Man Behind a Counter

The First of a Series on the Little Business Man

JOSEPH STAROBIN

That Folksy James Boy

The G.O.P.'s Hope in Pennsylvania

EARL McCOY

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With a Foreword by

ELLIOT PAUL

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EARL BROWDER

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Reviewed by

EDWIN BERRY BURGUM

ON THE COVER

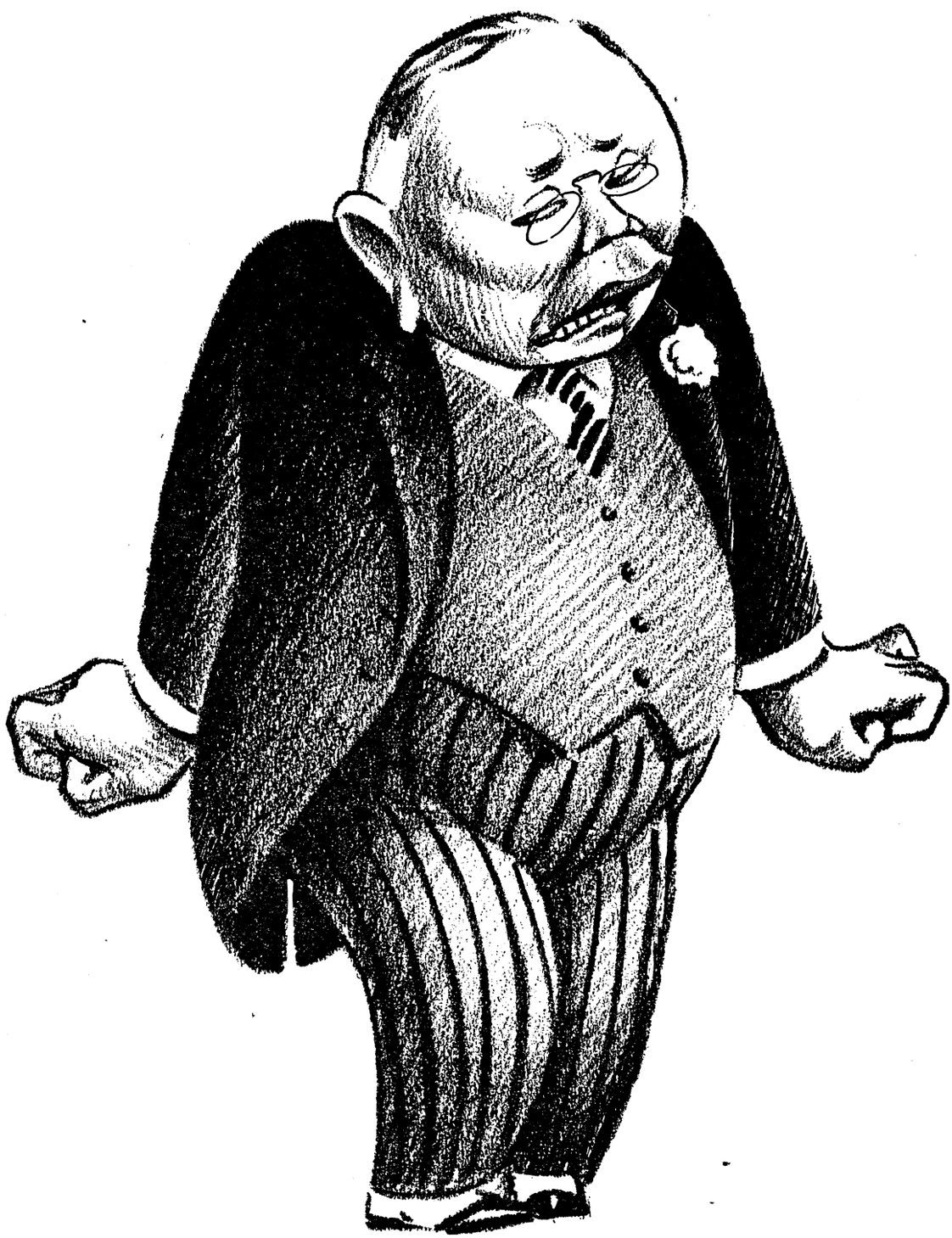
William Green

TURN TO PAGE 11

SEPT. 13, 1938

FIFTEEN CENTS

New MASSES



Between Ourselves

In October we will publish a series of special issues dealing with the four main points of the people's front program—jobs, security, democracy, and peace. The first of these issues will be dated October 11, out October 6.

Corliss Lamont, in next week's issue, describes his trip to the Soviet Union, after an absence of six years.

Martha Graham's recital of *American Document,* to be given for the benefit of New Masses, will take place at New York's Center Theater on October 9. *American Document* is, we are told, the first documentary dance in this country and, in a sense, does for the dance what Pare Lorentz's *The River* did for the film. In it, for the first time, Miss Graham uses the spoken word as an accessory device.

Patterned freely after an American minstrel show, it is presented in five episodes: "Declaration," "Lament for the Land," "Puritan," "Emancipation," and "1939."

Joy Davidman, whom New Masses readers will remember as a recent contributor of several poems to our pages, has won the annual poetry prize given by the Yale Series of Younger Poets, edited by Stephen Vincent Benét and published by the Yale University Press. Miss Davidman's book of poems, *Letter to a Comrade,* will appear next month. Several of these poems have appeared in New Masses.

The American League for Peace and Democracy is inaugurating an intensive campaign aimed at lifting the embargo against loyalist Spain. By way of opening signal, sixty local branches of the league will give Reunion Parties throughout New York on September 9, 10, 11, 16, 17, and 18. Each party will have as guest of honor a returned American veteran of the Spanish war.

Admission fee to the parties will consist of the contribution of one article of food, clothing, or medical supplies for the American Relief ship scheduled to leave the United States late in September, with five thousand tons of necessities for the civilians of the Spanish republic; and also the purchase of a Peace Endowment Certificate. Detailed information can be had upon application to the New York office of the American League for Peace and Democracy, 112 East 19th Street.

What's What

N. J. Ashley, of Birmingham, Ala., writes us:

"Best of luck with your 'I Like America' drive for new subscriptions, and I hope that a good part of the twenty thousand you are trying to get will come from the South. The people in these parts who do get New Masses are people who are alert to the growing sharpness of the struggle between the desperately exploited and the brutally exploiting; and their social awareness makes the magazine more significant to them. Reaction is using every propaganda trick available against its opponents. The latest is an anti-Semitic campaign, blaming everything, especially labor organization and strikes, on 'Northern Jews.' I saw this particularly when I was in New Orleans just after the recent taxi-drivers' and truckmen's strikes. It is the more significant and alarming because, while the cry of carpetbaggery is an old device of the bourbons who resent progressive interference with their rule, there was until recently only a small amount of anti-Semitism down here as compared with other regions. Now it seems that the prejudices of the North are being imported with its industrial capital. And the Southern bosses, who already have race prejudices enough of their own, are gladly cooperating with their Yankee brothers in spreading the use of this vicious class weapon."

New Masses has received the following letter from Ramón Brarén Welch and B. Warren Bell, of Pasadena, Calif.:

"We wish to call your attention to a recent publication under the imprimatur of the *Atlantic Monthly,* entitled *The Atlantic Presents* and subtitled *Trouble Below the Border,* issued in August. The entire magazine is devoted to misinterpretations, falsehoods, and direct slanders against the Mexican government, its policies, and against the Mexican people themselves; throughout it upholds the cause of imperialism, of reaction, and of fascism.

"We feel that your highly respected publication, so helpful in exposing reactionary forces, should expose this poisonous propaganda against the Mexican people."

Who's Who

Joseph Starobin has contributed several articles to New Masses. . . . Elliot Paul has collaborated with Luis Quintanilla, Jay Allen, and Ernest Hemingway on a book on Spain, *All the Brave,* which will be published this month by Modern Age. He is also the author of *The Life and Death of a Spanish Town.* . . . Edwin Rolfe, a former editor of New Masses, was for many months editor of *Volunteer for Liberty,* publication of the Americans and Britishers in the International Brigades in Spain. . . . C. Day Lewis' most recent novel to be published in this country is *Starting Point.* . . . Edwin Berry Burgum is a member of New York University's English department and a frequent contributor of book reviews to New Masses. . . . Marcel F. Grilli has written for *Science & Society,* the *New Republic,* and a number of Italian periodicals. He has recently completed a book on Italy. . . . F. K. Ballaine has for the past year been connected with the New York Museum of Science and Industry at Rockefeller Center. He formerly taught philosophy at the University of Washington.

Scott Johnston's drawing of William Green on the cover of this issue first appeared as an illustration in the book *Men Who Lead Labor,* by Bruce Minton and John Stuart, and is reproduced by courtesy of Modern Age Books and the artist.

Flashbacks

On the eve of a dinner being given by the League of American Writers in honor of Theodore Dreiser, who has just returned from Spain, falls an anniversary of another occasion on which writers stepped prominently into the political arena. On Sept. 13, 1932, Dreiser, Sherwood Anderson, Lincoln Steffens, and many others came out in support of the Communist presidential and vice-presidential candidates, William Z. Foster and James W. Ford. . . . Making aviation history, Sigismund Levanevsky and Victor Levchenko landed at Los Angeles Sept. 13, 1936, after having flown across the North Pole from Moscow. . . . One of America's potential führers, Huey Long was shot Sept. 8, 1936. He died two days later.

THIS WEEK

NEW MASSES, VOL. XXVIII, NO. 12

September 13, 1938

Art work by Scott Johnston (cover), Ad Reinhardt, Mischa Richter, William Gropper, Luis Quintanilla, Ned Hilton, Ida Abelman, Charles Martin, Malman, Beatrice Tobias.

Two weeks' notice is required for change of address. Notification direct to us rather than to the post office will give the best results.

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Man Behind the Counter

The First of a Series of Articles on the Little Business Man

JOSEPH STAROBIN

THERE are no statistics of the emotions of the little business man. No charts reveal in black and white the accumulation of his confusions and complaints. Generalizations are more valid in terms of numbers, but they emerge with equal power in the human story of men whose worlds are bounded by three shelved walls and a windowpane.

After a decade of perplexing crisis, all that is left of the retailer's initiative is a desperate and ragged individualism. Life drives a hard bargain with him, and daily he trades his independence across the counter of his own store. In the face of the growing power of the giant enterprises that operate far-flung retail chains, the little man stands with his back against his own wall—bewildered and resentful.

Candystore keepers will tell it to you over a three-cent soda. The proprietor of the corner drugstore admits it. (He is the third man to try to run that store in the last two years.) Leaning on the running-board while the motor idles on a husky note, gas-station operators will confide it freely in terms of prices, taxes, leases. Small dry-goods merchants, furniture dealers, local grocers, garage owners—everywhere the story bears the same refrain: business is bad, business is terrible. Business couldn't be much worse—something will have to happen unless people begin to buy once more.

If competition is the life of trade, the retailer will tell you, it's one hell of a life. To begin with, there is always the danger that no matter how fortunately one happens to be situated, another man will open a store three yards away on a cut-rate basis, selling cut-rate goods at cut-rate prices—calculated to attract the budgeteering eye of the passing housewife.

The comely girl who graduated from Hunter College and studied to teach French discussed this problem while she mixed the pineapple ice-cream soda with a manicured hand. "That kind of business man may only last a couple of months," she said, "but he can do a lot of damage. He can put two scoops of ice-cream in his sodas, and maybe some whipped cream besides . . . and sell the thing a nickel less than we do . . . he will cut in on us, exactly on those items that we make a profit on . . . "

Ad Reinhardt

But if small storekeepers worry about the competition from their own kind, it is the chain-store competition which affects them most. In this last great field of small-scale enterprise, the little business man finds the deck is stacked and the chain stores hold the joker in every deal.

At this moment when the business practices of monopoly enterprise hamper American economic recovery, it is appropriate to examine the effects of the chain stores in the field of retail trade. The Census of American Business (see Chart I) gives us the vital statistics for three separate periods since 1929, and helps establish the cardinal fact: that chain-operated retail stores have been increasing their share of the retail trade at the expense of the independent dealer.

The figures show that the number of stores operated by the chains has been decreasing since 1929, while there has been an increase in the number of stores operated by independents. And stores included in the category of "others" such as leased department stores, mail-order houses, and direct-selling establishments have been expanding.

(Direct selling is simply the well known Fuller Brush man technique: retail distribution with crews of solicitors operating from a central point on a house-to-house basis: a phenomenon that has competed sharply with the independents in the depression years. Among "others" is also included the increase of beer and liquor stores after the Prohibition repeal.)

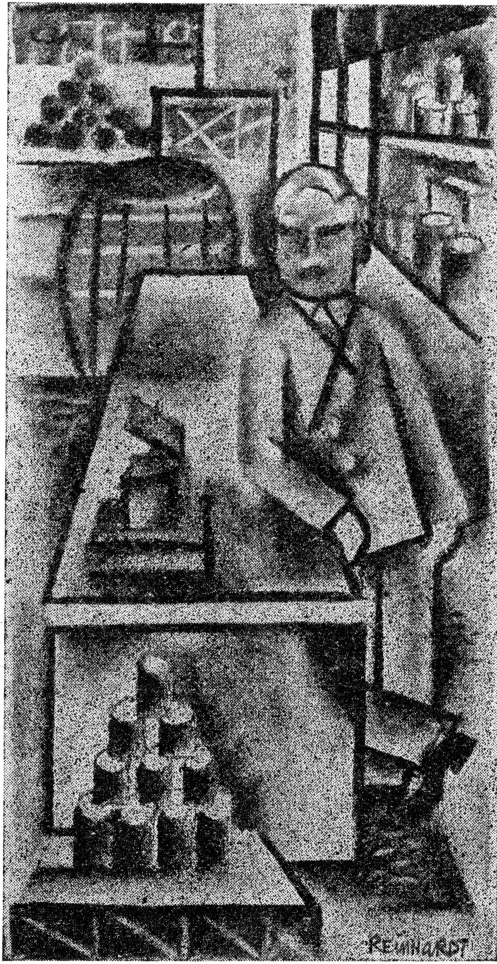
But this relationship in the number of stores assumes significance when we examine their comparative share of the total sales.

While all groups suffered heavily in the collapse of prices and sales during the depression, a smaller number of chain stores took a larger share of the business, while a larger number of independents were forced to take a smaller share of the business.

This trend is revealed even more graphically in the way the chains have weathered the crisis better than the small merchant. In 1935, the chains did 76.8 percent of the 1929 dollar volume; the mail-order houses, 81.5 percent; the utility-operated stores, 75.8 percent, but the independent dealers did only 63.7 percent of their 1929 dollar volume of the trade.

Fewer chain stores—more sales; more independents—less sales; from these contrasts emerges the deep cleavage between the great proportion of retailers who barely exist and the few giant enterprises that monopolize the field.

But there is light and shadow in this portrait of the little business man which the statistical charcoal alone will not disclose. In one of those regions in the Eastern Bronx where the quiet of the afternoon is disturbed only by the passage of the occasional cross-



Ad Reinhardt

town trolley car, a dry-goods storekeeper put the matter simply.

"Nobody buys dry goods from me anymore. . . . They think they will save by going downtown . . . but I tell you, they spend a nickel going down and a nickel coming back, so what do they save?"

In this remark there is revealed the retailer's two-fold resentment, against the customer and the large department store. The first resentment is continually conciliated, for he needs his customer in order to live. The second, against the chain store and big business, intensifies and deepens from day to day.

But the chain encroaches upon the independent retailer in several other ways. In the first place, the large chain unit buys in quantities that give it price advantage over the small concern. In the second place, the large chain unit can afford every modern publicity method, indulging in bewildering varieties of merchandise, attractively displayed and luxuriously advertised. Apart from bargain counters, souvenirs, discounts, and special attractions, the large and well established chains can afford loss-leaders: the practice of selling a particular article cut-rate or below cost. For the concern which undersells on one item operates on the valid assumption that the customer who is attracted by price-below-cost will stay to purchase other wares.

So that in a large metropolitan community like New York, most storekeepers are selling cigarettes, for example, almost as a matter of convenience, the way drugstores carry postage stamps. The margin of profits on cigarettes is fractional, and only those chains which specialize in the tobacco trade can really make it pay. If the man who ordinarily buys his tobacco at his local retailer is attracted by cigarettes and cigars sold below cost near his place of work, the local dealer is faced with more than the loss of trade in an individual item. He has lost a customer, too.

If competition leads the retailer a dog's life, problems of capital and credit have him tied in a knot. At the recent conference of little business men, Secretary of Commerce Roper received nearly six hundred comments and suggestions in which "increased facilities for providing capital and credit were strongly demanded." According to Roper's final report, the "principal difficulties in obtaining bank loans related to the collateral demanded by the banks and the length of the loans."

Retail stores are rarely bought for cash. Banks hesitate to give loans on such an enterprise, particularly for the novice or the repeater in the game. Collateral is slim: just the stocks upon the shelves and good will written in gilt-edged letters on the windowpane. The little man relies upon the few hundred dollars of his own, or else he borrows from a father or a friend—a sister-in-law perhaps, who digs down deeply into the roll that has been fattening slowly on her calf.

I remarked in talking to one man that the retailer might borrow from the Morris Plan.

"That wouldn't be so bad," he replied, "but usually you're at the mercy of the sharks . . . just plain sharks, who take a mortgage on your place. By the time you've paid in full the interest runs as high as 30 percent."

But once the store is bought, the shelves arranged, the counter painted, the windows displayed, the retailer's worries have just begun. He must find funds to keep his merchandise moving; cheap and ample credit to meet his bills, to keep supplied with fresh and attractive goods. Here, also, he is confronted with insuperable obstacles, compared with the chain.

