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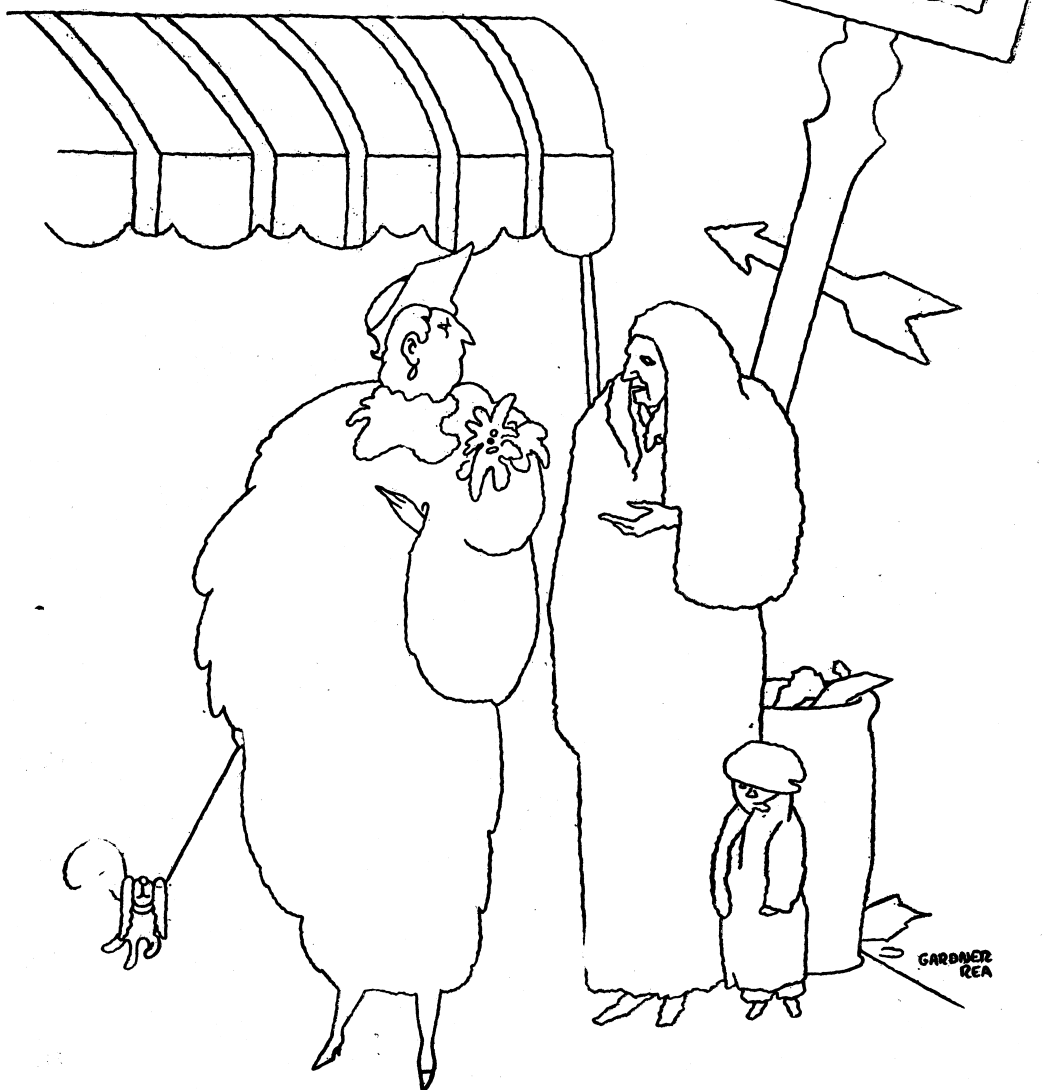
new Masses

JANUARY 28, 1936

The Silicosis Investigation

JUST a year ago THE NEW MASSES published two articles by Philippa Allen on the ravages of silicosis and the negligence of companies who refuse to protect workers from this incurable occupational disease. The House Labor sub-committee is finally investigating this crime. Miss Allen has testified before the committee, giving substantially the same account that she gave in THE NEW MASSES. The present hearing is an attempt to force the Department of Labor to appoint a board to investigate health conditions among public-utility workers throughout the country. In West Virginia, 476 workers have already died, their lungs destroyed, and fifteen hundred others face slow strangulation from working at Gauley's Bridge. The company responsible for this wholesale slaughter of workingmen has been able to settle the suits of destitute families with the most inadequate compensation. The Gauley's Bridge Committee composed of a broad United Front of labor, liberal and medical groups, has been set up to aid the victims of the disaster in West Virginia, to throw light on the conditions that led to this almost unbelievable industrial tragedy and to fight against the possibility of similar disasters in the future. As matters now stand, the victims of silicosis can obtain neither public relief, compensation nor employment. The Committee, 245 Seventh Avenue, New York City, welcomes funds to make the last days of the doomed men as comfortable as possible and to save their families from actual starvation.

THE West Virginia law purporting to make silicosis a compensatory disease, in Representative Marcantonio's words, "needs plenty of amending to make it effective." Indeed, the House committee must not only assure adequate compensation laws; it must force employers to provide protection for their workers against the fine dust that causes silicosis; it must prevent the deliberate murder of hundreds of men every year by companies who, because safeguards cost money, deliberately and needlessly expose men to working con-



"But I thought The New York Times had taken care of all you people!"

Gardner Rea

ditions that mean, in almost every case, certain death.

Hearst Pages Hathaway

AFTER last year's May Day demonstration, Tammany Hall transferred Assistant District Attorney James Neary from the Homicide Bureau to the Bureau of Special Investigation, with instructions to "get the Reds." Mr. Neary started his campaign by reading various volumes and pamphlets purchased at the Workers Bookshop. Now, for some mysterious reason he has requested Clarence Hathaway, James Casey, both of The Daily Worker, and M. J. Olgin and W. E. Douglas of the Workers Library Publishing Company to appear before him this week on the complaint of unnamed persons. Despite Neary's secrecy as to the source of the complaint, there is reason to believe Hathaway when he says that it emanates from Hearst headquarters. To begin with, the legislature in Albany

is at this moment considering bills designed to throttle democratic rights. Hearst reporters in the capital are actively lobbying for this fascist legislation. Presumably this first move against the labor press is intended to stimulate a Red scare which will stampede the legislature into passing the bills. Perhaps the Board of Aldermen, before whom similar bills are pending, will likewise be scared into voting them.

THE most important aspect of the case, however, is national. There can no longer be any question that the Tories are rapidly organizing the country for war. Already the statute books of the country contain laws enabling the reaction to crush all popular expression of opinion. The question is, how far and how soon can these be applied now. The Daily Worker case is a test move in that direction. If the Tories can get away with it, they will go further. The criminal anarchy act, first tried out on

Communists, will be applied to liberals of every shade of opinion who oppose war and fascism. Whether or not the reactionaries fail in this sinister attempt will depend entirely on how powerful a protest all liberal-minded Americans make against this new assault on the freedom of the press.

Whalen Letters from Brazil?

CAPTAIN MIRANDO CORREA, chief of the political section of the Rio de Janeiro police, apparently has ambitions to be another Grover Whalen. He says he is submitting to Washington documents "with grave bearing on the relations of the United States and the U.S.S.R." This is Brazil's way of coming to the rescue of little, discomfited Uruguay, which broke off diplomatic relations with the Soviet Union on the grounds that Moscow had financed the Brazilian uprising of late November. Uruguay was unable to produce any substantiating documents—naturally, because, as Pravda pointed out at the time, Moscow did not finance the uprising. The Uruguayan government was at least wise enough not to raid the Soviet trade bureau. The British Tory government did that in 1926 when it was about to break off trade relations with the Soviets and then had to make the embarrassing admission that the documents the police had been looking for were not there. But Captain Mirando Correa thinks he can find a way to put the Soviets in wrong even if Uruguay can't. We await his "documents" with breathless attention, meanwhile reminding the Captain that Grover Whalen, who sponsored some unusually clumsy anti-Soviet forgeries when he was Chief of New York's police force, has long since retired to private life.

THE reactionary Vargas government is in as tight a place as any since it assumed power in Brazil five years ago, not excepting the time of the San Paulo revolt of 1932. In his five years in power Getulio Vargas has signally failed to produce anything like a balanced budget. Without money he cannot continue to pay the army, and his creditors abroad (especially, at the moment, his American creditors) are threatening to crack down on him if he does not make good on at least some of his numerous promises to pay his debts and to enable Brazilian importers of foreign (American) goods to pay theirs. The November revolt,



it now appears, was precipitated by the Vargas government's aggressive weeding out of soldiers who had fraternized with railroad strikers in Rio Grande do Norte. Since the revolt, the government has gone still further than it had previously dared in the direction of establishing a naked dictatorship based on force and on the terrorism of fascist bands (known in Brazil as Integralists). At the same time, in a last desperate effort to stay in the good graces of the American capitalists, Vargas is talking of abrogating all Brazil's trade treaties with other foreign nations and extending certain tariff concessions to the United States alone. This is a language that Wall Street can understand and it will carry Vargas further, while his discredited régime continues to exist, than the furnishing to Washington of anti-Soviet "documents of grave import"!

Who Is Raising Prices?

THE hoary device of a purse-snatcher himself raising the cry of "Stop Thief!" is being tinkered up with 1936 trimmings by the Liberty League, which hopes to fasten the whole blame for the increased cost of living on Roosevelt. The silk-hatted banditti of the Liberty League are virtuously chasing those petty larceny thieves who somewhere along the line can be safely exposed as lifting the final few pennies from the consumer's pocket—such as the "artichoke king," for instance, exorcized by LaGuardia with bugles at sunrise. The Right opposition to Roosevelt does not confine itself, of course, to fooling with "artichoke kings." It says to the city worker, the farmer is boosting the price of pork and beans, that's why you eat less. It

says to the farmer, Roosevelt won't keep his hands off business, there's unemployment, people can't buy, vote for us. It fails to say to either farmer or worker that the New Deal program of 1933, then ardently supported by the top strata of American capitalism which now compose the Liberty League, based its hope of effectiveness on raising prices and keeping them up, that it succeeded in squeezing countless thousands of small businessmen to the wall and left the monopolists with a whole continent to exploit and a free hand to do it.

WORKERS, whether employed or unemployed, do not need to study charts to know that their standard of living has declined and is declining. They are eating less meat, drinking less milk, enjoying fewer mechanical conveniences in the home, seeing fewer shows, wearing fewer new clothes. (The Christmas retail turnover was larger in 1935 than in 1934, but the rise in prices far overtopped that increase, revealing a smaller total number of purchases.) One estimate of real wages—the actual purchasing power of money—for employed workers gives an increase of not quite two percent from 1932 to 1935. That is for employed workers. Average this figure with the precipitous drop in the money-income of the unemployed—and what workers' family is without its unemployed members or connections, with whom it must share?—and the picture is one of a calamitous diminution in all the comforts and necessities of life. Against this nightmare phantasy of the world's most technically advanced country tied by capitalist economy to a poor-house scale of life, stands the illuminating summary of corporation profits. The Federal Reserve Board reports that 166 corporations made the following profits, in the first nine months of each of the past three years:

1933	\$364,700,000
1934	569,000,000
1935	741,300,000

These are figures to burn into the consciousness of American workers. All the labor-hating, strike-breaking, shoot-to-kill corporations are there, Standard Oil, du Pont, General Motors, Bethlehem, Chrysler. They are all in the more-than-a-million-dollar-a-year-net-profit column, and they are all in the Liberty League too, howling about the high cost of living.



Colin

Anthony Colin

"Guarantees of Protection"

TODAY in New York City 21,000 working-class families and individuals are waiting to be told whether they are to get home relief or jobs. Whether or not they eat in the meantime does not seem to worry the administration. Crippled by the latest broadside of layoffs in the Emergency Relief Bureau, the over-worked staffs of the district offices will not get around to some of these "pending cases" for five or six weeks to come. In the face of a rising protest from her own workers against this drive on the unemployed, Miss Charlotte Carr, executive director of the E.R.B., recently gave out a carefully-worded statement to the press:

While the Bureau cannot offer vested job rights to its employes, it can and does guarantee them protection against discrimination and unfairness.

Simultaneously with this announcement, came wholesale dismissals of foreign-born workers whose final citizenship had not been granted, punitive transfers of workers active in the A.W.P.R.A., the employes' union, and the firing of several organization leaders, backed by the announcement of a new, union-smashing personnel policy. At the same time Victor Ridder, local Works Progress Administrator, threatened to double the already hopeless load of the Bureau employes by firing 20,000 of his workers. Frustrated by orders from

his chief, Harry Hopkins and reminded by a picket line of 4,000 white-collar workers thrown around his office, Ridder rescinded his order. In the course of this exchange it was revealed that Ridder had set up within his office a "reemployment bureau" which, backed by coercive regulations of the familiar "work or starve" type, was to become a scab labor exchange for private industry.

GROWING in the organizations both of relief-bureau workers and of workers on work relief is the consciousness that the present drive against the living standards of the unemployed can only be met by a solid front of the working class. Meeting in convention from Jan. 16 to Jan. 19, delegates of the A.W.P.R.A. sent back to their locals a strong resolution urging affiliation with the A. F. of L. They also indorsed a Labor Party and condemned District Attorney Dodge for the beginning of a drive to muzzle the labor press. Meanwhile, 21,000 applicants for relief are waiting. More important to them than the politics of the administration is the vital issue of how they will live for four, five or six mid-winter weeks without relief.

The Neutrality Bill

IT IS undoubtedly valuable to quiz J. P. Morgan and to prove that he and other finance capitalists dragged

this country into the World War. It is undoubtedly valuable to show that Woodrow Wilson, despite his sanctimonious phrases of "formal" neutrality, was pro-Ally three years before the United States sent armed troops into France to help the cause of the Entente. Certainly it is not surprising that Wilson sided with Britain and France when the Morgan interests gave the cue. For it was made clear to Wilson that American finance capitalism could amass greater profits by extending credits to the Allies and acting as central purchasing agents for both England and France. These facts are obvious enough now; but such knowledge is *useless* if the American people walk into the trap again. As Joseph Freeman says in his article on the Nye investigation in the present issue: "The preparations [for war] are now more quiet, more efficient, more intensive, vastly larger in scale."

TWENTY years have not lessened Wall Street's power. And Roosevelt is following Wilson's lead—pious resolutions which on analysis mean nothing. The present neutrality measure before Congress—does it differ from Wilson's promises of "keeping us out of war," can it better withstand the pressure of the finance capitalists and fascists of today who strain for war? Already in its present form, the Administration Bill is the target of big business. The Senate Foreign Relations Committee has surrendered to Wall Street by including in the draft of the neutrality bill the principle of "freedom of the seas," as it existed prior to August, 1914. The meaning of such an inclusion is clear: if American ships loaded with munitions are sunk by belligerents, the American government is placed in the position of defending death cargoes. Neutrality legislation that has any validity cannot possibly be dictated by finance capitalism. Neutrality legislation must be rooted in reality, ironclad, enunciating the principle insisted upon by the Soviet Union that peace is indivisible, that peace can be maintained only through collective action of nations against a declared aggressor, that an embargo on both war materials and credit must be declared against the aggressor. Such legislation alone embodies the will of the American people, the will that insists that the profits of the few must not be placed above the safety, health and the determined wishes of the overwhelming majority.

new Masses

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Published weekly by WEEKLY MASSES Co., INC., at 31 East 27th Street, New York City. Copyright, 1935, NEW MASSES, INC., Reg. U. S. Patent Office. Drawings and text may not be printed without permission. Entered as second-class matter, June 24, 1926, at the Post Office at New York, N. Y., under the act of March 3, 1879. Single copies 15 cents. Subscription \$4.50 a year in U. S. and Colonies and Mexico. Six months \$2.50; three months \$1.25; Foreign \$5.50 a year; six months \$3; three months \$1.50. Subscribers are notified that no change in address can be effected in less than two weeks. THE NEW MASSES welcomes the work of new writers in prose and verse, and of artists. Manuscripts and drawings must be accompanied by return postage. THE NEW MASSES pays for contributions.

Lenin and Leadership

MICHAEL GOLD

THE fascists have set up a decadent cult of leadership in which a Mussolini or Hitler is ballyhooed like some new brand of corn flakes, given the divine attributes of a barbaric Roman emperor and credited with the miraculous conception of fascism.

Outside of terrorized Italy and Germany, ordinary people laugh in movie houses when either of these burlesque demi-gods is flashed on the screen. The common sense of humanity is democratic; deep in his core, every man knows himself as human or divine as any other man born of woman. Every non-fascist historian too, knows the sordid inner story of Hitler and Mussolini. Fascism was not their creation, but the work of the big bankers and industrialists, who needed strike insurance against the hungry and outraged people. Strip the show medals off a fascist leader, the gas and ballyhoo away from him, and he is revealed as a miserable office boy of the great financiers.

Moribund and reactionary capitalism has spawned in every land these grotesque carpetbaggers, these Coughlins, Hearsts, De La Rocques, Hitlers and Mussolinis. But the working people of the world, fresh in a sense of new-born dignity and strength, hungry for culture, joy and an expanding life, have given us leaders like Lenin.

Lenin was as much abused by the capitalists in his time as Stalin is today; he was called a "dictator," a man without a heart. But the slaveholders of our own South brought the same charges against Lincoln. Was Lincoln a despotic dictator? It is true that any leader fighting a war for freedom must make dangerous and arbitrary decisions. But Lincoln was controlled by a congress and cabinet that often outvoted him. Neither could he have conducted the war for a day had he not had the unwavering approval of the northern farmers, mechanics and middle classes.

Lenin's power in the Russian civil war was never any more absolute than that of Lincoln. Lenin did not rule by personal fiat; the very nature of Communism precluded that. He had to fight for his opinions, democratically, with his fellow-commissars and before great congresses of peasants, workers and soldiers. On occasions he was outvoted; he

was subject to free criticisms; he was a leader but it was because he had asserted a moral superiority. As one of his fellow-leaders said, "the old man grew upon us, for he was always right."

True greatness somehow finds its place in a true democracy; it needs no wealth or hereditary rights, or ballyhoo or privilege. Like sunlight, Lenin pervaded the heart and mind of revolutionary Russia with the supremacy of his insight. He needed no organized claque to cheer him, as do fascist demagogues. Love for Lenin grew in the Russian heart as for a father; he was revered in life, as he is revered now, in death.

