new Masses

JULY 24, 1934

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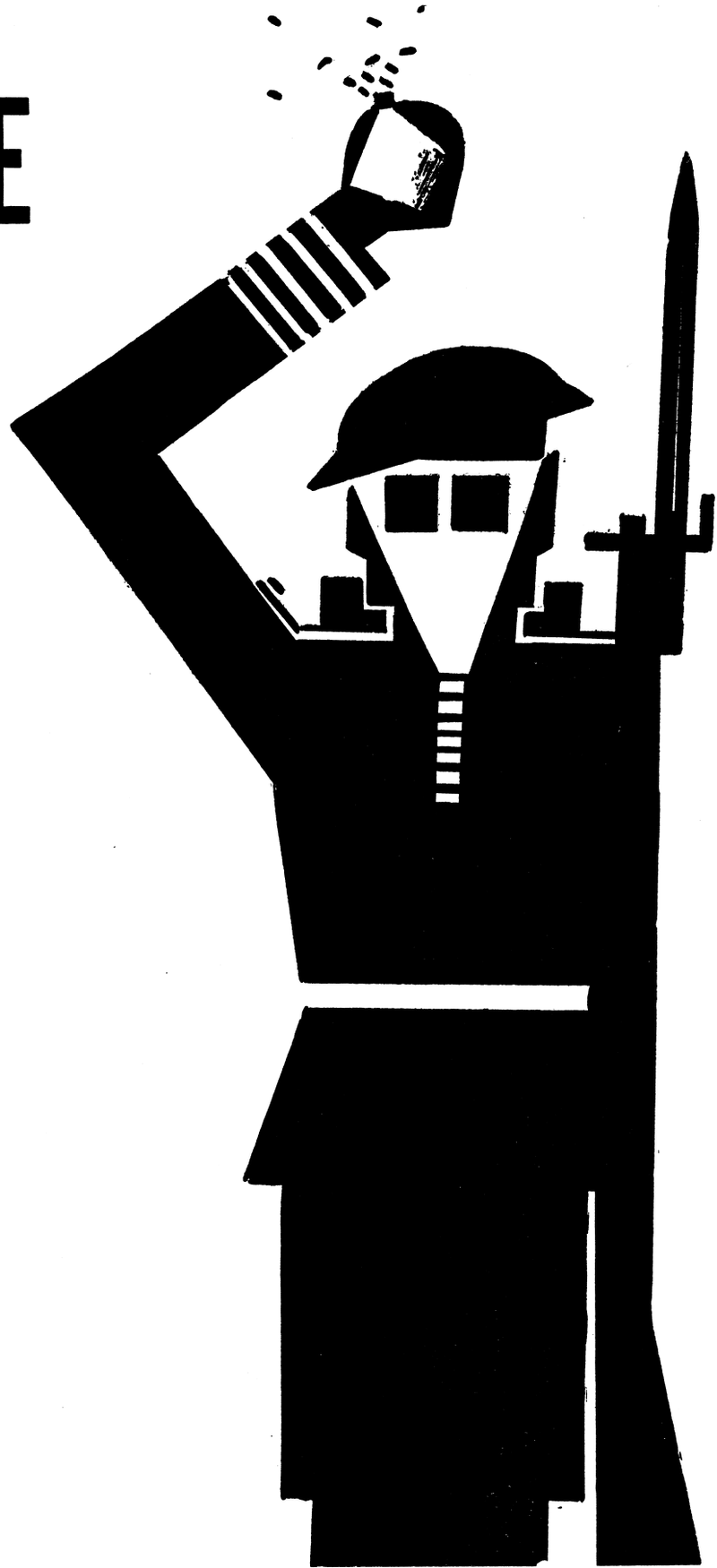
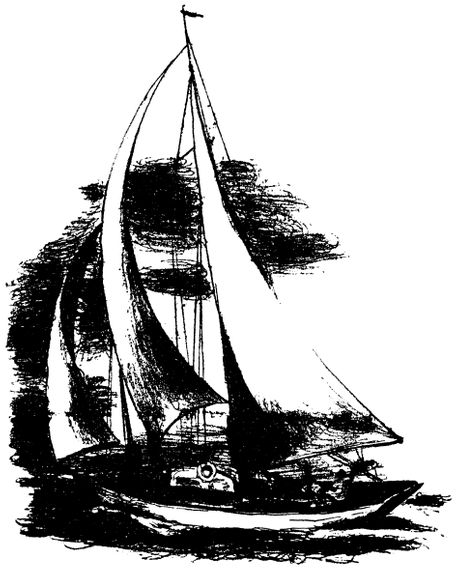
Maneuvering for Position



We Have Booked a Three-Quarter Moon

for the Moonlight Sail and Dance for the benefit of The New Masses and the Friends of the Soviet Union, beginning 7:30 P. M. Saturday, July 21 when the S.S. Ambassador leaves South Ferry for a gay, cool, informal moonlight sail up the Hudson. There'll be—the Valhalla Club Orchestra for dance music—refreshments—a bar—Ashley Pettis, pianist — National Negro Theatre Group, including Cecil Mack's Choir — James Boxwill, dramatic baritone —Thelma Minor, soprano—Orallia Benskina, African Dancer — Laura Bowman, character actress — Tessie Devine, torch singer. Tickets 75 cents in advance at New Masses, 31 East 27th Street—the F.S.U., 80 East 11th Street—the Workers' Bookshop, 50 East 13th Street. They are $1 at the Boat. Trip arranged through World Tourists, Inc., 175 Fifth Avenue, New York City.



New Masses

JULY 24, 1934

WITHIN twenty-four hours after the general strike in San Francisco became effective, two things happened simultaneously:

1. The A. F. of L. officials moved to sell out the strike.
2. An openly Fascist terror, with storm troops acting on the Nazi system, was launched against all Communists.

The two developments are organically connected. The reactionary labor politicians, pushed by the overwhelming demand of the rank and file into going along with the general strike, sit and debate their treacherous appeal for federal intervention and binding arbitration. At the same time organized and drilled bands of business men, detectives and imported thugs, are wrecking the offices of the Western Worker, the Workers' School, the I. L. D., the Marine Workers' Industrial Union, the Mission Workers Neighborhood House and the Workmen's Ex-Service Men's League. The raids are synchronized with hemming-in tactics by the militia; the police, where they do not actively take part in the raiding parties, appear on the scene instantly. Every Communist found, every person suspected of being a Communist, is clubbed, hunted down, dragged off to jail. Nevertheless, the sell-out move is not immediately successful; the employers, determined to smash the unions once and for all, return a contemptuous refusal. And the rank and file are furious at the attempted betrayal.

THE SISTER ACT *Limbach*

THE combined move of sell-out and Red-hunt did not come at the end of a long grueling struggle, with the strikers worn down by privation. The general strike had not yet reached its peak. It was spreading to Oakland, Alameda, Berkely, and other communities near San Francisco. A deep thrill of conscious power had run through the ranks of labor everywhere. Minneapolis truckmen, Alabama textile workers, had gone out. In Portland, the mass of workers were straining against the desperate efforts of their officials to keep them from throwing their strength behind San Francisco. With this enormous stirring of labor throughout the land, the employers of San Francisco, through their agents, the mayor, the police, the militia—and the reactionary labor officials—struck out promptly and hard, along the only line by which capitalism today can defend itself—the methods of Fascism. The issue in San Francisco, despite the unexampled campaign of lying propaganda in the press, has been raised into the full view of the workers of this country. It is the threat of Fascism — Fascism here and now; naked and brutal; suppression by force of all revolutionary workers' organizations; employers' storm troopers, as yet "unofficial," serving as the advance guard for the state power in upholding the American capitalism under the New Deal.

