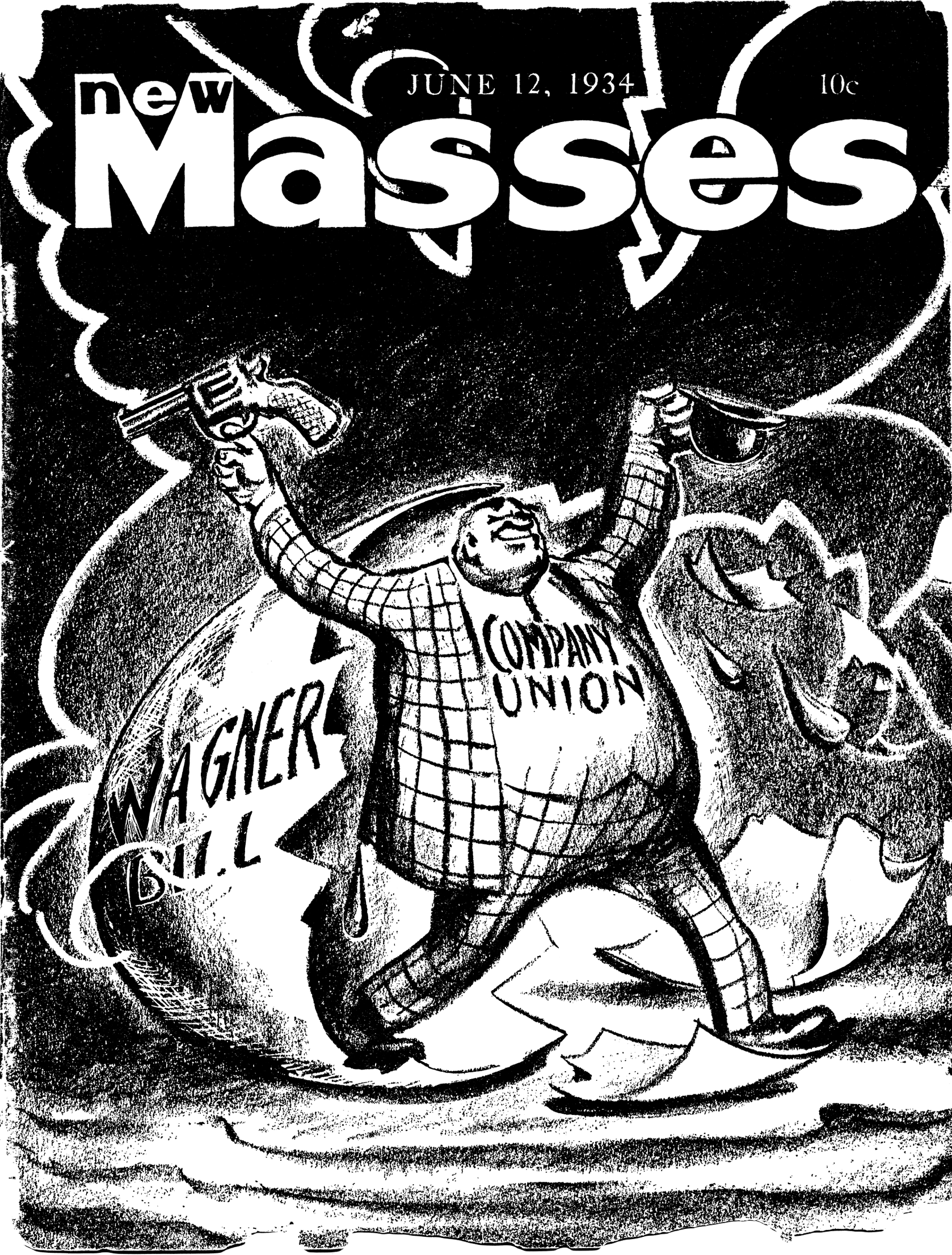
JUNE 12, 1934 10c

new Masses



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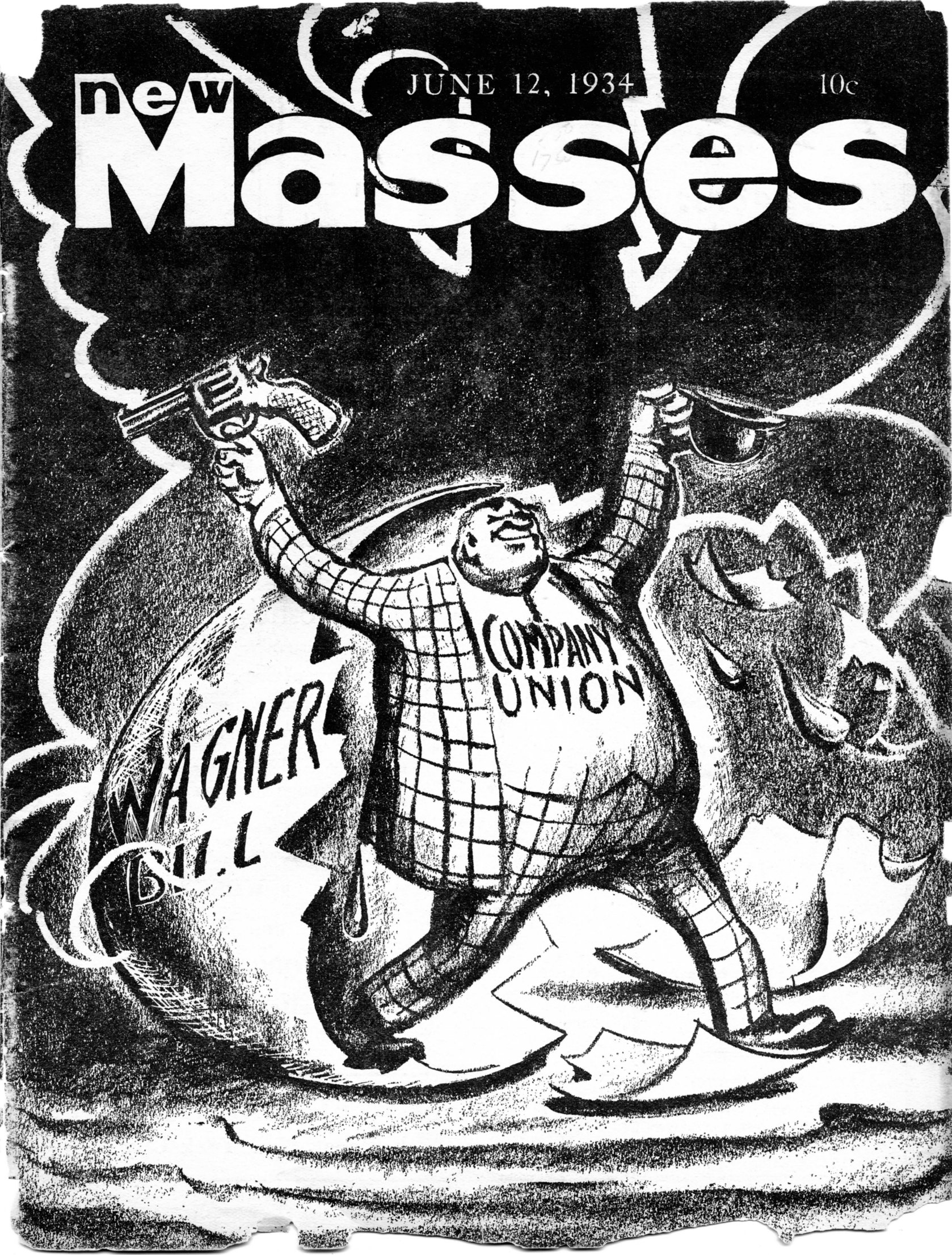

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Chicago	"	15
Milwaukee	"	16
Minneapolis	"	17
Butte	"	19
Spokane	"	21
Seattle	"	22
Tacoma	"	23
Portland	"	24
San Francisco	"	26
Sacramento	"	27
Los Angeles	"	28
Salt Lake City	"	30
Denver	November	1
Wichita	"	2
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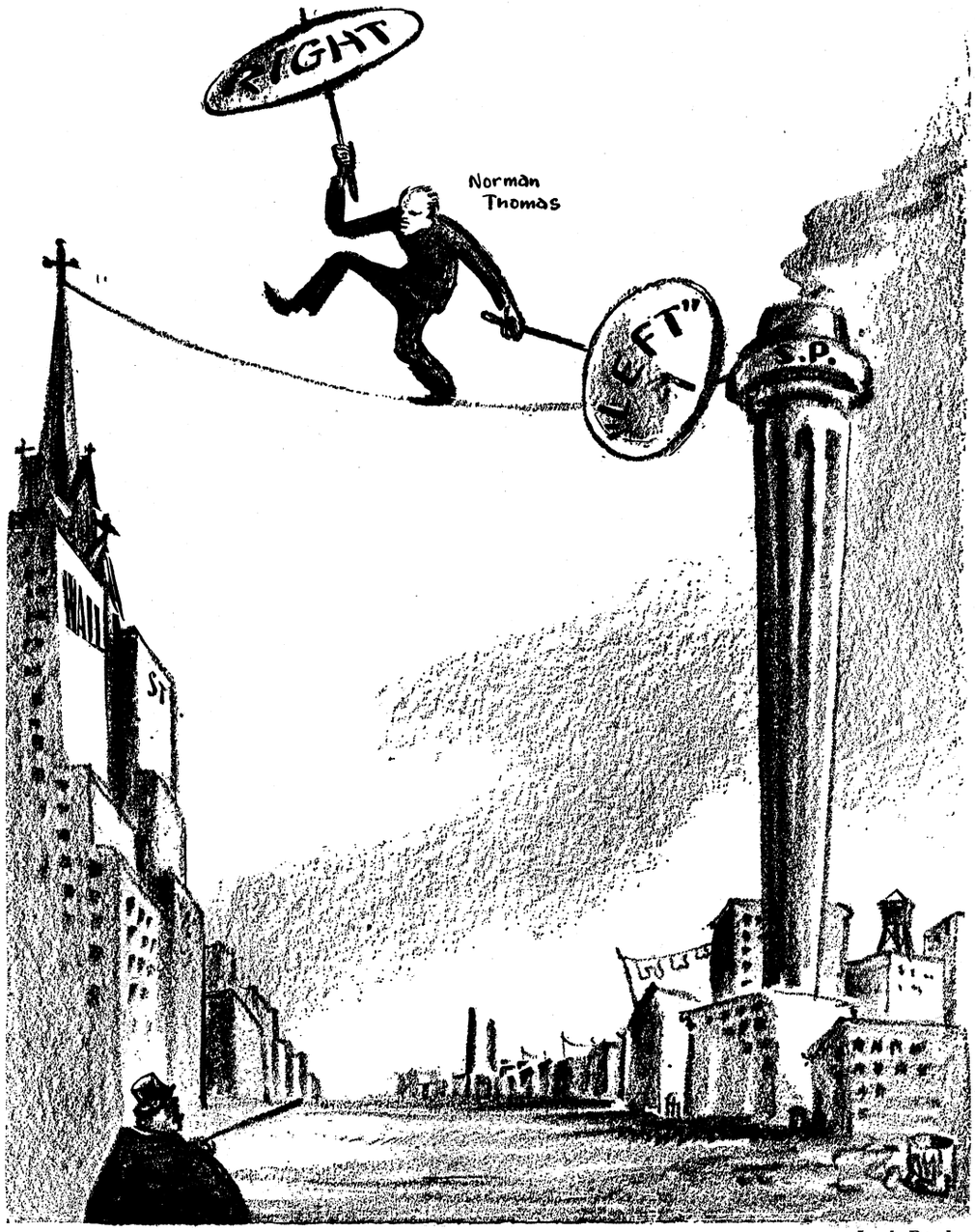


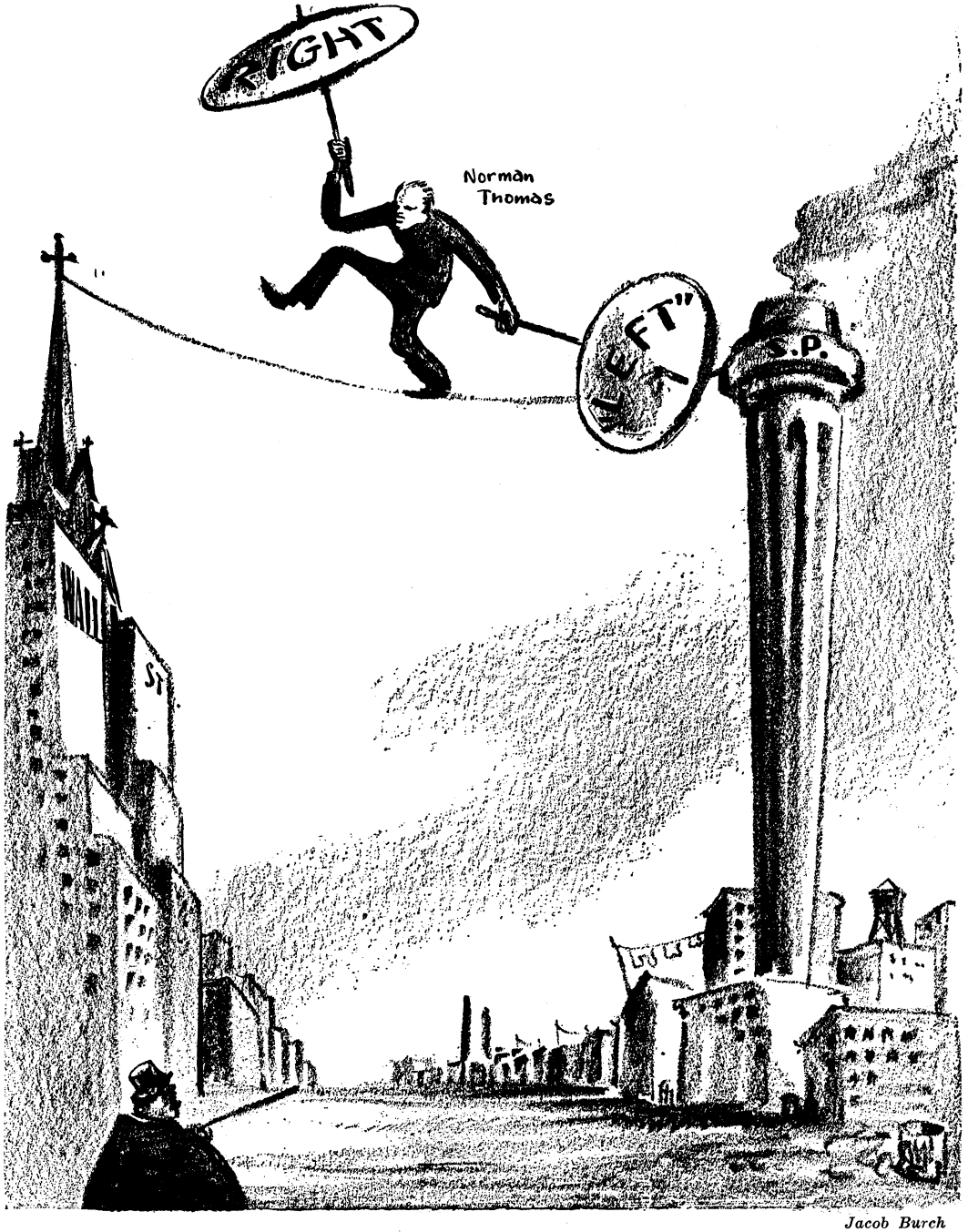
Jacob Burch

IT it clear that the class struggle in the United States, reaching a focal point in street demonstrations and strikes, has moved into a new stage of intensified violence against the workers, and equally determined resistance by them. Whether it be Charlestown Navy Yard, or San Francisco, Chicago, Toledo or New York, identical orders have been received and are being carried out by the police: Beat down every manifestation of the rage against the ruling class that seethes throughout the country. Beat down demonstrators, strikers, pickets. No protest allowed. Clubs, blackjacks, tear gas, where these will serve; then bullets. We would like to see something of the private communications among the members of the national association of police chiefs, bearing on the situation—the program and rules of the united front of organized and privileged sadism established by the police of the various cities. That being impossible, we must content ourselves with the available material, furnished by the ideological leader of the new policy of "force to the uttermost" against labor—for this movement has an ideological leader, and a great "liberal" at that. We refer, of course, to Mayor LaGuardia.

TWO recent actions of LaGuardia brand him with infamy. Both are part of the campaign of violence against labor. One supplements the other. Each was carefully timed. First, as reported in the Daily Worker, LaGuardia called in the city editors of the New York papers for a secret conference. He told them that the revolution was at hand, that it would begin in New York, and that there would be killings. When there were killings—when the police finally were given the word to use those riot guns they flourish so frequently in the face of the people—the newspapers would know what it was all about. In effect: "mass murder has been arranged, and will shortly take place." With this preliminary move accomplished, LaGuardia bided his time a few days for a public announcement. His opportunity came when James Gaynor, chairman of the Greater New York Committee for United Action, led a delegation of 1,500 to see the Mayor about the critical relief situation.

"ALL you are interested in is getting money for yourself out of the trouble. I won't stand for yellow-dog leaders inciting these people—yellow dogs who run away while others get hurt," LaGuardia screamed at Gaynor. "You allowed the cowardly attack on the police last Saturday, but you yourself ran away before the trouble started. When the police defended themselves, you played cry-baby." Witnesses of the police assault on the C.W.A. demonstrators that Saturday, and of the even more ferocious assault the next day, know how to appraise this piece of calculated theatricals by LaGuardia. The reports that seeped into the press shocked the city, and caused LaGuardia to call in the capitalist papers' city editors to forestall any further criticisms of the police. At the same time LaGuardia has given a clean bill of health to his clubbers, and set the scene for the killings that are planned. The responsibility for those killings will be the personal responsibility of LaGuardia.

WHILE the United States Steel Corporation literally prepares for civil war in the Mahoning Valley, the Pittsburgh and Gary areas, Washington toils indefatigably to hand the steel workers another Detroit "achievement in human engineering." About Youngstown, McKeesport, McKees Rocks, Aliquippa, East Hammond, and all the towns where the steel proletariat lives, there is the bustle of ma-



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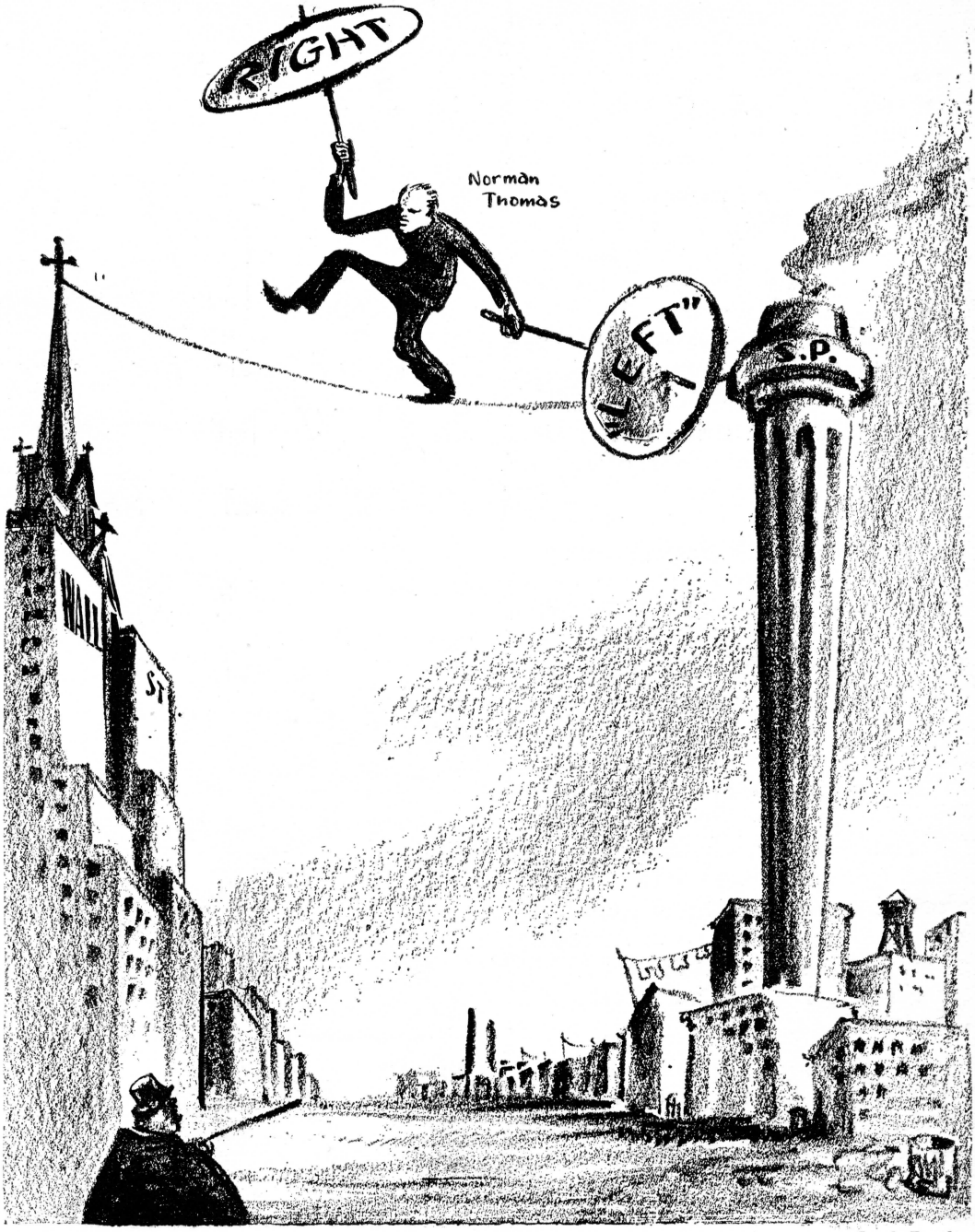

Jacob Burch

chine-gun and gas bomb importation. Barbed wire defenses spring up over night. Hired armed guards arrive on every train and bus. Company representatives call on workers in their homes. They ask point-blank "Will you strike?" They force them to sign agreements. In Washington, wily Johnson confers secretly with W. W. Irvin, president of the United States Steel Corporation. Roosevelt commands his lieutenants in Congress: Pass the Wagner Bill before adjournment. This company union document is to be utilized to break the steel strike with governmental force. Mike Tighe, of the A.F. of L. steel workers union, the "rank and file" Committee of Ten, and the Steel and Metal Workers' Industrial Union work at cross-purposes: the Industrial Union to mold a united front of all steel workers for the strike; Tighe, to prevent a strike if at all possible, and the Committee of Ten vacillating but teetering generally in Tighe's direction. Tighe contributes to the united front endeavors with the following injunction to the steel workers: "Not only do we advise, but we command you to disassociate yourselves from these vipers and mongrels." His zoological references were, of course, to the Communists and the militant and growing Steel and Metal Workers' Industrial Union.

THE past seven days were National Sellout Week; sellout in textile, sellout in Toledo, attempted sellout in the longeshoremen's strike. These days proved a period of preparation for further struggle: the employers patching up their differences in reference to the Wagner Bill and cementing relations with the A. F. of L. While workers strained for general strike in Toledo, in the longshore, in the textile, the McMahons, Ramseys, Ryans—all the A. F. of L. nabobs—split, dilly-dallied, betrayed. The cowardly Thomas Ramsey who fled the Toledo picketline, seeking safety behind the khaki lines of the National Guardsmen, as the United Press reported, forced the workers into an agreement with Mininger of the Auto-Lite Company. The A. F. of L.'s art of sellout is beautifully exemplified here: the heroic strikers who had picketed in solid ranks from the three factories of the same company, were finally divided into three groups—each meeting separately for the final agreements. As a result of a four hour bitterly debated session June 4, the plant is to reopen. Only 94 of the 800 strikers are permitted to return. Scabs are given preference in the rehiring.

Mackey

HOW the bosses feared the threat of general strike was evidenced in the agreement with the workers of the Toledo Edison Company, for a 20 percent increase in pay and recognition of the union. But the A. F. of L. split the ranks of the strikers by hailing this victory—sending the men of this key industry back to work—fracturing the solid ranks of the Toledo workers who thundered for a general strike in the demonstration of 20,000 several days before. Thus the general strike which could have won sweeping gains in Toledo, and could have spread to the entire auto industry, was halted; but only for the time being. As in Minneapolis, where the Trotskyites collaborated with the A. F. of L. leaders in heading off a general strike, in Toledo the Musteites were accessories after the fact. Angry phrases against the government, against employers, but silence on the role of the A. F. of L., their current partner. All along the line grow the ranks of workers dissatisfied with temporizing and class-collaborationist leadership. The sharply defined policies of class-struggle, of militancy, of settlement of class-demands on the picketline and not in the sanctuary of the arbitration-room—all these, the policies of the Trade Union Unity League and the Communists — are gaining ground among the American proletarians who had these latest statistics to note: one worker has died of hunger every 63 hours in New York City alone since Roosevelt took office.

