APRIL 24, 1934

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New Masses

Education Under the Crisis

By OAKLEY JOHNSON

Now They Are Madmen

By ILYA EHRENBOURG

The War Planes Stop

By HARRY GANNES

The Lost Battalion

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New Masses

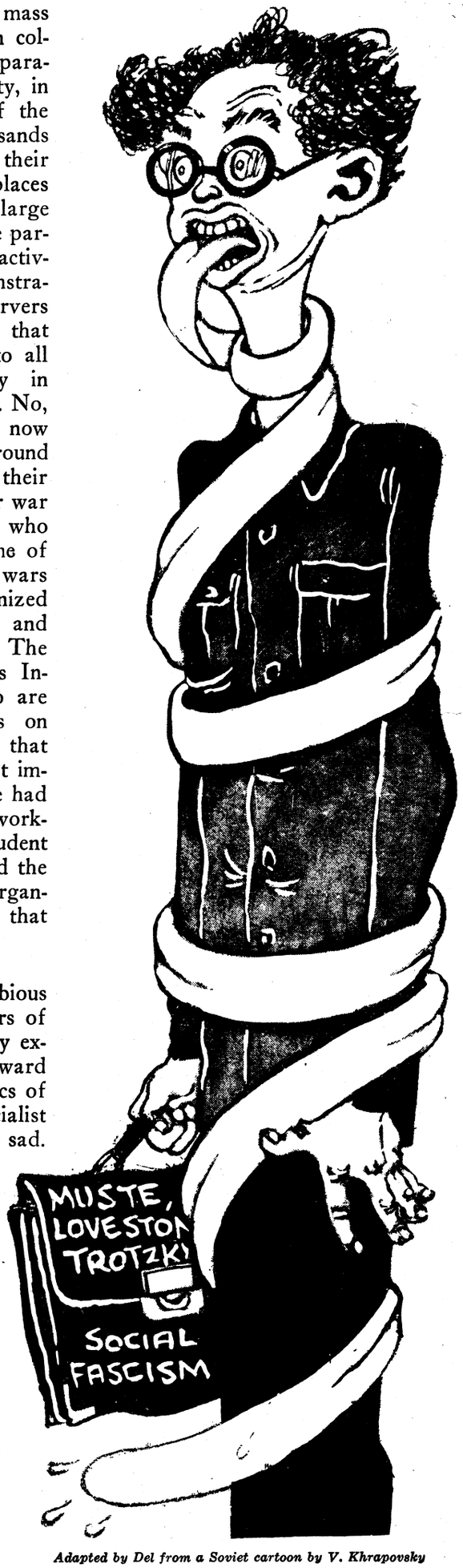
April 24, 1934

CAN the United States boast of compulsory education? Two and a quarter million children are without school facilities. Are our schools democratic? Not while 25 percent of school children never reach the eighth grade, 45 percent never get to high school, and 90 percent never get to college; not while Negro children are jim-crowed and cheated, and 30 percent over the age of ten are not taught how to read or write. Are the school facilities being improved? Over 2,500 public schools are closed down; building has stopped, terms are shortened, purchase of books and supplies is falling off or ceasing, the size of classes is increasing, health and play services are curtailed or omitted, necessary special classes (music, art, crafts) are discontinued, evening and summer schools are wiped out.

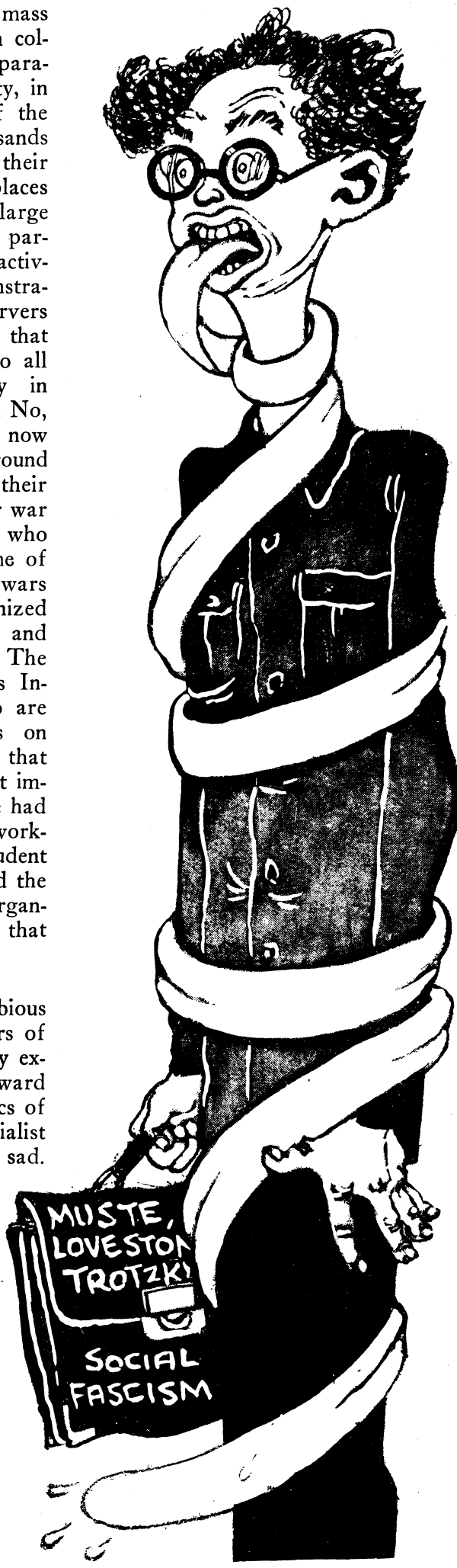
THESE facts and conclusions are drawn from *Schools and the Crisis,* a ten-cent pamphlet by Rex David. That education is in a major crisis, and that teachers, parents, and students are aware of it, is evidenced by the fact that International Publishers sold five thousand copies of the pamphlet within a week of its appearance. David asks, Is American education unbiased? He shows that historic and civic truths are concealed, while shameless propaganda for financial interests is openly carried on; militarist teaching is enforced and independent opinion suppressed. Education is falling to pieces because the schools are being systematically attacked by the rulers of finance capital. The United States Chamber of Commerce is pressing a twenty-point program for crippling and half-destroying American education. Rex David's pamphlet is a manual of organization and a program for action. Describing the Chicago teachers' successful mass-fight for back salaries and the dangers of following teacher misleaders, it shows that solidarity and rank and file leadership are the essential means for effectively combatting the treason of misleaders and the onslaught of finance capital.

AMERICAN college students, on Friday, April 13th, gave what was unquestionably the greatest exhibition of political consciousness and mass action in the history of American colleges. After weeks of careful preparations, and in spite of open hostility, in many institutions, on the part of the administrations, some tens of thousands of men and women students left their classes and paraded to appointed places for anti-war mass meetings. The large majority of them had never before participated in any form of political activity, much less in a militant demonstration against war. Foreign observers will not again be able to report that American students are apathetic to all political issues, engrossed only in studies, sports, and social activities. No, multitudes of these students are now aroused, awakened to the world around them and to the consciousness of their own power. The strike showed our war mongers that American students who constitute a strategic group in time of war, are opposed to imperialist wars and will militantly and in an organized fashion oppose war preparations and sabotage any war that may come. The members of the Marine Workers Industrial Union, for instance, who are planning anti-war demonstrations on ships at sea May Day, will see that they have allies in the fight against imperialist war. The students' strike had double importance: it showed the working-class the importance of its student allies, and at the same time helped the students to see in the militant organized working-class the one force that can prevent war.

ONE of the exceedingly dubious pleasures to which the editors of THE NEW MASSES are periodically exposed is that of following the awkward and not infrequently revolting antics of the gentlemen heading the Socialist party in this country. It makes us sad. For some of us once belonged to that party, and drew in part at least our revolutionary ardor from the great spirit of Eugene Debs. But that was long ago. Eugene Debs is dead. And his "successors," a host of petty creatures, intellectual bankrupts, moral pigmies, are desecrating the noble cause for which he fought, the cause of the revolutionary working class. The most despicable of the lot—we abhor invidious comparisons, but there is a limit to patience—is that slimy little careerist, that vicious hypocrite, Louis Waldman, Socialist State Chairman, who only



Adapted by Del from a Soviet cartoon by V. Khrapovsky



Adapted by Del from a Soviet cartoon by V. Khrapovsky

recently urged the police to use clubs on the Communist workers. At the tenth anniversary dinner of the Socialist New Leader, Herr Waldman, the Socialist *Fuehrer,* suggested a program to be adopted by the forthcoming convention of his party in Detroit. Some of his major points, as summarized by the Federated Press, were:

1. That "work among college students and the unemployed be Socialist work" rather than using "innocents' organizations;" by implication he would disband the L. I. D. as an "innocents' organization" and remove Socialists from the Unemployed Leagues.
2. Give every aid to the A. F. of L..
3. No united front with the Communists "forever."
4. Work for "socialist republic" not "workers' republic" and oppose "dictatorship of the proletariat."
5. Drop talk of "strikes against war."
6. Choose someone like Norman Thomas to be the official spokesman for the party, instead of letting ex-candidates make partly official, partly personal statements.

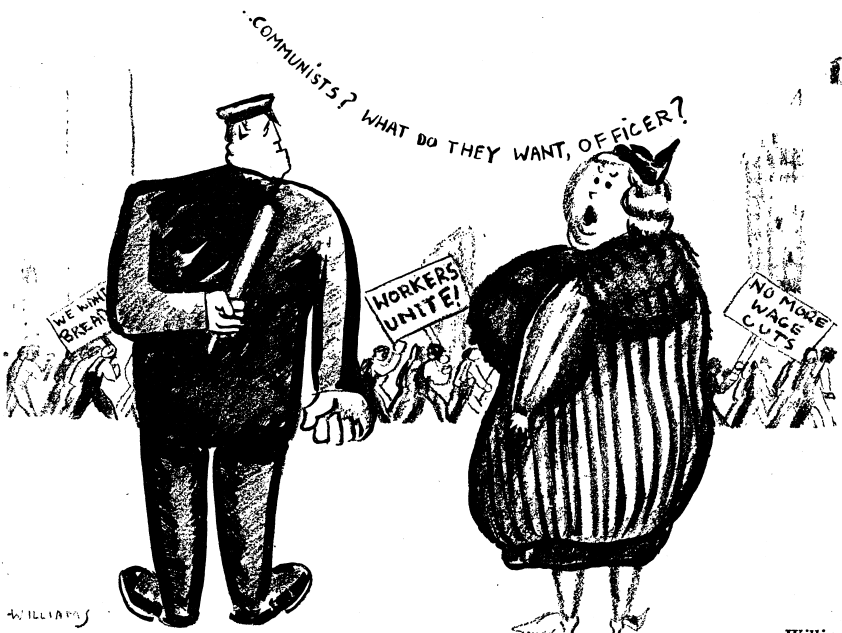
SENSITIVE souls have been objecting to the Communist use of the term "Social-Fascist." But can anyone devise a better, juster, more accurate and precise characterization of such a program? A hypocritical mouthing of the word "Socialism," together with a barely concealed betrayal of the working-class and everything it has fought for these many decades. Herr Waldman is opposed to a "workers' republic." Herr Waldman urges the working-class to drop talk of "strikes against war." Herr Waldman demands no United Front with the Communist workers "forever." Forever! Even in the face of a Hitler or a Dollfuss, even in the face of an imperialist holocaust. Perhaps we are naïve. Perhaps we have too much confidence in the intelligence of the masses. But we refuse to believe that the American working-class and the honest elements in the allied classes will tolerate this kind of scoundrelly leadership much longer.

NEARLY three times as many strikes in March as in February, reports Senator Wagner with considerable alarm—from 78 in February to 218 in March, involving 56,000 men in February and 139,000 in March. Figures for April promise an even more "alarming" picture as the strike wave swings into nation-wide scope. Over 4,000 miners have joined the 17,000 Tennessee Coal Co. strikers, making a total of 21,000 out in the Alabama mines—4,000 knitgoods workers continue on strike in Philadelphia—3,000 munitions workers in Hartford, Conn. —1,000 zinc workers in LaSalle, Ill.— 2,000 in the Buffalo aircraft plants— 2,500 miners in the Pennsylvania anthracite—over 3,400 textile workers in Fall River, Mass.—1,000 Detroit workers still striking against the Michigan Stove Co. Two hundred glove plants in Gloversville, N. Y. were forced to shut down when 3,000 employees walked out. Striking operators in Omaha, Neb. completely tied up the street car system when they walked out, demanding wage increases and union recognition. The beginnings of company terror are reported by the 13,000 rayon workers on strike in Lewiston, Pa., whose picket lines police are attempting to smash. And Imperial Valley, Cal., continues to seethe with terrorism organized by its leading citizens and carried out by the police and armed thugs.

Williams

MEANWHILE President Roosevelt's ballyhooed "settlement" of the Detroit auto strike is proving hardly the success the capitalist press claimed for it. Company officials, Labor Board officials, A. F. of L. officials have found almost no time for rejoicing, since the 4,000 striking tool and die workers will have nothing to do with the Detroit Automobile Labor Board—even though their leader, Matthew Smith, is a member. The rank and file refuses to be impressed by red-hot radical phrases which Smith pours forth while maneuvering for an arbitration. Actually (as the Auto Workers Union pointed out repeatedly) Smith offers the strikers no more than the A. F. of L. officials did who on Sunday agreed to outlaw strikes in the auto industry. And this fact is growing clear to the strikers who have become bitterly suspicious of "settlements" railroaded through by the Labor Board, A. F. of L. officials, or any other strike-breaking device of employers. The striking tool and die workers have demonstrated clearly that such settlements are not settlements at all but stop-gaps certain to be followed by renewed striking until the basic demands of the workers are won. In a world divided by warring classes settlements favoring the workers can be won only by the overwhelming pressure of picket-line, organization and proletarian solidarity.

THE voice of imperialism is never so brutally harsh and direct as when it issues from the Japanese Foreign Office. There are circumlocutions and hypocrisies, because circumlocution and hypocrisy are inseparable from imperialist diplomatic language, but in comparison with the syrupy emanations from Occidental foreign offices the Japanese are stark truth tellers. The policy announced to the world on April 18 is the declaration of an open protectatorate over China. Japanese newspaper headlines read: "Japan Does Not Need the Help of Other Powers to Maintain Peace in the Far East." "Japan Will Not Permit Other Powers to Alienate Japan and China." "Japan Seeks to Occupy a Position as a Leader and to Suggest to China Her Future Diplomatic Policy."


COMMUNISTS? WHAT DO THEY WANT, OFFICER?
WE WANT BREAD
WORKERS UNITE!
NO MORE WAGE CUTS
WILLIAMS

Williams

MAINTENANCE of peace means of course a program of military intervention. Barring other powers from alienating Japan and China is a direct threat against the Soviet Union. "Suggesting" to China her future diplomatic policy is the declaration of an open protectorate. We may look, in the near future, to Japan's assumption of the task that her minion Chiang Kai-Shek has so signally failed in, the smashing of the Chinese Soviets. But Japan will find an even more formidable opponent in the Chinese Red Army than in the Nineteenth Route Army which halted Tokio's Shanghai invasion. And during the process it is virtually certain that the Chinese masses will accept the Communist leadership in the only form of action that can free them from the Imperialist ring.

The Week's Papers

WEDNESDAY—Wirt is excused from stand—in fact not permitted to talk any more. Chairman Bulwinkle, of investigating committee (who led a lynch mob in Gastonia strike) charges Wirt was jailed as pro-German during war. Furore in House. . . . Eleven more New York State Senators mentioned in Thayer public utilities exposé. . . . D. L. Podell, who helped frame N.R.A., tells Bar Association Committee its basic aim: to ward off the "real danger of a red menace." . . . "You can't see the Scottsboro niggers," jailers tell I.L.D. Attorney. . . . International Workers' Order joins fight against LaGuardia's ban on Union Square United Front May Day demonstration.

Thursday—Roosevelt returns. . . . Crisis finally overtakes Nedick's, which took in $10,000,000 between 1921 and 1929 (but on the basis of a ten-cent hot dog). . . . Former secretary to Roosevelt (when he was governor) revealed as having borrowed heavily from the late Max Greenberg, notorious gangster. . . . Ex-Senator Reed of Missouri rushes to defense of Wirt. . . . Senate votes investigation of "munitions trust," sidetracking Nye amendment to double income taxes in case of war. . . . Detroit tool and die makers order new strike. . . . A thousand small-home owners in Pottsville, Pa., smash steel doors to get at County Commissioners. Tax assessment hearings to be re-opened. (Miners' homes' assessments tripled in some cases; mine property rate not touched.)

Friday—Student protest strike against war sweeps colleges. United Front a reality as students picket class rooms. Cops, incited by college heads, attack students at C. C. N. Y. . . . Assistant to Secretary of Commerce Roper urges business men to take on college graduates at little or no pay ("just enough to make a living") so they can "earn a little and learn a lot" (and keep general wage level down). . . . Roosevelt tells parading Congress "I'm a tough guy." . . . Senate adopts new tax bill, also provides for publicity on income tax returns. . . . 84 Detroit shops involved in strike of tool and die workers. . . . Aircraft workers out in Hartford.

Saturday—Methodist ministers' conference moves leftward, hits N.R.A. as lowering wages. Declaration for government ownership loses by small margin. . . . 90 percent of all New York tenements called firetraps. . . . First R.O.T.C. conference in Washington plans terror against anti-war fight of Socialist and Communist students. . . . Sheriff Hawkins of Birmingham whitewashed by grand jury on torture of Scottsboro boys. I.L.D. organizing a real investigation.

Sunday—Head of New York realty owners is bitter about report that 90 percent of tenements are firetraps. Says percentage is much lower, and besides this talk scares off tenants, hits rental values. . . . Farley announces he'll restore full postal service: business kicking about rotten service. . . . Elihu Root dragged out of seclusion to head committee against child labor amendment. Butler of Columbia is on it too. . . . Strikes nearly tripled in March, Wagner Labor Board reports. . . . Insull, on way back, a prisoner, denies he ran away; just "departed."

Monday—Heavy weather sets in for Blanshard, ex-Socialist Commissioner of Accounts. LaGuardia doesn't like having magistrates in good political standing called loafers. . . . 3,500 more Alabama coal miners strike. United Mine Workers organizer, named Huey, tells pickets to "go home, the battle's won." Sheriff swears in 100 special deputies. . . . D.A.R. convention hears Henry L. Roosevelt, holding down the family job as Assistant Secretary of Navy, call for more battleships. . . . Bulwinkle retracts charge Wirt was in jail. . . . Thayer admits authenticity of letters to power companies. Evidence in Washington is

New Masses

VOL. XI, No. 4 CONTENTS APRIL 24, 1934

Published weekly by the NEW MASSES, INC., at 31 East 27th Street, New York City. Entered as second-class matter, June 24, 1926, at the Post Office at New York, N. Y. under the act of March 3, 1879. Single copies, 10 cents. Subscription, $3.50 a year in U. S. and Colonies and Mexico. Six months $2; three months $1; Foreign $4.50 a year; six months $2.50; three months $1.25. Subscribers are notified that no change of address can be effected in less than 2 weeks. The NEW MASSES welcomes the work of new writers, in prose and verse, and of artists. MSS must be accompanied by return postage. The NEW MASSES pays for contributions.

that he made big profits gambling in power companies stock. . . . Crew of S.S. Pan America, half Negro, half white, wins strike for back pay and 1929 wage scale. Men are solidly behind Marine Workers Industrial Union.

Tuesday—Blanshard fails to get vote of commendation from Aldermen. On contrary, they chide the budding statesman severely. . . . Columbia Spectator attacks President Butler for opposing child labor amendment. Calls him an educator who would "drive children from the school into the sweatshop." . . . American aviators active in China, in military and civil work. . . . Shreveport, La., mob of 3,000, besieging jail to lynch man who confesses killing girl, is held off by jailers. This prisoner, however, is white. . . . Leisure League announces it knows 700 ways to kill time. . . . Wirt's charges of plot talk at dinner denied by all others who were present. They testify Wirt talked so much himself nobody else could get a word in edgewise.

Jewry at the Crossroads

THE tragic quandary in which the Jewish bourgeoisie finds itself is strikingly illustrated in the April issue of the magazine, Opinion, edited by James W. Wise, son of Rabbi Stephen S. Wise. Alongside of the elder Wise's grandiloquent inanities about Jew and Christian striving together "in the interest of a deeper and finer understanding between the mother-people and the daughter-church" and his Zionist hopes that "in the Jewish National Home of Palestine the Jew may have a resurgence of that morally and spiritually creative life which alone has made his people immortal," we have William Zukerman's unqualified assertion that as a panacea for the universal Jewish ills Zionism has "definitely and incontrovertibly" failed. We also find a leading "Passover Editorial," written — believe it or not—with such keen economic insight and fervor of revolutionary appeal, that, with some changes it might have appeared in a revolutionary journal. "Hitlerism," says Opinion, "stands revealed not primarily as a political, a cultural, a religious, or a racial—but as an *economic* phenomenon. Its roots are deeply and inextricably entwined in that capitalist economic order which is itself the contradiction and the foe of freedom, of human brotherhood, of peace. . . . It grows daily more apparent that the tragic lot of the Jew in Germany is the logical, almost automatic fate of any recognizable minority group in a country where revolutionary social forces are temporarily checked and thwarted by reaction. . . . Even on the lowest level of self-preservation it is evident that the very safety and survival of the Jew is bound up with the defeat of Fascist and reactionary forces and the emergence of an economic order, based not on the profit-motive, but on a socialized control and direction of the processes of production and distribution. It is no accident that the one country in the world where anti-Semitism is held to be a crime against the State is Soviet Russia. . . ."

Thus the question naturally arises: "What part shall the Jew take in the titanic struggle which is to come?" And Opinion's answer is:

> . . . Some Jews, to be sure, do not yet see the battle lines which are so sharply and rigidly drawn. Others will undoubtedly persist in refusing to admit, even though they intuitively apprehend, their own status. Still others will consciously and cunningly refuse to accept their responsibility to themselves and to their race. A few will deliberately betray their comrades and their cause for personal advantage and private gain.
>
> But there are others, constantly growing in number and in strength, who will courageously cast in their lot with those revolutionary efforts through which—and only through which—an end can be made to the arraying of race against race, of nation against nation, of group against group, for the further exploitation of the workers and the profounder enslavement of the masses. Such Jews will not fear to join hands with those inevitable allies in mine and mill and farm and slum whose battle, whatever the difference of race or creed, is their own.

Needless to say THE NEW MASSES is in fullest sympathy with the revolutionary stand of the Opinion editorial, except the latter's vague references to "some" Jews who will "consciously and cunningly refuse to accept responsibility" and to others "who will deliberately betray . . . for personal advantage and private gain." Such a circumlocution is confusing and in the final analysis not of much avail. Had THE NEW MASSES dealt with this subject it would have pointed out, clearly and unmistakably, the class alignments within world Jewry. Certainly, the Jewish workers, the Jewish professionals, and the Jewish small business men have everything to lose by the advent of Fascism. It is to their advantage to join the ranks of the revolutionary proletariat in determined advance toward a classless society. But what about the Jewish millionaires, the Jewish industrialists, the great Jewish exploiters? Is there any doubt that they prefer Fascism, of whatever brand, to a proletarian revolution? There is no use in speaking of "some" Jews when what is obviously meant is the Jewish capitalists.

