual would enjoy greater private liberty than now, since he would attain economic security. . . . The average man does not care to talk but to enjoy economic prosperity.

—SIR OSWALD MOSLEY.

SO screams, in the King's English, that bloated and obscene vulture, Fascism. Sir Oswald who mistook Olympia for Olympus and himself for Jove, thoroughly understands the First Commandment of the Demagogue: If the Facts are against you, call them Seditious. And the Golden Rule of all little Caesars: What you can't give, promise; strike a heroic pose—and watch your body-guard.

So now, with his Blackshirts—and Blackskirts — properly glorified by their first "putsch;" with his Fascist Union of British Workers, his Defence Force (40 trained pilots by the end of summer in Gloucestershire alone), Youth Organization and Propaganda Departments operating overtime behind the convenient smoke-screen of "official" indignation—now we might take a look at Sir Oswald's "Greater Britain." John Strachey has shown us how Mosley's Fascists are juggling for position on the international chess-board; in the July Labour Monthly the brilliant R. Palme Dutt analyzes, with a courage and realism worthy of Lenin ("revolutionary tactics cannot be built up on revolutionary moods alone") the underlying significance of Olympia and the imperative need of a mass "Anti-Fascist Front" in England. But what are some of the "facts" which the National Government is trying desperately to suppress through a Seditious Bill so extreme that even Conservatives are mumbling libertarian platitudes?

In a Statement on Poor Relief in England and Wales for the first quarter of 1934 the British Ministry of Health reports that by the end of March a total of 1,409,089 persons were receiving relief. This is the highest figure recorded for that period in any year since 1922, and represents an increase of over 40,000, or 2.9 percent, since December, or of more than 50,000 (3.8 percent) compared with the previous March. That is to say, for every 10,000 of the population of England and Wales, 351 were enjoying economic prosperity in the Fascist sense of the word—through "poverty and the dole." In the town of Sheffield alone (whose March output of steel, at 124,500 tons, was the highest ever registered), this national average was stepped up to 1,500, or over ten percent of the population. For the country as a whole the crescendo of pauperism (which Mosley tries to drown out by mass-choruses of the disillusioned and unemployed singing his "Song of the [Black] Shirt") is shown by government fig-

ures giving the March total averages on relief of all those who, whether insured or not, hold an Employment Exchange registration card: 1931, 166,000; 1932, 295,000; 1933, 411,000; 1934, 442,000. In his remarkable book, "The Condition of the Working-Class in Britain" (one of the outstanding classics in the literature of labor; inspired by, and ranking with, Engels' famous work on the same subject), Allen Hutt has vividly portrayed some of the ways in which modern imperialism rewards its dupes. In Glasgow, 40,000 dwellings (one-sixth of the total) consist of only one room, and 13,500 houses are in such rotten condition as to be classified as uninhabitable.

Nevertheless, in this capital of the Shipping Kings there is one section, containing six tenements, where the density per acre is 367 houses and 1,399 persons—as against the city's average of 8.7 and 37 respectively. The infantile mortality in Glasgow (always excessive) rose from 101 per 1,000 births in 1930 to 105 in 1931 (national average, 66). In Manchester, the textile center, this rate, for the derelict areas, reached 135 for the five-year period 1925-29, against 91 for the whole city, and close to 50,000 people in this one section (the Hulme district) are without adequate housing. From 8 to 10 percent of Lancashire's milk supply is tuberculous, and in the South Wales coal districts the usual diet of the unemployed is "bread, butter, potatoes, bacon, tea, with minute quantities of meat, fresh milk (one pint a week), vegetables, cheese and lard."

After this it is not surprising that Mosley—who enjoys the uplifting companionship and support of such "robber barons" as Vincent Vickers, Lord Rothermere (waving a little at present, Augustine Courtauld of the textile and rayon dynasty, J. A. Scrimmour, a Director of Handley-Page, whose aeroplanes carry mail and bombs in all countries of the civilized world; to say nothing of the insipid litterateur Sir John Squire and that splendid neo-Buddhist, Major Yeats-Brown—after this it is most appropriate that Sir Oswald should "look for a new morality and a new psychology" in his Greater Britain; and that he should stand Marx, Engels and Lenin on their heads (the best parts of them, incidentally) by his astounding aphorism, "The revival of the spirit must precede a change in the material environment."

The above gentlemen, and their colleagues of the embryonic British Corporative State are, it is true, a shade worried by the lag between the spiritual renaissance and material improvement among the lower orders, but they do not despair ("Despair," remarked the philosophic Prince of Wales, "is not a British trait"). Granted that there are still more

than two million unemployed and that the net effect of all wage changes during 1933 was to diminish the weekly payroll of those still working by £62,500 as compared with 1932: these are but the proverbial ill winds from which the wise profit. In this case the benefits of rationalization and systematic labor-exploitation were distributed among 1,960 joint-stock companies which in the first six months of 1934, realized net profits of £159,600,000—an increase of more than £17,000,000 or 12.1 percent over the same period last year. These "welcome and substantial increases," as the lordly *Economist* describes them, exceed in amount the quarterly increases recorded for the "good" years of 1928 and 1929. In respect to dividends paid out (on a total capitalization of 2,384.9 million pounds) 11 of the 18 classifications showed improvement in the year: notably Stewards & Lloyds, Baldwins, English Steel, Vickers, and Hadfield (iron and steel group); Ocean Coal & Wilsons and the mighty Powell-Duffryn (South Wales), in the coal group; Imperial Chemical Industries; Hawker, De Havilland, Napier and Rolls-Royce for aircraft; Courtaulds in textiles, and so on.

It is highly significant that most of these great corporations, and many of the smaller ones, are setting aside for reserve an increasing percentage of their net profits, and proportionately smaller ones for dividends, ordinary or preferred. In the first six months of 1934 these reserves amounted to well over £27,000,000, or 17.1 percent of the total net profits. True, this is an indication of the narrowing field for investment and expansion, but it reveals also the terrific financial strength with which British imperialism can meet any siege imposed upon it by the working class in terms of opportunist reforms, parliamentary bickerings, "gradualism" and the "lesser evil." These reserves, together with government subsidies to industry, which in 1933-34 reached the astounding sum of over 600 million pounds (in this same Budget only £6,000,000 went to health insurance, 16 millions to housing and 41.8 millions to old-age pensions) are to Capital what the hump is to the camel: a stand-by of surplus necessities with which to meet the severest famine in the desert. The one and only way in which this hump of fat can be rendered useless is to—kill the camel.

And that is where Fascism comes in. Mosley and his Black Shirts, like their kind everywhere, came into being and exist for the sole purpose of keeping the camel alive. With a generous hump if possible, with little or none if necessary, but *alive*. And so; "Keep the Empire alive!" bellows Mosley, into the ears of an attentive government, "Give us a Greater Britain . . . a Greater Sahara! . . ."

He is getting the second, at any rate.



# Correspondence

## The Big American Tragedy

TO THE NEW MASSES:

If it is not impolitic to inquire into the literary plans of Theodore Dreiser—when is this monumental builder going to produce an American milestone of revolutionary writing?

Of all the bourgeois novelists, before and after the war, concerned with worrying and being "agog" over middle-class putrescence, he alone stands out invested with the strength of his self-assertion and passionate honesty, besieged as he was by the suppressive reactionary forces.