THE announcement that Japan has at last settled the vexing fisheries controversy with the Soviet Union and has resumed parleys with Soviet representatives over the Chinese Eastern Railway is significant. This sudden change of temper, this sudden display of sweet reasonableness can be best understood in the light of other news dispatches issuing from the Far East. Japanese imperialism's encroachments on the Asiatic continent are obviously meeting with serious reverses. In the Ilan district in Northeastern Manchuria there has recently flared up a peasant rebellion which, though finally quelled, resulted in grave Japanese losses both in soldiers—500 killed—and in prestige. This "incident" in which 2,500 lives were sacrificed is, according to a New York Times report from Shanghai, "one of the most severe setbacks to Japan's colonization plans . . . Resentment, fortified with fear and hatred, smoulders in a wide area and may entail a complete change in policies." A report from Mukden (June 1) supplements the above with an account of numerous successful attacks by large groups of Chinese peasants ("bandits") on trains, stations, and villages in Manchuria. "The new policy of suppressing news of local disturbances is believed due to the fact that the bandits [read "peasant rebels," "Red Spears"] are having more success than in the past." The state of popular unrest in Manchukuo is also reflected in the news

Mackey

item describing the preparations for Prince Chichibu's expected visit to Dairen: "There has been strict checking of suspicious characters, and many undesirables are being locked up for the term of the visit." With an excellently equipped and marvelously disciplined army of Soviet workers and peasants defending the Soviet border and a population seething with rebellion in Manchukuo, the Japanese War lords have apparently decided for the immediate moment upon a policy of reasonableness. The war lords propose and the revolutionary masses dispose. This is the lesson.

THE same lesson is being learned by Chiang-Kai-Shek and the other Kuomintang servants of world imperialism. Despite the financial and military aid of American capitalists ($50,000,000 loan, airplane instructors, etc.), despite the expert direction of the notorious Nazi General von Seeckt, despite the hullabaloo of extraordinary preparations, huge armies (the Kuomintang boasted of an army of a million), solidarity of Canton and Shanghai, the peasant and worker armies of Soviet China remain unconquerable. On June 1 the newspapers carried in brief the following reports from Shanghai: Red Army is brilliantly victorious over the crack troops of the Chiang-Kai-Shek Army trained by the Nazi General von Seeckt, world famous strategist. The Kuomintang armies were intercepted on their way to the front in Kiangsi province in Soviet China. Over 19,000 Kuomintang soldiers were either killed or wounded "by the Communists." This was a week of triumph for the Red forces in Asia. This does not mean that the imperialists have surrendered their plans to destroy Soviet China and to attack the Soviet Union. On the contrary. It will only incite them to further effort. The price of victory is eternal vigilance—not only of the workers in Asia, but of the workers and their allies world-wide.

WHILE the agencies of propaganda are psychologically preparing the people for war, the League Against War and Fascism intensifies and broadens its activity. Right now it is addressing itself to women of all countries in preparation for the International Congress of Women Against War and Fascism to be held in Paris on the twentieth anniversary of the World War (July 28-30). Quoting Major-General Hanson Ely of the United States Army, the League warns:

> Governments, including our own, have been studying the use of women in wars. Woman power will in some instances supplant and in other cases supplement manpower in the next war. Utilization of women in war will grow out of a new conception of war making, born during the last war. The struggle was so gigantic that, for countries involved, war-making became the national industry.

Pointing to the fact that the United States has now embarked upon the largest armament budget in history, the League is campaigning to educate women to the basic facts about imperialist war; the economic causes of war (in which millions are killed for the profit of a handful of capitalists); and the reasons why Fascism inevitably breeds war. To the ten and a half million women employed in factories and mills as well as to the other millions of women in the white collar class and in the home, the League offers concrete means for preventing another imperialist war. It urges women to build anti-war, anti-Fascist committees—in the mills, on the farms, in schools, hospitals, everywhere! Regional conferences will be held during the present month to elect delegates. "Build and support the regional conference in your community," the League's bulletin states, adding: "Will you join in this fight which is your fight? . . . Join together, women of America! United, we are an invincible barrier against war and Fascism."

THE differences between the Catholic and Protestant churches disappear when the American fleet is in the harbor. The Catholic Cardinal Hayes and the Protestant Episcopal Bishop Manning have but one thought and one voice: "Praised be the fleet!" True, Cardinal Hayes admits that the fleet is "terrifying in appearance and latent power," but the reality behind the appearance consoles him. Seeing beneath the armor-plate, the Cardinal detects "one of the best guarantees of peace, good-will, and security." Bishop Manning, having surveyed the big guns of the battleships, mounts the pulpit and bravely says that the Christian "stands not for peace at any price, but for righteousness at any cost." Then in order to speak a good word to the sailors, Bishop Manning tells them that death is not the greatest evil that can come to a man, that the Christian must love righteousness more than material well-being or life itself. And this spiritual leader of wealthy capitalists tells the young sailors

New Masses

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before him: "There are times when a man must be willing to die." But the depth of degradation was fittingly reached by the rector of St. Paul's, down in the Wall Street district. This divine found a similarity between the fleet and the Eucharist. Just as God gave us the Eucharist "that His presence might go on with us and give us rest, assurance of protection from our enemies and security in serving Him," so, supposedly, He gave us the fleet as an "assurance of a great power ever ready to protect our shores, safeguard our commerce and all who pursue their lawful occupations on the seas." Thus capitalism's agents in the pulpits view the preparations for imperialist war. Truly the minister is worthy of his hire!

LAST week, Jackson Barnett, Indian oil millionaire, died. At one time his fortune was four million dollars. He was born a half-wit, and was an idiot throughout his life. A guardian was appointed for him, and in his old age, one of the many women who wished to marry his money finally succeeded in eluding the guardian and abducting him. The marriage was set aside and the last years of his life were a continuous lawsuit. How did this imbecile get his money? Through the accident that oil was found under his share of the barren land allotted to his tribe. A spectacular but by no means unrepresentative example of the lunacy of the capitalist distribution of wealth.

THE first strike in American book publishing history—that of the Macaulay Company in New York—turns up some startling and significant developments. Among the twelve workers who went out were the entire editorial staff and the publicity director of the firm. Here the awakening consciousness of the so-called professional and intellectual workers to the identity of their interests with all workers was clearly demonstrated. They acted completely in cooperation with the strike committee consisting of stenographers, billing clerks and telephone operator. The second development was the support given by authors, very few of them of a distinctly revolutionary stamp. Among those who picketed were outstanding writers, unaffiliated with radical magazines, such as Dashiell Hammett, mystery story writer, Morley Callaghan, novelist, Tess Slesinger, author of *The Unpossessed,* now a current best seller, and others. As we go to press, police who sought to ban mass picketing, retaliated for the violation of their ukase by mass arrests. Tearing placards from the pickets, they arrested about 20 strikers and author-picketers. Among them were Michael Gold, one of the editors of THE NEW MASSES, Tess Slesinger, Isidor Schneider, Malcolm Cowley, Edward Dahlberg, Edwin Rolfe, Albert Halper, Otis Ferguson, and Edward Newhouse. Off in Southern Illinois Jan Wittenber, well known artist, a member of the Chicago John Reed Club, was arrested together with ten other workers on charges of conspiracy, held under $8,000 bail, and beaten while in court. All the above facts are in line with recent developments among writers as well as newspapermen who are now definitely organizing in unions and showing a steadily growing awareness of themselves as workers.

To the Men of the Fleet!

WE ADDRESS YOU on this occasion because we feel that in your every-day tasks on the seas with your ship you may forget the important things happening ashore. Most of you, enlisted men and noncoms, are sons of workers and farmers. You come from every state in the Union where your fathers, brothers, sisters and in-laws are confronted with serious problems. Most of these relatives of yours are workers and farmers who, in the past five years, have undergone a trying economic struggle to make ends meet.

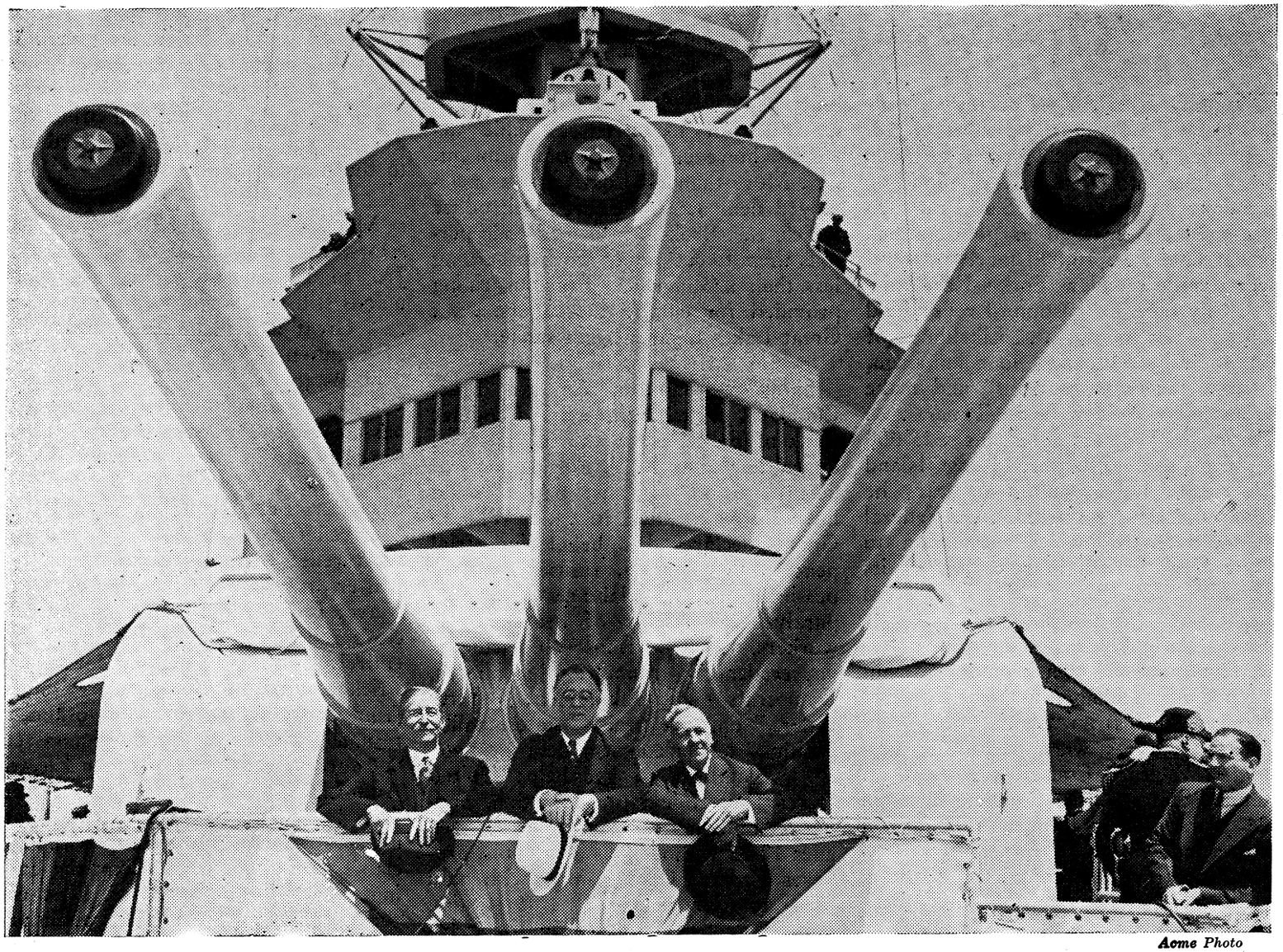
There is no space in this place to review the tremendous changes that have come over the country. You yourselves have been in port long enough to know that a depression of devastating proportions has gripped the land. Despite the artificial pumping of the N.R.A., no real help has been given to those who always suffer most in times like these — the workers and farmers. You may have read or heard of the strike battles that have been raging in almost every large city in the country. You certainly know of the large percentage of unemployed workers in the country and the fact that on the farms real distress exists in every homestead.

The N.R.A. has made promises to the workers and the unemployed as well as to the farmers. These promises have not been kept. Under the law, workers in industry are supposed to have the right to organize in their own unions. This right has been denied by rapacious companies who, though showing increased profits, persist in cutting down the incomes of their workers.

When these workers reply with the only weapons at their command—the strike and picket line—as they have done only recently in Toledo, Minneapolis, in Alabama and on the docks of the port cities, they have been beaten down by policemen's clubs, shot with guns in the hands of "National Guardsmen" and generally subjected to a reign of terror involving gas-bombs and machine-guns.

What does this mean? Why should large sections of the population be left to suffer the ravages of hunger? Why should large sections of the working-class be intimidated by a show of force to accept starvation wages and over-long hours of labor? Why should the small farmers be left hungry on their land, burdened by mortgages they can never pay and raising crops they cannot possibly sell?

We ask you to think of these problems and discuss them among yourselves because they are questions of vital importance to every person. They are of especial importance to you because you are a part of the defense forces of the United States. Another section of those forces, the so-called "National Guard," has already been called upon to defend the interests, not of its own people, but of rich manufacturers who hold their profit above the well-being of the people who must work for them. Back of these manufacturers are the financial powers of the larger banks whose main interest in "National Defense," is the defense of their own investments in this country and in the smaller countries like the Philippines, Cuba and the Central American states which are often visited by American warships and marines.



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SECRETARY OF THE NAVY SWANSON, PRESIDENT ROOSEVELT, AND EX-SECRETARY DANIELS REVIEWING THE FLEET

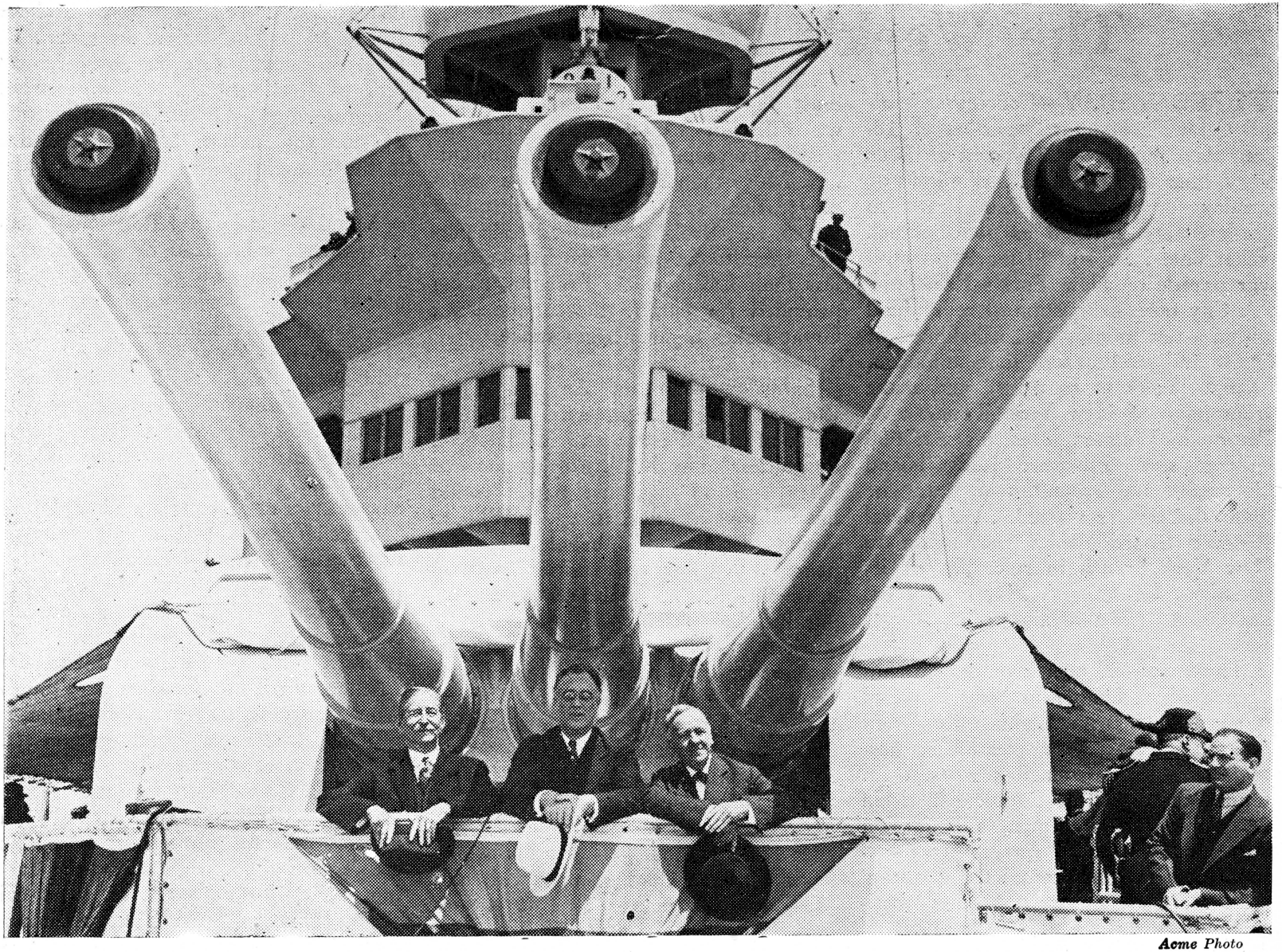
There is every possibility that you too will be called upon to "defend property rights," against workers demanding a fair deal from employers whose interest in their profits comes first. There is no reason why you should do this. There is every reason why you should refuse. You did not join the Navy to defend the interests of American business. You joined, as all enlisted men join, to become part of forces intended to defend the American people. Who are the American people? They are, in the vast majority, the workers in the cities and the working farmers on the land who are now being made victims of a system that finds it is no longer able to feed its own members.

These are the things for you to think about. They are things to think about should you be called on to break up a picket line as the guardsmen in Ohio did not many days ago. These lads were drawn to Toledo from other sections of Ohio because it was thought unwise to have the Toledo guardsmen go on duty against their own striking friends and relatives. Do you realize the significance of this fact?

We take this occasion to bring these things to your attention only because we feel the United States is confronted with an even greater crisis than it has gone through the past five years. One day you will be called to war—and that is another question. Right now, THE NEW MASSES is concerned mainly in your share in the WAR going on at home—between unemployed and striking workers on the one side and capitalists and bankers on the other. The fight is not over the "protection" of property. It is one for the protection of the lives and livelihood of millions of honest workers, their wives and children, in steel mines, coal mines, textile cities, on the docks and in the sweatshops of the metropolitan centers. In the vanguard of this fight of workers and farmers who are tired of exploitation, crisis and hunger and who want a better life, is the Communist Party.

The profit-makers have great influence. They are able, through the control they exercise in Washington, to call upon the armed forces of the country to help them protect profits that take food from the mouths of children. We want you to consider this fact and to think about it. We want you to ponder this so that when the time comes for you to be called upon to break up picket lines and follow commands to shoot down workers, you will know precisely what you are doing.

We have a strong feeling that since you are the sons and brothers of workers and farmers you will know what to do in a situation of this kind. You did not enlist to fight your own people. The real enemies of the people are the profiteers and grafters whose property rights and profits are to them dearer than the lives of their countrymen. Remember this!



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SECRETARY OF THE NAVY SWANSON, PRESIDENT ROOSEVELT, AND EX-SECRETARY DANIELS REVIEWING THE FLEET

The Week's Papers

WEDNESDAY—Canning code allowing 60-hour "basic" week, 10-hour day, minimum 22½ cent an hour wage, goes into effect. . . . Windows of striking longshoremen's San Francisco headquarters smashed as police attack picket line. . . . 10,000 march in anti-war parade on New York's East Side. . . . City faces exhaustion of relief fund within a few months. . . . Likelihood of textile and steel strikes, long imminent, become "news fit to print" and make front page of New York Times. . . . Peter G. Wagner loses his $25,000 damage suit. He sued Long Island University on ground two years he spent there were wasted. . . . Federal Reserve Board denies permission to New York branch to raise pay of its president, George W. Harrison, from $50,000 to $75,000 a year.

Thursday—29 men, women and children died of hunger in New York, in last year, 110 from "malnutrition," and 783 such cases were treated in hospitals, Welfare Council reports. . . . United States will be Communist within 25 years, Corliss Lamont tells foreign correspondents. . . . Largest free balloon for army tests completed at Akron, O. . . . Code authority studies possibility of curtailing hosiery output. . . . Johnson seeks to prevent textile industry strike looming as result of cotton textile curtailment order. . . . Also tries to prevent steel strike, being demanded increasingly by rank and file workers. . . . Wheat rises to $1.03 as speculators take advantage of drought damage. . . . The fleet comes to New York. . . . Dimitroff's mother asks American mothers: "Do for mothers of Scottsboro boys what you did for me—restore their sons."

Friday—Senate passes emasculated stock market control bill. . . . Workers barred from trial of 19 other workers arrested at relief demonstration which N. Y. police dispersed. . . . Hitlerite Ambassador Luther refuses to call on St. Louis' Mayor Dickmann because latter said Luther's visit would make no converts to Hitlerism. . . . New York City June relief set at $17,750,000, a new peak. 1,500 applications a day now reported. . . . In three columns of war debt message, Roosevelt fails to say anything new. "Europe owes us money; if it doesn't pay, American taxpayers must pay; we expect Europe to pay; we will not make unreasonable demands, however," is gist of document. . . . More than 50 Los Angeles unemployed demonstrators hurt when police attack. . . . Brokers informed code permits them to cut pay of workers earning less than $35 a week. Previous ruling provided for cutting the others. . . . Great Lakes tugmen begin strike.

Saturday—Bank of America Trust Company, Pittsburgh, and Fondulac Bank of East Peoria, still in "financial difficulties." The N. Y. Post admits two years ago no capitalist paper would have dared mention it. . . . William Green declares his belief industrial peace is not far off, refuses to be a pessimist. . . . Oklahoma stockyards paralyzed by strike of nearly 1,000 workers. . . . Roosevelt achieves unprecedented triumph: Republicans, Democrats, anti-isolationists, "bitter enders," unite to praise "statesmanlike position" he took in war debt message. . . . Youth is to get help: United States Department of Education, finding 7 million young people between ages 17-25 without jobs or schools, proposes Federal Commission (with paid jobs) to study matter. . . . 85 striking bakery drivers arrested in Brooklyn after police break up picket line. . . . Governor Rolph of California, who refused to free Tom Mooney and indorsed lynching, dies. . . . Wall Street brokers fire 5,000 clerks.

Sunday—Treasury offers investors $800,000,000 in long term bonds and notes. . . . College commencements scheduled this week. With probably 4,000,000 who were graduated during depression jobless, Edward G. Seubert, president Standard Oil and Steel Company of Indiana, finds solution for present year graduates. "Those who cannot find jobs might well spend their time trying to make jobs," he says. . . . Toledo strikes reported ended. . . . News that Soviet Russia produced $100,000,000 gold in year, exceeding U. S. output, worries Washington. . . . Abusing franking privilege, House members are charged with sending $67,000 worth of private telegrams at public expense this session. Typical Representative's telegram: "Attended White House dinner last night. See that it is played up in all papers in district." . . . Rains partly relieve Rocky Mountain section drought. . . . Steel production rate increased due to fear of steel strike. . . . Government slaughters much Dakota and Minnesota livestock because of lack of feed due to the drought.

Monday—Industrial Relations Counselors, Inc., subsidized by Rockefeller, Jr., to study and sponsor company unions still functioning after eight years. . . . Great Britain notifies Washington of intention to default on June 15 war debt instalment. . . . Roosevelt orders Wagner (company-union) Labor bill passed. . . . Capitalist sources predict summer seasonal business drop 15 percent more than normal. . . . House empowers President to spend $6 billion "for relief purposes." . . . "Unemployment relief is no longer an emergency matter, it's an established condition," Mayor LaGuardia declares, announcing city's relief funds are soon giving out entirely. . . . Half billion dollars for stricken drought-area farmers sought from Congress. . . . Toledo workers to resume strike as even meaningless sell-out agreement is violated when Electric Auto-Lite Co. seeks to hire non-strikers first. . . . William Green proudly announces signing agreement with Sinclair's Consolidated Oil Company barring strikes for a year. . . . First editorial strike in New York publishing house empties entire office of Macaulay Publishing Co. . . . 2,000 butchers, in packing houses, also join growing New York strike wave. . . . Government's $800,000,000 issue is oversubscribed. . . . Large steel companies have installed machine-guns and other weapons in their plants as strike threatens, Gov. Pinchot of Pennslyvania tells Roosevelt.

Tuesday—Hitler Ambassador Luther and other German officials financed and directed Nazi propaganda in the U. S., House Committee testimony reveals. . . . Roosevelt personally will seek to stop steel strike. . . . Authors picket Macaulay Publishing Company where editorial and office workers are on strike. . . . 10 workers arrested at New York's bloody relief demonstration held for the Grand Jury. . . . Nationwide "Free Thaelmann" campaign grows. . . . Ford fires 5,000 workers. . . . San Francisco judge refuses to reconsider decision not to free Mooney on habeas corpus writ because "all other legal means are not yet exhausted."

Columbia Fires Two

MARGARET WRIGHT MATHER

JEROME A. KLEIN, instructor in Fine Arts in Columbia University, and Miss Bella Gross, librarian of the Columbia Classical Library, have received notice of dismissal from their positions under circumstances that have in both cases aroused protest from students and fellow staff members. Both were capable and experienced in their work: Mr. Klein has taught seven years in all—four years as an assistant, three years as an instructor—and was listed in the Barnard College catalogue as a teacher for 1934-35; he is the only specialist in modern art on the Columbia Fine Arts faculty, and the Department's faculty vote was unanimous for retaining him. Miss Gross received her M.A. from Columbia University in 1930, and has served competently in the Classical Library since about that time.