That the editor of Opinion is in fact fully aware of the class implications in the present Jewish struggle against Hitlerism is evidenced by the address he delivered at the April 8 meeting of the Free Synagogue in Carnegie Hall. Here the question was posed very clearly: the Jewish masses versus the Jewish classes. "What comfort," asked Wise, "can the 600,000 Jews of Germany take from the fact that while they are racially spurned, economically despoiled and humanly degraded by Nazism, a handful of Jewish bankers and industrialists have gone unhurt? The wealth of the House of Rothschild, which I use merely as a symbol of Jewish moneyed power, has been used to further the interests not of its race, but of its class. The 15,000,000 Jews of the world are being driven ever deeper into economic despair and slavery. For them to put their trust in the House of Rothschild [in the Jewish capitalists—Ed.] would be self destruction." James Waterman Wise has taken the first step. If he remains true to himself and his best impulses he is bound before long to find himself an ally of the only revolutionary international movement of the exploited masses of the world—the Communist movement, the Communist Party.

"WE NEVER TAUGHT 'EM THAT!"

Boris Gorelick

The Communist Party Convention

2. "We Do Not Have Unlimited Time..."

JOSEPH NORTH

The Eighth Convention meets at a time when the capitalist world is approaching a new explosion. Any day, news may come of Japanese imperialism beginning its long prepared invasion of the Soviet Union. At any time the madman who holds power in Germany may launch the wild adventure of anti-Soviet intervention which is the keystone of his policy, or may set fire to the fuses of the whole system of explosive European relations. Who can say on what day the powers now engaged in a gigantic naval race may have their present navies thrown into action by one power's fear of being left behind in the race? Who can foretell when the tightening lines of class struggle in any one of a dozen countries may not, by some "small" incident like the exposé of the Stavisky corruption be ignited with the flames of a revolutionary civil war?

—Earl Browder's Address at the convention.

TAKE an Atlas, divide off one-sixth of its land surface—the section labelled "The Union of Socialist Soviet Republics"—and to the remaining five-sixths you can apply the Communist analysis of capitalism's status today. The overlords of capitalism have eased the position of their economy—even if only temporarily—at the expense of the laboring millions. The price is: less bread for the workingman, less than the subsistence minimum of milk for his child. The Stock Market can rest easier as the ticker tape registers another point or two advance. Finance-capital today despoils five-sixths of the world to ensure "legitimate profit." Glance at its program:

1. It fosters world-wide arms competition preparing for another world war. Once again the smoke hangs over the Ruhrs, the Pittsburghs, the Birminghams, registering an "upturn in output."
2. It destroys mountains of overproduced commodities—(burning wheat and coffee, slaughtering live-stock, "plowing under every third row," etc., etc.)
3. It transfers the heaviest tax burdens from the rich to the poor.
4. It increases speed-up in industry until the workingman in the shop finds practically every minute of his life wrenched from him for the aggrandizement of the employer.
5. It introduces inflationary measures, lessening the purchasing power of the masses; in America, handing the "forgotten man" a sixty-cent-dollar to buy the necessaries of life with a pay envelope already thinned to the minimum set by the codes, thus effecting a general, indirect wage cut which directly reduces the proletarian's kitchen supply.
6. It continually depresses the prices for farmers' wares.
7. It pirates a vast portion of middle-class savings through wholesale closure of banks.
8. It provides governmental impetus and direction to trustification and monopoly.

All this has inevitably had its effect—a slight, nevertheless definite, upturn in capitalism's economy.

But does this mean the prelude to another boom? Decidedly not! Capitalism is in general crisis. The alley it ran into is blind. The blank wall of War confronts it. The very measures which helped it from the lowest depths doom it to continued crisis. All the unfavorable conditions preventing industry from an emphatic rise remain on hand—chronic mass joblessness, the industrial crisis interwoven with the agricultural, the continued operation of the principal industries at a fraction of capacity, the absence of any trend toward an appreciable renewal of basic capital which ordinarily forecasts the approach of a boom, etc., etc. Stalin put it this way in February at the 17th Congress of the Communist Party of the U.S.S.R.:

> We are witnessing . . . the transition from the lowest point of the industrial crisis to a depression, not an ordinary depression, but to a depression of a special kind, which does not lead to a new boom and flourishing industry, but which, on the other hand, does not force it back to the lowest point of decline.

The Communists forecast greater disturbances of state finances, further aggravation of capitalism's general crisis. "The capitalist world is passing from the end of capitalist stabilization to a revolutionary crisis. This . . . determines the perspectives of the development of Fascism and to the world revolutionary movement of the toilers." Thirteenth Plenary Session, Executive Committee, Communist International.

> Our task is to win the majority of the working class to our program. We do not have unlimited time to accomplish this. The tempo, the speed of development of our work, becomes the decisive factor in determining victory or defeat, for Fascism is rearing its ugly head more boldly every day in the United States.
>
> *—From Browder's Address to the convention.*

It is a race between the hosts of Revolution and the hosts of Reaction. Fascism, "the open terrorist dictatorship of the most reactionary, most chauvinist and most imperialist elements of finance capital," confronts the masses. The potential Storm Troopers of a North American Hitler await his appearance. Vast strata of the middle-class have lost everything but their memories. They recall the good old days, when the newly polished Buick stood at the curb, the Sunday dinner simmered in the porcelain kitchen, the Tuxedo hung in the closet. Their regimentation into American Brownshirts, as well as that of certain backward strata of the proletariat and sections of the agrarian population, can be accomplished; the movement has already begun. The Communist injunction to its membership is: No fatalism! Fascism is not inevitable. This is conditioned by the pace with which you organize the working-class, perfect a united front and win allies from the poor farmers and the lower middle classes.

The beheading of the proletariat is no secret ambition of the American ruling class; it is high on their recovery agenda today. Propertied classes never flinch at blood-letting; murder is no rare phenomenon of capitalism. "Liberalism" attempts milder methods first; hence the Wagner bill; Roosevelt's Detroit "experiment in human engineering"; the revocation of foreign born Communist citizens' rights; and finally, history always boils it down to this in the end—the use of the Mauser and the blackjack against revolutionaries (Southern California, the Black Belt, Detroit, Ambridge, etc., etc.)

What is the Party today?—Good revolutionaries are no race set apart: they must be blood of the blood and flesh of the flesh of the masses. The Communist delegates at the convention were true sons and daughters of the proletariat; you may have met them downtown near Campus Martius of a Saturday afternoon in Detroit, or on Michigan Boulevard in Chicago of a Sunday, or driving a Ford on a dusty road somewhere in North Dakota. They are simple workingmen—with one distinguishing characteristic: their eyes are wide open. They are class-conscious and mad enough to fight at what they see. Picture, if you can, a party of such men and women, committed to endless labor and daily peril to strive for the liberation of the proletariat. From Mother Bloor—the 72-year-old veteran of the class struggle—to the youths of eighteen and twenty of the Young Communist League—the bravest, the ablest, the most enlightened representatives of their class. They assembled in Cleveland—a monolithic party freed from the intestinal strife characteristic of the American Communist Party up to 1930. As Browder stated with that Bolshevik self-criticism which calmly dissects errors the better to rectify them. "It (this convention) differed from the 7th National Convention when the party had just emerged from a long period of relative stagnation and even retrogression, resulting from protracted inner party fractional struggles." The 1930 convention consolidated the party's

unification and directed it toward "the correct Bolshevik policy" of mass struggles and mass organization. "But the party was still very weak in practice." Its membership did not exceed 7,500 in all America. Today it has passed the 25,000 mark.

A few words on the method of Communist organization: the basic unit, the shop nucleus, is the dynamo that galvanizes into action the masses of surrounding workers. Alert to pick up the grievances of the workers; if a man be injured, insulted or fired, the shop nucleus goes into action. By surreptitious shop-paper, by word of mouth, by leaflet and ubiquitous sticker, the entire shop is transformed from a sullen, passive conglomeration of individual workingmen into a co-ordinated, impassioned unit which dares demand, and can achieve its demands. In this manner the Communist Party differs from all other parties; its form of organization is such that numbers are not always an accurate gauge of its strength. Remember, in the October Revolution, a party of approximately 40,000 Bolsheviks guided 160 million people to Sovietism. Nevertheless, the greater the number of seasoned revolutionaries, the better the chance for success. The Party drives ahead forging multitudes into revolutionary leaders. The greatest advance occurred in the past six months. The American Communist Party is mastering the technique of revolution.

What characterized this convention, in contradistinction to all the previous conventions, was a unified party, unified both in policy and leadership. Destroyed completely was any ideological trace of the repudiated and expelled Lovestonite leadership which had dominated the Sixth convention in 1929 with its thesis "the Victorian age of American capitalism"—a thesis blown sky-high when the stock market crashed.

Today the Party counts at least twenty publications which reach hundreds of thousands of readers weekly; it leads more than half a million workingmen—members of mass organizations subscribing to various planks of the Communist platform, from the struggle for social insurance up to the ultimate, the dictatorship of the proletariat.

Consider the industrial area, about Pittsburgh, Cleveland, Detroit and Chicago. Here you have the concentration of American wealth and America's proletariat. Here the Bessemer furnaces flare, here lie the richest coal lodes, here is the criss-cross of the major railways, the conveyor belts of the automobile industry. In short this is the heart of America. These four regions of Coal, Steel, Auto, Transportation, are the concentration point of American Communists: here the party focuses its greatest activities. Shop nuclei, formerly unknown in these regions, today function energetically. Today the Party has 338 shop nuclei in factories employing over 350,000 workers. Add 1,482 street nuclei, which ultimately will not only lead neighborhood struggles against high rentals, against discrimination of Negro and foreign-born, but will also generate additional shop nuclei in the vicinity.

Tomorrow or the next day you will probably pick up one of Mr. Hearst's papers and find he has discovered, with great to-do, what the Communists today declare openly—the party's fundamental tasks:

1. The entrenchment in basic industries—accentuated activity in the Steel and Coal empires of Pittsburgh, the steel, metal and transportation district of Cleveland, the auto domain of Detroit, the steel, meat-packing and railway region of Chicago—the four concentration districts. And, of course, the marine industry, of paramount importance in wartime.
2. The winning over of 12,000,000 Negroes in America. (The proper guidance and support of the Negro people in the struggle for self-determination in the Black Belt, the fight for their equal rights socially, politically, economically.
3. The construction of vital opposition groups within the American Federation of Labor, within the independent unions, the construction of a powerful Trade Union Unity League and Independent Federation of Labor, coordinating all these groups of advanced trade unions outside the reactionary leadership of the A.F. of L.
4. The steeling ("bolshevization") of the party, building it to mass proportions so it can successfully cope with the growing Fascism in this country; successfully disrupt the war schedule of Washington and Wall Street.

Good warriors seek allies. It is suicidal sectarianism for a proletarian Party aiming at power to ignore the dissatisfaction of contiguous classes. The revolutionary working-class strives for the hegemony of all oppressed masses, all submerged peoples, in their common drive against capitalism. That the two and a half to three million agricultural workers comprise numerically the largest single proletarian category in America is not widely realized. Clustered about the cities, living in hovels, these workers are within easy reach of the organized labor movement. The rise of the revolutionary Agricultural Workers Union, especially in the California area, results from the Party's recognition of the strategic importance of leading these workers. They provide not only added legions, but also a solid basis for working-class hegemony in the alliance between the working-class and the rebellious farmers. "The necessity of the general leadership of the working-class over the the movements of all other sections of the exploited population if their forces are to be unified for the common struggle against capitalism, should make it clear to every district of the Party that its work in reaching and organizing the agricultural workers achieves extraordinary importance at the present time," Browder pointed out.

As stated before, the proletarian revolutionary party does not content itself with winning the leadership of its own class: it strives for hegemony in leadership of all allied oppressed classes: the middle-class, big, chaotic, wavering, realizing all its old values are in process of destruction, bewildered by the new times, new ways; the students, the white collar workers, the professionals of all categories; the farmers seeing the land in which they put a life-time of toil confiscated by some far-off but all-powerful bank or trust company; the oppressed nation within a nation—the twelve million Negroes—the embittered war veterans. The need of the party to assume ideological leadership of these "mixed-class" movements—such as the American League Against War and Fascism, received analysis and stress at the Convention. Similarly the necessity to expose "the lieutenants of capital in the ranks of the working-class"—the Socialist Party, the American Workers Party, etc., political groups characterized as "social-fascists" because under cover of revolutionary phraseology, they sidetrack the masses into Fascism through their capitulatory, class-collaborationist policies.

I come now to a question which received a major emphasis at this convention: to gain the support of the 12,000,000 Negroes in this country for the Communist Party. The Communist Party has burned into the minds of all who follow its tenets, Marx's declaration: "Labor in a white skin cannot be free while labor in a black skin is branded." The cause of the emancipation of the Negroes from their special oppression is inextricably interlinked with the cause of the emancipation of the working-class from the oppression of capitalism.

The position of the Negroes in America as an oppressed nation was lucidly presented at the convention. First: the large majority of the Negro population engaged in cultivating the land is systematically excluded from owning the land it cultivates; Second: it is thereby reduced to a position of semi-serfdom as tenant farmers and sharecroppers; Third: this Negro exploitation is enforced by a system of legal and illegal discrimination, segregation, denial of all political rights, subjection to individual exploiters, and all forms of violent oppression culminating in lynch-law. Briefly, the party's position on the Negro is: Self-Determination for the Negro people in the Black Belt. Its immediate basic demand is: Ownership of the land for the people who till it. I have already mentioned the fight for fullest social, political and economic equality.

Since a revolutionary party is not suspended in a void, but lives surrounded by all the factors in the capitalist environment, political trends and moods of the surrounding classes are reflected in certain sections and individuals within the party. Thus, within the ranks, we find traces of "white chauvinism," (belief in the superiority of the white race), of "bourgeois Negro nationalism (the latter tantamount to denial of the necessity for alliance with the revolutionary proletariat in the struggle for national liberation).

The discussion on this pivotal point lasted till well past midnight. The Negro and white delegates came to the dais, presented their views on the problem of combating these manifestations of ruling-class ideology. Although it may not be in keeping with the nature of this article, I cannot resist recounting a dramatic episode at the convention which perhaps best reveals the intensity with which the delegates regarded these questions.

The Negro Commission and the Political Commission were discussing the cases of a

white comrade—Comrade H. charged with white chauvinism and a Negro comrade, Comrade N., charged with petty bourgeois Negro nationalism. Several hundred of the delegates attended the session. It appeared that Comrade H had failed to combat evidences of white chauvinism in his district, while Comrade N. had impugned the sincerity of the party leadership in fighting white chauvinism. (He had secretly corresponded with several Negro party members slandering the white and Negro leadership.) Questioning became general; the delegates shot questions at the two. Comrade H. was now on the platform, wiping his brow, his face haggard. "And where were you when the Negro comrade was chased from the platform?" a white miner from the Pittsburgh area called out. "What kind of a fight did you put up against it?" a second demanded. (A Negro speaker had been hooted off the platform by some backward workers in Comrade H.'s district. He had failed, the charge was, to combat effectively this manifestation of white ruling-class ideology.) Pallid, he stood there on the platform, earnestly pleading his defense. Suddenly the lights in the auditorium were switched off by the management (it was past 3.30 a. m.).

Yet nobody stirred in his seat. The problem before these delegates was tremendously important. Out of the darkness Comrade H.'s voice continued, desperate: It is true. I did not carry on a sufficient fight. I did not . . . "

From the hall, jeers. Every Communist is expected to "spring at the throat" of the carriers of white chauvinism, the propagators of lynch law. Before the convention was ended these two, Negro and white, presented detailed statements admitting their culpability, pleaded another chance to prove their sincerity. They were removed from all office, but permitted to remain in the party on a probationary basis.

The convention adjourned, following the election of the Central Committee, whose members' names necessarily remain unpublished. But this much is known, the proletarians at the head of mass struggles, some of them comparatively new in the party, were elected to top leadership. They, and the most tried of the older revolutionaries, became the highest leading body of the Party. I left the convention convinced that here we have the basis of a powerful mass movement in this country—a movement enriched by the heritage of the best American revolutionary tradition; the Homesteads, Cripple Creeks, Ludlows, a movement led by solid, unswerving white and Negro proletarians, native and foreign-born. I thought as we rode home that the question of tempo will be seriously considered, and coped with as only a fearless, unified, proletarian party can. I thought, too, that in some future day American Soviet historians will thumb the minutes of this convention and jot in their notebooks: "From here on the Party became a mass party. From here on the Party took its place as the Bolshevik leader of the American masses. . . . "

The Lost Battalion

JOHN L. SPIVAK

LONGVIEW, WASH.

I MET a ghost that once walked with firm tread through the Northwest woods. His steps were heard in Centralia, Walla Walla, Spokane, Seattle—. He reeled a little when I met him and in the half-darkness of the doorway where we found shelter from a raw March wind he poked at me with a forefinger and talked of the yesterday which had been left so far behind.

He had come in from Ryderwood, the Long-Bell Lumber Company camp in the heart of the vast forests some 30 miles from here. We bumped into each other in the narrow hallway of the Labor Temple on Longview's main and cheerfully lighted street. He eyed me disgustedly and spat a stream of chewing tobacco on the wall.

"Just another scissorbill," he said under his breath.

"You talk like a Wobbly," I laughed.

"You're God—damn—right!" he said and clutched the wall for support. "Those were the days when you got drunk because you were feeling good, not like today when you get drunk to forget that you're married."

"That's a good reason for getting drunk," I said sympathetically.

"You don't understand. I got a fine wife and two of the finest boys you can find anywhere. But when you're married you're not free—you can't pick up and tell the boss to go to hell, see? The wife and the kids got to eat, got to sleep, don't they?

"And that's where they get you. All these damned lumber companies—they all want married men now for their camps so there'll be no turnover. And when they get you there they pay you less than when you're single. You know why? Because they know you can't pick up and beat it like you used to in the old days. You got to stay there because at least they give you a roof for yourself and your family."

He was in a talkative mood. When I suggested that we go upstairs he shook his head vigorously.

"I want to talk here," he insisted. "I got to go upstairs later and see Jones—he's secretary of the Loggers and Sawmill Workers Union. I got to find out what the union's going to do about our carload of potatoes."

"Potatoes?"

"Yeah, potatoes. We chipped in and bought a carload of potatoes but the company store made us sell it to them. Now they're selling it back to us at a profit. Won't let us buy anything except in the company store."

"How many of you are there out in Ryderwood? There used to be a thousand in 1929."

"Less than 500."

Ryderwood, one of the largest camps in the Northwest woods, is a town by itself, built and run by the Long-Bell Lumber Co. It is better than the average lumber camp. The filth, dirt and unsanitary conditions that are prevalent in most camps, and the exorbitant charges for rent and supplies bought at the company store have been eliminated in some measure. It is a comparatively good camp for the Northwest woods.

Washington's life is the lumber industry. Half the population depends upon the vast forests and the mills for its living. Half the entire state's payroll comes from the lumber industry—or rather, used to. When you learn that last year the lumber payroll was only one-fifth of the state's total payroll instead of the usual one-half then you have an idea of what happened to earnings so far as this industry is concerned. Since the depression two out of every three who used to work in the industry have been unable to find work. Where this two-thirds of the lumber working population has gone no one seems to know except to hazard the guess that they are in the big city breadlines or among the migratory workers who follow the crops on the west coast.

"What do you make a week?" I asked.

"If I average $15 I'm getting a big check," he growled. "And the cost of living has gone up so that it's impossible to make ends meet. I figured out once"—he poked me in the chest with a forefinger—"that me and my family needs $5.50 a day just to meet living costs—and what I get is about half of that."

"Are you a member of the Logger's Union?"

"Sure, but they're not doing anything."

"What are you doing about that?"

"I'm on my way now to tell Jones where he heads in."

"That'll help. What's happened to all the Wobblies around here? This used to be their stamping ground. The woods were full of them, a colorful, fighting bunch—"

"You bet they were," he interrupted heavily. "Good men—all of them. But they're shot now. Propaganda got 'em. Some of them's become Communists and some of them just hang around. More in the woods than in the mills."

"If this A. F. of L. union isn't doing anything, isn't there another that is?"

"Listen." He poked me vigorously in the

chest with a pile-driver forefinger. "Nobody can do anything. I hear the Communists got a local over at Gray's Harbor near Aberdeen, the International Timber Workers Union but they're not doing much either. I tell you nobody can do anything until seventy-five percent of the scissorbills are starving. Hit'm in the belly. Then you can talk revolution or anything else. Why—" he made a broad and vague motion with the palm of his hand—"the past few years did more for the Communists than all the propaganda they've spread since they started."

"Have you been hit in the belly?"

"Certainly I've been hit in the belly."

"What are you doing about it?"

"Nothing. I can't do anything alone."

"And the A. F. of L. union isn't doing anything. Then what's the matter with the Communist union?"

"I wouldn't have anything to do with them!" he exploded. "I went to some of their meetings. Don't do a damn thing except attack the I. W. W. Say they didn't know how to organize. Well, we had the best organization—"

"You didn't survive, so maybe the accusation has some grounds," I suggested.

He was a little hazy about why he did not like the International Timber Workers Union. All he knew was that he did not like it, didn't like Communists in general.

"Did you ever hear them talk?" he demanded. "Capture the government. Fight on the barricades. Christ! I tell you nobody can do anything until most people are starving to death."

"What do you favor?"

"Blowing up their God damned mills!"

"What good would that do?"

He thought for a minute and then laughed. "Nothing. Not a thing. But it would make me feel better."

"Suppose seventy-five percent of the people were starving. Who will organize them?"

"They'll come together themselves."

"Do you believe in organization?"

"You're damned right I do."

"Why?"

"Because it's for my own benefit."

"Then why aren't you organizing your fellow workers?"

"There's no use. I've been all through it. Give these men $30 or $40 a week and that will ruin your best organization. There's no use until they're hit in the belly."

A dark figure loomed in the doorway, a youngster in his early twenties. My companion recognized him. He was a logger from Ryderwood, too. The three of us went upstairs.

Roger A. Jones, secretary of the Loggers and Sawmill Workers Union was devoting most of his time to floundering about trying to keep the 4-L, a lumber company union, from capturing the right to collective bargaining. There were four men with Jones behind the low wooden rail that fenced in his office.

In the light I could see the face of the youngster who had come up with us. There was a reddish growth of beard on his chin and a grim set to his mouth. The Wobbly leaned heavily against the rail and started to poke a finger at the air.

"What the hell is this union doing?" he demanded belligerently. "I don't even get the hours I'm supposed to work—"

"There's been a lot of complaints about that," Jones assured him. "We're taking it up with the compliance board."

"But what are you doing about it?" the Wobbly insisted. "I came 30 miles to find out."

"You've found out," Jones said quietly.

"How do they feel?" I asked .

"They're bitter against the N.R.A.—low wages and high living costs. Under the Raw Deal the hours have not been reduced appreciably so as to take up even a small part of the two-thirds in the industry who are out of employment. The companies have installed improved machinery which increased production fifty percent. That eliminates thousands of workers from ever getting jobs in this industry again.

"During the code arguments the lumbermen fought for a 40 hour week and got it. But they didn't want it for production for they immediately put a 30 hour week into effect. They wanted the forty hours so as to put over a low wage scale and the government agreed to it. Why, in 1932-33 they got more orders than was produced. What they're doing is selling from stock laid by instead of putting people to work; and they're getting the current high prices, prices supposed to have been raised because the N.R.A. increased expenses. What the N.R.A.—the Raw Deal, the boys call it—really did is reduce our wages and raise selling prices for the companies so they could make up the losses they suffered in the past couple of years. One company, I understand, made up its losses of 1931-32 and showed a nice profit since the N.R.A. went into effect."

"What are you doing about it?"

"We're waiting patiently for the President's next move."

The young logger who had come up with us leaned against the rail.

"And we'll wait just so long," he added drily.