Millions of young people prior to 1929 did their thinking in the privy of American literature. For want of timely revolutionary guidance in understanding social and political problems, we dived deeper into the dung of capitalist contradictions.

I corresponded heavily with Dreiser, seeking a way out of confusion and bourgeois bewilderment. His letters date 1926 and 1927 were personally encouraging, but did not lead to a clearer understanding of the solution to the social problems which he so dramatically posed in his books.

Dreiser saw the development of a new social and economic order in Soviet Russia, and it has encouraged him. He knows that the civilization of the future is in the making, and apparently understands that the rest of the world must follow the same path. He admits to the bankruptcy of religion—its hopeless position in the modern world. But his consistency suffers from the bourgeois formlessness and creative uncertainty which still grips him.

He inveighs against the hopelessness of Roosevelt's magic-making, and the futility and danger of Fascism. But he has not openly admitted the necessity of revolution. Why does he shrink from indicting in a book the capitalist system which he excoriates in *What Has the Great War Taught Me?*

To many who have vibrated with the dramatic stuff of his works, this little piece is a promise of Dreiserian novelization of the burning sequences of the American Tragedy of capitalist decay.

Because of his unquestionable greatness, we cannot give up the hope that he will be the first of the old creative masters to work in the field surging with revolutionary forces as hot and creative as life itself.

THOMAS GERSON.

## 500 Face Sterilization

TO THE NEW MASSES:

Five hundred inmates of the state prison at McAlester, Oklahoma, are faced with sterilization under a recently enacted law which is supposed to apply to prisoners serving time for the third offense. A young prisoner, George S. Winkler, serving his third term for burglary, and who volunteered for the court test case, has been ordered by the court upholding the validity of the law to go through with the operation.

Thousands of other prisoners in this penitentiary, having come in contact on one and two occasions with a system which breeds lawlessness and crime, realize what they are up against. They are supporting Winkler, whose case will be carried to the State Supreme Court and even to the United States Supreme Court if necessary. Desperation and anger have so gripped these prisoners that Warden Sam Brown has placed an extra heavy guard on duty. The court hearing was attended by three prisoners who carried back to their fellow prisoners an account of the proceedings. Warden Brown feared a prison riot; he still fears one. He is taking no chances. Meantime, prisoners are putting their pennies and nickels into a defense fund to fight the case. Clarence Darrow, liberal attorney, was first asked to take the case. He expressed his sympathy,

but announced that he could not leave the work which he has been doing with the N.R.A. board. A decision to enlist the help of the American Civil Liberties Union was set aside. The two defense attorneys are E. F. Lester, former state supreme court chief justice and his partner, State Senator Claude Briggs. It remains to be seen what these politicians will do. Mrs. Franklin D. Roosevelt, who proudly boasts of being a mother, has given her answer. The appeal of one mother to Mrs. Roosevelt was turned over to the Department of Justice, which returned the letter to Gov. W. H. Murray of Oklahoma with the comment: "Not a federal matter."

This sterilization law does not apply to the big capitalists who steal from workers and workers' families their every means of sustenance. Neither does it apply to their paid gangsters who murder the workers for striking against their conditions. It applies to workers who, hounded by the system, commit petty offenses in an effort to secure food for themselves and their families. It applies to leaders of the working class who arise and organize the proletariat and middle-class against their oppressors. And it applies to aliens, to Negroes, and to Jews, just as Hitler has aimed at the working-class of Germany. It will be used against the helpless men and women in state hospitals who are broken mentally and physically under the burden of starvation and exposure. Eleven women have already been rendered sterile in the State Hospital at Norman, Okla. The entire state is on the drought "relief" list while insanity, tuberculosis and pellagra take gigantic strides. Side by side with the slaughter houses maintained for cattle, the eleemosynary institutions and the jails will become slaughter houses for human beings. Into the hands of incompetent physicians will be placed the lives and health of the working class of this state. Treatment for the effects of a rotten society will be stressed, but never treatment for the cause.

Workers! Only through a broad protest from all over the country will come the means of defeating this Fascist measure which is aimed at your class. Already the danger of such a law is increasing because other states will pass such a measure if allowed to do so. This month, Texas, at a special "relief" session, will vote on a sterilization bill. Texas is an adjoining state. The case of George Winkler in Oklahoma must not become a precedent. It will be possible to institute a sound eugenics program only when an equitable social system has been developed.

Send protests demanding the dropping of sterilization to Gov. William H. Murray, Oklahoma City, Okla.; to Sam Brown, Warden State Penitentiary, McAlester, Okla.; and to the Superintendent, Norman State Hospital, Norman, Okla.

LOUISE PREECE.

Austin, Texas.

## Underground from Germany

TO THE NEW MASSES:

With great enthusiasm I have just read the special strike issue of THE NEW MASSES in which the Toledo, Minneapolis and Pacific Coast strikes are described. At this time the German press (Fascist press) is giving great space to the strike wave in America. The reason behind this is the Fascists are trying to make the German workers forget about the June 30 executions.

The general strike in San Francisco is great news. I hope within a period of months we here, the German proletariat, city and poor-farm workers, soldiers and sailors will give you something great to write about. Manuilsky's report to the 17th Party Congress states: "This factor of 'unexpectedness' and 'suddenness' of revolutionary outbursts is an especially characteristic feature of the whole present situation." This seems to apply to the Pacific Coast

strike. And it will certainly apply to the situation here. The Fascist terror, driving underground all the small grumblings and hates of the worker, will cause a real explosion. We will have to throw off the Fascist dictatorship in a body, at one great smashing blow, and capitalism with it. With revolutionary greetings,  
W.

P. S. In our illegal press I read Manuilsky's report. Excuse the abruptness of this letter, a comrade is going to try to smuggle it out on his body. It must be short.

Hamburg, Germany. July 19.

## A Morris Langer Library

TO THE NEW MASSES:

The Educational Committee of the Needle Trades Workers Industrial Union is opening a library in honor of Morris Langer, leader of our Union, who was murdered by the bosses for his untiring fight in the cause of the working class.

There is no need to stress the importance of forming a library at this time when the crisis in the needle trades has deepened to an extent where thousands of workers roam the streets aimlessly. This condition causes workers to visit poolrooms, gambling houses and other places unbecoming a worker.

The Educational Committee has taken this measure to alleviate the condition by establishing a library of which the official opening will be celebrated at Irving Plaza Hall, Irving Place and 15th Street, on Thursday evening, August 16.

We appeal to you readers of THE NEW MASSES to donate to the Morris Langer Library publications which are of interest to workers. We should appreciate it if you would send us names and addresses of those who you think would sympathize with our work, from whom we might solicit books or funds.

Books or funds should be sent to 131 W. 28th St., room 605.

EDUCATIONAL COMMITTEE OF THE N.T.W.I.U.

## The Student Review

TO THE NEW MASSES:

The Student Review, organ of the National Student League, will increase the scope of its literary section in forthcoming issues. The editors would appreciate contributions—especially from students and teachers—of short stories, poems, articles, etc. The material submitted need not necessarily restrict itself to student life, although such writing would be most desirable. Address all manuscripts and communications to Student Review, National Student League, 114 West 14th Street, New York City.