Sixty-five Fine Arts students signed a petition for the reinstatement of Mr. Klein. Student committees who interviewed Dean Herbert E. Hawks on the Klein case found him non-committal—"A little early for me to take any action," he said, airily, as reported by the Columbia student paper, The Spectator. Professor William B. Dinsmoor, executive officer of the Department of Fine Arts, arrogantly told students "the whole question has entirely nothing to do with the student body. It is entirely a matter for the department." Professor Dinsmoor took the trouble, however, to attempt to deceive students about Mr. Klein's status, declaring "Mr. Klein has been doing certain work in Columbia for the first and last time [a teacher for seven years!]. It has not been proposed that this was to continue [though Barnard College announced his courses for next year!]." When a delegation of students after much difficulty succeeded in interviewing President Nicholas Murray Butler himself—from which interview, however, all reporters were expressly barred—that evasive president, as the Spectator observed editorially "gave scant satisfaction." . . . Interested students and teachers cannot blink the fact that Mr. Klein (who is Jewish) took part in the protest against Hans Luther's Nazi lecture some time ago, and that Miss Gross has for a year and a half been active in the Cosmopolitan Club and in the Social Problems Club on the campus, Miss Gross being particularly active in denouncing the discrimination practiced against Negro students; nor can they escape the menacing and more important fact that *retrenchment,* openly denied but secretly prepared by President Butler, is back of these dismissals, and is the lever by which militant teachers and librarians—and hundreds who are not militant—are being forced out of their jobs.

Whom does President Butler speak for? The personnel of the Board of Trustees of Columbia University is deeply rooted in Wall Street and particularly in the war industries in which Wall Street is now so vitally interested. The simple recital of the names of the trustees, with their corporate affiliations, is an answer to the question why Jerome Klein and Bella Gross were dismissed:

MARCUS HARTLEY DODGE, Chairman of the firm which produces one-third of the war armaments for the United States: Remington Arms.

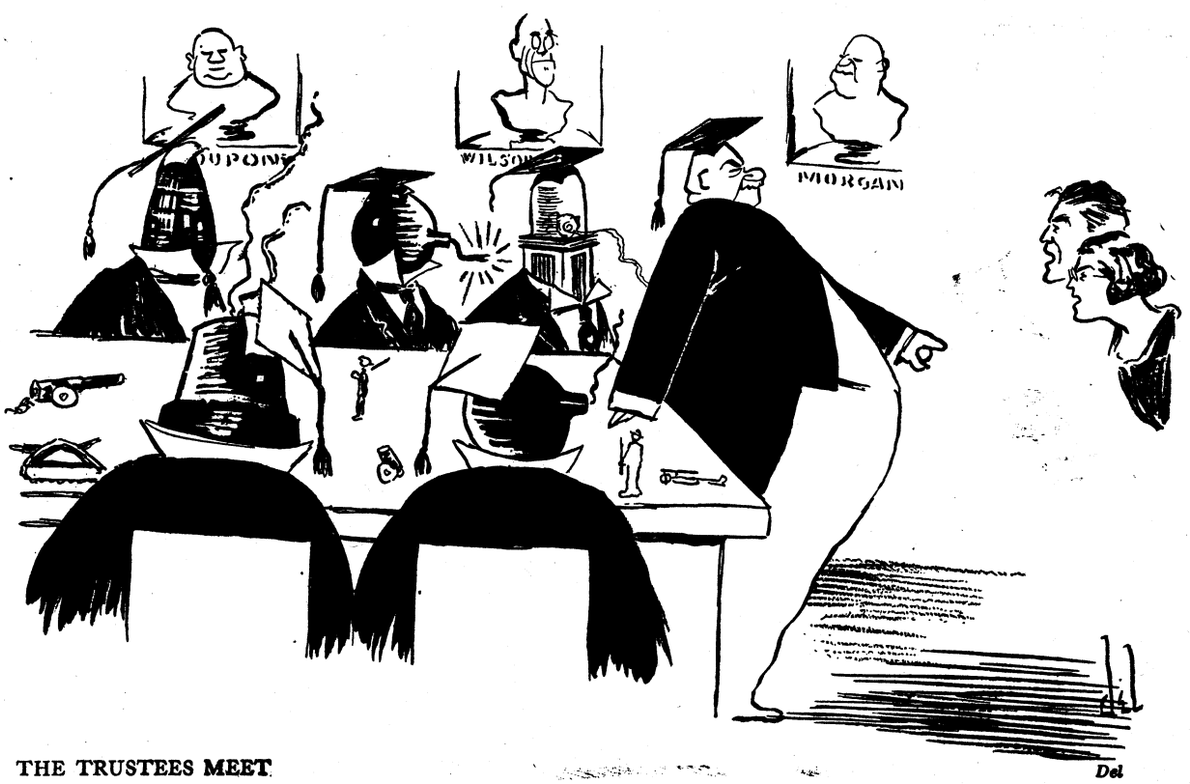
GANO DUNN, of the Grace National Bank.

ALFRED E. MARLING, of the Bank of New York and Trust Company whose president, John Traphagen, is an important factor in the Allied Chemical and Dye Company, makers of war nitrates and gases.

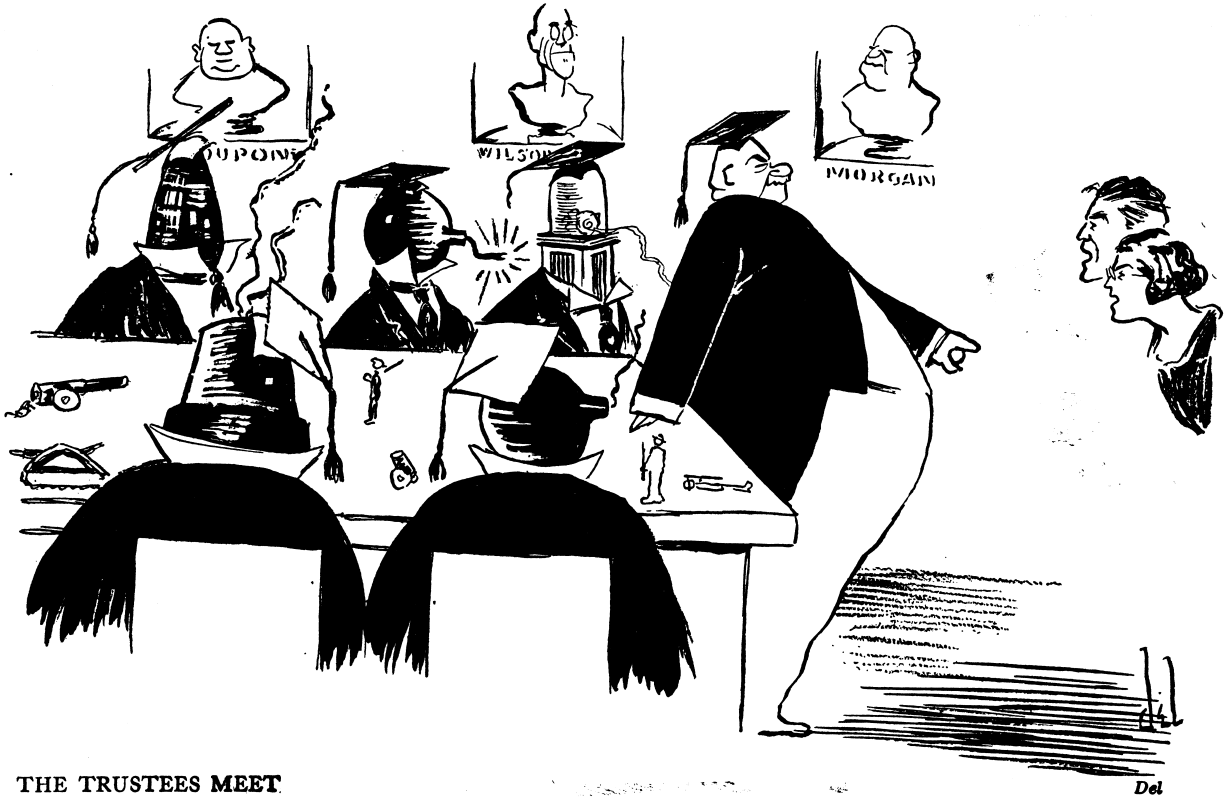
DAVID F. HOUSTON, President of Mutual Life Insurance which owns many chemical and steel securities; director of Guaranty Trust and United States Steel and Carnegie Steel Corporations.

CLARENCE M. WOOLLEY, of the General Motors company. Fellow members of this board on which he sits include: Fritz Opel of Ruesselsheim, one of Hitler's backers; Vincent Bendix of Bendix Aviation; Fred Fisher, director in the Baldwin Locomotive Works which owns the Midvale Artillery Corporation; Lamont, Henry, and Pierre Dupont of the DuPont chemical and explosive interests; Junius Morgan, Seward Prosser, John Raskob, etc.

FREDERIC R. COUDERT, of the Chase Bank, formerly lawyer for the Czar and later Kerensky. On the Chase boards he sits with Charles E. Schwab of Bethlehem Steel; Malcolm G. Chase of the Mathieson Alkali Company, makers of nitrates; W. S. Carpenter of the DuPont chemical interests; Samuel F. Pryor of Remington Arms; and Frederic W. Allen whose interests include: Vanadium Steel (makers of armor-plate), Remington Arms,



THE TRUSTEES MEET



THE TRUSTEES **MEET**

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Air Reduction (makers of nitrates and poison gases), and the Solvay American Investments —stockholders in Allied Chemical and Dye and other chemical firms and Shell Oil, Shell Union, and Shell Pipe.

JOSEPH P. GRACE as a member of the National City Bank sits on the board with John Garver of Remington Arms, F. J. Fisher of Baldwin Locomotive (*i. e.,* Midvale Artillery Corp.), Gerard Swope, openly fascist president of the General Electric Company, and intimate of Samuel Insull. Joseph Ripley, recipient of a $150,000 loan from the National City, is the director of United Aircraft of the recent airmail contract scandal. As director he holds key control of the largest aviation manufacturing and transport trust in the country—8 equipment companies (Boeing, Pratt & Whitney, Sikorsky, etc.), 5 transport companies (United, Boeing, National, Pacific, Varney), and 5 other aircraft corporations.

These examples of interlocking directorates can be traced considerably further. For example, Columbia Trustee Houston, as member of the Board of United States Steel Co., is directly connected with J. P. Morgan, etc. As a member of the board of Remington Arms, Columbia Trustee Dodge is associated with Percy Rockefeller of Bethlehem Steel and oil interests, with J. A. Garver of the National City Bank, characterized above, etc.

The ramifications of the control exercised by Columbia University trustees have significant roots abroad. F. W. Allen, Barnard College trustee, controls Solvay and Shell interests, having branches in Austria, Germany, England, Belgium, these branches having supported Fascism and war. Gerard Swope (of National City Bank on which Columbia trustee J. P. Grace sits), controls the General Electric interests which are tied up with the German Electric Trust, supporter of Hitler and Fascism. Owen D. Young is a trustee of Teacher's College. Another trustee of the same college is Felix Warburg, whose cousin is a board member of the Krupp munitions works in Germany, one of the chief supporters and controllers of the Hitler regime.

The Columbia Teachers' Council recently formed by some forty members of the faculty of Columbia University, with Donald R. Charles, teaching assistant in zoology research, as secretary, marks a definite step forward in college teacher action. It is the *first* evidence of *organized* militancy among this last-to-awaken pedagogical rank. And the first public act of the Council appropriately enough, was an energetic protest again the dismissal of Jerome Klein. The Council's ten-point program includes demands for restoration of salary slashes, minimum salary guarantees for teaching and research assistants, guarantees of tenure, and organized faculty participation in all administration decisions which concern economic and educational policy.

It insists upon a sufficient limitation of work to staff members to permit each to do research work, and fights against victimization of teachers for opinions or discrimination against them "because of race, creed, or sex." In addition to demands for federal appropriations to institutions of higher learning, the program specifically opposes any increase in student tuition, and calls for the diversion of all war funds for purposes of education and relief.

Here is a program that grows out of the soil of American college needs, and hits back at *retrenchment,* the backbone of reactionary administrative policy. It is a program of dignified defense of university educational ideals, a defense of the research that constitutes the motor nerve of cultural progress; it is an attack upon war preparations, the antithesis of all that education is and that education stands for. And it is a program general enough to fit the specific needs of every American college.

The Socialist Party Convention

Marking Time in Detroit: "Left", Right, "Left"

A. B. MAGIL

DETROIT.

THE guiding spirit of the Socialist Party convention, the most influential person there, was a man named Roberts. He wasn't listed among the delegates and I don't know whether he was ever even a member of the party. He is the author of a work of national and international reputation that was constantly on the delegates' lips and definitely put the works of Marx and Engels in the shade. I'm ashamed to say I have never read it; it is called *Rules of Order.*

Whenever one of the delegates would threaten to come to grips with a vital problem, some lawyer or other well-known leader of the Socialist Party would leap to his feet and with an eloquent quotation from Roberts' immortal work, would completely demolish the indiscreet delegate.

Yet it would be a gross exaggeration to say that Karl Marx was completely forgotten at the Socialist Party convention. By no means. Outside of Cass Technical High School, where the opening mass meeting was held, as well as in the corridors of the Fort Wayne Hotel, where the convention proper took place, energetic comrades rushed around shouting:

"Get the original Karl Marx Cigar! Made in Reading, Pa. Hand-made, union-made, highest wages paid to make this cigar. Best cigar in America for a nickel!"

The activities of these loyal rank and file Marxists were raised to a higher theoretical level by Reading Clerk Strickland when he exhorted the delegates: "Buy and smoke your convictions—Karl Marx Cigars."

For all that was ludicrous, stupid, hypocritical and pious at the eighteenth national convention of the Socialist Party, held in Detroit June 1-3, it was without doubt the most important convention of the party since 1919 when the split between the Left and Right Wings took place.

The last Socialist convention that I attended was in 1928 in New York. Though the faces this year were substantially the same—even where the names were different—though the same parliamentary rigmarole strait-jacketed every move that the convention made, the character of the discussion and the issues involved were radically different.

The 1928 convention met upon the bountiful bosom of Coolidge-Hoover prosperity. It found the party supinely blind to "the signs of the approaching storm," which had been so keenly discerned by the Sixth World Congress of the Communist International, definitely turning its back on the workers and farmers and making its major appeal to the middle class. That was the famous convention which took out of the party's membership application blank the clause requiring recognition of the class struggle.

The 1934 convention took place in the fifth year of the greatest economic crisis in the history of world capitalism, when no one can any longer deny the breakdown of the system, when the victories of socialist construction in the Soviet Union compel even the blind to admit the superiority of the socialist over the capitalist order. It took place in the midst of the greatest, most militant strike wave since 1919, when the great red proletarian fist that was Toledo flung its shadow over the whole of these United States.

And Toledo was definitely present at the convention, if only in the background. Under these circumstances, if the Socialist Party wished to survive, to stand a chance of winning the support of the working masses of this country, to prevent its own working class rank and file from deserting it and following the leadership of the Communist Party, it had to make at least some show of militancy. It did.

NO ONE HAS STARVED

Reginald Marsh (Weyhe Galleries)

For the first time since 1919 a Socialist Party convention found the so-called left-wing groups—the Militants and the Revolutionary Policy Committee—in control of a majority of the delegates. These "left" groups secured a majority on every committee and on the highest body of the party, elected at the convention, the National Executive Committee. Did the Socialist Party convention, then, commit itself to a genuinely revolutionary program?

To answer this question, we have to first define the character of the "left" groups. Were there among the delegates truly revolutionary elements? Yes—few though they were, confused, divided and ineffectual though they may have been. But if we define the character of the "left" groups in terms of their programs, their leadership and their actions—especially their actions—then we are forced to say that the eighteenth national convention of the Socialist Party made no basic change in the reformist, social-fascist character of this party, and that the hotly contested Declaration of Principles and the other statements adopted by the convention constitute an even more treacherous platform than the frankly reactionary platform of the past.

The 1928 convention took the class struggle out of the application blank; the 1934 convention put it back again. The 1928 convention paraded the advances Socialism was making in the Vanderbilt family; the 1934 convention definitely set out to snare the workers and farmers of this country. But let it be remembered that the 1934 move to the left was determined by the same considerations as the move to the right in 1928—the needs of the American capitalist class, the indispensability of a mass Socialist Party to a dying, bankrupt, system, "the main social support of capitalism."

The most "left" group at the convention was the Revolutionary Policy Committee, of which J. B. Matthews, who resigned as national chairman of the American League Against War and Fascism under threat of expulsion from the Socialist Party, is one of the leaders. The R.P.C. program has obviously been influenced by the Lovestone group of renegades from Communism and some of its leaders are undoubtedly organizationally connected with Lovestone. Space will not permit me to analyze its program, published as *An Appeal to the Membership of the Socialist Party,* but suffice it to say that while it is filled with very revolutionary rhetoric about proletarian dictatorship and "Workers' Councils," it has no concrete program of immediate struggle, adopts the Lovestoneite attitude toward the American Federation of Labor, which in practice has led to collaboration with the A.F. of L. bureaucracy, attacks the Communist Party and bases its activities on the prospect of converting the bankrupt and discredited Second (Socialist) International into "the effective instrument in promoting the world revolution." Actually at the convention the R.P.C. became the tail of the Militant group, and its leaders, after solemn declarations to the contrary, entered into a horse-trading deal with the very people whom they denounce as reformists.

The leadership of the Militants consists of all sorts of strange bedfellows, including some who only yesterday were hand in glove with the reactionary Old Guard. It has suffered certain losses to the bourgeoisie during the past year — Paul Blanshard, who decided he could be more militant by fusing with the Fusionist Republicans, and Upton Sinclair, who is EPIC Planning in California on a platform of Roosevelt and Sinclair. And it was none other than the man who helped write the Militant manifesto two years ago, McAlister Coleman, who recently published in the New Deal organ, Today, an article on the Communists that must have made Ralph Easley turn green with envy. But the leaders of the Militants—Maynard Krueger of Chicago, Andrew J. Biemiller of Wisconsin, and Haim Kantorovitch and Eddie Levenson of New York—manage to avoid mentioning these unpleasant matters. In their revolutionary fervor they also do not bother to explain why two years ago they wrote in the program they presented to the S.P. convention in Milwaukee:

> . . . we set ourselves firmly against dictatorship in this country as long as democratic means of transition to a Socialist society are still available.

whereas today, in their new program, they write:

> Since the time of the *Communist Manifesto* Socialists knew that the object of the workers' struggle for political power was the establishment of the revolutionary dictatorship of the proletariat. . . .
>
> This was preached and justified and defended in the writings of every Marxian Socialist from Kautsky [sic!] and Plekhanov [sic sic!] to the popular editorial writer in the socialist press [James Oneal, for example—or Eddie Levenson in his New Leader Days!].

The Militants also lean heavily for leadership on such devotees of the proletarian dicta-

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Reginald Marsh (Weyhe Galleries)

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torship as Norman Thomas and Leo Krzycki, national chairman, and, as vice-president of the Amalgamated Clothing Workers, part of the A.F. of L. bureaucracy with close ties—through his chief, the "militant" of yesterday, Sidney Hillman—with the N.R.A. apparatus.

The Militant leaders showed their true colors at the convention. The Militants had no trouble in spouting phrases about proletarian dictatorship and violent revolution—in the distant future; but on every question of immediate action they either evaded the issue or lined up with the reactionaries. And the R.P.C. tail faithfully followed suit.

This was most clearly demonstrated by the attitude toward the leadership of the American Federation of Labor. A paragraph of mild criticism of the A.F. of L. officialdom was included in the resolution on the N.R.A. The reactionaries — Waldman, Panken, Oneal, Vladek *et al.*—immediately rushed to the defense of the strike-breaking A.F. of L. leaders. The "militant," Krzycki, did likewise. When it looked as if the battle would be fought to a finish and a vote was about to be taken, the Militant-controlled Resolutions Committee announced that it had unanimously decided to withdraw the controversial paragraph!

The Militants also showed their colors on the question of the united front. Their resolutions committee presented a resolution attacking the Communist Party and calling for a continuation of the policy of the S.P. right-wing machine of forbidding all united fronts with the Communists (but not with capitalism!) and of passing the buck to the Second International.

The new "left" gestures of the Socialist Party also found expression in the resolution on the N.R.A., which was sharply critical of the New Deal program. But the Militants didn't bother to explain why, in a pamphlet being sold in the hall, entitled: *The New Deal, a Socialist Analysis* a pamphlet which Biemiller and Krueger helped to write, Norman Thomas was declaring:

> By and large it [the New Deal] is an emergency effort to increase spending power for farmers and city workers and somewhat to lighten the load of mortgagees and small home-owners. It is an attempt to impose some restrictions on the most vicious forms of exploitation.

The stormy struggle around the Declaration of Principles, the chief document of the convention, can in no sense be considered a struggle between reformist and revolutionary groups. That this is so may be gathered from the fact that the Declaration was defended by such ardent revolutionists as Norman Thomas, Mayor Hoan of Milwaukee (who has won his proletarian service-stripes by clubbing workers demonstrating for relief), and Krzycki, the A. F. of L. bureaucrat. The discussion on this question produced the finest bursts of socialist oratory, with the legal luminaries, Waldman, Solomon and Panken, and the sacerdotal Thomas in the van. It was marked also by the participation of people who had not been recognized by the chairmen—working-class visitors who loudly booed the reactionary statements of Waldman and the unbridled chauvinism of Joseph Sharts, Ohio state chairman of the S.P. Sharts, leader of a semi-fascist group, declared:

"If you place in the Declaration of Principles the statement that I shall be compelled in case of war to be disloyal to my country, then I declare as an American, loving America, that I will defend my country as I see fit and not be guided by the red internationalists who framed this document."

That the weasel words of the Declaration of Principles can be interpreted in any way one sees fit was evident from the fact that while the Militants were shouting that it is a revolutionary, even a "Marxist" document, Norman Thomas insisted that it was based on democracy and on constitutional methods of change.

Incidentally, the convention adopted no resolutions on unemployment insurance and relief or on the Negro question, and buried the resolutions on the Soviet Union, the united front and Fascism.

The new radically phrased tactic adopted by the Socialist Party convention constitutes a danger to the workers, farmers and intellectuals of this country. Eloquent testimony to that danger may be found in the graves, the prisons, the concentration camps of Fascist Austria. There "left" social-Democracy succeeded in befogging the working masses with radical "Marxist" phrases and thus led them step by step on the path of compromise with capitalism to surrender to fascism, to the bloody defeat of February. The recent history of international Social-Democracy, both "left" and right, demonstrates that there is no middle-of-the-road between reform and revolution, that Communism, the Communism of the Communist International and its sections throughout the world, offers the only way out of the ghastly blind-alley of capitalism for all producers of hand and brain.

Working for the Government

JEREMIAH KELLY, Jr.

OUR cross-country night bus made an emergency stop in a village. Restless passengers walked up and down the road. Strangers suddenly grew confidential; particularly, I thought, my newfound companion. He had just earned three days' vacation — the "experiment" was successful — his future glistened with hope. When I asked what it was all about, he explained:

"Why, I'm at the XYZ Chlorine Company. Research department. We're working on explosives—special division—just four of us. But we're really working for the government."

He was in a festive mood because at last the perfect container had been tested and accepted. Filled with fluid, dropped from airplanes, a half-pint could be depended on to make hopeless chaos out of buildings, industrial plants, and homes for a square mile in area.

"What's this got to do with the XYZ Chlorine Company?" I asked.

"Everything! Some fellow out in Milwaukee invented the fluid and tried to produce it himself but couldn't. So he sold it to the federal government and they subsidized our department. You see, we're a DuPont outfit."

"Is any of this known?"

"Hell no! The government guards our labs with a string of plainclothesmen twenty-four hours a day. And our work's so arranged that only the chief knows the whole process—and there's no chance of our finding out even if we wanted to—which we don't."

"But what's all of this going to mean in the next war?"

"Simply this: Everyone knows the country with the fastest 'planes will win because every country's working on this same type of explosive. Of course, it's terrifically expensive and it takes time. But the United States won't be lagging behind any of them."

"I thought some first-class anti-aircraft had been perfected."

"True enough. Radio detectographs can tune in the engine sound in enemy planes and automatically aim and shoot the birds down. But what's a battery of detectos when a hundred 'planes invade New York or Chicago?—and three gallons of fluid can wreck either town in no time!"

"Pretty tough on the people below. I wonder if they'll let this happen."

"Let it? What've they got to say about it—?"

"Ever hear of civil war?"

"Yes, but that won't happen here. It'll be just too bad for quitters and conscientious objectors and the rest of them. The government won't be able to go easy on them because we've gotta have war. The country needs it."

For a few minutes we walked up and down without speaking. Across the mountain blew breaths of frost mixed with odors of early grass.

"By the way," he added, "if anyone is foolish enough to say anything in print about this fluid, or mention the name of my company, or say that I told him, it will be just too bad for him."

We walked up and down in silence. Ten minutes later the driver returned. He slid into his seat, flung on the motor and raced the bus through the hills to make up time.

Literary Wars in the U.S.S.R.

I: From October to the NEP

JOSHUA KUNITZ

WHEN IN THE Spring of 1932 the Central Committee of the Communist Party in the Soviet Union ordered the dissolution of the RAPP (Russian Association of Proletarian Writers), very many lovers of Soviet letters, the present writer included, heaved a sigh of relief. "Now the RAPP is no more," exclaimed Louis Fischer a few months later in the New York Herald Tribune. And after detailing the multifarious atrocities perpetrated by the RAPP, Mr. Fischer proceeded to advance his interpretation of that welcome event: "Stalin and his highest collaborators have stricken it from the list of the living, and none will miss it . . . Why did it come so suddenly? Why the liberal mood which substituted a non-partisan writers' league for the Party's literary dog-in-the-manger? . . . I think the new policy was due directly to the disgust in highest quarters with the crude persecutions of the fellow-travelers by the RAPP and with the ugly personal concomitants of such tactics."