"I'm in favor of doing something right now," the Wobbly said. No one paid any attention to him.

"Suppose things don't get better?"

"Then there'll be a blow up here that will make the rest of the country sit up and take notice," Jones said quietly. "Get this: we're not Wobblies or Communists. We don't believe in sabotage or in overturning the government. We're patriotic American citizens. We're backing the President 100 percent. But he's got to show us pretty quick that he's going to give labor a break instead of the companies all the time."

"And if they continue as is?"

"God only knows," the Loggers' secretary said seriously. Then he looked at me and smiled:

"There's a lot of sentiment around here for government control of industry."

"Meaning what?"

"Well, the people are the government. What's the matter with the workers running the industry?"

"The A. F. of L. will take your charter away from you so fast you won't know what happened."

"Charters are easy to print. We're the A. F. of L."

"Sounds like rebellion within the organization."

"There's no rebellion. We'll follow our leaders. We're good Americans. But when the President can't do anything for us—or won't—and the A. F. of L. in Washington can't—or won't—then we try something else."

"But wouldn't that be sovietizing the industry—like Russia?"

"We're drifting towards something. I don't know whether its sovietizing of industry or what."

"And if we don't get the little we ask we'll help the drifting along a little bit," the red whiskered fellow added. "We're not doing anything yet. We damn near did before Roosevelt started to make promises. But we're not going to make the same mistake the I. W. W.s made when everybody turned against them because they were causing trouble. We're going to wait and see; how long we can wait, I don't know. But when we start no one will be able to say we didn't give the President all the chances he wanted. And when we start we'll go through with it."

"Through with what?"

"With everything. We cut the timber, we do the mill work, we ship it—we do everything there is to be done except get the profits."

"You'll be shot down if you try anything like that."

"It's a choice of being shot down or starving to death. I'll take mine standing up."

The others nodded their heads. There were smiles on their lips, grim sort of smiles and strength in the quiet way they spoke.

"You can't do it," the Wobbly warned them. "People still eat—even if it's only on ten or fifteen dollars a week. They've got to starve first—seventy-five percent of them. They got to be hit in the belly."

No one paid any attention to him. He had nothing to offer. And there were hundreds, perhaps thousands like him scattered through the woods, the mills, men who had fought long and bitterly and who were now discouraged, tired, disillusioned. "Let them starve first!" How often have I heard this in the Northwest woods from formerly Wobblies. This man leaning heavily against the rail was a member of the lost battalion.

The conservative, despised A.F. of L. was marking time here. But the members were not satisfied; there was restlessness in the rank and file, restlessness and more life than there is in what remains of the old I. W. W.'s.

Education Under the Crisis

1. The Public Schools

OAKLEY JOHNSON

The crisis in American education is extensive, serious, spreading daily into new territory, and affecting increasing numbers of children. . . . The situation in education has reached the proportion of a major national crisis.—From the Report of the Joint Commission on Emergency Aid to Education.—Feb. 1934.

Hundreds of thousands of children are either being denied educational opportunities entirely or they are able to attend school only on a part-time basis. Thousands of schools have been closed. Equipment has been deteriorating and replacements of essential tools for education have been lacking.—Secretary of the Interior Ickes, Oct. 29, 1933.

This year more than at any time in our present history, the quality, yes, even the existence of schools in many communities, is at stake.—U. S. Commissioner of Education Zook, Nov. 10, 1933.

DECLARATIONS by the experts of the National Education Association, by the Secretary of the Interior in whose department the national Bureau of Education functions, and by the U. S. Commissioner of Education himself are sufficient to establish the general fact that our school system has broken down. The Joint Commission above quoted, of which Professor John K. Norton is chairman, makes an outright demand upon the federal government for $50,000,000 for immediate emergency needs, and for $100,000,000 for the school year 1934-5—the latter sum asked for since, as the committee points out, even instant industrial recovery would not provide funds from the usual channels in time to be available for that year. The Commission further recommends "a federal appropriation or allocation of $30,000,000 . . . to assist students to attend institutions of higher education . . ."

A detailed analysis of the acknowledged educational crisis reveals appalling aspects not suggested by the most emphatic general assertion. Something more definite—but yet not definite enough—can be gleaned from the fact that while the public school enrollment has increased in the last four years by over one million pupils, there are 52,000 fewer teachers, and the salaries of teachers, the expenditure for equipment, and the per capita cost per enrolled child have each gone down fifteen to twenty-five percent; and capital outlay for education (i.e., for buildings) has decreased more than 80 percent. Something further can be gleaned from the following year-old partial table, taken from a chart prepared by the National Education Association, but not yet brought up to date:

Year	Total Enrollment, High and Elementary	High School Enrollment	Total No. of Teachers	Total Expenditures
1926	24,741,468	3,757,466	831,078	$2,026,308,190
1931	26,062,749	4,729,000	892,466	$2,316,613,523
1933	26,526,700	5,387,000	882,018	$1,961,900,000

The unprecedented increase in high-school enrollment, in which the cost of instruction is much greater than in the elementary schools, makes the figures in this table all the more significant.

The Financial Attack Upon the Schools—Up to 1930, except for a marked slowing down in school building, no particular weakening of school support was apparent; but the reactionary forces were lining up. Bankers were beginning to demand "economy" of city administrations. The cry against waste was leveled not at municipal corruption, but at the school budgets. The tax-payers rose in bourgeois wrath, and "citizens' leagues," like war-time vigilantes, set up their super-governmental demagogic control. They demanded the elimination of "frills," "fads," and "fancies" which, they said, encumbered education and doubled school costs. Prominent bankers and politicians publicly advocated a return to old-fashioned "simplicity"—Back to 1870 became virtually a slogan.

Meanwhile, the very bankers who demanded economy were playing loose with school funds. They raised rates of interest to school districts from a 4 percent to 6 percent, or more. Millions of dollars of school funds were lost through bank failures ("$15,000,000 in school funds is frozen in the closed banks of a single state," reports the research department of the National Education Association).

This onslaught on school finances—accompanied by national reduction or abolition of income and corporation taxes, and by gigantic appropriations for war preparations and governmental loans to corporations—has resulted to date in the closing of 2,000 rural schools in 24 states, of 1,500 commercial schools, and of 24 institutions of higher learning. One city in every four has shortened its school term at least one month, while 715 of the rural schools which remain open run less than three months. "Terms in practically every great American city are today one or two months shorter than they were 70 to 100 years ago." Private and parochial schools, incidentally, are also closing by hundreds.) The teacher-load—the number of pupils per teachers has been raised to a point which makes efficient teaching extremely difficult if not impossible, the number in a half dozen states being forty or more pupils in each class.

In a survey of 700 cities it is found that 67 reduced art instruction, and 36 eliminated it altogether; 110 reduced music instruction, and 29 eliminated it; 81 reduced physical education, 28 eliminated it; 65 reduced home economics courses, 19 eliminated them; 58 reduced industrial art, 24 eliminated it; 89 reduced health service, 22 eliminated it. Here is revealed the nature of the "frills," of the "fads" and "fancies," which our local and national bourgeois leaders think unnecessary: the art and craft courses which the best pedagogical theory and practice have proved of essential value, and the health services—the physical education, the gymnasiums and swimming pools, the plagrounds, the school nurses, school dentists, school doctors, the hot lunches for poor and under-nourished children, bus transportation—and, still more, night schools, summer schools, special classes for the foreign-born, for crippled children, for those with speech defects, etc., etc. (Even the special propaganda means for bourgeois ideology have suffered in some cases: A "teacher of character education" was dropped in Long Branch, N. J.) "Americanization" classes were discontinued in New Bedford, Mass.

Here is a typical report of the "economies" in school expenditure, from Elizabeth, N. J., as reported to the N.E.A. by its superintendent, Ira T. Chapman:

1. Increase in class size.
2. Elimination of summer schools.
3. Curtailment of evening schools.
4. Economy in books, materials, supplies.
5. Elimination of Spanish in high schools.
6. Arrangement that certain laboratory and specialized phases of activity may have maximum class size.
7. Elimination from boys and girls trade schools of courses and activities farthest removed from employment at the present time.
8. More rigid supervision of the use of buildings . . . for evening exercises, in order that . . . expenses may be reduced.

Similar and worse reports come officially in reply to the N.E.A. questionnaires from Atlanta, Ga.; Chicago, Ill.; the "Commonwealth of Virginia"; Grand Rapids, Mich.; Oak Park, Ill.; Birmingham, Ala.; and so on. From North Dakota: "Small rural schools are severely handicapped. . . . Budgets for higher institutions have been cut 40 and 60 percent." From California, as stated in California Schools, published by the state department of education (March 23, 1933): "The people of California may soon be faced with the momentous question: Shall public schools in California be closed?"

The Financial Background — The facts about the expenditures for education are insufficiently known. The total spent for education sounds large until one compares it with other and larger totals—with the expenditures for automobiles, for amusements, for war. The total teacher wage seems considerable—until we discover that teachers as a class are actually underpaid. One out of every four American teachers receives less than $750 a year; of the 400,000 or more rural school teachers, probably one-tenth receive less than $450 a

April 24, 1934

Jack Kabat

"SCHOOL'S CLOSED. TEACHER SAID THEY NEED THE MONEY FOR WAR FUNDS TO DEFEND OUR CULTURE."

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year; one out of every 13 Negro teachers receives $25 a month or less (which, for a year of nine months, would be $225—but what rural Negro schools in the South have nine month terms now?).

Many teachers, furthermore, rather than see schools closed, teach for nothing. "The teachers of the State," says Sidney B. Hall, Viriginia State Superintendent of Schools, "have loyally offered their services to continue the schools wherever funds would not permit their continuance. In this way and only this way can we say the schools are being maintained in Virginia."

Teachers are paid in scrip (warrants, vouchers, certificates) in at least 18 states, which paper is discounted 5 percent or more when cashed. (More tribute to the bankers.) Wherever they could, teachers have given generously for poor relief: in New York City they contributed $3,000,000 for hot lunches, shoes, and other needs of impoverished and under-nourished school children. And it is notorious that teachers' salaries are often held back: in 1932-3, 30 cities had teachers' salaries in arrears, the longest time being 7 months (in Garfield, N. J.), and the largest amount $28,000,000 (April 15, 1933, in Chicago).

The financial state of the school system is complicated by the great unevenness of the existing wealth in different communities: A state-by-state review of comparative resources describes the south central states as "worst," the mountain states (New Mexico, Idaho) as "poor," and so on, New York and Pennsylvania, the states of most industrial wealth, being "best." Some 259 school districts have been forced to default on their indebtedness—64 of these in Florida, 34 in Ohio, indicating that such districts exist in both the North and the South.

That teachers as a class constitute one of the largest groups in buying power suggests that the curtailment of their economic status is not helping economic recovery. In Chicago alone, as Superintendent W. J. Bogan reports, 2,278 teachers could not pay premiums on $7,800,567 of life insurance, and 759 could not meet payments on homes with a valuation of $5,197,693. "Over 500 teachers, only part of the total number who applied, are known to have been assisted by one Chicago charitable foundation."

And, in addition, 200,000 certified teachers were unemployed (on November 10, 1933.)

Educational Ideals and the Crisis—What becomes of educational ideals? Are the pedagogical standards of Herbert Spencer and Pestalozzi, of Professors Dewey and Thorndike, to go the way of the Bill of Rights and the Declaration of Independence?

(1) Should *all* children have a chance for decent schooling? But rural schools are far behind city schools; the schools for Negro children in the South are pitiful makeshifts; and there are 2,280,000 children between the ages of 6 and 15 who are now denied the privilege of any schooling at all. Some 200,000 homeless children of 12 to 18 wander over the country.

(2) Are pupils entitled to a minimum of personal attention from the teacher? For years leading educators have advocated reductions in the size of classes. Now the teacher-load is being ruthlessly increased; the number of classes per teacher per day is widely raised from five to six.

(3) Are children entitled to more than the traditional three R's? Have art and music a function in the expansion of child intelligence? Has handwork pedagogical value in the work with small children? Has *play* a proper and in fact quite undeniable place in the life of school children? But the "frills" are being torn out of the schools with fascist violence. The playgrounds, the gymnasiums and swimming pools, are being closed.

(4) Should children of pre-school age receive school care in an advanced industrial country such as ours? But the kindergartens are being closed to children of four and younger. The Soviet Union has its millions of children in nursery schools, reports the United States Weekly, while but a few thousands are thus privileged in America.

Is this, as Spencer envisaged, education for "complete living"? Is this what Thorndike and Gates meant by saying "The ultimate aim of education is to realize a condition in which human wants may be most fully satisfied?"

If "the Depression Lifts," Can the Educational Crisis Be Solved?—Education for the poor in our social scheme is always under a crisis: "1,659,000 children 6 to 13 years old are not in school *in normal years,*" says the National Education Association in its news release of November 10, 1933, and adds that over half a million of the ages 14-15 are also "not in school *in normal years.*" (Our emphasis.) The crisis becomes apparent to political and educational leaders, and significant for them, because three-quarters of a million more children are added to this robbed and enslaved child group, and because large numbers of children still in school are receiving considerably lessened educational services.

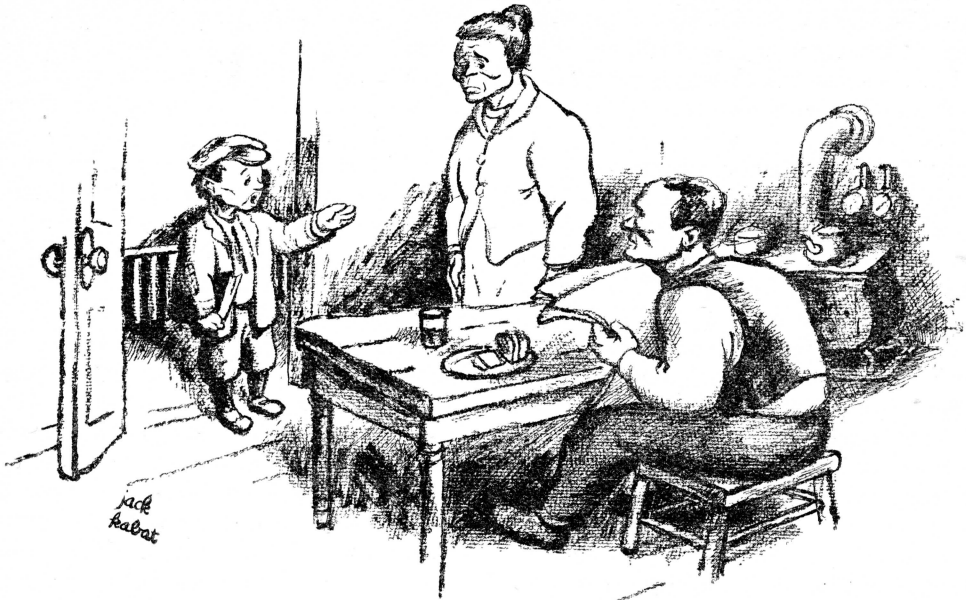
The rural schools and particularly the Negro schools in the South are *normally* below proper pedagogical standards in equipment and in other respects. Under the crisis, of course, they sink lower or are wiped out. Urban schools, though better equipped and with a more modern curriculum, are often overcrowded and understaffed; and the harassed teachers, caught in a repressive system, cannot do the best teaching. "In some communities," says a report, "free public schools have of necessity become tuition schools, admitting only those children whose parents can pay the rate asked." But *before* the crisis as well as since, we must remember, there were private tuition schools for the children whose parents could afford them.

And about the unemployed teachers: "If we decided to operate city schools today with the same number of pupils to a teacher that we had in 1930, it would be necessary to hire more than 26,000 additional teachers. . . . If we decided to provide education for the 2,280,000 children 6 to 15 years of age not now in school, it would be necessary to add 76,000 teachers." So speaks the N.E.A., hopefully; but that leaves still 124,000 of the 200,000 unemployed certificated teachers with no hope!

"The nation contains within its borders everything necessary for a high standard of living for all," says the preliminary statement of the Joint Commission on the Emergency in Education, declaring that "educational opportunities for all children, regardless of whether their parents are wealthy or poor," are a necessary part of that standard. Then they continue, "We call upon those who sit in the key places of business and financial control—"

But why call upon *them?* We must *fight* them. They are the very people who profit from a social structure in which some parents

April 24, 1934



Jack Kabat

"SCHOOL'S CLOSED. TEACHER SAID THEY NEED THE MONEY FOR WAR FUNDS TO DEFEND OUR CULTURE."

are wealthy and many are poor; and they profit from the economies which save them from the crisis, whatever happens to the children.

Capitalist Education, Like Capitalism, Has Its Contradictions — Not only is education under the crisis education under capitalism, but it is at all times *capitalist* education. (For data, not explanation, see Upton Sinclair's *The Goslings;* also, in a recent number of Progressive Education, an article by Roger Baldwin.) Compulsory flag saluting and other patriotic rites in most states; compulsory reading of the Bible in 18 states; the teaching of evolution illegal in 3 states; oaths of "loyalty" required of teachers in 10 states; compulsory military training in many high schools. The head of the American Legion addresses the congress of the National Education Association. The D.A.R. messes around in the schools. The churches, likewise.

Because of the pressure of workers, foreign governments concede more to the schools than does the government of the United States. England, forced to grant a measure of unemployment insurance to the workers, has at the same time an average school year of 210 days in contrast to the American average of 172 days. The N.R.A. grudgingly turned over a measly $35,000,000 for the building of certain badly needed schools—on condition, and with demanded guarantees, that 70 percent be repaid as a loan!

Capitalism fires teachers for economy; then, through the C.W.A., re-hires a few thousand of them temporarily in showy but ill-paid teaching projects. Alleged "frills" in the public schools are abolished, and "made work" frills are established for temporarily occupying the leisure of a few thousand jobless intellectuals. Some 3,000,000 young people of the ages 18 to 20 are out of school and out of work, and the U.S. Department of Justice records reveal that there are more 19-year-olds in its long list of 1933 arrests than of any other age group. The N.R.A. refuses to devote its funds to re-habilitate the schools, but under the N.R.A. reign of terror in New Mexico arrests were made of school children picketers.

Even in their pretended support of the schools the ruling demagogues expose themselves. The Kiwanis Club doesn't approve "unwise" economies! The Rotary Club admires the schools which carry on "despite economic strains"! In his much-praised address before the Conference on The Crisis in Education, January 5, 1933, ex-President Hoover said, "I have confidence that *with adequate reduction of expenditures* there can be ample amounts obtained . . . to keep our school system . . . functioning satisfactorily." (Our emphasis.) Secretary Ickes, in the broadcast already referred to, advances as a reason for supporting the schools the declaration that "it is by means of an educated people that material wealth is increased."

The struggle against reaction in the schools is the struggle against those upon whom the N.E.A. calls so trustingly. It is the struggle in support of Isidore Begun, Williana Burroughs, Alice Citron—in support of the Association of Unemployed Teachers, of the classroom teachers, of the awakening educational workers everywhere. It is a struggle in which parents should join teachers, as increasingly they are coming to do; and in which both should join the larger and inevitable struggle of revolutionary workers for the overthrow of capitalism.

The second half of Oakley Johnson's analysis of the educational crisis, dealing with the colleges, will appear next week.

The War Planes Stop

HARRY GANNES

HARTFORD, CONN.

WHO CAN blame them for getting the jitters. War orders are piling in heavily these days. Huge bombing planes, built with that supreme impartiality of profit-making, for either the Japanese or American army and navy, are suddenly left unfinished. Over fifteen hundred men walk out on strike, and planes ordered for military maneuvers are stopped dead.

It's not only in Hartford, where we are most concerned for the moment. But more than 2,000 Buffalo aircraft workers are on strike; and though they have no organizational connections with the Hartford men, they wire their brotherly greetings to the Hartford men, they wire their brotherly greetings to the Hartford strikers at the three subsidiaries of the United Aircraft and Transportation corporation. In Hartford, on the 10th of April 148 men of the Hamilton Propeller walked out. The next day 1,500 Pratt & Whitney Aircraft workers followed, with almost military precision. "They even took the cat with them," one striker told me, "so he wouldn't starve while we were away."

Hartford is the center of Connecticut's network of war industries. Here 'planes are made complete. Colt's Patent Firearms Manufacturing Company is near-by to add the finishing machine-gun touches. Underwood, Elliott Fisher Company and the Royal Typewriter Company are on the war department's A-1 rating. The staccato of typewriters being tested, within 24 hours can be turned into the sickening rattle of machine-guns. They all have experience from the last world war, and army and navy blueprints are securely locked in office safes, waiting the call of country and war profit.

In all of these plants the strike fever is spreading. The demands of the workers are as simple as they are deep-rooted. They want union recognition ("the closed shop and an open union") and increases in wages from 20 to 35 percent.

The bourgeoisie is extremely worried. They look on the strikes as akin to a great madness. Strikes may be understandable, if not tolerated, in other industries. To stop the supply of airplanes to the Japanese war lords, to Generalissimo Chiang Kai Shek bombarding Soviet villages in Kiangsi province, to Wall Street's army and navy, is nothing less than a "mania."

"The strike virus has been having an evil effect with advent of spring," editorializes the pious Hartford Times. "The current strike epidemic, generally speaking, is an hysteria. . . . Nothing currently happening seems more important than this strike mania, ill-timed recrudescence of industrial dispute . . ."

No ordinary exploiters, these Connecticut Yankee bourgeoisie. They hit hard and yelp loudly when the war machine is stopped by workers demanding more wages and union recognition. Lest anyone misunderstand their eagerness to reap a golden harvest from war preparations, they stoop to a hypocrisy that even Dickens never fathomed. Right below the editorial psychoanalyzing the strikes in Hartford's war industries, the Hartford Times perorates with one on the student's anti-war strike. Hearst or Col. McCormick here would sink to crude ranting. Not so the Connecticut Yankees, who have provided arms for the Civil War, the Spanish American War, the World War (not to count the numerous smaller wars.) They whoop it up for peace.

"Our approval goes to the anti-war demonstrations which have been staged this week in schools and colleges," one reads and marvels. . . . "When war takes place the young men and boys are called upon to become cannon fodder. . . . By the deeds of peace alone can war be overcome."

As for the aviation strike itself, it was planned with consummate skill. The first week in January, the workers of the Pratt & Whitney Aircraft Company, disgusted with having $5,000 filched from them by the International Association of Machinists, decided on building their own, independent, industrial union. Industrial Aircrafts Workers of America, they called it. The leadership consisted

entirely of workers in the shop, most of them American workers never before affiliated to a labor organization. They put their demands to the bosses early in April, declaring if they were not complied with by the 9th, a strike would be called by the 10th.

The bosses pooh-poohed the union leaders, telling them the men wouldn't strike. The strikers are proud of what actually happened. It would be best to tell it in the way one of the strikers told it to me.

"The walkout was carefully planned," he began with the pride of accomplishment. There are three plants that work pretty much as a unit. The Hamilton Propeller and the Pratt & Whitney aircraft are in the same building, separated only by a partition. Chance Vought, which makes the frames and wings, is only a little distance away. We had the 210 propeller men 100 percent organized. We could count on them. On Tuesday, April 10th, the day shift of 148 men walked out. The men in the Pratt & Whitney cheered and banged on their benches. The men who struck filed out like soldiers with grim faces. The straw-bosses down to the sweepers went with them.