SIDNEY ALEXANDER.

## Read By Workers

TO THE NEW MASSES:

Joseph North in the "Change the World" column of the Daily Worker writes that the readers of THE NEW MASSES are mostly professionals, intellectuals, and white-collar people. But, he states workers are reading it too. My experience as far as the Detroit Workers' Bookshop is concerned is that the great majority of those that buy it here are workers. To see them coming into the store with their faces black with grime asking for THE NEW MASSES gladdens one's eyes. Will the workers read THE NEW MASSES if approached to buy it? The answer is from my own knowledge in the affirmative. 15 copies of the quarterly edition that was my quota to sell outside of the bookshop was sold within one hour. Who bought them? Workers, every one of them. Whereas in the bookshop when THE NEW MASSES was a monthly we barely sold 10 copies during the month, now we sell between 40 and 50 per issue. This is not much to be sure, but one must remember that the bookshop carries about 15 different magazines.

BEN GREEN,

1981 Grand River, Detroit. Workers' Bookshop.

# Books

## The End of Fascism

*HITLER OVER EUROPE*, by Ernst Henri. Simon and Schuster. \$1.90.

*THE BURNING OF THE REICHSTAG*, by Douglas Reed. Covici Friede. \$3.

**T**HE Reichstag fire on February 27, 1933, marked the beginning of the last attempt to save the weakest link of monopoly capitalism, by the use of gangster methods. This effort is failing. Fascists are now murdering Fascists. June 30, 1934, and the Austrian *Putsch* were the next stages in this desperate effort.

Henri's *Hitler Over Europe* is brilliant. It is forceful, clear, and altogether the most conclusive account of Hitlerism that has appeared to date. It is based on a mass of factual data of such relevance that the book, actually written about a year ago, predicts the developments of June 30 and July 25. Henri reveals a masterly grasp of the social, economic, and political situation, of the forces that drove big business to enslave the German working class through Hitler, that drive it on to seek new markets and, inevitably, to war and civil war.

Hitler rode into power by way of the middle class. He was placed in power by the Thyssen-Flick-Vöglér group. The rapid growth of Hitlerism coincides with the time (1927) when Thyssen began to lend it large scale financial support. Through Hitler, Thyssen sought several objectives: 1. To prevent the collapse of his steel and coal syndicates. 2. To eliminate his economic competitors, the Catholic-Jewish group, bound up with the Otto Wolff Deutsche Bank. 3. To crush the trade unions and their political structures. These were the immediate aims and all pointed to make the Ruhr safe for Thyssen's profits. Profits are not merely desirable; they are indispensable for the existence of monopoly capitalism. Monopoly capitalism leads to imperialism. Hence, the further objective, expansion. The old dream of Berlin-to-Bagdad, of the economic penetration of Austria, Hungary, the Balkans, Turkey arises. Once the working class lies prostrate, once Thyssen is the sole possessor of the Nazi state, the dream dare go further to include the Netherlands and the Lorraine districts, the Scandinavian countries and the Soviet Ukraine. Here, at the end of the dream lies a death struggle against Soviet Russia and Communism. But these are not idle dreams. It is the necessary way of capitalist economy in its death crisis, the only means it has of saving itself—for the time being. The way is war.

But Hitlerism dare not wage war before it has made sure of its hinterland, with its thirteen million Marxists, with a class-conscious proletariat of tried courage. The militancy of the working class must first be

broken. The chapter wherein Henri tells of this effort is almost sinister in its effect. It is a chapter, crammed with official statistics showing that Hitlerism is solving the unemployment question by physically exterminating the unemployed. Of the eight million unemployed, one million are interned in camps; theirs is an enforced enslavement. Three million are outlawed, receive no relief, are allowed to starve and counted as non-existent. The four million registered unemployed receive a gradually dwindling relief. Thus, Hitler has not created work (with the exception of a small boom in war-material); he has only amputated the unemployed. Hungry unemployed have been turned into hungry forced laborers and pariahs.

When we turn to the thirteen million still employed, a parallel picture presents itself. Through wage-cuts, wage-confiscation (by means of direct contributions, amounting to more than one-quarter of the total wage), through increased hours and increased prices (20-30 percent), the German workers' real wage has been reduced by 20-30 percent. Lastly, the Nazi-Labor Law of January 20, 1934, makes of the free factory a labor prison, which the worker may not leave or rebel against. The Capitalist ("The Leader") becomes the owner of the worker ("The Follower"). All this to save monopoly capitalism—the meaning and mission of Fascism.

But Fascism means war and the Ruhr is driving toward it. The giant steel works of the Ruhr, the great chemical factories of the I. G. Farbenindustrie at Leuna must pay interest, must pay for amortization. Thyssen needs more room, more markets for his products and raw material. The idea of a Germanic race proves convenient. Bad anthropology is used to cloak the necessities of a rabid imperialism. The racial map is identical with the plan for a Germanic Empire. The Ruhr and Leuna also need the ore of Lorraine and the copper of the Balkans. The racial map is extended to non-Nordics. The dynamics of coal, of iron and of chemistry become the dynamics of the S.A., the S.S., and the Stahlhelm. The racial idea serves three ends: it diverts grievances from their actual roots; it becomes the screen for economic expansion; finally, it makes possible the method of *internal Nazi revolutions*. This tactic, as the example of Austria shows, requires no open warfare. "Through separate Nazi federations to a single and indivisible Germanic Nazi Union. Through national Hitlers to a Continental Hitler Empire! A thing like this is well worth a Reichstag fire." The Rosenberg plan of a Nazi International is launched with branches in all of Europe and in America. Until Hitler is ready for war, the system of speeches, lies, and intrigues; until then, feverish preparation, the building of thousands

of aeroplanes, the preparation of deadly gases and bacteria.

However, the Brown International is self-contradictory. Fascism is extreme nationalism. Under capitalism, such nationalism means conflict between rival nations. Thus, the Austrian events have brought two Fascist countries to the edge of war. If Henri's book is open to criticism, it is on the score that the dramatic manner of the presentation and the method of personifying German imperialism in one super-man, Thyssen, tend to create the impression that the Nazi movement is a powerful natural force that is bound to grow mightier. Henri does not give sufficient due to the inherent contradictions of nationalistic capitalism, when he discusses the Rosenberg plan for a Brown International. At the same time, his overemphasis destroys the dangerous illusion that Hitlerism is a movement of mere dope-fiends, perverts, and maniacs. Although it is led by men who are largely pathological, their very pathology becomes a ready and disastrous instrument.