How modest this great man was! He never wore a uniform or a medal in his life; he dressed like a mechanic and ate the simplest food. Nobody ever called him, "Your Excellency," but by the common and beautiful word "Comrade." He was one of the great theoreticians; a great organizer and general, too, laden with a thousand daily decisions, yet never did this philosopher and general forget to listen to the workers and farmers who came to him in Moscow, and to study their needs and thoughts as closely as he had studied Marx.

Lenin was a genius; but his bearing was as simple and democratic as that of a rank-and-file leader of a labor union. Stalin, his disciple, has the same simplicity. A real working-class movement creates such leaders; it shapes them in this mould.

One of the major problems of democracy has always been that of leadership. Because of years of monotonous betrayal by leaders whom it had elevated, a section of the working class, such as the I.W.W. and anarchist movements, came to distrust all leadership. The rise of Hitler and Mussolini has undoubtedly deepened this suspicion. Yet no movement can function without leaders. They are the coordinators of the great army of liberation, as necessary as dispatchers to a railroad.

A well-disciplined Labor Party will always know how to exercise a democratic control over its leaders. When Trotsky, now Hearst's latest star among Red-baiters, resisted the deepest needs of the Russian masses, Trotsky was eliminated.

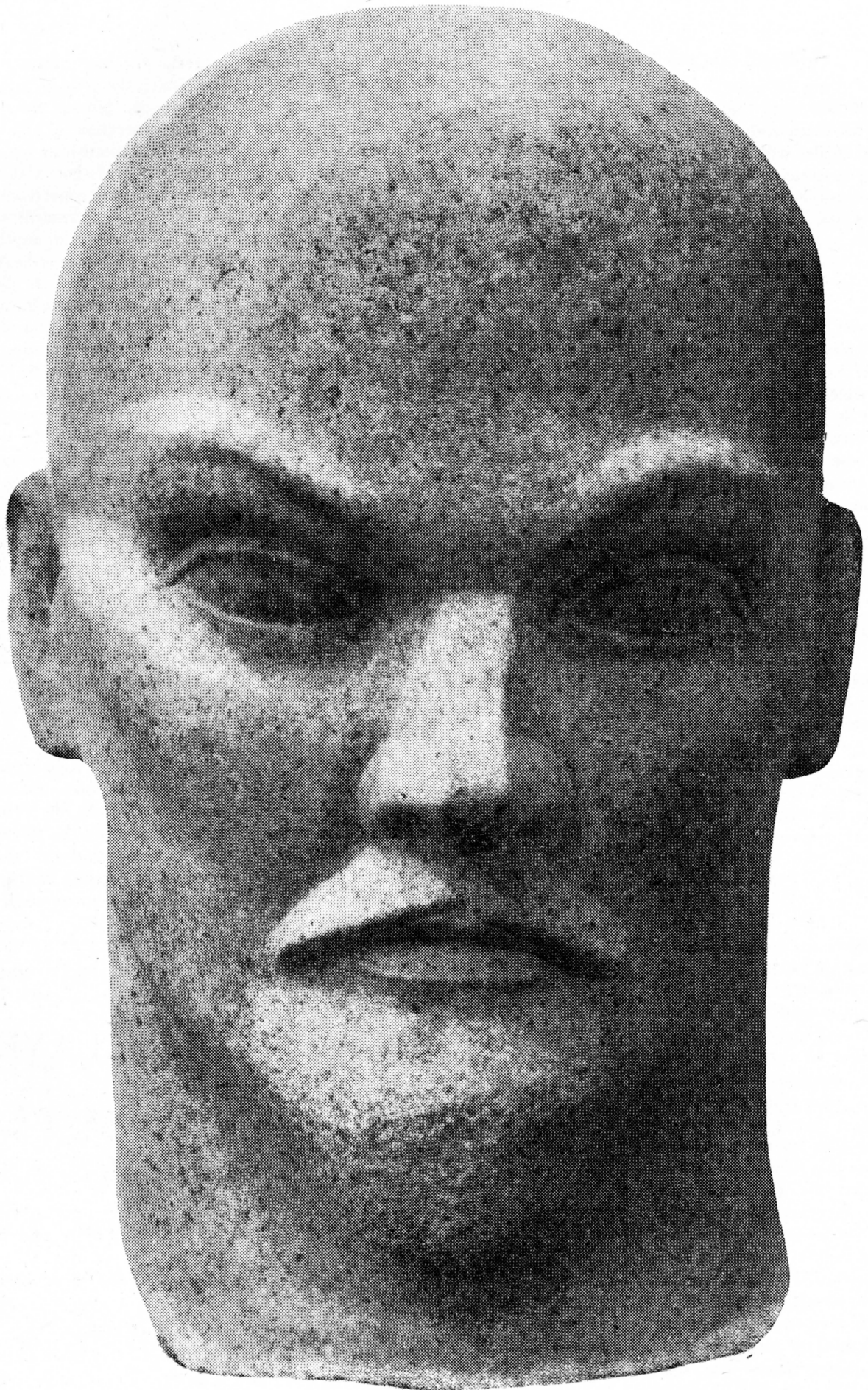
Lenin was a profound democrat, who ruled, because in a proletarian democracy, the best man must inevitably rise to the top. Nobody, except the enemy, fears such leaders; but instead, the people love them and are grateful to them. Genius is like electricity; it can kill or create, in contact with the masses. The genius of Lenin belonged to the people; he never felt it as his own; and when a great man loves the people as deeply and simply as he, history is made.

The Napoleons are stranded on a rock of Elba. The Machados are driven out like filthy rats. The Hitlers and Mussolinis will be hanged. Sooner or later, the people come to their own, and know their enemies and friends. In the heart of the workers of the world, there will forever shine the image of that heroic, witty, large-brained man, liberator of the oppressed and heavy-laden; their friend and father, Lenin the leader.

"When Lenin died, many of us experienced a painful feeling of uncertainty," once wrote Leon Kaganovitch, the remarkable Soviet organizer, who directed the peasant collectivization.

"Some of us thought; how shall we finish Lenin's work without Lenin? Thinking thus, many of the comrades did not suspect that actually they were criticizing Lenin himself." For Lenin, he goes on to say, had not built a party around any one leader; it was a mass party, combining discipline, a democratic centralism, strong leaders and the rapid development of new leaders from among the people, who themselves determined and shaped the policies.

Leaders, even the greatest, could die and be mourned; but the principle they had fought for was incarnated in millions of eager hearts and minds. It is twelve years this week since Lenin, that incandescent flame of human courage and intelligence, died of an illness brought on by the bullets of a frenzied girl who could not understand the New Economic Policy and believed it to be Lenin's surrender to capitalism. It is twelve years and another leader has appeared in Stalin. The great socialist work has gone on, and today all reports tell us there is joy and hope in the Soviet Union. Lenin still lives and leads his Party!



HEAD OF LENIN

Sculpture by Ahron Ben Shmuol

The Future of British Monarchy

JOHN STRACHEY

LONDON, Jan. 21.

THE death of King George V raises important questions as to the political effect which his death and the succession of the Prince of Wales will have.

It is now necessary to examine what will be the effects of the succession to the throne of Edward, Prince of Wales. Indeed, everybody is at the moment in private discussing this question. For let us make no mistake about it: the change of monarch will have considerable political effects.

There is no greater myth in the world than that of the unpolitical character of the British crown. The present monarchy is a political institution which the British governing class established by due process of law in 1688 for their own purposes, and they have used it for those purposes ever since and are so using it today. The British governing class is like one of those thrifty housewives that never throws anything away in case it may some day "come in useful." Other capitalist classes, such as the French and American, scrapped the feudal institution of monarchy when they came to power. Not so the British. They transformed monarchy to their own use, seeming to foresee a time like the present when they would find such a bulwark of conservatism extremely useful in their struggle against anti-capitalist democratic forces.

The crisis of 1931 marked the point at which the British capitalist class began a more intensive use of the monarchy for anti-labor purposes. Much remains dark and secret about the actual role played by the Crown in that crisis, but Professor Laski's interesting researches leave little doubt that the Crown was used decisively by Mr. MacDonald and Mr. Baldwin as an indispensable instrument for getting rid of the labor cabinet and setting up a national government. Professor Laski considers that this was contrary to the British constitution and of course it was contrary to what all the modern textbooks say about the complete political neutrality of the Crown. But what is the British constitution? As a matter of fact, since the British governing class has taken the precaution never to write that constitution down it is just about what the governing class likes to say it is at any particular moment. This is the famous "flexibility" of the constitution which is so highly praised.

The 1931 crisis marked, I suggest, the beginning of a period in which attempts will be made to use the Crown more and more openly for anti-working-class purposes. It is said that we have just witnessed one such attempt. It is credibly reported that the King was active in support of the Hoare-

Laval Pact and in opposition to any policy which might result in the fall of Mussolini. Far greater political crises lie ahead of us. However, it will be if and when the British governing class begins to feel that its existence as a governing class is seriously called into question that we shall see the most determined efforts to mobilize the Crown with all its prestige against the working class. Nor should we underestimate the psychological hold which the conception of monarchy still has over everyone of us. However modern, emancipated and progressive we may think we are, there are almost sure to be primitive, childish instincts tucked away in odd corners of our minds. And it is precisely these primitive childish instincts which respond to the appeal of monarchy.

The practical political question is this: to what extent will whatever king is at the moment on the throne allow the prestige of the monarchy to be used against the working class? As time goes on there will be more and more pressure to convert Buckingham Palace into a branch office of the Central Conservative Association. But if the incumbent of the throne is wise he will hesitate very long before yielding to such pressure. For just insofar as the monarchy is used to hold down, to deflect or to trick the working-class movement will it in the end become odious to the mass of the British people and nothing can ultimately prevent the rise of the working-class power. The question arises, however, as to whether any king, living in the extraordinary atmosphere which surrounds modern royalty, can realize this fact sufficiently clearly to see that in his own interest it is imperative for him

to resist the more blatant attempts, at any rate, which the governing-class politicians will make to use him as their puppet. A man of the generation of the late King could hardly be expected to realize much of this. I recollect a Labor Cabinet minister who had several long conversations with him during the 1929 government saying that it was exactly like talking to any business man commuting up from suburbs to his city office.

It remains to be seen whether Prince Edward will show himself, when he comes to the throne, to be a little more in touch with twentieth century realities. There is some evidence to show that he is subject to sharply conflicting impulses. And this just because he has a more up-to-date type of political consciousness. I do not think that, on the one hand, there is much doubt that the Prince of Wales' awareness of the difficulties of present-day capitalism incline him in a fascist direction. But on the other hand, they probably make him sensitive to mass pressure if that pressure is resolutely and intelligently applied. It may be that if the broad democratic forces in this country can make themselves felt quickly and powerfully enough, if something like a People's Front can be formed before it is too late, Prince Edward can be made to feel that the wisest course for him is not to flout these popular forces.

Like another comparatively young man who has just been called to high office, namely Mr. Eden, the Prince must be made to feel that when he ascends the throne his only way to popularity and success will be to resist the pressure of the reactionary forces by which he is surrounded.

SPIVAK ARTICLE DELAYED

The eighth article in the present series of European dispatches by John L. Spivak, scheduled for publication in this issue, has not as yet been received. A cable informed us that it had been sent. We hope to print it in the next issue.—THE EDITORS.

The Attack on West Coast Labor

AMY SCHECHTER

SAN FRANCISCO.

YOU can't get away from the waterfront or the unions in San Francisco. The steep streets look down on the Bay. From Nob Hill where San Francisco's wealthiest live, the whole sweeping curve of the Embarcadero is visible. It is not impossible that looking down at the Embarcadero, dwellers on Nob Hill may—if they have heard of it—think of labor's iron ring around Paris.

But San Franciscans, wherever they live, are keenly aware of the maritime unions and the attack that is being prepared on them, despite the fact that San Francisco papers almost entirely suppressed the sensational announcement of open warfare on West Coast maritime unions made by Elisha Hanson, attorney for Swayne and Hoyt. The New York papers carried front-page stories of the plans revealed by Hanson and others in close touch with the shipping companies on the Pacific Coast. These plans were reported to include federal action against the Pacific Coast Maritime Federation (to which 99 percent of maritime unions on the Coast are affiliated), indictment of Harry Bridges and some twenty-five other union leaders, placing the unions in the hands of the Ryan-Olander machine, taking over union hiring-halls, etc., and mobilization of a coastwise vigilante organization described as already set up and ready to function.

On the day the story broke, December 31, the early edition of Hearst's San Francisco Call-Bulletin carried an Associated Press Dispatch from Washington on Hanson's statement, under the heading, "Seek U.S. War on San Francisco Unions." This item was entirely deleted in the later edition and since then the story has been ignored in the Hearst and other San Francisco papers.

The reason is obvious. Shipowners here know the white-hot pride of San Francisco maritime workers in their unions and the rank-and-file leadership under which they have made such remarkable gains since the General Strike gave the deathblow to company unionism on the waterfront. They realize, perhaps not fully, the welded resistance they face once San Francisco labor is aroused to the attack; and from the time of the secret coastwise meeting of shipowners' associations, Chambers of Commerce, etc., held here the second week in December to coordinate the offensive, every effort has been made to maintain strict secrecy until time to go.

The announcement of an open attack hardly comes as a surprise. Ever since the formation of the Maritime Federation, ten months ago, the attack has gone on under one form or another, with employers constantly maneuvering for a position in which

they could declare a general lockout and drive full force against the unions. In the critical days of October, when the San Francisco Waterfront Employers Association had black-listed 1,800 of the 4,000 longshoremen on the docks for refusal to handle cargo from the striking port of Vancouver, B. C., and other hot cargo and were all set to take over the I.L.A. 38-79 hiring hall, this plan to engineer a lockout came dangerously close to success.

The attempt was halted at the last moment by the joint strategy carried through by the San Francisco and Vancouver unions. The moves which checkmated the shipowners were possible only because of the exceptionally high organizational level existing on the West Coast and the solidarity displayed by the Vancouver strikers who sacrificed their immediate interests and released the Vancouver cargo at the San Francisco docks, in order to remove the basis for an attack on the San Francisco unions which they realized might have endangered the very existence of the Maritime Federation. Time after time in the past months only this highly developed union consciousness on the part of the West Coast maritime unions, their capacity for organized action and the cool-headed and undeniably brilliant generalship displayed by Harry Bridges and the other men that the rank-and-file unions have chosen to lead them, have averted an open clash.

In bringing forward the refusal of West Coast unions to handle hot cargo as proof of "irresponsible" leadership, Elisha Hanson and the other advance agents of the drive on the Maritime Federation, carefully omit mentioning that this policy on hot cargo had been officially adopted at the annual convention of the International Longshoreman's Association held in New York early in 1935. In fact, the Ryan machine supported the resolution.

Ryan repeatedly gave lip service to this decision during the Gulf strike, dramatically announced midnight of October 31 as the deadline for handling Gulf cargo in every port on both coasts. Then Ryan broke up the attempts of longshoremen in eastern ports to execute the embargo, went through the same farce a couple of times more, forcing the West Coast to assume the whole burden and the peril of carrying through the national decision.

The refusal to handle goods from strike areas is of course not the radical innovation, as the shipowners and reactionary officials claim, but a basic principle of American trade unionism—one that has played an important part in union procedure for over a century. It must be emphasized here that the maritime unions, linked together loosely in the Maritime Federation for greater organizational strength, are all A.F. of L. unions in good standing,

with the exception of the American Radio Telegraphers Association, which is negotiating for affiliation. Here in San Francisco, in 1916, when shipping interests were already preparing for the World War, there was a prolonged and bitter struggle on the San Francisco waterfront centering around this same question of the refusal of maritime unions to handle hot cargo. An interesting parallel.

The attitude of the West Coast unions on arbitration is listed by Elisha Hanson and others as another proof of the "irresponsibility" of rank-and-file control. The facts in regard to the West Coast unions and arbitration are that these unions have demonstrated that strong and militant unions under capable and honest leadership can to some extent lessen the effectiveness of arbitration as a weapon in the hands of the shipowners. In other words, shipowners have not been able to use the Arbitration Board to chisel agreements, because of the organized action on the job with which the unions have immediately met every such attempt. Whence the desire, expressed repeatedly and with increasing vehemence in the course of the past months by bitter-enders in the ranks of the San Francisco Waterfront Employers Association to scrap agreements and arbitration or rank-and-file leaders or preferably both.

Incidentally, there is nothing in the agreement between the shipowners and the Pacific Coast unions which obligates any worker to handle goods declared unfair by other unions or to walk through picket lines. Recently, several important companies operating out of San Francisco specifically recognized the principle involved in the refusal to handle hot cargo and incorporated clauses to that effect in agreements with Bargemen's Local 38-101, I.L.A., San Francisco, and Bargemen's Local 38-102 I.L.A., Stockton, both rank-and-file controlled. The clause in part reads:

... it is agreed that in the event that the employes refuse to work in, on or about any docks, piers, vessels or cargo which has been declared unfair by any maritime labor organization, or where any maritime organization has established a picketline, such refusal by any employe to work shall not constitute a violation of this agreement.

The Penalties Clause

ONE thing the waterfront refused and will continue to refuse to arbitrate. This is the demand of the shipowners for the so-called "penalties" clause which the Waterfront Employers Association presented on October 21 for insertion into the I.L.A. 38-79 agreement. In addition to constituting a definite violation of the agreement, this is an openly fascist provision, copied directly from Hitler's labor code and opposed to American

democratic traditions and everything for which American trade unionism stands. The central provision of the penalties clause is the following:

Longshoremen who shall refuse to turn to after having been dispatched for work or who shall strike or stop work on any job, or who shall refuse to work cargo as ordered shall for each offense be subject to the following penalties:

a) For the first offense shall suffer a reduction of 50 percent in the maximum work hours for the ensuing four-week work period.

b) For the second offense shall suffer permanent elimination from the registration list and loss of further employment under the award.

Other provisions of the penalties clause give the employers the right to "summary dismissal" for smoking; provide that longshoremen "found guilty of pilfering or stealing cargo shall be permanently dropped from the registration list and suffer permanent loss under the award," etc., provisions which would make it possible for an employer to frame up any active unionist that he might want to get rid of, precisely as is done today in the company-union-ruled steel plants and in Southern textile mills.