"Next day we had the big job of pulling out 1,500 men in the Pratt & Whitney. We decided to do it department by department. Our committees were organized. At nine o'clock they marched along the aisles between the machines in the gear department. Starting with the last man, they marched them out. The men in the other departments cheered and hammered. It was a dramatic sight. By eleven o'clock the plant was emptied. One man in the testing room whom we did not expect to come out, at the call of the strike shut off the engine he was testing and came along. Test pilots and rangermen came out with the rest. One foreman who stayed in came out the next day. 'They asked me to open some cases,' he informed the strikers. 'I told them I wouldn't scab.' "

Only some 400 men in the Chance Vought were left in—not of their own choice. They flocked into the union. But the leaders did not call them out because many of the men are Catholics and their strike date fell on Friday the 13th. Some more bad luck stalked the strike, because on that day they received a telegram from Madam Anna Weinstock, one of Madam Perkins' strikebreaking retinue "not to do anything drastic" because she would arrive Monday morning, 11 A.M. sharp to "conciliate." President LaVista, a young American born Italian, who pretty well runs the union, and has the confidence of the men, said he would use the Chance Vought strike threat as a trump card in his conferences with Madam Weinstock.

The office force, the draftsmen and aeronautical engineers, as well as the powerhouse men, felt a little uncomfortable and left out of things. Some of them approached the strike leaders and asked how they could be brought in. LaVista proposed an auxiliary, to be attached to the industrial union; and that is now being considered.

The A.F. of L. top leaders are very much disturbed, also, by the strike. They remember the aluminum strike in Pennsylvania. There the federal locals in different parts of the country got together and formed a national council and called a strike, against the wishes of Messrs. Green, Morrison and Lewis. Now with the Buffalo and Hartford strike, and the desire of the aircraft workers all the country over to form a national union, they are afraid they will lose their grip. Mr. Roosevelt would not like this to happen in so strategic a war industry, and besides they would be ill-serving their role as official government strikebreaker if they were not in a position to head off such actions or behead them, if they could not be prevented.

They follow various tactics. They dine La Vista at one of the swanky Hartford hotels, tell him what a fine fellow he is and what a splendid strike the men are putting up. They hold out the bait of a national organization of aircraft workers. Perhaps LaVista might amount to something there. LaVista is honest and reports it all back to a strike meeting. Yet one can detect that he thinks those A.F. of L. lads are not as bad as they are cracked up to be.

Mr. John Lonergan, A.F. of L. organizer for Hartford County, becomes even still bolder. He comes to a strike meeting to show what a regular guy he is. "The A.F. of L.," he says, "is for a united front, even with Communists. They work for the same purposes we do now, to lick the Manufacturers Association. We're all out for the same purpose."

One thing is certain. The 2,000 Hartford aircraft workers are solidly organized and are loyal to their independent union. The test of their ability to steer an independent and militant course comes when they meet with the shrewd and experienced strikebreaker, Anna Weinstock. Instinctively, they prepared a celebration for her. Previous to her announced coming, there was very little picketing. But on the Monday she is scheduled to arrive, 1,000 men will be on the picket line to let her know that the only conciliation they will consider is the granting of all the demands before the strike is called off.

Now They Are Madmen

ILYA EHRENBOURG

IN THE course of my life I have seen many extraordinary machines. I have seen Morgan cranes which make a game of snapping up enormous ingots and looms which stop instantly when the thinnest of threads is broken. I have seen a machine with an iron hand and an invisible eye which makes sure that cigarettes are placed with precision in their boxes and automatically corrects the slightest inaccuracy. I have seen machines capable of determining the freshness of eggs, the exactness of intricate calculations and the tone of the human voice. Long ago machines ceased to astonish me. But I have lately seen one which confounded me. It was by no means at first sight that I was able to understand its secret.

We expect more from machines than from man. A machine cannot excuse itself on the score of poetic temperament or unstable character. It must be reasonable. When I finally grasped the mission of this machine I was not pacified and I resolved to consecrate to it these lines, which I hope will prove worthy of it. When commencing a tale, it is usual to go far back into the past so I will begin not with the machine, but with the sea.

It was a sea of the North, a hazy sea, dotted with the sails of fishing smacks. The woman of the coast villages still wore old-fashioned Dutch head-dresses. There is nothing surprising in this—the sea was Dutch and fishermen caught the justly celebrated Dutch herrings. Besides, the fishermen smoked clay pipes and rode bicycles. They disapproved of innovations, but they did sometimes dream of automobiles. They were worthy sons of their country, as enterprising as Sir Henry Deterding and as wooden as the native windmills. In the ordinary course, windmills would have disappeared long ago but there exists in Holland a "Society for the Protection of Windmills." Thus the fate of a windmill somewhere near Alkmaar is more secure than that of a native in a Dutch colony. Nothing menaces the windmills. Men occupy themselves with the sea.

Holland is the country of traditions and of progress. It has accustomed itself to make war on the sea and it does not wish to rest on its past grandeur. So the project of drying up its Zuyder Zee was born. It was carefully calculated how many acres of land would be reclaimed and how many herrings would perish. The enterprise promised well and so men marched to the sea. The newspaper of the Government Party which modestly called itself "the Party Against Revolution and Anarchy" declared: "We will show that if the Five Year Plan is possible, it will not be in a

country where the mob is unchained but only in a civilized State." In order to drain off the sea, extraordinary machines were created, but it is not of these machines that I write.

The fishermen were accorded indemnities. They pensively nicked their pipes. They traded their boots for tractors. They forgot the "royal herrings" and began to discourse on the great merits of Dutch wheat called "Wilhelmina" in honor of the queen. At the accelerated pace of history, the daughters of the fishermen exchanged their head-dresses for hats from Amsterdam. Irens, who produced the Russian film *Magnitogorsk,* was invited to perpetuate the victory of man over the elements. From the sea had been gained many thousands of acres of excellent arable land.

Everything had been foreseen, the net cost, the romance of the screen, and even the preservation of the old national head-dress; there were case-histories and exhaustive calculations. But on a gray and foggy day, one new figure came to join the others: in the granaries of the world 630,000,000 bushels of wheat rotted for lack of a purchaser.

Wheat is not a head-dress, it has nothing to fear from the caprices of fashion, it is necessary for everyone, always. But men showed themselves to be more stupid than machines. They miscalculated. Year after year they planted more and more wheat in Canada, Australia, Argentine. Stocks rose, prices fell. The growers were ruined.

On the first bit of redeemed ground a Dutch pastor celebrated a *Te Deum.* . . . "cause the wheat field to flourish." Across the ocean other ministers blessed a fire; they blessed fire solely because there was too much wheat in the world: it had to be destroyed. However, in Holland, in the earth conquered from the sea, men sowed wheat. And what would you wish these industrious Hollanders to do? They couldn't re-flood their land! They sowed, secretly hoping for a bad harvest. The crop was good. Then they sought means to destroy it.

When wise economists say there is too much wheat in the world this is not to be taken literally. For all these millions of bushels of "surplus" wheat there are still to be found enough sound teeth and empty stomachs. However fast the stocks of grain in the elevators increased, the crowds of idle and hungry grew still faster. Uncountable millions of Chinese writhed with hunger. But that has relation to ethnography or to sentiment. The Produce Exchanges quoted the market price of wheat. Banks failed, farmers groaned. At the Rome International Conference delegates from forty-six states undertook the study of "the organized destruction of wheat."

Eosine is a red dye. Statesmen made up their minds to denature wheat by means of eosine. They wished to uphold the market price of wheat: the solution was to feed it to the cattle . . . the denatured grain would provide fodder for cows. This was a magnificent cultural advance, but the story of eosine is only the prologue of my tale. The tale itself will come soon.

So cows throughout the world began to eat excellent wheat. They ate the wheat and produced milk. Men made butter with the milk. Besides, men ate steaks and roast beef. It seemed that a happy solution had been found, if not for the cows, at least for men. But once again figures interfered and here I am constrained to stop to consider the mysterious nature of these figures.

There are statistical figures that specialists study. They help them to arrive at decisions. They are indispensible to orthodox economics. They provide explanations and perform other valuable services — these are tamed figures. But there are other figures which resemble wild beasts. For example, there is a journal sold in Monte Carlo which contains neither telegraphic news, articles nor items. One simple thing fills this strange sheet: long columns of figures. Half-crazy gamblers read this journal from beginning to end—they find there the numbers which "came up" at roulette the previous evening. These figures serve no purpose except to recall to memory past losses. But the players always try to discover the hidden meaning of the figures. Gamblers must be humored, but what are we to say of this world of wheat and coal, of copper and butter, of cotton and leather where people who seem to be sober and who are supposed to have good sense tremble superstitiously and become infatuated with a mass of figures no less incomprehensible and fatal?

And still another figure fell upon them: there were too many cattle—too many cows, too many steers, too many calves.

In former times the Danes raised wheat. They were wise enough to retreat. They realized they could not compete successfully with America. In America there was virgin land in profusion and the Danes inhabited little islands. They could become rich only by great effort and intensive cultivation. They decided to raise cattle and pigs.

They attained their end. In this cruel and turbulent world Denmark seemed to be a happy exception—a little white house among the shade maples. The peasants drank cocktails and rode in automobiles. It was fair to expect them soon to be drinking champagne and owning little aeroplanes.

The figures took a hand: the depression began. As formerly, in the churns, the thick cream was refrigerated; as formerly, the swine, being family people, each accounted for a dozen tender little pigs; as formerly, at the slaughter houses, the dying bellow promised many juicy beefsteaks. The betrayal did not come from the beasts; it came from men: other countries stopped buying the "surplus" of the Danes.

Nowhere else had cows as sweet a life as in Denmark. Generally speaking, Denmark is a pleasant country. The people are good-natured, the houses clean and the verdure so rich and fresh that almost any farm could serve for the Biblical Eden. Men did not lead too bad a life there, but the cows were especially well off. Four years earlier I was in Denmark and from the bottom of my heart I more than once envied these melancholy creatures. They lived in luxurious barns equipped with running water, both hot and cold. In summer they wandered in pastures fresh as park lawns; they were surrounded with respect and love. There was a personal note book for each cow wherein were recorded all the details of her life. If she lowed out of season or if she ate a very little less than the quantity specified, her masters, full of solicitude, hurried to the telephone—and from the neighboring town came a veterinary, grave as a professor.

Now the veterinary is disturbed much less frequently. Is it worth while to pay for such care when butter and meat are so cheap? Is it even worth while to maintain these beautiful creatures whose value has so mysteriously diminished? England, Germany, France, the entire world has reduced the importance of butter. The market price of butter has gone down and down. Only recently it was liquid gold which flowed from the udders of cows; now it is more like plain water. True, if the cow is an extraordinary producer, it is worth while to occupy oneself with her, but unhappy the cow which slackens in its zeal—one leads it no longer to the pastures but to the *abattoir.*

And it is even worse with regard to meat. Germany loved Danish meat. At first it was the unemployed which caused the importation to waver. Millions of Germans substituted potatoes for beef. Then, questions of state policy intervened. The National Socialists declared that in reality Schleswig was German. In Schleswig cattle were raised for slaughter. The Germans stopped buying meat. They wished to strike Schleswig if not in the heart, at least in the pocket. The frontiers were closed. Economists gravely declared that there was overproduction of meat. The Danes grieved. What to do with these "surplus" cows?

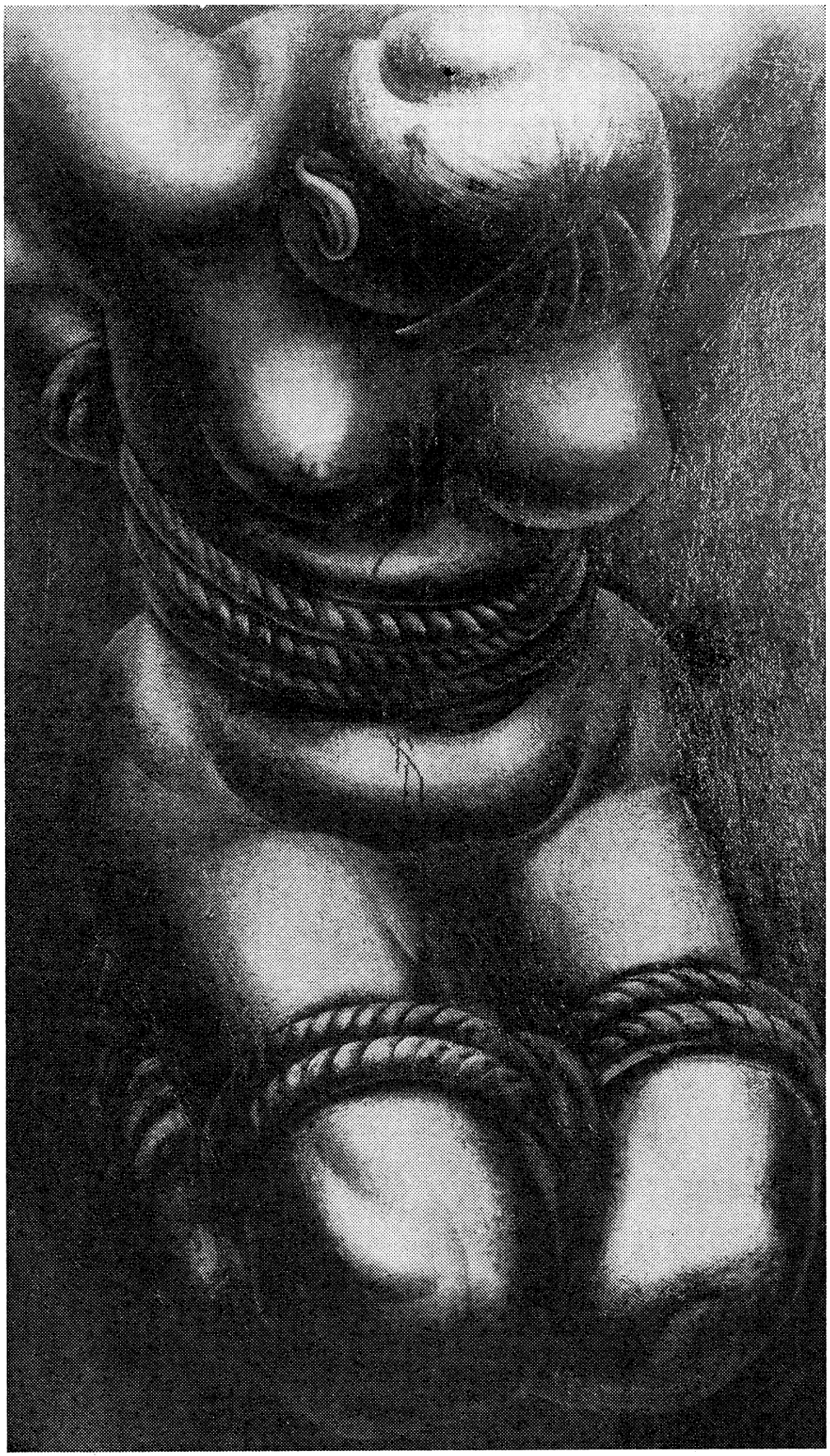
They decided to prepare potted meat, but Argentine was found to be in the way. In this Argentine there was too much of everything: too much wheat, too much wool, too much meat. Argentine sold its potted meat at a price hardly more than the net cost of the container. The Danes found no market for their preserved meat. What to do with their cows?

In a town on the island of Laaland, I saw the culmination of capitalistic civilization—farmers leading young and healthy cows to the slaughter house. They were the brown cows of Denmark, universally esteemed. Many generations had been required to develop this remarkable breed. How many countrymen at the four ends of the earth would these "Brunendes" have delighted! They were led to the slaughter house and the receiving clerk noted briefly: "to destroy."

The price of meat fell day after day, and to stop this fall the State undertook to destroy cattle. At first, the sick cows—this was explained on the ground of care for the public health. Then weak and aging cows—this was said to be to raise the quality of the meat. Now they were destroying young and per-

fectly healthy cows and there were no more explanations. Newspapers said nothing. Butchers and the veterinaries said nothing. Each week five thousand head of cattle were quietly destroyed.

Six percent of the four quarters passed to the manufacture of soap and for other industrial purposes. The remainder was burned up. They burned up the *pot au feu* of the poor, the family roast. They burned up these things, because, if one is to believe the distinguished economists in this miserable, half-starved world, there is too much meat!



PROLETARIAN VICTIM

David Alfaro Sequeiros

However, at Naksor a "rational utilization" of meat has been thought up. It is not destroyed; it is "converted." It was at Naksor that I saw the machine which impressed me so profoundly. In the midst of a great din the machine transforms the flesh and bone into paste. The paste is then boiled and pressed. Finally in place of sides of beef there are a number of flat, earthen colored cakes—and in this new form the beef is devoted to the fattening of hogs! So then, a remedy for the crisis has been found: it is only necessary to kill cows to nourish swine!

The key to the riddle of so mysterious an industry is that English housewives still buy lard and bacon and they like the Danish product. But the English are a whimsical race—they will eat only the flesh of white pigs. The bacon and lard of spotted pigs is in no way inferior, but because of this British fancy, spotted pigs are pariahs in Denmark—they are not worth half as much as their white cousins.

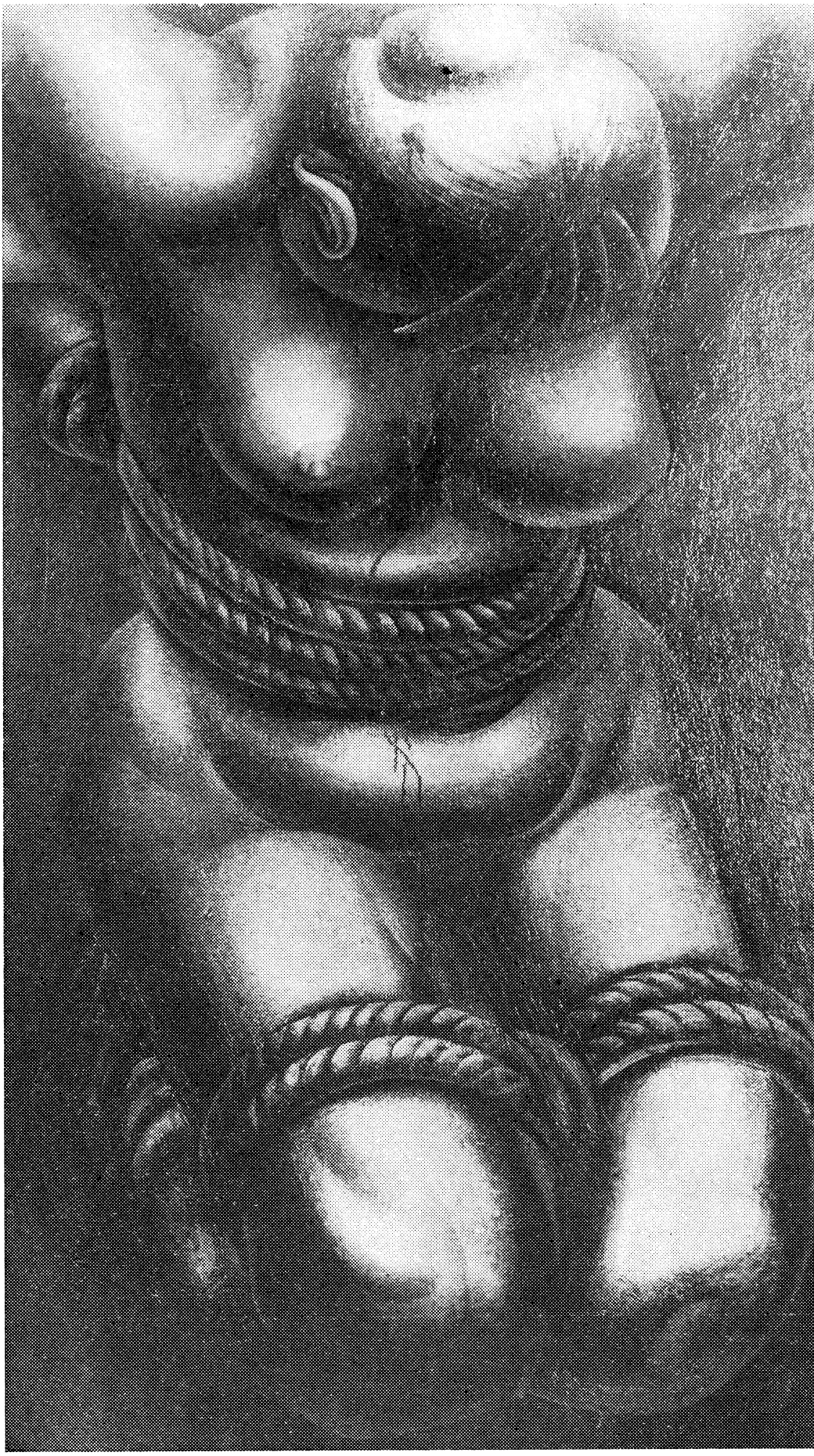
One must not get the idea, however, that the porcine race has escaped the world crisis. Its price has sunk and its export diminished. The Danish hog raisers receive special cards giving them the right to sell so many pigs a year. Without a card a pig is worth less than half as much as with one. Newspapers carried announcements, "For Sale: Export cards for hogs." Breeders speculate with these cards instead of with live pigs.

Week by week, England is reducing Danish hog imports. The English consider Danish bacon the best in the world, but there are the dominions to be thought of. It is necessary to take into account not only the quality of lard, but the claims of New Zealand. Perhaps the English frontier will soon be as tightly closed against Danish hogs as the German frontier is closed to Danish beef. And then? Then the procedure will be to destroy the hogs which for the moment fatten on the flesh of cattle.

Observe, then, this tragic round of the capitalist world. They dry up the seas to sow wheat. Then some of the wheat is destroyed and some is used for cattle fodder. Then they destroy the cattle to make food for hogs. Surely some enterprising man is already developing a plan for the "rational utilization" of hogs which the Danes will begin to destroy tomorrow.

The farmers seek something to replace the cattle and hogs. Their pertinacity and love of work are indestructible. They have turned now to the cultivation of apple and pear trees. They plan to sell their fruit abroad, but for the present the trees require all their time. There is a plague of insects. One can struggle against insects, but the time is near when the growers will be attacked by the senseless figures — like those on the roulette wheel. Then it will be in order to destroy the valuable orchards!