Buying in small quantities, the retailer rarely gets the same discounts and special offers from jobbers, wholesalers, and manufacturers. As Anna Rochester points out in her *Rulers of America,* many retail chains are now firmly integrated with certain manufacturers and as their particular distribution outlets. For instance, the Liggett Drugstores are subsidiary to the United Drug Co. which produces fountain syrups, stationery, rubber goods, in addition to drugs. "The manufacturing company [United Drug] finds its most important outlets, not [only] through its own chain of 594 stores, but [also] the ten thousand Rexall stores, which are independent in ownership but pledged to give preference to Rexall products in displays and sales promotion."

Similarly, Marshall Field & Co. owns some twenty-five textile mills and an equal number of factories and workrooms, producing its own bedspreads, blankets, silks, laces, knitted underwear, rugs, and other drygoods. "Much of the ready-made clothing," Miss Rochester declares, "is made by outside clothing factories on special order and detailed specification set by the dealer."

In the same way, the Melville Shoe Corp. owns two retail chains directly, the John Ward and the Thom McAn, while the Florsheim Shoe stores are openly owned by a manufacturing concern. All of which indicates at a moment's reflection the competitive and credit disadvantage of the independent storekeeper.

The small man has from thirty to sixty days to pay his bills, and if he happens to be in a line where turnover is rapid, this presents no particular problems. For instance, all candy stores operate 97.8 percent on a cash and COD basis; groceries about 84.1 percent; variety stores, as high as 99.9 percent, while shoestores sell 92.8 percent for cash, and drugstores, 92.1 percent.

On the other hand, household appliances and radio stores operate on the basis of 74.5 percent credit. Furniture, likewise, is sold for 72.3 percent credit; lumber and building materials, 70.7 percent, whereas motor-vehicle dealers operate on the basis of 69.9 percent credit.

Out of this circumstance, a two-fold process ensues.

The small business man would like to operate in those lines where most business is done for cash, but certain key lines in this category such as the variety, shoe, and drugstore trade are rapidly becoming monopolized by the chains and mail-order houses.

By 1935, they controlled 38.2 percent of the grocery trade; 39.1 percent of the combination stores; 50 percent of the auto acces-

Chart I: Sales Volume of Stores by Types of Operation

Exclusive of mail order houses, leased department stores, utility operated stores.

	NUMBER OF STORES			SALES IN DOLLARS		
	1935	1933	1929	1935	1933	1929
Total	1,653,961	1,526,119	1,543,158	$33,161,276,000	$25,037,225,000	$49,114,653,000
Independents	1,474,149	1,349,356	1,375,509	24,246,112,000	17,846,332,000	38,081,504,000
%	89.1	88.4	89.1	73.1	71.3	77.5
Chains	127,482	141,676	148,037	7,550,186,000	6,732,554,000	9,834,846,000
%	7.7	9.3	9.6	22.8	26.9	20.0
Direct Selling	6,349	6,934	1,661	125,316,000	107,813,000	93,961,000
%	.4	.5	.1	.4	.4	.2
Others	45,981	28,153	17,951	1,239,662,000	350,526,000	1,104,342,000
%	2.8	1.5	1.2	3.7	1.4	2.3

Taken from Census of American Business, Retail Distribution, 1929, '33, '35.

sory trade; 90.8 percent of the variety trade, 50 percent of the shoestore and 35.8 percent of the cigar and cigarettes store trade.

On the other hand, in order to maintain an independent establishment in such lines as motor vehicles, furniture, or household and radio appliances, one must be able to compete with the financing facilities of the chains. This is virtually impossible. Therefore, the small retailer is progressively forced into those fields where he must operate for cash, give small amounts of credit, and cater to a very local clientele. *In short, he is forced into the least profitable fields of retail enterprise.*

Demonstrating that the retailer has been forced to the wall—that his absolute number has increased but his share of the total trade has fallen, that his credit deficiency has crowded him into the least profitable fields of trade—we have made no more than a modest sounding in the waters of little-business discontent. There are problems of a less obvious character, factors less tangible and even more irritating, that harass the little business man.

What does he think about prices and taxes? How does he reckon his cash income? What has happened to his dream of independence, his pursuit of liberty and happiness? In the investigation of these questions, in a succeeding article, there lies a program for the little business man, a signpost for his future.

★

Lower Electric Rates

RESIDENTS of Lincoln, Neb., were recently treated to the fourth cut in electric-power rates since the municipal yardstick plant was established in 1913.

"The reduction, slightly more than 10 percent," says a Federated Press story from that city, "will whack nearly $112,000 off Lincoln's annual light bill, experts estimate. Residential consumers who use 100 kwh. a month, instead of plunking down $9 as they did in 1913, will pay only $3.50, 40 cents less than they paid in July.

"The cut, initiated by the municipal plant which serves only a fourth of the city's sixteen thousand power users, brought Iowa-Nebraska Light & Power, United subsidiary, promptly into line.

"Nevertheless, in electric rates, Lincoln still lags behind Hastings, central Nebraska town with a municipal plant that serves all its citizens. Hastings for several years has been selling 100 kwh. for $3.30.

"Similar stories of rate reductions, a recent survey by the state university revealed, can be told by all of Nebraska's seventy-four municipally owned generating plants. The village of Syracuse, which set up its own plant in 1918, has reduced light rates five times in twenty-three years of operation. Current which sold for 15 cents a kwh. in 1918 now retails at less than 6 cents.

"Nearby Nebraska City, taking a cue from Syracuse, recently voted overwhelmingly to condemn Iowa-Nebraska's power facilities there."

That Folksy James Boy

The G O P's Hope in Pennsylvania

EARL McCOY

WHEN Arthur H. James, tucking his judicial robes into his breeches, came out for the Republican gubernatorial nomination in Pennsylvania, it was evident he had brushed up on all the things a candidate must do to prove he is real folks.

He had let his pinkish hair grow, so that it was youthfully shaggy in the back and dangled in a coy forelock over his right eye. All through the campaign it was a henchman's sole job to see that Arthur did not wander off somewhere and absent-mindedly get a haircut.

He had discarded his neat oxford pumps for a pair of high shoes, not the kind with laces, but the kind with elastics that you pull on with a folksy "umph."

Best of all, he had dropped the high-falutin' speech he was accustomed to use from the august bench of the Pennsylvania Superior Court, and did his durndest to talk in the short and simple language of the poor, in the state's coal pits, factories, and farm towns.

He introduced himself. "I am a red-headed breaker-boy from the coal mines," he said. "I stand for labor. We were born to self-denial and unremitting toil. All my life I have lived with laboring people, and from the bottom of my heart I proudly say that I am one of them."

It was a good introduction, particularly for Pennsylvania, where you simply have to be an ex-breaker boy to get anywhere in politics, regardless of how many yachts you may be owning now.

The red-headed breaker-boy made his appearance in every one of James' 350 campaign speeches. He was a manly little fellow, trudging barefoot up the hill singing Welsh songs and dreaming great dreams. Everybody loved him. But it was hard to reconcile him with the pudgy, well fed, smug-looking martinet of a high court judge who was appealing for votes in his behalf. A little research in the tiny mining town of Plymouth, near Wilkes-Barre, where James lives and was brought up, soon revealed why.

The red-headed breaker-boy, around whom James waged his campaign, is a noble and sterling soul, but he is pure myth.

He never existed, except in the imagination of a Philadelphia advertising agency and ghost-writing bureau. Arthur James' father was a Welsh mine-boss who visioned easier pickings in the rich anthracite pits of Pennsylvania, and found them. It did not take young Arthur long to find out on which side bread is best buttered. He worked in the mine breaker for the fun of it one or two summer vacations while he was going to high school, and his heart was not in the drab miners' shacks in the valley, but in the big white house of the boss on the hill.

Arthur early found people who were interested in him because he was a bright and likely youngster whose talents could be turned to their advantage, and to the advantage of the mining interest which governed the town, the county, and the state.

As the candidate himself expressed it, only too well, in one of his speeches: "Whatever I have achieved has been largely the gift of groups of people who knew me."

These gifts included an education at Dickinson Law School, where—great campaign stuff!—he was known as the Peck's Bad Boy of his class, '04. They included the two-county law practice which he found waiting for him on his emergence; the district attorneyship of Luzerne County; a bank directorship; the lieutenant governorship of Pennsylvania; and finally, a sinecure on the bench of the Superior Court.

Gifts which the people "who know him" are anxious to add to this collection—and be assured they are the right people—are the governorship, and in two years, if all goes well, the Republican nomination for the presidency.

Since James was virtually unknown six months, ago, even in his own state, except to the right people, his recent rise proves that a man's public career need not be sensational so long as it is useful, particularly to those who can use it.

The mine bosses and superintendents who were James' earliest patrons gave him his thriving law practice, and by it he helped the anthracite monopolies and the interlocking railroads maintain their grip upon the lives and destinies of thousands of mine workers. James' clientele included most of the coal companies and railroads which tap Luzerne County, the heart and nerve center of the whole hard-coal industry.

The district attorneyship was the first logical step upward. There were always strikes, injunctions, frame-ups, provoked rioting, union-busting, and company terrorism, in the days when anthracite was king. It was a district attorney's job to prosecute the miners, the strikers, the unionists, and to protect the owners, the strike-breakers, the anti-unionists. Arthur James did a good job. He was rewarded by being chosen lieutenant governor.

Politically, James was allied with the powerful Republican machine of the late Boss

Vare, of Philadelphia. In 1926 he and Vare were on the same ticket, and while he was being elected lieutenant governor, Vare was being elected to the United States Senate. Vare's election, and of course James', was the most bare-faced steal that even Pennsylvania had ever seen, and Vare, it will be remembered, was denied his seat in the Senate. James was the first to spring to his defense. "We were robbed," said the new lieutenant governor.

In Pennsylvania the lieutenant governor presides over the state Senate, and during James' tenure of office that notorious legislative body set a new record in reactionary lawmaking.

In 1930 the right people told their favorite lieutenant governor that he could do them even more good in a black judicial robe to set off his pinkish hair, and he therefore announced his candidacy for the state Supreme Court. But Boss Vare was having trouble with some supporters who were not so patient and reasonable as James and the people behind him, and he promised to take care of James later if the lieutenant governor would withdraw from the judicial race. James issued a public statement declaring that he was only too happy to accede to the boss' request, and a patriot named George Washington Maxey was elected in his place.

Good little boy James received his reward less than two years later, when Vare put him in the Superior Court for a ten-year term. He still holds his place on the bench because he refused to resign when he became a candidate for governor last March, in violation of the canons of judicial ethics of the American Bar Association. All during his gubernatorial campaign, as he stumped the state, he collected his full judicial salary. If he is defeated in November, he still has five years to serve on the bench, at $18,000 a year.

The Superior Court of Pennsylvania has never been noted for anything save troglodytism, but with the advent of James, it outdid even itself by handing down one of the worst labor decisions in history. This was the notorious Romig decision, in which the court summarily denied the fundamental principle of workmen's compensation. The decision was signed by James.

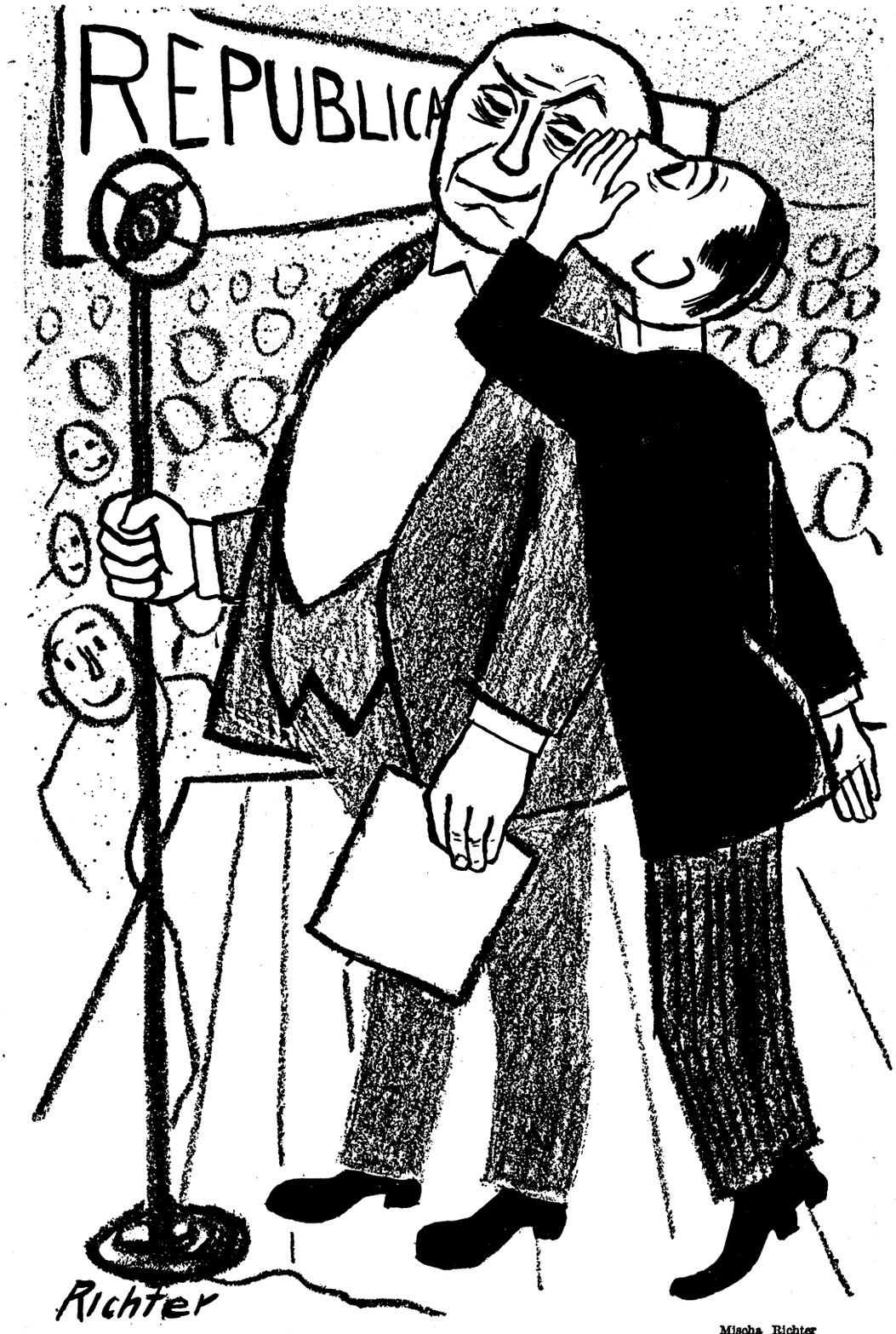
It smelled so badly that the state Supreme Court, which in ordinary cases is the Superior Court's big brother of reaction, had to overrule James and his colleagues. But the decision served its purpose, for the state's insurance companies refused to settle several thousand workmen's-compensation cases except by forced individual litigation, and as might be expected, many injured workmen did not press their claims for fear of being industrially blacklisted.

It is significant to note that the insurance company which benefited most by the Romig decision was the Pennsylvania Manufacturers Association Casualty Insurance Co., an affiliate of the Pennsylvania Manufacturers Association. Joseph R. Grundy, the head of the PMA, is one of James' chief supporters in his present campaign.

James' declaration, "I stand for labor," as compared with his actual labor record, is characteristic of the misrepresentation which was used during his primary campaign, on all issues.

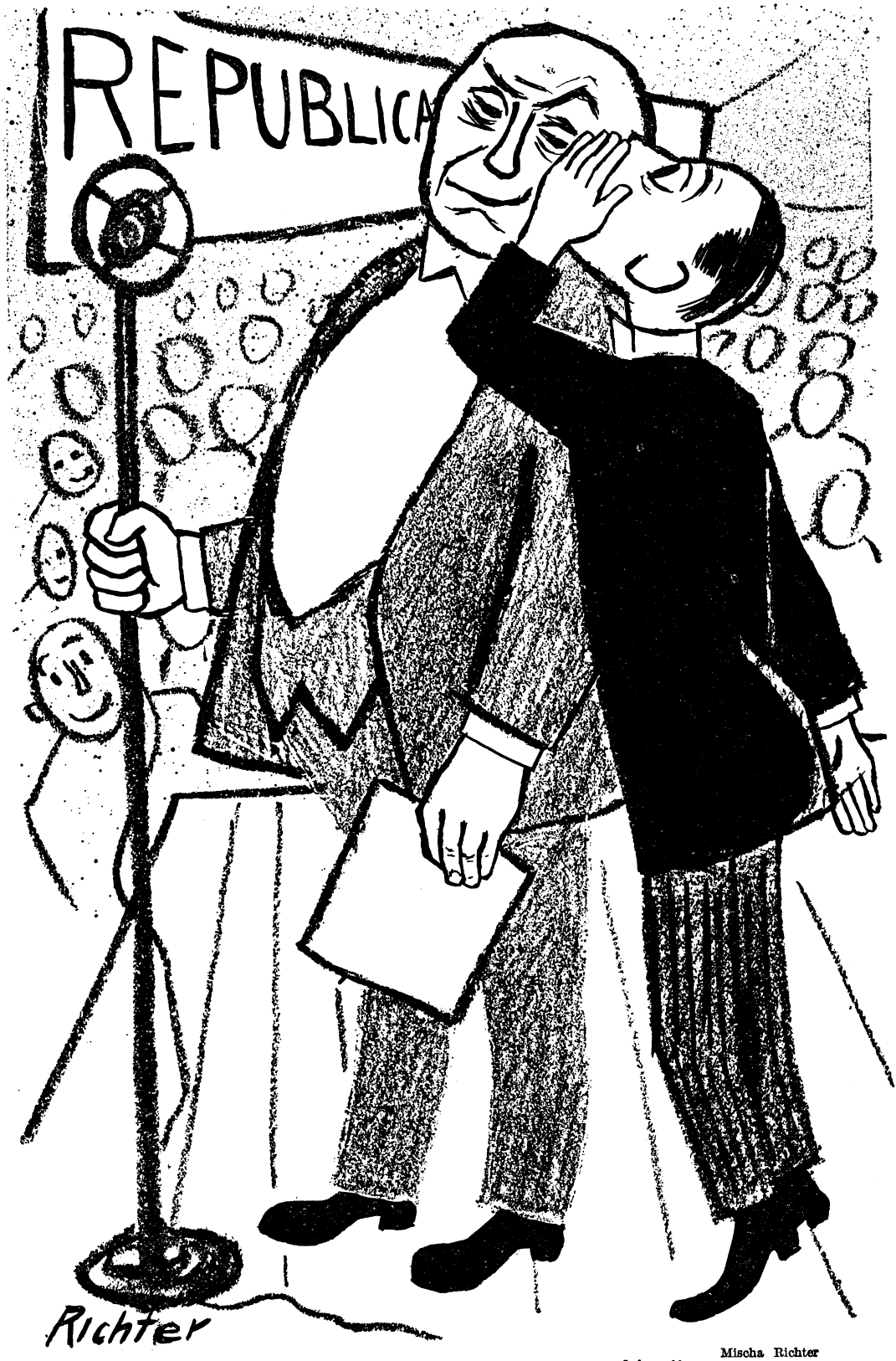
His first pledge, for instance, is that he will "keep industry in Pennsylvania." This has reference to the drift of some industries, particularly textiles, southward to seek the cheaper and unorganized labor and the tax-free sites available there. Pennsylvania has been hard hit by this migration, and James' solution is to end corporation taxes, cut wages, and lower living standards, so that industry may have a Southern paradise right here. The judge does not believe in the Wages-and-Hours Act. It is one of the things he calls the federal government's "pot shots at business." He prefers, he has said, "the rugged hillside of liberty and independence."