THE numerous Communist appeals to the French Socialists to join forces for united action "in the struggle against Fascism and in defense of labor and democratic liberties" have happily borne fruit: On July 15 the French Socialists' National Council accepted the proposal for a United Front made by the Central Committee of the Communist Party of France. The Blums and the Frossarts and the Faures, have finally yielded to the pressure of the masses who in the face of Fascism and

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the danger of imperialist war are determined to close their ranks and fight the common enemy. Already the reports indicate the tremendous effect this United Front of Socialists and Communists is having on the spirit of the French masses. In a few days Communist and Socialist representatives will meet to work out the details of the United Front agreement and lay the plans for a common struggle against Fascism, against wage cuts, against capitalist terror, and for the protection of the workers' rights which have been trampled upon by the various capitalist governments in France.

WE may be excessively sanguine, but it seems to us that a similar development is bound to take place in the United States. A wave of struggle is sweeping the country. Everywhere the workers are manifesting an irresitible urge toward united action. Life itself demands that the workers and poor farmers and the ruined sections of the middle-classes join together to fight for the vestiges of democratic rights which they still possess but which are in grave danger of being ruthlessly extirpated by the embattled forces of reaction in this country. It is a matter of common knowledge that the Communist Party in this country has within the last twelve months made numerous proposals to the Socialist leaders to open negotiations for a common agreement on united action for specific immediate issues. Only recently the Communist Party addressed itself to the Socialist Party Convention at Detroit urging immediate formation of a United Front on the burning questions now confronting the American working-class. The Convention took no action; it merely referred the whole matter to the newly elected, presumably "Left" National Committee under Norman Thomas. This committee has so far also ignored the Communist appeal. Undeterred, the Communist Party, through its General Secretary Earl Browder, issued another appeal on July 14. Again, as so many times in the past, the Communist Party has expressed its willingness to "agree to the cessation of all mutual attacks during the period of united actions so long as these actions commonly agreed upon are honestly carried out."

THE Communists do not call for unity in the abstract; they have definite proposals to make. They want unity in the fight "against the attacks of the police, for the right to assemble and talk freely, for the right to organize unions, for higher wages, against wage-cuts, strike-breaking, terrorism, Fascism, imperialist war." They want unity in the defense of class war prisoners here and abroad. They want unity in the struggle to free Thaelmann and other victims of Nazi oppression in Germany. These are concrete proposals, concrete and urgently necessary tasks on which all workers can agree. As to the theoretical and tactical differences with regard to the seizure of power by the proletariat or the form of state organization which the revolutionists will organize after the overthrow of capitalism, "these are questions that will be settled in the day to day clash of opinion, in the crucible of experience of the working-class, at home and in the international arena." Together with the General Secretary of the Communist Party, we say: "Those who hamper the united actions of the masses will stand in judgment before the bar of the American and international working-class." Let us follow the wise and inspiring action of the French Socialists and Communists!

THE Newspaper Guild has won the first strike of newspaper editorial workers ever undertaken in the United States. Four days of uninterrupted picketing, a wide use of additional publicity devices, and the local solidarity of newspapermen reenforced by a national organization, compelled the Long Island Daily Press publishers to yield to all the demands of the strikers. According to the strike agreement promulgated, the nine workers originally dismissed and threatened with dismissal for membership in the Guild have been reinstated; the publisher has unequivocally recognized the right of his employes to organize as a chapter of the Guild; and a grievance committee is to be set up under the control of the Guild. In addition, the publisher has agreed to begin negotiations in October toward the signing of a more detailed contract with the Guild, i.e., toward the setting up of a closed shop. To newspaper workers this complete victory means the first victory not only of the Guild but of a new policy in the relations between publishers and newspapermen. Organized under the N.R.A.'s section 7A, the Guild had at first been pushed into the role of a debating society by newspaper publishers. The publishers captured control of the Newspaper Code while the Guild did nothing to force inclusion in the code of its announced program. An industrial Board was established without Guild representation while the 8,000 Guild members sat quietly by and allowed none other than General Johnson to champion Guild inclusion. Editorial workers in different parts of the country soon began to be fired for Guild membership without effective opposition by the Guild.

AT the National Convention, June 5-8, R. L. Burgess, an editorial writer fired from Hearst's San Francisco Examiner for organizing a Guild chapter, delivered the keynote address: "There is no neutral ground for newspaper workers: we are for the workers or the publishers." Heywood Broun, reelected president, announced that newspaper men could and would use the strike as a weapon. But the previous firings still remained unchallenged. Then came the Representative Assembly of the New York chapter of the Guild to pass on charges of intimidation of Long Island Press writers for Guild membership. A proposal to strike was met with unanimous (only Allen Raymond, former N. Y. president of the Guild stood for "gentlemanly action") acceptance of picket duty. Out on the picket line went reporters, copy boys, sub-editors of every newspaper staff in New York. The "romantic" and "hard-boiled" tradition of the newspaperman's existence was swept away before a united assertion of the rights and demands of newspapermen as workers. As the Long Island Press strike began, publishers, who had cultivated the romantic aura and by unlimited hours of work developed the hard-boiled cynical reporter, faced for the first time in the history of American newspapers reporters who were organizing, picketing, and solidifying in defense of their rights. Coming as it does within a month after the complete victory of the first strike of professional employes of a publishing company (the strike against the Macaulay Company) the Guild strike victory indicates that professionals and intellectuals are daily becoming more actively conscious of their role as workers.

SIR JOHN SIMON, British Minister of Foreign Affairs, has just executed a graceful, though rather precipitous, *volte face*. Sir John, it is clear, is the perfect diplomat. Only a few weeks previously, during the Geneva sessions of the General Commission of the Dis-

armament Conference, he was sharply critical of the idea of regional pacts suggested by Maxim Litvinov, Soviet Commissar of Foreign Affairs, and vigorously supported by Barthou, who headed the French Delegation. Only yesterday, he maneuvered with Fascist Germany and imperialist Japan against the Soviet Union. Today, he blandly announces his warmest support of regional pacts, especially the East European Pact, his keen interest in persuading Germany to enter into this pact, and his eagerness to welcome the Soviet Union into the fold of the League of Nations. What has happened? Is it possible, as the Soviet Press suggests, that the British bourgeoisie whose spokesman Sir John is, has suddenly realized that "even should anti-Soviet schemes be put to action, they would end in a catastrophe for those who inspired them"? Naturally, France's exasperation with Hitler's Germany and her energetic policy of rapprochement with the U. S. S. R. had something to do with Sir John's change of attitude. But this, it seems, has been a secondary factor. The cardinal factor has been the events in Germany on June 30. Suddenly, it became clear to the British supporters of Hitler that they have been betting on the wrong horse. Hitler is doomed. The Third Reich is tottering. The totalitarian myth has been exploded. To orient British policy on a necessarily short-lived political freak and thereby to antagonize the most stable and one of the most powerful states in the world, the Union of Socialist Soviet Republics, would be sheer idiocy. With Nazi Germany threatening to fade out of the picture as an effective anti-Soviet force in Europe, Japan's aggressions against the Soviet Union in the Far East become much less likely to succeed. The Nazi ship is sinking, and the British diplomat is the first to run. Characteristically, Il Duce, the Fuehrer's greatest inspiration and support, is following Sir John a close second.