Nowhere is the blind, destructive force of



PROLETARIAN VICTIM

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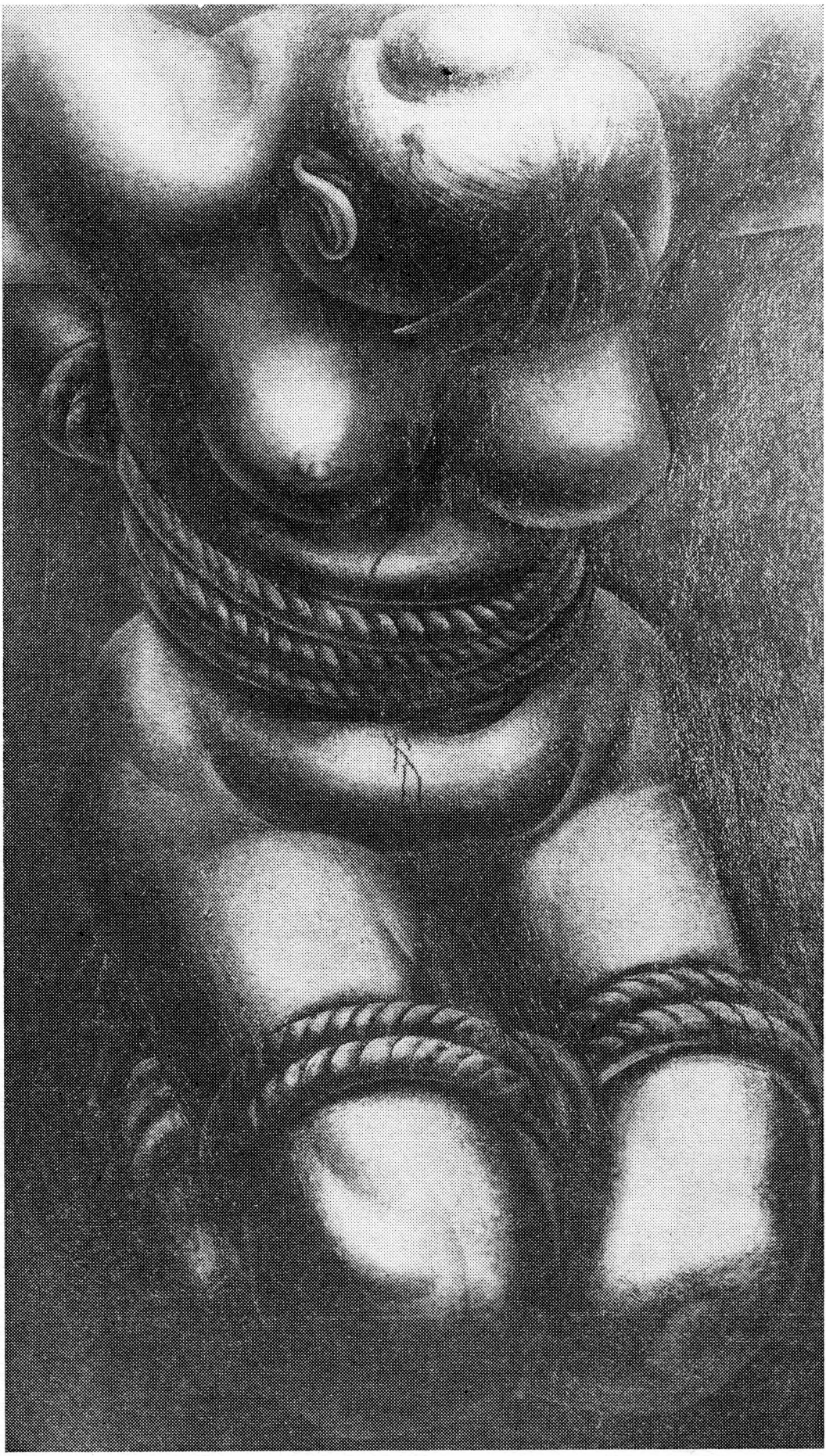


PROLETARIAN VICTIM

David Alfaro Sequeiros

capitalism so striking as in the small, well ordered country of Denmark. Each foot of ground is coddled like a flower bed. The inhabitants are accustomed to work early and late. The piggeries resemble clinics and the farmers are in close touch with the latest developments of science. In this country there is no longer any illusion of general prosperity. Certainly heretofore life there has been better organized and less difficult than in Germany or England. But the Danes now appreciate to what extent their welfare is linked to that of the whole world. The waves are submerging this happy isle. The Danes have not as yet known hunger and destitution, but they have already experienced something even more bitter: work in advance condemned to frustration.

For any man the spectacle of sound milch cows being destroyed is insupportable. I have seen the sad grimace which twists the faces of municipal veterinarians. I have seen the mournful visages of workmen near the enigmatic machine. It is not simply the destruction of wealth; it is vandalism. To all, the ignominy of it is evident—suggestive of the destruction of books by the demoniac Nazis. Human accomplishment is thus annihilated and no enlightened person can contemplate this without repulsion.

Something also enters into the destruction of food which is not less shameful. I will not speak of those famished wraiths I have passed in the streets of Berlin and Manchester. I will recall only what I have seen in the relatively prosperous countries bordering Denmark. In Sweden, in the region of the forest exploitation, I saw thousands of unemployed who eat meat only two or three times a year. I saw at Kramfors workers in the cellulose factories whose only food consists of oat-flour, potatoes and herrings—meat is beyond their means. I saw at Trondhjem unemployed sailors and longshoremen. They had the bearing of seafaring men, proud and self-willed. They are forced to beg the few pennies necessary to keep themselves alive. Of course they eat no meat. I myself know very well what hunger is and it was frightful to see with my own eyes this prime beef being carefully and expeditiously destroyed.

The boat on which I left Denmark for France was loaded with old, broken-down horses. The poor of Paris eat this hard and dry horse meat. It is possible that a simple-minded man might ask, "Why then do they not send Danish beef to France?" There are the duties, there is the "politics of meat," there are the figures. One has the right to export to France an old nag and so, in Denmark these old nags are each worth more than three heifers! This approaches delirium. But it is by economics such as this that the attempt to save the world is being made.

Formerly, the proletariat formed one of the classes of society. It struggled for the right to live. It worked in the interests of the exploited. It demanded justice. It took sides against another class — rapacious but living. The bourgeoisie then built admirable factories, raised blooded cattle and, after its own fashion, furthered human progress. That time is long past. We now have the right to appeal not to the feelings of men of one class, but to conscience, to ordinary common sense. We have the right to raise the question of the salvation of civilization. It is the bourgeoisie who have led the world to its decline. Formerly they exacted the work of slaves who constructed superb edifices for them. Now they exact a labor of Sisyphus, an absurd work, foredoomed to destruction. They have placed the world at the mercy of chaos. They have made a roulette wheel of it and the life of every man has become that of the feverish gambler who does not know what the next moment has in store for him. They have recounted tales of workmen who saturated fine houses with gasoline, of anarchists who threw bombs. But *they* are the throwers of bombs, the incendiaries, the barbarians of our century. Tomorrow you will see them convert lard into manure for the wheat, give the wheat to the cattle, give the cattle to the pigs and with the pigs again fertilize the ground. In former times they were cruel and heartless money changers. Now they are madmen.

—Translated by G. T. Hill, Jr.

Different Spring

ORRICK JOHNS

This is a fight
in darkness in the winter night,
until spring comes and the window opens wide
upon us who have been snowed in
the bourgeois house of thought.

When the spring comes we thought-slaves
shall put off the old mind the old flowers
the speech the old loves,
when the spring comes we shall see a new
kind of buds.

On the front of the woods you poets of
Missouri
will see the red bud bloom in March,
in it the blood of brothers will be flowing
the blood of comrades on the German front
bright blossoms of severed necks . . .
You of the south will see hanging
the acacia the wisteria clusters sweet scented
the bodies of our brown yellow black
comrades
are hanging. . . .
You poets everywhere
wont to sing in the springtime
to hear your bones awaken
loving the black soil the sharp smell the thin
cold branches clothing in green,
you now this spring will sing
more tenderly of hate
the spring of hate of the hand that strips the
tree,
the hate of class,
you will raise the beauty of buds to the
fruit of fight.

You who felt in the old day
your muscles burst your shirts in April
to rejoice and copulate and be soft
will feel new muscles come to life
hungry unsatisfied aching full of desire
muscles of strife,
with the spring dawns
and the spring cries of birds
the bud breaks its shell,
we break the shell of words
we will clothe the branches with a new green
steel,
the trunks of the trees will be cannon
rammed with our hearts.
When the ice breaks
and the snow melts and the young May
awakes
we will know its force
we will learn from it the art of bursting
asunder
we will take
the greening orchards from the lords,
we will take the roots of the world for our
stake—
meeting places homes clubs nurseries
hospitals laboratories orchestras—

The spring that comes
will be the mother of honest artists
in the crocuses the dandelions the early
violets we shall see something more to adore
than our own sick dreams,
we shall be the workers marching in mighty
streams
new born new strong new endless children
of the
one class building bridges to the new spring.
O singers, the dogwood the wild plum the
apple
the shadbush the bloody redbud the red
hawthorn,
these I sing being an old Missouri poet
familiar with the bourgeois spring,
but to us they will be strength of gut and gall
not dreaminess and self love,
to us they will be symbols of the young
leader the Day the blood of the workers' May
the victorious slogans the dying budding
babies the strong-branched arms of miners
steelworkers beetpickers—to us they
will be symbols of fight,
fellow poets
let us struggle in the winter night!

Saints and Toreadors

HORACE GREGORY

IN 1912 there was a Middlewestern Renaissance. And now no one is quite clear as to what has happened to it. Lindsay is dead, but where are Sandburg and Masters? And what direction will Dreiser and Anderson take? Where are they going? These questions admit no easy answer, for at their roots lies an American phenomenon, a story that touches the lives of millions living in our Middlewestern region. I would say that corn-huskers and hog-slaughtering butcher boys have been transformed into saints and toreadors, and now let me explain what I mean.

The five men that I mention here were men of unmistakable talent, possessing social insight as well as literary gifts. It so happened that their work was the fruit of maturity and not merely a flash of adolescent brilliance; their careers opened late and they received recognition in middle-age. Almost at once they supplied a backdrop for successors and a book of poems or a novel written from or of the Middlewest had a definite place in the minds of readers. Through revolt, restlessness and exhortation they had given color and variety to the country that had produced a Hamlin Garland and an Ed Howe. The immediate result was Sinclair Lewis and then suddenly Glenway Wescott and Ernest Hemingway. The same culture that had made a Lindsay or a Dreiser possible, created a climax in a generation of expatriates; it is not enough to say that the older men could do no more than imitate themselves. They were actually superseded by others who carried forward the story of a cultural development.

To get at the source of this phenomenon we must go back to the first decade of this century in the Middlewest and see again those forces that led to expatriation. Let us remember first of all that we are reentering a pioneer country and that unlike New England and the Far West, a stolid middle class had moved slowly forward. Not that New England didn't have shopkeepers, real estate men and embryo industrialists; not that the Far West didn't have members of the same fraternity, but in both cases there existed a claim to an older tradition on the soil: the East had its symbol of the Puritan, the Pacific West had its memories of a Spanish Roman Catholic civilization, but the Middlewest had the mere ghost of Pere Marquette, who represented an overflow from French Canada and beyond this there was practically nothing for the Great Lakes region to remember. There were the Indians and French trading posts—and then in the Forties of the Nineteenth Century a sudden influx of New Englanders traveling West and with them English, Irish, Scandinavian, German immigrants. They cut through forest traveling westward and those who stayed discovered pasture lands and acres ripe for raising wheat, truck gardening and corn—a flat, rich plain.

It is unnecessary to remind ourselves that the work of building a Middlewestern empire consumed the energy of an entire generation. That here as in all frontier activity in America individual initiative was obtained by a law of waste. The race toward "success" was dominated by Nineteenth Century philosophies of evolution, and our own Puritan background accepted the logic whose conclusion was a "survival of the fittest." The economics of "free competition" was justified by a stern act of God—and I wish to suggest here that the self-made man piously (and genuinely) believed that economic victory over his fellows deserved a prayer of thanks in Sunday morning church service. He was saved from the earthly terrors of the damned—praise Him from whom all blessings flow. But beyond this brief obeisance there was little time for worship; much of this office was left to the speculative imaginations of women who in childbirth or old age received that moment of leisure in which transcendental mysteries were revealed and the men who shared comparative respite from physical activity were regarded as loafers, half-wits or weaklings. It was assumed that these entered the professions and became school teachers, ministers, lawyers, "politicians." These were the servants of the "real" citizens, Dreiser's heroes, those citizens who secured economic supremacy in small communities and who forced the small town to grow into a city.

I realize that this summary of a state of mind is all too brief, but it serves as a partial explanation for a transition period which took place at the turn of the century. The cultural life of the Middlewest was at the disposal of women, for, with the settling of the countryside and the second generation grown to manhood, women were the first to benefit by a few spare hours of hard-earned leisure. The tradition of individual initiative remained; that is, male members of the household had learned that "success" could be achieved only by long hours of personal effort, and that effort was directed toward exploitation of others. The women, meanwhile, formed clubs and church "socials." It was they who remembered that Emerson once lectured at one-night stands throughout the region, that Matthew Arnold came from across the Atlantic to talk "culture," that there was a mysterious English poet called "Robert Browning" whose verse was more difficult to understand than Shakespeare and the Bible, both of which lay unread upon the library table. And the women had assumed the responsibility of educating the children. It would be well to know what and how children could obtain the mysteries of education. Naturally, housewives and club women had no time for learning Greek or Latin, or, for that matter, anything beyond the spelling bee or the multiplication table, but they could hire someone to talk to them about such attractively foreign, far-off things as "Literature" or "Science" or "Religion." And this they promptly did. They formed "Browning" clubs and "Shakespeare" societies; they convinced their husbands that such activities raised "the standard of living" and, raising the standard of living, increased business and therefore gave the community a general sense of well being. But "culture" was their province, and to feel that it was theirs to cherish was almost as good as a vacation away from home, away from the raw, newly-paved streets and clapboard houses, and almost as wonderful as the Columbian Exposition and World's Fair of '93, where there was so much to be learned, so much to be seen and which proved the world a large place that excited innumerable curiosities.

Of course one had to have money to indulge in adventures of this kind, yet the poorest housewife could afford to listen to a book salesman at her door, and with a few dollars paid in installments could buy books that no one found time to read. The husband was definitely out of this world—this was a secret that the children shared. They shared something of the excitement of "culture" that was not related to the routine of farming or business; that seemed far distant from the lives they saw around them, that bore no resemblance to the activity of Fathers who failed or succeeded at the mysterious task of making money.

By contrast the Fathers seemed brutal, narrow, hard. If they joined clubs there was a practical reason motivating them; they did no more than borrow from their women fine words like "idealism" and "service" and fitted them to the pragmatic uses of making business treaties and contacts. Of course the union of a yearned-for culture with business objectives soon became sentimental nonsense, a fantasy out of which Rotary Clubs and Elk Lodges grew. Maudlin as these societies became—and noisy and "characteristically American" there was nothing profound in the mere fact of their existence, which is a reason why Sinclair Lewis's novels now seem irrelevant. Their only reality lay in the perpetuation of a prosperous middle class, fooled for the moment into thinking that the sale of a gross of hair-brushes could be dignified into a medieval tournament. It was a naïve conception based upon a lack of cultural roots and a childish hope for unearned glory.

Into this society a third generation was born. No sooner had it learned to read and feel and think than seeds of revolt were

planted. The dream of culture, a confused Emersonian dream, arose in which all cultures danced in flowing garments and long hair. It ran directly counter to the realities of making money, of hard, manual labor, of speed, of science and invention. The beauty of it was that it seemed remote, and offered an escape from a harsh environment. It *was* effeminate, yet it perceived a lack of something that a previous generation felt as a deepening cloud of gloom. Dreiser and Anderson and Masters knew this despair, but to younger men who came upon their heels, an answer was implied by the mere act of leaving home. They would follow another road: they would forget the flat lands and the growing cities, the sprawling suburbs, and naïve, backslapping, false signs of friendship. This transition is clearly marked if we follow the trail from *Jennie Gerhardt* through *Main Street* to Wescott's *Apple of the Eye.* The sensitive boy in Wescott's novel runs to the shelter of women, to those who can appreciate his soft responses, to those who can understand his terror and the fears behind it. He is to run further, for the nightmare of the world that he feels closing round him has its symbols in the routine of life on a Wisconsin farm. He is to return to it only to glorify its women who shielded him, *The Grandmothers,* the pioneer women, whose strong bodies were dedicated to the service of a Middlewestern soil and whose vision reached far beyond the horizons of the leveled plain. It is little wonder that in flight he began his search for a tradition not his own. New York was a mere stopping place; he sought out Europe, the Continent where even the vaguest dreams of culture are likely to come true. He spent some years gathering material for a calendar of saints. It was not scholarly work, but relaxation. Something of Middlewestern skepticism, too deep for him to conquer, tainted his purpose. He sensationalized his portraits, dressed his beloved creatures in bloody robes and then grew mildly witty at the grotesque pictures he conceived. He remained as he began, a sensitive, gifted Wisconsin farm boy, searching for a tradition that he will never find. Something of his panic is revealed in his long essay *Fear and Trembling* and in *Good-bye, Wisconsin,* for to him the home lands yield a too abundant fruit of bitterness and fear and yet his traveling, his efforts to acquire a tradition are merely fuel for further restlessness and disquiet.

Superficially, Hemingway presents a contrast to the more delicately molded Glenway Wescott, but the longer we regard both Middlewesters in juxtaposition the more they seem to merge into a single portrait of their generation. Enough (and I think too much) has been written about Hemingway as a war and post-war prodigy. I would go so far as to say that the war came to Hemingway with the same overpowering irrelevance as it came to many of his contemporaries. He joined an ambulance corps and wrote down his experiences. If he is the writer I suspect him to be, a sensitive, though limited artist, with a

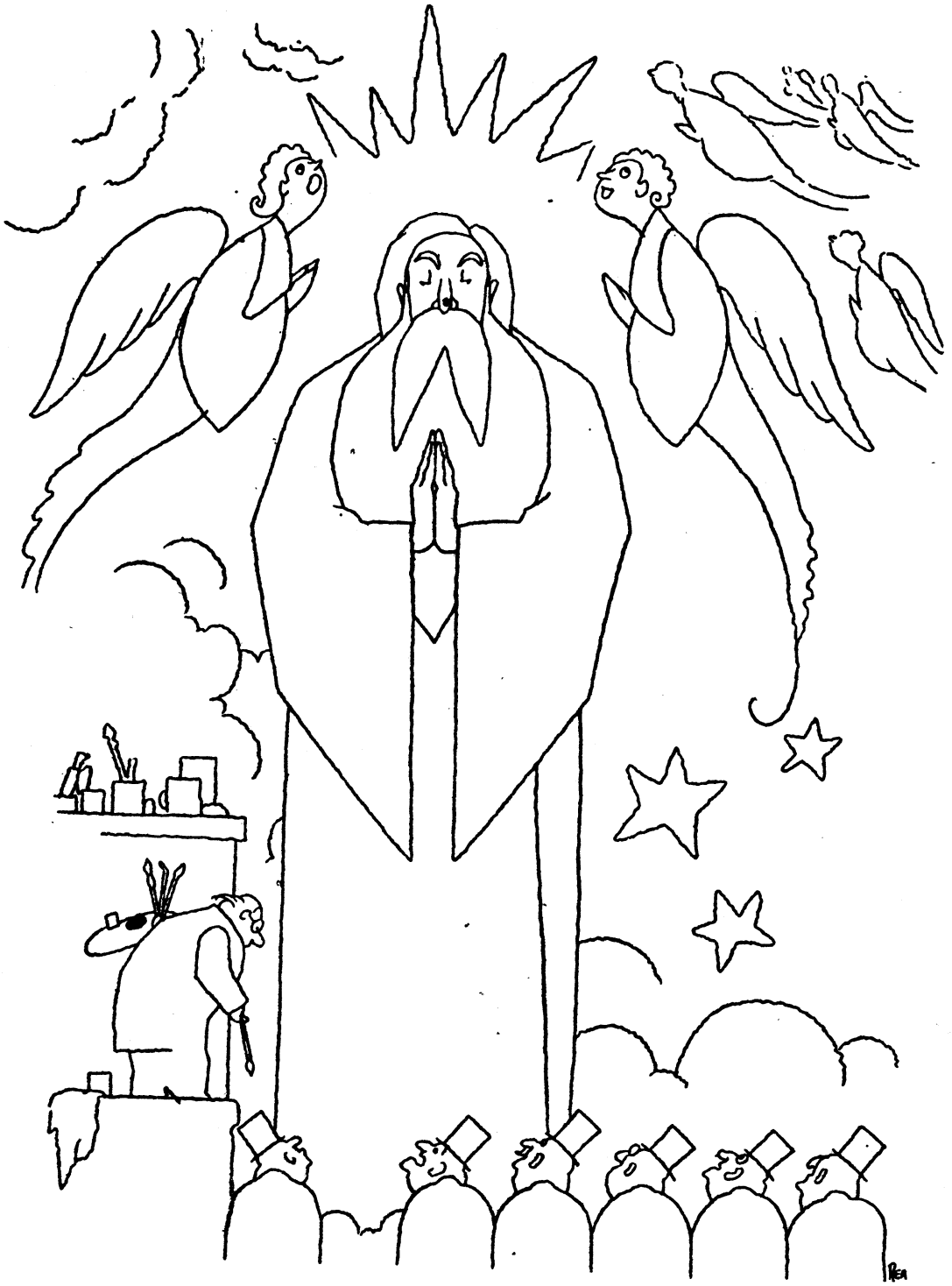
Gardner Rea

"THE COMMITTEE IS SORRY, BUT YOU HAVEN'T QUITE CAUGHT GOD'S EXPRESSION."

poet's eyes for sharp detail, war or no war, we would have heard his name and read what he had to say. He had the rare ability to live deeply in a particular moment that was his, to feel (though not to realize) the significance of that moment, and thus he precipitated a fortunate accident: he became the symbol of post-war young manhood and through him many another young American found a spokesman, some one who seemed to say all they were forced to leave unsaid.

More than all else he represented the American Middlewestern hero, the boyish inarticulate hero, the successor to the dreamy eyed, yearning protagonist of *Winesburg, Ohio,* the child of young Chicago that was hog butcher to the world. The principal difference between him and the earlier hero was the fact that he had escaped from his natural setting and was in vivid relief against a foreign background. So much for the external portrait. The internal picture was more complex; like Wescott's there was the complication introduced by a greater aesthetic sensitiveness than his predecessors and in the early short stories there is definite appreciation of the formal ease displayed by the European. Hemingway's Italian army officers are beautiful creatures: lithe, delicate, wheeling sharply to attention in salute. In *Good-bye, Wisconsin* Wescott remarked that a Middlewestern train conductor seemed boorish and crude when compared to a German or French railway guard. It is not enough to say that the observation and the air of resentment that accompanied it seems effeminate; it is of a piece with Hemingway's delight in watching a toreador in the arena and seeing an Italian officer stride across the room. To these two boys the railway guard and the Italian officer seemed to personify the dream of culture that was not to be found at home. Hemingway strode toward the objects of his search with a slight swagger and reported his discoveries with the deep bass intonations of a boy whose voice was changing. This attitude produced an obvious contrast with the thing he observed and though he wrote with an air of studious deliberation, the pose he assumed seemed a masterpiece of artlessness. One became completely charmed by his reverence for things that seemed remote from his behavior. He saw *Death in the Afternoon* as an event sanctified by a tradition, as a ritual performed with universal application, quite as Wescott saw in his lives of the saints, a justification for human martyrdom. I believe that this kind of observation reveals a naïvete possible only in a society that feels its lack of a cultural tradition and will propel certain sensitive individuals away from the larger unit to find it. This is done, I think, in the sanguine hope that following an act of purification, a sense of security will emerge out of the brutal anarchy of capitalism and the individual who happens to be the chief actor in the scene, drops to his knees as does a pilgrim, who, after a long journey, sinks exhausted at the foot of a foreign shrine.

I doubt if either Hemingway or Wescott could be accused of leaning toward Fascism. I mean that either one, as individuals, would reject the charge as unfair and technically untrue. Yet the more general phenomenon that they represent is the very soil from which Fascism springs: a disillusion that discovers comfort only in a reactionary movement. Their transitional period, which extends beyond the work of their predecessors, was a period of artfully stimulated unconsciousness, and for them, the character of that unconsciousness remains as beautifully intact as a lilac scented dream on a night in mid-June. Both men have a greater talent for personal histrionics than either Anderson or Dreiser and I doubt if they will ever exhibit the sympathetic attitude toward larger movements in social change that was frequently shown in the early work of the older men. They will arrive, perhaps, at a more decisive position than those who came before them, but it will be an increasingly lonely position and will cease to convert new readers. It will be regarded as a college class reunion with the dates of 1923-1932 printed across hat-bands and on banners. Behind them stand the ghosts of a Middlewestern Renaissance who now contribute to Raymond Moley's magazine, who write wearily of Lincoln and Stonewall Jackson. Here in this room, Wescott will exhibit his saints under stained glass and in the next room where there is sawdust on the floor, Hemingway will exhibit a bull-fight in miniature. Perhaps he will give prizes to small boys who dance about the ring, who imitate with wooden swords and solemn faces, the thrust, counter-thrust and parry of the graceful toreador.