As I have already pointed out in my discussion of the recent changes in Soviet fashions, education, and in the relation between Soviet parents and children (*Pitfalls for Prophets,* THE NEW MASSES, Jan. 30, 1934), such a catastrophic conception of major historical changes as Mr. Fischer's is utterly inadequate as a key to the underlying motives. I do not deny the rôle of the individual in history. But by and large, the individual, however great, is conditioned by circumstances. And his ability effectively to assert his will is in the final analysis determined by objective forces. Stalin, and his highest collaborators are in this respect no exception. Their virtue, like that of all good leaders, has consistently been in correctly analyzing and evaluating objective forces, and in cogently articulating the attitudes of those large sections of Soviet society whom they represented.

Art is not an autonomous realm existing in a vacuum. The same conflicts that take place on the material plane also take place on the ideological plane. The class struggle expresses itself not only in the factory, the shop, the mine, and the field; it expresses itself at the polls, in the classroom, in the theater, in the press, in the arts, and of course in literature. Art does not merely reflect: It is one of the fronts where the opposing economic forces meet in actual battle. There are periods of relative peace, when the belligerent forces on both sides of the line are strengthening their defences. But when the moment comes for overt conflict, the conflict breaks out on the art front just as it does on all other fronts.

Thus anyone writing on the various and conflicting trends in the art of a given period is doomed to futility unless he takes cognizance of the class forces expressed in these trends. Not infrequently, aesthetic differences and ideological tangles which defy analysis when viewed by themselves, appear simple and comprehensible when traced back to their class origin.

In the following pages I shall endeavor to sketch the history of Soviet letters and prove that its entire development, including the rise, decay and final dissolution of the RAPP, was not determined by the fancy and whim of one individual or a few individuals but by the whole complex of class forces in the revolutionary period.

There is one fact that the student of Soviet literature must bear in mind: It was in the field of culture that the Soviet proletariats' efforts at self-definition and self-assertion met with the gravest, most disheartening difficulties. It was relatively easy to seize the factories, the banks, and the lands of the upper classes, and thus deprive them of their economic and political power. But their education, their training, their skill, were things that could not be seized. Years of power and leisure had given the former ruling classes an overwhelming cultural advantage. The workers came to power from slums, from wretched suburbs, from villages, from poverty, from ignorance. (Even the political philosophy of the proletariat has been best formulated by scions of the bourgeoisie. Marx, Engels, and later Plekhanov, Lenin, *et al.,* all non-proletarians, had identified their interests with those of the proletariat and had become its ideological leaders.) Naturally, when the proletariat seized power, the vast majority of the bourgeois intellectuals in Russia were overwhelmed by a feeling of consternation and dismay. Thousands upon thousands of them — scientists, artists, engineers, chemists, physicians, teachers —fled the country.

Among the literati, even the erstwhile Social Democrats and Social Revolutionists became maddened with fright. Korolenko and even Gorky showed signs of weakness and vacillation. Writers like Bunin and Kuprin, Merezhkovsky and Hippius and Artzibashev turned counter-revolutionists. Andreyev, then in Finland, shrieked an hysterical "S.O.S.," appealing to the world bourgeoisie to come and crush the barbarian invaders, the Bolsheviks. Those who did not manage to escape scuttled hastily into their holes, staring with futile anger at the "débâcle" of Russia, at the "mob triumphant."

There were exceptions, of course; but they were not numerous. On the whole the bourgeois experts, specialists, scholars, who remained in Russia rendered services under duress. To live, they *had* to work. But their work was grudging, unsympathetic, indifferent. They were unhappy. Many of them were dreaming of a savior from abroad, a capitalist savior. The proletariat refused to capitulate before these difficulties. Always on guard, always watchful, the proletarian dictatorship utilized the reluctant services of its enemies, biding time, hoping that in a few years new cadres of experts would evolve from the masses—scholars, engineers, teachers who, rising from the lower depths and owing everything to the revolution, would be loyal and enthusiastic builders of a socialist society.

Among the bourgeois intellectuals who remained in the Soviet Union, the writers, especially the creative writers, were the most unhappy. Their work, by its very nature, was such that unless inspired by a sincere *intellectual and emotional* acceptance of the proletarian revolution it was doomed to meet with the condemnation of the working class, the dominant class. An engineer or an architect or a dentist could do his work, receive remuneration and gratitude, even if in the secret chambers of his heart he was not wholly in sympathy with the revolution, even if he was antagonistic to it. Not so with the writer. In his case simulation is difficult. Insincerity ruins art and exposes the artist. The creative writer must write as he sees and feels and thinks or he may as well not write at all. To be accepted by the proletariat, the writer had to accept the proletariat completely, unequivocally, without any reservations. Mere intellectual acceptance—and there were a number of bourgeois writers who were ready to accept the revolution intellectually—was not enough. Art demands the whole being of the writer, his instincts, perceptions, responses, emotions, ideas, everything.

With the exception of a small contingent of writers who had accepted the revolution with all kinds of nationalist, or mystical, or Slavophile, or populist reservations, it is safe to say that the older generation of Russian literati was solidly arrayed against the proletarian revolution and the proletarian dictatorship. Indeed, their fugitive writings of the first two years which later came to light are permeated with a spirit of implacable hatred for the new regime. The Futurists were the first literary group with bourgeois antecedents to come to the revolution. Obscure and neglected, ridiculed by the high-priests of the old Art, the Futurists before the revolution had had to resort to all kinds of stunts and buffooneries to

attract attention: ear-rings, fantastically painted waistcoats, provocative behavior, hooliganism. They had hated the old world with the unquenchable hatred of the unrecognized, they had despised its conventions, its complacency, its smugness. And now that the Revolution came, it was they who hastened to acclaim it. Under the able generalship of Vladimir Maiakovsky, they rushed into the squares, clambered tribunals, invaded the sacred precincts of the old academies, flaunting the gospel of a new, Futurist, revolutionary Art. There was no competition. The old writers had deserted the field. Maiakovsky became the pampered child of the Revolution. So touched were the Bolshevik authorities by the fact that the Futurists were the first to break the inimical front of the bourgeois literati, that the then Commissar of Education, Lunacharsky, almost bestowed upon them the crown of official status. Simultaneously with the Futurists there appeared a number of minor, but highly advanced literary groupings —Ego-Futurists, Imagists, Biocosmists, Emotionalists, Nichevokis, and so on without end —all sprouting from the dank cellars of Moscow's literary Bohemia. Like the futurists, all these groupings were anti-philistine rather than anti-bourgeois.

Civil war, blockade, invasion, hunger; no fuel, no light, no paper; death and sickness stalking the land. But in the dim Bohemian haunts of Moscow and Leningrad frozen, half-starved poets, critics, artists, and aesthetes were congregating, chanting their verses, vociferating their criticisms, and shouting themselves hoarse in mutual praise and denunciation. There was a paper famine. Things could not be published. The poets invaded the cafés.

A paradoxical situation! The revolutionary youth of the country, the future creators of literature were for the most part scattered over all fronts, fighting the White generals and the foreign interventionists, fighting in Siberia, in the Caucasus, the Crimea, Central Asia, the Ukraine, and in the Polar North. And here in the metropolises were the Futurists, the Imagists, and the rest of them, products of Bohemia, attempting to assume the rôle of artistic dictators of the Workers' and Peasants' Soviet Republic. In their hatred and denunciation of the old art, they had overreached themselves. Their rebellion was for the most part a rebellion against externals. They knew too much! They were too sophisticated. They were sick of old forms. But the workers and peasants were not inclined to thrill to their ultra modernist art. They were not jaded, surfeited, sick of old forms. When they did come in contact with the arts, they expected an honest reflection of their own experience and problems, their own emotions. In poetry they turned away from the ultra modernist violent treatment of language, grammar, syntax, logic. They demanded intelligibility, rational human speech. In the plastic arts they wanted to see things presented in recognizable form. They did not want the head of Lenin to look like a cube, or a horse to look like a triangle. They had unspoiled, wholesome tastes, and they wanted simple, wholesome artistic fare. The hegemony of the ultra modernists was doomed to a speedy collapse.

Much closer to the folk were the peasant poets—Kliuiev, Oreshin, Klychkov, Yessenin, etc. They were few. Their acceptance of the revolution in its early, not fully differentiated stages was genuine. It was, however, the agrarian revolution that they acclaimed, and an idyllic rural Russia composed of well-to-do individualist peasants that they envisaged. The purposes of the working-class were alien to them; the prospect of an industrialized, urbanized Russia abhorrent. And as the proletarian dictatorship crystallized and its aims became more evident, these peasant poets began to lose interest and turn away from the Revolution.

Generally speaking, during this period all the writers of bourgeois or peasant origin, whether their attitude was that of bitterness and hatred or of sympathy and acceptance, saw or emphasized only the destructive aspects of the revolution. There were differences of course. The revolutionary elements, those who came from the petty bourgeoisie and the peasantry, those who rebelled against the old bourgeois-aristocratic society, hailed the destruction brought by the revolution. The others hissed under their breaths, declaring that the revolution was bringing in its wake the ruination of culture, morality, decency, humanity. Still others bowed their heads resignedly accepting the revolution as a cosmic, mystical catastrophe which was sweeping down upon them as a punishment for their fathers' sins. But that the revolution was creative as well as destructive few if any of these writers seemed to realize. Even Maiakovsky, whose loyalty to the Revolution was profound, even he, in most of his revolutionary poems, revealed a supremely egotistical, individualistic, anarchistic spirit.

The ultimately more significant phase of the revolution, the creative, the collective, the disciplined, was reflected by the group of writers who had long before October been affiliated with the revolutionary working-class. I have specific reference to those who emerged from the "proletcult" organizations and who had subsequently, in 1920, formed the "Smithy" group of proletarian writers, also known as the "Cosmist" group.

To afford the reader background for a more adequate understanding of the vast problem involved in the efforts of the proletariat to define and assert itself culturally, I will indulge in a bit of historical retrospection. The essential point to remember is that in the Empire of the Czars the industrial revolution was rather slow in coming, and that therefore the Russian proletariat emerged as a class, conscious of itself and its destiny, rather late in history—the nineties of the last century.

In 1860 there were in Russia only about fifteen thousand industrial enterprises employing a little over a half a million workers; but in 1887 the number of enterprises grew to 30,888, and of workers, to 1,300,000; while in 1897, only ten years later, there were already 39,020 enterprises employing 2,098,200 workers. In the factory settlements, in the mines, in the mills, there was rapidly forming an increasing army of industrial workers. From the villages they came, those erstwhile peasants, driven by hunger and landlessness and crushing taxes. Wages were miserable and the conditions of work more so. Occasionally workers in one of the factories or mines would break out in revolt, but such revolts were speedily crushed and punished.

It is significant that even in its earliest formative stage the working-class began to reach out toward some sort of artistic expression, vague, groping, and inadequate though it all was. The first worker poets in Russian literature were E. Nechaiev (b. 1859), the grandfather of proletarian poetry, and F. Shkuliev (b. 1868), his close second. Both made their poetic débuts in the late eighties of the last century, and both were not, strictly speaking, proletarian in outlook. Their poetry was a hybrid product, half peasant half proletarian in content. This was characteristic of the average Russian worker of those years, who not infrequently regarded himself a peasant, the village his real home, agriculture his natural occupation. The city was exile; the factory, temporary imprisonment. The work of both Shkuliev and Nechaiev was surcharged with a longing for the touch, the feel, the odor of the soil, the grass, the cattle. "I am torn away from my family," complains Shkuliev, "from my free fields. My life is ebbing away under the yoke of slavery." He yearns for his "village," for his "own little hut," his "dear little helpmate," his "flock of children." There is a great deal of self-pity, humble supplication, and attenuated resentment. "We are men, not animals, not dumb beasts . . ." declares Nechaiev weekly. While Shkuliev, in a moment of defiance, shouts, "I have not come to beg. Give me not bread as alms; there are many like me—we are strong . . ."

Crushed by exploitation and poverty, the workers were at first in no position to offer serious resistance to the grasping commercial and industrial bourgeois protected by the Czar's armies and the Cossack knout. Gradually they begin to consolidate. From being a class by itself, the proletariat is evolving into a class for itself. In 1896 more than 29,000 workers strike in 118 different enterprises. In St. Petersburg alone thirty thousand textile workers go out on strike. In 1897, there are 145 strikes, and the following year 215. The worker is becoming class-conscious, and more and more susceptible to revolutionary ideas. The working-class becomes a social force, it attracts the revolutionary intellectuals who until now had fruitlessly forced their attention on the village. Periodicals and books with a Marxian orientation begin to make their appearance. The working-class itself becomes more articulate; it begins to develop its own distinctly proletarian intellectuals, leaders, artists, poets. Instead of merely being reflected

in the works of the middle-class writers whose leanings had been mainly populist, the workers now set out to reveal themselves and define themselves, albeit haltingly, gropingly, and quite inadequately, in their own literature. Within the depth of the old society the germ of distinct proletarian culture and proletarian literature begins to evolve.

The notes of proletarian self-assertion become more resonant. The hybrid nature of the literary output persists, but the interminable plaints about "evil Fate," "helpless childhood," and the lost rustic paradise begin to recede into the background. The same Shkuliev, abandons his mournful tunes and breaks into a vigorous song of joy.

> We are blacksmiths, our spirit is young,
> We forge the keys of happiness.
> Higher rise, O heavy hammer,
> And stronger strike that breast of steel!

And Alexey Gmyrev (1887-1911) is the first in Russian poetry to point to the working-class as the vanguard of the revolutionary army:

> To suffer and not to lose heart,
> And with faith in the working class
> Make ready for mortal combat.

In battles, in strikes, on the picket lines, in the underground political organizations, in study circles, aided by allies from the revolutionary intellegentsia, the Russian worker was becoming more and more conscious of the great rôle he would soon play on the stage of history. Worker poets pour this heightened confidence of the proletariat into candid class war poetry.

> The hour is near—embraced in flame
> The great, the noble fight will burst
> And from the earth our cursed foes
> We'll sweep away in storming waves.

Liashko and Bibik, the first proletarian prose writers, appear. Soon the influence of Gorky is felt. With the exception of Gorky the literary importance of these proletarian writers need not be exaggerated. In comparison with the giants — Chekhov, Bunin, Merezhkovsky, Briusov, Balmont, Biely, Blok, Sologub, etc.—they were exceedingly minor indeed. Their importance lay elsewhere. They were the first indication of the larger chorus of proletarian voices ushered in after the Russo-Japanese War and the 1905 Revolution.

The Revolution of 1905, though it was followed by a furious wave of reaction and repression, accelerated the crystallization of proletarian class-consciousness. Many workers plunged into study, devouring Marxist pamphlets and Social Democratic classics. The organization of a legal workers' press helped matters considerably, especially the *Zvezda,* and the Bolshevik organ *Pravda* (1911-1914). A number of the better proletarian writers grouped themselves around the *Pravda*—Kirillov, Gastev, Gerasimov, Samobytnik, and above all the now famous Demian Biedny. Not all of them were of proletarian origin, but all were intimately connected with the revolutionary proletariat and its struggle for power.

A great deal of proletarian verse and poetry had been written in the decade following the 1905 Revolution. And by 1915 over fifty volumes of peasant and worker verse had been published. Though proletarian literature was hobbling way behind proletarian political thought and revolutionary organization, it nonetheless helped organize the consciousness of many of the less educated and politically illiterate workers in a revolutionary direction. In 1914 Gorky published the workers' anthology, representing 27 proletarian writers. Of the 94 authors who in the course of three months sent in 450 manuscripts to be included in the anthology, 79 were manual workers.

It was at this time, too, (1910-1914) that A. Bogdanov in a number of essays—*Science and the Proletariat* and *Is a Proletarian Art Possible?*—formulated the basic principles of the Proletcult (Proletarian Culture) Movement which assumed such great importance in the post-October days.

Obviously, the idea of a proletarian literature and a proletarian culture was not the invention of Bogdanov or an Averbakh or a Stalin or the RAPP. It was a normal, indeed inevitable and quite desirable outgrowth of the entire conscious life and struggle of the proletariat. Only one hundred years before, the main stream of Russian literature had been aristocratic, with two contributing rivulets coming from the peasantry and the incipient bourgeoisie. With the gradual rise of the bourgeoisie as an important factor in Russian economic and political life, the literary stream of the artistocracy began to run dry, while the bourgeois rivulet began to swell and roar, and by the end of the century it practically flooded the land. At the same time the peasant rivulet began to grow, but before long it gave off a tributary which, though very minor at the beginning, was slowly gathering more water from the emerging proletariat. True, as regards craftsmanship and form, the workingmen's literary achievements before the Revolution were not much to boast of, and to the leading Russian critics of that day the small volumes of proletarian prose and poetry were altogether outside the pale of literature. They pooh-poohed them as "untutored" and "naïve." They failed to recognize in them the forerunners of a movement that would play a momentous rôle in the next era.

Among the major writers, only Gorky had an inkling of what was coming. In his introduction to the first proletarian anthology he wrote:

"Written by your comrades, this book is a new and very significant phenomenon in your difficult life; it eloquently attests to the growth of the proletariat's intellectual forces. You, of course, understand perfectly well that for a self-taught author it is immeasurably more difficult to compose a tiny story than for a professional writer to compose a novel of four hundred pages—these difficulties are caustically hinted at by the author of the story *But* . . . You will also understand that besides the lack of free time, the worker-writer is handicapped in presenting his impressions clearly and concisely, *i.e.,* artistically, through his insufficient skill in wielding the pen, the writer's tool; he is handicapped by his lack of familiarity with the profession; and his greatest handicap is the lack of word mastery—the inability to select out of a dozen possible words the simplest, strongest, the most beautiful. . . . Who knows the future? It is possible that in the course of time this booklet will be referred to as one of the first steps of the Russian proletariat toward the creation of its own literature. 'Fantasy,' I shall be told incredulously. 'Never and nowhere was there such a literature' . . . I am thoroughly convinced that the proletariat can create its own literature, just as it has created —with much difficulty and enormous sacrifices —its daily press. This conviction of mine has grown out of my many years of observing persistently the efforts which hundreds upon hundreds of industrial workers, artisans, peasants are making, trying to put down on paper their ideas about life, their observations, their feelings."

The World War temporarily arrested this development.

Then came October. And then the Civil War. The country was in arms. Class against class. New against old. Children against fathers. Pupils against teachers. Minority peoples against the once dominant Russians. Passions rampant. Workers and poor peasants fighting victoriously against enemies within and enemies from abroad—English, French, Czechoslovakian, Japanese, Italian, American interventionists. Not much time then for very careful study of various nuances of opposition and counter-revolution. The soldiers who had survived the horrors of the imperialist war, the ruined peasants, the oppressed workers, the masses who had been slaughtered, robbed, exploited by their former masters were in no mood for fine distinctions. The opposition had to be ruthlessly crushed. Everything suggestive of the upper class, of the landlords, of czarist officialdom, of the bourgeoisie—good clothes, exquisite manners, fastidious speech—was anathema. This was a period of war Communism, of rigid centralization, of ruthless requisition in the villages to feed the city, to feed the army, to feed the workers who were still at their posts. This was the period when some of the extremists demanded the militarization of labor and the complete abolition of money. Glorious visions of world-wide revolution, of world-wide risings of the proletariat. The workers were revolting in Germany, rising in Austria, organizing soviets in Hungary. Soon the whole capitalist world would be in flames. Surely, this it would seem was no time for *constructive* proletarian assertion on the cultural front, in literature.

Yet such was the colossal energy of the emerging class that even the cultural front was not wholly neglected. The few proletarian writers of the preceding period who for one reason or another were not on the military front hastened to group themselves around the spontaneously organized "Proletcult"

(proletarian cultural-educational) movement which had its first all-Russian conference on September 15, 1918. The Proletcult developed rapidly, counting at one time as many as 300 local organizations with a total student membership of 80,000. Now this was a mass cultural movement, started by the proletariat in the midst of war and famine. The decline and virtual disappearance of the Proletcult belongs to a subsequent chapter. Here it is important to remember that the proletcult represented the first attempt of the aroused proletariat to organize itself and give battle to the enemy on the cultural front. The mere fact that its growth was so rapid and so widespread would indicate that it expressed a psychological need of the first period of the Revolution. Even its exaggerated claims for cultural dictatorship were perfectly normal and indeed desirable in the intense class war atmosphere in Russia at that time.

By 1920 the majority of the writers grouped around the Proletcult crystallized into a distinct literary association under the name "The Smithy," the name of their literary organ which began in May, 1920. The publication of "The Smithy" was important. It was the first magazine in the Soviet Union reflecting the consciousness, the ideology, the aspirations of the proletariat. Gorky's prophecy was coming true. Fantasy was being transmuted into reality.

Even after casual perusal of the works of "The Smithy" authors before and after they formed their association, one is stirred by the great joy and exaltation pervading their pages. The workers are proud that theirs was the great honor to start the world revolution.

We, the countless, redoubtable legions of Toil,
We've conquered vast spaces of oceans and lands,
Illumined great cities with suns of our making,
Fired our souls with proud flames of revolt.

Gone are our tears, our softness forgotten,
We banished the perfume of lilacs and grass,
We exalt electricity, steam and explosives,
Motors and sirens and iron and brass . . .

Our souls fused with metal, part of our engines,
We unlearned to wish for and dream of the sky,
It is here on this earth that we want to be happy,
To feed all the hungry, to hush their long cry . . .

—V. KIRILLOV.

Of course, this proletarian poetry was purely transitional. Its main virtue lay in its emphasis on the creative phases of the revolution in contradistinction to the Futurists, Imagists, etc., whose main emphasis lay on the destructive. On the whole "The Smithy" poetry was abstract, romantic, full of revolutionary sentiment. It was winged, it soared above sordid prose and drab everydayness; it was permeated with a proud faith in the boundless power of the workers, and in the immediate triumph of the proletarian, the Communist ideal.

As such it was in complete harmony with the Romantic urge of the early years, with the dream of immediate world revolution, and the aspiration to idealized beautiful cities, skyscrapers, and electricity. The horrors, the hunger, the blood of the present were absent from their poetry; they sang either of the dark past or the glowing future. Their poetry gave expression to the workers' exalted sense of the honeymoon of the Revolution, to the heroism of military Communism and victorious war, to the exuberance of the pre-NEP days.

Four Wobblies

BEN FIELD

1—*George Thompson*

WE ARE in the old headquarters of the United Farmers League in North Dakota, in Minot. Young Finlander Bill is in charge while Mother Bloor is organizing in Montana.

The door bangs open and in stumbles one of the old I. W. W.'s Bill has met in his work on the prairies. He sways into a chair, and tries to roll a cigarette. His knee-boots are polished like glass. A brown moustache droops in wings to his chin.

George was born in Oregon. Wife dead. He's a cutter and tailor. Makes good money but feels so damned discouraged at times that he kicks up the dust settled on him and hammers his stake in another place. Then he goes on a spree. Yanked a gun away from a policeman when he was just a squirt of 16. This policeman was later brought up on charges of rape. George was in the Cripple Creek Gold Strike with Bill, good old Bill Haywood.

For a moment he sobers up. He brushes his pants and tries to roll another cigarette. "The only people worth salt here is the foreigners. During the war I was almost strung up. But 2,000 Italians, mind you, foreigners, got together with pitchforks and saved me. None of them 100 percenters and pea eyes, none of them bitchy scissorbills. Those are responsible for Centralia. I feel like burning them all, bringing up a truck load of dynamite, letting the sick cats squirm out, and just one gun to cover me. I'd shoot it out with them. I would, comrades."

Finlander Bill wets a pencil and makes a triangle on a scrap of paper. Thompson shoves the cigarette into his mouth, but it drips tobacco over him again. He fishes for his bag of makings.

He tells us that he was in Corona when the I. W. W. were rounded up and had hell beat out of them. He said to the minister of the village near where he was staying, "I don't fight in any war. If you want me you can go up to the woods. I'll shoot it out with any of you with my 33." They didn't dare come.

"Those who make wars should fight them. I can throw sledges back at them if they say go back where you come from. I was born here. No country is despised the way this one is. Look at the way they're buying Argentina beef for our soldiers in China while our farmers starve. Look at the copper tariff and the rich oil bugs. Nothing will help. No voting, no yelling. I'm a lone wolf and put all my cards on the table. I'm a battler. Though I've taken many beatings, I've given many. We've got to shoot it out with the dogs."

He fumbles his cigarette. I offer him a tailor-made. He shakes his head, never cared for tailor-mades. I wisecrack every one he rolls is a tailor-made. Thompson gets up seriously and shakes hands. He goes out dragging his game leg.

The last picture I have of him is his standing on the corner wondering which way to turn. Then, his belongings bundled in a black sausage on his back, he limps through the town full of whores, legionnaires, and dust.

2—*Pete*

THE town burns as if on a gridiron. We squat on the curb in the shadow of a side street. On the corner the hotel once owned by the chief of police who was in cahoots with the bootleggers across the border. Harvest hands with goggles on hats crawl through the town. One stops at the corner and takes out of his pocket a hunk of bread.

Pete is paring his fingernails with his knife. Still speaks pidgin English though he came to this country when he was 17. His forehead furrows with his efforts over his nails.

The Macedonian village where he was born was pretty as a picture. Only during the Balkan War when they made him a baker behind the lines did he think of running away to America. He'll never forget the community life and the church where the Russian soldiers were trapped and the 400 bells which can be heard 50 miles off. And the fields where the roses grow. Thousands of acres for perfume. Friend of his got a bottle of it from home. He kept it for years. Only when they calcimined his place, the calcimine stole the odor away. The old country is a pretty place. Take the women there, they are strong, straight as

posts; they are healthy, beautiful.