The union-smashing intent of this penalties clause is clear. If the I.L.A. accepted it, they would be putting an end to their own existence as a labor union and thereafter would exist only as a fascist Labor Front unit. According to this clause which binds workers to jobs as inexorably as in fascist Italy or Germany, the union is itself made the jailor of the workers, in exactly the manner prevailing in these countries.

The attempt to force the penalties clause on the waterfront unions is the key to the shipowners' present strategy. When they charge the rank-and-file leaders of the Pacific Coast maritime unions with "irresponsibility," they mean that these leaders refuse

to turn over to the shipowners the unions they have been elected to lead or allow the shipowners to transform the unions into jails for the workers or accept the position of jailors. A longshoreman summed up the position of the union: "The union refused to become a dick agency and the plan blew up."

However, if Bridges and the other rank-and-file leaders will not accept the fascist role the shipowners wish to assign to officials of the maritime unions, others can be found who will. Hence the move to force out Bridges, and the other rank-and-file leaders (re-elected to office in the annual elections in various of the San Francisco maritime unions held in the course of the past months by overwhelming majorities) and to allow the Ryan-Olander machine to take over.

National Anti-Labor Drive

A CONFIDENTIAL memorandum from the files of a leading shipping company in San Francisco, disclosed, a few weeks back, that the company was bothered by the solidarity of the West Coast maritime workers and the growing influence of the Maritime Federation. Also, that in the opinion of the company "Harry Bridges is more solidly entrenched than ever before, and that if anything is to be done about the situation *it must be done from the East.*"

Action from the East has begun. The various moves of the past couple of weeks all fit nicely into a plan. In Washington, Elisha Hanson of Swayne and Hoyt broadcasts his appeal to the federal authorities for action against the Maritime Federation and its leaders; R. J. Baker of New York, President of the American Shipowners Association, issues a statement on the renewal of the 1935 agreement by Olander and other East Coast

officials of the International Seamen's Union, in which he contrasts the "amicable" situation in the Atlantic Coast Branch of the I.S.U., "under the guidance of Andy Furuseth, Victor A. Olander and other reputable leaders" with the "continued strife" prevailing on the West Coast. "The difference lies simply in the leadership of these two branches of the union," Mr. Baker says. In New York, Paul Scharrenberg, leading I.S.U. reactionary and ex-member of the Sailor's Union of the Pacific, demands that the "revocation of West Coast charters and the reorganization by the convention" be carried through by the international convention of the International Seamen's Union set for Washington, January 14. (Scharrenberg was expelled from his local for two reasons—the unauthorized calling of the tanker strike without referring it to the rank-and-file of the Seamen's Union for a referendum; and his statements made at arbitration hearings that "I hope we have a war with Japan, because we will be sitting on top of the world then"; "We don't care how much the shipowners is able to make out [of the government funds] as long as we get our share.")

Following a general survey of the situation in the Sailors Union of the Pacific since the 1934 strike, the report goes into what it describes as "the unhealthy tie-up of the sailors with the longshoremen" in West Coast ports.

It has become a fetish along the waterfront to argue that the sailors cannot get along without the support of the longshoremen, and vice versa—the report continues—this idea was inculcated into the minds of the new members of both unions, particularly the Sailors, during the 1934 strike, the cry was all for a "United Front," which may be all right for tactical purposes in fighting a battle, but once that battle is over, history has proved that the interests of the two organizations are not the same.

Harry Bridges, his "large following up and down the Coast" and the existence of the Maritime Federation, are, according to the report, responsible for the coastwise unity it deplors. Approaching the question of how to remedy the situation the report states:

With this picture in front of us, the natural question is, "What is to be done?" And the answer is that any one of several things could correct the situation:

1) Cancellation of the charter by the International Seamen's Union. This would mean the confiscation of the funds of the union; seizure of books and records; probably issuance of a charter to a new union, and in the meantime, leave the sailors without an agreement with the employers. This method would very likely produce trouble.

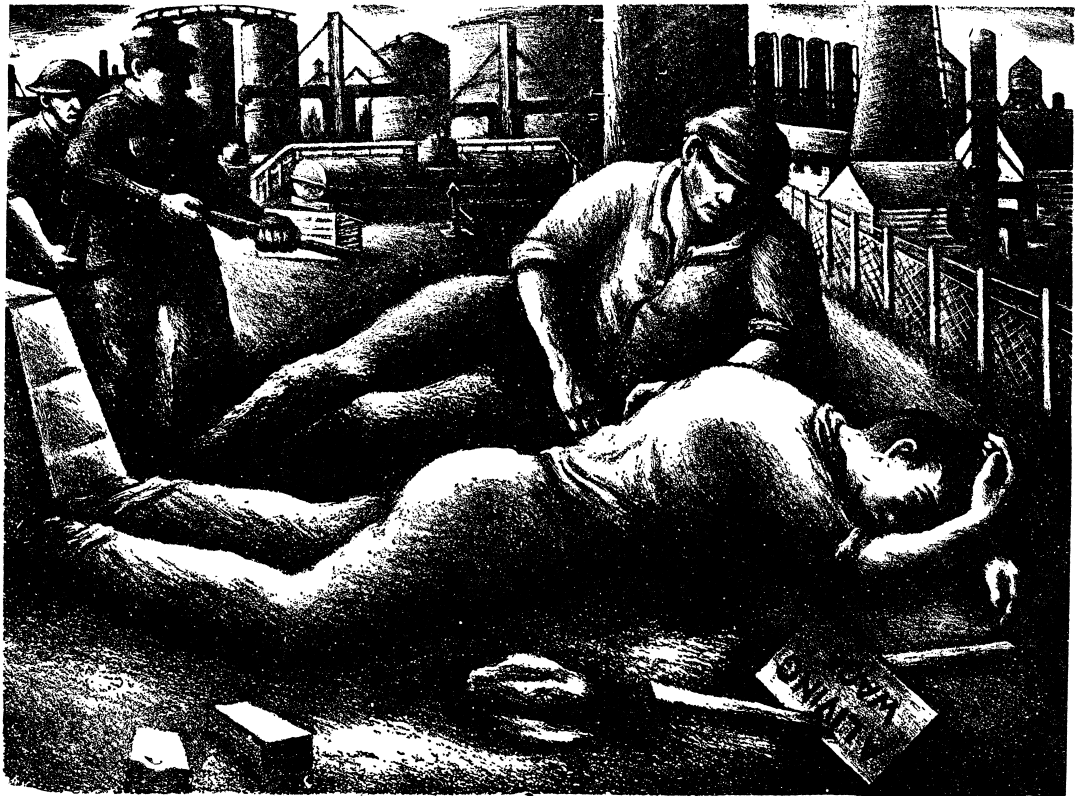
2) Suspension of the charter by the international. Under this plan restoration would probably hinge upon the Union's agreement to purge its ranks of all radicals, and put itself in a position to abide by agreements and awards.

3) The government could step in. The government would probably work through the immigration department or Department of Justice. Their angles of course would be illegal entry, failure to take advantage of citizenship laws, and criminal and subversive activity.

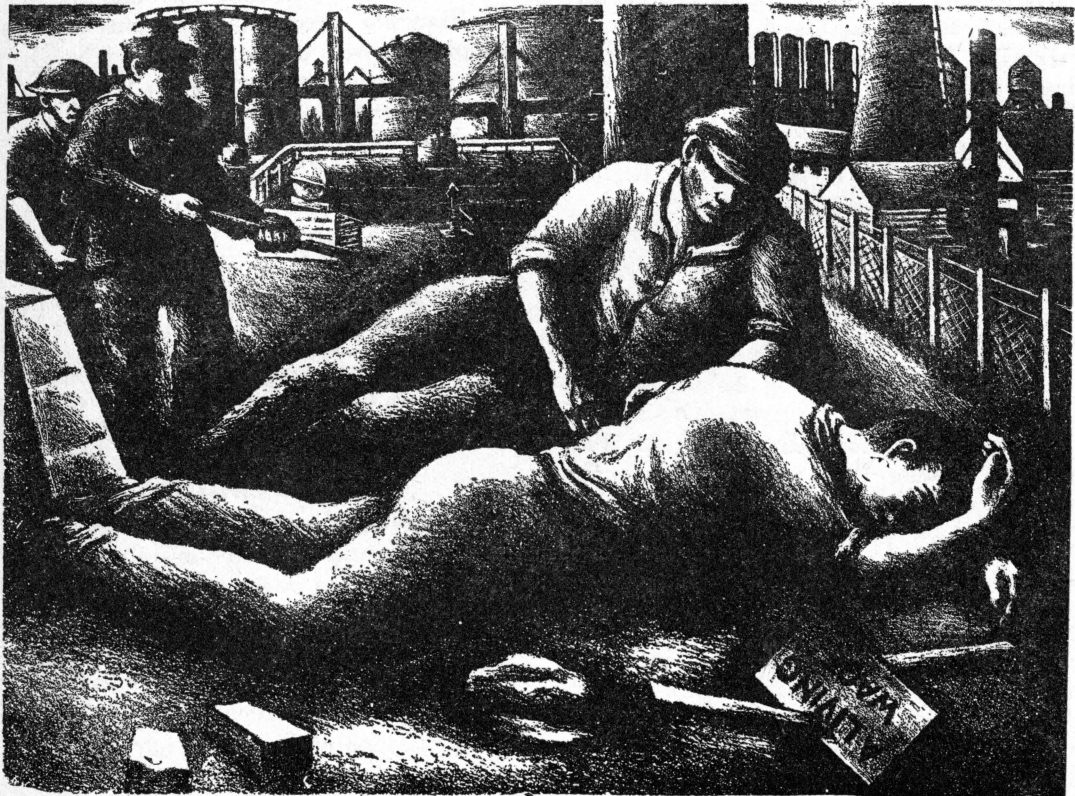
4) Vigilante activity. This might be effective, but deplorable. *It is also dangerous, because too*



Paul Meltzer



Paul Meltzner



Paul Meltzner

often, there is no discrimination between innocent and guilty. It would have to be carefully planned to avoid this, and should not be considered.

The Spread of Unionism

THE prestige and influence of the Maritime Federation has spread from the West Coast to the Gulf, to Canada and now to Hawaii. In a Washington ultimatum, Elisha Hanson specifically listed the part played by the Federation in aiding the organization of the Gulf maritime workers as an imperative reason for the liquidation of the Pacific Coast federation. The move to set up a Gulf Coast Maritime Federation, similar to that in the West has been directly fostered by the West Coast organization. Such steps are of genuine importance in the drive for industrial unionism in the maritime industry on a national scale—a step in line with the principles advocated by the Lewis-Gorman Committee.

In Vancouver, the maritime unions declared for some time their intention of affiliating to the Pacific Coast Federation after their admission to the I.L.A. and the I.S.U. In Honolulu, waterfront unionization has been initiated with funds and forces voted by the headquarters branch of the Sailors Union of the Pacific. Longshoremen as well are affected; a group of them wrote to Joseph Ryan for a charter, but Ryan is making use

of the fact that some of them are Japanese and other non-citizens to withhold the charter. And the Red scare is raised by the great sugar plantation owners in their attempt to prevent organization.

The drive also spreads inland. The longshoremen aided the Mine, Mill and Smelter Workers Union in setting up a local in Selby, where it is said three-quarters of the world's refined lead is stored. In Crockett, they helped to organize the workers in the Crockett sugar plant. They have brought into unions the unorganized bargemen along the Sacramento and San Joaquin Rivers—extending the organized workers' movement into the rich agricultural valleys of California. In Stockton, in Fresno, everywhere longshoremen are hired, they bring organization to the working class, organization along militant lines that will benefit California workers.

And in San Francisco the waterfront unions have extended their influence to the teamsters in a way that alarms the shippers. Solidarity established during the 1934 strike over the opposition of the reactionary Mike Casey, has grown steadily. This is especially true of teamsters hauling to and from the docks—today the longshoremen can pretty definitely rely on these men to support job action on the waterfront.

And that is the story up and down the

Coast. As one delegate to the San Francisco Central Labor Council from a non-maritime union put it: "Due to the waterfront unions, we organized our shop. Due to the waterfront unions we organized that shop—" pointing to another delegate. The waterfront unions have brought union organization to the Pacific Coast.

UNION signs are thickest along the Embarcadero—union restaurants, barber shops, filling stations, saloons, drugstores, tailor-shops . . . about 100 percent out in the Fillmore and Mission sections where most of the waterfront workers live. Car conductors wear large union buttons . . . the Market Street line which Tom Mooney was framed trying to organize is for the most part organized now, again with the help of the waterfront . . . despite reactionary officials controlling the car-men's union.

San Francisco is probably the strongest union city in the United States today, with the largest measure of rank-and-file control, despite the fact that the Vandeleur-Rossi machine is still in power. The fact that such a situation exists a year and a half after the General Strike is probably more alarming to the shipowners and notorious open-shop forces of California that back them than the General Strike itself.

Ireland Breeds a Serpent

BRIAN O'NEILL

DUBLIN.

MUSSOLINI'S jackal raid on Ethiopia has produced an instructive crystallization in Irish politics. He has secured support for his imperialist crime from everything that is reactionary and dirty in Ireland: cunning support from Cosgrave's United Ireland Party and its chain of subsidiary newspapers; circumspect support from many dignitaries of the Catholic church (opposition from none). And in General O'Duffy, now head of the National Corporative Party, he has found a veritable political *fille de chambre*. Here is O'Duffy on the Free State Government's sanction measures against the fascist war (Irish Press, November 18):

But for the Sanctions Bill there would be a hundred Italian vessels in the Liffey today loading cattle and other commodities, and a fine market would be available to this country. The Free State is backing the League against Italy despite the fact that Most Rev. Dr. Hinsley, Primate of England, said that if Italy lost the war it was a loss to Christianity, and that Monsignor Curran, head of the Irish College in Rome, regarded the action of the Dail as unchristian and dishonorable.

Americans know little of this man who

urges the Irish people to support an imperialist war of conquest on the independence of a free nation. Some additional details may be interesting, for General O'Duffy is more than a fogleman of Mussolini; he has his own dreams; finance capital once laid its hands on him and anointed him Duce-to-be of Ireland.

Eoin O'Duffy was an officer in the Irish Republican Army during the war with England from 1919 to 1921. After the Treaty of 1921, when the dominant section of the capitalist class accepted a "Free State" inside the British Empire and betrayed the national struggle for republican status, O'Duffy went over to the Free State side. And he rose high. During the Civil War of 1922-24 he was in command of the Free State forces in Kerry, the stronghold of republican resistance. Kerry's roadsides today are marked with little crosses to tell by what means the Free State was established. Dorothy Macardle, in her book *Tragedies of Kerry*, gives a picture of O'Duffy's troops in action:

The soldiers had strong ropes and electric cord. Each prisoner's hands were tied above him, then his arms were tied above the elbow to those

of the men on either side of him. Their feet were bound together above the ankles and their legs were tied together above the knees. Then a strong rope was passed round the nine and the soldiers moved away. . . . The shock came, blinding, deafening, overwhelming. For Stephen Fuller it was followed by a silence in which he knew he was alive. Then sounds came to him—cries and low moans, then the sounds of rifle fire and exploding bombs. Then silence again: the work was done.

The Free State troops had disposed of their prisoners by means of a mine and electric fuse . . .

O'Duffy's lack of squeamishness over Mussolini's "civilizing" methods in Africa is not so strange; he knows how Kerry was "civilized!"

The General went still higher. The new Free State regime needed a strong police force. He became chief of police. The "civilizing" process was carried farther. Anti-imperialists were raided through the night, they were beaten up in jails, they were found unconscious in the street. Police and "G" men had a free rein, and all the pent-up hatred of them concentrated itself on O'Duffy's head. So when the Cosgrave government was uprooted in the general election

of 1932 and Eamonn de Valera came into power as head of the Fianna Fail Government, mass pressure forced O'Duffy's dismissal. The General was out of a job. But not for long; he was hired again, for a new, grandiose role.

Big Business, which had solidly supported the Cosgrave regime, was taking stock of the situation in the months following de Valera's election victory. Prospects of an early return of Cosgrave to power via the ballot box looked dreadfully slim. But across in Germany, in February, 1933, Hitler entered an automobile and rode to the Wilhelmstrasse and power. The imperialist bourgeoisie thought it would take a chance. Before most people in Ireland had realized what was happening, Cosgrave's party and all kindred groups had fused into one organization, the United Ireland Party. The old conservative program and propaganda was dropped overboard; the Corporate State became the new policy. A "youth section" was formed and in a few months some thousands of Blueshirts were parading the country. And in place of the discredited Cosgrave, the new leader, General O'Duffy, appeared on the scene.

And the fledgling Goebbels and Feders got to work. The rotund, witless face of the heaven-sent Irish fuehrer appeared in the papers *ad nauseam*. The inspired speeches hit the front page in full—even when he forgot to say the piece prepared for him and blathered anything that came into his head. Little girls related touchingly in the fascist press how in the middle of the night seventeenth-century Red Hugh O'Donnell appeared at their bedsides, and he with his spectral finger pointed commandingly and his ghostly lips framing the words: "Follow O'Duffy!"

But the Blythes, the Hogans and other "theoreticians" who were now burning the midnight oil in company with *Mein Kampf* and the lucubrations of Mussolini were Goebbels only in intent. There was an odor of ham about their new "anti-capitalist" speeches and actors. O'Duffy himself was a country barnstormer compared with the continental prima donnas. And they were fatally handicapped from the outset. "In the colonial and semi-colonial countries certain fascist groups are also developing, but it goes without saying that here there can be no question of the kind of fascism that we are accustomed to see in Germany, Italy and other capitalist countries." Dimitrov pointed this out at the Seventh World Congress. Ireland is an example. In Italy and Germany, fascism grew up as a force apart from the established political organizations of capitalism; fascism stepped forward as something new; fascism proclaimed itself the liberator of the nation. But in Ireland these factors for fascism were absent; rather they were present in reverse, as factors against fascism.

In the first place, the United Ireland Party was only a rechristened Cosgrave party; the

personnel was basically the same, the continued support of big business and its press was blatant. In the second place, new gibberish about the Corporate State and "social justice" was hopeless to wipe out the known records of these men during their ten years' rule. And in the third place, how could they pose as the champions of Ireland?—they who had borrowed English arms to crush the Republican forces in 1922, who had outlawed and bludgeoned the anti-imperialist movement for ten bloody years, and who even now, spilt all their social demagoguery, placed the maintenance of the British connection and resistance to full independence in the forefront of their program!