Gardner Rea

"THE COMMITTEE IS SORRY, BUT YOU HAVEN'T QUITE CAUGHT GOD'S EXPRESSION."

Correspondence

From a Student in Greece

To the New Masses:

First of all I must tell you that I don't know very well English: I am a poor student of Athens University, obliged to work very hard to gain my bread; having no money I learned this little English without any teacher; and so now I beg your pardon for I know that is a great trouble for you trying to understand my English.

Some days ago I found a copy of a New Masses of 16 January 1934, and you cannot fancy my delight; I read it, with the help of my dicionary, from the first page till the last.

This copy of New Mases is the first which I read after eight months, because the last was of June 1933. From that copy I translated an important article, *Marxism and Science,* by Paul Salter, which we published in the "Students' Flag," the organ of the Communist students of our University.

After eight months, some days ago, I have met accidentally a comrade who had a copy of New Masses. I borrowed it, of course, and you must believe me that my profit was great by reading it.

Unfortunately I have no money to be a subscriber of New Masses; if you were a newspaper I should say that I can send you in exchange a lot of revolutionary magazines and newspapers and chiefly photos from the struggles of the Greek workingclass. But I know that is not the same with a magazine. Perhaps to read again after 8 months New Masses—

As I was reading I have seen in page 28 a little critical article about a new American pamphlet by Moissaye L. Olgin, *Why Communism?* I believe that this is very interesting for our workers also, and therefore I enclose twenty drachmas to send me, if you please, it. I shall translate and shall give it to the publishing-section of the Athens worker's club. The price of this pamphlet is 10c, about ii drachmas; but I send you 20 drachmas to pay the money-changer and the stamps. This pamphlet is the cheaper than all the other books and pamphlets which you have in your advertisements.

And now I shall ask you something on the part of Students' Flag. Write please to me an address of the National Students League. Write please also if they have any newspaper, or magazine and what is their address. You know that today, more than ever, we must give our hands to realize the "Workers of the World Unite." The poor students of Greece and America are still very far. That is a felonious act today. (I don't know to express it in English.) We want to learn about their life, about their struggles. We are so near with the poor students of America and you see that we don't know them.

Here I finish my letter.

Excuse me for my mistakes.

Your Comrade,

Athens, Greece. N. P.

Farrell-Dahlberg-Conroy

To The New Masses:

In his review of Farrell's book, *The Young Manhood of Studs Lonigan,* Edward Dahlberg compares it to Jack Conroy's *The Disinherited,* to the detriment of the latter. I think Comrade Dahlberg is at fault in this. I am aware that Farrell's book is deserving of praise, that it is interesting and clever; but the style, the technique is that of Joyce and Farrell. To call Conroy's prose "remnants of writing done in the last ten years" is literally astounding. All I can say is that I wish more novelists of the literary left—Dahlberg himself—would give us some of those Conroy "ten year remnants" in their books!

Farrell's novel is a rehash of material long familiar to the reading public. There is nothing new in novels written to show the degradation of the poor, the breeding places of crime, and Hugo did it much better than Farell in *Les Misérables,* while Zola years ago wrote all Farrell has to give us without having to borrow the technique of another writer.

Conroy's prose is simple and sparse and in *The Disinherited* he has made the first outstanding contribution to proletarian literature, while Farrell's novel only succeeds many of its kind. The approach of Conroy is revolutionary and we get the workingclass of America unforgettably limned. And he has achieved something none of the critics seem yet to have given him credit for, the subtle blending of the subjective with the objective, so that the usual method of the average writer, when he attempts to show the psychological reactions of his characters, is avoided. I am well aware of certain orthodox structural flaws. It is episodic in part (but what episodes!) and the continuity limps. Yet despite this, the novel possesses the organic wholeness of a panorama. You finish it with the feeling that you have covered territory, that you have seen America —the America of the roads, the shops, the mills, the mines. In this sense *The Disinherited* hangs together and the flaws of construction become very minor indeed.

The delineation of character is one of the virtues of the book. The characters are real, flesh and blood, and they talk like honest-to-god workers. There is nothing "arty" in Conroy's handling of characters and conversation. For Dahlberg to say (or imply) that Farrell's characters will belong to the future more than those of Conroy's *Disinherited,* is rather strange. This is tantamount to saying that the ruling workers of the future soviets will be more interested in the decadent elements under capitalism than in the trials and tempering, to revolutionary struggles, of genuine workers. It is doubtless true that the future ruling workers will show an interest in every aspect of capitalism, and it is quite possible that *The Young Manhood of Studs Lonigan* may be of some literary and documentary importance; but since Conroy's book is the first of its kind and treats panoramically of the workingclass, of the vital, affirmative class, and not of the decadent, lumpen proletarian elements fringing labor and seeping into it from the petty bourgeoisie; and since it does this faithfully, with literary distiction and a revolutionary approach, in a way that has yet to be duplicated, we are fairly safe in assuming that *The Disinherited* is of more literary and documentary importance to the future than are Farrell's novels to date.

Henry George Weiss.

Tucson, Ariz.

Are Newspaper Men Workers? A Reply

To The New Masses:

"With characteristic romanticism" Philip J. Corbin (in The New Masses for March 27) takes a particle of truth, builds it into a mountain of villification, and hurls the works at the entire body of newspapermen without discrimination. He raises a self-righteous finger and cries, in effect, that they are all stupid, opportunistic, hopelessly deluded by the demagogy of their employers, and might just as well be left, in a lump, to the ravages of some fascist, big, bad wolf.

I have no desire to defend bourgeois thinking newspapermen (an impossible task, of course) but certain erroneous impressions given by the Corbin article must be protested in fairness to those leftwing writers working today in the newspaper industry, and those growing numbers of others whose sympathies are turning "left." The only mention of opposition to Guild opportunism is listed as the futile gesture of a "few malcontents," later softened to "dissenters."

We have a job to do and an organization to win. To begin with, the very act of organization is an indication that the newspaperman is recognizing himself as a worker needing protection from exploiters even as other workers. The accusation of stupidity based on the mere fact that English and Continental newspapermen were long since organized immediately reflects back on the accuser since it is in line with the backwardness of the American workers as a whole, organizationally and politically, founded on the clay god of "individualism" which has until recently retarded the development of working class struggles in almost all branches of industry. Which proves only that newspaper workers are what they are through the operation of the same system which has successfully deluded employees generally. To consider and treat them as a class apart is dangerously close to assisting capitalism in maintaining its illusions, both for the newsmen, and for the other workers reading about them.

The stories used by Corbin as a basis for the indictment of all newspapermen, individually and collectively, show simply that newspaper publishers are dishonest and work in collusion with politicians and other racketeers. Is that news? Why isn't some mention made of the efforts of developed workers in the Guild to produce concrete advances, to force real gains, and through example hasten the leftward swing of the active units?

The code, for instance, submitted by J. David Stern, Philadelphia Record and New York Evening Post owner, was prepared by himself after much shouting from the housetops of how ready he was to sign the first of all the publishers. When his flunkeys presented it to the local guild units it was enthusiastically received—till its treacherous character was exposed by an advanced left-wing fraction and rejected. A new code favorable to the workers was drafted and returned, leaving Mr. Stern in the delicate position of having either to sign a code he objects to seriously or of eating his own "liberal" words. We can afford to present the truth. Let the politicians be demagogic; let the fascists educate with the axe; let the church rant and threaten hell-fire; the Communists can show with simple fact the only truths possible today. Let us be honest; are newspapermen workers? You're damned right they are. A check on their salaries and living conditions definitely places them in the proper category; and do those two factors serve to penetrate any remaining romantic haze!

Vincent Norman Hall.

Reviewing a Review of a Review

To The New Masses:

Earl Browder, in his "highly personal reactions" to my review of Hugo Gellert's *Capital in Lithographs* (New Masses, Feb. 27) says that it made him very angry, so angry as to rush right into print (New Masses, April 3) to berate me. For what? For "grudging praise" and "weasel-words of carping criticism." I carped about such non-essentials as the lack of organic relation of "far too many" (by which I meant most) of the drawings to the text, of their lack of clarity within themselves, of their rigidly undialectical structure both individually and as a group, etc., etc. Non-essentials that a serious revolutionist can't be bothered with.

Browder admits he was so angry he forgot "all niceties of polite writing." So he proceeded to throw together a few fragments in quotes, and then ask what sort of revolutionary writing is this? Thus he ridiculed my description of a Gellert worker as "musclebound," though I had described "a musclebound worker, standing in classless isolation." Again, "he doesn't like the symbols used." What symbols? Browder doesn't say. He simply gives the impression I was being snooty. I specifically pointed out that the symbols of surplus value, use value, exchange value were fancy contraptions whose meaning was not decipherable. A number of people of average or higher intelligence, including Communist Party members, were unable to give me clear explanations of these symbols, despite Robert Minor's assertion recently in the Daily Worker that Gellert's

drawing are "absurdly simple" and easily accessible to the average mind, that is "anyone above the intelligence level of a bourgeois professor." (Unfortunately I am only a bourgeois instructor.)

Although admitting he did not consider himself qualified to review the book, Browder has not hesitated to review my review. And in his review he not only rips all quotations out of context, but also fails to answer a single argument. He simply states "I do not know if Gellert's book is a 'masterpiece of art,' but I do know it is a smashingly powerful political document." But the whole burden of my criticism was to show as concretely as possible within the limits of a short review how the faults of Gellert's graphic art were inseparable from its shortcomings as a revolutionary political instrument.

I very much regret that the defense of my review must take the form of an attack on Gellert's book. This however is no fault of mine. I accepted the responsibility of reviewing the book only on the urgent request of one of the editors of THE NEW MASSES with the plain understanding that I was to write a critical review and not an appreciation.

There resulted, in the words of Earl Browder, "a scandalous situation": the revolutionary press was more critical of a revolutionary work than the capitalist press. What is shocking about that?

O. FRANK.

Rebecca Pitts Answers

TO THE NEW MASSES:

I was interested in the letter you just published from Martha Andrews relevant to my article *Something to Believe In.* I am a little puzzled by the harshness (not of the criticism, wherever it is coherent, but of the tone); and by its irrelevance to my actual meaning. May I undertake here to clarify one or two terms, and purify them of their disagreeable (although accidental) connotations?

To begin with, although she speaks of a "martyr complex," and "sacrifice," and "going to the people," I find no such phrases in my article, nor even any such ideas implicit within it. I wrote the piece from the point of view of the middle-class professional worker, who is honestly trying to identify himself with the working class. This position is not an easy one; and it has its economic as well as its psychological agonies. But I do know that no honest leftward-moving "intellectual" of today imagines himself in any Christ-like role—any more than the workers do. We understand that we literally cannot survive either as members of the middle-class, or as an independent class of "intellectuals"; that (in short) we must effect an honest rapprochment with the workers. . . . And at this point we may remind Martha Andrews that whatever "knowledge" we have acquired here and there was not taken in with our mothers' milk. We worked hard for it.

All of us understand, I think, the historic *necessity* of the revolution, and the objective social forces that produce it—rooted in economic factors. We ought to understand, too, the famous Marxian dictum that "it is not consciousness that determines life, but life that determines consciousness." That is, the mind is formed by the impact upon it of every outer activity and force—material and social. Thus arise the various "social-psychologies"—for instance, that of Fascism. It is this very fact that guarantees the emergence of a new human type when the new social order is born. But in our objective analysis of the social arena, we dare not forget that these psychologies and attitudes are rooted in individual minds.

My article was written frankly and entirely from the point of view of *experience;* that is, its orientation is psychological: Experience and human psychology will no doubt change, in the classless collective society of the future, far beyond our present imagining. But even the most resolutely collective philosophy cannot deny that the locus of consciousness will always be the individual mind. Therefore the problem of personal integrity (that is, the resolution of inner disharmonies), and of the adjustment of the ego to the world, will always be a vital human problem. To deny this is to fall into a very mechanistic and exterior conception of human nature and the world.

It is the word "faith" which seems to carry with it such a disagreeable aura of religiosity. It actually means "strong belief," or conviction." Now it is possible to *know* a great deal, passively, without feeling called upon to *act* upon the knowledge. It is in this fashion that we know algebra, for example, or any facts of science. It is possible to know and understand the equally undeniable facts of Marxism without feeling called upon to act in any way at all. The thing that is really lacking, however, is a certain emotional attitude toward these facts—an attitude which I have called "faith." I may be wrong in using the word thus, in regard to scientifically demonstrable facts; but I wonder if we have any other word which conveys the same color of dynamic motivation.

So used—"faith" *is* the prerequisite to a life of revolutionary devotion. I know very well that the class-conscious worker knows the bitterness of hunger and anger and suffering. But so do a great many million other workers who are not class-conscious. The class-conscious worker sees a way out, and believes it will work, and is willing to fight for it. And a person who sees his world clearly, and his own role in it, and labors with others for a good that is not private to him—that person has made a definite and real adjustment to life (though he may not give this fact a thought—which is admirable); and he is a more honest man and a more significant personality than his egocentric neighbor. That is all I claim.

My words about Lenin were written—not "daringly," as she says—but very humbly. But I have studied his life. His early sufferings educated him to a clear perception of the historic situation in which he found himself; he studied Marxism and knew it to be the truth; and he furthermore—*—believed* in the revolution with a passion which his fellows, the Plekhanovs and Kautskys, did not share. Martha Andrews does not like the word "faith." But it was some emotion toward the facts he knew which gave Lenin the vast driving power he had. Otherwise, how could his life have been made up so unsparingly of "observation, experience, hard work, study, and revolutionary action?" And Lenin was a happy man. Read Gorky's *Days with Lenin* if you doubt it.

As for "bathing in the sunlight of . . . naturalistic faith"—the sarcasm is absurd. People are never passive when they really feel the passion which I (perhaps wrongly) called "faith." . . . And it will not harm the revolution if we look, now and then, beyond its immediate political and economic factors. If, in short, we think of it as a magnificently practical *means* to the end that man shall find richness and meaning and value in life.

REBECCA PITTS.

Buchmanism's Class Base

TO THE NEW MASSES:

The Oxford Group Movement concerns itself not with "a material economy" but with the "spiritual economy of Christ." In search of souls and influence the members of the Movement flit from one luxury hotel in Europe or the States to another. With plenty of money in their jeans—supplied from sources never divulged—they can afford to talk about ignoring "material economy." With Dr. Frank Buchman, head and founder, they have just landed at New York. Buchmanism seeks for "prospects" among the wealthy and the literate who are losing their grip in a decaying bourgeois culture because they are functionless members in it. In the newly arrived "team" are two baronesses, an archdeacon, a number of young scholars, and a former neighborhood leader of an English working class district. The rôle of the Group Movement is double: to give its bourgeois converts a sense of purpose and security in a disintegrating civilization, and to administer an opiate to its friends in the workingclass. At this moment a hundred and fifty English undergraduates are at work in London's East End teaching the slum dwellers to be content with their hard lot.

The anti-Communist character of Buchmanism is already in evidence. The leaders of the movement are shrewd enough to soft pedal this so far as public emphasis goes, but in private conversation they will declare quite frankly that Communism is *the* enemy that must be combatted. Premier Bennett of Canada recognizes their usefulness in this direction, and their forthcoming second invasion of the Dominion will be under his direct patronage. On the religious plane Buchmanism is a latent aspect of Fascism. It stresses respect for property, and the need of submission and humility. In its internal organization the members of the Group must render obedience to the head. In action, and when seen at close range, Buchman himself seems to fancy himself as a dictator giving the brusque, military commands of a Mussolini. "Our old system of democracy, like our old system of economics, is gone—never to return." The quotation is from a recent authorized work telling of the plans of the movement. What is to follow? A fantastic scheme, embracing "the possibilities of theocracy under the Oxford Groups and other working Christians in all sections of the world" is contemplated.

The fascist aspect of Buchmanism is, as stated above, latent rather than overt. The most sinister indication to date of their inner friendliness for the fascist idea is to be seen in the unreported flirtation which occurred last summer between Group emissaries and the German Minister of Propaganda, Goebbels. The Buchmanites made an advance, and had the satisfaction of a conference. Hitler, they were given to understand, was much interested in their program, and thought it not impossible that they could supply those elements of "leadership" which were lacking in the old German Church. They were promised an opportunity to show what they could accomplish in Germany in the spring. They have not so far protested against the reign of terror and brutality that stems from the man they would like to draw into their circle. And this because, as one of them explained, to do so would alienate Hitler as a potential convert. As the butcher goes about his work, they watch him wield the knife, holding their tongues in the name of that Christ they profess to serve.

London. FULLMER MOOD.

"Maddeningly Subversive"

TO THE NEW MASSES:

A belated reading of Albert Maltz's story *Onward Christian Soldiers* struck me with amazement. And I still find it hard to understand why THE NEW MASSES printed it.

Two young men, at first inferentially and then obviously, class-conscious, watch a starving kid being exploited by a rich pervert. Three fairly worn symbols: within the gaseous aura of the Salvation Army band (1) religion—the people's opium; (2) the degenerate capitalist viciously exploiting (3) the innocent child of the working class. Outside that rim, in the dark, lurking, watching, two young class-conscious workers. And these two young men stand there immune to the stench, sheltered from it, watch the crime, shrug their shoulders, emit a few fulsome verbal (social democrat?) squibs, and go their way, wearied by it!

It's a maddeningly subversive dénouement. These two class-conscious ones don't do what even any two young street-corner bums will do, if there's a scrap of decency left in them. They don't rip through the salvationary halo and spare the kid, at least for the night (one of them is at his own doorstep), not even for the sake of an extra sentence from the author. Yet I've seen it done, even by half-drunks. The excuse that they can't buy him a steak is ridiculous. The kid is obviously unwilling to take to the fat pederast. Yet these two remain inert: and so does the story.

BARNEY CONAL.

Revolution and the Novel

4. Characters and Classes

GRANVILLE HICKS

IN THE biographical novel in its purest form one character dominates the book from beginning to end. The great virtue of the form is that, if the author is skillful, we come to know that one character thoroughly, and by virtue of knowing him so well we come to know his world. The form in itself makes no rigorous demands; the author may begin and end his story where he pleases, and he may loiter as long as he cares to at any attractive spot along the way. There are no questions asked so long as he succeeds in creating a character with whom the readers may identify themselves.

Obviously the selection of the central character is the first important step for the author of a biographical novel. Yet absolutely anyone might be chosen for the leading role, and each author has to make his choice on the basis of his experience, his interests, his conception of what is representative and important. This is as true for proletarian authors as for any others: the whole world stretches before them, and no critic can tell them they must write of this kind of man or that.

Because the choices are so nearly infinite, it may seem a little arbitrary to discuss them according to economic classification. But no Marxist will deny that the most important thing about an individual is the social class to which he belongs. Other things are important, too, and cannot be left out of account, but, since convenience demands some sort of systematic arrangement, we shall not go far wrong if we base our scheme on fundamental economic considerations.

The Millionaire

At the top of the scale, as things stand, is the major industrialist or financier, the ruler of modern society. He would seem to be as natural a theme for the contemporary novelist as a king was for the Elizabethan dramatist. Yet actually relatively few novels are written about multi-millionaires, perhaps because their activities are somewhat more mysterious than those of kings, perhaps because biographical novelists often prefer to write about characters they can admire. However that may be, enough biographical novels have concerned the very rich to warrant a few generalizations.

In the first place, the novelist who chooses an industrialist or financier as his central character has to define his attitude towards this figure of his creation. Usually he either approves of him or condemns him. If he approves, he may show his approval by exhibiting the great man's good deeds and revealing his contributions to civilization. As a matter of fact, I cannot think of a serious novelist who has ever done this, though apologies of this type are common in the Saturday Evening Post and the American Magazine. The serious novelist is far more likely to make his approval tacit. He usually refrains from spending much time on the economic functions of his multi-millionaire and dwells on his kindness to his family or his support of culture. This may be a largely conscious method of offering a subtle apology, as in Tarkington's *The Plutocrat* and some of Hergesheimer's short stories, or it may be an unconscious betrayal of ignorance and prejudice. Henry James, with his leisure-class contempt for money-grabbing, hated millionaires in their economic functions, but his non-functioning millionaires are very sweet. In *Dodsworth* Sinclair Lewis pried his character loose from his automobile factory before he placed him on display—a device that may account for the singularly silly ending of the novel.

It may be put to the credit of literature that far more novelists have disapproved of multi-millionaires than have approved of them. (It is really a striking comment on the status of authors within the class to which most of them have belonged.) Disapproval has traditionally taken a moral form: note Howells' *Rise of Silas Lapham,* Boyesen's *Mammon of Unrighteousness,* Herrick's *Memoirs of an American Citizen,* Phillips' *Master Rogue,* White's *A Certain Rich Man,* and Upton Sinclair's *Oil.* Such novels point out the evil deeds of their millionaires and usually dwell on their moral degeneration. Norris in *The Pit* tried to reconcile such a moral judgment with a mystical determinism: though the deeds of the individual are wicked, the good of society is secured.

Proletarian novelists certainly cannot be expected to approve of industrialists and financiers, but, on the other hand, they are not likely to fall into the liberal fallacy of attributing to personal wickedness the evils of a system. Certain bourgeois novelists have tried to avoid this dilemma, and with some degree of success. Theodore Dreiser sought to preserve a rigid objectivity in *The Financier* and *The Titan* by clinging to a thorough-going philosophy of determinism. In *Tono-Bungay* Wells sought to indict a criminally wasteful system, not to attack the morals of poor Edward Ponderevo. Both Dreiser and Wells suggest the method a proletarian novelist would employ. The trouble with *The Financier* and *The Titan* is not that Dreiser refuses to judge Cowperwood; the weakness lies in the inadequacy of the inflexible and old-fashioned determinism according to which he tries to explain Cowperwood's conduct. Wells' indictment of a system is certainly sound; the trouble is that he opposes to the wastefulness of capitalism the efficiency and intelligence of science instead of recognizing the class struggle.

The proletarian novelist would emphasize those elements in the millionaire's career that most fully illustrated his function in the economic system. That is, the proletarian author would see the millionaire as the class-conscious proletariat sees him. He might or might not illustrate the ways in which the millionaire falls below his professed moral standards, but he would not in any case assume that such delinquencies were the key to the man's character and career. He would certainly bring out the broad social effects of the millionaire's activities, thus illustrating the general waste of the capitalist system, but I think he would stress more than anything else the relation of the man to his employees. He would, in other words, recognize that the most important aspect of the man is his role as exploiter, and, without attempting to make him a monster, he would show clearly and concretely the process of exploitation.

Very few novelists have attempted to apply the Marxian method to the understanding of the multi-millionaire. Upton Sinclair, of course, has drawn to some extent on Marxism, but his liberal preoccupation with moral issues has made most of his millionaires mere caricatures. Some of the virtues of *Tono-Bungay* may be traced to Wells' slight acquaintance with Marx. Samuel Ornitz's *Haunch, Paunch, and Jowl* falls far short of adequacy, but it does indicate possibilities. The great obstacle to proletarian novels of this sort is ignorance: the proletarian author simply does not, as a rule, know enough about either the concrete economic activities or the personal life of a millionaire to make such a novel credible. It is fatal to the substance and reality of a book to reduce the central character to his economic function; the millionaire in fiction must be as many-sided as the millionaire in life. How far research may overcome this obstacle the work of Theodore Dreiser, Sinclair Lewis, and Upton Sinclair indicates, and Marxism offers a valuable guide for the conduct of such research, but the problems both of gathering and absorbing material can only be fully solved by a major talent.