The rugged hillbilly also believes in "ample relief." This turns out to mean putting an end to WPA, which he thinks is "a costly experiment spawning oppressive taxation." It



Mischa Richter

"Mention Lincoln, but don't quote him."



Mischa Richter

"Mention Lincoln, but don't quote him."

means returning the relief problem to the tender mercies of the cities and their big political machines.

This practice, which James would extend to the whole state, has long existed in Philadelphia, where the Republican machine has control of the city council. While other cities solve the relief problem by appropriating funds which will qualify them for WPA grants, Philadelphia's city council refuses to take any action whatsoever, with the result that the direct-relief situation is much more acute than it need be.

This is all covered by Plank No. 4 in James' platform, in which he upholds "the principle of local government."

James also believes in "efficiency and economy in government." Translated, this means that he and the people behind him want their taxes cut. The judge has promised to end the state corporation taxes and reduce real-estate taxes, if he is elected. He is in favor of a sales tax, however, such as the Republicans last March foisted upon Philadelphia.

It will be seen that while the James platform professes to deal with labor, industry, relief, and all the other usual subjects, it is in reality devoted to only one thing, and that is to cut the taxes of the overburdened millionaires who are behind him.

Who are these right people who "know him," appreciate him, whom he represents?

There is Joseph N. Pew, Jr., millionaire oil man, whose Sun Oil Co. is one of the angels of the Republican Party.

There is Joseph R. Grundy, mentioned above. He is the father of the high tariffs enacted in 1930, and for this he was appointed to the Senate to fill Boss Vare's denied seat. His brief term was a major scandal in itself, for he was then president of the Pennsylvania Manufacturers Association, lustiest and most avaricious child of the National Association of Manufacturers.

There is A. Atwater Kent, who closed his huge Philadelphia radio plant rather than recognize his workers' union.

There is Lammont du Pont.

There are Joseph E. and George D. Widener, who raise champion horses and acacias on the proceeds of the nefarious Philadelphia transit grab.

There is Ernest T. Weir, the labor-hating duke of Weirton.

There is Jay Cooke, whose grandfather financed the Civil War, and who speaks for the banking interests of Philadelphia. He is chairman of the Philadelphia Republican city organization.

There is Jerome H. Louchheim, millionaire contractor and race-horse owner, who runs scab shoe factories in Philadelphia.

There is, finally, M. L. Annenberg, wealthy publisher of the anti-New Deal Philadelphia *Inquirer,* which ran the James campaign from its own editorial rooms and did everything but go out and stuff the ballot boxes for the judge.

None of these fine gentlemen made his appearance while Arthur James was shouting up and down the state for votes, but their names appear where it counts—on the certified record of James' campaign expenditures.

Of the $470,012 spent on behalf of James—and this comes to about $1 for every vote by which he defeated Gifford Pinchot—Pew put up $152,500; Grundy, $22,750; and Moe Annenberg, his son and his wife, put up $5,000 each. The Atwater Kents, senior and junior; the Wideners, du Pont, Cooke, and Louchheim also contributed $5,000. Weir of Weirton, who is also contributing to the Ohio Republican machine, gave $2,500 to the noble cause of Jamesism.

A few years ago men like James were being nominated and elected with regularity in other states as well as in Pennsylvania. But James' 1938 nomination in what is otherwise an overwhelmingly New Deal year has set the pattern for Republican action on a national scale, in the congressional and senatorial elections this fall, and in 1940 when the presidency is at stake.

James waged his campaign as a man of the people. He was going to bring industry back to Pennsylvania and give every man a job. He was going to put an end to governmental foolishness. He was going to drive out the New Deal. He was going to smash the CIO. He was the real representative of Americanism and populism.

In reality, of course, he is anti-progressive, anti-labor, and anti-democratic. He and the worthies behind him seek to replace taxes on wealth and corporations with sales taxes. They are against adequate relief and the WPA. They are against social legislation.

If such a candidate and such a program were to win in Pennsylvania in November, the effect upon national politics may be imagined. The forces of reaction would be given new and unbounded strength and fervor, and millions of dollars would be coaxed from their resting places in the toes of blue stockings.

If nearly a half-million dollars, officially, and nobody knows how much more unofficially, was spent on James' behalf in a mere party primary, where he ran against a generally discredited opponent, there will be no limit to the millions spent to beat the New Deal ticket in Pennsylvania this fall.

And if James wins, he automatically becomes one of the Republicans' hopes for the presidency in 1940.

It is thus apparent that James' nomination, although at the time it passed comparatively unnoticed, was just as important a result of the Pennsylvania primary last May 17 as was the Democratic intra-party contest, in which Tom Kennedy and the progressive wing were nosed out by the middle-of-the-road forces led by Gov. George H. Earle.

If anything were needed to unite the two great factions of the Democratic Party, with their 1,100,000 votes, it was the nomination of James. That unity now is a fact. The 520,000 votes cast for Kennedy, and the coalition of urban and rural, labor and middle-class elements which produced them have had their progressive effect upon the inner councils of the party, and modifications in previously lukewarm campaign planks are being drafted.

The Democratic candidates are Charles Alvin Jones for governor, to oppose James; and Earle for senator, to oppose the old "labor" hack, "Puddler Jim" Davis.

Jones is far from being a strong, militant character, and even his liberalism is of the mildest sort. The best that can be said for him is that there is not much against him. Earle, too, has an in-and-out record as a liberal, although in justice it must be said that the notoriously reactionary state Senate is partially responsible.

But it should be remembered that in Pennsylvania this year it is not the men who count; it is the issues. James is unimportant as an individual. It is only when he is placed against his proper background, beside the things for which he stands, that he becomes a dark and dangerous apparition on the horizon.

So, too, Jones and Earle are relatively unimportant as individuals. Their good looks, their clothing, their diction, and their personableness do not matter; nobody wants to sign them to a movie contract.

The important thing is that the Democratic Party in Pennsylvania is a New Deal party all the way down the line; that it has the support of Labor's Non-Partisan League; that the rank and file of the American Federation of Labor are behind it; that city workers and farmers, middle-class and professional groups, Negroes and other minority groups, support it; and that if it is defeated, that defeat will be one of the greatest setbacks for progressivism that this country has ever known.

Unified action in November can make it a cold winter for Pennsylvania's Republican millionaires. And nobody is going to feel sorry for Arthur James, the brave little red-headed breaker-boy. He still has his judicial robes to keep him warm for his five remaining unethical years.

Analysis

The trajectory of a shell
Is a wonderful scientific thing.
Merely a question of physics,
Calculus and the Nobel Prize.
It whirls from a steel sleeve
The forty miles you point it
And then explodes, slightly louder
And with more light, mostly red,
Than fireworks at the country fair.
And if they strike you win:
No cigar or kewpie doll,
But ravaged lands, stricken peoples,
Shattered brotherhood the fine reward,
Shrapnel bought from you at premium
Is returned to you gratis, gifts
From the living to the defending dead.

SAMUEL SILVERMAN.

★

William Gropper

NEW MASSES
ESTABLISHED 1911

★

The Cardinal Issue

PRESIDENT ROOSEVELT'S Labor Day speech at Denton, Md., served to illuminate the cardinal issue facing the American people in this election—the issue of progressive and democratic government as against government in the interest of "the cold-blooded few." Perhaps never before has Roosevelt so strongly emphasized the need of unity of workers and farmers to keep the country moving on the road of progress. The President sensed correctly that the great danger lies in the efforts which big business and its political satellites are making "to drive a wedge between the farmers on the one hand and their relatives and their logical partners in the cities on the other hand." This warning is particularly pertinent in Maryland, where Sen. Millard Tydings, the tory Galahad, has been counting on sowing sufficient confusion among the farmers and middle classes to counteract the united support which Rep. David J. Lewis is receiving from the AFL and the CIO.

Roosevelt drew a sharp line between conservatives and liberals and declared his determination to keep the Democratic Party liberal. But that he is thinking not merely in party terms, but more and more in the direction of a new political realignment is evident from his statement last Friday approving the election of liberal Republicans. His Labor Day speech, with its underscoring of farmer-labor unity and its ranging of liberals and progressives against conservatives and reactionaries, is an important contribution toward furthering this end.

The Maryland primary, September 12, will tell just how effectively the people of that state have learned the lessons which the President emphasized. Representative Lewis is waging a gallant fight, but Wall Street money behind Tydings may prove too great an obstacle to overcome. In addition, Maryland has the same reactionary county-unit system of voting as has Georgia, enabling sparsely settled agricultural counties to outweigh densely populated industrial regions. But win or lose, the New Deal in Maryland, as elsewhere, has taken an important step toward breaking the bourbon stranglehold on the South and toward assuring a progressive victory in 1940.

Georgia Primaries

ALL Georgia recognizes the issue at stake in its nomination of a United States senator on September 14. The three-cornered fight between Sen. Walter F. George, Gov. Eugene Talmadge, and the New Dealer Lawrence Camp has developed, as the latest Gallup poll shows, into the standard two-way contest—progress versus reaction, with Camp and George, respectively, leading the two forces, and Talmadge, almost out of the running, avoiding the labor centers and snapping his red galluses in the back country.

The development of democratic forms has been slow in Georgia. In addition to the poll tax, which automatically disfranchises thousands of Negro and white voters, and the lack of a secret ballot, the people are faced with the necessity of beating the archaic county-unit system. The county-unit system—effective in the Democratic primaries, Georgia's real elections—is similar to England's rotten boroughs; and Georgia has not yet had its Reform Bill of 1832. Each county is entitled to twice as many votes as it has representatives in the General Assembly. Under the Georgia constitution, dating from Reconstruction days, the number of representatives, by counties, in the General Assembly is as follows:

8 largest	3 each	24
30 next largest . . .	2 each	60
121 smallest	1 each	121
159 counties		205

The 121 small counties have more votes than the thirty large counties, though the latter have a majority of the state's population. Of the 159 counties, 117 have less than twenty thousand people living within them; sixty-one have less than ten thousand, and eight have less than five thousand inhabitants. Thus Fulton County (Atlanta) with a population of 325,000 has three representatives in the Assembly and six votes in the state Democratic convention while Echols County, with a total population of 2,744, has one representative in the Assembly and two votes at the state convention.

The crux of this corrupt system is the rule which throws the entire vote of a county's representation at the state convention to the candidate who attains a *majority of one* in the popular vote. Regardless of whether a candidate gains a statewide majority in the popular vote, his election depends on the vote taken at the state Democratic convention which is dominated twelve to one by the rotten boroughs.

If the bourbons seem to have things to their liking in the actual mechanics of the primaries, the people of Georgia are not without reasons for supposing that victory is possible. Republican leaders can send Republican voters into the primaries, as they plan to, but they cannot be certain that their constituents will vote as they are told. Rank-and-file Republicans in Georgia, as in many Southern states, have a long tradition of progressivism, and many of them will understand what is involved in the present primary. The bulk of organized labor, despite the lefthanded endorsement of George by AFL national leaders, is unquestionably for Camp. The CIO has endorsed the New Dealer, and Labor's Non-Partisan League, a little slow in getting under way, is now moving to organize a progressive vote for Camp. Though largely unorganized, Georgia's farmers still cherish their Populist traditions. Today those traditions call for unity with labor and the middle class in support of the one progressive candidate, Lawrence Camp.

Defeat With Honor

COTTON ED SMITH has refought the Civil War, repealed the Emancipation Proclamation, and declared Lee's surrender at Appomattox null and void. It is a great victory for "democracy" and a setback for "dictatorship," say a majority of the country's newspapers, including the Northern Republican press. In California Sheridan Downey, original New Dealer, has defeated a half-hearted, opportunist New Dealer, Sen. William G. McAdoo. But this too, according to the more astute commentators, is somehow a great blow to the New Deal.

There is no doubt that the New Deal took a beating in South Carolina, but it was a defeat not without honor. Cotton Ed Smith's campaign should give pause to all those who believe that it is possible to join hands with the enemies of the New Deal and still defend democracy. He ran unashamedly on the platform of the Confederacy—of treason to democracy. His speeches consisted of frenzied appeals to race and sectional prejudice. And he topped it off by reviving the Red Shirts, blood brother of the old Ku Klux Klan, which in a contemporary setting has a decidedly fascist flavor. Cotton Ed is a symbol; "white supremacy" and "states' rights," like the medieval shibboleths employed by the Nazis, are the cloak for the program of the modern slavocracy, the forces of big business that dominate the South.

That Cotton Ed, despite his vicious dema-

gogy, despite his powerful capitalist and planter support and the prestige of thirty years of continuous service in the Senate, was able to win over Governor Johnston by a margin of only a little more than thirty thousand votes speaks volumes for the new South that is stirring to birth, a South of progressivism and democracy. Had the Negroes been permitted to vote, had even the many thousands of poor whites who were disfranchised by poll-tax restrictions been able to participate in the primary, there would have been a far different story to tell.

As for California, excuse us if we shed no tears over the downfall of that not too reputable wheelhorse, Senator McAdoo. The California primary results were, in fact, an overwhelming victory for the New Deal. In addition to Downey, there was nominated for governor Culbert L. Olson, formerly prominent in Upton Sinclair's Epic movement. Olson has been the leader of the progressive forces in the state legislature and he received the support of organized labor, farmers, liberals, small merchants, motion picture celebrities, and other professionals. He is pledged to free Tom Mooney and his chances of defeating Governor Frank Merriam, renominated on the Republican ticket, are considered exceptionally good. Chosen as the Democratic candidate for lieutenant governor was Ellis E. Patterson, one of the leaders of the liberal bloc in the state Assembly. All New Deal Representatives were renominated and Jack Shelley, progressive president of the AFL Central Labor Council in San Francisco, won nomination as a candidate for the state Senate. The only setback for the liberal Democrats was the winning by Earl Warren, Hoover Republican, of both major party nominations for attorney general.

Britain's Latest Wile

THE negotiations over Czechoslovakia, under British inspiration, have taken a miserable turn viewed from any meaningful perspective. The Czechs offer one compromise after another, each a more serious encroachment on their independence and sovereignty. Prague's plan No. 3, of which the author is Lord Runciman, involves cantonalization, certainly a dangerous experiment under the circumstances. But no sooner is an offer made than it is rejected by Berlin as a "mockery" and Britain begins anew to search for a "more satisfactory" formula. Why isn't some similar pressure exerted on Berlin and Berchtesgaden and Nuremberg for a parallel show of conciliation and compromise?

Of course, Britain does not want Hitler to plunge all Europe into war in order to get Czechoslovakia. At the zero hour, then, when peace hangs in the balance by a slender thread, London exerts some beneficial influence in Berlin. Otherwise, however, its pressure is pernicious. Gladly would the British tories sacrifice Czechoslovakia to the Nazis if they could do so quietly and quickly. Since that is difficult, ingenious expedients have to be employed. The Runciman mission was an innovation of this type. But the aim of Britain is still essentially the same and the fewer the illusions on this score the better.

While the French Cabinet reiterates its decision to come to Czechoslovakia's aid in the event of German invasion (as the Franco-Czechoslovakian pact pledges), the British are attempting to compromise the Czechs into a position that would make resistance to German aggression impossible. Right now, the Chamberlain government is preparing the ground for a "plebiscite" proposal. As Berlin demands the extinction of Czechoslovakia as a state, London respectfully suggests that perhaps Germany would be satisfied with the Sudeten region alone. Berlin thunders and London echoes, but all to the same account. For Czechoslovakia cannot defend itself without the Sudeten part of Bohemia. It would be doomed to a gradual but certain death under any partition plan. London's formula to achieve this end is really ingenious. With the French Foreign Office relinquishing all initiative to London, the British demand only that the Nazis moderate their tone and show a real affection for peace, in which case Britain guarantees that Prague can be "induced" to make even more "far-reaching" concessions —a plebiscite in the Sudeten regions, for example, as some of the London dispatches report. Czechoslovakia can no more afford to permit a plebiscite on secession than could the United States in 1861, and the British know it.