It took time before the ceaseless educational work of the Communist Party exposed to the Irish people the social role of Blueshirtism. But then the masses saw its anti-national, imperialist nature clearly. And they smote it hip and thigh. Whenever the Blueshirts paraded publicly they were mobbed. At Dundalh and Drogheda it took bayonet charges by war-helmeted troops to save them. In Tralee armored cars were called out. The urban masses gave them no foothold anywhere.

In the countryside, however, fascism hoped for a mass basis. The farmers were suffering as a result of the crisis, aggravated by Britain's "economic war" on the Free State. The ranchers were solidly imperialist; their markets depended on the Empire link. A no-rate campaign was organized by the fascists, and in Cork and other countries local administration was almost hamstrung. The fascists went a step farther. They organized refusals to pay the annuities (the compounded rent) to the State. (When in power Cosgrave had made it a criminal offense to advocate non-payment of annuities!) And when the de Valera government at last began to make seizures of stock in areas where non-payment clearly was due to the fascist conspiracy, the Blueshirts risked a desperate hazard. State seizures were met by violence, roads were barricaded and railroad lines were torn up to prevent the transport of seized cattle.

O'Duffy and the more hare-brained Blueshirts were prepared to carry out the campaign to the end. But at this point the scared bourgeoisie drew back. They were appalled by the dangers; a campaign such as this, making use of the revolutionary slogan "Pay no Annuities," might lead to the last thing they wanted. It might set the spark to a new land war and they would perish in the blaze. So O'Duffy was called to book.

But to their horror, the Executive of the United Ireland Party found their hired fuehrer impervious to reason. They had no other choice. *The heaven-sent leader was fired!*

O'Duffy gaped at the men who a few hours before had been heiling and saluting him, collected his last pay envelope and departed breathing vengeance. He took a con-

siderable section of the Blueshirts (the uniformed section) with him and for weeks Ireland was uproarious over the daily exposures and counter-exposures. Indicating their nature is their unpublished story of a high official of the U.I.P. explaining the affair to subordinates: "Jesus, I tell ye O'Duffy is mad. I spent the last three months writin' corrections to the papers. I'd be afraid to open the paper in the mornin', wonderin' what he'd been sayin' the day before. And the fine speeches we gave that man to say!"

SO THE United Ireland Party has got the old politician, Cosgrave, at its head again; its Blueshirt section is kept quiet; and it is soft-peddling on the Corporate State. And O'Duffy has transformed his followers into the "National Corporative Party," brazenly fascist.

The man's a playboy, true enough and his party is diminutive. But it would be highly dangerous for the Irish working class to regard him as a harmless *amadhan* and to think that fascism has been routed for all time.

Fascism does not come into existence because a "leader" arises. On the contrary, because the bourgeoisie requires fascism, a "leader" is created from such materials as can be found. . . . The development of a specific fascist movement is a complicated process, involving a considerable "trial and error" of rival movements, before the successful technique is found. Only fools will laugh at the awkwardness of these embryonic stages, and not realize the character of the serpent that is being incubated. (R. Palme Dutt, *Fascism and Social Revolution*, p. 259.)

O'Duffy in fact has trumpeted a new, more double-dealing and dangerous policy, since his break with his former employers. He has attended the International Fascist Congresses at Montreux, etc. And his new mentors have advised him out of their long experience. He has been told that he can make little headway among the masses without jettisoning the old, clumsy "membership of the Commonwealth" platform and draping himself in national colors. As a result, he is now fulminating against Britain, flourishing the Tricolor, "accepting" the Republican Proclamation of Connolly and Pearse in 1916 and declaring his intent to build a new government on the Hill of Tara!

And the united front movement is still in its most embryonic stage in Ireland. The leaders of both the Free State and Northern Ireland Labor Parties still take their cue from the British Labor Party officialdom, the rampart of the resistance to unity in Europe. The breach in the revolutionary nationalist ranks has not yet been overcome; the Irish Republican Army and the Republican Congress are still at cross purposes. But the mass feeling for unity is growing. And the Irish people have won the first round against fascism. If the United Front can be won, neither O'Duffy nor any other brand of fascism will find it easy to succeed in Ireland.

Poems of a Farm-Hand

H. H. LEWIS

Just for Propaganda

No unemployed in Russia now
Because of communism?
No hungry at the pauper's vow
By rule of bolshevism?
No aged out of pensionhood,
Nor youthful forced to pander? . . .
The Wrong Idea "doing good,"
It's just for propaganda!

It's just for propaganda, pshaw,
It's just for propaganda,
Outraging economic law,
It's just for propaganda;
Ulterior purpose driving Reds
To stunts appearing grander:
A *hoax* to turn our muddleheads,
It's just for propaganda!

A renaissance for world-acclaim
From Poland to Pacific?
Where art can serve the social aim,
And proudly does, prolific?
Where culture rears the dreaming boy
To live a life of candor? . . .
Too Red, too Red, the Russian joy,
It's just for propaganda!

It's just for propaganda, pooh,
It's just for propaganda,
Whatever fine the Russians do,
It's just for propaganda;
The darkest motives urging them
To lull our righteous dander:
This all-so-peaceful *stratagem*,
It's just for propaganda!

Now What Good That Do?

Today on the folly-made desert,
Where the greenness once grew tall,
Where the bison roamed and the tribesman homed
With food enough for all,—
Out there on the ruin of Kansas,
In the duststorms grown severe,
Came a Voice profound from the wind around
And spoke against my ear.

"White man shove off Red man,
Start plow work like hell,
Want put mon in bankhouse,
Got grow worth crop sell.
Dang wheat dry out subsoil,

Then come no-rain too . . .
White man shove off Red man,
Now what good that do?"

Downtown in the ruins called Denver,
Where the "hoboes" stand and stare,
Where the eyes would glaze in the deathlike daze
At sharkboards mocking-bare,—
It seemed like a Touch at my shoulder,
Like a Shade to haunt me then,
Till the mood could hear, on the scene so drear,
That same old Voice again.

"White man build great big burg,
Heap few glom much roll,
Rest make fun 'bout Red man
Wash in town crap bowl.
Then come this here layoff,
Bad kind joke on you . . .
White man build great big burg,
Now what good that do?"

Star Ride

Though it seemed, to childish wonder,
Even then somewhat bizarre,
Once I heard the preacher saying,
Hitch your wagon to a star.

So I put a length of plowline
To my wagon's pulling-bar,
Stood at night upon the smokehouse,
Trying to lasso me a star. . . .

Preacher, preacher, what the dickens,
Just a spoofer, that you are,
Telling me to hitch my wagon,
Hitch my wagon to a star!

But with Lenin as the preacher,
After childhood, after war,—
How my freedom-loving spirit
Has been
Lifted
By
The
Star! . . .

Star in the East,
New faith released,
While the most of mankind lingers in duress.
Star to rebirth,
Brotherhood of earth,
Future ringing, ringing, ringing out redress
Till the most afar
Hail the freedom-star
Over their U.S.—
S.R.!

Sugar

NATHAN ASCH

I WAS walking in the hazy evening along Larimer Street in Denver, hearing music playing and voices through the suddenly opened doors of the Mexican cafés and trying to decide to go into one; then with the noise torn off by the doors again closing, hesitantly going on—when through one of the doors two girls came out and almost fell on me. They were Mexicans; one of them was drunk and asked me if I would buy them wine. We went inside the crowded smoky room; three men sat on chairs and played nostalgic Mexican music; two fat cops, giants among the Mexican boys and girls, walked up and down the room and stood over tables and stared; the dancers and the drinkers, Spanish eyes set in Indian faces, with strong hook noses, high cheek bones, and always even on overalls and cheapest dresses a touch of color, tried to dance and drink and make believe the police was not in the room, watching them, determined to find trouble.

The two girls led me to a booth and sat themselves and ordered red wine; they drank one glass of wine and then ordered another; and then drank that, and the drunker one of the two said she wanted to dance. I said I didn't want to dance. She said I had to.

I asked the other one: "What's the matter with her?"

She said: "She's in love."

And then I looked up and there was a young fellow with black polished hair looking as if he wished he had a knife.

I rose from my seat and went up to him and I took his hand and I said:

"Look, there's an extra place in our booth and I wish you'd take it."

He said: "Who are you?"

I said: "I'm nobody at all. Just a man from the East."

Suspiciously he went with me. I ordered more wine and I acted as if I were terribly interested in the other girl.

I asked her: "What's wrong with them? Why don't they get married?"

She said: "They haven't got no kids."

I said: "What?"

"They can't get a contract," she said, "if they don't have no kids."

I asked for explanations. All these Mexicans worked in the sugar-beet fields in Northern Colorado. During the winter they lived in colonies on relief; and in the spring when the time came to make an agreement with the growers for work in the fields, the contract unit was a family, a father, mother and their children. I said I thought that child labor was forbidden. I thought there had been an agreement made.

She said: "Well, maybe there is. All I know is that when beet picking time comes around they close all the schools and if you're young and ain't had no time to get kids of your own, you don't get no contract."

I said: "Why don't you people do something about it?"

The boy who was in love shrugged his shoulder. "They say all the time if you don't make a contract, if you don't get off relief, they'll ship you back to Mexico."

I asked: "How old were you when you came?"

"I was born here. They can't deport me."

But the girl who was in love had been five years old when her family had been brought over to work in the beet fields. The next year she had picked beets and had continued ever since. Now she was drunk. And she wanted to dance.

I said: "You two dance. But I want to talk to some of your friends."

He brought some friends over and the cops came, too.

One of the cops wanted to know: "What's going on around here?"

I rose, and I took my credentials from my pocket and I let them read them.

The cop said: "You mind coming out with us?"

I went out with them. We walked to the corner of the block we were on and the cop said:

"Buddy, you don't want no trouble. And we don't want no trouble. Why don't you go home?"

I asked: "Are you going to run me in?"

He said no, he wasn't. But I was not going back into the Mexican café.

He added: "Why don't you be a good fellow and go home?"

A DAY later Chiver, Aragon and I got into the old dilapidated sedan and started off for Northern Colorado. The sedan had been on the go for weeks in other parts of Colorado and Chiver had tried to sleep in it, had lived in it, had stood on its uncertain top and made speeches to the assembled beet workers. His eyes were red with tiredness, his hands were not steady and he almost fell asleep in the Denver traffic. Aragon must have been tired too; he had hitch-hiked from the North the night before, had reported to his office and had been told to find Chiver coming from the South and to start out again. It must have been the Indian blood in him that made his eyes seem inscrutable; that prevented me in the

following two days from guessing Aragon's feelings. To me, everything about Aragon was amazing; this man whose face was of red copper, whose head was like an eagle's, whose shoulders were so wide that when he spread his arms to prove a spoken point he looked like an eagle with the wings outstretched, who had broad hands and enormous body, had the most musical voice I have ever heard and spoke correct and unaccented English. Look at him and he was a big red Indian, but speak to him and you heard old Spain. He was well read and though Chiver had been a year to college, Aragon could out-argue him on every necessary subject and decide the point and act on it, and though Chiver was the leader of this expedition it was Aragon that led; and Aragon that kept Chiver to the chosen line and called him down when Chiver enthusiastically and devil-take-the-consequences got off the line.

Aragon was a peon and the son of a peon, while Chiver's father had been a beet grower and Chiver himself had grown sixty acres of beets until two years before and had kept Mexican families on his own farm and had paid them what other growers paid. But the combination of the sugar company and the current times had proven too much; he had been sold out; his wife was on relief; and Chiver was organizing the sugar-beet workers; Aragon was organizing too. They were going into Northern Colorado, to visit the colonies of Mexicans and to try by some means to organize them into a common front against the growers.

Yet the growers were as much victims of the situation as the Mexican workers were. When in the fall the price was paid for the delivered beets and divided among the grower and the Mexican, the Mexican got almost nothing, but the grower after he had paid the interest on the mortgage on his house and land, after he had paid for seed and the interest on the loan for seed, did not get anything either. He owned the house he lived in and the land he planted, but the bank in which the mortgage on these chattels lay was controlled by the sugar company and the company set the price for beets, arbitrarily, without the semblance of an open market, of competition. He could accept the price that was offered by this one company, or his beets could rot. And all the stories that for years had appeared in the newspapers of the nation describing the awful living standards of sugar workers of other nations and begging for a protective tariff, all these stories were misleading, were lying stories, because when lawyers for the sugar company, elected to the United States Senate, had finally succeeded in getting the protection and incidentally ruined the economy of Cuba, the living standards in the sugar country did not rise, the difference between the world price and the American price for sugar was transformed not into increased education, better homes and more nourishing food, but into dividends for the

sugar company; and in the blackest year of the depression, when world trade was paralyzed and profits did not exist, the sugar company, protected by the tariff and profiting from the living standards it had imposed on both growers and workers, made profits of nine millions of dollars.

In the beet industry a lot of work was needed in the fields, and all this work had to be done in the summer months. The grower himself in the spring drilled the land with seed, but when the fourth leaf appeared, and beets had to be blocked, then thinned, hoed, topped and later in the summer pulled to be trucked to the factories nearby, no natives in America wanted to do this sun-burnt, aching work. Years ago Mexican families had been recruited from Mexico, shipped north in trucks; during the season they lived right in the fields, in shacks, sometimes in wagons to be pulled right to the edge of work so as not to waste time; and when the summer was over, they had to leave the shacks and wagons and live in colonies in towns and wait till the following spring. Relief was only an innovation. Up till two years ago six in a family together earned less than three hundred dollars a year, and when they returned to winter quarters with what was left after the storekeepers had been paid, they were forced to pay rent by the same sugar company which also owned the colony they lived in. When relief was introduced the Mexicans were well used to living on almost nothing. And when this year, squeezed by the company, the growers tried in turn to squeeze the Mexicans, by offering them contracts that would pay less even than in previous years, many Mexicans refused. Spontaneous strikes broke out in sugar counties.

And now the announcement had come that those who refused to accept the contracts would be taken off relief and would be deported; and the bewildered, frightened Mexicans in their little colonies . . .

CHIVER and Aragon were to visit the colonies in Weld County, richest in all of Colorado, and were to get the Mexicans together at mass meetings and find out if the sporadic strikes and the refusal to accept new contracts would make it possible to organize all the beet workers into one large sugar union that could make itself as strong in the sugar industry as was the sugar company. The problem was to find the colonies in each town they came to, to hold meetings, to organize local unions, to have representatives appointed from each district who could later meet and work out the proposed union's program. The problem further was to convince the terrified Mexicans that beets always would be grown, and that even if the sugar company were to disappear, they, the Mexicans, could not be made to disappear; their work was needed and whatever happened they would not be deported.

The little car arrived in Brighton, Colo-

rado, and there were natives and Mexicans walking along the street, and we drove to where there were still more Mexican faces, in front of a pool room, and Aragon got off and talked in Spanish to some boys. He came back.

"They've got a hall somewhere in the colony," he said, "but they don't know if we can get it for a meeting. Let's go down there."

We turned off the main street and off the cement highway, got onto a dirt road—passed a polling place; there seemed to be a local election being held that day and a crowd of citizens was there—we drove past progressively poorer houses, a railroad spur and a factory, past the breathless sour smell of old beet pulp, to a place that looked like an empty yard in spite of shacks crazily leaning over it. We talked to a little boy and to a Mexican lady and then Aragon disappeared. When he came back he said:

"They want a dollar for the meeting hall, and they want to know what we want it for. And they look as if they were going to telephone to somebody. We'll hold the meeting in the vacant lot."

We drove back to town and to the pool hall, went inside and Aragon asked for quiet and told everybody in Spanish to come to the vacant lot. In the street he told little boys to summon their fathers. We drove again to the vacant lot and waited.

There was the wall of a house facing where we were and as the Mexicans arrived they went up to the wall and sat on the ground against it and did not look at us nor at each other but rolled cigarettes and waited. When about thirty had arrived Aragon stood before them and spoke to them in Spanish. I did not understand what he said, and they did not seem to listen, but looked at the ground and smoked cigarettes. At first they were in a line before him; then the pattern changed, he was like a star in the half-crescent of a moon; his voice did not change, they did not seem to listen, but soon he was in the center of a circle; though they looked away, they were all around him. I never saw brighter eyes nor more immovable faces; I never knew less of what went on in the minds of people I was watching than when I watched these Mexicans' faces as they listened to Aragon. Then he stopped and Chiver spoke, in English. Chiver told them about the other meetings he had been to, in the South; he said they had been enthusiastic meetings; he said the beet workers in southern Wyoming, in Nebraska, in western Kansas, all were organizing, all were going to stand together strong against the growers. He said:

"Once the beet plants are peering out of the ground, they can't do a thing without us. But we can do a lot. We can force them to do whatever we want to."

I didn't hear Chiver speak again, and I never understood what Aragon said, but I felt between him and the other Mexicans

a sort of silent understanding. I seemed to feel what he said more in the pauses between his words, in the silence which he, a man not really fitted for speech, but more for doing, needed to arrange his thoughts.

We drove on and we spent that night in Johnston, Colorado. The colony there looked more like an imaginary colony would. There was a white-washed wall and inside there were little white-washed houses, looking like hives in a bee colony and really not much larger than bee hives, having only one room. Aragon knew a man who lived in one of the houses, and while word was being sent to the workers to come together, the lady of the house dished us food out of a pot that stood on a brazier, while little Mexican girls shyly stood in the doorway and watched us, eyes shining.

It is hard to describe how little this house was, because there were two beds in it, and there was a dresser and there was the brazier where they cooked and there was room to stand between the beds, but the whole room was not ten feet square, and in this room lived a family of nine. It was clean, walls white-washed, curling curtains in the windows and holy pictures on the walls. And the beds were covered with embroidered spreads, and on one of the beds there lay a little naked baby with a teething ring in its mouth, and on the other were two older children that looked like twins, asleep. And into this room, now crowded, perhaps fifteen men came in to hear Aragon speak; and after he had spoken, they organized a local of beet workers' union and elected a secretary. It was all done so quietly that the twins never woke.

I spent that night with a motherless family, the children sighing in their sleep and the father in the morning clumsily feeding canned milk to the youngest child; Chiver and Aragon slept elsewhere, and in the morning we drove to Fort Collins.