The Worker

It would take too long to review all the different ways in which, since the rise of hu-

manitarianism, the poorer classes have been treated in fiction. The pathetic treatment, for example, intended to arouse the emotions of the upper classes, had its vogue in the nineteenth century. Its greatest practitioner, Dickens, had fortunately had some firsthand acquaintance with poverty, and his principal vice, sentimentality, was balanced by notable virtues. In time the mood of pity yielded to the harsher methods of naturalism. It may be doubted, however, whether impartiality in the face of injustice and suffering is ever more than a pose. Sometimes, as in Stephen Crane's *Maggie,* that pose masks disgust and fear. Sometimes, as in Catherine Brody's *Nobody Starves* and in various other novels of the depression, it conceals the old attitude of condescending pity. Sometimes it is the refuge of desperate helplessness.

In writing of workers proletarian novelists are strong for precisely the reason that they are weak in writing of millionaires, and a considerable section of American revolutionary fiction is made up of biographical novels with workers as their central characters. Michael Gold, Jack Conroy, Robert Cruden, Louis Colman, Grace Lumpkin, Myra Page, and Fielding Burke have written such novels, and there are other writers whose novels and short stories illuminate the problem of the worker in fiction.

The novelist may choose as his central character a worker who is already class-conscious. The novel would then be a novel of the class struggle, not exclusively devoted, of course, to revolutionary activities, but centering in the hero's participation in the revolutionary movement. It seems to me a pity that no such novel has been written in this country, for the struggle is so dramatic, so intense, and so varied that it ought to yield a rich and vigorous fiction. Colman's *Lumber* is to some extent a novel of the class conflict, and it derives much of its interest and effectiveness from that fact. As Colman shows, pre-occupation with daily toil and with the organization of labor need not lead to the neglect of the more narrowly personal life of the characters. Instead, personal relationships, as well as individual experiences, desires, and dreams, take on deeper significance when they compose the background of open class warfare.

In the second place, the central character may be a worker who, in the course of the story, becomes class-conscious. Perhaps we can point to so many examples of this type—*Jews Without Money, The Disinherited, Conveyor, To Make My Bread, Gathering Storm,* and *Call Home the Heart*—because our authors have themselves experienced the development of class-consciousness. This type gives excellent opportunities for portraying the backgrounds of proletarian life. Gold, for example, has given an extraordinary picture of the East Side; Conroy has shown a worker in a dozen different jobs and with no job at all; Cruden has recorded with convincing accuracy the details of the body-breaking routine in an automobile factory. All of these books are, however, more successful in their depiction of characteristic events in a worker's life than they are in describing the kind of psychological development that results in class-consciousness. Both Myra Page and Fielding Burke have also failed, for very different reasons, to make the process of conversion wholly convincing. Grace Lumpkin has come the closest to a record of such psychological growth that satisfies in every detail. I imagine that we shall have many more novels that portray a worker's conversion to Communism, and there is no reason why we should not, but I hope that other possibilities will be explored as well.

Perhaps the most difficult theme is the third one, the worker who is not and does not become class-conscious. As both Dahlberg and Caldwell have demonstrated, a novel on such a theme can be rich and powerful. Moreover, so long as the masses of the proletariat are not class conscious, it can always be argued that the non-class conscious worker is representative and important. On the other hand, the class-conscious worker is, when seen in historical perspective, more significant. The real difficulty, however, is a practical one: it is almost impossible to deal with the kind of people that appear in Dahlberg's and Caldwell's novels without giving an impression of absolute hopelessness. The revolutionary writer does not feel hopeless, and he is loath to convey to his readers such an impression, and yet he knows that slogans and sermons will not serve his purpose, and he will not resort to falsification. Perhaps, sufficient insight and sufficient skill could reveal in the most helpless group of workers the potentialities of revolutionary activity. In practice, however, this would be extremely difficult, and probably at best only sympathetic readers could perceive the full implications of the author's treatment of his characters and events. The charge of defeatism is not, of course, to be taken too seriously; books such as Caldwell's and Dahlberg's and Farrell's have a value that is not to be dismissed with an epithet. They deal with sectors of American life that ought to be treated, and they constitute an unanswerable indictment of the capitalist system. Such work cannot, however, communicate the militant hopefulness of the revolutionary, and is therefore likely to prove a little disappointing to author as well as readers.

The idea that the life of a worker is the only possible theme for a proletarian novel has been pretty well exploded, but it is likely that most proletarian novelists will find their subjects in the working class. Such a concentration need not lead to any lack of variety. There are not only the different kinds of treatment that have been indicated in these articles; within the scope of the biographical form there can be many different kinds of emphasis, and of course, in addition to all other possibilities, there are the numerous types of work, each of which offers special opportunities. Attention to specific detail, finally, is important, but it need not, and must not, prevent the treatment of proletarian character in the broadest human terms.

The Middle Class

Many of the writers who are helping to create proletarian literature come from middle-class backgrounds, and the middle class is inevitably indicated as a theme for their novels. The selection of a character from the lower middle class gives as good a chance to interpret class psychology and to show the workings of economic forces as the choice of a worker. The trouble is, of course, that such a theme does not give the author an opportunity to display the forces that are working against the defeatism and incipient Fascism of the petty bourgeoisie. As in writing of unclass conscious workers, the author is bound to feel that his subject does not permit him to communicate his total conception of life. He cannot be satisfied with the superficial satire of *Babbitt,* much as he may admire the skill with which Lewis has created a credible and significant character, nor will he imitate the confused psycho-analytical approach of *Many Marriages,* though he may recognize Anderson's flashes of insight. His treatment is likely to be rather sombre and austere, for he realizes that he is dealing with a class that is doomed. Sometimes he can suggest, as John Herrmann does in *The Big Short Trip,* the existence of opposing forces, but this remains merely a suggestion, and even so its introduction may seem forced. Probably the only thing the author can do is to portray as honestly as he can his representatives of the doomed class, and trust to the sympathetic reader to reconstruct for himself the other half of the story.

One particular section of the petty bourgeoisie that has played a large part in recent fiction is the intelligentsia. During the years when authors were struggling for emancipation from Victorian taboos, they were naturally much concerned—and found an audience that was also much concerned—with the trials of an artist among Philistines. The semi-autobiographical novel of esthetic sorrows has pretty well gone out of fashion since the depression, and a proletarian writer would be the last to try to revive it. There is, however, an opportunity for a clearer and more fundamental analysis of the status of the artist under capitalism. It is rather queer that the leftward movement of the intellectuals has not found a place in fiction, for it would seem that at least one good novel might be written on that theme. But whether the character in question found his way to Communism or not, there is much to be said about the American intellectual that the novels of the "renaissance" did not mention.

Another section of the petty bourgeoisie that deserves special mention is to be found on the farms. Of course a distinction has to be made between the poor farmers and the more prosperous ones, but even the latter class ought to be treated from the Marxian point of view. Rural life is so persistently presented in the romantic terms of a Gladys Hasty Carroll or a Phil Stong that a clear and realistic novel about farmers would be cause for cheering. And if the poorer farmers were introduced,

there could be, as Whittaker Chambers' short story, *Can You Hear Their Voices?,* shows, a stirring presentation of the militant spirit of revolt. Ben Field's sketches and stories indicate the richness of the material, but the novel remains unwritten.

Thinking over the novels that revolutionary sympathizers have written about middle class characters, I incline to the opinion that the complex novel offers a better way of presenting such characters than the biographical novel. It is obvious that bourgeois life is in no sense taboo; moreover, it would be a pity for knowledge of and insight into that life, such as many of our writers have, to be wasted. On the other hand, the very closeness of the fellow-traveler to the middle class makes it particularly difficult for him to free himself from attitudes that belong to that class when he writes about it. The problem of the artist, moreover, is always to express himself as fully as possible, and both the proletarian by birth and the fellow-traveler are likely to feel themselves unpleasantly cramped when they concentrate their attention on a typical middle-class character. Again I want to say —for I should rather appear indecisive than seem to bar any paths—that there is much that can be done with the biographical or dramatic novel of middle-class life, but the dangers and possible disappointments ought not to be ignored.

Books

That New England Human Nature

THE ECONOMY OF ABUNDANCE, by Stuart Chase. The Macmillan Co. $2.50.

BEFORE us is probably the least original (aside from his *Mexico*), yet the most self-revealing work of this very popular American economist-journalist. Borrowing indiscriminately from whomever passes, from Thorstein Veblen through the Technocrats and Rexford Tugwell to Lawrence Dennis, he draws up a list of the familiar ailments of capitalism and lays down eighteen specifics, "technological imperatives," upon which alone, he says, the construction of "the new society," a new capitalism, as far as we can see, may proceed.

The power age, Mr. Chase tells us, has given us an economy of abundance, "a condition where the bulk of economic work is performed not by men, but by inanimate energy . . . a point where output per man hour becomes so great that total productive labor must thereafter decline, even as output grows." This means that because of the increasing application of science to industry, the workers as consumers "are unable to purchase more than a continually decreasing fraction of the industrial output. The capitalist formula has run out." "The ultimate decay of capitalism prophesied by Marx, is now going on before our eyes." A "new economic society" must take its place.

But when we come to examine Chase's eighteen technological imperatives, upon which alone this "new society" may be constructed, we discern in them nothing more than the familiar fumblings of the Roosevelt administration, plus some of the vagaries of technocracy. Among the major of these pretensions are: the elimination of waste in the productive processes, the conservation of natural resources, the encouragement of research and invention, shorter working hours, perhaps only thirty a week, revised and simplified political forms, centralization of government, and "a working dictatorship over industry."

But having, to his own satisfaction at least, diagnosed the ailments of capitalism and having prescribed the specifics, Mr. Chase stops short. He does not, apparently, think it necessary to tell us how this "working dictatorship" would be effected. But though he is reticent in telling us how, he is emphatic on the point that in America it will not be by the Marxian, the revolutionary way. The Power Age, he explains, which has brought on the cataclysm creates certain conditions which make the revolutionary way out of the crisis of capitalism generally impossible. "As the Power Age gains," he tells us, "the proletariat diminishes." "The clean outlines of the struggle between the manual worker and capitalist so manifest in Europe when Marx wrote his immortal treatise, have been blurred. Technology is slowly obliterating the proletariat," that is, the manual worker. In other words, no "proletariat," therefore no revolution.

But, Mr. Chase, wasn't that a straw man that you have just knocked down? Marx, you know, or should know, never limited the "proletariat" to manual workers. In the correct sense of the word proletarian, the power age, with its intensification of concentration of the means of production in fewer and fewer hands, of which Mr. Chase himself speaks at considerable length, makes proletarians of most of us.

The second reason why, according to Mr. Chase, a social revolution is not possible in America is that America is different. Marx, he says, "recognized that all nations did not run to one rigid pattern." And he quotes from the speech Marx delivered at Amsterdam in 1872, in which he referred to "certain countries, such as the United States, and England, in which the workers may hope to secure their ends by peaceful means." Lenin, in *The State and Revolution,* clearly points out why in 1872 Marx could assume that a revolution might succeed in England without the destruction of "available ready machinery of the state." "This was natural in 1871," says Lenin, "when England was still the pattern of a purely capitalistic country, without a military machine and, in large measure, without a bureaucracy." "Today in 1917," Lenin goes on to explain, "in the epoch of the first great imperialist war, this distinction of Marx's becomes unreal, and England and America, the greatest and last representatives of Anglo-Saxon 'liberty' in the sense of the absence of militarism and bureaucracy, have today become completely rolled down into the dirty, bloody, morass of military-bureaucratic institutions common to all Europe . . . Today, both in England and America, the 'preliminary condition of any real people's Revolution' is the break-up, the shattering of the 'available ready machinery of the state.'"

But Mr. Chase will not be convinced. The "class struggle" is foreign to our very human nature, to our New England human nature, he comes back at us. "The class struggle, as such," he says, "was blurred in the generic American picture. The clean-cut distinction of lord and peasant, universal for so many ages in Europe, was found only in the great plantations of the South. This fact goes far to explain the difficulty of the Socialists and Communists in propagating their philosophies. Americans may be wage-slaves today, but they will not believe it." Mr. Chase is obviously closing his eyes to the revolutionary upsurge that is stirring the American masses at this very moment. Are the demagogues writing "radical" books and has the government gone into "a partnership with business" for mental exercise, or as a defense against the mass pressure of an infuriated American peasantry and a militant city proletariat?

Mr. Chase, like many others of his kind, concretely observes details, but will not see the whole. Seeing only details, such people prescribe specifics—"technological imperatives" that are but the exudations from the very festerings of the decaying corpse of capitalism. But capitalism is suffering not from so many specific ailments, but from one fatal disease—senility. Capitalism is dying, because it has outlived its usefulness, because it has completed its historic role of giving birth to and of maturing its very opposite—the wage earning proletariat. To understand that one must be a Marxist. And *"a Marxist,"* Lenin tells us, "is one who extends the recognition of class war to the recognition of the *Dictatorship of the Proletariat.* In this, is the main difference between a Marxist and a bourgeois."

JOHN IRVING.

Notes of a Novelist

IN ALL COUNTRIES, by John Dos Passos. Harcourt, Brace and Co. $2.50.

The sketches in this book were written over a period of eight or nine years and have appeared in half a dozen magazines. They deal with Russia in 1928, Mexico in 1926 and 1932, Spain in 1933, and the United States from 1925 to 1934.

It is scarcely necessary to write a review,

for Dos Passos has said almost all that needs to be said. In Moscow he writes, "Well you're a reporter, you tell yourself. You're gathering impressions. What the hell good are impressions?" Some good, of course. These sketches are always lively, usually perceptive, sometimes shrewd. "Worthwhile writing," he goes on, "is made of knowledge, feelings that have been trained into the muscles, sights, sounds, tastes, shudders that have been driven down into your bones by grim repetition, the modulations of the language you were raised to talk." The best of the sketches are those on America, especially the restrained, terse, powerful summary of the Sacco-Vanzetti case, the description of the 1932 political conventions, and the account of the meeting of the unemployed. Next best are the sketches of Spain, where Dos Passos has spent considerable time.

As for the general attitude that underlies the book, Dos Passos has said the last word, said it deliberately in a prefatory piece called "Passport Photo." He is leaving Russia, and the director and company of the Sanitary Propaganda Theatre come to say good-bye. "They want to know," says the director. "They like you very much, but they want to ask you one question. They want you to show your face. They want to know where you stand politically. Are you with us?" The Amerikanski Peesatyel stammers, "But let me see . . . But maybe I can explain . . . But in so short a time . . . there's no time." The train pulls out.

And there you are. Some writers, as Dos Passos once pointed out, are born to be camp-followers. He is on the side of revolution, of course. He will fight for Sacco and Vanzetti or go on a delegation to Kentucky. He understands that "the function of the Socialist Party has been to give disorganized capitalism a breathing-space." But he hates to commit himself. Time after time you feel him drawing back. "But let me see . . . But maybe I can explain."

In All Countries is an interesting book because it has, though in lesser degree, the qualities we find in Dos Passos' novels: the vivid, authentic reproduction of sights and sounds, the lively sense of the paradoxical and the symbolic, the honest sympathy with working men and women. It exhibits also, and in an exaggerated form, the weaknesses of his novels: the absence of solid, inclusive, irrefutable knowledge of political and economic movements, and the absence of the kind of insight that only direct, disciplined participation in struggle can give.

Dos Passos, I believe, is superior to his bourgeois contemporaries because he is, however incompletely, a revolutionary, and shares, however imperfectly, in the vigor of the revolutionary movement, its sense of purpose, its awareness of the meaning of events, and its defiance of bourgeois pessimism and decay. He is also, it seems to me, superior to any other revolutionary writer because of the sensitiveness and the related qualities that are to be found in this book and, much more abundantly, in his novels. Some day, however, we shall have a writer who surpasses Dos Passos, who has all that he has and more. He will not be a camp-follower.

GRANVILLE HICKS.

It Pays to Be Blind

THE UNITED STATES IN WORLD AFFAIRS—An Account of American Foreign Relations in 1933, by Charles Merz and William O. Scroggs, edited and with an introduction by Walter Lippmann, Harper and Bros. $3.

In this, the third of the annual surveys of American foreign affairs published by the Council on Foreign Relations, Mr. Lippmann and his collaborators have again presented a highly useful summary of the continued flounderings, muddlings, and futile gyrations of the American government in its efforts to deal with the international aspects of the world crisis. Here is a mine of facts and dates, statistical data, and diplomatic documents, accompanied by a chronology of important happenings and a topical resumé of American policy with reference to the major subjects of negotiations during the calendar year 1933. The bulk of the narrative is devoted to disarmament discussions, the Allied debts, the London Economic Conference, gold and silver, Cuba and South America. The final chapter on "The Far East and Russia" is the weakest in the book and indicates insufficient appreciation of the significance of American recognition of the U. S. S. R. and of the clash of rival imperialisms in the Orient. The other chapters are, in general, more adequate and contain helpful summaries of the surface events of diplomacy.

A work of this kind should perhaps be judged only as a factual compendium, not as an analysis and interpretation. The reader is inevitably impressed, however, with the unwillingness of the authors to draw general conclusions or even to realize the implications of the extraordinary record of frustration and catastrophe which they have set forth. Mr. Lippmann, to be sure, in his introduction attempts an "interpretation." Here, as always, he achieves an effect of incisive penetration and profundity by his gracious style, his air of "objectivity," and his scrupulous refusal to deal with general assumptions or ideas. He emphasizes the instability of the Republican policy of economic nationalism, resting upon prohibitive tariffs against imports, aggressive promotion of exports, insistence upon payment of the war debts, and encouragement of foreign loans. Hoover's retreat after the collapse of this system was followed by Roosevelt's efforts to promote domestic recovery through "reflation" and "economic planning" and by his simultaneous efforts to promote international economic collaboration. The incompatibility of the domestic and international programs was clearly revealed in the breakdown of the London Conference. Thereafter the international program was for all practical purposes scrapped and the domestic program tended more and more in the direction of national economic isolation and autarchy. Mr. Lippmann wisely refrains from attributing partial domestic recovery to the specific policies adopted by the Administration. One suspects that he realizes that the creaking machine of capitalistic economy is quite out of control. He likewise refrains from prediction, for he has achieved no general analysis of the decadence of capitalism which would make prediction possible. It is precisely this lack of any general analysis which renders the whole "interpretation" superficial and inconclusive.

To the reflective reader, the inability of the bourgeois States to save the fabric of world economy from disintegration is an obvious consequence of the political and economic contradictions inherent on the one hand in the nature of capitalistic production and distribution and on the other hand in a State system in which the ruling classes of the national tribes necessarily compete and struggle with one another for profits and power. To try to "interpret" the foreign policy of any State without reference either to the interests and ideology of its élite or to the whole politico-economic chaos into which the world of capitalism has been plunged by the controlling forces at work within it is an impossible enterprise. Mr. Lippmann's uncertainties and his coworkers' neglect of the Far East and of the new arms race flow from a common source. One can only express the hope that before the next volume of this series appears the authors will take thought upon the meaning of events, particularly upon the politics and economics of imperialism, the rôle of fascism, the problem of autarchy and surpluses, and the gathering clouds of the next imperialist war. That they will do so, however, is improbable. They must perforce say, along with all liberals and with the Administration whose acts they depict, "We don't know where we're going, but we're on our way!"

FREDERICK L. SCHUMAN.

The Art of Last Things

AMERICAN SPECTATOR YEAR BOOK. F. A. Stokes Co. $2.75.

The editors of the American Spectator have staged a literary follies, done on a Hollywood scale. With professional slickness, the contributors to this book put on cute little acts and exit. Mr. Cabell tap-dances across the stage while piping about fornication. Mr. Nathan knocks off a skit on fairies, and for an encore delivers a monologue on the vanishing of the institution of Dinner. "Hobo" Tully comes out in a dress suit to tell the story of how Arnold Bennett gazed upon a girl's legs.

"Lord" Swinnerton tells a typical English joke about literary cliques in London. M. Morand sings his theme song about the lack of café terraces in New York. Morrie Ryskind does an Eddie Cantor to plead for fewer and better programs. Hendrik Van Loon dons a cook's hat and presents a culinary interpretation of history.

Susan Ertz offers advice to the lovelorn.

Mr. Hazlitt croons a tune "in praise of escape." Somebody repeats the old dirty jokes about our Puritan fathers. Mr. Boyd brings down the house with a fan dance on the "lost art of adultery."

In the grand finale, the editors put on a Jew-baiting dialogue—"with wine."

Most of these skits are presented in the form of the polite essay. This literary tool was first sharpened by the rising bourgeoisie in the eighteenth century and used as an effective weapon for social criticism and satire. In this book it serves as a form for the expression of moldy thoughts and vaudevillian pranks.

In one of the essays, *The Science of Last Things,* Mr. Krutch draws some (unhistorical) comparisons of the decline of Rome with the decline of capitalism. It would probably never occur to Mr. Krutch that the degenerate literature of that period in Roman history finds a striking parallel in contemporary writing typified by many of the essays in this book.

It must be pointed out, however, that not all of the contributions to the American Spectator belong in the same category. Sherwood Anderson's portrait of an American capitalist and his cry to the American masses "to remember" that it is possible to take America for themselves, Dreiser's tribute to Randolph Bourne, as well as Evelyn Scott's pungent piece of reportage on the economic crisis, are as out of place in the book as an Isadora Duncan in a Bowery burlesque show.

ALAN CALMER.

A "Sympathetic" Fiction

BLACK RIVER, by Carleton Beals. Lippincott. $2.50.

Carleton Beals ought to have known better than to write this book. Attempting to novelize the story of America-and-oil in Mexico, he has produced a narrative in which a twisted sense of historical values is heightened to the point of absurdity by his clumsiness in working with the novel form. The stupendous facts of his source of material strain through pretty threadbare invention, and what presumably was intended as an indictment of imperialist greed becomes merely an inexpert exercise in cheap sensationalism, in the manner of the worst Hollywood racketeer scenarios.

Black River is the story of CEMOC—the Calumet East Oil Company (Yankee-owned)—which, before and during the Carranza period, rode the crest of the wave on the mighty rivers of Mexican oil. CEMOC sunk oil wells—and poured gold into the laps of foreign industrialists, statesmen, murderer-generals, with the atendant small fry of government land agents, stool pigeons, thugs, and camp-followers. CEMOC sunk oil wells—and seized lands, fought rival plunderers, financed revolutions, shot down peasants and workers. CEMOC (and its English rivals) despoiled Mexico, expropriated the Mexicans. And prominent in the foreground of the picture was a certain General Yarza, a thinly veiled caricature of the notorious Manuel Pelaez, who during the days of Carranza maintained his separate bandit regime in power in the Tamaulipas oil regions, financed by the foreign oil magnates.

Mr. Beals manages to transform his material into a gaudy tale of foreign adventurers, prostitutes, drunkards, and natives, who are either naïve and gentle or utterly depraved. The essential character of the period as one of agrarian and anti-imperialist revolt is entirely missed, extraordinary as this may seem. One expects a man like Beals to go astray in his estimate of the Carranza and Obregon movements, but that he should fail to see the Mexican peasant and working masses as anything but a piteous object that history kicks around is after all a little surprising. Under such circumstances his implicit attitude of "sympathy" for an exploited people is actually offensive.

MANUEL GOMEZ.

Brief Review

LOUIS XV AND HIS TIMES, by Pierre Gaxotte. Lippincott. $5.