THE latest report of an anti-Nazi demonstration by the student body of the University of Goettingen following the wholesale murders of June 30, evidences again the failure of the National Socialist demagogy to maintain itself against the force of the economic crisis. National Socialism had swept the post-war colleges of the Reich. Nazi orators had preached to them the gospel of Youth, the debasement of Germany through the Versailles Treaty, the cult of physical and military fitness, the barbaric "honor code" of the duel. Steeped in the atmosphere of Junker tradition, facing a world of unemployment and overcrowded professions, the university student flocked to the banner of the swastika as a new salvation, as a new world-outlook. Anti-culture, anti-science, the cult of primitive emotionalism, appealed to the scions of an historically dying class. Disillusion followed zeal. Fraternity houses, far from returning to the days of Wine, Women, and Song, became military barracks and drill houses. A young German was forcibly taught that he was a soldier first and a student afterward. The "Fuehrer" principle was duplicated in miniature. Collegiate Hitlers became the campus tyrants to whom heels had to be clicked and a rousing Heil! given. Backtalk, disobedience meant swift punishment, even imprisonment.

THE enthusiasm of the university S. A. man who saw himself the savior of his country waned. Cases of "political unreliability," or "resisting discipline" multiplied. In April, 1934, 5,000 students of the Friedrich Wilhelm University in Berlin were transferred to Breslau and Koenisberg. Three student corps were dissolved on disciplinary charges. The butchery of their troop leaders has served to increase distrust and disaffection. The mounting economic crisis has not opened the world of professions to them. The myth of the German struggle as a struggle of Age and Youth, not as a struggle of classes, falls apart under the weight of its own invention. The collapse of the student movement is an inevitable part of the increasing tempo of the collapse of the whole structure of demagogy and terrorism that has been Hitler's "economic" program.

WHAT happened at Bridgeton, N. J. in the agricultural workers' strike was so falsified by the capitalist newspapers that the Strike Committee has been forced to make a public statement of facts. Charles Seabrook, who "learned about collective farming from the U. S. S. R.," made an agreement with his 800-900 employes to end their strike in April. Five days of watching his cabbages mouldering convinced Seabrook of the expediency of raising wages from 12½-17 cents an hour to 25-30 cents; he even agreed to abstain from hiring ten year old children to work in the fields for 5 cents an hour. In

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June, however, he changed his mind, reduced wages and cancelled his agreement; whereupon the workers, led by the Cannery and Agricultural Workers' Industrial Union, went out on strike. This time Seabrook set out to smash the strike in the best tradition of Imperial Valley Fascism: by importing deputized thugs, wholesale arrests without warrants, generous attacks of tear gas and vomit gas, and a little arson on the side. Separating the workers' houses from the plant stood a seven foot fence strung with live wires running uninsulated to the ground where children were playing. Because Seabrook's son felt that Mrs. Betarelli "talked too much," deputies threw tear gas into her house, burning sheets and blankets and injuring her two children.

QUARTERED in Seabrook's offices where applejack flowed in abundance, the representatives of the capitalist press were having a wonderful time. J. Goodman, Jr., of the Philadelphia Record, spied on the pickets' houses and reported back to his chief, Seabrook. Professor Fairchild of Bryn Mawr, a member of a delegation to Bridgeton, observed a reporter and a constable exchanging Heil Hitler salutes. Mrs. Colston Warne, wife of the Amherst professor of economics, was told by one of the reporters that "it was more interesting to the public to know that it was a Red strike than to reveal wages and conditions," adding that he was "going to get his little gold badge and be sworn in as a deputy that morning at $10 a day." All of which helps to give the human background for the solid front of lies which appeared in the capitalist papers: Donald Henderson, one of the union organizers, "was attacked by the strikers" and had to be "escorted out of town under police protection." Branding this report a lie, the union states that "Henderson received the overwhelming support of the strikers. A gang of vigilantes attempted to start a mob attack on Henderson." Meanwhile, the strikers returned to work on July 11, having won two of their main demands: restoration of the 30 cents hourly wage and assurance against discrimination in rehiring strikers. They refused to accept the compulsory arbitration of an "impartial" board from which they were deprived representation. But they are under no illusions about their employer. Their union promises to restrike if Seabrook breaks the terms of the agreement. There are already indications that he has done this—in discrimination against Negroes in rehiring—which means a recrudescence of the struggle, of bloodshed, vomit gas, and the rest of labor-smashing thuggery — and relentless counter-attacks by the workers.

AT 78, Nikola Tesla, scientist responsible for many of the outstanding developments in radio and the generation and distribution of electrical energy, announces the invention of a death-ray capable of destroying 1,000 airplanes at a distance of 250 miles and of annihilating an army of a million men at the same range. Coming from a scientist of such eminence, the announcement cannot be dismissed. Tesla, like others engaged in the profitable business of destruction, insists that his death-ray is a weapon of defense, and with this hypocritical rationalization brushes away humanitarian criticism. Tesla has spent many of the latter years of his life on developing this death-ray. Mass destruction has had a strangely morbid fascination for scientists who in recent years have concentrated on this type of research. The urge to deal death has an almost suicidal strain. The dying capitalist system weaves out of its agonies, monstrous fantasies of death.

To Free Angelo Herndon

TWO MAJOR defense cases, involving nearly every issue confronting the working-class movement today in their ramifications, are being taken to the United States Supreme Court this fall by the International Labor Defense.

The Scottsboro case will go there a second time, unless the Alabama State Supreme Court grants a re-hearing in October — which is unlikely unless the enormous pressure is brought upon it.

The conviction of Angelo Herndon, 20-year-old Negro organizer of white and Negro unemployed in Atlanta, having been confirmed by the Georgia State Supreme Court, will also be taken to the "court of last illusions."

Meanwhile, State Solicitor John A. Hudson, former deacon, and still a pillar of the Methodist Church in Atlanta, has announced his intention of sending Herndon to begin serving his 18-20 year sentence on the Georgia chain-gang even pending the appeal. Under Georgia law, which is concerned primarily in feeding its convict-labor system with victims, and with the suppression of the militant labor movement, there is no legal barrier to this act of barbarism.

A stay of execution has been granted until August 3. Bail has been set at the huge sum of $15,000 in cash or Liberty Bonds.

On top of this, the expenses of the Scottsboro and Herndon appeals alone will amount to another $15,000.

NEW MASSES readers are familiar with the horrors of the Georgia chain-gang, as described by John L. Spivak and other writers. What special tortures and death-traps are in preparation in these camps for a Negro who is also a militant working-class leader who has defied the officials of the state, can perhaps be better imagined than described.