It is a larger city. The meeting was held in a lodge hall, two American flags crossed over the speaker's table. When we arrived, we drove through the Mexican streets, and modern Paul Reveres, we called out whenever we saw a Mexican going by:

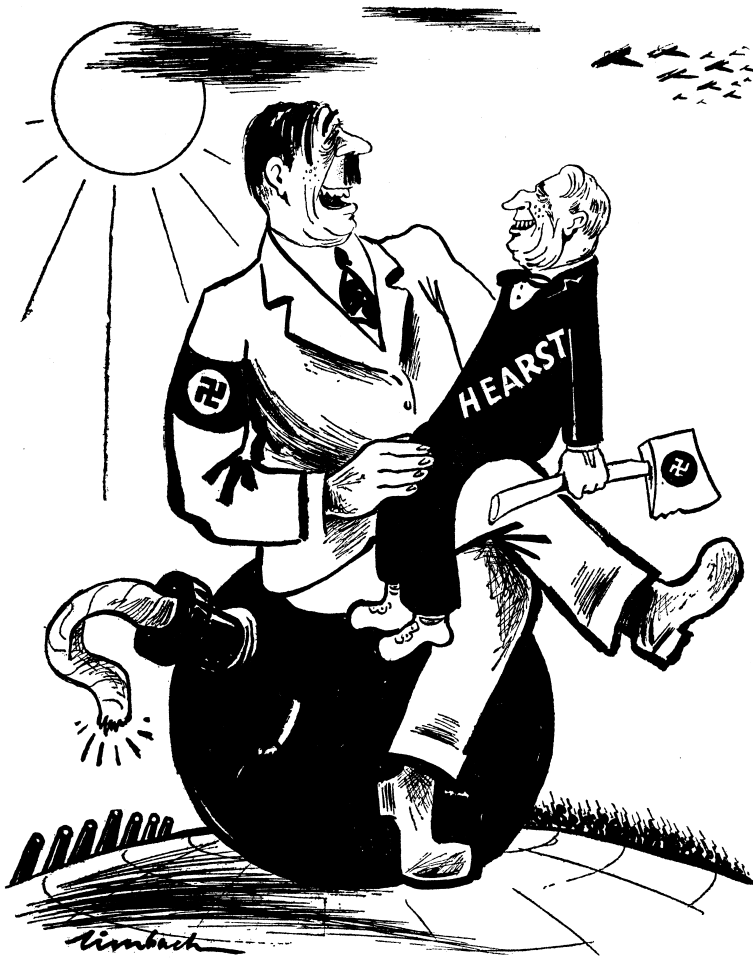
"Come on at once to the meeting hall."

There were about three hundred people there when Aragon started to speak. The night before in the two preceding towns the workers seemed all more Spanish in appearance, with little shaven moustaches and long side burns. Here there were Indians, their faces incredibly red, bold, high cheekbones. They were the faces that one sees on the Indian pennies, in portraits of old Indian warriors. Their eyes were not the piercing Spanish eyes, but covered with some inner looking film and dull. They sat, tremendous men, like sculptured statues and heard. And when the time came, they rose and they told their names, and when these had been written down, they clumsily made their crosses.

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Wilson's Ghost, Morgan's Power

JOSEPH FREEMAN

WASHINGTON, D. C.

ALL through the Morgan inquiry, the bankers on the witness stand smiled comfortably. Occasionally, however, the giants growled. Fury lurked under their perfectly composed faces. Evidence linking the government to the House of Morgan was becoming irresistibly conclusive. You wondered when high finance would swing its mighty paws down upon the Senate Munitions Committee, battering the investigation into dust.

At last the bankers have acted. Under the rules of the capitalist game, I cannot prove this assertion. Those rules are tricky. They take no formal cognizance of reason or of generally recognized facts. Only documentary evidence is admissible. But bankers seldom hand out written instructions to their political agents. When they do, the instructions comply strictly with the rules. If Senator Carter Glass, screwing up his mouth for an outburst of planters' rhetoric, should bellow at me from the Senate floor: how do you *know* that Morgan is trying to crush the munitions inquiry? I would be compelled to reply: I don't actually know—under the rules of your game. Yet it is obvious that big business is doing precisely that.

The first thing which struck me at the Morgan hearing was that the Senate Munitions Committee has been burdened with every possible handicap in its investigation of the role which industry and finance play in making war. The du Ponts concealed important documents by having the War Department stamp them confidential. From the Morgan files the committee has been able to obtain only such documents as the *bankers* were willing to release. Similarly, the White House, State Department and Federal Reserve Board can always withhold vital information on the ground that it is an official secret likely to embarrass the government of this or another country. Moreover, the committee failed to get a fighting lawyer, one capable of putting the Morgan partners through a stiff and effective examination. And Franklin Delano Roosevelt, after assuring Nye that the munitions investigation was especially dear to him because of its bearing on the administration neutrality bill, has not lifted a finger to aid the committee.

But the greatest handicap of all was the committee's own limitations. Nye and his associates accept the premises of capitalism. Once these are granted the bankers have every logical advantage. If capitalism is right, then private business is right. If private business is right, then private profit is right. If private profit is right in time of peace, all the

more so in time of war. If profits are right, then credits are right. If credits are right, then loans are right. If loans are right, it is certainly right for the government of the propertied classes to protect those loans. If it is right for big business to exploit and rob workers, farmers and professional people in time of peace, why not in time of war? If men may be killed for profit in mine and mill, why not in the trenches?

The Morgan partners, cool and amused on the witness stand, never put it that bluntly. But this was the tacit foundation of their defense. To readers who doubt the values of capitalism, Morgan may have appeared stupid. In the Senate caucus room he was exceedingly clever because the inquiry was conducted on premises wholly favorable to him. The tragic guilt of the Nye Committee lay in its false assumption that once a war starts you can suddenly and by legislative fiat alter the normal operations of capitalism.

NEVERTHELESS, in spite of this handicap, the committee has made a number of disclosures which must convince every thinking man and woman that big business makes wars. Official documents have established that the Wilson administration, like the House of Morgan, was pro-Ally from the beginning of the European conflict. Neutrality was a deliberately propagated myth. Wilson consciously betrayed the American people. His unctuous phrases were intended to screen the banking and industrial operations which drew America into the worldwide slaughter for imperial profit.

Then Senator Nye uttered one truth too much. He showed that Wilson knew about the robber treaties of the European imperialists before the United States joined the conflict. Wilson and Lansing had denied this before a Senate committee in 1919. Nye accused them of "falsifying."

This was the *faux pas* for which the bankers had been waiting. The House of Morgan could now hide behind the sacrosanct ghost of Woodrow Wilson. The real causes of the last war and the swift preparations for the next one, could be concealed behind an outburst of organized hysteria about the "insult" to the memory of a great and idealistic president.

At once the political machine-gunners of the House of Morgan went into action. On the floor of the Senate, Connally of Texas, a pompous and florid Democrat, rose to defend the good name of his party's wartime chieftain. I have heard many debates in the various parliaments of the world, but seldom have I heard so cheap a bathos as when the

gentleman from Texas championed J. P. Morgan under the pretext of shielding the holy memory of Woodrow Wilson. The Nye Committee, Connally wailed, has "dragged the grave clothes off of Woodrow Wilson and dragged his poor body across the committee room and plastered it with the denunciation of having lied."

Nobody mentioned the fact that in 1919, when Wilson testified before the Senate committee which examined the Versailles Treaty, the liberals and radicals of this country had said the President was falsifying. He asserted that when he had gone to Paris he had not been aware of the secret European treaties. But those treaties had been divulged the fall of 1917 by the new-born Soviet regime. They had appeared in the American press. What the liberals and radicals wanted to know was whether the President of the United States ever read the newspapers and if not, why not.

Now the Nye Committee has produced evidence that Wilson knew about the secret treaties—certainly in the spring of 1917, probably earlier. Wilson burned a letter from Ambassador Page in 1915 referring to treaties. This revelation was only one item in the overwhelming array of evidence that from the summer of 1914 the House of Morgan and the White House were determined to use every possible means to assist the Allies to victory.

The Tories, hitherto silent, were ready to roar—and for a good reason. In protecting Wilson's character, the reactionary senators were more concerned about the profits of the living than the prestige of the dead. The counter-attack was oblique, but its meaning unmistakable. *If Wilson was innocent of serving the interests of Morgan, then of course Morgan was innocent of dominating the government.*

THE defense of Wilson's ghost was essentially a defense of Morgan's power. "A banker is an American citizen just like anybody else," Connally whined in his plea for 23 Wall Street. Ralph Easley, head of the National Civic Federation, went him one better in a pathetic epistle to Senator Barbour, pro-Morgan member of the munitions committee. "Thank God for President Wilson!" Easley exclaimed with more candor than discretion. "Thank God for Secretary Lansing! Thank God for J. P. Morgan!" It needed only the presence of the Deity to make the Holy Family complete.

On the floor of the Senate, Connally of Texas did not confine himself to inflated rhetoric. He appealed to the rules of the game, so completely loaded in favor of high



Russell T. Limbach

finance. He questioned the Nye Committee's authority to examine the causes of the World War. More important, knowing that the committee has only \$400 left with which to make its findings public, the so-called gentleman from Texas threatened that it would not get another penny for its work. The Nye Committee will be strangled with the purse strings of the Senate, manipulated by the House of Morgan.

But that is not all. The counter-attack of the mighty bankers was well planned. At the very moment when Connally was bawling on the Senate floor about Wilson's honor, Senator Pope, Democrat of Idaho, entered the Senate caucus room with a joint statement on behalf of himself and Senator George, Democrat of Georgia. The most remarkable thing about this statement was its unmitigated gall. It was signed by the two members of the munitions committee who most of the time have been *absent* from the Morgan hearing.

Senator Pope, who embarrassed the Roosevelt administration last summer by his political hitch-hike through the capitals of Europe, was so overcome by his own effort on behalf of the sacred dead, that his false teeth slipped out. The press table had some diffi-

culty catching his sublime phrases. But there they were:

"We must express our resentment at any effort to impugn the motives of Woodrow Wilson and to discredit his character."

Not a word disproving the evidence of the Nye Committee. Not a single proof that Wilson was telling the truth when he said he had known nothing about the secret treaties.

J. P. Morgan leaned his huge body across the witness table, eagerly sucked at his gold-ringed pipe, drank in every syllable which Pope mumbled. Nye later told the Senate that at this moment the Morgan partners were passing notes to one another saying that on the Senate floor there would be statements embarrassing to the Nye Committee. He described the "keen and complete satisfaction which encompassed the faces and broadened the breasts" of Morgan, Lamont and Whitney when they learned that the munitions committee was under attack in Nye's absence.

Subsequently, the House of Morgan denied this in the newspapers. Again the rules of the game. How do you *know* what was in the note which the bankers passed to each other? Yet the fact remains that the munitions committee was simultaneously attacked

in the caucus room by Pope and George and on the Senate floor by Connally, Pittman and Ham Lewis.

This coordinated assault accomplished its purpose. For the first time since the hearing started, the newspapers diverted attention from the crimes of the House of Morgan to Nye's disrespect for the dead. The question was no longer whether the bankers had dragged us into the war for their own greedy interests, but whether it was permissible under the rules of the game to say that Wilson and Lansing had falsified.

THE accuser had become the accused. Nye was now on the defensive. The red herring of bathos obscured the manipulations of the robber barons, as guilty of the last war as they are of the next. Nye had to adjourn the hearing for a week. On Friday he went to the Senate to defend the activities of his committee against the legalistic gunfire of the Tories. These were carrying out the Morgan policy by trying to prove:

First, that the Nye Committee has no right to accept any help in its labors from any of the federal government relief set-ups; second, that the Munitions Committee is wholly lacking in authority when its investigations





really disclose something about the relations between high finance, government and war; third, that it is far too late and futile for anyone to inquire into the causes of the World War; and fourth, that it is an unpardonable sin for anyone to question the idealism and integrity of Woodrow Wilson and Robert Lansing.

Nye spoke on the Senate floor for almost an hour, a young clean-cut militant among the decrepit reactionaries who did not even have the courtesy to listen to him. Borah listened carefully as did young LaFollette; Shipstead and Frazier watched the speaker's face and once or twice came to his assistance. The galleries, jammed with veterans and their families who had come to hear the scheduled debate on the bonus, were distinctly favorable to Nye. Today, as twenty years ago, the people do not want war. A few moments before the tories had opened fire on the Munitions Committee, Senator Capper had given the Senate a report on a newspaper poll in the Middle West in which the overwhelming majority of the participants had voted against war.

But for the embattled champions of the sacred dead, Nye was a voice crying in the wilderness. Useless for him to plead with corrupt politicians that we must learn from the experience of the last war to avoid the next.

The moment Nye took his seat, Morgan's stentorian guards were on their feet. Again the ghost of Wilson was raised to shield the power of Morgan. It was no longer the people of the United States versus the bankers, but the sacred memory of the dead versus those who openly and truthfully proclaimed that high finance instigated wars for profit.

In reply to Nye's facts and documents, Carter Glass of Virginia brought the antiquated mortar of well-worn vituperation. The oldest and most despicable rhetorical tricks were trotted out, from adolescent alliteration to *ad hominem* abuse. Connally of Texas followed in the same miserable vein. The chairman of the Munitions Committee was nothing less than a coward! Why did he pick on the dead? He was a publicity hound. Later the papers reported that Glass was so overcome with emotion for his dead chief that he broke the skin of his hand pounding the desk and the blood spurted. Maybe the blood did spurt. Vituperation certainly spurted. But I did not hear from Carter Glass a single word to prove that Nye was wrong in his accusations either against the House of Morgan or its spokesman in the government. Such proof was superfluous. High finance needs no logic. It has power.

Connally of Texas shrieked that Nye had actually taken relief money for investigating the causes of the war. The gentleman from Texas conveniently forgot that at one crack \$238,000,000 was taken out of P.W.A. funds to build warships. Carter Glass threatened: not another dollar for the Nye Com-

mittee! No idle threat, either. Glass is more than a Virginia gentleman; he is chairman of the Senate Appropriations Committee.

THE capitalist press came in for its share of the killing. All the space hitherto devoted to exposures of Morgan and Company has been turned over to the tory senators, to Colonel House, to Secretary Hull, to the National Civic Federation, to the publicity department of 23 Wall Street. You no longer saw photos of Morgan, Whitney and Lamont. Instead, there was Carter Glass holding up his bandaged hand for the admiration of Tom Connally. The New York Times quoted the complete text of Glass' attack on Nye; it gave only a few obscure lines, toward the end of a crowded story, to Nye's peace plea on the Senate floor.

Yet that plea deserves to be printed in full. Alone in that pompous body of bankers' and landlords' representatives, Nye dared to stand up and defend the right of the American people to question war and the makers of war. Subsequently, Bennett Champ Clark of Missouri supported him half-heartedly. In their unprincipled attack, the tories had accused him of continuing his father's pre-war feud with Wilson. Young Clark, who had been the most aggressive examiner of Morgan, Whitney and Lamont, could not take the personal abuse. He, too, came to the defense of the sacred dead. He did not be-

lieve, he said, that Wilson and Lansing had falsified.

Nye, however, refused to back down. "I have no apologies to offer for any act of mine," he shouted at the tory senators, "or for the Munitions Committee in the investigation. I take away, I recall not one word of my expression to the effect that President Wilson and Secretary Lansing falsified when testifying in the presence of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee in 1919. The record in this respect offers no escape from the facts."

Nye went further and gave the Senate "the most emphatic notice" that in the fifteen remaining days of the hearings which the committee plans in the completion of its investigation, he would not alter his course in developing facts pertinent to the inquiry.

"There are companies still to appear before the committee," Nye said. "Some of them are powerful and influential. Some of them have friends—influential friends. Is there anything in the testimony of the large steel companies furnishing army and navy supplies to disturb anyone; or in the ramifications of the aviation companies; or in the facts about the company which has a monopoly of machine-gun manufacture for the army; or in the practice of some companies in selling the latest American war inventions to those nations upon this earth that we hear from day to day are most apt to be our foes when we come to another war? What is it that men fear from the completion of this investigation? What truths are there, what truth can there be that they would have us run away from? Where and what is the power that moves to block, to stop, to embarrass and to cripple the work that has been undertaken?"

Rhetorical questions. But they said as clearly as possible under the circumstances what is actually going on. The Munitions Committee has further disclosures about the companies which are producing steel, airplanes and machine-guns for the next war, and the bankers in control of those companies are determined that the disclosures shall not be made. Not Wilson's honor but Morgan's profits are at stake; not only the last war but the next is to be veiled in rhetoric and hysteria. I recalled General Johnson's statement early in the Roosevelt regime. That vociferous administrator had frankly said *the N.R.A. was the outcome of military plans prepared by the War Department.*

Washington revived in me all the feelings of 1916. Twenty years after the first World War, American high finance, the munitions makers, the big industrialists, the government, the army and navy, the reactionary propaganda organizations are preparing to lead us into another war. The preparations are now more quiet, more efficient, more intensive, vastly larger in scale. But they are there. That is the sinister fact to which the American people must awaken with the utmost speed.





Limbach

Correspondence

Help to "Turn Them Loose"

TO THE NEW MASSES:

The following editorial, "Turn Them Loose," appeared in the San Francisco News (Scripps-Howard) of January 17.

"We heartily indorse the plea of contributors to our Pulse columns that the eight young people now serving prison sentences under the criminal syndicalism act be released . . . as soon as their minimum sentences shall have been served. This will be within a few weeks.

"Convicted at Sacramento as a result of a concerted drive by reactionary organizations and professional patriots, these men and women were found guilty of nothing worse than belonging to the Communist Party. The jury specifically acquitted them of committing any act of violence or of inciting violence.

"In order to obtain the convictions, the duly elected district attorney of Sacramento county was pushed aside and the prosecution was conducted by a lawyer selected by Attorney General Webb. *The whole case was a scandalous abuse of judicial process to suppress agitation for better wages and conditions among agricultural workers, in which the defendants had been active and successful.* The News condemned it at the time, and urges that the Parole Board redress the injustice by fixing the sentences at the minimum, which is one year." (My italics. G. L.)

Excellent in its way as this editorial is, unfortunately it alone will not be sufficient to open the prison gates to Caroline Decker, Pat Chambers and the other prisoners. The Parole Board will probably impose as much of the maximum 14 years as it thinks it can get away with.