Pete whets his knife against the heel of his hand. When one of the chief Communists died, there were 40,000 people at his funeral. Just like here when the Salisbury girl died, daughter of Rodney Salisbury, I. W. W. sheriff of Plentywood, Montana. Salisbury is a Communist now. Salisbury often had him stay over and eat with the family. While the girl was dying they read a Joe Hill song for her. They buried her in the backyard among the lilacs. The whole town and the farmers left their wheat to come to the funeral.

He was thinking of going back to Bulgaria. First it was one thing, then another stopped him. He's worked on pipe lines, logging, machine shop, and in Illinois on a large dairy farm where they washed cows 3 times a day. And then the war come. He was out in the wheat fields. Sheriffs rounding up the I. W. W., forcing them to work for $2 a day, slamming them in the jug if they wouldn't. A bunch of the boys attacked one of the jails and freed the prisoners. Business men burned wheatfields and blamed the I. W. W. They set bloodhounds after the boys, slammed a bunch into a revolving cage, branded them like cattle. . . .

Pete snaps the blade. He weighs the little knife with its mother-of-pearl handle in his paw. Even Dimitroff, even he had to leave Bulgaria. But there is no country so beautiful. He was telling that to Rodney one evening.

For a second Pete's lips catch against his teeth. He shakes his head. And again he is torn between the Macedonian roses and the lilacs in the Plentywood backyard.

3—*Joe Fisher*

DAISY, the Norwegian waitress, serves us coffee and. Overworked, pale face like a turnip boiled in milk, she gets $6 a week working from 7 till 5 every day in the year. Farmer's daughter. Won't go back to the farm, never, no matter what happens. She sits near the counter listening, her hands in the lap which sucks up occasionally an extra dollar.

There are 5 of us at the table. Joe Fisher, Pete, the Yankee brakeman, Finlander Bill, and myself.

Joe has the floor while he soaks his cake. Joe Fisher, Bohemian, one of the old I. W. W. leaders, big, rawboned, a burdock of a man, burrheaded, burrfisted. He bucks the Communist Party.

"First off the bat, they made a mistake chasing Trotzky out. That made a big stink all over the world. They should have bumped him off quietly or that Emma Goldman. We were ready to affiliate with the Red International. I answered the 25 questions sent out by Zinoviev. But we are an industrial organization, not a political one. Why must the Communist Party boss the whole world round? Many in the Party don't know what the hell it's all about. Lots of these comrades are windjammers, piecard artists, pencilpushers. When your party held its moles convention in Bridgman, Michigan, we held it open in Chicago. The hell with spies and dicks. The U. F. L. is all hot over nothing. Sure, the farmer is getting it in the neck now, but he's the bastard you got to keep your eye on. And then this Negro policy. What about this open mixing with them? Outsiders think it's whoring. Is that so? Listen. I'm still a I. W. W., free, and don't have to be licking anybody's tail. Many a time I've knocked a brakeman off a train with a logging chain."

The brakeman grins. He says he wouldn't wait to be knocked off if he saw Joe steaming ahead.

Feeling himself pushed, Joe Fisher makes tracks for the past. He was in Tulsa, Oklahoma, when the war terror was bad. "Night riders grab 17 of us. A gang of Kluxers chase the Riders and grab us. It was one of them make-believe games they was staging. It was cold as the devil. One guy, he says, 'Aw, let the bums keep their britches on.' They fixed it up for one of us beat the rest. Else they was going to plug us full of daylight. First fellow flogged was a German who wouldn't salute the flag. He was a A. F. L. man, strong, big fellow with teats like a woman. The blood spurted out of him; I was second. They took the whole bunch of us in the woods and smacked tar and feathers over us so we look like chickens. They took our clothing and burned it. I had a new suit and a gold watch. They could have shot us and no one know the difference. They could say 17 bums killed each other in a scrape. They said, 'Now you fellers run, each to his hole. Run for your lives.' We didn't wait for no second invitation. It was dark as hellsmoke. Bullets whizzed by. I smacked square into a wire fence. Then I feel something warm running down. Blood. I lay knocked cold for a while. We didn't take no chances coming back. We begin calling each other like a bunch of quail when the shooting dies down. Fourteen of us get together. We didn't go till we rounded the whole lot up, didn't want to leave the three die. The last one in was a tall Yank with nine kids. We crawl on our knees till we hit a shack. We lay there all night. It was so small nine lay across one cot, the others on the floor. I stood, holding on to a post. Next morning we get kerosene to wash off the tar and feathers. We find some clothes. We get hold of a couple of axes for another attack. Yah, the clothing didn't fit, so I looked like a cucuricoo with a small hat, she was setting on top of my head. At night we hit the road. We come across a ditch gang. The foreman give us jobs. We got $5 a day. Couldn't work because of my back. All I could do was sit on a stump. When I lost that job, I went north. Couldn't work for a year."

We look at Joe.

"So that's the sonsabitches you got to fight. And the people is dumb. Down in Amarillo, Texas, where the longhorns live I almost got myself lynched because I told a bunch of them a judge who shot his son-in-law was going to get free. They don't savvy what it's all about. Sure, the judge went free. Look at the Congressional Records, that's a history of it all. There's that steamship company on the west coast gets $100,000 for delivering 3 letters and a 4-pound bag of express to South America. There you are!"

Finlander Bill says, "You don't have to prove all that. You fellows were good once. But where do you stand now?"

"On me own feet. On the balls of me own feet. A scissorbill offers me a job in the postoffice. The hell with it. Who wants to be an informer or in business with this rotten system? No compromises. On your own hook you're always the boss and square as a die."

It is night already. The stars blow up from the Dakota prairie. Joe goes out to bum some chuck and then to the box-car. Pete follows him. The brakeman leaves for the station. And Finlander Bill to write a report and sell his Daily Workers.

4—*Farm Organizer, Ed Baumann*

THE Farmers National Weekly has recently reported the arrest of Ed Baumann of Bagley, Minn., on charges of drunkenness and disorderly conduct. The judge, a Bagley storekeeper, fined Ed $40. The farmers raised the money in a jiffy for this Minnesota firebrand, knowing far well that Ed is too sober and steadfast for their enemies, that Ed was framed up because he was preparing the farmers to fight the eviction of an old farm woman of more than 80.

I remember Ed Baumann at the First Farmers National Convention in Washington reporting, his face like one of those pikes found in the cold Minnesota lakes. I remember him at the Plenum in Duluth, one of his ears cauliflowered. He had been caught in the blizzard on the prairies while organizing, and had managed to save himself by getting into a haystack. "But," Ed said then with a grin, "I got big ears. One of them stuck out and got frostbitten."

The first time I met Ed was at his home near Bagley. A log hut, 2 rooms. Chinks where the plaster has fallen out. The kitchen with one side open, screened with cheese cloth.

Ed's putting on his shoes in the bedroom. Lean as a whipstock, battleship jaw, tobacco-stained teeth. Irish and German blood in him. Hacked away from home at 14, evangelist, sign painter, farmer, editor, Socialist, I.W.W., head split open during a strike.

Ed's second wife stands in the doorway. Hungarian and worked in a Newark cigar factory. She met Ed in Seattle when they were investigating the Centralia case. She is still weak as a cat from the bad attack of pleurisy. They had to give up the car, and

so all winter long she too has been riding freights and tramping thru snow up to her stomach organizing the farmers. What made her sicker probably was that they were afraid to call the nearest doctor as all Bagley is dead set against them, and the doctor could very easily try monkey shines. All's fair in the class war.

Over the bed hangs a picture of the death masks of Sacco and Vanzetti under a frame with cedar leaves and paper roses. Also a copy of a poem beginning with "Let us choose a nook in a shady brook," and a painting of her brother in the uniform of a Hungarian soldier killed during the Hungarian revolution.

We have supper of corn, berries, cucumber salad. The bread is rye mixed with white flour. Flour's so thin it's like eating sand, says Mrs. Baumann. She went to town for flour but the relief office said her name hadn't been handed in. "That's a lie. I made up the list and gave it to you myself." She explains to us she had a little money, but she wouldn't spend it on flour so long as she could use it for Party work. She threatened to bring a bunch of farmers down with her. The relief agent rushed out after her and gave her all the flour she wanted.

Ed rushes through his meal. He must feed us the whole picture of the struggle in his county. First, the church is fighting the U.F.L. "The farmers kind of scattered like chickens with a rock chucked into them because of religion. But we had an organizer down who explained to them everybody was welcome in the U.F.L. no matter what his race, creed, or color so long as he was willing to fight for to live."

Ed's story shows he is partly responsible for the "religion hawk swooping over the farmers." At the age of 17 he left the church, and boasts that ever since he's been a bone in the throat and a thorn in the side of the Lutherans. Always liked to be at sermons to ask hard questions like Tom Paine's. He's bawled out a minister who came down to U.F.L. meetings to sneer. Another time, he, a farmer, and a minister had a 3-cornered argument. Ed turned the Bible inside out like a chicken's gizzard. The minister legged it off in a huff. The farmer said it was a good show Ed put on. Since then he's been a U.F.L. man.

Not only the church, but also the school is used to fight the farmers. Ed decided to have a Red funeral for his first wife. He wanted to have her coffin draped in red in the school gym. The whole country was aghast. They locked the schoolhouse. Ed had one of his boys creep through a transom to open the door. Then the teacher was ordered to get after his boys because he is a Bolshevik. He met her on the road one day and flailed into her until she started crying.

The boys hang about near the table as Ed talks. The youngest still doesn't care for school. He is thin and pale, probably suffered most because of his mother's death. The other

A. Sopher

two are freckle-faced Irish looking kids, sturdy and fresh as bull's eye daisies, and help the grandfather on the farm.

Ed says, "If I die in the first volley, I hope I live long enough to see the Red Flag go up. Maybe we'll straighten things out before the boys grow up so they'll be able to enjoy life."

Ed brings us over to the old man's place. "My father's been homesteading these 40 acres 32 years. Now he's faced with eviction and foreclosure. Our first big fight will be right here. We haven't paid the Rural Credit the interest on the loan. Can't pay and won't pay."

The father is trying to fix the cream separator nailed down to the floor of the best room. The old woman helps. Floors bare. A few chairs. Smell as of a potato bin though everything is scrupulously clean. Bible on the table.

Ed introduces the comrade. The old man is right glad. Tells Ed about a neighbor buying a copy of the Minnesota Voice. Ed snorts, "That buzzard's sheet. I'll be down tonight to see him. I'll step on his collar until he buys the Daily and Producers News."

We walk back through the corn field. "The old generation was against us from the start. In 1922 the old man let my oldest brother chase me off the place. My brother wouldn't speak to me until my niece got sick and he had to ask me to go to the doctor in my car. Sister's a great churchgoer. Now she lets my nephew read the Daily. Some come down!"

The corn is short, yellowish. The drought has turned whole fields rusty. Ed's voice sounds like knives sharpened against running stones. "The politicians give us the hardest fight. The road commissioner bought a grader to use in his own pit. We showed him up in the county seat. He was going to punch my head. My wife got in his way. He smacked her. We landed on him and ripped half his hide off. Next, we fought the politicians on the game tax. We told them we wouldn't pay hunting licenses. If a deer came into a hungry farmer's yard, he'd be no man if he didn't go for his meat, license or no license. The commissioners wouldn't revoke the license. We farmers ain't paid it. Not a single one's been locked up, we fished and hunted. Now we got the farmers fighting the dog tax. A dollar for male and $3 for bitch. If you don't pay by September they'll jail and fine you. We roused the farmers with the battle cry, 'Farmers, we're being fined for being poor. Farmers, the poorer you are, the harder they grind you.' "

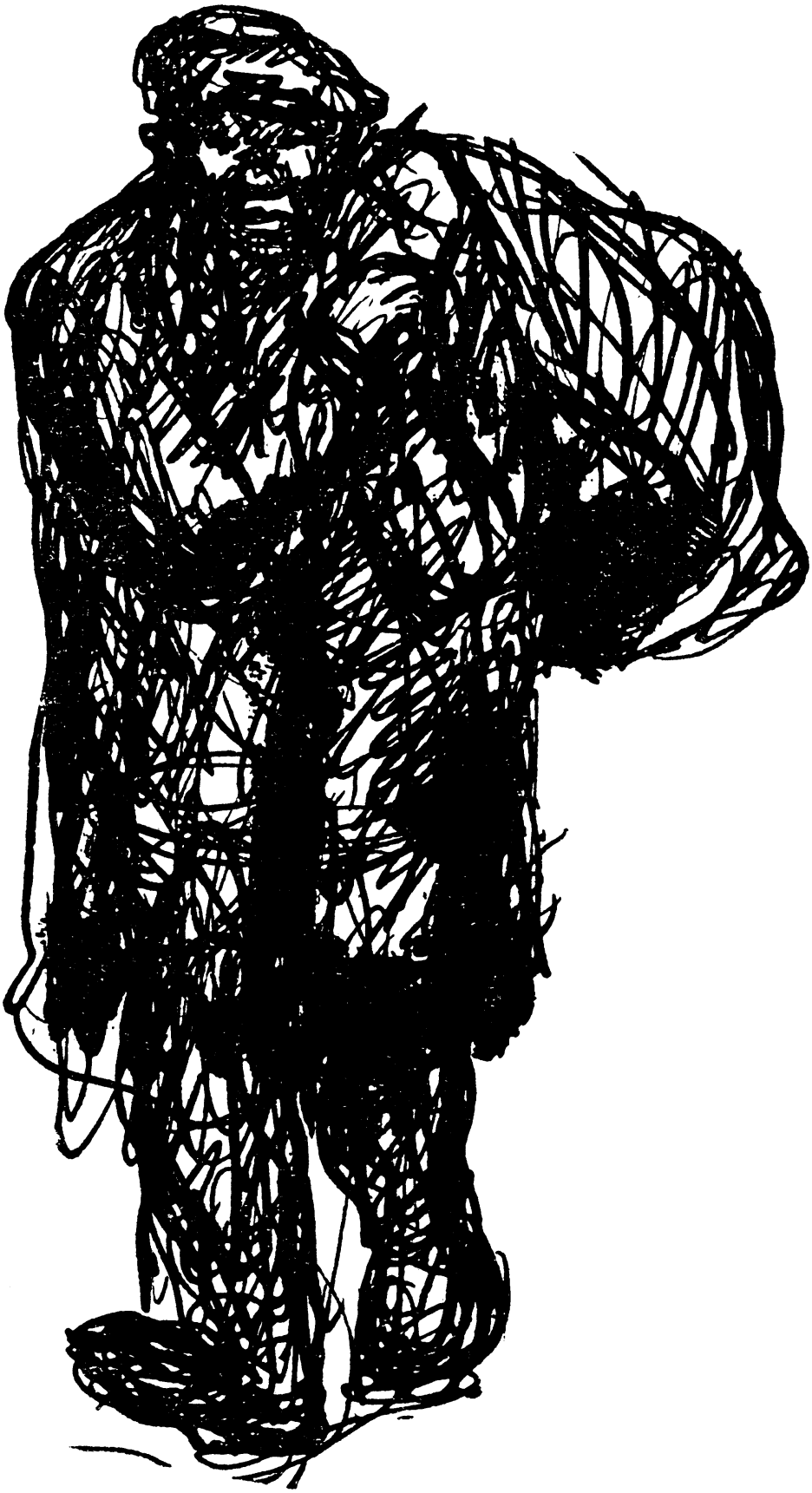
Ed's battleship jaw moves forward. "This organizes the farmers, dogs and deer. Bigger issues will find them ready to fight. We don't let anybody get away with it. When a politician like Townley running for Congress comes round we're set for him." And Ed describes how he got up after Townley had spoken at a meeting and called him a faker. He showed that Townley was always straddling the fence and falling off on the side where the nickel is. He said that if you put Democrats, Republicans, Socialists all in the same bag, they would stink each other to death. They turned the lights out and Townley run off. That didn't stop Ed. He yelled, "I can speak in the dark as well as you can in the light."

We go back to the hut. Ed rummages around in an old trunk. The I.W.W. is still strong in him. Times when he feels so strong about Centralia that he believes with 2 cars full of stout men he could free Ray Becker, jailed for 20 to 40 years. His wife smiles, "You know you couldn't, Ed."

"Well, we let Ray Becker go because he is still against the I.L.D. defending him." And Ed goes on with the story which he had written.

The I.W.W. headquarters being attacked by the Centralia gang of legionnaires, thugs, business men. The boozers blazing away with their vomit and guns. The boys defending themselves. Some of the thugs bloated like the hoglouse; you expect blood to be dripping from its tail from the blood sucked out of the people. Some of them crumpling up from the bullets fired by the boys. The door broken in. John Davis battered to death by that hoglouse Cunningham with a gas pipe. Wesley Everett insisting he was Britt Smith to give Britt a chance to make his get-away. Wesley dragged out of town. His penis cut off and stuffed into his mouth. Rope round his neck, lowered from the bridge, jerked up again. "Kill me like a soldier." One of the business gangsters throwing a gun into his face. "If you're a soldier, here's a gun," and smashed in his face. They made the rope longer to give more souvenirs around. Then hanged him.

On the wall hang the two death masks of the Italian workers, the picture of the murdered Hungarian soldier. The sister's cough shakes her breasts. Wesley Everett bleeds on the bedroom floor, the holster of his body mangled. And Ed's eyes go gunning furiously over the bristling turret of his jaw.



A. Sopher

A. Sopher

"I Am Tortured!" Thaelmann Cries

A non-partisan shop delegation from the Saar Basin was sent to Berlin by its constituents, for the purpose of gathering immediate information about Ernst Thaelmann's state of health. They succeeded in getting to Thaelmann and conversed with him for a few minutes. And they found: the leader of the German Communist Party was and still is being maltreated. That is what Ernst Thaelmann, in spite of the presence of Gestapo (Secret Police) officers indignantly told his fellow workers to have them tell it to the world. The delegation's communiqué follows.

WE, KURT THOMAS, member of the Social Democratic Party since January, 1930, and of the Miners' Association since 1920, member of the District Committee of the Social Democratic Party at Ottweiler, working in the Dechen mine;

Wilhelm Stauner, miner, member of the Communist Party since 1934 and of the Red Aid, working in the foundry at Heinitz;

Fritz Naumann, non-partisan, working in the Kohlwald mine, declare:

During the campaign of the International Committee for the Release of Ernst Thaelmann and the other Anti-fascists, we were elected in shop meetings of the Dechen and Kohlwald mines and the foundry at Heinitz. As the delegates of Saar Basin workers, we had the duty of convincing ourselves by actual evidence as to the condition of the leader of the German proletariat who, according to newspaper reports, is being tortured by S.S. men. This delegation was financed through collections among the workers of the mines and foundries in the Saar Basin.

The delegation arrived in Berlin on Thursday, May 17th, and immediately established contact with the Ministry of Justice to procure a permit to visit Ernst Thaelmann. It was but Saturday morning that the delegation was able to overcome all the obstacles the authorities had thrown in its way, and to accomplish its aim. We, the delegates, are thoroughly convinced that the German Government granted us the permission to see Thaelmann only under the pressure of the powerful campaign for the release of Thaelmann and on account of the enormous importance of the Saar Basin for the Government's political ambitions.

Here follows an account of our interview with Ernst Thaelmann:

We were told that we had to greet him in the name of the Saar workers with the words: "Good day, comrade. We bring you the greetings of the Saar workers."

These further questions were dictated to us by the Gestapo officers:

Is your food sufficient?

Do you get any mail?

Are you permitted to write?

Are you permitted to smoke?

How often and how long are you permitted to walk?

Are you permitted to buy extra foodstuff?

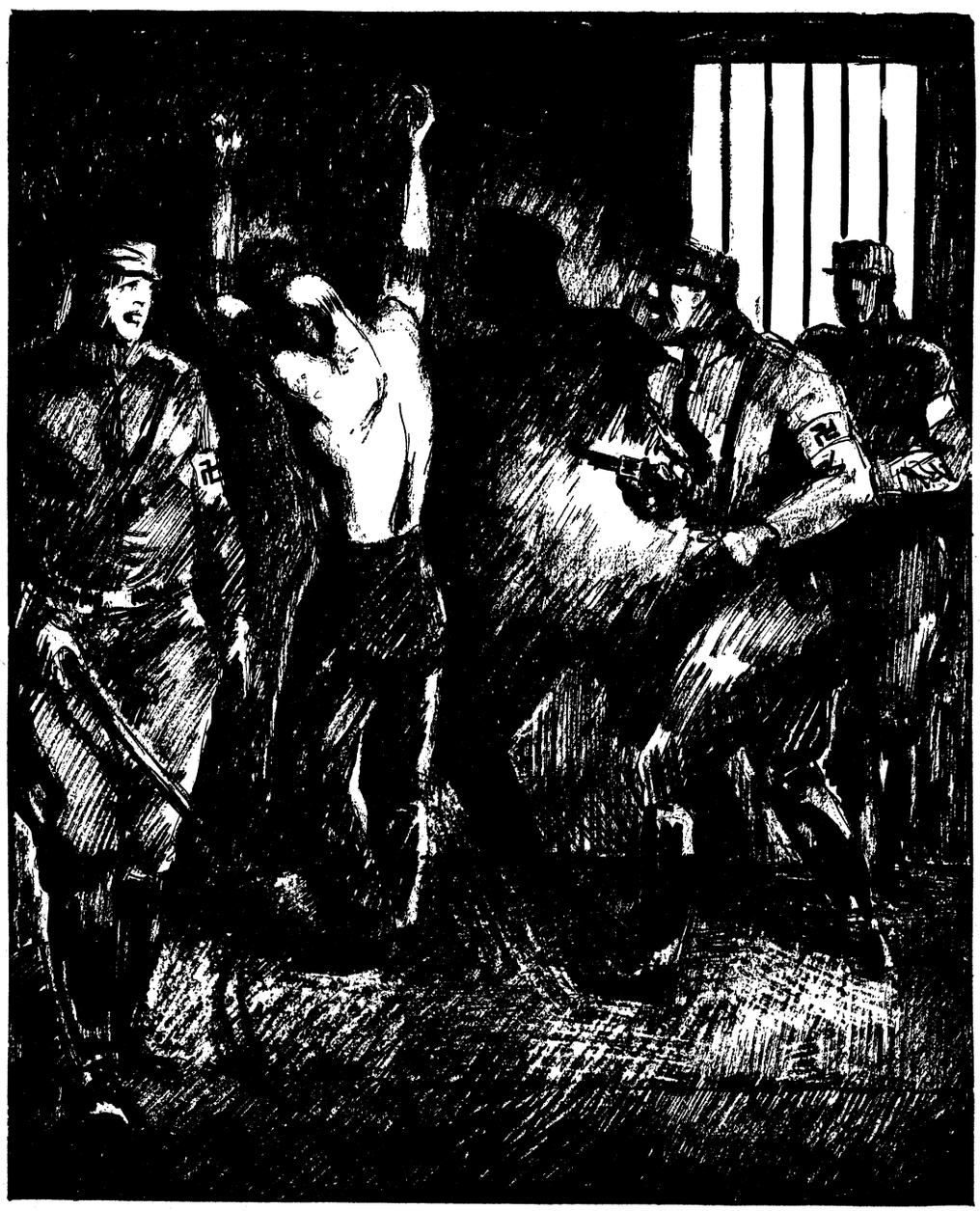
One question we proposed, namely: Have you any complaints to make about your treatment in prison? was refused by the officers. When we, according to our instructions, requested to be authorized to ask Thaelmann: Have you been ill handled or tortured? we were told explicitly that this question would be a *political* one which could not be granted. It was made clear to us that we, should we ask any other questions than those dictated to us, would be *taken in custody as political prisoners.*

Finally we saw Thaelmann. We asked our questions. Deeply moved though we were, we could not overcome the impression that Thaelmann had his answers dictated to him, just as we had been told what to ask.