Hope rests in the pressure that can be brought on Chamberlain to bar further concessions to the Nazis by the Trades Union Congress now in session, and in the refusal that may come from the French to trail the British farther on the road that leads to handing over of Czechoslovakia to Hitler. The Soviet Union has repeatedly made clear its position that it will uphold its commitments to defend Czech democracy. The gravest danger lies in the progress which Lord Runciman and his London manipulators have made towards forcing a plebiscite upon the Czechs.

Labor Relations Abroad

THE report of the President's Commission on Industrial Relations in Great Britain provides a valuable summary of English trade-union practice and labor legislation. Probably its most pertinent contribution is to show conclusively, in President Roosevelt's words, that in Great Britain "collective bargaining is an accepted fact." It is significant that spies and industrial espionage are not employed by the overwhelming majority of British employers—a fact that greatly contributes toward speedy adjustment of disputes. The forthcoming report on Sweden should also help prove that collective bargaining and the absence of espionage are the norm in all other advanced industrial democracies. Certainly this is a cue to American industrialists seeking peaceful labor relations.

Obviously, the United States cannot solve all its problems simply by deciding to do things in the "British" or "Swedish" way: such an arbitrary solution could not answer our needs. No doubt there will be anti-union employers who will use the report to bolster such arguments as: "Unions are incorporated in Great Britain, why not here?" "Unions in England are not allowed to engage in sympathetic strikes which are not within the trade or industry, or which are designed to coerce the government either directly or by inflicting hardship on the community—why not such a rule in this country?" However fallacious or superficial this quoting of misunderstood and misinterpreted scripture may be, experience has already shown us that the report will be utilized by some to "prove" that the Wagner act should be amended and weakened; that unions should be forced to accept compulsory arbitration; that the general strike should be declared illegal. Tories will rhapsodize over hoary anti-union formulas for which they will find alleged precedent in English and Swedish practice.

On the other hand, workers and their allies faced with such sophistry should recall some details concerning English labor development not revealed in the report. British unions have been weakened and repeatedly defeated by the class-collaborationist policy of their leadership. Much of English labor legislation represents definite setbacks to the labor movement which stemmed directly from such collaboration. That British workers are far from satisfied with the way things are will be evident in the debates of the British Trades Union Congress just convened. Here, past practices will be examined and efforts made to correct mistakes. There will be groups pointing out that the strength of the working class rests in its ability to resist exploitation and attack, not in its ability to mollify the ruling class. There will be strong voices urging that the success of the labor movement is determined in the end by the unity and aggressiveness of the unions themselves. They will insist that Chamberlain's present role of conciliating the fascist aggressors is made easier by the weaknesses of the British labor movement. Legislation,

it will be apparent, can only be beneficial when labor is powerful enough to make it so.

The trade unions of America need unity, and organization allowing them to play an independent political role in alliance with the farmers and the middle classes. Only then can they fully resist efforts to weaken them through adverse legislation. They should beware of all attempts to foist on them a policy of class collaboration. From this viewpoint, the report is important and should be studied. By understanding it, the unions can forestall and defeat the reactionaries in their drive to weaken and destroy the labor movement and, with it, democracy and progress.

Rail Unions Stand Firm

THE general chairmen of the Railroad Brotherhoods have sanctioned a strike vote following the failure of the National Mediation Board to bring about an agreement on the companies' demand for a 15 percent wage cut. The representatives of the rail unions have likewise rejected arbitration because in their opinion the reduction of wages is unjustifiable and arbitration would be tantamount to sanctioning a compromise.

In previous editorials, we have pointed out that the railroads have enjoyed immense profits for many years (and even during the depression). The gains have been partially concealed by tricky bookkeeping. But figures show that capital net earnings paid out on bonds and stocks have risen from 12.1 percent in 1920 to the fantastic figure of 20 percent in 1933.

The railroads are suffering from their own mismanagement; from watering stocks and bonds which in turn leads to gross over-capitalization; from looting treasuries; from the distribution of huge bonuses, commissions, and salaries to executives and large security holders. Now they wish the workers to pay for their extravagance and faulty financing.

The reduction of rail wages would curtail purchasing power at a crucial moment and seriously impede President Roosevelt's recovery program. It would work immediate hardships on workers, farmers, and middle-class people everywhere. It would herald a new drive against wages in all industry. The ills of the railroads cannot be cured by maiming the economy of America. Wall Street has put the railroads in a hole; the logical solution is to return them to the people by nationalizing the railroad industry. By calling for nationalization, by refusing to accept any wage cut or compromise, by expressing determination to strike rather than bow to the demands of the companies, by augmenting their unity, the brotherhoods can prevent further sabotage of recovery by the big business sitdowners. Their unyielding resistance to the cuts is the strongest defense of recovery. It deserves the support of all who stand to gain by protecting and raising the present standard of living.

Third of a Nation—$9 a Week

CRITICS of the Soviet Union are fond of attacking the statistics of its economy by breaking down such figures as wages into terms of what they call purchasing power. It doesn't matter how many rubles a worker gets, they say; tell us how many kilograms of meat, how many suits of clothing, how many theater tickets he can buy with his rubles. We wonder how these critics—who usually couple their attacks on the Soviet Union with broad generalizations about the United States, running to such statements as that an American on relief is better off than a Stakhanovite worker with full salary and bonus—we wonder how they will tackle the latest figures on the distribution of income in the United States.

The report of the National Resources Committee for the fiscal year 1935-36 has just been published. If anyone needs documentation for the general thesis that life in America is meager alike in material goods and hope for the future, let him glance at these figures. In the fiscal year 1935-36, in the richest country in the world, one-third of the nation lived on an average annual income of $471—$9 a week. Nine dollars a week will provide—how many pounds of beef? how many suits of clothing? how many visits to the theater? The combined incomes of these thirteen million families and individuals amounted to only 10 percent of the total income. On the other hand, one-half of 1 percent—the richest group of families and individuals—also received 10 percent of the total income. In other words the spread between the richest and poorest in the United States during 1935-36 was the spread between sixty-six and one.

When President Roosevelt spoke of one-third of the nation being ill-fed, ill-housed, ill-clothed, this is what he meant. Thirteen million American families living on $9 a week. That is the issue, today and in 1940. Political lines now shaping up, if they are to be genuine divisions along lines of economic interest, must and will take this basic fact as their starting point.

Self-Destruction

NOT madness, but hatred, blind and malevolent, prompts the course of self-destruction on which the hierarchy of the AFL has embarked. Only in terms of an all-consuming hatred of the CIO can one explain the latest action of the AFL executive council in endorsing Hamilton Fish and Bruce Barton for reelection to Congress and giving its unqualified support to the Dies committee. The executive council thus openly makes common cause with the most reactionary, pro-fascist elements in American life. It throws the weight of its influence against the New Deal and declares its solidarity with those whose program, if successful, would destroy every vestige of labor organization and democratic rights as completely as did the Nazi program in Germany.

The endorsement of Fish and Barton cannot be justified even on the basis of the discredited AFL "reward friends and punish enemies" policy. For both these gentlemen have been consistent enemies of labor and are probably the two outstanding reactionaries in the House of Representatives. Ham Fish is the pioneer fascist who sponsored and headed the so-called congressional investigation of Communism in 1930, which has served as a model for all subsequent Red-baiting expeditions. Both he and Barton opposed the two measures which the AFL most actively supported in the last session of Congress, the Relief-Recovery and the Wages-and-Hours Bill. Fish, however, sensing which way the wind was blowing, did a last-minute about-face on the latter measure and voted for it. The legislative record of Representative Fish is eloquent. He voted against the original work-relief program in 1935, against TVA, against the Utility Holding Company Bill, and against the 1936 Tax Bill. He failed to vote on the AFL-supported Social Security Bill, but worked actively to secure the incorporation of various crippling amendments. On foreign policy he follows the leadership of William Randolph Hearst, opposing the Roosevelt policy which the AFL executive council has endorsed—concerted peace action by the democratic nations to curb the fascist aggressors. It would, in fact, be difficult to find a record more completely anti-labor and anti-progressive than that of Hamilton Fish. As for Barton, the big business advertising man—who only a few years ago sang the praise of Mussolini in a magazine article—in his brief year in Congress he has labored so faithfully in the Wall Street vineyard that he has become the rising hope of Republican reaction.

In South Carolina and Georgia AFL unions revolted at the efforts of the national leadership to deliver their votes to Cotton Ed Smith and Sen. Walter F. George. We do not think Messrs. Green, Frey, and Woll will be any more successful in selling their membership this latest reactionary bill of goods.

Forsythe's Page

Spoiling Mr. Leacock's Fun

DURING the course of the summer I suffered grievously from a case of national claustrophobia. The score was something as follows: Cincinnati, hot; Minneapolis, hot; Houston, hot; Yuma, boiling; Hollywood, hot; Needles, roasting; Albuquerque, hot; Amarillo, hot; Denver, hot; Boulder (in the heart of the Rockies), unbelievable; Chicago, hot; New York, unbearable. When I got to Boulder and found that one step more would bring me to the hospital, I was ready to surrender. I felt trapped. I felt surrounded by a wall of steam; I felt buried alive.

What saved me at this juncture was an article by Stephen Leacock in the Sunday New York *Times*. The title was not too promising: "All Is Not Lost! The Sun Still Shines!" but the sentiments were of the best. Mr. Leacock was giving thanks that although there were recurring threats of war in the world, the world was still a beautiful place. A place for fishing and hunting, for golf playing and walking, for picnics and lawn fetes. But these are spoiled for us, writes Mr. Leacock, because of the news on the front pages of the newspapers. Just as we are about to set out on a fishing trip, "The Lats (I think it was) had sent what was practically an ultimatum —the nearest they could write to one—to the Slats and there was no likelihood that a high-chested people like the Slats would swallow it. As I say, I think it was the Lats and the Slats, or it may have been the Checks and the Shorts; at any rate, some of those high-chested people that fill the center of Europe, who used to be content before the great war to play the hand-organ and make toy clocks, and who now fill our whole foreground."

Mr. Leacock, who is a humorist, went on in this humorous vein for several pages. He spoke of Latvia and Czechoslovakia and Lithia and Seltzer. His remarks about the Sudeten Germans verged on the hilarious. He admitted that once your mind gets mixed up with the Sudeten Germans, you're not fit to go fishing. He deplored that in a most amusing manner.

He spoke particularly about war and how we are always being told it is imminent and how it never quite comes off. This convinces Mr. Leacock that our actual world could be as gay as the bright world of imagination to which we so eagerly retreat "if we would only let it be so." At the conclusion of his article, he writes: "Everything is there, the smiling abundance of our unrealized paradise, the good will towards man that all feel and none dares act upon. It is all there for the asking, if we can only cast aside from the gateway the evil spirits of fear and apprehension and distrust which keep us from our kingdom."

This approach to the problems of the universe brought relief to my mind, weakened as it was by the heat and by the same news that had worried Mr. Leacock. However, it did seem to me that Mr. Leacock was setting almost unapproachable standards for the rest of us. For a moment I fancied that Canada, where Mr. Leacock so gracefully lives, might have been cut off from the world, but surely by this time the Pony Express, convoyed by the Canadian Mounted, has brought through the news of the Spanish war and of the Sino-Japanese conflict. But these may not be Mr. Leacock's idea of a war. The losses in Spain are estimated at over a million and they are undoubtedly heavier in China, but seemingly these do not strike him as important. He does mention Spain, saying "we read of agony in Spain, cruelty, and the fall of freedom," but he hastens to add that we should not let such things keep us from our fun. "All about us is a beckoning world, ample in its abundance."

I am struck as I write this by the fear that my sense of humor must be weakening. The article by Mr. Leacock is not dubbed "Humor," as is done with articles in *Esquire*, but he is generally quaint and jocular. "The world has got into a kind of mass idea, a mass gloom, mass apprehensiveness. Psychologists of today tell us that we live on one idea at a time and all get it together. The idea just now is *distress*, or worry over the imminence of something that is just about to happen—but perhaps won't. There is a Greek name for this, but I forget it. . . . " I got no further than this for laughing. If Mr. Leacock had really mentioned the Greek name (any Greek name; I wouldn't have cared), I know I'd have been rolling around in a perfect state.

After recovering slightly, I went on to read: "Here is the European news that we read: War, more war, Mussolini, Hitler, crash of the franc, agony in Spain, bombs, cruelty, and the fall of freedom. . . . Nonsense —that's all illusion! Here are the real things, the French news, for instance: Summer tourists in Paris break all records . . . Folies Bergere with standing room only . . . bathing costumes at Deauville simply scandalous . . . French ping-pong team beats all Germany . . . Daladier opens pup show . . . President of the republic bets a dollar on horse race . . ."

I can see that it is going to be difficult to wean Mr. Leacock from his pleasures. A fair-sized calamity is not going to be enough. If there is one fish left in one sparkling mountain stream, Mr. Leacock is going to be there, scoffing at anybody who allows such a thing as a world war to keep him away from nature. All is not lost! The sun still shines! Possibly what he is plumping for is a debacle so tremendous that even the spheres will be affected. Short of the sun turning black all over like a man afflicted with cholera, he is not likely to be moved.

Mr. Leacock, in brief, is not only a humorist but he is an isolationist. Not only is he a national isolationist but he is probably a county and precinct isolationist. Anything that doesn't happen in his backyard is only an illusion, an indecent thought not worthy of any man who has "cast aside the evil spirit of fear." The Lats may fight the Slats, the Checks may fight the Shorts, the Germans and Italians may fight the Spanish, the Japanese may fight the Chinese, the Germans may threaten the Czechs, but a Leacock will not be moved. The background may be filled with alarms and fears but the foreground "has all the beauties of summertime, with leaves on the trees and trout in the streams, with every golf course an artistic dream, a vast lawn of green, gay with bright costumes of red and white, with every shimmering summer lake dotted with its pagodas and its canoes, and splashed with bathers. . . . If the pioneers who fought for economic life upon this continent could see this picture of color and luxury that was to cover its surface, what would they think of us, its discontented, timorous, trembling inhabitants, shuddering at the fleeting shadows that fly over a landscape bathed in bright sunshine!"

I have read that the inhabitants of Catalonia once felt that way about the Spanish war. They could not be convinced that there was any danger to them in the activities of Señor Franco and his Moors and legionnaires and Italians and Germans. They were no more afraid of the fleeting shadows that flew over the landscape than brave Mr. Leacock is afraid; they only became fearful when the fleeting shadows turned out to have wings, when the shadow fell on the earth with a sinister glint and was followed by an explosion that buried the gay and uninterested Catalonians in the ruins of their homes. There came a time when human bodies floated in the Ebro and spoiled the fishing. This would have been irritating to Mr. Leacock. During one of his humorous crises, the one which followed the ultimatum from the Lats to the Slats, he had been all set to go with a friend of his—"all set with everything in the motor car—rods, tackle, box, bait, fish baskets, lunch, flask. You know, perhaps, what fun it is getting it all packed and the good old jokes about what gets forgotten and what never does. . . . ?"

That trip was ruined by the usual fear—"fear of the front page of the newspapers." Another fake crisis but it spoiled all the fun for Mr. Leacock. Poor Mr. Leacock! Poor vicious, silly Mr. Leacock!

ROBERT FORSYTHE.

California's Pension Hoax

And the Communist Position on Utopian Short-Cuts

EARL BROWDER

Seattle, September 5.

THE spotlight of public attention has been focused upon the California pension plan, the so-called "Thirty Dollars Every Thursday" scheme. Spending a week in California, just before the recent primaries, the writer had an opportunity to study it on the spot. There is not the slightest doubt that it has big mass support. Those candidates in the primaries who met its claims with nothing but a flat negative fared very badly in the voting. Clearly, the majority of Californians are convinced that their state is rich enough to take care of old people in comfort and are determined to end neglect of this question. Thus far all intelligent progressives and liberals must agree and approve. And by forcing this question into the national spotlight, the California pension plan has performed a public service.

But there is much more to the plan than this. It is a blueprint of a specific proposal to accomplish its aim, complete to the last detail, and rejecting any modifications or changes in advance, except by the same method proposed for adoption, namely, the general referendum. This blueprint is very complicated and difficult for the ordinary reader to understand. Doubtless the great majority of its supporters make no attempt to understand its details but merely approve its aims, as all progressives must. Thus great responsibility is thrown upon the leadership of all sections of the democratic camp. It is not enough to approve the aims; it is necessary to answer the question, will the means proposed really attain these aims?

The main features of the detailed plan are: The state issues to every person over fifty years a pension warrant each week for a nominal $30. These warrants are not money, or checks for money. They are, however, given some attributes of money by allowing state taxes to be paid in warrants. Merchants are encouraged to accept them by being granted certain reductions in taxes on business transacted by warrants. But the value of the warrants finally rests upon the provision that every week the holder must affix a special tax stamp of two cents for every dollar, paying for the stamps in real money. This special tax thus returns a dollar and four cents yearly for each dollar warrant. In this way the fund raised from the sale of stamps will be used to retire the warrants. But the warrants have value only as the holders establish it weekly with payments of real money. Actually the supposed pension-receivers receive only an order for eventual payment of whatever money they themselves put up or can induce others to put up for them. Clearly the banks and monopolized industries would touch the warrants only to the extent they can manipulate them to increase their own profits, but not to make any contributions to the masses of people. The whole scheme would, in practice, reveal itself as a cruel hoax and would create mischievous disorders which the reactionaries would use to their own advantage.

These considerations moved me to declare in public meetings in California and to the press that the recent statement of President Roosevelt against this and similar Utopian schemes was well-informed and correct. But I further added that if large numbers of the people support such unworkable schemes, the primary responsibility rests upon the leaders of the state and nation, who failed to provide a workable plan and who allow millions to

Malman

"His idea is for the Government to print a lot of six-dollar bills that can be turned upside down and passed as nine-dollar bills. It sounds crazy. He's against Roosevelt, though."

sink into misery and want in the richest country in the world. If Utopian schemes finally force responsible leaders to establish a workable plan, then they have performed a national service. This in no way means to endorse the California plan or urge its adoption. We cannot accept the slightest responsibility for Utopian schemes, of this or any other sort.