Pressure produces counter-pressure. Hitler's barbaric repressions have increased the heroic work of the underground revolutionary movement. The *Rote Fahne* now has an edition of 300,000, instead of the pre-Hitlerite circulation of 70,000. Hitlerism is being shadowed by Germany's militant working class. This class has learned a great deal since February 27, 1933. The burning of the Reichstag was followed by the Reichstag trial. (Reed's detailed story of the trial is highly interesting. It is competent, except for Reed's hesitancy to draw the conclusion from his own material, that the fire was the work of Goering's henchmen.) This trial revealed Nazi methods: the drugging of van der Lubbe (he spoke at the trial of "voices in his body," who tell him "what's going on" and of "meals five and six times a day"—in prison!) Out of it (and herein lies the one important contribution of Reed's book) emerged the man who turned the trial against the accusers, the heroic revolutionary, Dimitroff. There are now many unknown Dimitroffs in Germany. They are today working along the lines on an Anti-Fascist United Front. They are working with Catholics and Jews, Protestants and Liberals, Socialists and Storm Troopers. Hitlerism is full of inner divisions as the differences between Hitler, Goebbels and Goering, between the middle class Brown Shirts and the upper class Black Shirts, as the massacre of June 30 revealed. It cannot succeed because of these contradictions. It cannot succeed because of Soviet Russia. It will fall because of the revolutionary working class in and outside of Germany. Yet, Hitlerism—and this is the most signal warning that emerges from Henri's book—is a grave, great and imminent peril. To crush it, a wholehearted anti-

Fascist front is essential. This front is now being formed. The dynamics of history declare against Nazi success. The Nazi International will one day be destroyed. "It will be destroyed more terribly, and fall, crumbling into nothing, from its pedestal more tragically, than any other international force before it."

VICTOR BURTT.

### Russian Trivia

*ON THE VOLGA*, by Panteleimon Romanof. Charles Scribner's Sons. \$2.

As a sort of postscript to this collection of short stories, Romanof has appended three laudatory sketches of a Soviet factory town. In a way these sketches are not entirely without relevance to the rest of the book. Though coming at the end, they may be considered a kind of background against which the stories are presented. For Romanof is concerned primarily with what is popularly known as the human equation (or the endeavors of humans to find the equation) rather than with life as a whole, as a unit. He has given us a gallery of characters with the emphasis on their private lives rather than on their place and conduct in society. *These* are implicit. One major exception must immediately be noticed. This is a story called *One of Us*, which deals with the conflict between the old and the new; which contrasts the attitudes of a peasant and his young Communist son toward the new order. For the rest: occasionally with a grotesque irony reminiscent of Hardy, occasionally with the sophistication for which he seems to be famous, at times with a jarring sentimentality, Romanof deals with clandestine affairs, with unrequited love, with love gone awry. His stories, simply as stories, are well done. Unfortunately, however, they lack significance. Like the themes they deal with, they are affairs of the moment and disappear from the memory almost as one turns the page. They are the strange and the curious, off the highway; somehow vitally estranged from what is rich and dynamic in Soviet life today. They are, in short, trivia.

From this judgment *One of Us* must be excluded. It is the one story which is genuinely satisfying in every way. Romanof understands what the revolution has meant to old and young alike; and through his consummate presentation of the problem in action the reader also comes to realize the profound changes hammered out by the revolution. And with this realization comes a heightened sympathy.

GILBERT DOUGLAS.

### A New Untermeyer Product

*POETRY: ITS APPRECIATION AND ENJOYMENT*, by Louis Untermeyer and Carter Davidson. Harcourt, Brace. \$3.50.

Unfortunately people will be sold this book. Hypnotized by the success-story of the almost numberless Untermeyer books on the back-blurb, many will take Untermeyer's word as final and believe that he really covers the ground described by the chapter headings; that

*Poetry: Its Appreciation and Enjoyment* includes all that its subject stands for in 1934. Of course it doesn't. Part I analyzes in elementary fashion: prejudice against poetry, poetry and prose, imagination, emotion, satire, play, etc.; Part II: structure and technic. Contradictory ideas frequently appear side by side, their contradictions unresolved. True to his past—of constant shifts in critical appraisals, *vide* the successive editions of his *Modern American Poetry*—Untermeyer remains the perfect liberal of poetry criticism.

But he seems to be slipping, for isn't this the first time he is actually trailing the bandwagon? Two whole chapters—The Poem as Idea, the Poem as Weapon—contain not the merest mention of the recent infuriated debates about art and propaganda which surely Mr. Untermeyer has heard about. Or if he hasn't, his publishers have. Why no mention? Because this book is directed at inviolate minds who shouldn't be "faced with a choice?" Because Untermeyer himself hasn't been able to resolve the critical "contradictions" of, let's say, an Archibald MacLeish vs. Michael Gold? Or may we entertain the hideous thought that Untermeyer finds it wiser to wait till the fury will have resolved itself when he can record "both sides impartially" and be thereby relieved of the responsibility of coming out now with a statement of his own.

To readers, writers, and students of poetry this volume offers little which they do not already know or which is not more satisfyingly treated elsewhere. To those who find poetry incomparably illuminated in the recognition of all art as outgrowth as well as instrument of social forces, the present book is a shameless evasion of a duty of its authors in 1934. This is all the more impressive because Untermeyer's original verse some years ago showed him to be responsive to the brutalities of our social system—as some MASSES readers may now recall, with regrets or smiles.

STANLEY BURNISHAW.

### Dead Figures on the Pacific

*ECONOMIC HANDBOOK OF THE PACIFIC AREA*, edited by Frederick V. Field. Doubleday, Doran and Company. \$5.

Here is a book of 650 pages closely printed with innumerable tables, figures, and data on the economic factors underlying the structure of the many countrys touching the Pacific Ocean totalling half the population of the world. In addition to the so-called Far East with its nations, colonies and territories, there are also included such countries as the United States, the U.S.S.R., Australia, Canada, etc. There is no question that the vast quantity of information gathered in this handbook is very valuable to students of the Far East. Many subjects are dealt with: Population, Land Utilization, Food, Transportation, Finance, Capital Movements, Trade, Minerals, Agriculture, and Textiles. The bibliography itself is very useful.

But what is the purpose of this compilation? Frederick V. Field who edited it for the In-

stitute of Pacific Relations writes in the preface that "the volume may now be defined as concerned entirely with the material aspects of the vastly complicated and increasingly important economic problems of the peoples of the Pacific area." So far so good. But then the next sentence reads: "Among these problems the elemental factors of population and the use people make of the land on which they live are of first importance." They are of first importance only in liberated peoples. Facts of real first importance are unfortunately omitted from the book. Does not Mr. Field know that the "use people make of land" is entirely dependent upon their power and freedom to use it. Especially is this an important point in the Far Eastern colonies where imperialists are rampant. What have the Chinese or the Philippine masses of their own accord to do with using land?

Newton D. Baker in a foreword gives us the answer. He says: "They [the statistics in this book] are addressed to no existing controversy and are not aimed to support or combat any thesis. They are just facts without emotion." Yes, facts do not need emotion, but facts need a lot of explanation and analysis before they can take on any meaning. Otherwise facts become dead, as indeed the facts and statistics in this handbook are dead and meaningless. This review is not an attempt to belittle the importance of the book, but it is precisely those facts and explanations which are omitted which would bring this book to life and stir people to action against a small group of imperialists and financiers who are impoverishing a world of plenty.