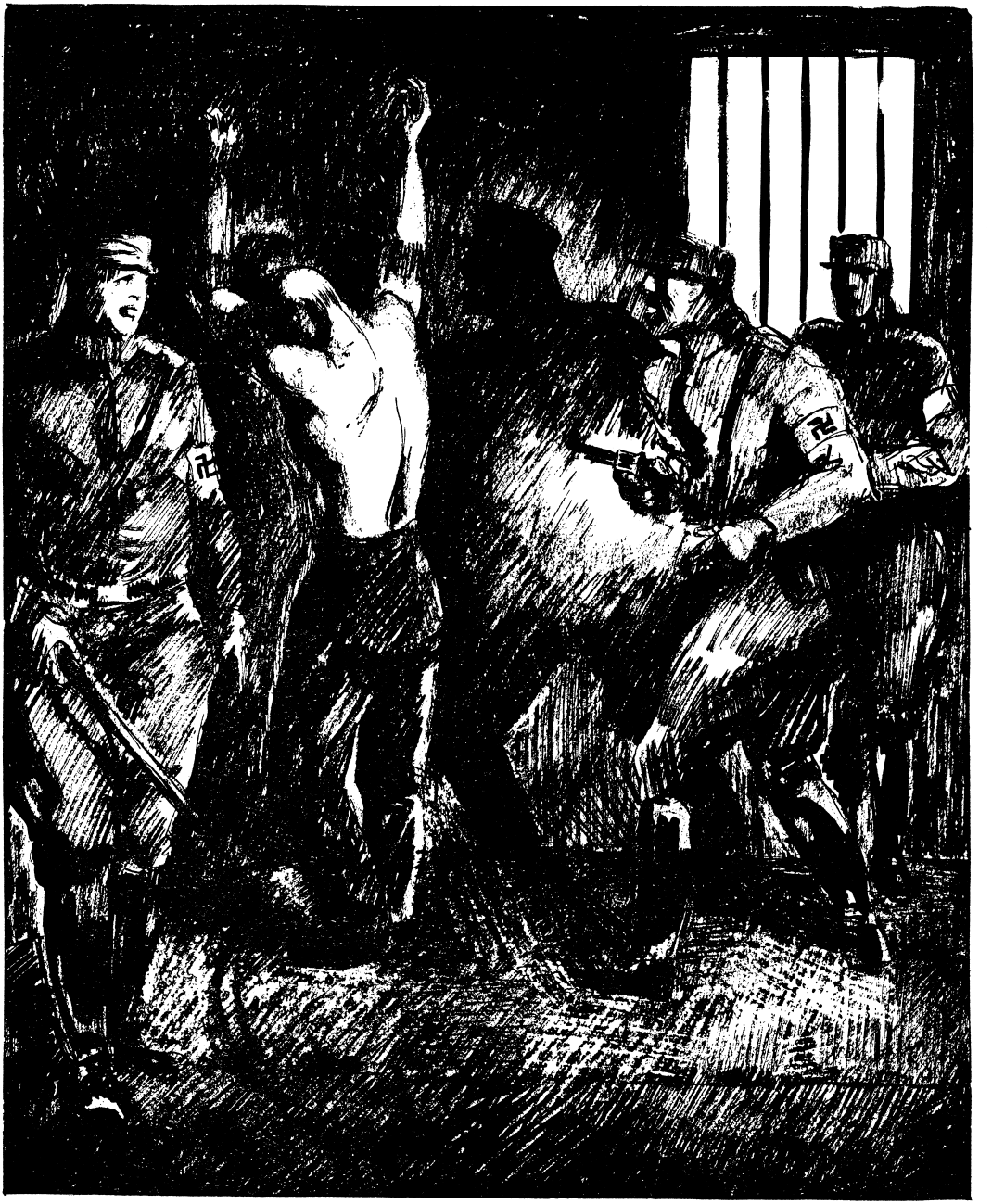
But during the interview it became quite apparent that Thaelmann, in spite of his frightful position, had not yielded. In his answers he revealed to us the terrible danger he is in.

Our first question about food Thaelmann answered: "It is impossible to live on what I am getting here. If I couldn't buy foodstuff from the money my wife sends me, I most surely could not exist."

To our question, whether he received any mail, he remarked: "I receive mail from my closest relatives only. Though I know most certainly that hundreds wrote me on the occasion of my birthday, only three letters were

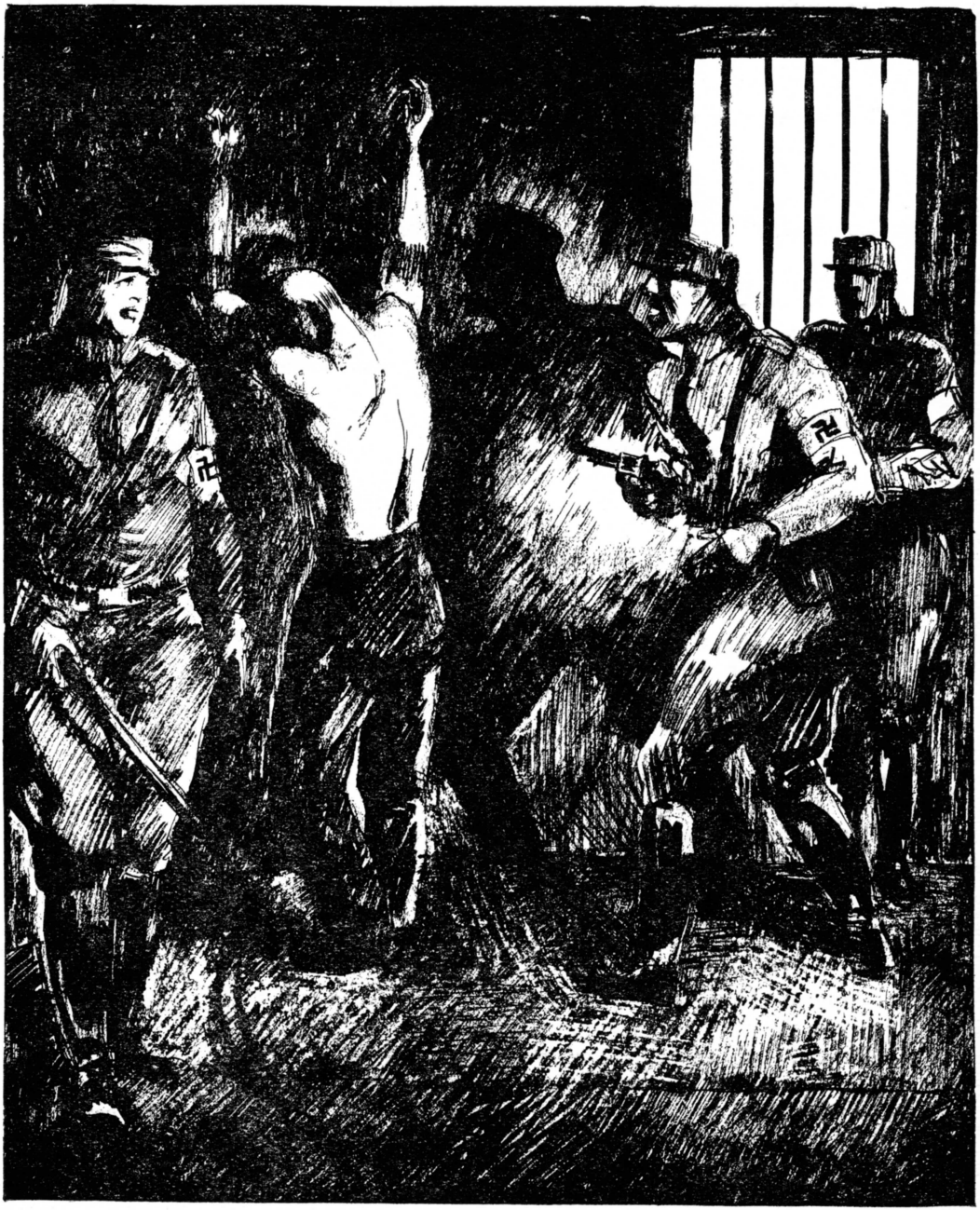


ANOTHER COMMUNIST COMMITS SUICIDE *Mac Garrity*



ANOTHER COMMUNIST COMMITS SUICIDE

Mac Garrity



ANOTHER COMMUNIST COMMITS SUICIDE

Mac Garrity

handed to me, one from my wife, another from my parents, and one from a stucco worker in Saxony."

Thaelmann is permitted to write one letter every two weeks, he told us.

At this moment the officers tried to make us ask Thaelmann to get up and walk back and forth so that we could see that he was able to walk. But neither Thaelmann nor we reacted to their demand. Thaelmann's silence was eloquent enough.

Now we sprang the surprising question: "Comrade Thaelmann, how do you feel *in general?*"

And then we learned the whole alarming truth. Deeply roused, Thaelmann answered:

"I HAVE BEEN TORTURED."

At once the Gestapo officers interfered. Thaelmann in growing excitement hammered with his fist on the table: "THEY DID AND THEY STILL DO MALTREAT ME!"

The Gestapo men shoved us out of the room. Thaelmann shouted after us, and these are his last words we heard: "Give the workers in the Saar Basin greetings in my spirit."

We have seen the gallant, unbroken and unshattered Ernst Thaelmann, and we have found that he is being tortured. We are deeply convinced that his life is in immediate danger. We are deeply convinced that only an unceasing vigilance of the world can protect the life of Ernst Thaelmann.

We therefore appeal to all liberal-minded people of the world to intensify their efforts in the struggle for life and freedom of Ernst Thaelmann. Only this strong pressure will do—that is the opinion of us three delegates, Social Democrat, Communist and non-partisan,—to assure the life and freedom of Ernst Thaelmann and of all the other incarcerated anti-fascists!

—Translated by Andor Braun.

The Trial

MURIEL RUKEYSER

The South is green with coming spring: revival
flourishes in the fields of Alabama. Spongy with rain,
plantations breathe April—carwheels suck
    mud in the roads,
the town expands warm in the afternoons.
    At night, the black boy
teeters no-handed on a bicycle, whistling the
    St. Louis Blues,
blood beating, and hot South. A red brick courthouse
is vicious with men inviting death. Array your judges;
    call your jurors;
                come,
here is your justice, come out of the crazy jail.
Grass is green now in Alabama; Birmingham dusks are quiet
relaxed and soft in the parks, stern at the yards:
a hundred boxcars shunted off to sidings, and the hoboes
gathering grains of sleep in forbidden corners.
In all the yards: Atlanta, Chattanooga,
Memphis, and New Orleans, the cars, and no jobs.

Every night the mail-planes burrow the sky
carrying postcards to laughing girls in Texas,
passionate letters to the Charleston virgins,
words through the South—and no reprieve,
no pardon, no release.

A blinded statue stands before the courthouse,
bronze and black men lie on the grass, waiting,
the khaki dapper National Guard leans on its bayonets.
But the air is populous beyond our vision:
all the people's anger finds its vortex here
as the mythic lips of justice open, and speak.
Hammers and sickles are carried in a wave of
    strength, fire-tipped,
swinging passionately ninefold to a shore.
Answer the back-thrown Negro face of the lynched,
    the flat forehead knitted,
the eyes showing a wild iris, the mouth a welter of blood,
answer the broken shoulder and these twisted arms.
John Brown, Nat Turner, Toussaint stand in this
    courtroom,
Dred Scott wrestles for freedom there in the dark corner,
all our celebrated shambles are repeated here: now again
Sacco and Vanzetti walk to a chair, to the straps
    and rivets
and the switch spitting death and Massachusetts' will.

Wreaths are brought out of history
    here are the well-nourished flowers of France, grown
        strong on blood,
    Caesar twisting his thin throat toward conquest,
        turning north from the Roman laurels,
    the Istrian galleys slide again to sea.
    How they waded through bloody Godfrey's Jerusalem,
    How the fires broke through Europe, and the rich
    and the tall jails battened on revolution!
    The fastidious Louis', cousins to the sun, stamping
    those ribboned heels on Calas, on the people;
    the lynched five thousand of America.
    Tom Mooney from San Quentin, Herndon: here
    is an army for audience

                all resolved
to a gobbet of tobacco, spat, and the empanelled hundred,
a jury of vengeance, the cheap pressed lips,
    the eyes like hardware;
the judge, his eye-sockets and cheeks dark and
    immutably secret,
the twisting mouth of the prosecuting attorney.
Nine dark boys spread their breasts against Alabama,
schooled in the cells, fathered by want

    Mother—one writes—they treat us bad.
        If they send us
    back to Kilby jail, I think I shall kill myself.
    I think I must hang myself by my overalls.

Alabama and the South are soft with spring:
in the North, the seasons change, sweet April,
    December and the air
loaded with snow. There is time for meetings
during the years, they remaining in prison.

                In the Square
a crowd listens carrying banners.
Overhead, boring through the speaker's voice a plane
circles with a snoring of motors revolving in the sky
drowning the single voice. It does not touch
the crowd's silence. It circles. The name stands:
Scottsboro Scottsboro Scottsboro

Correspondence

A Visit to Milwaukee

To The New Masses:

Recently I was in Milwaukee. More recently I have read of the Socialist Party convention in Detroit, and I am moved to get down a few notes on my visit to the "Socialist city."

When I asked a Milwaukean about the Socialist Party, he smiled indulgently and questioned me first. Do I know about the victory just won by 2,200 employees in the Seaman Auto-Body Corporation? During the seven weeks the strikers rejected sell-out proposals of the N.R.A. boards, finally winning a 15-percent increase in wages and forcing the company to reemploy all strikers as well as all workers laid off since last November. The A.F. of L. tried valiantly to break the strike—and the workers know that this betrayer group is openly controlled by the Socialist Party.

Certain facts seem to indicate clearly that this stronghold of the Socialist Party is tottering. In recent elections Socialist candidates failed to win a single office and every one of their referendum proposals was defeated. The leaders, of course, are busily digging their own political graves. For example, Mayor Hoan refused to welcome Lord Marley on his recent anti-Fascist, anti-War lecture tour, but outdid himself in praising and greeting General Haller, official Fascist visitor from Poland. Rank and file members of the Socialist Party are protesting the shameless conduct of their leaders who have permitted federal anti-picketing rulings to supersede the state guarantee of picketing rights and operate against restaurant, leather, and theatre workers. Moreover, the local House of Correction is so full of graft rackets involving Socialists that the New York Welfare Island racketeers may soon have to surrender their laurels of corruption.

But the most brazen role is being played by the Milwaukee Leader, only Socialist daily in the United States. During the milk, transportation, and power strikes the Leader carried strike-breaking advertisements. Hordes of infuriated workers stormed for an explanation. They were told that, after all, a paid ad is a paid ad, business is business, et cetera. In line with this philosophy of Socialist officers, the Leader now permits its presses to print a Fascist weekly magazine—which is also distributed by the Leader's trucks. Once again infuriated demands for an explanation. . . .

In this alleged fortress of the Socialists the General Secretary of the Communist Party on May 1 spoke to a packed house (3,500) which had to close its box office at 9:15. Milwaukee had just witnessed a parade of 6,000—nearly three times as many as last year. Some 10,000 demonstrated at Red Arrow Park to the May Day call of the revolutionary leaders, a band of Y.P.S.L. and many Socialist members scattered in groups, breaking through their hopeless misleadership to forge the beginnings of a united front of Milwaukee workers.

Henry T. Adamson.

Mount Vernon, N. Y.

What Happened in Laurinburg

To The New Masses:

Press accounts of Laurinburg, N. C., events state briefly that eight strikers were wounded on the picket line at the Prince Mill, on the night of Sunday, May 27. This is the way things happened that night, and what is happening now:

Late Sunday night Prince Mill officials brought in scabs and started up the mill secretly in order to get ahead of the striking workers of the three other Waverly chain mills who had voted that afternoon to throw a picket line around the Prince Mill and strike the first thing Monday morning. About ten o'clock word got around that lights were showing in the mill and the strikers poured down and surrounded the building. Mill officials and scabs armed by the company came out and opened fire at the strikers. Jim Waters, cardroom overseer, the strikers say, began the shooting. The strikers rushed the mill gang, took the guns away fom some of them, and defended themselves. Result, two strikers were wounded—one of them shot in the back—and six company men. Jim Waters and his son were among them.

H. E. Sanford, Jr., picket lieutenant of the first shift, said about the fight next day: "We're sorry about last night, but they attacked us, and there wasn't anything else to do but fight back." The pickets were not armed when they got to the mill, but . . . "What we got we took from the others" he said. "I took a pistol away from X—— as he was about getting ready to shoot."

The way the workers were feeling about the company men, the hospital authorities thought it best to place strikers and scabs in separate wards. A clash between Roy Lockey, wounded striker, and Elmore Evans, "loyal worker," took place right in the operating room.

The next day a mass picket line was thrown around the Prince Mill as per schedule, despite orders of United Textile Worker officials to the contrary. Also some forty cotton mill workers came up the 17 or 18 miles from Bennettsville across the South Carolina line, to give their striking fellow workers a hand and stay around till things quieted down.

On Thursday pickets reported scattering shots fired at their ranks from a distant point. Yesterday (Saturday, June 2nd), pickets again reported sniping; mill thugs were in an especially ugly mood after a day of the moonshine freely handed out in the local election primaries. It is also reported that these company men are threatening to shoot a road through the picket line surrounding the Prince Mill. As answer, the strikers yesterday added 100 pickets, bringing the total to 325. (There are 800 workers in the four mills of the chain.)

The outstanding and typical contribution of the A.F. of L. to the situation appears to be the request made after Sunday's fight, for Governor Ehringhaus to send in troops. A.F. of L. officials, incidentally, came into the strike some days after it began as a spontaneous walkout against stretch-out and bad housing; they are now trying to settle it in the usual A.F. of L. fashion.

The company, which has steadily refused to enter into negotiations with the strikers, is openly working towards a massacre of pickets, towards staging a clash in which the most militant strike element can be framed, or both. They will get away with it unless the strikers, carrying through their stubborn and heroic struggle in this remote stronghold of company feudalism, unaided except by their Bennettsville comrades, get prompt and effective backing.

The Laurinburg struggle is of special significance precisely because it is taking place in one of those isolated, 100-percent company-controlled mill-towns which millowners have planted far out in the country away from contact with the concentrated proletariat in the large industrial centers. It is not many miles up the line from Rockingham, a particular company hell-hole, where the millowners and their specially selected gorillas wield practically absolute power over the lives of the workers, (and where, incidentally, a militant strike directed basically against company control in 1932 was sold by A.F.of L. officialdom lock, stock and barrel.) Only recently, in Rockingham, workers whom the millowners suspected of supporting the militant National Textile Workers' Union were stopped (outside the limits of the company towns) and searched for union literature or membership cards. Blacklisted workers coming back to visit friends were halted and closely questioned; in some cases told to get out of town and stay out. Union meetings held in private houses, away from company property, have been entered and broken up by mill deputies.

Workers all through the South are watching Laurinburg. "Those are men," a worker said yesterday, "wish I could go up there and help them out." Laurinburg is discussed at every gathering of workers. Correctly, the workers see in the Laurinburg struggle not alone a fight against stretch-out and bad housing, but a challenge to the whole feudal regime in Southern Textile to which the United States government has now given official recognition through its endorsement of the Cotton Code and general wage differential.

Amy Schechter.

Somewhere in North Carolina.
June 3, 1934.

More on Upton Sinclair

To The New Masses:

Upton Sinclair's incredible political campaign, so ably characterized by Sender Garlin as "reactionary utopianism," becomes intelligible only when we see it against the background of the California political situation out of which it arose.

One of the peculiarities of this situation is the complete absence of any mass basis for the Socialist Party. In California—the Socialists here control no trade unions, no organizations of unemployed, and for that reason their hold on those who voted their ticket has been most precarious.

In the last two years, the Communist party has made tremendous advances in California. Honest elements within the Socialist Party and among its followers—those very honest elements whom the capitalists must divert from activity in the class struggle by seducing them with the phraseology of the Socialist Party—began to become discontented with the party and its inactivity as contrasted with the militant day-to-day struggles led by the Communists.

Last July, the Socialist Party made a desperate attempt to secure a mass basis by following up the abortive "Continental Congress of Workers and Farmers," with a State Congress. Despite plentiful support this congress dissipated itself into futility because of internal conflicts over leadership. Its only result was Stitt Wilson's organizing a dual union in the agricultural fields near Turlock and his sell-out of the workers. Because of this sell-out the prestige of the Congress, the Socialist Party, and of Wilson was irreparably ruined among the agricultural workers. All attempts to apply a hypodermic to it proved fruitless. The Congress was dead, and with it the hopes of the California Socialists.

If there were no Socialist Party, the capitalist class would have to create one. In California, as elsewhere, the bourgeoisie feel very keenly the need of some political group which will canalize the discontent of the leftward-moving masses into the futility of revolutionary phraseology without action. And, since the Socialist Party had shown itself utterly incapable of assuming the task, some new Social-Fascist party had to be created by the capitalist class to divert the strong tendencies towards the Communist Party.

This is where Upton Sinclair came in. This is the reason why the class-conscious capitalists asked and urged him to run for Governor on the Democratic ticket. Workers who could see the corruption and the hopelessness of the Socialist Party might not be able to see at once the charlatanry of Sinclair's program. Workers could see that they were indeed throwing away their vote by voting for the Socialist Party might believe Sinclair when he told them that they could attain a classless society with-

out struggle and sacrifice. It is not important to the capitalists of California whether or not Sinclair is elected, but it is tremendously important that his campaign should keep workers out of participation in the class struggle during the coming agricultural season when the growers of California are planning openly an intensive campaign to fasten Fascism—the open bloody terror aimed at working-class organizations—upon the agricultural fields of California.

When the prop of support from certain class-conscious sections of the capitalist class was removed from under the Socialist Party, it shriveled still further. As was inevitable, its most militant members left it at the February convention after the United Front appeal of the Communist Party was flatly refused by the State Executive Committee. One-third of the delegates to this convention, together with a proportionate number of the rank and file, walked out of the convention and the party and into the ranks of the Communist Party. These elements were the ones who had kept what life had previously existed in the party going—without them, whole locals are sickening and dying. The party has given up all pretense of being a working-class or revolutionary organization—it is now plainly petty-bourgeois in its class composition and openly Social-Fascist in its program. Its candidates for Governor, an anemic, pedantic, and owlish young man named Milen Dempster, is a complete nonentity. It is doubtful if he will poll half as many votes in the primaries as Sam Darcy, Communist candidate.

But while there is life, there is hope. For, according to John C. Packard, California's tremulous representative on the National Executive Committee of the Socialist Party, Upton Sinclair has promised—with his very own mouth—that *if he doesn't get the Democratic nomination in the primaries, he'll urge all his followers to vote the Socialist ticket in November.*

The Socialist Party is not dead in California. The bourgeoisie cannot afford to let it die. It is merely waiting for Upton Sinclair to drop a new batch of followers and votes into their lap. Social-Fascism, which Sinclair and the Socialist Party equally represent, will not die—it must be killed. But it is important to see that these two Social-Fascist groups, who are at swords' points now, are objectively not only allies but conspirators—conspirators to seduce the masses from the stern realities of the need for struggle.

Of course, this conspiracy is not necessarily conscious. Sinclair, in one of his unpredictable eccentric turns, may go back on his agreement. But whether he does or not, the inevitable outcome of his campaign will be the same as if he had carried it through. It is doubtful whether either Sinclair or the Socialists completely understand either the scope or the purpose of their collaboration. They are forced into this conspiracy because the bourgeoisie is in desperate need of assistance in stemming the rising revolutionary spirit of the workers.

DAVE LYON.

San Francisco, Calif.

Covici, Friede Complains

TO THE NEW MASSES:

It is not the practice of this house to protest to reviewers or to periodicals about the tone of the reviews of its publications. Nevertheless, I feel that in all fairness the attention of your readers should be called to the flagrant error of fact in David Alfaro Siqueiros' review of *Portrait of America*, by Diego Rivera and Bertram D. Wolfe.

He asserts that a portait of Julio Antonio Mella, Cuban Communist leader, was not included in Rivera's "Imperialism" fresco, and the fresco itself was reproduced in THE NEW MASSES to bolster up this astonishing assertion. There are only two portraits in this particular panel: one, in the upper right-hand corner, of General Augusto Cesar Sandino, and the other, prominent in the lower left foreground, of Julio Antonio Mella, described in the text, on the following page (195), as "the brilliant young Cuban Communist and student-leader, who was assassinated in Mexico by the gunmen of the butcher Machado, maintained in Cuba so many years by the support of American capital, and the State Department."

PASCAL COVICI.

Siqueiros Replies

TO THE NEW MASSES:

Is Mella in the panel *Imperialism* of Diego Rivera? Who has recognized him? I who lived with him for a long time was unable to recognize him. The Cuban and Mexican comrades who struggled together with him cannot recognize him. Would Mr. Covici be willing to bet with me that the mother of Julio Antonio Mella, who is actually in New York City, will not recognize her son? You, Mr. Covici, who never saw Mella, recognized him! You are a victim of the classic political camouflages of the master painter of the Mexican government.

Rivera is a good portraitist. He knows how to make a one hundred percent likeness. When he paints Washington, everybody recognizes Washington. What happened in the case of Mella? You must know, Mr. Covici, that Rivera paints in a recognizable manner when it suits him and in an unrecognizable manner when it does not suit him. This is one of his most usual tricks, and I unfortunately forgot to refer to it in my article—but now you remind me of it.

I should like to know whether you could also recognize in *Portrait of America* the figures of Roosevelt, Johnson, Green, Calles, Morrow and all these personages of imperialism and its penetration in Latin America. Why did you use exclusively the argument of Mella?

Beware of the tricks of Rivera, Mr. Covici.

D. A. SIQUEIROS.

Helping the Money Changers

TO THE NEW MASSES:

The Home Owners' Act was passed by Congress for the express purpose of saving the property of the small home owner from foreclosure and presumably, for the sole benefit of the home owner. In the first place, it is significant to note that this Act was passed by Congress only after real estate had become a glut on the market and it was no longer profitable for mortgage holders to institute foreclosure proceedings. At this stage of the game, the plight of these deserving home owners in distress, became a pressing problem to be solved. Of course, the increasing unmarketability of mortgages, may have given a slight impetus to the passing of this law. In essence, the provisions of this Act are:

It provides that any home owner, the appraised value of whose residence does not exceed $20,000, which property was acquired prior to June, 1933, and whose home is in danger of foreclosure, may make an application to the Home Owners' Loan Corporation, for a loan upon said property. If his application is approved of and the amount of indebtedness does not exceed eighty percent of the appraised value of the property, he is then eligible for a loan. However, the Home Owners' Loan Corporation, in order to obtain a first lien upon these premises, must pay off all the existing liens thereon. This is done by wiping off the mortgages and other obligations by paying them through bonds of the Home Owners' Loan Corporation. These mortgage holders, consisting for the main part of banks and title companies, magnanimously consent to take bonds for the full value of their mortgages. Of course, the consideration for which these mortgages were executed was not merely bonds, but the promise of the obligor to repay his indebtedness in currency. Nevertheless, conditions being what they are, the mortgagors are willing to make a sacrifice and accept these bonds, which are now selling above par and are readily convertible into cash. In certain instances, the mortgage holders even prove their willingness to co-operate in this phase of the new deal, by agreeing to accept less than the face value of their mortgages, where the amount allowed for the loan is not sufficient to cover all the obligations. It is true that in such cases the practice is to have the home owner execute notes or a second subordinate mortgage to cover this difference, but even such a practice is generous as the mortgagor is not bound to go through with the transaction, but may foreclose at any time on the property in question, which has greatly decreased in value from the time when this mortgage was executed and correspondingly, the value of this mortgage will have decreased.