The Board consists of Frank C. Sykes, chairman, a contractor and an old-time conservative; Joseph H. Stephens, President of the Merchants' Nat. Bank of Sacramento who issued a public statement at the beginning of the C. S. trial against the defendants; and David F. Bush, a prominent lawyer-politician-landowner-legionnaire of Oakdale, who, as a state senator during the last session, was the mouthpiece of the Southern Pacific Railroad, the Power Trust, etc.

Obviously, only the most articulate, wide-spread and insistent kind of public opinion can induce such a Board to set the sentence at the minimum figure.

I write you this with the hope that you and your readers will communicate with the Board at once. It is too late to rectify the wrong already done. The least the Board can do is to free the C. S. victims as soon as the law permits.

I am certain you appreciate the importance and urgency of immediate action.

Sincerely yours,

San Francisco, Cal.

GEORGE LANSING.

A Visit with Caroline Decker

TO THE NEW MASSES:

When we went to Tehachapi, I visited Caroline Decker. I asked her how life was and she answered as follows:

"As far as material things go, they are quite all right in comparison to San Quentin or Alcatraz. The food is not bad, and our cells are clean. But there are thousand and one ways in which one can be made miserable. It is the small things of life which make things unbearable here. We are constantly reminded that our minds as well as our bodies are imprisoned. We are permitted to read only such literature which is an affront to our intelligence. When I was brought here first, I thought I would never be able to stay not even a month. But one can be accustomed to anything.

"It is much easier for us political prisoners. The

others become apathetic, lonely and resigned. They look wistfully through their cell windows and try to see what goes on to the other side of the hills. They lose hope and courage, and the prison board is satisfied. It's different for us. We know that although they have imprisoned us, there must be thousands who have sprung in our place. We feel certain that the cotton pickers of San Joaquin Valley stand in closer ranks and will include in their fight our liberation. We are certain that the whole American working class will avenge us and we never despair.

"We get up at 6 in the morning, eat breakfast, and go to work. I carried enough barrels of fertilizer to fertilize a tremendous American farm. Yes, it takes a lot of fertilizer to make things grow in Tehachapi. At seven, we are locked in our cells—pardon me,—they don't call them cells here—not very exciting, but a day has passed, and that's what counts. Oh, I forgot to mention there is a break—when mail comes. That's really our only link with the outside world."

A bell rang, announcing that our visit had finished. Caroline shuddered and remarked, "How quickly the hour passes." ROSE CHERNIN.

A Liberal Considers The New Masses

TO THE NEW MASSES:

The time has come when I must either renew my subscription to THE NEW MASSES or drop it. I have been of two minds on that question during the weeks when I have read fairly thoroughly the articles in THE NEW MASSES. I am a liberal (you may prefix that label with any adjective which you can infer from my handwriting) and I want to see in this country neither fascism nor the Russian type of socialism, but I am desirous of supporting a policy eventually resulting in an American Socialism. Your attitude toward Russia is that (as it seems to me) of the most devout adherent toward a divine right monarchy — the King can do no

wrong. I have never found one criticism of any Russian policy. Your writers refer to Karl Marx with much the same unctious as the Christian Scientists show in their references to Mary Baker Eddy. Are we to get rid of one infallible book only to have another take its place?

However I like some of the articles and it is only by reading magazines and papers of various viewpoints that one gets the benefits of a free press for no one publication but is controlled by some group or other. So I have decided to renew my subscription to THE NEW MASSES along with The Herald Tribune and Today.

Brockport, N. Y.

ELIZABETH BRIGGS.

From a Vermont Striker

TO THE NEW MASSES:

We are having quite a time up here. The Vermont Marble Company has got all its general managers and superintendents loading marble on the cars. They had quite a time up in West Rutland when they tried to load the car. They are going to try to have National Guards that will make everything all the harder for the strikers. They are having an awful time about the food up here; they give us enough to last about two or three days a week. Gov. Smith won't let the company have the National Guard—yet. They were going to start the Danby Quarries with scabs Monday—there were forty men picketing on the road behind stone walls. They were going to try this Monday, the thirteenth of January, to try to send the scabs by.

We are trying to keep up the spirit of the strikers so we can win, for we are not going to give up until the last minute. But the food problem bothers us. It is hard to go home and see the kids not eating the way they should. That's why we appreciate most anything that is sent to us, because we want to keep the strikers in good spirits. You know what this strike means to us—so many of us.

Danby, Vt.

JOHN M. PEARSON.

Letters in Brief

The Communist Party, New England district, will hold a Lenin Memorial Meeting, Sunday evening, January 26, at Symphony Hall, Boston. Earl Browder will speak on "Lenin and the Traditions of the American People." The Hearst papers have already aimed their guns at the municipal officials to have the meeting kept out of the "cradle of American liberty." Liberal groups have joined with the Communist Party to see that the meeting is held despite the fight of Boston's reactionary elements.

A group of Margaret Bourke-White's photographs of Soviet life are now on exhibition, writes the Workers' Bookshop, 50 East 13th Street, New York. The subjects are: ballet, theater, industry and collective farms.

The South Carolina Board of Health, closely aping Hitler's tactics, adopted a motion for the sterilization of "unfit" adults. The motion was based on the sterilization law passed by the state legislature. Ten cases are now under consideration for operation. As may be well imagined, the law hits only the "lower-class" people and the oppressed Negro people in particular. Negro and labor organizations are vigorously protesting the law as another step toward fascism in the South.

The Home Relief Bureau in Harlem has refused \$5.50 for the purchase of prescribed medicine to Mrs. Mary Cherry, a Negro worker whose condition is described by physicians as critical. The Bureau

objected that the amount is too much for medicine and urged the physicians to prescribe cheaper medicine, even if it did not meet the needs of the patient, according to the Crusader News Agency.

Three Negro sharecroppers, Ed Brown, Yank Ellington and Henry Shields, convicted in Kemper, Mississippi, for the murder of Raymond Stewart, a white tenant farmer, have appealed their case to the United States Supreme Court. There was no evidence to connect the three men with the crime except their "confessions," obtained after inhuman torture. Two justices of the Mississippi Supreme Court declared that the Scottsboro trials were models of judicial procedure compared to the Kemper county case.

Partisan Review & Anvil, the new magazine discussed in a recent article in THE NEW MASSES, writes us that its first issue will contain fiction, articles, poetry and reviews by a number of well-known writers, among them John Dos Passos, André Malraux, Waldo Frank, Carl Van Doren, Newton Arvin, James T. Farrell, Kenneth Fearing, etc.

An "all-star cultural evening" for the benefit of Commonwealth College, is announced for the evening of February 2, at the New School for Social Research, by the college's New York Committee. Readers interested in helping this project may write to the Committee c/o A. C. A. Gallery, 52 W. 8th St., New York.

REVIEW AND COMMENT

The World and the Artist

EDITED BY ANGEL FLORES

TODAY any intelligent discussion of a writer involves one in an analysis of his ideology.

Years ago, it was still permissible, in the realm of literary criticism, to rhapsodize about form and style, glossing over or entirely disregarding the content of a given piece of literature. At the time, the world of letters seemed totally divorced from political and social concerns. Psychology and rhetoric reigned supreme—symptoms, to be sure, of a grievous dissonance between art and social life. In the history of literature these “generations” which have emphasized technique and purely esthetic problems represent defeat. The artist-ostrich, burying his head in the sand, has not understood his world; he has preferred to discuss how the ideas should be expressed rather than what the ideas should express. Such an emphasis on how-ness belongs to art-for-art’s sake.

At present to ask a Malraux or a Plivier—or almost any young writer of no matter what country or race—whether there is a crisis and whether such a crisis concerns him, would be, to say the least, downright impertinence. On the other hand, there are numerous so-called consecrated writers who, for some reason or other, have not as yet committed themselves either openly or in the substance of their writings.

Conrad Aiken:

1. I see no reason for becoming “alarmist” about the state of things: seen in historical perspective I think there can be not the slightest question that it is better than it has ever been in the past, that it will slowly and steadily improve in the future. What is tolerated, is tolerable; and what is tolerated today, per capita, is surely less than had to be tolerated one, two, three, four, five, or six thousand years ago. That it behooves every conscious person to be aware of iniquities and inequalities, and to help towards a slow and peaceful righting of wrongs, goes without saying: but this increase of consciousness goes on automatically, and takes care of itself. As individuals, we are simply part of an evolution, and we contribute to it whether we want to or not.

2. Obviously the artist is as much involved in this evolution as anyone else, but that is not to say that his art needs to be, or can be, confined to particular social changes or necessities at a given time and place. Social change follows on growth of consciousness with which the artist is concerned—the growth of consciousness as a whole. To restrict himself to one feature in this—on whatever plane—will be perhaps to limit his permanent usefulness. The lesser artist sometimes does this with success (*Nicholas Nickleby*, *Uncle Tom’s Cabin*, etc.): but it will be observed that it is in pro-

portion as his work of art extends beyond the immediate problem that it acquires any more lasting or widespread value for humanity at large. A Shakespeare is more useful than a Shaw because he is an extender of human consciousness on a wider front.

3. The artist needn’t worry about the relevance of his art—all art is relevant. It is more or less relevant in accordance as it brings less or more perception and understanding to consciousness. A great poet is more useful than a great propagandist.

Bruno Frank:

1. To close one’s eyes to the dismal confusion of the world today is impossible to a sensitive man and, least of all, to a writer deserving of that name. But I do not believe in any panacea for happiness. I accept no programme as prescription. I do not believe that in the year 1936 particularly, or even in 1942, the human race is going to change.

2. The influence of a writer is small, astonishingly small. During a decade, a great literature has arisen in Germany which stigmatized war and racial hatred and explained them as world dishonor. These books circulated in editions of millions of copies; plays of great power zealously proclaiming the same doctrines ran in all theaters; moving-

Inspired by Mr. Geoffrey West, I have borrowed the scheme he used last year in endeavoring to define the position of a few English writers. He asked them three revealing questions. With his generous consent, I have submitted these questions to writers representing the most diverse levels of expression and with a varied reading-public. I have not limited my investigation to American writers, but I have included half a dozen European figures whose non-commitment on social questions may have puzzled their American readers.

I must add that a few writers did not deem it necessary to answer, and their silence may be taken for a reply. Unamuno, for one, has joined Primo de Rivera’s son as a supporter and champion of Spanish fascism.

Here, then, are the questions and the answers. Readers will draw their own conclusions.

1. Can you, as an individual, declare the state of things today, even in your own country, as in their totality humanly tolerable?

2. If not, can you as an artist disregard that state of things?

3. If you cannot, how would you define, plainly in a brief sentence or so, the relevance of your art to these existing conditions?

(A. F.)

pictures presented the frightfulness of human slaughter before the eyes of the whole nation. Result: Herr Hitler and the most assinine chauvinism known to recent history.

3. Should one therefore despair? One should not. We should not give up hopes that we can still bring about a change in the hearts of men. A man can only do it, however, through changing his own heart. In this, in this self-education, in this self-advancement, consist the activity of the writer. He should not preach but mold himself and the world. He should also not regard himself as a demigod or a prophet, and, above all else, he should never claim for himself the privilege allowed to all prophets of being tedious. (Translated from the German.)

Louis Bromfield:

1. The state of affairs in the world in general seems to me to be very nearly intolerable. In my own country conditions appear to me to be more tolerable than upon most of the rest of the earth’s surface—certainly very bad but not intolerable.

2. I find it impossible either as a man or an artist (?) to disregard the state of affairs. It is both spiritually and morally depressing and the cause of constant irritation and indignation.

3. I consider the relevance of my art (?) to these conditions one of comment and observation and whenever it is possible to strike a blow at the folly and greed which has prevailed for so long in America. I do so, not however at the expense of what I consider the eternal qualities of a piece of writing. A tract is a tract and a novel is a novel, and nothing can ever mix the two. I am not a Marxist and while I believe that the pen of any writer can and should be used for reform and for revolution when necessary, I do not believe that art should be a function of any economic or social system.

I trust this note will reach you in time to be useful. As you can see I am rather a Jeffersonian than a Marxist. I do not believe that any system of government has much power to alter human character.

James Branch Cabell:

Heartily as I disapprove of symposiums, I none the less find the only conceivable answers to your questions far too simple to be begrudged. They are:

1. No.
2. Yes.

Peter Freuchen:

1. As an individual, I see all over in the world conditions growing worse and worse. Everybody suffers, but every country closes its doors and keeps foreigners and foreign goods away. In the great war sixteen million people were in the trenches. Everybody wanted to go home, yet they stayed. We all look back on the dear old times, yet who will take the first step? I am not sure that it is of any help to try and repair the old wreck. We must change our minds and the conditions entirely.

2. As an author I have to study the new times as closely as possible. No new movement has ever started that hasn't first been born in the brains of an artist. We are not allowed to disregard anything in the world, especially not now, where people need teachers, and who is better fit than the artists?

3. Things look to me so terrible, that every change must be to the better. It cannot grow worse. Therefore I am looking forward for progress and happiness and peace more and more. (Original in English.)

Hans Fallada:

1. No.
2. No.
3. Change it!

Andreas Latzko:

I think the first and second questions are insulting to every artist as well as to every human being. It was the hard work of centuries to vanquish the brute in men. Surgeons struggled against epidemics, aided by scientific inquiry, in order to save the

lives of people affected by the malicious attacks of nature, in order to retain the gains and advances of all humanity, the genius of all. Cultivated nations work to overcome the mastery of the arbitrary.

Millions of human beings are born dumb, unable to complain if they suffer, working like stokers in the hold of a ship, while only a few privileged ones are able to raise their voice as they stand on the bridge and control the course of the vessel.

With a knife at their throats, writers have lost their right to existence, unable to lend their assistance to the dumb, they are traitors to their own avowed mission and to humanity. But a ship navigated from the hold will eventually founder. In this age of broadcasting, flying, television, diminishing the communicable outposts of the globe, piracy will not endure for long. (Original in English.)

Ludwig Lewisohn:

To a sensitive conscience the state of things in this world and especially in one's country has never in any age been "in its totality humanly tolerable." Never.

This state of things few serious artists

have ever disregarded or can disregard. I have myself been accused of disregarding too little.

But the eternal and unchanging relation of the serious artist to the evils that are under the sun must mainly and upon the whole consist of his hope that from his works men will gain an impulse toward *reason*, so that they will manage their mundane affairs more wisely and, above all, toward *goodness*, so that they shall less and less conceive it to be possible that any good can be a true good that involves any inhumanity to any other fellowmen.

If from anything I have written or shall write either of these impulses is communicated I shall be satisfied that the necessary moral function of my art has been fulfilled.

Robert Nathan:

1. In a world in which men hate and torment one another, the state of things is not humanly tolerable. (Nevertheless, one lives; because death is perhaps even less tolerable?)

2. No artist can wholly avoid such thoughts.

3. I ask of my work that it help men to be less hateful to one another.

A Marxist on War

THE COMING WORLD WAR, by T. H. Wintringham. Thomas Seltzer. \$2.50.

GENERAL SMEDLEY BUTLER ("old Gimlet-eye" to the thousands of veterans in the Marine Corps) takes a long, peevish look at war, draws a deep breath, squares off and delivers his verdict, as explosive as one of his own guns in the old days: "A Racket!" he says—and follows it up with a smashing barrage of scandal and corruption in the military services of his country: not forgetting the bankers and profiteers.

General Butler has the right idea: the only thing wrong with it is that the same word, "racket" also covers just about everything that goes on in peace-time. In other words, if you really want to know what war is, and why it keeps ripping human lives to pieces, you have seriously to ask, and answer, the deeper question, "Who profits most from 'peace'—and at whose expense?" Having got that far you take another step and ask yourself, "Who actually supplies the enormously complicated war-machine of modern times? who operates its thousands of parts? who gives and receives its horror of slow agony and sudden death?" If—and when—you have correctly answered these two questions, you will know, with complete certainty, what must be done and can be done, to STOP WAR!

It is these last questions which make up the theme of this book by the brilliant young Englishman who has been hailed by John Strachey in his introduction as "the leading

Marxist expert on military affairs now writing in English." T. H. Wintringham, solidly grounded in the dialectics of the class struggle, turns the tables on the elaborate "military science" of the bourgeois state by showing how, in the words of Friedrich Engels, "the triumph of force is based on the production of arms and this in turn on production in general—therefore, on 'economic power,' on the 'economic order,' on the material means which force has at its disposal." "Machines," he begins by saying, "make war." Then, in a series of lucidly written and remarkably well documented chapters, he demonstrates how all these intricate and costly machines—automatic rifles, grenades, bombs, chemical weapons, aeroplanes, optical goods and their thousands of auxiliary parts to say nothing of the munitions required to serve them—how the whole field of war technology is hopelessly (from the viewpoint of the capitalist war-makers) involved not only in the general productive scheme of industry and agriculture, but also in the production relationships. "The scale of warfare made possible by the almost illimitable productive capacity of the modern world," he writes, "has led to a position in which the fighting forces are dependent not on a few arsenals but on all the industry of a country at war. . . . Governments need to think first of the discipline and productive efficiency of the working classes, not the armies." (Emphasis mine.)

The full force of this fatal contradiction (which the more class-conscious workers in munitions plants all over the world actively

realize today) is brought out in Wintringham's accounts of Germany's feverish rearmament program and in the desperate militarization of entire populations in Japan, Great Britain, Italy (note how the breaking of a single supply thread—that of oil—can utterly destroy Italy's cumbersome war machine in Ethiopia). Along with the amazing development of war industries we get an increasingly abject dependence upon the two groups by whom and against whom, they are directed. First the workers who, in thousands of factories, fields, workshops and warehouses *make* the products needed for war; second, the millions of people who, in uniform or out of it, must "do and die" in a war of whose appalling destructiveness and utter savagery there can no longer be any question.

Mutinies in the military forces: Strikes behind the lines in any one of numerous strategic plants: Organized resistance by non-

combatants before and during hostilities: Constant attrition of the war-machine through exhaustion of supplies and men. Above all, the growing strength of a united People's Front against the entire capitalist system which breeds war and fascism: these are the constructive points which Wintringham brings out very clearly in his analysis of the material problems of "the coming world war." His examples of how such organized popular action in a number of countries (especially Great Britain) put an immediate stop to the interventionist attacks on the struggling Soviet revolution in Russia make inspiring reading for us today—and his discussion of the tactical problems of Japan's proposed invasion of Soviet territory deserves the most careful attention.