A few illustrations will help to clarify this point. In the chapter on "Land Utilization" there appears the following statement: "The utilization of land depends upon such factors as temperature, rainfall, topography, the quality of soils, etc." True enough, but what about the land that was destroyed by Japanese bombs around the area of the Great Wall of China which made twenty million Chinese homeless last year. What about the 108,813,115 famine victims in China from "natural and human calamities" reported last year by the *Investigation of International Relief Commission*? If the money spent for civil warfare against the Chinese masses were used instead for defenses against floods and drought, there would be no "natural calamities." What about the vast acres of the most arable land in China which are converted to opium growing so that the militarists and imperialist lackeys can draw large funds for the support of their armies. What about Soviet China (one-fourth of China proper) and the remarkable progress it has been making toward building up a plentiful food supply? Where are these figures? Why are they omitted? The answer is easy. These omitted facts and figures would prove a "thesis" that would endanger the power of the imperialists and bankers.

In the same chapter there is a table giving the remarkable increase in productivity on the collective farms of the U.S.S.R. Doesn't it seem important to the editor to explain the



reasons and the economic philosophy behind this amazing growth? And when the Roosevelt A.A.A. program of taking acreage out of production is discussed, isn't it a vital statistic to show that while wheat and cotton are plowed under, millions are starving and nearly naked?

In the chapter on "Transportation," the editor apparently is not aware that only 30 percent of the railways Japan is building in Manchuria is warranted on economic grounds. That 70 percent is planned for military reasons, for the preparations of an attack against the U.S.S.R. Certainly such clarification belongs to an economic handbook.

In the chapter on "Public Finance" there appears the figure of over 300 million dollars (50 percent of total expenditure) in the Chinese figures for military expenditures. Does not Mr. Field know that every cent of it is spent to fight the Chinese people in the Soviet territory? Who covers the Nanking government's deficit? Who supplies the Nanking government with military aeroplanes, pilots, and instructors? Where are these facts and figures?

Such omissions are so numerous that they become conspicuous by their absence. Their inclusion would light up the figures into a "thesis" that Newton Baker and his colleagues fear so much.

JOHN PHILLIPS.

## Sons of the Revolution

*REBEL DESTINY*, by Melville and Frances Herskovits. Whittlesey House. \$3.

About two hundred years ago a series of remarkable rebellions broke out among Negro slaves imported from Africa into Dutch Guiana. On plantation after plantation, the slaves threw off their yoke and made for the interior bush country, where they established villages along the rivers. Bands of these self-liberated slaves frequently made sorties on the plantations to set free those still enslaved. Expeditions of Dutch and English armies were sent out periodically to exterminate them or to bring them back into bondage, but these armies were roundly defeated each time. Finally, after a half-century of bitter struggles, the rebels forced acknowledgment of their unconditional freedom, and their descendants have remained independent since. (An object-lesson for Garveyites who still preach flight to Africa: here is a Negro people who fought against oppression, stood their ground, and made it their own!)

The present-day descendants of the hardy rebels who settled along the Suriname River in Dutch Guiana are the subjects of this anthropological study by the Herskovitses. They still cherish their hard-won freedom; their traditional heroes are the great revolutionaries of two centuries ago—Araby, Okosu, Bagido, Ajako and others. The authors sojourned in the Saramacca villages along the Suriname for two summers, continuing their researches into Negro culture begun in 1923. Their approach was friendly and refreshingly unpatronizing. Their findings lead them to reject the still-

prevalent opinion that "the Negro slave came to this country a savage child with or without his loin-cloth, and as naked culturally as he was sartorially."

Written in semi-popular style, the book deals principally with the folklore and religious rites of the Saramacca people, whose beliefs revolve mainly around two supernatural forces: *obia*, given to man by the gods to protect and heal him, and *kunu*, a sort of Nemesis that punishes men who violate ancestral laws. Many of their gods and god-names show cultural survivals from Africa, and are, incidentally, found also in Haiti and Jamaica.

While the book offers many original and interesting contributions to the study of bush Negro culture, it must be pointed out that its almost exclusive emphasis on folklore and ceremonial rites results in a non-integrated and distorted picture of Saramacca social life. The average reader, lacking previous knowledge of the historical and social backgrounds of this people, gathers the impression that they spend nearly all their time propitiating their deities or waiting to be "possessed." The fact, merely hinted at in the book here and there, is that they are a very industrious and resourceful people, gaining their livelihoods by cutting timber and selling it down the river, and by agricultural pursuits (growing their own rice, cassava, etc., and working on plantations on the French side of the Marowynne during the harvest season). When the rainy seasons force them indoors, they occupy themselves in making wood carvings, an art in which they are highly skilled. The economic side of the cultural picture is inadequately treated by the Herskovitses. Again, though we are told in the preface that the bush Negro's cultural contacts with the white man have been slight, we learn later that their language (a most important factor in any culture) is almost entirely based on European tongues, being a Negro-Portuguese jargon, with many English, and some Dutch, French, and even Jewish elements. Several of the folk-tales related by the Herskovitses (*e. g.*, the preacher's black pants story, the devil and god tale) also indicate greater cultural interrelationships than the Herskovitses allow.

HENRY COOPER.

## Servicing Capitalism

*ECONOMIC RECONSTRUCTION. Report of the Columbia University Commission. Columbia University Press. \$3.*

Nearly three years ago a number of economists were called down to Washington to testify on Senator LaFollete's bill for a National Economic Council. Those were the days when "economic planning" was in the air. J. M. Clark of Columbia, George Soule of the New Republic, and Harlow Person of the Taylor Society, all bore witness to the new light. Today these same men and a number of others are turning in a report on economic reconstruction. President Butler had outlined their problem for them in advance. It was to

explain and remedy the contradiction between "technical and industrial development which offers for the first time in history a universal standard of well-being, and on the other hand an economic mechanism of exchange (sic!) which seems to defeat . . . that promise." President Butler had added that "The subjects to be attacked are not so much material for meticulous research of the traditional kind as for rigorous philosophic and economic analysis and for . . . formulation of policy." He had even ended with a gentlemanly warning: "Material things can wait; men cannot and sometimes will not."

In the face of such stimulus, four years of experience of the crisis, and a year's common deliberations, what have these "very representative" economists to say? Well, the first thing they have to say is that their theme is too difficult for them. Wesley Mitchell, of Columbia and the National Bureau of Economic Research, says, "No committee working for a single year can solve the problem," and advocates "more penetrating studies."

In the body of the report, the supposedly well-rounded philosophy of the whole group expresses itself. But it is only a philosophy of contradictions — contradictions between what they see and what they recommend, and contradictions between their several proposals.

The basic necessity, it seems, is to keep the profit system going but without its primary characteristics. "Profit margins," we are told, "must be adequate, but not excessive." "The principle could be recognized, and machinery might be set up to facilitate this end, that as unit costs decrease, average money wages are to be proportionately increased." "The essential problem of control is to adjust wages upward in line with increased productivity . . . labor would share proportionately and without bitter warfare in the gains of industry." When "danger signs" appear, "signs . . . of growing unemployment and . . . abnormal profits . . . the appropriate controls could at once be set in motion."

"Adequate, not excessive," "adjust upward," "danger signs!"—In heaven's name, whom do the gentlemen expect to make these decisions: Mr. Soule or Mr. Swope, Mr. Wesley Mitchell or Mr. Charlie Mitchell? One blushes to answer for them, but in their specific recommendations we have it in their own words: "The existing machinery devised under the *National Recovery Act* could be utilized for this purpose." In other words, the existing machinery devised by big business for big business and manned by big business is the economists' one suggestion as an agency for denaturing big business.