What about the home owner in this general Roman carnival of debt paying? He must execute a mortgage to the Home Owners' Loan Corporation to cover the amount of obligations which the corporation has cleared off his property, and in addition pay expenses of approximately $75, which are incidental to the closing of the loan. The new mortgage provides for the payment of only five percent interest and he has a moratorium on the payment of principal on this mortgage until June, 1936. The only apparent tangible benefit to the home owner is the fact that the interest rate has been reduced from five and one-half or six percent to five percent. The mortgage holders, however, have been financially rejuvenated by receiving more than the present market value of their securities.

Once more the New Deal has driven forth the money changers from the temples, with its customary broom of further financial assistance to them.

E. G.

Investigating Fascism

TO THE NEW MASSES:

The Commission Investigating Nazi Activities in the United States is requesting the privilege of appealng for assistance to carry on its work through your columns.

This organization is the American section of the International Commission Investigating Fascist Activities with headquarters in Paris. The work the Commission is doing is of paramount importance. By means of leaflets and pamphlets, as well as the issuing of a bi-weekly bulletin, it fights the menace of the Fascist Plague. It also has as one of its tasks the building and the maintenance of a complete set of archives pertaining to Fascist and Nazi activities. This task is so great that we need additional workers. We therefore call on all who can do newspaper work, research, translation and typing to volunteer their services for this worthy cause.

EDWARD DAHLBERG, Chairman,
Commission Investigating Fascist Activities.
168 West 23rd Street, New York City.

First Aid to Fascism

TO THE NEW MASSES:

Anyone worried about the present—and future—of American liberalism should take comfort in the case of Emanuel P. Adler of Davenport, Iowa, owner of the Lee newspaper syndicate. Mr. Adler is so fair minded that in the morning he is a Republican (*vide* his Davenport Times) and by twilight has turned Democrat (*vide* his Davenport Democrat) only to become Republican once again on the following morning.

Naturally, many have wondered about his position during the intervening hours of the night; only to have their forgivable curiosity at last satisfied by reports of a meeting at which he was impresario. Summoning several hundred leading Jewish business men of Davenport to a meeting in a local hotel, Mr. Adler warned them of the danger of an anti-Semitic wave. With feeling he pointed out how members of his race have always suffered pogrom and persecution. This was an inevitable part of their lot on earth. But with even more fervor Mr. Adler insisted on not only the futility but the undesirability of Jewish resistance to anti-Semites. Finally, he warned his guests that in the event of individual or group persecution of Jews passivity must be maintained. The Jews must take it lying down, he proclaimed.

GERARD T. CAHAN.

Davenport, Ia.

Books

The Profits of Murder

MERCHANTS OF DEATH, by H. C. Engelbrecht and F. C. Hanighen. Dodd, Mead & Co.

WE ARE living in the prehistoric period of mankind. This is the age of adventurers, when all the goods of the workers are there to be seized by the cleverest and strongest brigand. Capitalism is the system by which the workers are exploited within each nation; war is the method for securing new territories to exploit or for overthrowing rival groups of capitalists; peace is but an interlude in this bloody game, an interlude of respite used for the re-alignment of forces.

In this prehistoric state of things, the Merchants of Death, the manufacturers of arms, are one of the most important factors. Without that keystone we might suppose the arch of capitalism would soon crumble before the mere indignation of the workers, as some Socialists hope. But with the Merchants of Death supporting the present capitalistic system, the necessity of revolution is forced upon the workers.

The present volume is an interesting but rather brief compilation of the crimes of the makers of munitions, the international ramifications of the armament-ring, its brotherly hand of profits stretched across the frontiers and trenches where workers are killing each other, its support of Hitler, its lobbies, spies, and graft. The authors have done us a service, too, in recapitulating the history of the development of new and more efficient methods of slaying, which paralleled our developing mechanical efficiency.

Unfortunately, the authors fail to draw larger inferences. It seems to us rather to their shame than to their credit that Harry Elmer Barnes in his introduction to this volume could speak of "the calmness and sanity everywhere evident in this book," which simply means that the authors nowhere squarely face the issue.

Let us see if the matter can be here presented in a couple of paragraphs. If we study the history of the first groups of Crusades, we see that the European had no particular advantage over the Mohammedan, and that, though for a time typical imperialistic domains involving vast plantations with slavery, etc., were carved out in Syria and Crete and elsewhere, on the whole the European, without his musket, could not take upon himself the task of civilizing and ruling the world—the white man's burden.

This famous burden could only be assumed when gunpowder and the various machines for employing this agency came into use. With this weapon that Asiatic peninsula called Europe could conquer and subject the whole, and has practically done so in this, the second group of Crusades, initiated by Columbus, who, it must not be forgotten, thought of himself as a Crusader and carried the Crusader's cross.

But the rulers, by regimenting people for the performance of the tasks of our technical civilization, have dug their own grave. Not a nation in the capitalistic world but must think twice before arming its population for another war. Chiang Kai-Shek has a million soldiers and yet cannot conquer the Chinese Soviets, for he is afraid to give his own men more than two or three rounds of ammunition. The next wars must be swift and certain; otherwise the well known spectre of Communism will get the munition makers and their gang.

These implications are smudged away in this volume, though they should have emerged clearly and sharply. It is particularly in the last chapter, called "The Outlook," that the real solution should have been given in strong and simple terms. But the authors are perhaps too calm and too sane. Capitalism, it is true, comes in for a little bit of blame, but with an apologetic air. Much is said of "deeper issues involved" and of the necessity of "remaking our entire civilization." I feel that the authors are aware of the right solution, but why do they hesitate to speak out? Do they not realize that a Hitler, a Coughlin, and their kind, they too can speak of "deeper issues involved," meaning "Jewish" international finance or Communism, and they, too, speak of remaking our civilization? Surely the authors are not seeking to aid Fascism? Then why confuse the reader?

GUY ENDORE.

Librarian's Hawaii

THE LORD'S ANOINTED: A Novel of Hawaii, by Ruth Eleanor McKee. Doubleday, Doran and Co. $2.50.

The Lord's Anointed, according to the publisher's blurb and the author's pretensions, is supposed to be a novel of Hawaii. Most emphatically, it is not. The setting might as well be Poictesme. It is the story of a group of New England missionaries wrestling with their own souls, and at the same time tightening a stranglehold on the souls of the naked, dancing natives. More particularly, it deals with a missionary's wife, Constancy, who is a heretic at heart and lives in constant dread that her hypocritical acceptance of Calvinist doctrine will be exposed. These fictitious missionaries are isolated from the natives to such a degree that they form an abstraction, an island inhabited solely by missionaries. The role of the missionaries as the spearhead of imperialism is completely concealed.

An historically accurate study, however, of Hawaii's missionaries — Castle, Cooke, Judd, Dole, Baldwin, and Alexander — reveals a record of imperialist plunder. Christian civilization brought forced labor, syphilis, and whiskey to Hawaii, leading to the annihilation of the native population, which was reduced from 200,000 in 1820 to 22,230 in 1932. Missionaries like Castle and Cooke cast off their saintly vestments to become merchants and sugar planters. They expropriated over 300,000 acres of land from the natives and turned the land over to a two-crop economy—sugar and pineapples. As a result, the natives have lost their former self-sufficiency; foodstuffs are imported; the cost of living is sky-high; and the natives subsist mainly on a rice diet.

As the native population dwindled, the former missionaries scoured the world for plantation slaves, importing thousands of Chinese, Japanese, Filipinos. At the beginning, contract laborers (forced labor) received wages of three dollars a month and even at the peak of sugar prosperity wages were far below one dollar a day.

The missionaries and their heirs have ground hundreds of millions of dollars in super-profits out of the plantation toilers. Plantation strikes have been crushed in blood. The national oppression found open expression in the Massie lynching in 1932, a parallel to Negro oppression in our own South. The islands are the most powerful war base in the Pacific and will figure prominently in the coming imperialist conflict in the Far East. The missionaries' families today have an anaconda grip on the island resources, including sugar and pineapple plantations, mills and canneries, railroads, steamships, electricity, gas, telephones, newspapers, hotels and banks. Hawaiian production and capital are concentrated among the missionary descendants.

The author of *The Lord's Anointed,* a Honolulu librarian, spent much time among the musty journals of the missionaries. "I had missionaries on the brain," she confesses. She might have done a decent job if she had extended research to another section of the library *(Moody's Manuals, Poor's Register of Directors,* and *Annual Report of the Governor of Hawaii),* or if she had left the library occasionally to observe the plantation laborers or the unemployed roaming the streets of Honolulu.

SAMUEL WEINMAN.

A Family of Reformers

SAINTS, SINNERS, AND BEECHERS, by Lyman Beecher Stowe. Bobbs-Merrill Co. $3.75.

The history of the Beecher family is a record of the adaptability of religion to an expanding capitalist society. Lyman Beecher, the head of the clan, retained many of the features of that Calvinism which bulwarked the rigid social system of the small New England town during the eighteenth century. That religion, with its emphasis on hell fire, its aristocracy of the chosen, disciplined and controlled the small communities. It centered life in the church and authority in the minister

and the trustees. With the growth of big cities and the expansion of the West a more flexible religion was needed to rationalize the pirate ethics of the pioneer capitalists and to soothe the increasing miseries of the lower classes. Old Lyman Beecher realized the need for a softer theology; he left New England to labor in New West and founded a liberal seminary. But his absorption with knotty problems of doctrine prevented him from achieving that popularity in the "religion of love" which earned a million and a half dollars for his son Henry Ward Beecher in his Brooklyn Church.

The Beechers had that mountebank charm which has always been so successful in America. Their dramatized religion and their passionate reformism filled two basic needs of the nineteenth century middle class. Their religion provided the emotional excitement which a less pious public finds now in motion pictures. Their reformism served to veil the uglier activities of the cut-throat period of capitalism. Reformism helped then, as it does now, to prevent clear and organized revolt against the basic causes of social evils by campaigning against certain distressing symptoms.

All the family joined the anti-slavery movement, but they were not, as this biographer tells us, abolitionists. The Beechers, in spite of their defiance of orthodoxy, always kept well this side of social ostracism. They had no sympathy with extremists like William Lloyd Garrison and John Brown, who offended all sensible people by advocating actual and immediate freedom for the slaves. Harriet Beecher Stowe's novel was written, according to her grandson, who is the author of this book, as a plea to humanitarian southern gentlemen to examine their consciences and correct this social evil. *Uncle Tom's Cabin* is typical of the Beecher kind of reformism in its confusion of purpose, its sentimentality, and its low intellectual level. There is neither maturity or clarity in its analysis of social forces, nor that actual contact with laboring people which would have prevented the saintly picture of Uncle Tom and the cheap burlesque of Topsy. The importance of the book is, of course, just in that quality Lyman Beecher Stowe deplores as destroying its art—that is, in its didacticism. The tragic injustice of human slavery was a theme which could dignify even this stilted and moral melodrama. Other Beechers served well during the Civil War, several as chaplains and soldiers. Henry Ward Beecher went abroad to make some splendid orations to the English people on the humanitarian and economic heroism of the northern industrialists.

Slavery was the most important but not the only Beecher cause. Catherine Beecher was a crusader for education, not free and public, but the refined middle class variety. Isabella Beecher was a suffragist, more sincere, more militant, and considerably less popular than the rest of the family. The other Beechers were less successful editions of Henry Ward and Harriet, lusty laborers in the vineyard of the pioneering middle class in America, vigorous in loving-kindness and brusque in attacking any surface evils which flawed the splendid nineteenth century American scene.

The Beechers were not as personally fascinating as their slightly fatuous biographer tells us. But the work of the popular evangelists and reformers of the last century is of tremendous importance to Americans who live in the country they helped make. A really thorough study ought to be made not of the Beechers only but of the entire group which nourished and patched the American Dream during its healthy days of the last century.

ELIZABETH BLAKE.

A Great Unknown

THE DEATH SHIP: The Story of an American Sailor, by B. Traven. Alfred A. Knopf. $2.50.

It was significant, and by no means mere coincidence, that the best work of fiction which came my way during several years in Germany was not revealed to me by a literary supplement or a university lecture on contemporary letters, or even by the literati and cognoscenti of the Romanisches Cafe. One better able to judge—a typical young Berlin "prolet," class conscious, jobless, underfed, but hungrier for knowledge than food — insisted that the book *Das Totenschiff* by a certain Traven was real stuff, had to be read. I read it and others—*The Wagons, Government,* and *Treasure of the Sierra Madre.* Hundreds of thousands in Germany and German-speaking countries shared this kind of enthusiasm, and especially proletarian readers were in evidence. Traven's reading public has been the best evidence of his abundant vitality, his crabbed charm, and his genuine worker's slant.

This "mystery" writer has epic sweep. The stokehold scenes in this book fairly burn you with hot coals and scald you with living steam. Is there anywhere an intenser apotheosis of wage-slavery carried to the ultimate of exploitation? He has real proletarian pungency (but don't mistake this for a mere sez-you, sez-me sea yarn!). His sarcasm is seething, his humor full-blooded. He hits you hard. But he does not "snarl" as Mr. John Chamberlain has asserted.

Never far below the surface and repeatedly breaking through are lyrical ebullitions. All the other novels — about half a dozen — are about the Mexican and Central American natives among and with whom "B. Traven" prefers to live. He draws them with a sly wink and with tender affection. The novel of the native Rancho Rosa Blanca, coveted and finally ravished by the American oil sharks, should surely be published here. In some ways it beats *Death Ship.* It is a sympathetic, almost sentimental, symphony on the theme: "The capitalist class, wherever it has come into power, has destroyed all feudal, patriarchal, idyllic relationships" *(Communist Manifesto,* 1).

Traven, whoever he may turn out to be—and chances are he isn't a Yank by birth and upbringing—is quite thoroughly and consistently an anarchist of the Wobbly variety. This good old devil-may-care, defiant, individualizing, hero-glorifying, basically romantic attitude leads him into the usual anarchistic inconsistencies; but he is no poseur, no ballyhooer for individual violence, and, though often riled by "the reds," he is not vicious. He is a state-hater, an iconoclast to all the idols of boss-class authority which blind and bind workers. But after striking staggering blows at the fat vitals of the capitalist state apparatus, he follows with some pretty wild passes at the necessary ruling apparatus of proletarian dictatorship. All bureaucracy is the bunk. The Soviet Union has bureaucracy too. Things must be about as bad there as anywhere. All that interference with private life of the private personality! . . . Thus, somewhat caricatured, run some of his less-digested notions, or picturesque, wild Wobbly prejudices. But even lumped together, such stuff bulks small.

Traven is to be read for his story-telling gift, his sense of drama and color, his exposure of the nastiness and degradation of state and society dominated by the exploiter, whether capitalist as in this book, or feudal-agricultural as in the others. The readers he appeals to most will be the very ones least bothered or misled by the minor miscarriages of his reasoning. For the most part the abundant, lengthy soliloquies which embroider every Traven story are rich with shrewd observation and ironic exaggeration.

According to recent reports, Traven is being published in the Soviet Union. Certainly he has qualities to make him a favorite there. And here, too, if he is not overlooked or misunderstood. His merits are original, natural, healthy, and great; his weaknesses are minor. His influence should be fructifying. He can show many writers that many elements of richness and variety — fanciful humor, personal soliloquy, and thriller plots—are by no means incompatible with literature of and for the working class and its fighters.

ARTHUR HELLER.

A Voice from the Grave

THREE ESSAYS ON AMERICA, by Van Wyck Brooks. Dutton. $3.

We should doubtless be grateful to Mr. Brooks for making these three historic essays on American culture available to us in one reasonably priced volume. To students of literature and criticism, *America's Coming-of-Age, Letters and Leadership,* and *The Literary Life in America* are invaluable, and they have not been in a convenient and purchasable form for some time. Nevertheless, there is something almost tragic about their reissue in this second year of the New Deal. During the past two years Mr. Brooks has published, in addition to the present book, a new and revised edition of *The Ordeal of Mark Twain* and a volume entitled *Sketches in Criticism,* a collection of reviews and essays which appeared originally, I believe, in The Freeman

more than ten years ago. Is there nothing in America today that arouses Mr. Brooks to creative activity? Does he think that the questions he raised before and just after the war are still unanswered and that they are still the most pertinent to our problems and the nearest to our hearts? Must he be forever raking over the coals of his youth?

But it is not only because it is sad to see so fine and sensitive a mind as Mr. Brooks' preoccupied with the pleasant but petty business of recollection that I speak of tragedy! It is also — indeed, it is primarily — because these essays that once seemed so brave, so significant and stimulating, now seem so quiet and wistful, almost timid, evasive, in their peculiar irrelevance to our own day. Not that they are no longer richly suggestive in their understanding of the American past and their oblique insight into the aesthetic philosophy of the Babbitt. Their brilliance is perhaps dimmed, but there is yet enough in them to provide themes for academic nightmares and liberal reveries. No, it is rather because they shed no real light upon the *essential* conflicts in American art and thought. These conflicts —between the bourgeois and the revolutionary, the leisure-class and the creating-class— were apparent in 1915 and 1920. Mr. Brooks perceived them, but how incompletely, from what a distance! He never came close enough, never felt their heat, never made them the basis of his perception of the issues in our intellectual life.

If he had, he would have become this country's greatest critic, for no one of his generation, or of the younger generation, has yet given any indication of being his equal in equipment and talent. As it is, he remains a man who was brilliant and courageous in his day, but is already beginning to date. It may be said in his behalf that the crucial choices were not quite as obvious or pressing in America when these essays were written. In reply I can say only that I have nowhere seen evidence that Mr. Brooks has altered or developed his point of view since then in any fundamental respect. If he has, we will greet a proof of it warmly. In the meantime, if there is anyone who seeks evidence of the ultimate effect, in the writing of cultural criticism in the twentieth century, of an overly refined individualism, of hero worship, of a failure to make contact with the masses and to confront the class struggle, let him read this book.

BERNARD SMITH.

Rorty's Revenge

OUR MASTER'S VOICE: ADVERTISING, by James Rorty. The John Day Co. $3.

This book represents a prodigious effort by ex-comrade Rorty. It is exhaustive—it leaves scarcely any aspect of the advertising business untouched. It is encyclopedic in scope—a potpourri of biography, autobiography, economics, and sociology—interspersed with frequent literary flights styled after the models of Sherwood Anderson. Its 394 pages are closely packed with quotations, most of them from the works of that grandfather of all the technocrats, Thorstein Veblen. The reader is left marveling at the industry and range of Rorty's reading. Veblen, Stuart Chase, Max Weber, Sidney Hook, Abraham Flexner, Vernon L. Parrington, Victoria Woodhull, Robinson Jeffers—these are but a few of the masters whose voices echo through his pages.

Those portions which deal objectively with the mechanism of the modern advertising agency and its exploitative processes are of real value. No previous writer has attempted to describe realistically the inner workings of the advertising business and its tremendous power as an instrument of capitalist rule. But despite the valuable material which the book presents, the total result is a disappointingly superficial survey. It ends in confusion largely because of the warring intentions of the author. His keen eyes and intelligent perceptions are largely nullified by the contradictory objectives of his hates. Rorty hates the advertising business, the capitalist system, Soviet Russia, and Communists, apparently with almost equal fervor. He *loves* himself — and next to his own colossal ego, Thorstein Veblen is perhaps nearest to his heart.

Lines such as these reveal the true state of his covert feelings about Soviet Russia, and Communism:

> The Liberal illusions of a free press, free radio, free speech, constitutional rights, objective education, etc., all disappear almost overnight. This has been happening under our eyes in Russia, Italy, and Germany.
>
> In Russia a bureaucracy was set up, theoretically to solve the tasks of socialist construction, and gradually, with the coming to birth of a classless society and the elimination of the conflicts which the state power must adjust or suppress, to "wither away." The Russians are frank in confessing that they are obliged to fight the tendency of their bureaucracy to propagate itself verdantly.
>
> Curiously, the editor of Nation's Business seems to be less confident that Fascism is our next phase than are the editors of the Communist Daily Worker.

Rorty refers to "revolutionaries claiming allegiance to a hypothetical future 'classless culture' and to the 'militant working class' also more or less hypothetical at the present stage." This skepticism recurs again and again: "The tower [capitalism] is tottering, but it will probably be some time before it falls." "What Weber saw with horror [in 1905] was not 'the last stage' [of capitalism] but the next-to-the-last-stage—perhaps not even that."

To those readers who know of Rorty's career in the advertising business, and in his intermittent and tentative affiliations with revolutionary organizations, these continual interruptions of his thesis to take discursive sideswipes at his recent allegiances will arouse no surprise. His subtly reiterated bracketing of Soviet Russia with Nazi Germany and Fascist Italy are the expressions of an embittered heart. They spring from the same motivation as his hatred of the advertising business and

"HAVE YOU CONSULTED A SPECIALIST?" *Gardner Rea*

"HAVE YOU CONSULTED A SPECIALIST?" *Gardner Rea*

American capitalism. In the revolutionary movement nothing short of a general's post could satisfy his all-consuming ego. No generalships being proffered, Rorty did not tarry long among the Communists. A corporal's job among these social and intellectual inferiors? Unthinkable! Hell hath no fury like a precious intellectual scorned! So Rorty hurried off to where quick advancement beckoned. He joined the less rigid ranks of that heterogenious band of fighters for an "American" revolution—100 percent.

The book ends with a profoundly true observation, "I venture to predict that when a formidable Fascist movement develops in America, the ad-men will be right up front; that the American versions of Minister of Propaganda and Enlightenment Goebbels (the man whom wry-lipped Germans have christened 'Wotan's Mickey Mouse') will be both numerous and powerful." From the internal evidence contained in this volume, one is justified in the faint suspicion that James Rorty may be among them.

FRANK THOMPSON.

The Ideas of Aldous

BEYOND THE MEXIQUE BAY, by Aldous Huxley. Harper Bros. $2.50.

Geographically speaking, I suppose Aldous Huxley might be defined as a small body of imagination completely surrounded by knowledge. But "excess of knowledge and imagination leads to a kind of paralysis." If the humanitarian coupon clipper, for instance, really knew where his profits were coming from and could imagine in terms of flesh and blood the exploitation involved, he would have to stop either being so humanitarian or clipping his coupons. Since the later alternative is obviously damned inconvenient, let us praise philosophers like Mr. Huxley for telling us that "our ability to imagine how other people think and feel, or how we ourselves should think and feel in some hypothetical situation, is strictly limited."

For if, as Mr. Huxley says somebody else said, philosophy is only the supplying of bad reasons for our intuitions, and our intuitions are only what we learned in childhood, then surely our author must be called a philosopher. Mr. Huxley is indeed so very philosophic that he can think of bad reasons even without intuitions. Thus he repudiates the idea of the economic basis of war by claiming that "none of the wars of Central America has had an origin which could possibly be interpreted as economic." Further proof: "If the capitalists were interested only in the efficient exploitation of their victims (as would to heaven they had the sense to be!) they would not waste their resources in fighting one another; they would combine to work out the most efficient scheme for squeezing profits out of the entire planet. That they do not do so—or do so only spasmodically and inadequately—is due to the fact that the exploiters are as much the slaves of the passions aroused by nationalism as are the exploited. They own and use the instruments of propaganda, but are themselves the first to believe in, and to act upon, the nonsense they broadcast."

What is needed, in short, is not less capitalism, but more psychology, a "World Psychological Conference"—with somebody like Mr. Huxley as chairman — to explain war away.

However, *Beyond The Mexique Bay* is fortunately not entirely devoted to war and nationalism; these little subjects merely intrigue our author for a moment on his journey through Central America and Mexico, and having talked himself out about them, he is ready to turn his learned thoughts to the culture of the Mayas, the weather, religion, Indian costumes, the accidental nature of artistic genius, human nature, mother nature, time, the Encyclopedia Brittanica, ethnology, physiology, psychology, anthropology, or the doxology.

Beyond The Mexique Bay, in other words, is Aldous himself going his erratic, witty, cynical, thoughtful, and well-written way through Central America and Mexico; is a book that may be said to have more counterpoint than point.

Even so, it is a better book about the locality traveled than any of the escapist coloratura volumes about the same locality, by economists and otherwise, recently published in this country. Ridiculing such books as flights from "the horrors of industrial reality," Mr. Huxley writes: "William Morris gave his contemporaries *News From Nowhere;* his successors give us news from Mexico." "For the tourist, it looks like Eden; but for the inhabitants, it feels too painfully like Mexico."

Mr. Huxley is not blind to the criminal exploitation that devastates the Eden of Latin America. He merely treats it as a fact among other interesting facts. He is the pure intellectual whose fetish is objectivity. Unlike his nineteenth century antecedent his role is not to fight for an idea; it is to be curator of the Natural Huxley Museum of Ideas.

EDWIN SEAVER.

Towards Understanding

THE RECKONING. By Leane Zugsmith. Smith and Haas. $2.50.

Sketchy, using a mechanical formulation of the "searchlight" technic of *Manhattan Transfer,* but inferior in vigor and richness of events, Miss Zugsmith's *Never Enough* still showed an awareness of nuance and inner rhythm that served to energize her characters and to sustain the inarticulate futility which projected outward from them and became the dominant mood of the book, an attitude emphasized by the titles treating the specific years of the dizzy post-war period. There is no mistaking the repressed sentiment of the cynical "Massachusetts, There She Stands" which is immediately followed by Sacco and Vanzetti's last communication to the world, or the hollow irony of "Day by Day in Every Way I'm Getting Better and Better." Miss Zugsmith knew something was wrong; this realization, coupled with her inability to define the disease as easily as she found she could define people, produced a confusion which she attemped to resolve by objectifying it in terms of art.