If you want to know *why* the Marxists are so astonishingly right about things in general, read this brilliant Marxist study of war.
HAROLD WARD.

A Queer Business

THIS BUSINESS OF EXPLORING, by Roy Chapman Andrews. G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1935. \$3.50.

IF THE unexpressed premises of the author be accepted, particularly the assumption that "advanced" nations are entrusted with the duty of uncovering the prehistoric treasures of "backward" areas, it must be admitted that he successfully popularizes the achievements of the Mongolian explorations conducted under the auspices of the American Museum of Natural History. The Central Asiatic Expeditions, directed by Roy Chapman Andrews, are associated in the public mind with the discovery of the "dinosaur eggs" during the earlier explorations of 1922-1925, described in *On the Trail of Ancient Man*. This story is brought up to date in the present volume, which enlivens a cursory outline of the scientific results of the 1928-1930 expeditions by a continuous narrative of hair-raising adventure. Destructive sand-storms and howling blizzards, interspersed with bits of local Mongolian color, constitute the background of these narrative sections. But the *piece de resistance* is formed by the continual encounters with Chinese "bandits." The superior arms and expert marksmanship of the members of the expedition proved their worth many times. So effective were they, in fact, that the casualties were entirely on the Chinese side. As the author remarks, "They don't like to stand up to rifle fire and if one or two of them are killed in the first volley the rest run like stags. About twenty Chinese bandits to one well-armed foreigner is proper odds, as we have found by experience." Under such circumstances, the expedition was able to cut a swath through the unlucky Mongolian bandits, whenever they ventured to interfere with these civilized Americans.

The hardships of desert exploration have their remunerations—a winter in Peking, for example. Mr. Andrews writes: "I lived in a beautiful old Manchu palace; had a staff of eighteen efficient servants; a stable of polo ponies and hunters; and a host of friends. Peking is the one place left in the world where one can live an Arabian Nights' existence. One rubs the lamp and things happen. Don't inquire *how* they happen; just rub the lamp!" How many of the Chinese people can rub this lamp? Might the contrast in material well-being explain their "banditry" and his "orderliness"? Mr. Andrews does not stop to ask these questions, but glibly philosophizes that "you can have a lot of fun at housekeeping in China if you don't let it get on your nerves. 'Squeeze' drives foreigners mad at first until they come to realize that it is a custom of the country and that all you can do is to keep it within reasonable limits."

Thorough and efficient cooperation was the rule in the relations between the American Legation at Peking, the American military and naval services in the Far East and the Central Asiatic Expeditions. Corporal McKenzie Young, expert motor mechanic of the U.S. Marine Corps in Peking, was "assigned on detached duty to the Expedition." By courtesy of the Secretary of Navy at Washington, Lieutenant G. A. Perez, U.S.N., was "detailed to the Expedition" as surgeon. Captain W. P. T. Hill, U.S.M.C., went along as topographer; later he was replaced by Lieutenant Wyman. Colonel N. E. Margetts, military attaché of the American legation, came up from Peking to visit the campsite in Mongolia. Code messages from the American legation, carrying the news of political developments in China, were picked up by the expedition's radio out on the Mongolian deserts. Time signals were despatched

each night on short wave from Cavite, in the Philippine Islands, by the U.S. Navy. In April, 1928, when the expedition entered Mongolia, the American Minister, Mr. J. V. A. MacMurray, went up to Kalgan from Peking. Mr. Andrews notes: "The Minister's presence was of much help to us in Kalgan. Not only did the [Chinese] officials hurry through the final passports, but we were relieved from paying the road tax which for our eight cars would have been a considerable amount."

Although the 1928-1930 explorations uncovered valuable prehistoric mammals, they were no more successful than the earlier trips in their primary quest—the discovery of the remains of ancestral man. Mr. Andrews speculates on the possibility that such remains may exist "somewhere in southern Siberia . . . logically the next place for us to explore. I would love to do it if we could. But unfortunately politics and palaeontology do not seem to get on well together. Hunting fossils, which involves geological studies and messing about in the earth, is too easily confused with oil and mineral research by suspicious and ignorant politicians."

It is surely most unfortunate, but the chances are that Mr. Andrews must continue to forego the pleasures of Siberian exploration. The "politicians" of the Soviet Union may be "suspicious and ignorant," but they know enough to keep these harmless expeditions from "messing about" in Siberia.

What is even more disconcerting, the Chinese authorities also seem to have developed a "suspicious" concern about the expedition's activities. A Commission for the Preservation of Ancient Objects, set up by the Chinese, even went so far as to confiscate the specimens of the Central Asiatic Expedition

*How much longer can
Mussolini out-bluff Europe?*

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HARPERS

in 1928. "Eventually," says Mr. Andrews, "our specimens were released but bitter feeling was engendered on both sides. . . . In the last analysis anti-foreignism underlay all the trouble; that, accompanied by the increasing nationalistic spirit throughout China. Any agitation of whatever character that

was directed against foreigners found immediate popularity with the masses." Just so. And how unnatural of this people not to recognize that these high-minded foreigners, engaged in purely scientific research, deserved the thanks of all right-thinking Chinese.

DONALD HEMSLEY.

Old Roguery

MY COUNTRY AND MY PEOPLE, by Lin Yutang. Reynal and Hitchcock. \$3.

THIS book has become one of the smart books of the year; some reviewers who first ignored or dismissed it have had cautious second thoughts about it and have expressed them; it has become a best seller and is being read as the last word about China.

The reasons for its success are plain. In a field where solemnity is the rule it uses a nonchalant and even, at times, a slapstick style. It gives approving tolerance to popular vices, to laziness, indifference and good living. Some of its chapters, especially those on Chinese literature, are valuable and from the samples given I would welcome a volume of his translations of poetry, especially poetry from the Chinese drama.

Nevertheless the book is useless and even misleading for an understanding of political or economic China or almost any aspect of China that is of more than passing interest. There is not a paragraph in the whole book on the Soviet districts of China. A vague epilogue dealing with conditions in China is prefaced with this cautious note "the following must not be taken as reflecting on the National (Nanking) Government, but rather on the immensity of the task which the government is faced with in its gigantic work of evolving order out of chaos." In the light of this respectful obeisance to Nanking the following might have been expected as a corollary ". . . the Communist idealist, with a volume of Marx under his arm and unkempt hair on his head and smoking a Russian cigarette and perpetually fulminating against somebody will not bring China into salvation."

It is not merely this smart-aleck attitude that one finds offensive. The gist of Lin Yutang's book is that China has survived invasion, social disorder and economic misery in the past, that China "can take it." Yutang quotes from a paper by Dr. J. S. Lee "The Periodic Recurrence of Internecine Wars in China," which divides Chinese history into eight hundred year cycles each beginning with military unification, a period of wars, secession, subjection to foreign rule, to be followed by a renewal of the cycle. This seems to comfort Yutang who conveniently overlooks the fact that colonial status and its special type of exploitation, which China is facing at the hands of Japan, is very different from a change to a foreign dynasty and that in her present crisis China's civilization and

not the conqueror's is threatened with absorption.

Resignation to the inevitable is fine for a man comfortably situated for the enjoyment of leisure and the arts and unexposed to the miseries that have to be undergone. The Chinese masses who die in the floods and droughts, who are kidnaped into the armies, who sicken and starve at a rate unknown to any other civilized country must feel differently. They do the enduring and they may not feel as philosophic about it as Yutang.

They may even feel different about the pleasures of discomfort, for Mr. Yutang roguishly tells us that discomforts are good for the health and the material comforts of Western civilization are signs of decadence. As a matter of fact, far from enduring in silence, the Chinese masses are in open revolt. They established a commune in Canton. They captured Shanghai for Chiang Kai-shek, though later he betrayed them. They have established Soviets in China over a vast territory and are the only hope of China to escape Japan. To leave this unmentioned is to paint a portrait without a face. The reason is obvious. The face would not be pleasing to Nanking. Yutang, who is so cutely provocative and challenging to other intellectuals, has a great disinclination to offend the Nanking government which, by general consent, is one of the most, if not the most corrupt regime acting as a government in contemporary world affairs.

ISIDOR SCHNEIDER.

Housing for the Landlords

HOUSING UNDER CAPITALISM, by Sidney Hill. Published by International Pamphlets. 10c.

IGREET this housing pamphlet for two reasons. First, because it is a pamphlet, whose forty succinct pages cost only ten cents, so that everybody can buy it and has time to read it through. Second, because housing literature generally has not yet caught up with the New Deal, and no one has yet made such a well-rounded job of analyzing and interrelating the activities of the various Washington agencies, showing their ineffectuality in dealing with public housing as contrasted with their effectiveness in respect to private construction, whether by way of insuring new and momentarily sweet mortgages or salvaging the banks' old curdled mortgages.

While the pamphlet contains useful analyses of similar failure of housing in other capitalist countries and the quite different approach in Soviet Russia, and includes the author's positive recommendations, it is his presentation of the recent American situation that I am anxious to comment upon.

When Mr. Hill's pamphlet appeared some months ago, the only agency supposed to do public low rental housing was the P.W.A., with its urban housing and its subsistence homesteads. He shows how it blundered and delayed its urban projects, and how the few completed projects with their \$11 room rentals came nowhere near meeting the problem for people of low income or on relief. He shows how the rural subsistence homesteads tie people to a meager subsistence level while they try to pay for homes on installments, with little prospect of cash income with which to make payments. I regret that he did not mention the forty-seven additional

urban projects that P.W.A. has under way to house some 25,000 families at \$7 or \$8 per room if and when finished. It would have added accuracy without weakening his argument, for the 25,000 families thus housed constitute only one percent of the people who need it!

He shows how at the same time the Home Owners Loan Corporation and Federal Farm Mortgage Corporation lent over six billions (sixty times as much as P.W.A. has been allotted) under the guise of helping farmers and home "owners," but with the actual effect of bailing out the banks. It speaks volumes for the muddled sentimentality of these people that they accepted this new burden of a government mortgage. I know a few hardboiled home "owners" who permitted the mortgages to foreclose and then rented the homes back again at a great saving.

Having released the frozen funds of banks, insurance companies and building and loan associations, the administration passed the National Housing (sic) Act establishing the F.H.A. to insure private loans for renovation and for new houses, so the same institutions could lend all over again for the same middle class and not low cost houses whose mortgages it had had to salvage. That is, in effect, it lent its own funds, except that instead of controlling the new construction directly, it permitted its funds to go into sour mortgages on old houses, and the exchanged funds of private institutions into the new houses. And then private interests have the temerity to criticize the government for "piling up debt" for public housing, relief, social security, in contrast with permitting private initiative to do the financing for new construction. What do they want for their bad money?

On top of this, Mr. Hill shows that relief money goes out in great measure as rent into the pockets of slum landlords. He thinks the Administration has thought all this out. I disagree. Though the results are the same as if intentional, I think it is just part of a general confused viewpoint that thinks it is doing good liberal things. The distinction is important. Big business is fighting the administration as being radical, and the administration thinks it is at least experimental. Big business should bless this administration. It could never have got what it has in this depression, might not even have survived, without the liberal and, I think, sincere patter of Administration leaders. Through lack of a concerted philosophy the administration is fulfilling perfectly its role in economic history.

This lack of a concerted political and economic philosophy runs through our entire country and explains why so many sham battles are fought, why workers don't effectively demand housing coupled with social and health insurance as the author advocates. He asks why housing isn't built, why slums continue, and says "Workers who live in tenement flats . . . farmers whose houses are as truly slums . . . must frequently ask themselves such questions." Not enough of them do, Mr. Hill! If people building new homes with the little money they can scrape together considered a moment why the last crop of home "owners" got it in the neck and whether these conditions weren't bound to recur, they wouldn't build them.

No, the millions of badly housed, underfed, bullied people simply think they're in

hard luck. We must show them how they can do something about it. We've got to show them that it's irrelevant whether Mr. Roosevelt *thinks* he's their friend or not, that romantic "experimentation" isn't worth a damn.

That's why I like your pamphlet. It shows that we can't get housing under capitalism, whether the government is amiable or unamiable. If we could get this pamphlet into the hands and heads not of sixty million people, but only two million people (or a third of those who read Mr. Macfadden's publications) we would be doing a real job. It is almost a supererogation to review it for **THE NEW MASSES**. Its readers will read it anyway. But how are we going to get new people to read it? That's the problem we must put our heads together to solve.

ALBERT MAYER.

The New Republic announces a series of three articles by George Soule to be published under the general title:

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There have been almost as many articles written about Russia as there have been visitors to the Soviet Union. How could it be otherwise? Tremendous issues depend upon the world's judgment of the first socialist society in man's lay experience. That judgment will be based on the testimony of hundreds of thousands of witnesses. Travellers from Russia tell and write of their experiences because those of us who have not been there demand a report. We want to know. We want evidence.

George Soule has recently returned from the Soviet Union. He has evaluated his experiences and impressions from the perspective of a trained economist, noted them with the eyes of an insatiably curious visitor, and analyzed them to show what their meaning is for all of us here who have at heart the necessity for a decent social order in the United States. The three articles, published under the general title **DOES SOCIALISM WORK?**, are:

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Brief Review

BUTTERFIELD 8, by John O'Hara. (Harcourt, Brace and Co. \$2.50) After the extraordinary applause (in which **THE NEW MASSES** did not join) that greeted *Appointment in Samara*, John O'Hara became that sad figure, a promising young novelist in search of something to write about. He finally found a subject in a newspaper scandal of four or five years back, the story of a besotted young nymphomaniac who jumped off a Fall River boat. It must have seemed to O'Hara that this story was somehow significant, and he was quite right. But he had no idea what its significance was. The best he could do was to point it up with some rather ghastly sentimentality about purity and the home. Mr. O'Hara has an uncommonly good eye, and the novel reflects many revealing details of life in the speakeasy era, but it should begin to be apparent, even to Mr. O'Hara's admirers, that this is not enough.

JAPAN'S POLICIES AND PURPOSES, by Hiroshi Saito. (Marshall Jones & Company. 1935. \$2.50.) These "selections from recent addresses and writings" show that the Japanese Ambassador thinks of himself as the representative in the United States of a hostile Power. With curious simplicity, he announces his gratitude for the fact that Americans are "always ready and eager to listen to what the *other side* has to say" (*italics ours*). He is surprised that he is "asked to speak and write more or less publicly" in our midst. On the lips of a veteran agent of imperialist diplomacy, such language is both instructive and amusing. And the book contains other gems of statesmanlike subtlety, besides echoes of Woodrow Wilson, tributes to Lincoln and the elder Roosevelt, proof that "we (the Japanese) are a democratic people" and a dithyramb, in pidgin, on the Cherry Blossoms.

EUROPEAN EXPERIENCES, by Mabel Dodge Luhan. (Harcourt, Brace and Co. \$3.75.) Mrs. Luhan has had a passion to know and to subjugate famous people and, being blessed with a good deal of energy and considerable cash, has usually succeeded in getting what she wanted. *European Experiences*, the second volume of her autobiography, describes the years in which she was living in Florence. She entertained, among many others, Gordon Craig, Eleanora Duse, Leo and Gertrude Stein, Jacques Emile Blanche, Paul and Muriel Draper, Stephen Haweis, John D. Herron and Jo Davidson. The names are worth giving because the list suggests the measure of the book's failure. Whenever she introduces a new celebrity, Mrs. Luhan begins with some lively description that rouses one's interests and hopes, but in the second paragraph the reader is right back to Mabel Dodge's melodramatic emotions and second-hand ideas. There is nothing in the book but Mabel, who appears to be such a dull and silly woman that one wonders how, in spite of her immense fortune, the celebrities ever were able to put up with her.

COMPANY UNIONS TODAY, by Robert W. Dunn. (International Pamphlets. 5 cents.) Company unionism has forged ahead until it has become a major menace to American labor. Among other important factual material Dunn's valuable pamphlet reveals how the government's veiled strike-breaking program under the N.R.A. and in other ways, has aided in the spread of company unionism and how the adherence of the A.F. of L. leadership to craft unionism which has enabled company unions to pose as saviors to the unorganized, especially to unskilled workers, has led to similar results.

A HISTORY OF SWEDEN, by Rganar Swanstrom and Carl F. Palmsturna. Translated by Joane Bullman. (Oxford University Press. \$5.) This volume is published under the auspices of the Anglo-Swedish Library Foundation and the authors, conscious of this sponsorship, have given undue emphasis to the relationships between England and Sweden. This, however, is one of the least of its defects. The authors are traditional, academic historians. Living in the twentieth century they must make at least an effort to analyze the movements of Swedish history by the interplay of class struggle and economic forces; but their effort is inept and the book remains old-fashioned dynastic history. It is clear from the naive prejudices of the authors that they have shrunk from any understanding of the historical present. They can bring, consequently, no insight into the history of the past. Their book, though it is of slight value, has this advantage, that it is the only one in its field with the exception of a much longer volume written with fully as great, if not more, academic obtuseness.

That's Their Story

My favorite columnist is Eleanor Roosevelt, who has restored to American letters some of the flavor that I found in the best work of Ring Lardner. Queen Eleanor has made banality an art. "If you have a cough, what is it," she recently inquires, "about going to a play or concert that always brings on a tickling in your throat?" And she does a whole piece on that absorbing theme.

The saddest story of the month: Scott Fitzgerald's account in *Esquire* of his crack-up. The salt, he says, has lost its savor. I bet some narrow-minded Marxist will light on the story and say it's all the fault of the social order.

Neat of John Chamberlain to pass over the new Tchernavin book to Robert Van Gelder, his *Man Saturday*. Most of the reviewers sounded pretty faint, as if they knew they had made a mistake with *Escape from the Soviets* but weren't going to admit it. The best that even J. Donald Adams could do for the book was to print a flattering picture of Mme. Tchernavin.

John Chamberlain, says Walter Winchell, is leaving *The Times* for *Fortune*. Rather tough on a certain *NEW MASSES* critic who has enjoyed heckling John. And a little tough on *Times* readers, for, say what you will, Chamberlain was the only daily reviewer with whom a critic could conceivably have picked a quarrel. But it may be a good thing for Chamberlain. Heaven knows what *Fortune* will do to him, but he was getting pretty Harry Hansen-ish under the burden of a daily column.