It should be interesting for the broad public to note the contrast between the sober responsibility of the Communist position, and on the other hand the reckless demagogy with which Republicans and right-wing Democrats are playing with and encouraging Utopian schemes. Besides many honest and sincere liberals and progressives who in California fight for the $30 plan there are also a flock of Red-baiters who speculate on manipulating the movement to split the New Deal majority and thus bring the reactionaries to power. These Red-baiters accuse the Communists of fomenting disorders and chaos when in truth it is they themselves who are guilty of the same charge. The Communists are giving their full strength and influence to support a program of orderly progress and guarantee the unity of the majority against the economic royalists and their reactionary agents. That is why, while fully identifying ourselves with the hopes and aspirations for security and a better life of the masses supporting the California pension plan, while insisting that America is rich enough to care for its aged in comfort, and demanding this must be done immediately by a workable plan, we issue an uncompromising warning against this and all Utopian schemes which, by their inevitable failure, would finally bring only disillusionment and confusion to the people and comfort to their enemies.

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Crisis in Society

THE most aggressive foe of the cigarette among the more notable of the country's gourmets and wine experts is probably Sohier Welsh, one of the moving spirits of Boston's Club des Arts Gastronomiques. He has been known to snatch gaspers from the hands of guests drinking his own celebrated cocktails, and the very idea of cigarettes during dinner is enough to give him the vapors. Bostonians are pleased to recount the anecdote concerning Mr. Welsh's acute perceptions on the occasion of one of the dinners of the club at his own Beacon Hill home. Right in the middle of the game course, as the guests were getting to work on the grouse and Musigny, a look of horror passed over the host's face, and he cried in strangled tones, "Somebody in the house is smoking! It's ruining the wine!" . . . Finally somebody downstairs remembered: the ice man had come a half hour before, and it was recalled that he had been smoking a cigarette. Only after the windows had been flung open and the house well aired could dinner continue.—LUCIUS BEEBE, *in his column, "This New York," in the New York "Herald Tribune,"*

Luis Quintanilla

Four New Drawings by the Great Spanish Artist

ELLIOT PAUL

NOWHERE in the world is the relationship between the artists and intellectuals and the workers more cordial and intimate than in Spain. And of all the artists there Luis Quintanilla is perhaps the best known to the farmers, artisans, and soldiers who are fighting for their country's independence.

For two or three years before Alfonso's corrupt monarchy collapsed, Quintanilla's studio was an arsenal and he worked there with the shadow of arrest and of death behind him as he faced his easel. On that day in April when the monarchy fell, three men were standing in a doorway near the royal palace and all were agreed that the crowd gathered there should be reassured in some way, since armed Guardias who had mowed the people down on other occasions were patrolling the courtyard. The three men were Negrín, now Premier of Spain, Barral, a sculptor who was killed defending Madrid, and Quintanilla. The latter, being the most agile, climbed the front of the palace and placed a Republican flag there while Alfonso was still cringing inside. Then he told the commander of the Guardias to take his men away and keep them out of sight. The officer obeyed.

After the first revolution, the traitorous agents of capitalism tried to nullify its effects; the well-intentioned revolutionists rose against them, and Quintanilla, with nearly all the prominent Spaniards who can hold up their heads without shame today, went to prison. There he worked, and drew a terrific indictment against his country's enemies while his fate was being decided by judges who wanted to have him killed but didn't dare.

When a graver moment came and the Spanish people were obliged to improvise a defense against fascist aggression, a willing crowd of workers and students followed Quintanilla without question and took the Montana barracks away from an armed and trained force.

It is not incompatible for a modern man to be a patriot, a soldier, and a revolutionist and also to be an artist. In the case of Quintanilla, it is necessary for him to be all that he is. He is filled with energy and determination, he is sensitive to an almost painful degree, he does not let the enormity of his own or his country's sorrows overwhelm him. As long as he lives he will protest, he will hold up to scorn the traitors and the bootlickers, he will fix with terrible images the memory of democracy's agony.

The first drawing is entitled *Franco's Dream.* And in order properly to understand the Spanish tragedy it must be known that Franco, the self-styled savior of Spain, has not the forceful dogface and he-man style of Mussolini nor the comedy mustache and the weeping countenance of Hitler. I may as well come out with it. Franco is a cute and plump little fairy. Consequently, his dreams, as portrayed by Quintanilla, are devoid of women. Behind him, guarding his slumber, stand his mercenary Moors whom he sends to the front to be killed when he owes them too much money. In the distance are ruins of men and of buildings. Lolling ecstatically in the left foreground is a fat bourgeois and a squatting figure symbolic of superstition and ignorance. The faint stench of the Middle Ages hangs over the spectacle.

I have no hesitation in saying that a careful study of this drawing will throw more light on the Spanish situation than reams of newsprint.

The second drawing is in no way symbolic. It shows an old man and an old woman murdered in their beds by the Moors who have been brought into Spain to aid Franco's program of civilization. What impresses one is the uselessness of the murder. One does not feel sorry for the old couple. One does not hate the Moors. It is the contempt for Franco, his masters, and his colleagues, that rises to the surface.

Ah, no, it is not by killing the old and defenseless that power is gained and held.

The third drawing depicts Franco, the great patriot and führer, taking his morning walk, led by a chain and nose-ring by one of Hitler's prize Nordics, propelled from behind by a broom in the hands of one of Mussolini's jolly Aryans. Broken trees and a corpse are in the background, and in the middle distance the familiar figure of ignorance and superstition. Hypocrisy kneels and gives the fascist salute as the self-appointed dictator passes by. Keen observers will notice a spider web.

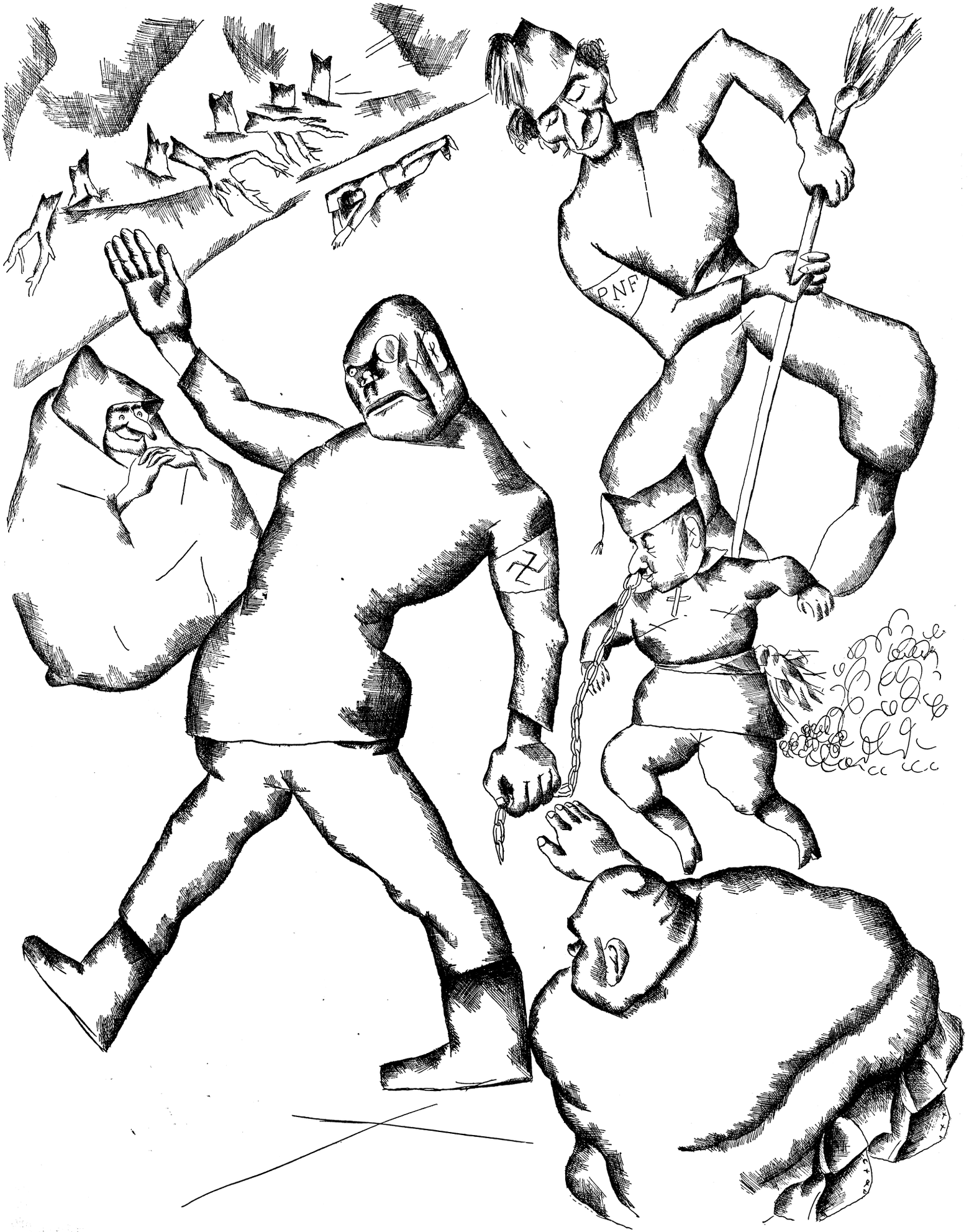
The last drawing in the series is a self-portrait. Quintanilla sticks to his work, departing dreams of old Madrid dissolving and the sickening parade of tricksters and invaders reduced to pigmy size beneath him.

I think the streets and squares of Madrid will ring again, some time, to Quintanilla's laughter. I think he will receive his friends there with his oldtime grace and gusto. The flag he placed on the palace still waves there. One must not forget that. The honest men of his country whose work and spirit he has admired and to whom he has dedicated unreservedly his talents are still in the fight. Give them ammunition, give them half a chance and they will place democracy high and safely on the Spanish plains and its fragrance will enhance the beauty of Mediterranean ports. If any of the Basques are left, that region will flourish again. And the bravery of the Asturians will be carried on by the survivors.

The only possible ending of any article, however brief or long, about Spain is a renewal of the plea to Americans to be fair and decent, also wise and prudent, and give the loyal Spaniards the means of defense.

Franco's Dream

Murdered by the Moors



Franco's Morning Walk

Quintanilla: A Self Portrait

Americans at the Ebro

The Lincoln-Washington Brigade in the Loyalist Drive

EDWIN ROLFE

Barcelona, September 1 (By Cable). AFTER a month of the fiercest fighting this war has seen, the Lincoln-Washington Battalion is in a secondary position away from the lines again. The twelve days they spent, together with their brother battalions of the Fifteenth Brigade, on the Sierra Pandols was the kind of ordeal that demands more than mere good soldiery. The punishment they took without flinching—the long marches, the many times they went over the top, the artillery barrages that could not drive them from their sandbag gunpits—these are but a small part of the story of a month of heroic action, a month of the toughest and most intense action, as any of the men will tell you, that the Americans have gone through in all the time they have been in Spain.

And now they are at rest, tired, fagged out, sleeping it off. But they know they have done more than a good job. For the story of their twelve-day defense of the Sierra Pandols has already become, in Spain at least, one of the epics of this war. Imagine them today, spread out under the olive trees, talking in small groups, chewing the rag. See them here, going over the details of the battle, mentioning names of comrades who lie buried where they fell, saying merely, "Too bad, he was a swell guy," which means more than tears. Listen to them recalling the exciting, terrible hours, talking of home and parents and wives and girls, whom they long for more deeply and profoundly than anyone who has not been here will ever fully realize. And then the tiredness will overcome them at intervals, and they will drop off to sleep any time of the day. But they were in just the same state when they got their first eight-day rest before they were called on to relieve another division on the Sierra Pandols. They were tired—yet they went into action without hesitation. And now they have been cited — the whole Lincoln-Washington Battalion—in a special brigade order of the day. Here is part of the citation:

The Fifty-eighth Lincoln-Washington Battalion is due praise for its distinguished action during the past days. The commanders and commissars have rivaled each other in heroism side by side with the soldiers, thus preventing the enemy from advancing a single step. Despite the slight protection provided by the trenches and despite the enormous amount of artillery and mortar fire employed by the enemy, it was in no way able to break the tenacious resistance of our comrades. In every case the battalion, causing with its sure fire a great number of enemy casualties, completely repulsed them. This is how Spain is being defended and how the orders of the command are fulfilled. The order was for resistance. The Lincoln-Washington Battalion understood its importance and carried out the order magnificently.

Let me outline, in the brief space I have, the chronology of the Americans' part in the Ebro offensive. Breaking camp the night of July 21, they proceeded under cover of darkness to a position near where the crossing of the river was planned. At dawn of the twenty-fifth they proceeded to the river, foregoing the usual morning coffee and bread. They crossed in small boats while the enemy shelled the approaches to the river and while a huge bomber soared overhead. Then they marched under a scorching sun till late afternoon, when they occupied a hill near the town of Fatarella. The next morning they entered the town, only to turn it over to another division while they moved on to capture half a battalion of the enemy. Another night and forenoon of steady march followed, after which the battalion deployed against the contacted enemy, driving them steadily back till nightfall. By this time the fascists had sent up reenforcements—and the battle proceeded, with the Lincoln-Washington fighting along the line at different positions from Villalba to Gandesa till the night of August 6, when the whole brigade was relieved. Eight days of semi-rest, with fascist aviation always overhead, then on August 15 they went in at Sierra Pandols where they fought, solid as the rock of the Sierra, until the night of August 27. I won't even attempt to tell the story of the Lincoln-Washington at Sierra Pandols—a short cable couldn't do it justice. And now they are at rest—or semi-rest—again. And as Captain Wolff, commander of the battalion, remarked of his men early in the campaign, "They are all heroes, every one of them."

To compile a list of their outstanding deeds, you would have to reprint the whole battalion roster. But let me mention some of them. Captain Lamb, who, together with Commander Wolff, enjoys the unstinting love and admiration and respect of all the men, was wounded July 27 and carried off to the hospital. It was from the looks of it a "two-month wound," but Lamb was back again in two weeks and went through the whole Pandols action. Harold Smith of Queens, N. Y., Company Two commissar, wounded slightly but painfully, early in the action, who refused to leave the comrades till Wolff ordered him to. Lieut. Bill Wheeler, commander of Company Three; Sergeant Luke Hinman of California, chief of the scouts, who has been proposed for special citation; Dave Smith of New England, a short and chunky tower of strength in Company Four, and his youthful company-commander, Lieut. Donald Thayer of Wisconsin; Morris Goldstein of Nebraska, Company One commissar, who, like Smith, refused to leave his men after being wounded, until ordered out; and Archie Brown of San Francisco, who succeeded Goldstein as Commissar.

Then there is Yale Stuart, who lost his left arm while on an important battalion mission—which he carried out perfectly after his group was ambushed. He too was proposed for citation. It is about his progress that the men are most concerned, for he is one of the best loved men in the battalion. And those two tireless transmissions men, Harry Fischer and Martin Sullivan, who dragged the heavy wirespools on their backs under intense enemy shellfire day after day, repairing lines and maintaining important communications. And Johnny Rody, Company Four stretcher-bearer, who worked tirelessly to get his wounded comrades to safety; Lushell McDaniells, San Francisco Negro, whose reckless grenade-throwing won him the respectful nickname "Fantastico" from his Spanish comrades; and Frank Stout of Nevada, who disregarded the doctor's decision that he remain behind because of faulty eyesight. Stout insisted on going through with the others, performing outstandingly till he was wounded.

These names make only a small dent in the list of men that you at home would call heroes. As I said before, to reprint the whole battalion roster would be justified. They worked and fought as only men can when they are imbued with the deepest strength and conviction, the most unflinching loyalty to the ideals which brought them here, to the mud of Jarama, the dust and loneliness of Aragon, the snow and ice of Teruel, the nightmare retreats of March and early April when many of them had to swim for their lives in the swift and treacherous Ebro current; and the triumphant recrossing of the Ebro in midsummer heat—which brought them in sight of Gandesa again.

And now, at rest, they talk and sleep and gripe about the food and the lack of cigarettes and the scarcity of letters from home. And they gripe most of all about the rats, the men who deserted — they have another unprintable expression for them. They read the American papers, two or more weeks late in getting to them, and their anger and contempt are boundless toward the likes of Abraham Sobol and Alvin Halpern. They tell me things about these deserters; Lieut. Lewis Secundy, who was wounded in this action but is now up and about and ready to go back, was in charge of an Anglo-American group at the transport base in June 1937, when Sobol arrived. "I put him on a job driving a truck," Secundy told me today, "and a few days later I had to slap him in jail for driving while drunk and overloading his truck. Then I put him in the grease-pit to get him out of harm's way, but I had to have him

arrested a number of other times for drunkenness and for committing nuisances. Late in June I sent him to one of the International Brigades—not the Fifteenth—and then one days in August when I was commander of the Fifteenth Brigade auto-park, he was transferred into the service. I had a long talk with him, and told him that if he behaved half as badly as he had back in the base he would be kicked out. For a while I had him on the greasing job, but then a shortage of drivers forced me to put him on a truck. He was frequently drunk. Finally, at Teruel, he was hauled on the carpet for looting in town, for getting drunk, and for stealing comrades' personal possessions. He was put in the brigade jail, and later sentenced to a labor battalion. While he was in jail he sent me a cringing letter, telling me he recognized he had made a grave mistake. He wrote that he didn't want to be put in with deserters and other types of their kind. He wanted another chance. He wouldn't misbehave, he wrote, and wouldn't I please get him out. Well, during the big retreat he saw the opportunity he had been waiting for, and he deserted."