In her latest novel, *The Reckoning,* Miss Zugsmith has stopped flirting with the problem, has laid aside the protective covering of the ironist and attitudinist, and comes with bare-handed sobriety to an attempt to understand society. In style, too, there is a general tightening up, a well-controlled, even line of prose never intruding upon the action: a solid base upon which rests a tight plot and several well developed characters. In contrast to the all-inclusiveness of *Never Enough, The Reckoning,* in its search for the first cause of confusion, is narrowed down to the ramifications of one unimportant event. Castie Petrella, aged fifteen, steals a roadster owned by a man who is visiting his mistress, and because he is sent to Welfare Island instead of reform school his teacher, Miss Muller, tries to get a lawyer to take the case, which involves both Oliver Pace, who plugs along on court assignments, and Amy Turk, the wife of the man whose car was stolen. Miss Muller falls in love with Oliver, now a somewhat bizarre pessimist after seeing justice administered in courts of law. Castie, out on parole because of Amy's intercession with a politician with whom she is having a mild affair, tries to hold up Amy for her jewels, but he kills her in his fright. Oliver defends Castie to sensationalize himself before being appointed a magistrate (having got the goods on Amy's string-pulling lover), but in the business of bribing a juror he is neatly double-crossed by the district leader who guaranteed his appointment. He is forced to leave town, and Miss Muller is left standing on a street corner.

Miss Zugsmith wants to write, and she knows how to write, but whether she has discovered the things she wants to write about is doubtful. Though she has lost none of her preoccupation with individuals as such, there is added to her carefully woven tragedies a faint perception of an external flux that is dynamic and complementary to her own internal ferment. Having dealt with the contradictions of intuition in *Never Enough,* and with the deepening of these contradictions in the more involved external world of *The Reckoning,* in which also the contradictions of events play no small part, it is possible that Miss Zugsmith, since she is possessed of honesty and a keen feeling for essentials, may put two and two together and deal with the contradictions of class.

PETER MARTIN.

The Jews' Choice

HOW ODD OF GOD, by Lewis Browne. The Macmillan Co. $2.50.

Lewis Browne has written a virile sociological tract of Jewish progress through history. But he deserts reality and falls victim to his own limitations in his recommendations for Jewish orientation with the rest of the world.

In his analysis of anti-Semitism Browne ad-

vances the thesis that the basic causes of conflict between Gentile and Jew are the same as those between urban and rural civilization. Economic and physical compulsions have forced the Jew to form groups, whereas the Gentile has always been able to hunt alone. Therefore, just de-urbanize the Jew and de-ruralize the Gentile, and there you have it! Browne points to the Soviet Union to substantiate his recommendation, to the demonstrated success of de-urbanization and de-ruralization in the Jewish collectives in the Ukraine and Biro-Bidjan, together with the absence of anti-Semitism anywhere in Russia. He even recognizes that the wound of Jew versus Gentile conflict in the Soviet "will be healed not because the Jews will be made over in the image of the Gentiles, but rather because both will be made over in the image of a new type of man."

So close can he come, yet shy off. The obvious fact that "a new type of man" is not manufactured at will out of a spoils system, escapes him. He points with complete approval to the de-urbanization of Jews in Palestine as further proof. There are Jewish pioneers abroad in the land, he says. The fact that they are as temporary as the mushroom Jewish collectives in this country escapes him. He says nothing of the exploitation of the Arab and the Jew, of the pitting of *fellahin* against the *chalutzim* to depress labor costs, of the increasing domination of capital over the country, nothing of the renewal of the urban versus rural conflict and the consequent anti-Semitism. He does not realize that his plan must fail when it is imposed on a typical capitalist economy and that today's pioneers are tomorrow's slaves since "the new type of man" is not being produced there.

Mr. Browne agrees that there is class division within Judaism. He mentions it early in his argument when he states that whenever persecution was especially virulent, the rich Jew supported the dominant persecuting parties while the poor fled either to their ritual or to revolutionary groups. Later he says that the Jew more easily becomes a radical since he must combat not only social and economic oppression, but racial and minority discrimination as well. Again he speaks of the Soviet: "They are free in Russia, free as perhaps nowhere else on earth today. They are not accorded mere tolerance; they enjoy comradeship. Whether this will last, no one can tell; but it is certainly part of the Soviet teaching that it *should* last." Yet he continues to speak of the "Jewish problem" as such, and will not see that the fate of the Jew is the fate of all other oppressed classes and minorities, that, for the Jew, the words, "The capacity for emancipation of the modern world," ring truer today than when Marx wrote them.

But even if Mr. Browne refuses to propose the orientation of the Jew with all other oppressed peoples, his greatest omission is that of neglecting to call attention to an immediate and pressing fact. Today the Jew has no freedom of choice within the limits of Judaism itself, for he and his solely Jewish future are faced with a decision that allows no choice. Between Communism and Fascism Judaism has no choice. Browne does not mention that. He is exasperating, but typical.

VICTOR ULLMAN.

The Revolutionary Dance Movement

EDNA OCKO

THE DANCE, because it immediately establishes rapport between audience and performer, is a remarkably flexible vehicle for the conveyance of revolutionary ideas. It concretizes a situation more graphically than music, with more mobility than painting, and at times, with more poetic beauty than the drama. Ideally, as the film, it is a projector of movement-forms into space and time; its focal point, however, instead of being the externalization of an idea or sequence of ideas (viz. drama, film), is the depiction of kinesthetically-realized emotional states. In the revolutionary dance, these emotional crystallizations, apart from technical considerations, must be compounded of not only "sympathy" for the working-class movement, but a thorough intellectual grasp of Marxian dialectics as well. Our true revolutionary dancers cannot be those who from time to time include on their programs numbers possessing vague "revolutionary" titles or still vaguer "revolutionary" ideas; as yet they pay only body-service to the movement, and a perfunctory one at that. Working-class ideology, no matter how thinly sketched, cannot be a superficial integument slipped on to any skeleton of a dance technic, nor can it be an innovation in movement imposed on to an idea that becomes revolutionary by annotation.

The revolutionary dance can emerge only after the significant (revolutionary) emotion and the mode of expression have moved together for so long a time and have interpenetrated the composition to such an extent that the very movement of the dancers has revolutionary implications and the very idea arises not from casual inspiration, but from a living with and a thinking for the proletariat. It must be so subtle a welding together of manner and matter, of emotional content and dynamic ideational form, that it can, at its best and greatest agitational heights, commandeer revolutionary mass feelings of the profoundest and most stirring sort, and project proletarian ideas of vast implications on the one hand, or specific everyday class issues on the other. And it is beginning to do so. More and more is it becoming part of the daily cultural education of the working-class, more and more is it entering the theatre as vaudeville ally of the drama (vide: *Newsboy,* prize-winner at Theatre Competition), more and more is it assuming through performance on the concert stage an independence and vitality never before enjoyed by this type of art in the bourgeois world.

Yet it remains one of the most shabbily treated of all the revolutionary arts, with its progress being unquestionably retarded by the total disregard it receives from professional workers in other fields. Artists in the vanguard of the revolutionary movement from whom the dance groups are so eager to receive criticism and aid, neglect to a reprehensible extent the work of these people. Either they retain unpleasant associations of bourgeois dancers of the past whom they once observed, or else they receive erroneous reports of the actual work of these groups; at any rate, they have remained, out of misguided preference, totally detached from activities in this field. They have failed to realize the potential drawing power of the dance for the masses, and the importance that a movement of such dimensions should be not only adequately publicized, but painstakingly analyzed and directed.

At present, our revolutionary dancers and dance groups are part of the *Workers Dance League.* This coördinating body has 800 dues-paying members. In addition to its performing units, it has twelve amateur groups and over 50 classes. It has an Eastern section comprising groups in New York, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Massachusetts, and has formed groups in Chicago, Detroit and Los Angeles. It has received information of a revolutionary dance group in Paris, and one in Berlin.

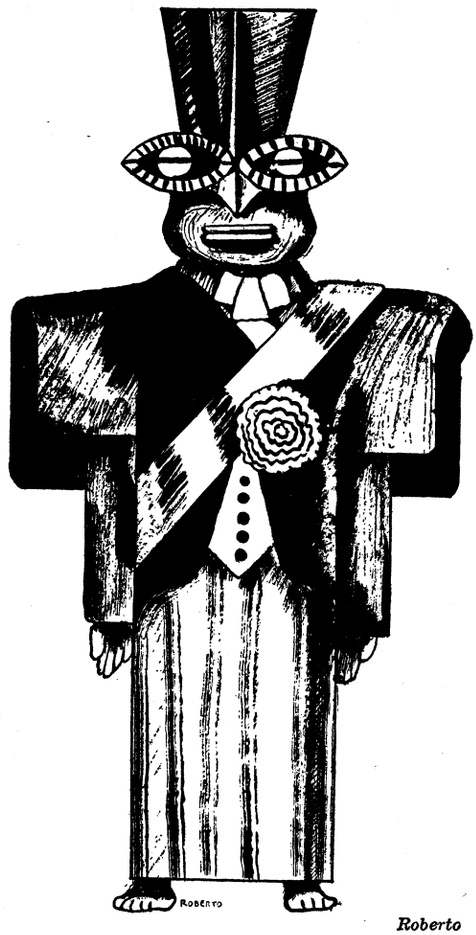
One of its aims at this time is the building up of performing troups so that they can reach ever-increasing masses of people through dancing at strike halls, union meetings, affairs, benefits, concerts, etc., and activize more of their audience into sympathy and coöperation with the working class movement of which they are a definite part.

They have contacted a tremendous audience already. On January 7th for the benefit of the Daily Worker, these performing groups presented a program of dances at City College Auditorium. Not only was the hall full (seating capacity 1,500), standing room sold out, but hundreds were turned away at the doors. On April 20th, these same groups performed, again a benefit, this time for the Labor Defender, at the Brooklyn Academy of Music to a capacity crowd of 2,000. Between

October and April, the W.D.L. had requests for 240 paid performances, of which only 140 were accepted, due to limited forces. Assuming that only 200 people attended each of these 140 affairs, which number is ridiculously small, considering the fact that among the performances are numbered those at the U.S. Congress Against War and Fascism, when 6,000 packed the St. Nicholas Arena, the Daily Worker Bazaar at Madison Square Garden and the 10th anniversary of the Daily Worker at the Bronx Coliseum, the League performed in one season before about 34,000 workers.

Nor do workers alone attend these performances; the faces of the most important bourgeois dance critics, dancers, pedagogs, and students appear time and again, watching with an admixture of admiration and envy; the one for the indubitable talent the groups possess, the other for the cheers the audience gives a performance that is not solely an exhibition of physical virtuosity, but in addition, a presentation of revolutionary working-class ideology and rich emotional content. John Martin, dance critic of the New York Times, in an article appearing there, refers to the W.D.L. as one of the most important trends in the American dance. "E.E.," of the World-Telegram, who seems constantly at variance with Martin on other issues, in his review of the April recital, not only substantiates this praise, but commends the groups more specifically.

Who are these groups? At the time of the April 20th recital, they were the Red Dancers, the New Dance Group, the Theatre Union Dance Group, the New Duncan Group, and the Modern Negro Dance Group. These groups in toto represent all technical trends in the American dance today. The Red Dancers and the Theatre Union Dance Group stem from the Martha Graham School, the New Dance Group from the Mary Wigman School, the New Duncan Group from its namesake, while the Negro group is a product of the now deceased Hemsley Winfield, the witch-doctor in *Emperor Jones* at the Metropolitan Opera House. On June 2nd, these groups again performed at the Second Annual Dance Festival, which was held at Town Hall with both amateur and professional groups competing. A new group had been added at that time to the list of performing units, the American Revolutionary Dancers, and a Children's Dance Group was presented for the first time. *Van der Lubbe's Head,* performed by the New Dance Group to a poem by Alfred Hayes, was awarded first place at the competition, with the *Anti-War Cycle* of the Theatre Union group and the *Kinder, Küche, und Kirche* of the Nature Friends Dance Group receiving second and third places respectively.



Roberto

DIPLOMAT—THEATRE UNION DANCE GROUP

There is no doubt that these groups as a whole have among their numbers some of the best of our young American dancers today, giving up the fame they could undoubtedly achieve in bourgeois circles on the basis of their talent, to be active in the revolutionary movement. Soloists, however, have not as yet been encouraged, and it is the groups in combination who offer a full evening of outstanding revolutionary art.

Yet the Workers Dance League, with these groups as a nucleus, has unending promise. Its future is assured it by the generous masses who support each concert with unwavering enthusiasm. Besides a completer artistic and ideological development in its own ranks, it looks forward to a more friendly acceptance of its activities from co-workers in other fields on the cultural front, whose traditions are more firmly intrenched in the movement and whose assistance could be of great benefit. One cannot be too urgent in requesting that support be given to this popular ally of the workers' movement in the United States.

Movie

MURIEL RUKEYSER

Spotlight her face her face has no light in it
touch the cheek with light inform the eyes
press meanings on those lips

See cities from the air,
fix a cloud in the sky, one bird in the bright air,
one perfect mechanical flower in her hair.

Make your young men ride over the mesquite plains;
produce our country on film: here are the flaming shrubs,
the Negroes put up their hands in Hallelujahs,
the young men balance at the penthouse door.
We goggle at the screen: look they tell us
you are a nation of similar whores remember the Maine
remember you have a democracy of champagne—

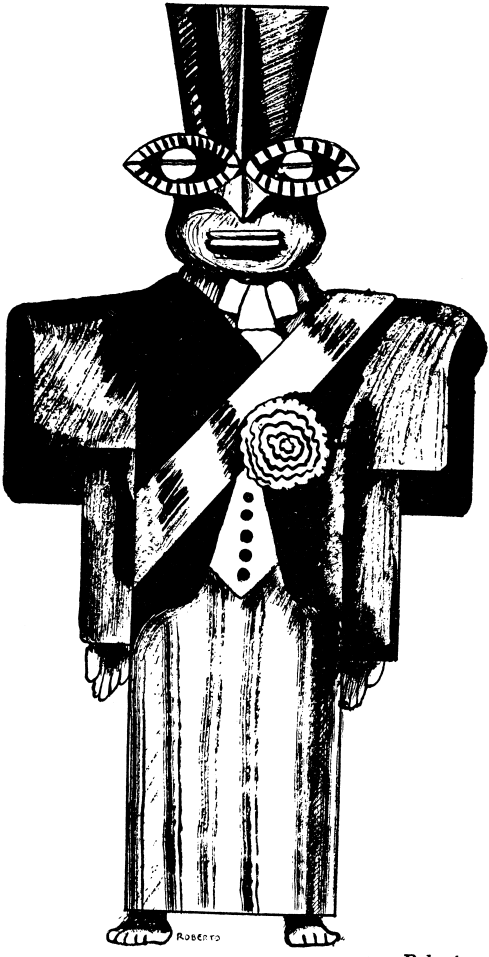
And slowly the female face kisses the young man,
over his face the twelve-foot female head
the yard-long mouth enlarges and yawns

The End

Here is a city here the village grows
here are the rich men standing rows on rows,
but the crowd seeps behind the cowboy the lover the king,
past the constructed sets America rises
the bevelled classic doorways the alleys of trees are witness
America rises in a wave a mass
pushing away the rot

The Director cries Cut!
hoarsely CUT and the people send pistons of force
crashing against the CUT! CUT! of the straw men.

Light is superfluous upon these eyes,
across our minds push new portents of strength
destroying the sets, the flat faces, the mock skies.



Roberto

DIPLOMAT—THEATRE UNION DANCE GROUP

Hollywood—and Gorky

ROBERT FORSYTHE

WHEN *Little Man, What Now* appeared as a book, I was reproached for saying that it fell considerably short of greatness by reason of the fact that Hans Pinneberg, the hero, was definitely a moron and in no sense representative of the little men who struggle along in this most beautiful of all possible worlds. The book critics loved Herr Pinneberg's descent into the abyss because it was so perfectly artistic. He started down and he kept going down without a word of protest. When you protest, it is propaganda and J. Donald Adams and Harry Hansen will not be amused.

In the movie which has now been made by Frank Borzage for Universal, with Margaret Sullavan and Douglass Montgomery heading the cast, and made with that studied amalgam of viciousness and reverence which characterizes Hollywood, it is so apparent that Pinneberg is an imbecile that the spectators at Radio City Music Hall were commenting upon it openly. By making Pinneberg a character so helpless that the faintest crisis would overwhelm him, it is easy to create the impression that all men out of work are misfits who deserve treatment as mental incompetents rather than technological victims. In Hollywood's behalf I may say that in this instance they were following Fallada's book faithfully. I stress the point because no later than a month ago Mary Colum in Forum was annihilating Marxist fiction by the mere device of setting up *Little Man, What Now* as a Marxist classic. Any critic who failed to see that the book was a perfect prelude to Hitlerism should have had his commitment papers prepared.

The plot goes like this: Pinneberg, a simple little fellow, marries Lammchen. (In the book, Lammchen's father is a Communist and she is radical herself, but have no fears about that; it doesn't come out in the picture.) He loses his first job when the boss finds he has married somebody besides the boss' homely daughter. They then go to live with his stepmother, who is a dubious old dame living with a pleasant crook named Jachmann. She is also doing something disgraceful in the way of throwing wild parties, but I was never able to make out from the book or the picture what it was all about. However, it is so bad Hans won't stand for it when he finds it out. They leave. In the meantime he is working for a men's clothing store, making 150 marks a month, which in my crude arithmetic is $37.50 a month. (The dialogue is all in English with the exception of the salary amounts.) He is paying 100 marks a month rent and with his first pay his halfwittedness, which has been lurking in the shadows, becomes almost violently evident. Of his 150 marks pay, he spends 130 marks to buy a dressing table for Lammchen because she happened to admire it in a window.

From then on it gets worse. They go to live in a quaint old loft over a furniture store which can be reached only by a ladder. Hans loses his job at the store, and Lammchen is going to have a baby. But she has a wonderful constitution. No matter how near she approaches the confinement period, Lammchen shows no signs of it. She gallops up and down the ladder; she goes to a dance with Jachmann.

Pinneberg is now a bum. Whenever you see him he is going around in the rain with his coat collar up and water running down his neck. But he is game; he won't complain; and he is pretty much annoyed by a man who talks about "equality." (The film curiously enough says nothing about how you divide everything up equally and the same people get it who had it before and you can't change human nature.) The "equality" gentleman is given no name on the list of characters. He is listed simply as "Communist" and you should see him. He looks exactly like Wallace Beery. The same bulky, threatening figure, the unshaven physiog, the harsh voice. I'm not exaggerating. And they must have looked all over Southern California to find anybody bedraggled enough to play his wife. The inference is plain that if the big bozo would stop talking and go to work, mama wouldn't like that. Ah, these Russians—if they would only drop their propaganda and stick to Art.

Hans is out wandering around in the rain one afternoon when he gets knocked down by the German replica of one of Mr. La Guardia's cossacks. This is something new for Hans; he doesn't like it so he shows his resentment by coming home with his tail between his legs. He's a failure. He's licked. He's done. And what does he find? Don't anticipate me, but you're right. The baby has been born during his absence. And now everything is different. Are we downhearted? No! This is a new bit of life, we have created it and we must look after it, for Life Goes On. And just to make it complete, up the ladder comes his old friend Snicklefritz who used to work with Hans in the store and is here to offer him a job in his new establishment in Amsterdam. The depression is over, God is in his heaven and a little child shall lead them.

But they really don't go about the business properly. A child being born—ridiculous! It should have been quintuplets which could have been sold to the Century of Progress in Chicago. That would silence some of these radical fellows. If they'd stay home and do their duty by their wives, there wouldn't be this talk about depression and unemployment and all that nonsense.

Comparisons are not only invidious, but they are deadly when *Little Man, What Now,* Hollywood's pathetic attempt at grappling with life, is placed by the side of Gorky's *Mother,* which is being shown at the Acme. The contest is so unequal that no American could make it without embarrassment. In my admiration for the direction of Pudovkin and the acting of Baranovskaya as the mother and Batalov as the son, I find myself running into such adjectives that I hesitate to use them.

Put very plainly, *Mother* is one of the great Soviet pictures, which means that it belongs with the greatset of all times. In the years when Hollywood was screwing up its courage to produce a chocolate soda like *Little Man,* the New York censors were barring *Mother,* or *1905* as it was originally known. It is the story of the working class mother who fights with her son in the factory strikes which preceded the 1905 revolution in Russia. The father is a scab, a strike-breaker, and is killed in the strike. The mother seeks to protect her son, but he is arrested. He escapes from prison. They are both shot down by Czarist troops in a May Day demonstration.

That is the bare outline and it gives nothing of the vitality and warmth and deep emotional content of the film. Where do the Soviet writers and actors get these qualities which make a picture like this so beautiful and stirring? What is it that these forlorn Artists in Uniform have that can never be duplicated by the great free souls of Beverly Hills and Hollywood Boulevard? It is almost cruel to press the point.

Glorified Horse Opera

LIKE Upton Sinclair's *Thunder Over Mexico, Viva Villa!* (Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer) is a glorified horse opera. It's a Western brought up to date. The story is woven around a historical, if legendary, character; there aren't just a few hard riders, but hundreds and thousands of men always furiously riding, shooting, screaming, and at every opportunity singing *La Cucuracha;* there is sex of the frontier-saloon variety, mock marriages, polygamy, attempted rape and murder; there are ballroom and bedroom scenes; there are bank robberies and jailbreaks; there are vicious and false political insinuations; in fact the only thing that was left out was General Pershing and his army.

According to the producers, this is a pure fictional account of the life and death of Pancho Villa, right hand man of Madero, the "liberal," who succeeded Diaz, the Mexican Robin Hood, the extraordinary military

leader, the bandit and the late enemy of General Pershing and William Randolph Hearst. Since little or nothing is known about the actual facts of Villa's life the apology for fiction is really insignificant. As in all other historical films of the recent Hollywood and London variety, what is important is what they did not say.

Viva Villa! deals with the revolution of 1910. In that revolution neither Madero or Pancho Villa was as important or as influential as Zapata. Zapata, the real hero of the revolution who *demanded* that the land be given back to the peasants. When Madero refused to fulfill his promises, Zapata withdrew his support of Madero. And he is not even mentioned by name. He simply doesn't exist as far as the M.-G.-M., Ben Hecht, Hearst (who owns a great part of the M.-G.-M.; of California and Mexico) are concerned. Not one of the weaknesses of the Madero regime is shown. Madero is portrayed (with some distinction by Henry B. Walthall) as the Christ-like "revolutionist" who wanted to give the land back to the people. But nothing is said of the fact that Madero himself was a rich landowner and that his family was and still is one of the important landholding families of Mexico. *Viva Villa!* cannot be dismissed merely as fictional biography of a popular national hero. It serves a definite political purpose. By implication and the last title, the film insists that contemporary, social-fascist Mexico is a country of Justice and Equality. Why doesn't Upton Sinclair sue Metro for plagiarism?

In its technical aspects *Viva Villa!* shows the result of extended and troublesome production. The exterior sections (the mass scenes of fighting and riding) are far superior to the Hollywood portions: which are as phoney as the Hollywood portions of *Eskimo*. James Wong Howe, Hollywood's crack photographer, must have studied Tisse's work in *Thunder Over Mexico*. For whatever cinematic quality it has is due to the contribution of the cameraman. As for the rest, the film is badly edited and clumsily constructed. A high pitch of dramatic excitement is reached much before the middle. The rest is anti-climax. The spectator's excitement is incited by the purely physical impact of the furious riding and war sequences, by the frequent sadism, and the lively musical score.

The portrayal of Pancho Villa is a result of Ben Hecht's writing (which is a combination of John Reed's picture of Pancho and Hearst's journalism) and Wallace Beery's acting in *The Big House, Min and Bill, Tugboat Annie,* and *The Bowery*. In several places Beery forgets Mexico and talks Bowery.

IRVING LERNER.

Between Ourselves

OUR READERS are urged to send money for subscriptions, books, etc., either by registered mail, postal or express money order (the latter is obtainable at drug stores and other shops where no P. O. or express company office is near). We are compelled to make this request because our mail has repeatedly been rifled at the post office, and subscribers' cash has often not been received. So many complaints have been coming in that we appeal to readers to safeguard their remittances, as we cannot, naturally, assume the responsibility for loss through theft in transit.

Muriel Rukeyser's poem, *The Trial,* originally appeared in the Student Review.

Ben Field, formerly secretary of the Writers' Group of the John Reed Club of New York, is active in the farmers' organization movement.

Edna Ocko is a member of the Workers' Dance League.

Irving Lerner is active in the Workers' Film and Photo League.

Margaret Wright Mather has been making an examination of the economic and financial background of American universities. She is planning to publish a book on the subject.

Among other correspondence we have received in regard to the prize contest for a proletarian novel, is a note from a writer who has an uncompleted manuscript and wonders whether this work is worth completing. Unfortunately, we have not the forces as yet to carry on the kind of editorial conferences with worker authors that we should like to—and that eventually, when the magazine is more firmly established, will be a regular part of our work. So we must state that only completed novels can be considered in the contest.

The Workers' Dance League Festival at Town Hall, June 2, by the way, resulted in the awarding of first prize to the New Dance Group for its presentation of *Van der Lubbe's Head.* This was a rendering in the dance of Alfred Hayes' poem by that title, which appeared in THE NEW MASSES on January 23.

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