After such a central recommendation, the rest of the Commission's proposals sound a little pale. We have met them all before: public works, unemployment reserves, and of course "regulation"—"regulation" of large-scale corporations and "regulation" of banks. Finally, there is once more our old friend, the "National Social-Economic Council," still made up of experts and statisticians, still "purely advisory." Only now, coming on top

of the admission about the N.R.A., even its advocates' mention of it sounds perfunctory.

But is this really all? Is this all that four years of crisis have taught our leading economists? Yes, this is really all—in fact it is a good deal more than it has taught some of them—for B. M. Anderson of the Chase National Bank was led to resign from the commission before it had completed its deliberations because it went too far, and a good many of the professors register dissenting opinions. Professor Schumpeter of Harvard, for example, begs that the commission's readers be reminded of the "increase of the real income of *all* classes (italics his) during the last 30 years" and the "not unreasonable inference that in another 30 years, the system, if it were allowed to work on, would . . . make economic care a thing of the past." Moreover, he adds, readers should be talked to "realistically" about Soviet Russia: "The results . . . in the case of the Russian experiment are obviously far below what even a most backward and largely pre-capitalist system would by this time have done for the masses."

Contradictions upon contradictions. Unreality and chimera. But is this really all? No, there is one further illusion with perhaps a dangerous reality behind it. In the chapter on "A Planned Economy" someone—it must be Harlow Person—writes a silly statement about national (capitalistic) economic planning having "the same objectives on this grander scale" as scientific management has gradually developed for the single plant. And J. M. Clark in a separate statement calls attention to this and very properly says, "Neither the Soviets nor scientific management face the problem of influencing the actions of independent enterprises whom they cannot order to produce."

Quite true. But how is it that Mr. Person has described this "planned economy" which he proposes? *Whom is it being planned for*, and under what sort of system would this sort of planning in America actually take place? I submit, with all due respect to Mr. Person, who, we can rest assured, would not know a political idea if he saw one, that it is a Fascist system he proposes, and that already, in the three short years since "economic planning" first appeared upon the American horizon, its phrases upon the lips of its supporters have been twisted and adapted to that end.

There you have the story—Economic Planning as envisaged by the liberal economists: "initiative," the golden word of monopoly capital, not reduced, but "preserved," "enhanced"; an "advisory economic council" safely on the side lines, dignifiedly directing the adding machines, feeding "data" to industry; the code authorities or their Swope equivalent in the saddle, seeing that wages are advanced "enough" and that profits are "not excessive." And labor? Labor nicely "equilibrated" among the other "service factors" (page General Motors!) with its "education," "training," "employment conditions," "retirement policy," and general "economic security" established for it,

"without bitter warfare," under the same agency. Can Fascism promise more?

SARAH STEWART.

## Brief Review

*I, CLAUDIUS*, by Robert Graves. Harrison Smith and Robert Haas. \$3.

For some reason Robert Graves has felt impelled, speaking in the person of Claudius Caesar, to retell the story of the Julian family, particularly of Augustus, Tiberius and Caligula. He writes carefully with intentional prosiness, and follows the authorities, chiefly Tacitus and Suetonius, nearly as completely as if he were writing straight history. What he contributes to the telling is a character study in behalf of Claudius, letting him appear diffident, scholarly, loyal to his friends, free of most of the family viciousness, only casually cruel in the manner of the times. Although Graves seems studiously to avoid any tendenz emphasis, and although allusions to ancient history have not been fashionable for a hundred years, the book, as a study of ruthless inner-circle intrigue, is readable because it is about contemporary Middle Europe as well as Rome. But Caligula at ten was a more skillful killer than Goering, and Livia, the wife of Augustus, could have taken on the whole Fascist gang, single-handed. Otherwise the parallel does not hold. The commercial classes were strong; it was a period of prosperity; personal degeneracy was not always incompatible with clever administration. Except for the technique of crushing army revolts. Graves seldom lets social questions intrude. Even political autocracy is not much discussed, although Claudius is given republican tendencies.

*CONDITION OF INDIA. Report of the Delegation sent to India by the India League in 1932. Essential News, London. 2/6.*

This recently issued paper-bound report by the India League Delegation, comprising over five hundred pages, contains a wealth of compactly-written data on India's struggle for freedom, although it suffers from the deflected emphasis characteristic of most liberal exposés. Backed by an abundance of documentary proof, it traces the various forms of terroristic ferocity wielded by British imperialism in its attacks on the colonial masses. Although the report continually overstates the "revolutionary" role of the native bourgeoisie, represented by Ghandi and the Indian National Congress, it cannot avoid revealing the great masses of workers and peasants as the real fighters, the real heroes. The weakness of the liberal approach is displayed in Bertrand Russell's preface to the report, in which he pleads with "true" Britishers to give India "Dominion status" (which would still keep India enchained by imperialism), implying that if England does not toss her this bone now, India will win full freedom through force. It is significant that, though the report devotes pages to the mock-heroics of

Ghandi, it barely mentions, and omits any description of, the historic trial of the Meerut prisoners, who were given barbaric sentences ranging to transportation for life to the notorious Andaman Islands, one of the worst "Devil's Islands" in the world, for the crime of organizing workers into unions.

*MAGNUS MERRIMAN*, by Eric Linklater. Farrar and Rinehart. \$2.50.

The hero, Magnus Merriman, is a literary carouser with a strong penchant for smart-alecky conversation. Beneath his Bohemian exterior, however (or rather, of course), beats the heart of a staid snob and political reactionary. Finding London too suffocating for his ego, Merriman journeys to Scotland, where he falls in with an oddly-assorted group of Nationalists seeking Scotch independence in varying degrees. Merriman, who has fascist tendencies himself, becomes a convert to the cause and stands for Parliament on a Nationalist platform, with disastrous consequences to his pocket-book and his ego. There is a great deal of tedious drawing-room conversation in the cynical vein of Aldous Huxley, and when this becomes too intolerable even for the author, he hurries his hero into a bedroom or tavern for stimulation. The novel is written in a highly uneven style: side by side with painfully limping epigrams and forced writing, there are some good descriptive and satirical passages.

*MODERN AMERICAN PROSE*, edited by Carl Van Doren. Harcourt, Brace and Co. \$2.75.

This book will serve very nicely for Literary Guild subscribers, and probably it will be adopted by the few English teachers daring enough to deal with the twentieth century. But there is no reason why any mature and intelligent person should pay good money to read extracts from works that he either has read in full or ought to read as quickly as possible or doesn't need to read at all. Dr. Van Doren's selection is a little better than, all things considered, one could have expected. It is particularly gratifying and surprising to find a chapter from John Reed's *Ten Days That Shook the World*. On the other hand, it is hard to get enthusiastic about the inclusion of Frank Moore Colby, Dorothy Parker, Julia Peterkin, Hendrik Van Loon, Alexander Woollcott, and Burton Rascoe. The only play is *What Price Glory?* The selection from John Dos Passos—a few sketches from *Orient Express*—is inadequate and not wholly representative. The omission of Michael Gold is inexcusable.