In the case of Herndon also, not only the struggle for national liberation of the Negro people, all the issues involved in Scottsboro, but the fight for existence of trade-unions and of all workers organizations are directly at stake.

The drive against the revolutionary movement in Atlanta, inaugurated by Hudson following the Georgia Supreme Court decision in the Herndon case, his announcement that he will "burn Communism out of Georgia," and demand the death penalty for every "agitator" every organizer, every advocate of unity between Negro and white, on this same basis, show the clear connection between the fight against growing Fascism and the fight to free Herndon.

The most important thing at the present moment is to secure the release of Herndon on bail, and the I. L. D. has opened a drive for this purpose. Certificates which guarantee the return of these loans as soon as the bail is released are being issued by the I. L. D.

THE NEW MASSES endorses this drive whole-heartedly, and urges all its readers to dig into whatever reserves of cash and Liberty Bonds the depression has left them, and put them into the Herndon bail fund. They should be sent to the national office of the I. L. D., Room 430, 80 East 11th Street, New York City, which will send out the certificates to all who loan these sums.

From Izvestia U. S. S. R. *Fr. Leschani*

From Izvestia

U. S. S. R.

Fr. Leschani

The Week's Papers

WEDNESDAY — Ivy Lee, Rockefeller master-publicity man, revealed as getting $25,000 a year for advice on Nazi propaganda in America. . . . Friends of New Germany open Nazi summer camp on shore of MacDonald's Lake, New Jersey. . . . Refusing to pay $200,000 adjudged due its underpaid workers under code, G and H Clothing Company closes down its Fredericksburg, Va., plant, throwing 500 out of work. . . . Newspaper Guild members join picket line of Long Island Press, Jamaica, L. I., which had forced dissolution of Guild chapter. . . . 100 Hillside, N. Y. relief workers strike against proposed relief cuts. . . . Bridgeton, N. J., farm workers return after agreement ends strike. . . . Gov. Pinchot promises investigation into University of Pittsburgh which dismissed Dr. Ralph E. Turner for his liberalism. . . . "In terms of actual nourishment, the workers after one year of N.R.A. are worse off," Dr. Carmen Haider tells Institute of Public Affairs at University of Virginia.

Thursday—Navy proposes to recruit 5,500 more men and build 19 additional ships, including destroyers and submarines. . . . Committee of big businessmen tells Government business must now be allowed to govern itself. . . . Evidence of sweatshops openly operating is placed before New York State N.R.A. director by Grace Hutchins of Labor Research Association. . . . Wehr Steel Casting Company plant in Milwaukee closed by strike. . . . Hugh Frayne, reactionary A. F. of L. official for 30 years, dies in New York at age of 65. . . . Weirton Steel Company men swear out warrants on framed charges against five Amalgamated Association of Iron, Steel and Tin Workers on framed charges for participating in the fight against Weirton. . . . Gov. Lehman, at Albany luncheon, tells business men, professionals, editors and social workers, "educational" advertising fund of $500,000 was appropriated by Legislature "to teach people to use more milk."

Friday — Dwight Manufacturing Co.'s cotton workers at Gadsden, Ala., strike against anti-union discrimination. . . . Cops cold-bloodedly murder a man and a woman at Cleveland relief headquarters demonstration, firing bullets into victims' backs. . . . Germany's formal protest against Gen. Johnson's mild strictures against Hitler's "blood purge" brings "regrets over misunderstanding" from Secretary of State Hull. . . . Railroads to seek 10 percent increase in freight rates. . . . Militant action wins workers' fight against municipal ban on picketing in Jersey City. . . . Protestants vote to join "pure film" movement. . . . "Communism, Fascism, Socialism, let the people fight them all," former Ambassador James W. Gerard urges in Newport, R. I., speech. . . . Wheat goes to $1.

Saturday — San Francisco labor unions call general strike. . . . Seven companies in sheet and tin plate industry forced to grant workers increase in wages. . . . Republic Steel Company holds out against union; strike may be called. . . . Huge sesqui plane ready to make first "trade recognition" flight to Soviet Union, taking off from Chicago. . . . National Labor Relations Board holds Washington conference to establish best strike-breaking policy. . . . Second of 11 unemployed demonstrators jailed in Hillsboro, Ill., is released. . . . Case of Corliss Lamont for picketing in Jersey City again postponed. . . . American Civil Liberties Union asks Congressional inquiry into Fascist "shirt" groups in U. S.

Sunday—Three longshoremen killed in Houston, Texas dock strike. . . . A. A. A. mails $30,000,000 more as benefit payments to wheat farmers for curtailing production. . . . Officer at Citizens' Military Training Corps at Camp Dix tries to suppress news of address there by Rabbi Silberfeldt referring to Hitler as an "unscrupulous adventurer." . . . U. S. Government, as "relief" measure, may go into meat canning industry. . . . Alabama textile workers vote to strike. . . .Cleveland workers set Wednesday for mass funeral of two victims of cops at relief demonstration. . . . American Civil Liberties' Union says "pure film" drive by churches lays foundation for censorship of films, radio, books.

Monday—General strike begins in San Francisco. . . . Pacific Coast shipping still entirely paralyzed. . . . Minneapolis truckmen begin new walk-out at midnight. . . . Oakland joins general strike. . . . Oakland police club workers during raid and ransacking of Communist Party headquarters. . . . Bridgeton, N. J., farm workers consider a new walk-out. . . . Strike closes Benton Harbor, Mich., plant of Watervliet Paper Co. . . . 18,000 knitgoods workers in New York prepare for strike. . . . 500 workers strike for more pay at Assawago Woolen Co., Danielsen, Conn. . . . Atlantic Coast marine workers discuss strike to tie up Eastern shipping. . . . Mass picketing continues in strike at General Tire and Rubber Company's Akron, O., plant. . . . 8,000 pecan shellers at San Antonio, Texas, strike to enforce demands for more pay. . . . Striker and deputy wounded when picket line is attacked at Kohler plumbing plant in Kohler, Wisc., "model industrial town." . . . Scioto marshlands' onion patches near McGuffy, O., are mass picketed in strike to bring wages up from 12 cents an hour to 35.

Tuesday — 27,000 more unionists walk out in Oakland, Cal. . . . San Francisco general strike committee adopts resolution seeking Roosevelt intervention and arbitration. . . . S. F. police and "vigilantes" raid Communist and militant unionists' headquarters and halls; 300 arrested. . . . Ordered to quit office as convicted felon by Supreme Court, Gov. Langer, North Dakota, maintains himself in power by armed force, declaring martial law. . . . Butte copper miners still out on strike. . . . 11 huge Navy planes leave San Diego for mass flight to Alaska. . . . Red ore miners end strike in Alabama. . . . Cleveland's striking taxi drivers reject compromise offer. . . . Denied collective bargaining rights, workers may strike at Duquesne, Pa., plant of Carnegie Steel Company. . . . Warrant issued for arrest of Justice of the Peace Ellsworth P. Long on charges he violated law holding "court" at the Seabrook Farm in Bridgeton, N. J., in effort to break farmers' strike. . . . National Guard mobilized in Minneapolis as trucking is tied up by strike. . . . Alabama textile walk-out spreads through State. . . . A Hitler-like "purge"is advocated by Gen. Johnson, now in California to help break general strike. . . . In first half of this year, General Electric Co. profits rose to $8,175,557, an increase of 75 percent over the same period last year.