The rest of the men feel about deserters as Secundy does. It is easy to sell lies, concocted to justify one's own cowardice, to Hearst. It's easy to testify before the Dies committee, which is always on the alert for such weaklings who sell out. It is far harder to remain steady in the face of bullets, to feel fear and, overcoming it, act with courage; to long for home so strongly that you grit your teeth to keep from sobbing—but act like men when it's time for action; to renounce—many forever—the comforts of men to fight for the rights of man. The men of the Lincoln-Washington know these things just as the people of Spain who have fought in this bloody war for more than two years know it, and they know themselves. The war has ripped all illusions from even the youngest of the volunteers, leaving only the reality. That reality is harder than anyone who has never been under machine-gun fire and bombs and artillery fire can ever know. Yet the men of the Lincoln-Washington, knowing it well, chose and continue to choose to fight for Spain's free existence, for the world's democracy—to be true to themselves and their innermost convictions.

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Bible Platform

THE tories of New York State, having formed their own Conservative Party, expect to back a statewide ticket headed by Borough Pres. George U. Harvey of Queens, the most reactionary of New York City's five borough presidents.

Harvey will run for governor on a platform consisting of the United States Constitution and the Ten Commandments. He has renewed his pledge to fight Communism (for some time he has ranked as the No. 1 Red-baiter among elected officials in this area), and he has said that he will fight fascism and Nazism also, two isms that have never bothered him much in the past.

Harvey once knew the Ten Commandments in Greek, and he says that he read them in English only a couple of months ago.

"Could you name them now?" he was asked.

"I certainly can."

"Well, what are they?"

"Say, what is this?"

After further discussion, it developed that Harvey could not recite the portion of his platform that came from the Bible. "The reason we picked the Commandments was that our form of civilization rests upon the Ten Commandments and the Bible," he explained. "And the Communists and fascists violate every one of the Commandments."

"Do you think that the CIO violates the Commandments?" was the next question.

"I think that those in charge of the CIO break the Commandments," he hedged. "Homer Martin has proved that the leaders of the CIO are Communists."

Asked what he would do if had to live next to a Communist and obey the Biblical injunction to "love thy neighbor as thyself," Harvey said that he would first try loving the Communist and would then try to convert him into the Conservative Party. So far as the records show, the borough president of Queens has not yet wasted any affection on known radicals, suspected radicals, or just plain unionists."—FEDERATED PRESS.

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New Soviet Theaters

SOON construction of the Central Red Army Theater on the Commune Square in Moscow will be complete. It is still concealed by scaffolding, but in a few weeks' time the curious passersby who watch its progress with keenest interest will be able to take their seats as spectators in the huge auditorium. Moscow will be the richer by a large theater and a noteworthy piece of architecture.

Architects Alabian and Simbirtsev have designed the building in the form of the Red Army emblem, the five-point Soviet star. The result is an edifice of a unique kind, a tall, five-angled construction which will be surmounted by a statue about forty-eight feet high, of a Red Army soldier. The ground plan, composed of the five triangles which form the points of the Soviet star, have been very skillfully used. They contain the main entrance, buffet, an auxiliary stage, and dressing-rooms for about two hundred artists. Each

"Damn that fellow Roosevelt!" Ned Hilton

dressing-room has hot and cold running water and a shower. The artists' dressing-rooms, foyer and buffet, as well as all the studios, are fitted with wireless connecting with the stage, so that every artist can be kept in touch with the progress of the performance and be given his "call."

Main considerations of the designers have been maximum comfort and space, and perfect visibility from every seat. There is a seating capacity of nineteen hundred—and so cleverly has the space been used that no seat is more than ninety feet from the stage. Ventilation is excellent, and the hall and foyer are beautifully and comfortably fitted out. Wide stairways lead to spacious promenades on the projecting roof of the theater. Above the theater hall is a concert and rehearsal hall with seating room for four hundred, and above this are the technical studios.

Engineer Maltsin has designed all the stage machinery which reduces waits between the acts to a minimum, and does all strenuous physical exertion. So roomy and solid is the stage that even horses and lorries can be brought on for mass productions. There is room for eighty musicians in the orchestra.

The Central Red Army Theater is but one of many new theaters provided for the Soviet public for the coming season. Nearing completion also is the new Nemirovich-Danchenko Theater, designed by Architect Popov, which will without doubt be one of Moscow's most beautiful buildings. This new opera theater, semi-circular in shape, is surrounded by an imposing colonnade. Seating capacity is fifteen hundred. All the latest scientific inventions for acoustics are being utilized.

The Stanislavsky Arts Theater is being extensively rebuilt, and the auditorium and stage will be completely transformed.

A new concert hall is now being put up on the Mayakovsky Square in Moscow.

These four Moscow theaters, the first of a series, will next season be an addition to the forty theaters already open in Moscow, and are impatiently awaited by the Moscow public.

Many new theaters are to be opened in other towns in the Soviet Union this year. In Minsk, a new opera house with fifteen hundred seats, designed by Honored Architect Langbart; the Red Theater, with sixteen hundred seats, in Leningrad; an opera house, with eighteen hundred seats, in Ivanov; an opera house, with fifteen hundred seats, in Smolensk; and a theater, with eleven hundred seats, in Kirov.

A theater is also to be opened in Gori, Stalin's birthplace.

All these theaters have been constructed and equipped for the greatest comfort of the spectators and the actors. Most of them have revolving stages. In addition to these theaters, all of which will be opened this year, there are a large number of other theaters now under construction for completion next year, as for example in Novosibirsk, Cheliabinsk, Erivan, Stalinabad, Alma-ata, Stalino, Frunze, and so on.—ART AND CULTURE IN THE SOVIET UNION, *Moscow, August 1938.*

Readers' Forum

Arnold Reid

LAST week the news reached NEW MASSES office that Arnold Reid had been killed fighting in Spain. Reid was a member of the editorial staff of NEW MASSES for nearly a year, in 1936, during the editorship of Joseph Freeman. We asked Mr. Freeman to write about Arnold Reid, and the following is from a communication just received.—THE EDITORS.

. . . There is no phone in our house and telegrams are delivered by mail; that's why your wire took so long to reach me. When it did come, the news of Arnold Reid's death was so great a shock that for a day or so I could not write you anything about it, let alone a formal piece. You must have gone through similar experiences yourself, and know how numb under these circumstances all your thoughts turn. For a long time I could only see his face, young, pale, sensitive, yet with growing strength and resolution in his large brown eyes, high forehead, and square jaw. All the boys in Spain are our comrades, the death of anyone of them hurts like the death of a brother; but when it's someone you have known and worked with, the thing hits you harder. Then you say to yourself, this was to be expected; everyone who has taken up a rifle for the People's Front has gone into action knowing that death in battle might be his untimely end. These boys hate to be called heroes, yet every factor of true heroism is theirs, not least the modesty with which they offer their lives in a combat of whose sacred purposes they are wholly conscious. This is war, necessary war, and in war the imperative victory can be gained only at the price of death; and in our frightful civilization, so full of agony, chaos, waste, there is nobility as well as tragedy in the end whose epitaph is those four terrible words of your wire: killed fighting in Spain. You say all this to yourself, and yet the news seems incredible, and a wild fury comes over you against those barbaric forces who have imposed this war upon us and would like to impose even greater and more savage ones. You cannot mourn, you can only fight and wish that all the good people of the earth would stand up together and smash this monstrosity to pieces with one blow.

But this doesn't give you your commemorative piece. The truth is, I am not equipped to write it. Like so many of our boys in Spain, Arnold Reid had packed a great deal of action into his young life, and someone who knows far more of that life than I do should pay him the tribute he deserves.

He came to NEW MASSES two years ago, reticent about his past. Only occasionally, outside the office, at dinner or drinking beer after a long day's work, he might speak of his work in the YCL, his days in Mexico, his year in Cuba during the underground democratic movement against Machado. But it was mostly about other people that he talked. He had a genuine love for his Latin American comrades, was proud of their gifts, their courage, their love of liberty. Once we had dinner at his house, cooked by his wife, a charming and intelligent Cuban school-teacher. Some six or seven Cubans were present, and Arnold made each one tell his exploits in the fight against Machado. The deeds were sometimes fantastic, and this made Arnold beam; this was Cuba, and behind the extravagant deeds, the incredible bravery bordering on rashness, was the lucid program of a people's movement. Of his own work in Havana he said nothing, yet he who pays tribute to him now should know that story fully.

In the office he was at once shy and firm; shy because he was just beginning to learn the elements of journalism. He was doing a great deal of work on the side—teaching classes at a workers' school, carrying on election work in Harlem, serving on committees. None of this bothered him; he was at home in organizations and on the platform; this was his life, and he lived it all his waking hours; his universe was the movement. When he sat down at the typewriter to do a piece for us, he worked excessively hard: it was part of his acute sense of responsibility, so rare among young people in general, so common among our young people, conscious and trained in struggle.

That sense of responsibility lay behind his firmness too, for that firmness was confined to politics. Gentle in all his personal relations, Arnold was immovable when it came to principle or tactics. He wanted us to be politically right, to commit as few mistakes and stupidities as possible. But there was nothing of the pedant or instructor about him. He was not laying down the law to us or giving us the benefit of any superior wisdom; no, he was one of the comrades, this was a common venture, and all of us were responsible to our readers, to the movement for a better world. Our mistakes were his, and if he saw them first he fought to correct them, just as when he made a mistake he was the first to call attention to it. I mention this not only because, like so many Communists, he realized Whitman's dream of the manly love of comrades, but also because he was a new type of American, forged in the fight for a truly democratic society, an American whose responsibility to society permeated his whole being. It was not only a principle with him; it was a way of life, so much so that without being prissy he was, in the true sense of the word, pure.

Even the manner in which he went to Spain was typical of him. It was a period when everyone in the office was anxious to go, and we had to insist that some stay to keep the paper going. One day Arnold appeared and said quietly he had gotten some work to do in Paris. As usual, he wouldn't say what it was. We shook hands, said goodby, and that was the last I heard of him till your wire came, saying: killed fighting in Spain.

It's a terrible loss, and you begin to wish we would appreciate our comrades more while they are alive. And then you remember the way Arnold used to talk about his friends killed in the Cuban struggle; he loved them, regretted them, accepted their destiny as an inevitable part of the struggle for a free society, and went on working energetically with the living for that same great end. I know that is the way he would have wanted us to think of him. If the dead could speak, he would say to us: Go on fighting and don't make any more political blunders than are absolutely unavoidable. He would be proud of the survivors too, those members of the Lincoln Battalion who come back to us still young but profoundly matured by their experience, strong in their faith, assured of our ultimate victory. And this perhaps was the main point; Arnold was a beautiful personality but not uncommon in our ranks; and just as we are proud of his memory, so he was proud of the fine Americans who, in increasing numbers, are joining the struggle for democracy and Socialism. This was the goal of his life; this the meaning of his heroic death.

JOSEPH FREEMAN.

Accord, N. Y.

REVIEW AND COMMENT

The Left Book Club

London.

READERS of NEW MASSES will remember that, about a year ago, Victor Gollancz contributed an article to this paper on the subject of the Left Book Club, of which he is the founder and publisher. Since the Fabian movement, there has been nothing in this country comparable with the growth and potential importance of the Left Book Club. It is therefore well worth trying to estimate the causes of its success: how has it been able to reach its present membership of 53,000, and to undertake the activities which I shall mention in my article?

First and foremost, the LBC was founded at the right "psychological moment," at a time when the increased menace of fascism, the deterioration of the international situation, the disillusionment of great masses of our people (and especially of the middle classes) with our National government—all combined to create amongst these masses a feeling that some kind of popular front was necessary for their own salvation, and that—unless they took a hand themselves—nothing would get done. The LBC provided both the knowledge necessary for such action and a form of organization in which progressives of different political parties or no political affiliations could work together, thrash out their differences, and advance from a purely cultural basis toward wider activities. The LBC study groups, of which there are now no less than 945, brought middle-class sympathizers and the more or less vague progressives into contact with individuals both of the working class and the politically minded bourgeoisie, to an extent that none of the political organizations had yet been able to achieve; and this contact did a power of good to everyone concerned.

Credit for seizing the "psychological moment," for demonstrating in action that "knowledge of necessity" which must be the first, second, and last virtue of the Marxist is due to Victor Gollancz himself. "V. G." is well known to be nearly always a jump ahead of his rival publishers; and this, no doubt, is the main reason why they are apt to refer, rather acidly, to the good thing he is making out of the LBC. He has certainly made a good thing out of it, but in something very much more than the financial sense. He has proved that left publishing need not be a charity organization, that the spirit in which the working class of the nineteenth century struggled for self-education is not dead.

It was not only the international situation which stimulated the development of the LBC. The British labor movement has never possessed a coherent political philosophy; it has, of course, learnt a great deal from its struggles in the past; but no system of thought has been evolved from these struggles which should coordinate and explain their causes and results. Socialism in our country has always been a rule-of-thumb business. The books published by the LBC, and the groups formed to discuss them, have already done a great deal towards showing the need for scientific political thought and demonstrating Marxism (though its publications have by no means been all written from the Marxian standpoint) as the only trustworthy instrument for dealing with the contemporary chaos. We must certainly rate this crying need for scientific political education as the second most important factor in the growth of the LBC. It is also, incidentally, the main reason why official labor in this country looks upon the LBC with suspicion and sometimes with hostility. Although the leader of our Labor Party has written a book for the club, the feeling of the Labor Party and trade-union leadership on the whole seems to be that the LBC is a breeding-ground for advocates of the popular front, Communists, and other "undesirables." This is a sad pity, when we consider how little we can afford such internal dissensions at the present time, and when we realize that LBC study groups have already done a great deal toward forming Labor Party branches in rural and other backward areas, and have also recruited for the Labor Party in more active localities.

This naturally leads us to the question of the future of the LBC. Have we reached saturation point?—the membership has not materially increased from its fifty thousand figure of this time last year. Are we in danger of losing our cultural basis, and becoming just another political organization? Can such an organization maintain its initial momentum on the basis of reading and discussing books, however valuable those books may be? Are we likely to become too left, and thus fail to attract the mass of liberal-progressive opinion which the club originally aimed to attract? There is material for answering these questions in the more recent activities of the club, some of which I will now describe in greater detail.

First, I should say there was a real danger of our losing our cultural basis. When a book has a guaranteed sale of fifty thousand, author and publisher can so easily fall into a certain complacence of mind as to the manner in which it is written. Some of the LBC books, of course, have had to be produced in a great hurry to deal with some topical question or crisis. But there have been one or two published recently which have no such excuse for the slovenliness of their style and arrangement; excellent material has been partially wasted thus, and ideas will continue to be ineffective as long as there is a feeling that it does not matter much how they are presented provided they are the right ideas. From the cultural viewpoint, too, it is a fair criticism, I think, that the LBC has paid too much attention to the intellect and not enough to the imagination. Any form of education, whether indirectly or directly aimed at a political objective, will be inadequate unless it is realized that converts are made through the heart as well as through the head. Facts, statistics, close reasoning are essential for us of the left; but those outside our ranks must be approached through an imaginative medium, and the LBC has published too few books of an imaginative nature.

This is proved by the enormous success of such a publication as Joseph Freeman's *American Testament*. A comrade who has recently been leading discussions on this book writes to me, ". . . literally dozens of people have said that they regard it as the most valuable book the club has published, because it has explained them to themselves so well." A step in the right direction is the formation of the LBC Theatre Guilds. There are now over 250 of these in different parts of the country. Most of them are reading or rehearsing plays for production this autumn, among which Odets' *Waiting for Lefty* continues to be the most popular. Some groups are actually writing their own plays; and, although the guild has only been in existence for a year, it organized a National Theatre Festival this summer, at which fifteen groups competed. I myself have seen how the formation of such a dramatic group in a backward area of the country has revivified interest in the LBC itself. It would be difficult to overestimate the importance of these plays, both in drawing young people into the orbit of the LBC and in presenting imaginatively to the unconverted the realities of the world they live in.

Another method, which combines appeal

to the heart with appeal to the head, is the monster LBC rallies which have taken place in the Albert Hall and in the larger towns all over the country. These rallies, addressed generally by a Liberal, a Labor, and a Communist speaker, have created a really remarkable atmosphere of youth, purpose, and enthusiasm; no one who has attended a rally can fail to have come away with the impression that here was a community of emotion, a real force being generated, which was the right and proper answer of democracy to the emotional appeal which fascism undoubtedly makes to youth.

It would, indeed, seem inevitable that the LBC must broaden itself from its purely cultural basis, even at the risk of frightening off a few lukewarm sympathizers. Sympathizers cannot be drawn into the movement simply through the printed page. Once the initial imaginative stimulus has been given, it needs to be kept alive by definite political activity. The question is therefore bound to arise soon and more acutely—what political line does the LBC actually stand for? It has already gone so far in the direction of political activity that it can no longer pretend to be merely an educative organization on a broad progressive base. We stand for a popular front, certainly; but a front that is too popular ceases to be a front; by which I do not mean that we do not want the masses, but that we have to make it clearer just what we want them for. The course of our development up to date shows, I think, what our line for the future must be. We should aim to establish ourselves as the educative branch of the labor movement as a whole, but at the same time our groups must not shrink from taking the initiative in practical political activity wherever the official Labor Party branch is showing itself lazy or reactionary. I am speaking for myself here, of course, not for the views of those who control the LBC.