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# Wall Street Hollywood

GERTRUDE ARMSTRONG and BEN MADDOW

**T**HE title, "Code of Fair Competition for the Motion Picture Industry," is a mask by which the N.R.A. administrators conceal the almost complete ownership of the motion picture industry by the Chase National Bank, organ of the Rockefeller interests. The title, "Fair Competition," is wilfully inaccurate. In reality, the code is an official charter sealed by President Roosevelt, giving a formal approval of Chase domination.

Nominally there are five major companies in the industry: RKO, Paramount, Warner Bros., M.G.M.-Loew, and Fox Film.

Examine the present status of the industry and you discover RKO, subsidiary of the Radio Corporation of America, which along with the towers of Radio City, is dominated by the Film Securities Corp. (a Chase creation). Whatever their direct holdings in RKO may be, the Chase domination of the entire Radio set-up, including the National Broadcasting Co. and RKO, was considerably strengthened by an arrangement made recently whereby the Radio Corporation of America ceded 100,000 shares of its Class "A" preferred stock to the Chase-Rockefeller group, in lieu of rental adjustments for space in Rockefeller Center. These 100,000 shares of Class "A" stock are equal in voting power to one million shares of common stock.

Of the second corporation mentioned, the Paramount Pictures Corporation, it must be stated that up to the time of its bankruptcy in January, 1933, it was the largest and most important single unit in the Motion Picture industry. As far back as 1919 it had shown its ingenious policy of expansion through the aid of large banking groups in Wall Street by enlisting the aid of no less a banking firm than Kuhn, Loeb and Co. Recently, however, despite the activities of the late Otto Kahn and Sir William Wiseman (both of the Kuhn, Loeb banking firm) in a "reorganization" plan for Paramount, it seems that the control of Paramount has been shifted to a different banking group—the Chase National. This fact can be realized if one examines the peculiar composition of the Board of Trustees in Bankruptcy: Charles D. Hilles, Eugene Leake and C. E. Richardson. The two latter are out and out Chase men; Eugene Leake is a director of Loew, Inc., and C. E. Richardson, up to the time of his appointment as Trustee of Paramount, was the vice-president of the Equitable Trust—the Rockefeller bank which merged with Chase several years ago. Thus by a simple mechanism, the Chase-Rockefeller group has managed to obtain the administrative control of the company.

However, it is through the historical conditions of the last corporation mentioned, the Fox Film, that we shall endeavor to show the various methods by which the Rockefeller-Chase Bank cleverly manipulated the circum-

stantial conflicts in the motion picture industry, unscrupulously jostled the equally unscrupulous independent producers from control, and finally paved its way to its present position in the industry—to monopoly control.

Before 1919 the production of movies was a freakish industry, sprouting tremendously but without substantial financial backing. Patent rights were considered insufficient and no sensible banker considered Pearl White, although the survivor of a thousand episodes, immortal collateral for a loan. It was Adolph Zukor who hit upon the correct technique for erecting a movie monopoly. Having begun to establish a chain of theatre properties, he was able with this as collateral to borrow finance-capital on a large scale. In this way he bought up whole chains of theatre properties, putting control of manufacture, distribution, and exhibition in one corporation's hands and providing visible assets for the financiers. Such was the expansion under these methods, and so violent the cutthroat competition, that difficulties arose over the Sherman Anti-Trust Law. These difficulties were resolved by hiring Will Hays, Postmaster General under Coolidge and National Treasurer of the Republican Committee, to become the Supreme Wire-Puller and the Presbyterian Shirt-Front, with the virtual status of dictator and \$150,000 annually. This choice at once obviated the difficulty with the local censorship boards who, under the guise of the preservation of morals, voiced their concealed chauvinism against the Jewish-controlled movie industry (Zukor, Fox, Goldwyn, Mayer, etc.).

J. P. Morgan never cared for the movies. But the Chase group, more "progressive," viewed the 100 percent profit with a lust that increased with its great 1924-1929 surpluses, lying frustrate in its vaults. Early in 1929 there came the death of Marcus Loew, controller of M.G.M.-Loew, which had merged in 1921; his heirs were quarreling, ready to be bought out. The chains of theatres were so distributed and the balance of the industry such, that of the five major companies, any combination of two would control, not two-fifths or less of the industry, but much more; such a merger would dominate the whole field.

William Fox, owner of Fox Film at the time, was encouraged through his bankers, Halsey Stuart and Co., to negotiate for the 660,000 Loew's shares. Halsey Stuart gave Fox \$100,000,000, secured by one year notes, to buy the Loew's stock and in addition, British Gaumont, Ltd.

Fox, having been used by the bankers for their own purpose, was due to be removed. On a sick bed late in 1929, he was informed that his notes would be called in April, 1930. Since he didn't have the \$100,000,000 on hand, he got a rival banking group (Bank of America, Dillon, Read, and Lehman Bros.) to

approve a refinancing; he gave them \$1,000,000 merely for investigating his credit status. They promised to refinance the notes. Halsey Stuart and Co., however, threatened suit for breach of their contract, which gave them exclusive financing rights for ten years. They would not allow other banks to refinance the notes. In other words, they wanted their money back, but they refused to be paid! At the height of this struggle Fox's branch offices, 129 of them extended over the world, found they could not withdraw money to meet their payrolls. Their respective banks would not pay out their accounts. Here at once it was clear that some tremendous power, capable of closing credit throughout the capitalist world, was preparing Fox's death. It was evident the power was Chase's.

Halsey Stuart, having prevented other rival banking groups from lending money to Fox, declared that they would not refinance the notes for Fox unless the Fox Film was submitted to a dependable trusteeship of three. Charles Evans Hughes, Fox's lawyer, advised him to accept the plan. Consequently, a trusteeship including Halsey Stuart, Otterson of Electric Research Products (a Chase company through the American Tel. & Tel.), and William Fox, was organized. Here, Fox found himself opposed by Otterson and Stuart on every policy. Badly frightened by the voting opposition and at his loss of power, Fox, on the advice of Samuel Untermyer, corporation lawyer, sold out to Harley S. Clarke, Chicago Utilities magnate, who was introduced to Fox by no other person than "Czar" Will Hays. Fox received \$18,000,000 from Clarke, who was president of the General Theatres Equipment Corp. (Clarke had received the \$18,000,000 with which he paid Fox, from Chase subsidiary corporations, who by financial manipulations watered the stock from \$2,225,616 up to \$38,285,000!) At this point, Halsey Stuart and Co., which had refused to renew William Fox's notes, benevolently decided to renew the \$100,000,000 notes now held by Chase—supporting Clarke—for another year, to April, 1931.

But it was time for Halsey Stuart to step out. In April, 1931, they gracefully forgot their ten year exclusive finance rights with Fox Film; Chase instead was to do the refinancing by a huge bond flotation. But the sale of these bonds required a certain ballyhoo. The Chase accountants, Price, Waterhouse and Co., investigated the Fox Film Corp. They found a polite falsification of profits, by the use of accounting methods which were accurate for silent pictures, but fraudulent for talkies. Did Chase, the shrewdest finance capitalists in the world, withdraw? They could not—they were too deeply involved already, through Clarke, through Halsey Stuart, through their whole comprehensive scheme for dominating the movie industry! They got the Fox accountants to set up a sham controversy against their own accountants in the financial press. Price, Waterhouse and Co. published their findings; then Fox Film's accountants replied with speciously convincing arguments

that inspired public confidence. Chase was now able to float the bonds. They sold a million and a half of them.