General Strike

IRIS HAMILTON

SAN FRANCISCO.

"LIKE a besieging army, pickets were stationed on all roads leading into San Francisco and East Bay Cities." Not a truck can pass on El Camino Real, Skyline Boulevard, or the Bay Shore Highway without the pickets' permission.

The tables are turned with a vengeance. Only yesterday, the Battle of Rincon Hill, last of five Bloody Days (every day of the week but two has been christened "Bloody" in the last two months—days on which police fired their pistols and threw their tear-gas bombs and wielded their skull-cracking nightsticks): only yesterday the Governor of California could order two thousand boys just out of high school to shoot and kill seasoned workhardened men without whose labor these kids would have whined and starved. (Which of them could carry three hundred-pound loads like a longshoreman, work thirty hours at a stretch? The National Guardlets complained of the cold and discomfort and lack of movies and "fun" after three days.)

Only yesterday Mayor Rossi could sermonize on "law and order," "fairness to the public," "protection for citizens" and open the American Legion anti-Communist drive among fanfare of trumpets, mouthing his inanities in the open while secretly assisting the Industrial Association in its attempts to break the strike.

Today the Governor is "appealing through the press to representatives of the striking workers to make ample provision for necessary food and medical supplies into San Francisco and the Bay region." The City Board of Health is *asking the Unions* for gasoline permits; milk and bakery wagon-companies are *asking the Unions* for permits to make deliveries.

You can goad men till they enjoy the unchristian virtue of revenge, enjoy it even with a reverend archbishop sitting on a Mediation Board set up by a Christian President. . . .

But that's not it. Labor in the West has temporarily won; it is thrilling with excitement, spirit and courage. Labor has stuck together up and down this Coast, stuck, steadfast and rocklike as its own Sierras. Fifteen unions are out in sympathy with the striking longshoremen; the strongest, most important and best-organized unions on the Pacific. The Battle of Rincon Hill, in which Mayor Rossi's police shot and wounded more than a hundred unarmed workers and bystanders (unarmed except for the industrial debris, rocks and bottles and screws, they could pick up) took place on July 5. On July 8 the teamsters met and determined by a vote of 1,220 to 271 to come out three days later if the strike were still unsettled.

On July 10 they came out on a practically unanimous strike vote of 2,000. They are delighted. Their district president, Michael Casey, tried his best to stop them, with warnings, threats and pleas—even declaring that the strike was "illegal." When they overrode him and called their strike, he said: "It will take a few days to establish picketing lines." But the truckmen, out at midnight, had by dawn their pickets, hundreds strong, on every highroad into and out of San Francisco, and by morning enough trucks lay on their sides, and enough peaches, apricots, pears and cabbages were sprawling over the sidewalks to decide the warehouses and grocery stores not to try to transport anything.

"Too bad," said Mayor Rossi, shaking his head, as he drove by Dreamland Auditorium and heard the news, "Ts-ts ts too bad!" "We're out! We're out!" shouted 2,000 teamsters, as they streamed from the Auditorium amid thunderous cheers and were greeted by an answering thunder from the overjoyed marine strikers and stevedores who had stood waiting on the sidewalk for two hours and a half. A. F. of L. leaders, Kidwell, Vandeleur, Casey had said in that meeting: "Stand by President Roosevelt and his mediators . . ." "Consider the gravity of rejecting the request . . ." "It may mean martial law . . ." "You will lose the $10 strike benefits because sympathy strikes are forbidden. . . ." The teamsters scoffed. They roared for Bridges. "Bridges, Bridges! Get Bridges in!"

Harry Bridges, leader of the Joint Marine Strike Committee and the Longshoremen's Strike Committee came, surrounded by his strong bodyguard of stevedores. A lusty shout went up.

"The entire labor movement faces collapse if the maritime strikers are defeated," he said. "If you strike, you will double the power of the strikers." Unity, solidarity, determination . . . That is what Bridges harps on, what he and all the other trusted strike leaders have repeated over and over, since May 9—and what is bringing the employers, police, press and mediators, Federal and State and City Governments to their knees. "Stick together and you can't lose."

On Monday, July 9, two months after the strike broke out, San Francisco union labor buried two comrades who gave their lives for union labor—for the rank-and-file: Howard Sperry, World War veteran, I.L.A. member, an unemployed fry-cook, and Nicholas Bordoise, seaman, member of the Tom Mooney Branch of the I.L.D. and of the Communist Party. It was a moving mass funeral. The capitalist papers fell over themselves in their descriptive accounts by picked reporters; pages of color-stories; banner headlines. For not only did fifteen thousand men follow the flower-laden coffins, in a procession stretching a mile, but tens of thousands more watched from the streets, heads bared as the slow dirges beat on the sunny air. Workers from shop and mill, truck and ferryboat, street-car and taxi, fell into line in that march; men left their offices and joined that march; relief projects were deserted, buildings, elevators, kitchens, delivery wagons, laundries and factories; as workers joined in that procession, one immense solid phalanx, to bury their dead.

One had seen it somewhere before, this silent, endless march, workers knit by something no outsider could understand; sailors, stevedores, firemen, cooks, oilers, engineers, mates, pilots; with the flowers, with the music, in the sunshine, in silence: moved by one great emotion: one had seen it before—where was it?—Ah, *Potemkin!* The film *Potemkin!* That march by the bier of the sailor slain on the Battle Cruiser *Potemkin,* Odessa, in 1905—*because he wouldn't eat any more of their tainted food!*

"In fact, I can state before the Board," said Harry Jackson, National Organizer of the Marine Workers' Industrial Union, at the Roosevelt Board open hearings: "I can state before the Board that one-third of the seamen who are forced to go to the Marine Hospital for treatment go there because of the rotten food served aboard American ships."

But there's another similarity with that movie of an historical event: and it makes one say, with Vandeleur, one of the sell-out A. F. of L. leaders in San Francisco, "Do you fellows have to see a haystack in the air before you can see which way the straws are blowing?" It is this. Remember that cross bobbing up and down, after the revolt has broken out, that is flashed now at the top of the stairs, now on the lower deck, now in the mouth of the cannon, now in the men's bunks, as the sailors take over the ship?—the great decorated fluted Greek Orthodox Cross? A symbol. Remember?

The Chairman of the Roosevelt Mediation Board is His Grace the Right Reverend Archbishop Edward J. Hanna.

"You can't describe San Francisco 'quite like it,'" as the little girl said. The taxis are out—2,500 of them. The hotel bus men are on strike. (The Knights Templars, with their black and yellow banners and their intricate crisscross marchings, who were holding a national conclave in San Francisco, "hurriedly left." One hotel, used to forty arrivals a day, had four. The cleaners are out; the dyers are out, the butchers, boilermakers, welders, marine cooks, stewards, firemen, oilers, watertenders, wipers, scalers, engineers, masters, mates and pilots—oh yes, and 12,000 longshoremen—out on the Pacific Coast.