If we consider the most fruitful recent activities of the groups, we will see, I think, that this is true. In the last few months they have sold 230,000 copies of John Strachey's pamphlet, *Why You Should Be a Socialist;* it would be difficult to think of any more effective way of spreading political education. The groups, also, have succeeded this summer in giving vital information on the subject of Czechoslovakia. Dr. Ida Sindelkova, a graduate of Columbia University, who is one of Czechoslovakia's most prominent spokesmen, undertook a tour in England; her meetings were organized by local LBC groups; and, although July is commonly considered a dead month for indoor meetings here, and the groups had only a fortnight in which to organize them, attendances of several hundred were obtained in many places. I have already referred to the work done by the groups in forming or recruiting for local Labor Parties. Another consistent activity of the groups this summer has been the raising of money for Spain; in districts where scarcely any labor movement exists, LBC groups have organized Spain weeks, raising sometimes as much as £60 for the cause; while at the recent Emergency Conference on Spain the number of delegates from the groups was third highest on the list of those who attended, second only to trade-union branches and Labor Parties.

It seems evident from all this that, for the Left Book Club, cultural, educative, and directly political activities are equally necessary branches of the club's life. We set out first to educate ourselves; from this there arose the urge to spread our knowledge beyond the limits of the club membership; and this, in turn, led to the need for practical political activity. Both in theory and in practice the Left Book Club has gone a considerable way towards presenting the material and the skeleton organization for a people's-front movement. It is, therefore, all the more important that the autumn campaign to double our membership should be successful, and that we should be aiming all the time and above all at consolidating the only basis on which a people's front can stand firm—a united working-class movement.

C. DAY LEWIS.

Liberal Junket

THE SUMMER SOLDIER, *by Leane Zugsmith. Random House. $2.50.*

MISS ZUGSMITH has chosen for her new novel a theme that is highly characteristic of present-day America. Congressional junkets are a well known tradition among us. What Miss Zugsmith exposes, to our surprise I fancy, is that they have an equivalent in left-wing circles. Naturally there are differences. The radicals almost invariably pay their own expenses. But in both instances there is the same union of what looks like high purpose and what turns out to be an abysmal ignorance of the matter to be investigated.

Ida Abelman

When the subject is a labor dispute, the protagonists are plump middle-class intellectuals, whose previous contacts with the proletariat, or the police, for that matter, have been through the columns of the radical press. Now they are induced by some well-wishers of reform to leave the comfortable routine of their lives and investigate a distant violation of civil liberties or the right to organize. One, a restless woman who haunts the literary circles, goes for the sake of new adventure. A clergyman, whose radical preaching is meeting the disapproval of his trustees, is motivated by a vague suspicion that the pulpit is not enough. The professor, who is the "summer soldier" par excellence, accepts in order not to have his liberal bluff called. None of them is averse to having his name associated with great affairs in the newspapers. But they are all equally ignorant of the type of man, the type of situation, they are going to investigate. In high spirits these Galahads in sack suits take a train that dumps them upon the harsh rocks of actuality. They discover that their respectability does not automatically chasten the hearts of sheriffs and vigilantes. Pippa's song dies on lips that begin to sag with consternation. The little hotel they manage to find near the town where the outrage has been committed is infested within by bed-bugs and is patrolled without by too attentive automobiles. Two of the liberals of opposite sex forget their helplessness in a moment of passion. The rest are not so simply distracted. Before they have agreed upon a plan of action, they have been huddled into automobiles and driven to the borders of the county, where one of them is beaten up while the sheriff's back is turned. The party returns to New York with their tails between their legs and the private conviction that they had best play safe in the future.

Such a plot harbors the most devastating criticism of the parlor radical, and Miss Zugsmith has kept it admirably from degenerating into farce. She has held herself strictly aloof, and allowed the story to speak for itself. She has taken the action seriously, and evoked a climax of pain and disgust that leaves the reader permanently conditioned against a liking for sheriffs. But it is doubtful if the action is worthy of so much attention. It is essentially a story of character. Its interest lies in the differences of motive that led these various individuals to make their pilgrimage, in their different reactions to the practical emergencies that arise, and the difference in lasting effect of the experience upon their personalities. Miss Zugsmith, especially in the opening chapters, is careful to suggest these differentiations. But they are worthy of her undivided attention, and if she had given it, perhaps the reader would leave the book free of conflicting emotions. For you cannot feel much sympathy for the wounds of persons you have not come to know intimately, or who, as far you do know them, you have come thoroughly to despise.

Miss Zugsmith has made an effort to redeem two of her characters from such an ac-

Ida Abelman

cusation. The playwright and the clergyman of the party are full of indignation at their treatment. While the rest return to New York, Miss Zugsmith leaves them legally at the bedside of the wounded man. But there is no evidence that their hatred will be of lasting quality. Perhaps the clergyman will lose his pulpit and continue to grow in understanding. Perhaps the dramatist will learn to discipline his sardonic belligerent personality to better purpose. Instead of clarifying these important points, Miss Zugsmith takes us back to the bickerings and the mounting aversions of the professor and the flirt. The douse of actuality has only left them afraid of the water and disliking the persons who dropped them in it. It is distressing that these characters are chosen to strike so clearly the final discord. EDWIN BERRY BURGUM.

The Big City

NEW YORK PANORAMA, *American Guide Series, Federal Writers Project. Random House. $2.50.*

PUT down under the heading of things-I-never-knew-till-now almost every page of this admirable work by the Federal Writers Project. The lively encyclopedists of the project have done a job that would be simply impossible under any other plan than the collective one by which it was prepared.

New York is an agglomerate of nations, races, communities, classes, and individuals. It is less a city than it is a super exposition of the cultural traits of the world, gathered in an indefensible jumble of illogic. No man, not even Lewis Mumford, could be this giant's Boswell. The job calls for a biographical industry—the typewriter legion of the Federal Writers Project. These larking scholars at $23.85 per, using a method of collective writing and research, have done the city's visage in all its anthropological humors—not only the "sights" in the guide books but the smells and the sounds of the real life of New York. For a dazed reviewer to question their scope or selection or verification would require a staff as large and as perspicacious as the project's own literary troops. The facts have been checked and double-checked and found good by a jury of savants from Vladimir D. Kazakevitch, New York Chapter of the American Institute of Banking, to Dan Parker, sports editor of Hearst's New York *Daily Mirror.*

What *New York Panorama* contains is an enormous learning of the metropolis, presented under headings like: "Speech—The Local Vernacular"; "Architecture—Bricks of the City"; "Popular Music—Folk Tunes to Swing"; "The Press—Newspaperman's Mecca"; "Transport—City of Motion"; "Housing—One-third of a City"; and "The World's Fair, 1939—Perisphere and Trylon." This is a quick dabble into twenty-six chapters which can be directly explored through a twenty-three-page index. The bleak boredom of most fact compendiums is absent from the book. It is turned out with wit, grace, irony, and vernacular, judiciously used. It emphasizes just the points we'd want to tell our grandchildren about New York in the thirties. No old codger, writing on the stationery of the Old Bolshevik's Club to the *Times* of 1970, could safely say that he remembers the McCarthy Yankees and what a bunch of fistic bearcats they were, because right here on page 316 it says: "The Yankees are a well-mannered group of business men, highest paid on a team-average the game has ever known. They seldom have fights on the field; they are courteous, if cool, with the umps."

Photographs in offset adorn the book. Here is Joe Marsalla, playing his clarinet in the Hickory House; the Wrigley spectacular on Times Square; the New School for Social Research; and an East Side pushcart market —the thousand and one marvels and disgraces of the city.

Naturally such a book cannot probe too deeply into these urban phenomena, but the boys have not shirked the necessary judgments and comparisons. These departures from straight exposition give the book its extra pleasure. Quite disgracefully, none of the essays are signed. I'd liked to have seen a short note in the back, giving these credits. Many people worked on this extraordinary book about the Big City and many, many more will thank them for it. JAMES DUGAN.

Mussolini and Britain

MUSSOLINI'S ROMAN EMPIRE, *by Geoffrey T. Garratt. The Bobbs-Merrill Co. $2.50.*

WHEN Mussolini boasts that he is resuscitating the ancient Roman empire, some people are still inclined to dismiss such blustering as pure bombast and to rely on the safeguard of the British empire. England becomes, *ipso facto,* the guardian of the Mediterranean because of her key positions in Gibraltar, Malta, and Suez, and, in the eyes of the world, Britain should form the prime obstacle to the new Caesar's imperialism. Yet in the two major raids that Il Duce has staged, in Ethiopia and in Spain, Great Britain assisted the aggressor by more or less open connivance. It is this counterpoint of Italian trumpet blasts and British echoes that this book has set out to clarify and expose.

Charles Martin

Mr. Garratt is a product of Rugby and Oxford and saw service in India and Mesopotamia. During the Ethiopian affair, he was a close observer of events as a correspondent for the Manchester *Guardian.* In January 1937 he assisted in the work of evacuating children from Madrid and in general relief work among the refugees of loyalist Spain. As honorary administrator of the National Joint Committee for Spanish Relief, he spent most of last year in Eastern Spain, with headquarters at Madrid and Valencia.

The author, therefore, knows very intimately whereof he speaks. His narrative seeks to go behind news cables in an effort to portray a troubled world in which dictators bluff and browbeat the statesmen and politicians of the so-called democracies. And the role of Great Britain is exposed with all the anger of an outraged subject who sees his country playing a double game of intrigue in an effort to placate an insatiable and irresponsible aggressor. It becomes a frank and direct indictment of British foreign policy.

The imperial game of bluffing began with the breakdown of the League of Nations in 1932, after the British refusal to support the note sent out by Secretary of State Stimson against Japan's encroachment in Manchuria. British non-intervention in the Far East gave Mussolini his cue and told him as directly as any formal note could have done that England would not interfere in any aggression so long as her own commercial interests were not affected. It meant that Italy could go on interfering in Ethiopia and round off the scattered Italo-African colonies into an imposing aggregate, thus laying the foundations of a new Roman empire. But that was not all. The game, once successful in Ethiopia, could be repeated in Spain and other parts of Europe. Il Duce's "Roman empire" would be based on a mastery of the Mediterranean—the *Mare Nostrum* of Roman times. The stepping stones in this plan would include Majorca, which would cut off France from Tunis and Algeria; pro-Arab alliances in Palestine and Syria, which would undermine French and British control in Asia Minor; and intrigues in Spain, which would give Italy control of Andalusia and North Africa, thus making Gibraltar untenable.

The chief obstacle to these schemes was Great Britain, with her control of the western and eastern extremes of the Mediterranean and with Malta hampering everlastingly the free swinging of the Italian boot. England supposedly rose to her role of world stabilizer by forging the weapons of "sanctions" in Ethiopia and "non-intervention" in Spain. Actually, both these instruments proved to be Mussolini's most valuable aids. Garratt has set himself the task of examining these tools, of showing how they foster Il Duce's plans, and of exposing England's duplicity.

The main reasons that explain the British foreign policy are the pro-fascist pressure exerted on the Foreign Office and the pursu-

Charles Martin

ance of the divide-and-rule tactics. The latter implies a humoring and cajoling of Italy in the hope of weaning her away from the Rome-Berlin axis. "Such opposition as Signor Mussolini might meet in Ethiopia must not be strong enough to ruin Italy's future effectiveness in Europe if her aid was needed against Germany." With regard to the Spanish issue, the pro-fascist permeation of England stands revealed. "Inside the British government there were the usual divisions, but the right-wing 'drawing-room fascist' element was stronger than the year before." The author points out that the fascist danger in England lies not in the melodramatics of a Mosley, but rather in the reactionary temper of the diplomats and officials who represent the British ruling caste:

> Their general attitude to the world makes them hate social experiments, loathe Russia, and sympathize with the old "traditional obstacles" in Spain. Their Spanish connections would be among the military caste and the descendants of the "grandees," the classes who were prepared to introduce Moors to keep down their own countrymen. They would tend to undervalue any hastily raised popular army, to think that a left-wing government must be corrupt and inefficient, and believe any evil against anyone with anti-clerical beliefs. They are inclined to form their opinions on historical precedents, with little regard to whether they are likely to hold good in this changing world.

Finally, the British business interests tended to throw England's sympathies on the fascist side. "Spain had always been something of a *colonie d'exploitation* for England, and special business interests were involved—mining, engineering, landowning, wine-exporting, etc. These had all been disturbed by the syndicalist tendencies of the Spanish left-wing parties, and felt that a comfortable military dictatorship in Spain might see them through the next six or seven years."

In England this book appeared in a paper-bound edition and sold for the nominal price of 6d. (around twelve cents). As a result, the book was bought by over 150,000 readers within six weeks of publication. It seems a pity that such a valuable study could not be produced at a low cost in this country too. For it deserves the widest possible audience.

MARCEL F. GRILLI.

Beloved Refuge

THRICE A STRANGER, *by Vera Brittain. The Macmillan Company. $2.50.*

IT IS typical of Miss Brittain's political blindness that on the last page of her book she should gladly entrust her children to that "beloved refuge" America in the pious belief that when all the lamps of Europe have been put out, the torch held aloft by our Miss Liberty will burn ever brighter in a darkened world.

Miss Brittain's faith in America's destiny

is based on a total of two years spent here over the period from 1925 to 1937. During this time she made a lecture tour through thirty states, covering fifty thousand miles and speaking from the platform and over the air some 100 times. Her three visits, in 1925-26, '34, and '37 supply the material for this book. Both the length of her trips and their spacing, together with the author's European background, make one expect more than one gets from this record. Miss Brittain went through the Great War as a nurse and wrote a widely successful study of its effect on the young men and women of England in *Testament of Youth*. She has seen the rise of fascism and its wars of aggression. She did not come here a popeyed innocent. Yet *Thrice a Stranger* is a petty, annoying, and futile book.

It is petty because so many pages are littered with personal trivia: clothes; hotels, menus; beauty parlors; the look of flowers, trees, water, mountains, and sunsets, from Georgia to Minnesota; dull chitchat; meaningless little happenings—and all this in diffuse, humorless prose.

Another defect is Miss Brittain's exasperating habit of filling a section with promising discussion of some phase of American life (sharecropperdom, slums, the CIO, etc.) and then tying it up sloppily with a loose generalization. She seems unable or unwilling to follow a line of thought through to its logical end. Again and again she will build a series of facts into a nice syllogism and top it off with an irrelevance.

Somewhere in the book Miss Brittain says she speaks "as a Socialist"—but as a Socialist who considers the principal cause of the recession purely psychological, who attacks the Soviet Union, who admires Eugene Lyons, who thinks middle-class women are household slaves because servants ask too high wages, who opposes collective security as a policy imitative of fascism, and who can write, "The Middle West doesn't care if Japan mops up the whole of China. And after all, why should it?"

Nevertheless, Miss Brittain sincerely hates war and is vehemently anti-fascist because she knows who makes war today. Her confusion on this and other issues is of the same kind afflicting that group of English writers called "liberal individualists" by C. Day Lewis in a recent article [NEW MASSES, July 5]. Miss Brittain spoke for them in the *Saturday Review of Literature* last January when she stated that "In a confused world full of bewildered individuals looking desperately around for salvation, one source of hope surely lies in the writers and thinkers whose business it is to stand above contemporary conflicts, and keep sane when others lose their heads." By adopting political passions, she believes, the writer panders to the grossest weaknesses of the public mind.

Throughout her American tours Miss Brittain maintained this standoffish attitude. The Americans she met were professional and business people. Most of her opinions on the

The Vacationers

Moving among simple lives,
The cottages perched on rock, the pastures
And bee-radiance of summer in the provinces,

They, charmed with peace,
Forget the program interrupted for the censored message,
The martial music played in subtle swing-time.

Postured on beaches, how
They offer sensual sun their calm subjection,
Within shut eyes catch spinning fireworks

While history pounds like surf
Upon the persecuted coasts of earth,
Upon the cities rains its neutral brimstone.

Stifled, they will wake
Before the first cock crow, hear stamping
In the stalls where nervous cattle stay;

Like swimmers, look,
No longer submarine, upon the close
Abnormal night, its bolted dark, its silences.

Toes clenched like fists,
Dimly they will watch their dream: the house
They lived in barred, the hedges burned, names

Like curses inked upon the gate in blood.

JOHN MALCOLM BRINNIN.

★ ★ ★

New Deal, taxation, the CIO, the National Progressive Party came with the upper strata. Her contact with workers was limited to Pullman porters, cab drivers, and bellboys, to whom she was grateful when they were courteous. Isolation from the people who do the work is characteristic of the liberal individualists. Bred among the middle-class intelligentsia, unable to apply a class analysis to history, and ignorant of the power of mass action, Miss Brittain and her group rely upon moral persuasion to cope with fascist coercion. She is a pacifist of the Huxley-Heard type, confident that love will survive hate, that this eternal principle will release us from concentration camps. It is out of such idealism that she views America as the last haven of freedom. America will not take up arms, America will not be devoured by fascism. No. "From the forward direction of her aspiring, invincible spirit, freed from the impulse of death that leads ancient cultures to compass their own destruction, arises one sure and certain hope that for those whom she shelters, the dawn of tomorrow will break." A pretty sentiment, if not a program of action.

MILTON MELTZER.

Academic Sociology

THE STORY OF SOCIAL PHILOSOPHY, *by Charles A. Ellwood. Prentice-Hall. $3.50.*

THE literature of twenty-five centuries is more than generously stocked with the fruit of man's search for a simple account of his social relations. To survey this literature is not only to follow the story of social philosophy. It is to feel under your own feet the slow bending and twisting of human strata, the gradual acceleration, cracking, and then the open fault. It is to see the Athenian slave become a freeman; the feudal serf the small landowner; the lowly merchant the power of the state. It is to traverse the curve of history with those who lived it, seeing in each account both the social milieu of the age and the private milieu of the writer.

The Story of Social Philosophy spans twenty-two centuries: from Socrates to Lester F. Ward. Since the author believes cultures and institutions owe their development to the guidance of thought, the survey of theory is to him the very closest one can come, in the study of society, to the people. The result is that a very important subject never quite materializes from the realm of Platonic ideas in spite of the device of reference to very contemporary society—Germany, Italy, and Russia—in an effort to bring it to life. The book remains a gymnasium for the exercise of ideas under the coaching eye of Professor Ellwood.