After this there is simply the story of intricate thievery, the everyday practice of finance capital, details of super-holding corporations and receivership practices. But we are properly concerned with the now evident result: Rockefeller, through his Chase companies, owns Fox Film; its directors are his men, and their resignations already signed are in his locked files. M.G.M.-Loew, Paramount, RKO, Fox Film; he owns them all.

An illustration of this control: When a million and a half of interest on the Chase Bonds fell due early in 1933, Fox Film had not the ready cash. It was decided by the clever directors that a 50-percent wage-cut for eight weeks on all employes would be a fair way to get money to reimburse Chase for all their difficulties. But the bankers were cleverer. It was pointed out that such a wage-cut would lower the Fox prestige in the industry, exhibitors would demand of Fox lower rentals for movies made at lower costs. Therefore there was summoned a grandiose private conference of the potentates of the movie industry, Czar Will Hays presiding; it is said that Herbert Hoover sat at his right hand. The boys were told that for the good of the industry it was necessary for every company to decree an eight-week 50-percent cut. This was accomplished. The strike wave which was the resistance of the American workers to the program of wage-cuts decreed by monopoly capitalism in every industry, rose to the gilded props of the Hollywood studios. Six thousand technicians refused to accept the cut; but the strike was broken.

It is our view that the Rockefeller acquisition of Hollywood has hardly changed the nature of its product—so far. Despite the change of theatre property from the independent producers to the monopoly of Rockefeller-Chase interest, there is no essential difference in the class ownership. But the important factor to be considered is that the potentiality for wielding an instrument of mass propaganda, like the moving picture industry, lies in the safe of a single Wall Street Company. Suppose the Rockefeller interests in China reached an acute stage in their conflict with Japanese imperialism, and it became necessary to defend Standard Oil tankers on the Yangtse with the bodies of American workers—then we would find the "Yellow Hordes" menacing us with child murder, rape, arson and the destruction of Radio City from tens of thousands of screens, all controlled by Chase National.

We have here not an isolated phenomenon, but one which is connected with the development of monopolies in the imperialist stage of capitalism. The N.R.A. as the governmental agency for the giant industries has also for example taken the initiative to unite all the organs of communication such as the telephone and telegraph, and radio companies into one unit that will be easily manipulated for Capitalist purposes in times of war and for super-profits in times of peace.

# Enter the Villain

IRVING LERNER

THE cinema, seldom a prophet, usually merely reflects the political consciousness of the ruling class. But the ruling class, controlling the cinema, has to depend upon the mass consumer for its profits, and must therefore adapt itself (to a certain extent) to the demands of the masses. And thus there comes a time when it is necessary to abandon fairy tales for more "realistic" themes.

As the economic and political situation becomes more and more intense, movies preaching the *status quo* are no longer effective. The bosses are scared stiff. More and more reactionary-fascist methods are being used by the press, radio, school, and church. The red with the foreign accent, the bushy beard, unruly hair, baggy-pants, with a bomb in his hand, is the contemporary villain. This villain is now a regular prop in current films.

Like the Cohen Brothers of Columbia Pictures, the Warners and First National Pictures have included a red herring in their latest comedy, *The Friends of Mr. Sweeny*. He is played by Warner Brothers' expert lunatic impersonator, Robert Barrat. Mr. Barrat, like the "Bolshevik" in *Whom the Gods Destroy*, speaks with a Russian accent. But with the customary Warner thoroughness, Barrat wears a silk Russian blouse (just like the Communist in *S. A. Man Brand*) and has very bad manners. He is always shouting, calling everyone "comrade", lying all over couches, sleeping in clean beds with his shoes on, and generally making a pest of himself. He also wears a tuxedo and smokes cigarettes through an ivory cigarette-holder. He frequents night clubs only to call the customers dirty capitalists, and lousy aristocrats. He haunts White Russian Greenwich Village joints and drinks vodka. He makes a living by blackmail and bulldozing innocent citizens. He has nothing much to do with the story and is dropped out of it as unexpectedly as he is dragged into it.

The film itself is concerned with the life and loves of that national character, the Timid Soul, a worm who turns at the end of the film and makes good; finds himself, and wins the lovely hand of the heroine. The direction is as standardized and as dull as are nearly all Warner Brothers films. Charlie Ruggles, as the Timid Soul, an excellent actor, supplies the comedy.

The independent producer who sticks pretty close to the big shot also includes a "Communist" in a trite film starring Eric Von Stroheim: *Fugitive Road* (Invincible). The locale is the Austro-Italian frontier. The film is only about Eric's love affairs with buxom Hungarian, Italian, and Austrian maidens. The "Red" is a phoney physician who is caught red-handed smuggling diamonds into Austria from Italy. Upon being questioned,

he says: "I demand to be sent back to Russia, where I belong! You can't do nothing to me, I'm a Soviet Citizen!"

## Other New Films

*Hat, Coat, and Glove* (R.K.O.-Radio): Let the producers review it themselves: "The attorney for the defense KNEW his client was innocent . . . but he could PROVE he was guilty, with a HAT . . . a COAT . . . a GLOVE! He wanted him dead! . . . but fought for his life! . . . knew he was INNOCENT of murder; . . . but GUILTY of stealing the love of the one woman in the world he wanted!" It's a mystery, this one.

*The Girl from Missouri* (M.G.M.): A night-club hotsy-totsy (Jean Harlow) out to hook a rich man (Lionel Barrymore) meets his Don Juan son (Franchot Tone). She slaps him for thinking she was that kind of a girl and Franchot makes a face that screams of true-love-for-the-first-time-in-his-life. You can guess the rest. This film would have been called *Born to Be Kissed*, if it weren't for the Legion of Decency.

*Cockeyed Cavaliers* (R.K.O.): An abortive attempt at humor and satire on *Henry VIII* and *Queen Christina*. All the gag men on the Radio lot will never make the Marx Brothers out of Wheeler and Woolsey.

*She Learned About Sailors* (Fox): More propaganda for the Navy, with Alice Fay and Lew Ayres. One of the films awarded the "Seal of Purity" by the Production Code Administration of Will Hays' organization.

## Between Ourselves

THE rules for the International Play Contest, for plays for the Amateur and Professional Children's Theatre, announced here last week, are as follows:

All plays should be sent to the New Pioneer, Box 28, Station D, New York. Plays should reach the New Pioneer not later than Dec. 1, 1934, in order that they may reach the International Union of Writers before the closing date of the contest, which is January 1, 1935. The author's name and the title of the play, skit or scenario should be enclosed in a separate sealed envelope accompanying the manuscript. Only the title should appear on the submitted manuscript.

Plays, skits, scenarios, etc., must be written in lively interesting, and popular language, understandable to children lacking cultural development. It is essential that they be very amusing. The plot, expressions, songs, proverbs must be written in an easy form so that the children may be able immediately to pick them up and relate them to others. It is desirable that these plays, skits, and scenarios be done in such form as to involve the audience into some of the episodes, games, etc.

The Arts Committee of Pen and Hammer is gathering material for an anthology of proletarian verse. Poets wishing to contribute should submit poems to Arnold Perl or M. Vetch, 114 West 21st Street, New York.





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