"It's unique," cries the capitalist press, "it's like no other general strike situation ever seen.

THE PRESS COVERS THE STRIKE

Limbach

Why, it is almost entirely a sympathetic strike!"

"It's illegal!" wails Michael Casey. "It's against our constitution," moans Edward Vandeleur. "The N.R.A. can't help them!" shouts General Johnson. "Not till there's a shipping code." "The closed shop is illegal—it's against Section 7A"—headshakes the Employers' Association. . . . "Ts-ts-ts-ts — breaking laws passed by the impartial federal government!"

Oh yeah? say the strikers. And what about those hundreds of pickets you illegally imprisoned and illegally beat up? What about the workers you have jailed illegally for striking, for selling literature, for showing movies, for distributing leaflets, for vagrancy, for protests, for "being a Communist," as one of your own judges flatly put it, breaking the bounds of legal fiction for a passionate truthful moment? What about the strikers you had illegally shot and no policeman has been even brought to trial for it?

It is not difficult to read, between the lines, the employers' intention in this historic class battle. There is little doubt left now that this was a concerted, arranged, coastwise (and nation-wide) attack on organized labor. Employers have been laying for some time, on this coast, for a show-down. "It's got to come sooner or later," they kept saying. It came. The employers have thrown their all into this battle—their money, guns, vomit gas, mediators, press, their lies, appeals to patriotism, religion, impartiality, "law and order"; their A. F. of L. officials. And yet all they have accomplished, with each successive move, is to turn more sympathy toward the strikers. San Francisco labor is solid for the strike. Every Los Angeles union has voted money and moral support for the general strike when called. Seattle, Portland, Washington, San Pedro are solid for the strike. Today even the barber in the corner shop, the waitress, the manicurist, the hotel employee — people who spend their lives serving the bourgeoisie personally —hope the strikers will win.

The Mediators have played the sorriest role: they have exposed themselves in all the nakedness of the partisanship of the national government. "Roosevelt Board Battles to Avert General Walk-Out" cried Hearst's Examiner on July 11. But they haven't battled for peace or for workers; they have battled for one thing—to break the strike (at $20 a day). The open hearings were calculated — consciously or unconsciously — to create delay, while trucks carried cargo from the waterfront to warehouses under police and National Guard protection. (Though the Industrial Association, with all its police and troops and murders and hypocritical page-ads in newspapers, has accomplished as much as one little boy might have accomplished; it has moved cargo only from the dock to warehouses. It has to stop that now, because the warehouses are overflowing; and there are no trucks in the city of San Francisco that will move one skein of silk or one pineapple out of a warehouse. . . .

The Board's open hearings occupied three days. Before they began, Archbishop Hanna asked the men to return to work pending arbitration. The men refused. Appeals were made daily to the strikers and not-yet striking workers for patience, for care for the interests of the public—for trust in President Roosevelt, "who is your friend." Appeals to workers to trust their (yes, *their*) Mayor, their (yes, *their*) Governor (whose publicity woman says: "We can always count on insults to reds to be good publicity"), for return to work pending arbitration. Even when the employers said they would arbitrate and the newspapers spilled it over the front pages, there was a joker in it; they still wouldn't meet the chosen representatives of the strikers. They still would arbitrate collectively only if *they* were satisfied with the strikers' representatives; and there was no provision for arbitration if collective bargaining should fail.

The hearings before the Board were characterized by clearly stated, terse, vivid pictures by strike leaders of conditions on boats and on the docks, of conditions of work and hiring, underpay and overtime, blacklisting and human degradation that shocked even the sunny California bourgeoisie out of its somnolent paradise. The speaker for the employers, Thomas G. Plant, Manager of the Waterfront Employers' Union, bald-headed and sonorous-voiced, read from a prepared statement for over an hour: and all he had to say was what they had said before, except that he added a gratuitous insult: The men have had the closed shop since 1921, he said, meaning

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the notorious Blue Book company union.

During the three days of the hearing, full-page ads appeared in every San Francisco newspaper morning and evening, telling in bold black print, the employers' falsehoods.

The Mediators knew the teamsters were going to walk out Wednesday night "unless the strike was settled." In that time they sat and asked, impotently, "What is a scaler?" "What is a fink, this word fink, Mr. Bridges?" "Why are the insurance rates for longshoremen as high as for aviators?" They let the employers collect funds; move heaven and earth to sway public opinion; they let them lie about wages and conditions, the closed shop, legality. They pleaded for arbitration. The Mayor of Portland let his Chief of Police shoot four strikers, one of whom is still in a critical condition, and when even his City Council protested and asked removal of the official, and the longshoremen came and waved the wounded men's bloody shirts in his face, he requested them not to use profanity.

"If your police can use bullets, I should think the longshoremen would be allowed to use profanity," mildly suggested a City Commissioner. And now even Governor Julius Meier, of Oregon, has wired Senator McNary at Washington: "I urge that the Mediation Board either act . . . promptly . . . or be succeeded by another." The Senator was unable to see Miss Perkins, but her Department said the Board was directly responsible to the President. And the President is on the high seas preparing his tackle for fishing off the Cocos Islands.

Archbishop Hanna, just before the teamsters struck, walked up and down the platform, so the radio announced, in great perturbation, praying for the teamsters and counting his beads. Last night, with the General Strike two days off, "as father of the poor and the afflicted" he stated in a nation-wide radio address of great solemnity, "that in the new Law all Men were Brothers in Christ," and that "a settlement can be arrived at only by arbitration."

But there is a graver menace to the General Strike — labor's worst enemy, the employers' most powerful ally: the reactionary A.F. of L. leaders. Their part has also been nakedly exposed in this strike. The rank and file have pushed through, fought through, sacrificed through, to the brink of victory; will these compromising "leaders" snatch the workers' gains from them now, at the eleventh hour, when labor has the support of every class-conscious workingman, of every sympathizer, every imaginative and generous person in the United States?

In the days after the police shot workers and the troops came out, labor gathered together and answered with a great cry: "General Strike!" A meeting of the San Francisco Labor Council, July 6, to act on the general strike resolution, adopted a substitute resolution—setting up a strike strategy Committee of Seven. The workers were misled at this point, for on this committee were appointed the seven biggest anti-strike, anti-rank-and-file, anti-democratic, of the well-paid A.F. of L. officials. And they have acted true to pattern. They have delayed the general strike vote, and delayed it again, meanwhile using every thinkable means of splitting the ranks. Up to the moment of the general strike vote, they had failed to even dent the unity of the workers.

The rank and file is wonderful, heartening. They have acted in such a way on the Pacific Coast in this strike as to ensure that there are some things which will not be done to Labor again. For forty years the employers said, "There's nothing to arbitrate." Now the longshoremen say it. "There's nothing to arbitrate in the closed shop. Because, you see, we don't mean a half-closed, or a three-quarters closed, or a seven-eighths closed shop; we don't want a crack in the door left open; we mean a *closed* shop."