It is an indication of how real the class struggle has become that history and biography are now openly partisan. The old tolerant mask, put on when capitalism was stable and secure, is now being dispensed with and savants take sides. The present volume is frankly written as a monarchist tract. It defends monarchy as a system by defending a king who lies under historical indictment. The inglorious reign of Louis XV is excused on the ground that subversive democratic forces were already at work and that the people forced him to lead them into disastrous wars. There is, curiously enough, a recognition of the class struggle in M. Gaxotte's pages; in this version of the class war the masses are always wrong, and the world is constantly in need of a saviour-monarch. By his own count, dynasties rarely produce more than one capable monarch per century. It is peculiar to find M. Gaxotte advocating a system which he expects to work satisfactorily only a quarter of the time.

TREELESS EDEN, by Francine Findley. Alfred H. King. $2.50.

In this novel of three generations of Californians we have another effort to depict the great era of capitalist expansion in America. Mrs. Findley writes vigorously, and the outlines of her characters are admirably clear. For an understanding, however, of the forces behind those characters—and it must be remembered that the forces are essentially her theme—she has as resources a vague humanitarianism, a somewhat mystical ethics, and a superficial knowledge of economic processes. Her story therefore lacks body and significance, and it is not surprising that it ends in confusion. When Howard Jacox, the representative of the third generation of the family, rejects Communism for some technocratic fantasy of his own, the reader realizes that Howard's compromise perfectly expresses the author's bewilderment. Like many another American intellectual, she recognizes the vitality of Communism, but innumerable prejudices stand in the way of her accepting it, and she seeks to maintain a comfortable balance between her prejudices and her conscience. The effect on her novel is unmistakable.

MIRACLE ON SINAI, by Osbert Sitwell. Henry Holt and Co. $2.

To a group of tourists in a luxurious hotel at the foot of Jebel Musa, supposed to be Mt. Sinai, is vouchsafed a new revelation. Each of the tourists—a Napoleonic newspaper magnate, a bearded poet (D. H. Lawrence thinly disguised), a Jewish financier, a columnist, a great English general, a much-married socialite, an Arab chieftain, an American movie star (when, O when, will a credible American character appear in an English novel?), and a high-priced spiritualist medium—finds in the new Decalogue only a confirmation of his own prejudices. The story is amusing but so thin that Mr. Sitwell consumes two hundred pages before he dares to begin it. It is unfortunate, but not surprising, that he did not include himself in his gallery of aristocratic bores and pretentious intellectuals: Osbert Sitwell, a "smart" novelist, whose lengthy novels poking laborious fun at the foibles of the English ruling class only succeed in disclosing to what extent he shares their limitations of intellect and vision.

FINNLEY WREN, by Philip Wylie. Farrar and Rinehart. $2.50.

Mr. Wylie, who correctly describes his novel as twaddle, has written with one eye on Sterne, Rabelais, and Joyce, and the other eye on the patrons of the circulating libraries. It is, therefore, not surprising that the book is cock-eyed—as well as cheap and nasty.

THE UNFORGOTTEN PRISONER, by R. C. Hutchinson. Farrar and Rinehart. $2.75.

Mr. Hutchinson writes with sincerity, good-will, polish, and pleasing British humor. His plot—the story of the post-war reconciliation of an Englishman and his German-reared nephew—is both original and strong. But most of these virtues are lost in an absurdly prolix recital, and the rest are vitiated by his lack of economic and political understanding. One of the best sections in the book, for instance—a vivid and horrifying description of Germany in 1919—nowhere mentions a single political party or gives a unified picture of the country's economic distress. It cannot be too often stressed that the cause of international good-will to which Mr. Hutchinson so ardently subscribes will never be furthered by the mere narration of horror stories. The more discriminating of Warwick Deeping fans will find the book enjoyable; all others had better overlook it.

CONTEMPORARY AMERICAN LITERATURE AND RELIGION, by Halford E. Luccock. Willett, Clark and Co. $2.

Dr. Luccock, who teaches the students of Yale Divinity School how to preach sermons, mentions several hundred books in the course of this brief treatise. He finds in American literature a good deal of realism, a good deal of disillusionment, and a good deal of social criticism. He also finds in all sorts of books, including Mike Gold's *Jews Without Money,* what he calls implicit religion. About all the explicit religion he can discover is in a few minor poems and in *Green Pastures.* (The Algonquin sophisticates and the physicists are now the principal mainstay of mysticism.) We predict that the book will provide the substance of some noteworthy flights of pulpit eloquence.

Notes on Pamphlets

SIX SEAMEN, by Mike Pell. International Publishers. 15 cents.

These sketches of Russian, American, and English sailors, very informal and very readable, show with dramatic force the differences between the life of a worker under capitalism and the life of a worker in the Soviet Union. The sketches of Barney and Mishka are particularly interesting and skillful.

HAWAII, by S. Weinman. International Pamphlets. 10c.

This is not a story of grass shacks, ukeleles, and hula-hula girls. It is a story of a century of disease, reducing the native population of Hawaii from 200,000 to 22,000. It is a story of forced labor, pitiful wages, long hours, and pig-sty living quarters. It is a story of strikes —1909, 1920, 1924. It is a story of 15, 30, 40, and even 50 percent profits for a little oligarchy. It is a story of the most completely equipped war base in the Pacific. It is a story of race prejudice and lynching. In thirty pages of brilliant concentration this pamphlet tells the facts militant workers need to know about a little island that may—at some none too distant date—be the center of the world's attention.

WE ARE WEAVING, by Quentin Parker. Published at 1329 N. Marshall St., Philadelphia.

Notable rather for vigor and forthrightness than for subtlety of thought or originality of phrase, the poems in this booklet repeat the slogans of the revolutionary movement in sonnets and other conventional forms. They have eloquence of a kind and the merit of simplicity, but Quentin Parker has not succeeded in giving a fresh significance to the familiar revolutionary symbols. If he would draw more on concrete experiences of the revolutionary struggle and less on abstract slogans, his work would be more impressive.

The Gilbert-Sullivan Cult

MICHAEL GOLD

WHEN a Nazi with hands dripping with the blood of workers begins to sentimentalize over Wagner, or an ex-Czarist officer who has hung and flogged peasants tells us that Dostoievsky shakes him to the very soul, one is perhaps justified in suspecting both Wagner and Dostoievsky.

While the French peasants were dying of hunger, the court of the Sun King was dancing minuets, and admiring the pretty pastorals of Bougereau and Fragonard. Today no bourgeois critic grows indignant against the culture of the last French kings; but the bourgeois revolutionists of the time greatly did.

In brief, as one has heard so often, it is difficult to separate a work of art from the class out of which it has sprung, and the audience it affects.

Which brings us around to the subject of Gilbert and Sullivan. For the benefit of those who may never have heard of this famous team, I would say that they are the authors of the most charming, seductive and altogether delightful operettas that have somehow ever flowered from the sour clay of the bourgeois Anglo-Saxon soul.

Gilbert and Sullivan were Tory gentlemen of the reign of Queen Victoria. Both were knighted for their permanent contribution to the geniality of the human race. Their plays first appeared some sixty years ago, and have been produced in America and England ever since. Without a doubt, they have won a surer immortality than Ruskin, Carlyle, Tennyson and many another heavyweight of their period. Three generations of bourgeois theatre-goers have been raised on this melody and wit. There is a large Gilbert and Sullivan cult in America, and every season for the past few years the repertoire is presented before enchanted audiences.

It was the *Pirates of Penzance* I heard the other night at the Majestic Theatre. It is all the most glorious nonsense, and the music has a happy folk-dance quality. Nobody has ever written better popular music; it hasn't a single vulgar flaw.

It is easy to understand the Gilbert and Sullivan cult. Having once sung the part of Sir Joseph Porter, K.C.B. in their *Pinafore,* and having hundreds of their verses in my mind, I can testify to the hypnotic spell these two magicians cast upon one.

But let me protest, in as unamiable a spirit as is possible, against the Gilbert and Sullivan cultists. They are bourgeois culture-hounds who want to avoid all reality and strength in art. They are the same pleasant exploiters who once danced minuets at King Louis' court while the masses perished outside. In America today, at the depths of a crisis, they are turning to opiates in the theatre, plays liks O'Neill's retreat into Catholic piffle, and books like *Anthony Adverse.* Their unhealthy spirit of cowardice and evasion fouls the air at a Gilbert and Sullivan performance.

It is noteworthy that much of Gilbert's satire is directed against such phenomena as prison reform, the rights of seamen, parliament, stupid Lords, unmarried women past thirty, trial by jury, Utopia, social equality, and rebels in the arts. He was a crusty old Tory of a minor genius, of a character much like our own boisterous reactionary, H. L. Mencken. Such men are the "cultural" pioneers of Fascism. And the audience that adores them would resent the same wit if it were directed on a Communist path. This is all an unconscious process, perhaps, but the true class culture grows by such unconscious accretions. When we develop a Communist Gilbert and Sullivan, these people will hate it. But whether or not, it is coming soon.

A Reply to Lawson

To continue, briefly, the discussion with John Howard Lawson:

It is my belief that, despite any personal realizations he may assure us he has, the record is against Lawson. His plays have not been merely the exercise of a fellow-traveller groping for clarity, but a source of dangerous confusion.

I have covered the ground in my previous review, and of course will not recapitulate here. But let me repeat this observation; it is noteworthy that Lawson has attempted to portray several persons who have made some approach to the revolution. In the eyes of the audience, these were the representatives of the movement. Well, one (*Success Story*) is a frenzied money-maker to whom the revolution is only a brief emotional outlet for his personal frustration. Another (*Gentlewoman*) is as Lawson now tells us, a Bohemian, "90 percent faker, and 10 percent revolutionist." Another (*The International*) is some sort of neurotic girl who flits about from place to place in a meaningless nightmare.

What is the audience to think of such people? He despises them of course, and the revolution which they are supposed to represent. Lawson tells us they are meant to be despised, they are authentic types whom one finds on the lunatic fringe of every movement. Even if this were true; why has he only selected such types for his plays? And it is not merely a mistake in emphasis; in the plays these people are tenderly treated with a kind of romantic glamor.

Recently, we are seeing revolutionary subjects being handled by bourgeois authors who are enemies. Now it is a curious fact, that whenever they portray a revolutionist it is almost in the same terms as Lawson; he is sure to be a climber, a faker, a Bohemian or a

neurotic. Lawson may have had the finest intentions in the world, but he has done a great disservice to the revolution, I believe, in having failed in ten years to find a single Communist or militant worker to write about who had the slightest positive virtue and integrity.

Another minor point: in *Gentlewoman,* whenever someone spoke a line of revolutionary color, it was immediately followed by some gag repartee, and smothered hastily in laughter. What is the intent behind such a technical trick? To me it seems very plain; the author wants to disassociate himself from any positive utterance; he is not a partisan, but an observer.

I don't want to go over any more of the ground which I believe was presented as fairly and impersonally as possible in my previous review. To conclude: Lawson thinks he is presenting bourgeois decay, and that is why the bourgeois reviewers attack him. But Erskine Caldwell presents even a more dreadful decay, and he is praised. Maxim Gorky, in his latest play, *Yegor Bulichev,* presents a complete picture of bourgeois decay, and it is one of the finest revolutionary plays I have ever seen. The truth is, I still believe: Lawson is lost between the two camps. This muddies his every concept, and makes him incapable of presenting even a strong and authentic picture of this very decay.

A word as to the fellow-travelers: I did not say their problem was too "monotonous" to be written about. No, it is a great problem, and the first author who can describe it truly will have made a great revolutionary contribution. But he will have to be one who is himself out of the woods, and can make an objective picture which has a solid structure of class values. Lawson is obviously not this person. It is ten years since he has set himself this problem. One can forgive much to a young novice grappling with a theme too great and new as yet for his powers. But Lawson is no novice. I will confess, I have always been puzzled by anyone who could sit on a fence as long as he has. If my review was too harsh, perhaps, it may make him angry enough to climb down from that fence. If this happens, I for one, think such a review justified.

Without a doubt, many of us have made serious mistakes in our approach to the fellow-travelers. At times there has been the overgenerous welcome that was given Dreiser and Sherwood Anderson; at other times, an overnarrow and mechanical criticism that drove some writers away. It is not easy to find the right line. Each writer has his own peculiar and complex past that has to be studied and taken into serious account.

But at the time, it was correct, I believe, to welcome Anderson and Dreiser. The revolution is nobody's private property and the door is open to any man who sincerely feels he belongs. It will always be open. But Sherwood Anderson wrote a sincere if muddled novel on a Southern mill town, and he was told this in the revolutionary press. Many of Dreiser's essays were offered to the revolutionary press at the time and were rejected, even though he was a great writer.

The revolutionary movement makes mistakes and compromises, but it never surrenders its fundamental line. Many fellow-travelers have the notion that there should be no criticism of their weaknesses and bourgeois hangover in the revolutionary press. Can you have a revolutionary art on such a basis, everything muddled, no standards, no values of any sort?

No, this is no help to anyone, least of all the writers. If they want to grow, if they want to make themselves over, they should heed such criticism, even when it is sometimes harsh. I myself have been kicked around often and again in the revolutionary press. It has made me humanly sore at times, but I have tried to learn from it. Writers cannot stand still; they must make themselves over anew if they are to be revolutionists; this is often a painful job; their critics may often seem to them like enemies; but often a harsh and honest critic proves to have been one's most useful friend. Thus have I myself found it, and I pass the experience on to those tender fellow-travelers who would like to see a moratorium on criticism on the revolutionary culture front.

Lawson has mentioned the name of John Dos Passos. I believe Dos Passos's case is an example of a lack of firm, honest, and comradely criticism, *not* helping a writer. Dos Passos is a great and gifted writer, and one of the most honest men alive, but is he growing toward the revolution or away from it? The revolutionary press has always treated him with a sort of idolatry; his mistakes were never thoroughly analyzed; and today he has begun to find himself in sympathy with intellectual groups whose main object in life seems to be the destruction of the Communist Party.

The problem of the fellow-travelers isn't settled, and may never be settled, but its solution does not consist in accepting blindly all the errors and bourgeois prejudices of the fellow-travelers, and surrendering the line of Communism.

Ma and Blah

ROBERT FORSYTHE

WE have just returned from the Paramount Theatre with a message for those poor unfortunates who live in what is known as the hinterland of America. This is the message: Be damned glad you live out there. Seeing one punk motion picture is bad enough; running into a double feature at which both are terrible is a tragedy; but encountering a middling good film plus Roxy and His Gang in one hour and a half of stage show is murderous. It wasn't that we weren't warned. We knew he was there but we went in at six o'clock with the feeling that even a radio announcer would have to eat. Before we could do anything about it the curtains parted and there was Roxy, probably half starved but valiant in his determination to bore everybody to death within range. He had a large orchestra and a singing chorus of eight girls and eight boys who piped up at intervals and gave a hi-doodle-ay whenever it seemed apparent even to Roxy that the paying guests were on the point of sliding under the seats fast asleep. On the right side of the stage sat, in addition, three men and two women. On the left side a man and three women. To the consternation of everybody concerned it soon became apparent that these were the soloists and we were going to hear them all, properly and individually introduced by Roxy in a eulogy slightly longer than Anthony's oration over the body of Caesar. The first high light was a portly gentleman looking much like an English colonel (the drooping mustache, the air of having just dressed for dinner as an example to the natives). He put on a paper cap and sang "Laugh, Clown, Laugh!" with expression. There followed a lady singer (formerly with the Metropolitan), a man singer, a lady singer, a dancer (was she lousy), a lady singer (formerly with the Metropolitan and famous now as the lady Albert Einstein had chased and kissed! out of no lecherous impulses, we hasten to add, but solely because he was stirred by her singing of a Viennese song). She was

the best of the lot, at that. It finally ended with a potpourri of Victor Herbert numbers, by orchestra and soloists jointly—Zum, Zam, ZOWIE.

Over the air this sort of cheapness used to sound halfway acceptable. For one thing you couldn't see Roxy at the microphone holding the young ladies while he introduced them (holding them with that I Am Your Uncle and You Needn't Be Afraid of Me but Yet You Never Can Tell manner). The program afforded some singing and the orchestra and it was free. The amazing thing about it is Roxy himself. He was the pioneer in modern movie house presentations and occupied such a commanding position in the industry that the Rockefellers practically built the theatres in Radio City to his plan. And there he is. A cheap, trivial, second rater setting cheap, trivial, second rate standards for millions of Americans. Roxy's is a particularly obnoxious form of fake sentimentality because it stresses Ma and blah impartially. If your heart is in the right place everything will be all right. Remember your mother, remember your father, remember to have the nudes removed from the smoking room because they may offend Bishop Manning.

After a bath of Mr. Rothafel anything from Hollywood would have sounded good, and it happens that we have always been partial to W. C. Fields. He was playing in something called *You're Telling Me* and it was really a pretty awful picture, but Fields was very funny. The film is based on Julian Street's *Mr. Bisbee's Princess* which, God help us, actually won an O. Henry prize several years back. The plot is remarkable. If you want to see the typical middle class attitude about wealth, here is your chance. Sam Bisbee is a likable old drunk who fools with patents and lives on the wrong side of the railroad tracks. His wife is ashamed of him and his daughter can't marry her feller because her feller's mother thinks the Bisbee's are impossible. She insults them in their own house and Sam is sore. And how do the Bisbees meet that situation? They strain every ligament in an endeavor to get enough money so they *can be friends with the Murchisons on their own level!* Sam, coming back from the failure of his puncture-proof tire, meets the princess on the train. She is kindly and noble, never telling Sam who she is. But she comes to his town to help him out. She gives all the attention to the Bisbees as her old friends. The Murchisons begin to fawn. Sam's patent is a success. He's a millionaire. And are the Murchisons and the Bisbees pals then! Children, it is marvelous. It is marvelous how smooth the path can be made with a few dollars. It is Cinderella. But, hark! Lo! and Behold!—it is also a classic illustration of economic determinism. Can we allow Red propaganda of this subtle kind to corrupt the minds of our children? What if somebody perceives that not everybody can patent a puncture-proof tire and therefore will never be able to meet Mr. Morgan face to face? Can America stand up under a thing like that?

Between Ourselves

ABOUT six weeks ago THE NEW MASSES undertook an experiment in collective effort. The object—to produce a good marching song for May Day. A poem by Alfred Hayes, *Into the Streets May First,* which seemed excellently suited for a musical setting, was selected as the lyric. Ashley Pettis, music editor, laid the poem before the Composers' Collective of the Pierre Degeyter Club of New York, and before other composers, not affiliated with the club, with a request that they write music for it.

The result has far exceeded our expectations. In this brief time nine scores have been written and turned in. Last week a mixed jury, including the editors of THE NEW MASSES, Jacob Schaefer, conductor of the Freiheit Gezang Farein, and others, musicians and laymen, heard the songs played, and selected what seemed to them the best one for the specific purpose of mass singing. A full discussion of the music written during this very brief, almost unheralded and highly successful contest, will appear in THE NEW MASSES next week, together with the song itself—*words and music.*

At present there is time—and space—to say only a word about the music. Dignity and musical craftmanship characterized all the scores; the judging was done "blind,"—the songs being played by number with the names of the composers not announced. The song judged best for mass singing was written by Aaron Copland, who is one of the best known of American composers.

The song will receive its first public performance at the Second Annual American Workers' Music Olympiad, April 29, at the City College Auditorium, 23rd Street and Lexington Avenue. The Workers' Music League, after the competition of the revolutionary workers' chorus, will sing *Into the Streets May First* with its full ensemble of 800 voices.

Stanley Burnshaw, on tour for THE NEW MASSES, will speak in Detroit April 28, 8.30 P. M., on "Revolutionary Literature Today," under the auspices of the John Reed Club in the Women's Federation Building.

A symposium on "The Eighth Convention of the Communist Party and the Intellectuals" will be held at the Irving Plaza on April 27, with Marguerite Young, Joseph North and Harry Gannes participating. Granville Hicks will be chairman. The following evening, Saturday the 28th, Hicks will take part in a symposium at 114 West 14th Street on "The Place of the Intellectual in the Changing Social Order." This will be under the auspices of the Rank and File Teachers Union.

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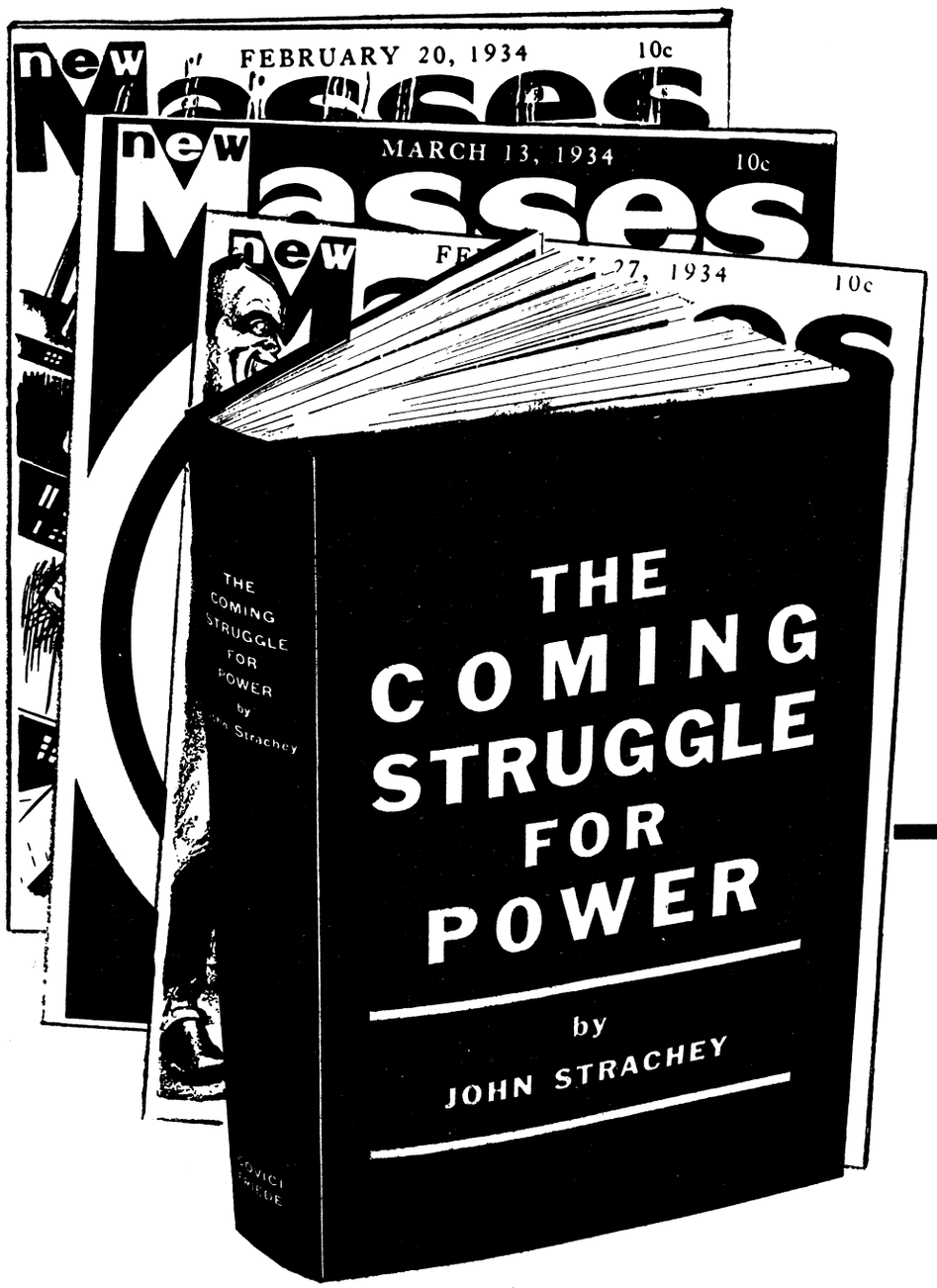

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