Walter Winchell's *Girl Friday* says that John Chamberlain's *Man Saturday*, Robert Van Gelder, is first choice for his successor. Since Gelder is already what Chamberlain might have become in a few more years, that's a pretty prospect.

The Times will be mighty dull without either John Chamberlain or Andre Sennwald. Sennwald shone with peculiar brilliance because he succeeded Mordaunt Hall (just as Chamberlain's memory will be uncommonly radiant if he is followed by Robert Van Gelder), but there is no denying that he was intelligent and sometimes courageous.

"Eden Ordered to Go Easy on Oil Sanctions," *Herald Tribune*. "Eden Is Ordered to Push Oil Ban," *New York Post*.

Mary McCarthy, who disliked *Marching! Marching!*, pointed out that it won *THE NEW MASSES* prize and was a Book Union choice. H. S. Canby, who liked it, not only failed to mention these facts but intimated that the book was so good it would probably be denounced by left-wingers as unorthodox.

Note for persons who think authors make books. Viking Press announces in *The Publishers' Weekly*, "The campaign for Rebecca West's new book, *The Thinking Reed*, will aim at making it the spring's outstanding novel."

After a year of exposure in *THE NEW MASSES*, *People's Press* and *Daily Worker*, the capitalist press has finally discovered the Gauley Bridge silicosis murders. Had to; there is a Congressional investigation on.

After wondering for a long time if *Fortune* served any purpose except the adorning of high-class dentists' offices, I catch a glimmer of what the bright boys think they are doing. In the January issue a devastating survey of the twelve best preparatory schools is preceded by an introductory note on what should be the function of these schools: "Baldy

and brutally they have not grasped the fact that they exist . . . to serve a particular class, the moneyed class. . . . The British schools, upon which the American were modeled, did grasp that fact. They understood that they existed to serve the British ruling class, which meant that they existed to see that the British ruling class was perpetuated. . . . The American ruling class may quite possibly be taxed out of existence in the next few decades because the American ruling-class schools have not educated their rich men's son to political superiority." So I gather that what *Fortune* really aspires to do is to teach the ruling class how to rule. I'm afraid the bright boys started too late.

Victory for Hearst! Eddie Cantor, who offered a \$5,000 prize for the best essay on "How America Can Stay Out of War," now announces, via *The New York American*, that he knows the right answer: "Preparedness is the only insurance against war."

"Bad as Russia's transportation system was in 1914, it was incomparably more efficient than the wretched and dilapidated system of communications in the Soviet Union today," says Isaac Don Levine, Hearst hackey. Required reading for Mr. Levine: *The Wall Street Journal* of January 13, whose correspondent says the Soviet railway system is displaying "an activity and efficiency which are beginning to attract attention not only inside but also outside the country." After commenting favorably on Soviet railway efficiency, the correspondent mentions that, since 1929, freight traffic, measured in tons and miles, has fallen off 22 percent in England, 39 percent in France and 43 percent in the United States and has doubled in the U.S.S.R.

Donald Day, who reports the Soviet Union (from Riga) for *The Chicago Tribune*, must be getting lonesome. His latest invention is that all Russian correspondents except Walter Duranty, "who is regarded in Moscow as official publicity man for the Soviet government," are going to move to Riga.

Walter Winchell reports: "American National Socialist Party here (the Nazis) will put up candidates for all city and state offices, including the governorship, in the 1936 elections."

Did you notice Malcolm Cowley's sudden aberration in *The New Republic* a week ago—his prose-poem review of Foster Damon's biography of Amy Lowell? It doesn't do to keep these creative writers cooped up too long at a desk; awful things happen.

The Wall Street Journal makes a nice contribution to the Marxian theory of the class basis of ethics and religion. "It seems to me," Bernard Kilgore writes, "that if someone could prove, not that the Townsend Plan is bad economics but that it is immoral or wicked and the Bible says so, they would stand a better chance of getting somewhere."

The Wall Street Journal is not the only periodical that knows the uses of philosophy. Last June George Barton Cutten, president of Colgate, got off the old line about philanthropy weakening the human race. Hearst's *American Weekly* picks this up, along with Dr. Alexis Carrel's obscene nonsense, to attack the decent treatment of prisoners, the Soviet government and the relief of the unemployed.

(I may as well explain and apologize now. Never in my life, before I started this job, have I bought Hearst papers. I hate to buy them now. But a clinical investigation is a clinical investigation and no scientist ought to be frightened by bad smells.)

MARGARET WRIGHT MATHER.

The Theater

Serious Laughter

"IF THEY had only gotten married, that would have solved everything," remarked the woman in front as the curtain fell. And as far as she was concerned—and all others who open one eye and one ear to a play—Lynn Riggs has written a rather stale story of youthful insurgence. Such people should never have remained through the evening, for *Russet Mantle* (Masque Theater) as it progresses offers less and less realistic theater. In fact, judged purely in terms of realism, it is a gratuitous tale of rebellion against morals. But in reality it has little to do with realism in the ordinary sense, and it is by no means primarily concerned with the sex code. Its subject is the problem of contemporary youth trying to free itself from the stifling, tawdry meshes of the great American dream. Approached on its own plane and in its own terms, *Russet Mantle* is a searching picture woven with the fire and grace of an incisive lyric.

It is a lucent example of what poetry can give the theater. By poetry, of course, we do not mean rimes, ornamental metaphors or scanned verses, but that intensity of characterization and compression of statement which communicates vastly more than appears in the syllables of the speeches. To achieve this the playwright must create characters that are more than credible individuals: their thoughts and actions must be representative of large and significant groups. A great deal can be taken for granted when this method of symbolic characterization is used; the playwright is saved much explaining of the whys and wherefores. But he must compact his dialog with enormous precision. And he must face the very real disadvantage of making demands upon

the imagination of the audience—in this case, an audience whose imaginations have been all but atrophied under a constant diet of dramatic journales.

Horace Kincaid salvaged enough from the crash to buy a ranch in Santa Fe, where he and his wife Sue burn up the days in brief and bitter squabbles over their hen-and-apple-raising problems. Sue's sister Effie, wife of a Louisville banker, has just arrived for a visit, supposedly with her daughter. But Kay is nowhere to be found. Effie's casual explanation throws a small thunderbolt into the Kincaid ears: "Oh, she'd met some cowboy and was going out to his ranch. So I think she must have stayed all night with him," followed by: "I don't care *what* Kay does so long as she doesn't *tell* me." There is certain to be a clash when the young, superbly alive Kay arrives. And when John Galt, who has hitch-hiked a thousand miles "in order to think," gets a job in the household, the audience may be sure of complications between them.

Obviously the two youngsters will crack their heads against the wall of proud, good-natured stupidity around them. Obviously they will be drawn together in a variant of the cohesive-force-of-persecution pattern. But the result of their love will be far less predictable. Kay is pregnant. What of this child of a banker's daughter and a penniless, defiant youth?

At this point people insistent on one-eyed, one-eared theater should turn the page. For them the play should only begin here. And yet it is *Russet Mantle's* strength that its simple plot is so fully conclusive. The reason, I believe, may be found in the organic manner in which the characters, as they grow and change, construct a significant portrait

of contemporary social struggle. Riggs has not attempted the somewhat epic proportions of an Odets' *Paradise Lost*; he has built a smaller structure, but it is a surer one—one more solidly grounded in fact.

There is Kincaid embittered by a loveless existence, his fortune shattered, his wife unable to hide her deep contempt for him, her ceaseless regret that she chose economic security above a hazardous desire. There is Effie, the Dulcy wife of a banker, whose key-line is "Oh please, No truth. No truth." There is Galt, one of America's disinherited millions, who has dug ditches, worked in factories, plowed farms, run elevators, written poetry. And there is Kay, whose derisive gaiety dies when Galt rips off her defenses: "You were born sensitive and intelligent and once you became conscious of that woeful combination you fled . . . to escape . . . You are dying by your own hand."

If Galt and Kay do not typify the largest and most important sections of contemporary youth, they nevertheless carry enough truth to speak for a profoundly important struggle. Galt knows that the economic roots of avarice, cruelty and misery cannot be canceled: "They have to be dug up." If he is given to poetic trajectories, it is because he articulates the generation "born desperate enough, and searching—with the taste of rage in their mouths." If he is a poet whom Effie and Suzanne would muffle with dreaminess, his conception of reality can speak for a people:

Sometimes a winter when sleet and snow and wind are slashing and venomous. But what happens? The cold stops. Rains fall. The sun shines. The rigors and terrors of nature come to and end. But the rigor and terror of man against man never cease. I've seen it. I know. In textile mills, railroad yards, on docks, in the streets. Machine guns mowing down men in Wisconsin. Men and women hounded and flogged and tortured in San Francisco. Riot squads, strikebreakers, nausea gas—bayonets! And starvation! And voices crying out! For what? A little bread, a little sun, a little peace and delight. I've heard them, I tell you. I've seen. And I know. *This* is reality, this is the stuff our senses are gorged with.

The newspapers call this play a comedy, so does the author; but its texture is so subtle an interweaving of tragedy and laughter that it emerges essentially as a work of deep seriousness. Effie's feather-brained non sequiturs may draw belly-laughs from the house for a while, but gradually she emerges a pitiful-and-despicable object. The Kincaid

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The Screen

"The Ghost Goes West"

couple's holier-than-thou championing of a morality they fear to question is farcical until their individually tragic frustrations are told and then it is impossible to laugh at their deformed humanity. There are overtones floating throughout the dialog which deepen the meaning of the desperate clinging to the status quo and which make it difficult for the rebels to prove their case.

Obviously, Lynn Riggs has not loaded the dice in favor of the progressive generation whose cause he is proving. He has, in fact, created their opponents with more clarity and symbolic breadth. Some of us may prefer a more politically developed symbol of disinherited youth than Galt, whose energies have not yet gone beyond individual striving into the fruitful world of collective striving. Others may object to the validity of Kay as a symbol of psychically "hungry, tired, sick, desperate" and cynical youth. One can argue these matters and arrive at excellent conclusions and perhaps agree that *Russet Mantle* fails to do a number of worthwhile things. And while arguing, we would neglect the splendid fact that this tragi-comedy is a rich addition to the social drama. "We have to live in a world that's our time. We can help make it. It will make us." It requires restraint to write such a seemingly tentative finale in the America of 1936. Yet a more class-conscious conclusion would have been ruinous. It is to Riggs' credit that he has avoided wishful actions and wishful speeches—at the expense of an illusory loss of scope. It has enabled him to write one of the most convincing of social plays.

STANLEY BURNSHAW.

In *The Ghost Goes West* (United Artists), the eminent French director, Rene Clair, spoofs an American capitalist through the eyes of a good-natured Scottish ghost. It is potentially a hilarious idea which succeeds only occasionally, is sometimes witty and charming, but always urbane. Clair's film opens with a prelude of Seventeenth Century Scotland. There are bagpipes, clans and feuds. And Clair politely pokes fun at the seriousness of the family battles, the ritual of war and Scotch whisky.

Mr. Martin, the capitalist, buys the ancient Glourie Castle and ships it to Florida, brick by brick and panel by panel. With the castle goes Glourie's Ghost who for two hundred years has been looking for a member of the MacTaggan clan in order to settle the feud between the families. Publicity men announce that the ghost is being imported through the courtesy of Martin's Food Products. But Congress objects to the importation of a *foreign* ghost and the British get snobbish at the idea of a "British Made" ghost being exported to uncivilized America.

It is an event when a genuine Scotch ghost visits these shores. Martin and his guest are given a royal Jimmy Walker welcome with all the trimmings. The scene in which Martin's car is followed by an empty one bearing the sign, "Reserved for the Ghost," will be remembered for a long time.

Once the castle is safely transplanted to Florida soil the director lets us down. What should have been the funniest part of the film is the dullest. There is the usual Rene Clair chase—influenced by the early Mack Sennett and Chaplin comedies—which is an anti-climax instead of the highest point in the film. The action is always interrupted by dialogue and long sentimental passages. There is none of Clair's usual exploitation of the minor characters which gave all of his earlier pictures their special flavor.

Rene Clair's strongest asset in the sound film was his understanding of the function of music in relation to the visual image. But the score of *The Ghost Goes West* is schematic and elementary. The most serious deficiency is the artist's reliance upon Robert Sherwood's undramatic scenario which belongs to the *Beggar on Horseback* period.

In a conversation with me, Clair admitted that his films were extremely disliked in France. He cooked his own goose with the French bourgeoisie when he satirized their cant, their pettiness, their stuffiness (*The Italian Straw Hat*). The climax came with the release of *The Last Millionaire*. It was shown just after the murder of Alexander of Yugoslavia and Clair was almost accused of provocation. The rich, the Rightists and other reactionaries almost ruined the movie house when they found that Clair's dictator

was a lunatic. "I had to leave France because of economic reasons," said Clair. "I couldn't get any money for new films." Of course with the increasing French fascism Clair found it more and more difficult to make the kind of films he wanted to make. He "escaped" to England where Alexander Korda of London Films promised him "freedom of work." But Mr. Korda, in spite of his interest in the cinema, is a business man. And he saw to it that Rene Clair's satire was such that it didn't hurt anyone. For it is a commonplace that polite satire which offends no one doesn't come off.

It is a wide gap that separates Clair's earlier brilliant film, *The Italian Straw Hat* from *The Ghost Goes West*. Still there is hope that one of the screen's most brilliant artists will recover his old spirit. It would be easy to generalize and say that he has "gone Hollywood." But in the meantime, it seems to me that only the ghost of Rene Clair goes West.

PETER ELLIS.

"Grain"

GRAIN (Mosfilm) is a story of the Soviet collectives, the beginnings, the trials, the hardships, the sabotage of the kulaks, and the final victories and the flourishing fields of wheat.

Here on the steppes, the kulaks have organized to break down the collective. "I am a cattle dealer and this is no government for me." They give the peasants houses to use for their schools, they organize "bigger and better" collectives, they penetrate into the ranks of the Red Army (but not for long)—anything to confuse issues, to break down the morale of the kolkhoz.

But it doesn't take long for the peasants to discover their leaders. The work is hard; sometimes it is difficult for them to understand; they learn slowly that these houses and these horses belong to them all, and that the land and the growing grain is theirs. But, despite the swift and frantic efforts of the kulaks to disrupt the ranks, despite the sabotage and the attempted destruction of the ripening wheat, the work is accomplished; there is a tractor, a great harvest and there is dancing in the fields.

The film is based on the novel by Ivan Shukov, and there was evidently conscious effort on the part of the directors to follow the script faithfully, and in this case perhaps the film succeeds too well. The picture suffers from overabundance of material, the sequences are too often broken for lengthy subtitles, forming what might be called uneven chapters. The result is a slow-moving and too often fumbling and episodic structure. There is little elasticity and while the work is completely realistic, there is an absence not of suspense but of dramatic moment.

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Unfortunately, the film reminds one of *Peasants*, in comparison with which it suffers badly. But, it has lively music, an excellently conceived satiric sketch of the kulak son blurring inappropriately, inadequately and incor-rectly Marx and Lenin. And there is the delightful thanksgiving festival near the water. More than all else there is Nashatir, the slow think peasant. For the horse the kulaks promise him, he sets fire to the grain only to realize suddenly that he is betraying his people. He breaks into the flames, beats them with his hands and his feet and his body, rolls in the burning wheat until the fire is choked. And it is Nashatir who finally cries, "Let us drive the kulaks out!" OWEN BURKE.

Current Films

Cock o' the Walk (United Artists): Walt Disney's most brilliant Silly Symphony. A biting satire on Hollywood's conception of a musical film and a grand take-off on a Busby Berkely dance routine. The animation and drawing are superb.

Ceiling Zero (Warner Bros.-Strand): In which James Cagney for the first time in years has been given an opportunity to demonstrate his high efficiency as a film actor. In spite of Howard Hawk's unimaginative transcription of last season's play about commercial aviation, it is worth while and should be seen. P. E.

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Between Ourselves

THE New York branch of the Friends of THE NEW MASSES has elected the following group of officers: Elizabeth Collins, *Chairman*; Lewis Simmons, *Vice-Chairman*; J. Stone, *Treasurer*; Dorothy Carr, *Secretary*.

The next meeting of the Friends of THE NEW MASSES will be held at Steinway Hall, 113 West 57th Street, Room 717A, on January 29 at 8:30 P. M. It will be an open meeting at which Bruce Minton, Associate Editor of THE NEW MASSES, will speak.

The Studio Party given by the office staff for the benefit of THE NEW MASSES, held at Steinway Hall on January 18, turned out to be an overwhelming success. So many friends of the magazine attended that the studio engaged for the party was quickly overcrowded and a large number of people had to be turned away. The office staff assures everyone that "there will be plenty of room next time."

We urge every physician-reader of THE NEW MASSES, who lives in the metropolitan area, to attend a meeting to be held on January 30, at 8:30 P. M. at Studio 604, Steinway Hall, New York. William E. Browder, Business Manager of the magazine, will speak on an important program of action for physicians. The meeting is for physicians only. No admission charge.

Herman Michelson, formerly Managing Editor of THE NEW MASSES, sailed for the Soviet Union on January 18.

Joseph Freeman will contribute another discussion of the Nye Munitions investigation to next week's issue.

Amy Schechter, whose first article on the West Coast labor situation appears in this issue, has spent the last five months in the Pacific ports which are chiefly affected by the present anti-union drive. She is the author of numerous reports of labor struggles, several of which have appeared from time to time in our pages.

Angel Flores, editor of the symposium printed in this issue, was formerly the editor of the Dragon Press and a member of the Romance Language Department of Cornell University. His translations and criticism are well known to followers of foreign literature.

A new branch of the Friends of THE NEW MASSES has been organized in Chicago. Ben Meyers, of 188 West Randolph Street, Room 1315, is the secretary.

Marian Hart of the Book Union, 381 Fourth Avenue, asks us to inform our readers that she has a complete set of THE NEW MASSES for last year. She will be glad to put it at the disposal of an organization or an individual.

A chance of using the cartoon title contest of THE NEW MASSES announced in this issue for the benefit of organizations is offered by the Contest Department. For details write Contest Manager, Box 76, Madison Sq. Station, New York, N. Y.

H. H. Lewis is the author of several pamphlets: *Red Renaissance*, *Thinking of Russia*, *Salvation, Road to Utterly*, published by B. C. Hagglund, Holt, Minn. An interesting comment on Lewis' verse by William Carlos Williams appears in the January Poetry.

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