They are learning not to be fooled by lost leaders. (Perhaps not fast enough. That is the great fear. Perhaps not fast enough.) "Those fake leaders haven't five percent of the support they think they have," said one rank-and-filer. Many of the rank-and-file, grown wise, have been enlightened by the perception of their own power. They said they could do it, and it's true: they can! Labor can beat the Company union. Workers can beat Fascism——if—if—they'll stick by their *uncorruptible, uncompromising,* red leaders.

For that reason it is that against the leaders who stick by the men, every calumny has been spread; they are dope-peddlers, they are hooligans, criminals, British agents, un-American, aliens, kidnapers, vagrants, REDS! REDS!! Thieves, dynamiters (all one of course) . . . *Reds!* The rank-and-file shout for Reds—they want more of them. . . . "Give us more Reds!" they cry—and they *need* more of them.

Capitalists, more and more, are forging the weapons of their own destruction. They have a way of proving whether you're a Red or not. If you have discipline, order, poise, intelligence, patience, foresight, loyalty — if you stand devotedly, unflinchingly, uncompromisingly by your men—by the rank-and-file—then you are a red. The flattery of it! The compliment of it! In every kindergarten of the U.S.A., in every Boy Scout troop, in every nursery and schoolroom, the patriotic teachers are seeking to inculcate just those virtues into children which San Francisco capitalists and their tools attribute to communists, radicals, Reds. (Before labor's onslaught even the American Legion has retreated in dismay. It had to publish an apology for a labor-baiting advertisement in a capitalist newspaper, when it realized it was antagonizing even its own potential recruits.)

The line-up has been clear in this strike. The employers, organized and united, the Government, Arbitration, the Press, Church, police, troops, guns, A. F. of L. officials on one side — and organized labor, solid, conscious, determined, on the other.

Let's dial in on one last radio news-instalment:

> The tomato crop of Contra Costa County, ripening a month ahead of schedule, is threatened with ruin because there are no trucks to deliver them.

A month ago one hundred and fifty militant fruit pickers, organizing in the Cannery and Agricultural Workers' Industrial Union, were run out of Contra Costa County by police for striking against a wage of twenty cents an hour, and locked up for three weeks.

Oh, Archbishop Hanna's heavenly Boss! You couldn't by any chance be laughing, could you?

(*This article was written and dispatched while the unions were voting on the general strike, and before the final decision was known.*—THE EDITORS.)

The Veterans Won't Scab

DAWN LOVELACE

PORTLAND, OREGON.

I'LL never forget the expression on old Nate's face when I mentioned class conscious war veterans. Nate—that isn't his real name, but if he reads this, I hope he will take it as an overdue rebuke—had been a revolutionist in Russia years ago. So many years ago that exposure and many winters had crippled his feet with rheumatism. He had been conked on the head by policemen, and through the years of the Coolidge-Hoover prosperity, when so many younger, smarter people had decided that a proletarian revolution was the dream that Jack Reed used as a shroud, old Nate kept plugging away at his active hatred for the capitalist class. And oh, how he hated the capitalists! Hatred would spread over his face—it was a rather Madonna-like face for an old revolutionist—and would sparkle in his eyes. His lip would curl, and the final result would be a look of infinite, brooding patience reminding one of how a pebble is caught in an eddy and swirls around in a hole that eats into the rock-bed of a stream. Some day, either the pebble will wear away, or the rock-bed will be hollowed and worn out.

That was the way Nate looked when I said that American war veterans—members of the American Legion, etc.—should be reached by the militant workers and won over to our side. "You wait and you'll see what side they will be on when the workers are on the barricade," he said, with that sad, slow hatred that left

no need for waiting. Somehow, Nate could not keep in mind that veterans shed blood on both sides at Centralia, Washington, in 1919. He thought of aluminum helmets, red puff-pants and brutal faces on parade. He thought of American Legion exhibitions of patriotism in California. He thought of W. W. Waters, his boots, his book and his "aides." He thought of resolutions calling for great vigilance (and vigilantes) against Communism. And sadly, he echoed a note that one still can hear among class conscious non-veterans: Those screwey veterans will all turn fascist.

To Nate it was a waste of time in 1933, before the Veterans' Rank & File Convention at Washington, D. C., to set up the Oregon Veterans' Liaison Committee, collect nickels and dimes to issue tens of thousands of leaflets analyzing what the Economy Act meant, and showing that dear Uncle Sam had no illusions about what class the rank and file veteran belonged to. When we saw, after the weeks of work, after using workers' dimes to pay for leaflets, the little group of veterans who started out from Oregon as a contingent of delegates, we wondered if Nate was right. Out of a big, state-wide conference, with delegates from V.F.W. (Veterans of Foreign Wars) posts, D.A.V. (Disabled American Veterans) chapters and Legion posts, that little group of men started out, less than sixty in all. It looked hopeless. The Wobbly, grinning cynically at the vindication of his defeatism, repeated that the veterans needed to starve "like other workers." Maybe they had a special way of starving. "The government ought to rescind the bonus. That's what's keepin' 'em scissorbills. They got a few lousy dollars dangling in front of 'em. That's all they can think of."

But that wasn't what the Oregon contingent — plain, rank and file veterans — was thinking of. Not entirely. They were starting out to deliver Uncle Sam and his advisory committee, the National Economy League, an ultimatum, that they as well as the other workers, farmers and veterans, were tired of hunger. They bummed their way to Washington, attended the convention, and scattered. Some returned to Oregon, to find the united front shattered and some of its elements saying: "Well, Roosevelt put over the Economy Act for the country's good. We hadn't ought to grumble. We have to make some sacrifice."

Again we were almost ready to give old Nate the benefit of the doubt. The American Legion convention was passing resolutions against Communism, while disabled veterans in t.b. hospitals, n.p. wards, soldiers' homes were committing suicide, and Congress juggled around with clauses and the Veterans' Administration used a fine-tooth comb to see if they could scrape another sliver off some disabled veterans' wooden leg. From California came rumblings of what the Legion was doing to live up to its resolution to defend Americanism. Meetings of the Friends of the Soviet Union were broken up by flag-waving gangsters. Workers felt the enthusiastic beating of patriotism on their heads at demonstrations. In the state of Washington, the Legion was showing they could still fight for Wall Street. Yes, those tens of thousands of leaflets; those long hours of hard work—were all wasted. Only a relative handful of veterans would dig in and struggle for relief. The Commander in Chief—the Great White Father in Washington—would fix things up if the reds would only give him a chance.

But last fall the Chief of Police (he's a buddy, too,) issued an invitation to the American Legion to form a nice, country-loving reserve police force. He wanted 250 stalwart men with guts to handle demonstrations. After all, they had fought for this country. Did they want the reds to have it? When the issue was allowed to die a discreet death, only about 15 Legionnaires indicated that they gave a whoop. Well, maybe those leaflets weren't wasted, after all.

On May 9th, the longshoremen went out on strike. The Waterfront Employers let forth a blast of paid ads, telling what dirty dogs the longshoremen were. The newspapers co-operated with long editorials, telling how the American public was suffering because of the stubborn longshoremen. Portland has what is reputed to be the largest Legion post in the country. There are other Legion posts, too, and V.F.W. posts and a D.A.V. chapter. The newspapers called loudly that the strike was the work of reds, creating discontent and hiding behind the backs of the American workingman. But there was no answer from the Legion rank and file—except a resolution from Post No. 1 declaring that the Legion would not interfere in the strike! It was a formal announcement that the American Legion would not be used as striker-clubbers and strike-breakers.