Although *The Story of Social Philosophy* is not the human document of struggle it should be to earn the title, it does, as inevitably any such attempt must, reflect the conflicts of today. It is all too apparent that Professor Ellwood represents a cross-section of the mess that bedevils a great many of our academic intellectuals:

> Probably no writing of classical antiquity, besides the New Testament, has had such influence in recent times as Plato's *Republic.* Its influence upon the Russian Soviet government is beyond question, as well as upon every recent experiment in Communism. Plato must be considered the first great apostle of Communism, even though, as we have seen, he limited his Communism to the upper classes. . . . Perhaps here we should add that modern fascism is almost as dependent upon Plato as modern Communism.

No single portion of the book is quite as befuddled as the chapter on Karl Marx. The philosophy of human society called "the economic interpretation of history," or the "materialistic conception of history," is more accurately designated, says Professor Ellwood, "economic determinism." He identifies this

"unilateral social theory" with the "economic thinkers" following Adam Smith, but while they generally remained "exceedingly conservative" it was left to the "social revolutionists to perceive that this materialistic conception of social evolution might be turned in a radical direction and made to support their revolutionary program. The man who did this above all others was Karl Marx."

In offering this kind of intellectual enlightenment Professor Ellwood squarely takes his stand with the cap-and-gown Red-baiters. The emphasis throughout is that the social philosophy of Marx "was constructed to bolster up a revolutionary social philosophy." It seems pretty clear to this reviewer that the term "revolutionary," as used by Professor Ellwood, has reference to both small and large bombs. However that may be, it may interest Marxists to know that the only "basis for the theory was in the revolutionary wishes of Marx and his co-workers."

It was the same Albion W. Small, at the University of Chicago, the teacher of Charles A. Ellwood, who said, "Marx will have a place in social science analogous with that of Galileo in physical science." From the distant campus of Duke University, Professor Ellwood finds this simply the judgment of an old man.

To what end does this story of social philosophy lead? Although it is not fair to quarrel with Professor Ellwood over what he does not attempt to do, this survey of social thinkers and their theories reflects a very definite contemporary sociological trend, notwithstanding the author's attempt to remain the impartial historian. The attempt to convey to the reader only a judicial aloofness is a matter of literary technique: in detailing or discussing a theory, simply find some ideas true or good, some false or bad, and, for relaxation, some amusing. It is a method in common academic use, but few writers, I suspect, are as adept in its employment as Professor Ellwood. He does, however, forget technique, to the extent of becoming enthusiastic over two thinkers, Aristotle and Lester F. Ward. In the epilogue, he completely abandons disinterested commentary to plead for a combination of "fact-finding" and "philosophical syntheses" in sociological theory, following bold social thinkers of the present (illustrated in "the most brilliant way" by Prof. P. A. Sorokin, of Harvard University!) who "are surely showing us the way out." Such a philosophical development would indeed lead sociology into poverty. The curt elimination of Marxism on the ground that it leads to chaos, and the rationalization of belief in distinctions of race and class under the guise of planned progress, intellectual leadership, is the familiar road to fascism.

It is conceivable, of course, that Professor Ellwood is not at all confused. His book, however, will certainly confound the general reader and prepare the less mature student for the lower depths of fascist theorizing.

F. K. BALLAINE.

MOVIES

WHEN a motion picture audience breaks into spontaneous applause at speeches in a picture, it is a reassuring demonstration to the Hollywood moguls who have been desperately reduced to spending a million dollars in advertising to get audiences to love the movies again. This happened several times during the new film by Frank Capra, director, and Robert Riskin, screen writer. *You Can't Take It With You* is something different from the stage version. The creators of *It Happened One Night* and *Mr. Deeds Goes To Town* have taken a vapid and charming stage whimsy by George Kaufman and loaded it with political and social viewpoints. Pointing out to Hollywood that real reaction to real things is not only artistically necessary but surefire boxoffice has been the main preoccupation of left film criticism for some years. In their previous pictures Capra and Riskin indicated that they understood this simple principle. The gate receipts proved it.

What has been quietly happening in Hollywood is that several major producers have accepted the idea of a social film. Warner Brothers, Columbia, and Walter Wanger need not be told again that there's gold in them thar soapboxes; we are now faced with the *fait accompli. You Can't Take It With You* indicates that the period of the big headache is about to begin in the social film. What the upper middle-class audience at Radio City cheered in the picture causes my alarm. In a speech inserted in the mouth of Grandpa Vanderhof (Lionel Barrymore) which was not in the play and has no organic place in the picture, the genial old zany remarks to his novelist daughter that she should put some "ismology" into her book. He goes on to explain that no contemporary novel should ignore Communism, fascism, and Nazism. Everybody who is disgruntled today, says Grandpa, goes out and gets themself an "ism." This means that if you don't agree with what they think they'll bomb you. What Grandpa wants to boost is "Americanism," and the old gentleman names a dozen American heroes to illustrate his point. The house came down.

Now then, Riskin is no ignoramus. He is a grown man with a kindly feeling for the underdog—remember the exciting invasion of the farmers in *Mr. Deeds* and the whole bus sequence of *It Happened One Night*. When he begins to talk like Grandpa Vanderhof, naming the Communists along with Hitler and Mussolini as bombers, he is doing something that he very well knows is a lie. This disingenuous bid for reactionary applause, this seconding of the confusion hatched in the fink press is a burden that no man of talent and decency can afford to carry.

A second speech of Grandpa Vanderhof brought even greater applause. When the income-tax investigator comes to the mad Syca-

more household and reminds Grandpa that he hasn't paid any income tax in many years, the old man asks him why he should pay. Grandpa allows that he doesn't believe in the income tax. What does he get for his money? The income-tax man is baffled and he answers by asking who is going to pay for the big army and navy, all those battleships. Besides the money pays for Congress and the Constitution and the President. "The Constitution was paid for long ago," says Grandpa, and as for the President and Congress, he'll be damned if he'll pay for them. The audience applauded heartily. There was thick, tory laughter. This is an old Kaufman scene in which that dramatic Fuller brush man gave away a free sample to the carriage trade.

In grade school we used to study "civics" and about the only thing I remember of the rather elemental interpretation of the American system was that American citizens had a responsibility toward their government. Are the key people in our national life, the substantial people who hold together the very warp and woof of our civilization, telling me with their applause that this principle no longer holds? Was the Music Hall full of anarchists? I do not like to think that these people were members of the Grand Old Party, or the citizens in my civics book.

The main theme of the picture is the soul-wrestling of Mr. Kirby, the big monopolist, whose son is in love with the Sycamore daughter. Mr. Kirby is a stuffed shirt, a prig, and a heartless wolf of high finance, and the plot agility of Mr. Riskin is devoted to bringing him around to the Sycamore point of view —withdrawal from money-making to a peaceful little world of crazy hobbies and leisure. *Lost Horizon* locates in New York, and works its healing powers on the rich. I don't believe a minute of it, Mr. Riskin. It is the snidest piece of nirvana all of the fantasy factories on the West Coast have ever turned out.

It's a toss-up whether the minds behind pictures like these are those of gifted children

Beatrice Tobias

or of men who are grown up and can read and converse and listen to the radio and understand things like other adults. The conception of character in *You Can't Take It With You* is about as deep as the illustrations in *Collier's*. The charm of the Sycamore eccentricities is all right up to the point where you've learned that Grandpa suddenly quit business thirty years ago because he didn't like it; his daughter Penny writes interminable novels because someone left a typewriter by mistake eight years before; that her daughter Essie aspires to the ballet stage; that Essie's husband plays the xylophone; that Penny's husband makes fireworks in the basement with Mr. De Pinna, the iceman who joined them years before, and Mr. Bobbins, whom Grandpa lured away from the ledgers one day. After you know these traits you sicken of the fireworks, the xylophone, the funny servants, Grandpa's harmonica, the Home, Sweet Home motto that falls when the fireworks explode; the repetition of certain little gags to the groaning point. You don't have any trouble tiring of Grandpa because he is played by Lionel Barrymore who quit acting several decades ago. When he tells granddaughter Alice of Grandma, little children quail and strong men bite the seats.

The emotional charm that Riskin and Capra have previously commanded becomes hokum and the promise of economic understanding is now demagogy. Of course, there is the expected scene between Mr. Kirby and the lower classes after the financier is mistakenly arrested in a raid. In the cell block, Kirby tells Grandpa that he is better than the scum in the drunk cell, and Grandpa makes an impassioned speech denying this. There is a beautifully handled sequence in Central Park when James Stewart and Jean Arthur learn to dance the big apple with a band of urchins.

Malman

The SUB SELLER

WANTED

4,000

Committees-of-one

"I am already a committee-of-one as suggested by Jessica Barrett in NEW MASSES, *July 5, to circulate* I Like America. *I have landed two schoolteachers, one intelligent hairdresser, and one elevator operator."*

This is A. Y., of New Jersey, writing to Granville Hicks, evidently before announcement of the NEW MASSES *I Like America* drive. But the idea's there for a' that.

Four thousand committees-of-one. That's what this drive needs. Each committee signs up five new subs, and there's the 20,000!

The kind of a committee I mean is DAVE PERLMAN, of the Camp Followers of the Trail, who came in the other day with $40 in subs he'd signed up over the weekend. There isn't a single week in the year that committee-of-one Dave doesn't bring in at least one sub. "How do you do it?" we asked him. "It's easy, I just ask them. I ask everybody," he explained.

To prove your whipcracker wouldn't ask you to do anything she wouldn't do herself, I made myself a committee-of-one to sign up some of those little business men Joseph Starobin writes about on page 3. So far I can report five successful landings:

One typographer who lost one business and now runs his legs off building another.

One kind-hearted owner of a small food factory who would pay her employees more if it weren't for competition.

One beauty shop proprietor who works like hell and no more than gets one loan paid off than he has to have another for some more new equipment.

One owner of a small advertising agency who lives on small accounts big agencies won't bother with, and gives his clients three times the service they pay him for.

One restaurateur who used to be a union garment worker and still knows his bread is buttered on the workingman's side.

Surely every one of you knows at least five small business men like these. How about appointing yourself a Committee-of-one to sign them all up as NEW MASSES subscribers this week—so they'll get all three articles in the Little Business Man series?

Charlie Crawford

Sub Editor

I LIKE AMERICA Drive
NEW MASSES, 31 East 27th St., N. Y. C.

Enclosed is $..... in payment of ..... yearly subscriptions to New Masses at $4.50 each and a FREE copy of *I Like America* to be sent to each. It is understood that when I have sent in 5 yearly subscriptions, I am entitled to one yearly subscription FREE.

(List names and addresses on separate sheet. If 5 are sent herewith, list address to which FREE Prize Subscription is to be sent.)

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Appropriately enough the scene is dragged in by the heels like a very good number in a very poor revue. Stewart and Miss Arthur are an appealing couple and Spring Byington is good as the lightheaded Penny Sycamore. Mischa Auer (everybody in Hollywood is in the picture) gets the most individual laughs as the Russian dancing master; Edward Arnold plays Kirby. Among the others Dub Taylor stands out as Ed Carmichael; Hallidwell Hobbes as Mr. De Pinna; and Harry Davenport as a judge.

There's no point, except an esoteric one, in comparing the movie with the play. It is vastly changed in emphasis and fifty times as many people will see the movie as have seen the play. What Capra and Riskin have done is a good boxoffice job, an entertaining film, which will just about ruin their enviable position as the screen's foremost exponents of exciting, topical, heartwarming—and *honest*—material.

WHAT Robert Flaherty did for the bleak Irish Island of Aran, a young English director, Michael Powell, has nearly duplicated for Foula, one of the Scottish Hebrides. Unlike the Flaherty picture, *The Edge of the World,* which is to be seen at the 55th St. Playhouse, is a drama of the islanders themselves as well as a tale of nature. Powell's story is the conflict between the dwindling of the opportunities of existence on the forsaken windswept soil and the adamant resistance of the islanders to abandoning a losing battle with the sea and the loneliness and the increasing bitterness of life. Peter Manson, played by John Laurie, who was once seen in a compelling bit part as a jealous Scotch farmer in *The 39 Steps,* is the hardest loser of all. His stubborn resistance to the idea of evacuating the island causes the death of his only son and the unhappiness of his pretty daughter.

Ernest Palmer's camera work is distinguished but it does not quite approximate the dramatic terror of great rock walls, heaving seas, and spinning avalanches of surf that gave *Man of Aran* its grandeur. The playing is excellent with the natives of the island supporting a cast of imported actors. Many authentic folk touches are given play in this fine and serious picture. Among these the episode of the Sunday church service, with the staunch young catechist intoning Holy Writ in his manly baritone, is one you will remember. The tragedy of the death of Peter Manson's son who has gone "overside" climbing a sheer cliff is followed by a poignant sequence in which his father and sister go to the homes of the crofters and Old Peter formally announces to each household: "I bid ye to the funeral of Robbie Manson."

Choral accompaniment has been appropriately provided by the Glasgow Orpheus Choir. The picture is hurt by a trite introduction and epilogue that you may very well ignore in the excellence of the work as a whole. *The Edge of the World* has many faults on the side of slick film treatment but it is worth your money for its warmth and its lonely beauty.

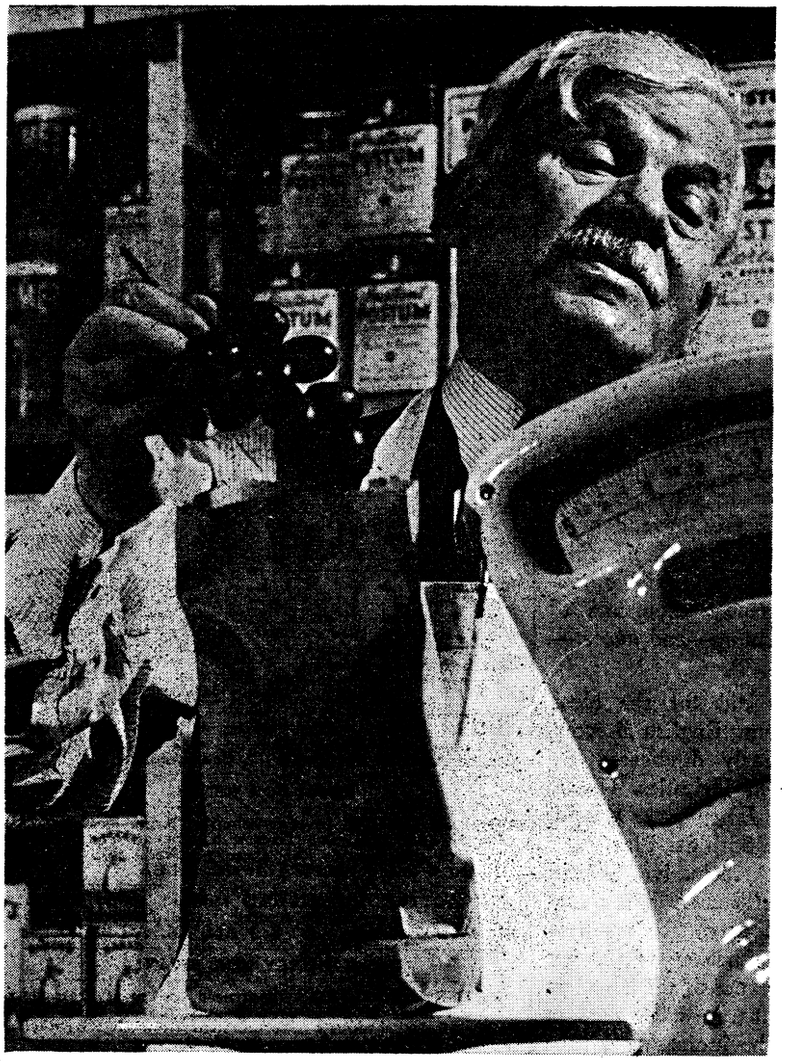
JAMES DUGAN.

GOINGS ON

WORKERS SCHOOL Fall Term registration now going on. For descriptive catalog write to School office, 35 East 12 Street, N. Y. C.

MARIE MARCHOWSKY, Director of Repertory Dance Group, announces apprentice group and classes in modern dance technique. Open for registration, evengs. 6 to 8 p.m. 13 West 17 Street.

ANALYSIS OF THE NEWS of the Week every Sunday evening at 8:30 p.m. at the Workers School, 35 East 12 Street, 2nd floor. Admission 20 cents.



By Ewing Galloway, N. Y.

WHO is the "Little Business Man"? What does he think about prices and taxes, chain stores and cut rate competition? Why does he stay in business when he makes so little? How can he get the credit he needs? Upon what does his prosperity depend? Can he fight the monopolies? And if so, how? How can he gain the support of the consumer in such a fight? What must he give in return? Every small business man in America should read the answers to these questions—in the series of three articles on

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By JOSEPH STAROBIN beginning in this week's issue of

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What shall the LITTLE BUSINESS MAN do?

HE WORKS twelve to fourteen hours a day. Seven days a week. No vacations. No fun.

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He is the friendly fellow who runs your corner delicatessen. He is your barber, your grocer or perhaps your neighborhood tailor. He may be your uncle who owns a small factory.

Every year there are more of him. Every year he shares a smaller amount of business. The giant monopolies are strangling him.

He is resentful but confused.

He has lived by the legend of rugged individualism.

He remains alone with his despair. Or listens to clever spokesmen of the very monopolies that are crushing him. What's good for big business, they tell him, is good for his business, too. Vigilantes. Citizens committees. Sales taxes. You know.

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(3) Granville Hicks' stimulating book, *I Like America,* which does such a beautiful job of revealing America and the role of its middle class.

Why not make it *your* business to visit every small business man you know before this week is over—to call his attention to this important series of articles and this special I LIKE AMERICA Offer—and to sign him up *now,* so he will be sure to get next week's issue?

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