Some months ago, obviously preparing for such an "emergency" as the longshoremen's and seamen's strike, the leadership of the Legion formed a state-wide "law enforcement committee." General George A. White, commander of the Oregon National Guard and regular army big-shot, was chairman of it. There were prominent attorneys, newspaper editors and publishers and businessmen. Of course, they weren't interested in Communists. Pooh! There weren't enough of them to worry about. No, sir—it was kidnaping and bank-wrecking that they were going to clean up on. (There has been no kidnaping in Oregon and the guilt for bank-wrecking is an ambiguous, controversial issue. They might have been out to get Hoover—but it is doubtful.) The law enforcement body of Legion leadership lived a short life (about three half-column spreads in the newspapers) and died a reticent death. I was talking to a Legionnaire about that time and I asked about this committee.

"Huh! They can't get away with that stuff —using the Legion to hide their reactionary fineigling behind! They won't have *any* membership left," was his reply.

But the Chamber of Commerce, not to be defeated by a little stubbornness on the part of the rank and file Legionnaire, V.F.W., etc., recently started a new attempt at building a fascist battering ram to break the longshoremen's and seamen's strike. Patterned after "similar organizations in California," a "Citizens' Emergency League" was formed. Prominent Chamber of Commerce men make up the executive committee. Henry Cabell, wealthy Oregonian and member of the C. of C.'s military affairs committee; Sammonds, big corporation head (Iron Fireman); Freck, printer and engraver business, and Legion leadership; Kenneth Cooper, formerly regional manager of the Veterans' Bureau here (until driven out by the resenting veterans). And of course, *they* had no concern with the strike, either. They were just getting ready to answer the call of the regular law enforcement bodies in case of emergency. A thousand members were recruited according to reports given out recently. Now anyone would think that the American Legion, V.F.W., etc., were joining *en masse*. But—two posts of the Legion have already gone on record in opposition to the Emergency League. A V.F.W. post has done the same, and is out investigating the outfit. They asked Captain Aird, "in command" of the League, some embarrassing questions. Was it not true the Chamber of Commerce contributed a fund of $20,000 to finance this self-sacrificing body? If not, where did they get their funds to start off with such a bang? Weren't there enough law enforcement bodies in Oregon—;emergency and otherwise? You say you have no interest in the strike—then what th' hell are you organizing for?

Well, as to the last question . . . just in case the Mayor or the Governor calls on us. Oh —in other words, the Citizens' Emergency League is a pure and simple fascist organization.

Something desperate has happened to the spirit of 1919. Neither the workers nor the industrialists can count on the rank and file Legionnaire turning Fascist. There are no Legionnaires strutting around the water-front, looking for a Communist to bat on the head. There are no fife and drum corps rallying the citizenry of Portland to defend the employers' interests against the militant strikers. It's enough to make you cry to see veteran posts going on record against being used by the Chamber of Commerce and the Waterfront Employers. It's enough to make Hamilton Fish tear his hair (if he is still in the hair-tearing business) to talk to rank and filers of the Legion and hear them tell the strikers to go to it, and by God! I hope you win! Yes —and it's simply blood-curdling the way veteran posts in Portland are sending delegates to the Conference Against War and Fascism. The drums that beat in 1919 are busted. . . . There is a bigger drum that has grown in volume during the past five years, and the veterans—those screwey veterans who always fight on the side of the boss—are marching to it.

I hope old Nate reads this. Perhaps it will temper his long-suffering hatred with hope. Perhaps it will add a dash of courage to the bitterness that spreads over his face.

Maneuvering for Position

JOHN STRACHEY

LONDON.

THE main recent political events in Britain have been occasioned by an intense activity and enormous expenditure of funds by the Mosley Fascists.

It is now clearer than ever that the great Olympia meeting marked a distinct setback for Mosley. The counter-activity developed by the London working class was considerably greater than either he or the ordinary Conservatives expected. Moreover, this activity was developed wholly under the leadership of the London Communist Party. The result appears to have been that the British governing class, surveying the situation, has as yet by no means made up its mind that it is necessary or advisable to change over to an open Fascist basis.

Naturally, that possibility is always in its mind, but at present it feels that it has still a good deal to gain by keeping up Democratic forms. Mr. Baldwin, as ever by far the most important leader of the governing class forces, has strongly attacked Fascism in several recent speeches. He evidently feels that the perceptible revival in the economic situation allows for further Democratic maneuvers.

On the other hand, the Conservative Party is determined to show the governing class that there is no need to employ Mosley and his crude methods. The Conservative Party believes that it itself is quite capable of doing the job of building up a Fascist regime in this country by gradualist methods. The most important step in this direction is the Incitement to Disaffection Bill, which makes fundamental changes in British common law practice. The amount of United Front opposition which has arisen to this Bill is decidedly gratifying. A successful United Front demonstration, organized by a new body called the Council of Civil Liberties, was held in Trafalgar Square last Sunday. The London Trades Council, which is an important official Labor Party body, together with the London Communist Party, the Anti-War Movement, and several middle-class organizations — Quakers, Teachers' Associations, etc.—participated in this demonstration. It seems possible that when the capitalist class is forced to drive openly to Fascism, as it has been in France, it will encounter here also those formidable symptoms of mass resistance which are giving the French Fascists so much trouble.

However, once again the internal British situation is almost wholly dominated by the far more rapid development of events abroad. Thus the question of whether the British capitalists go over to an *openly* Fascist regime probably depends not so much on their present internal calculations as on the fate of the Nazis. German Fascism is so rapidly and visibly weakening that this fact dominates the whole European situation. We must not, of course, delude ourselves by supposing that this fact gives in itself any guarantee of an immediate German revolution and the establishment of a Soviet Germany. Even if Hitler does fall, it is probable that the next phase will be an open Reichstag military dictatorship. But this would be an immense gain, for it would go far to remove the remaining elements of mass support which are the real obstacle to the overthrow of Hitler.

Moreover, it is by no means clear, of course, that things will go even as far as this in the immediate future. Hitler is maneuvering desperately in order to shunt his movement, with himself still at the head, over to more openly conservative lines. Many competent observers think that the most likely development is a driving out of the Nazi Left and the consolidation of a Hitler-Goering-Papen triumvirate ruling more openly in the name of land owners and capitalists even than does the present regime.

This, however, is all speculation; but the weakening of the Nazis has already had profound effects in Europe. It is clear that the French capitalists, in spite of their acute internal weakness, are regaining much of that control over the European situation which they lost during 1933 and in the early months of this year. The pro-Versailles Treaty bloc is visibly re-forming in Europe. Hitler turns desperately this way and that for allies, but he gets the most equivocal coöperation from Mussolini alone (whose internal difficulties are, in the opinion of many qualified observers, the most serious of all).

The weakening of the Nazis has relieved the minds of the British capitalists of any threat of immediate attack from Germany. This has not prevented them from doubling the British Air Force, but it has undoubtedly diminished the signs of alarm which were so apparent a few months ago. This I believe to be the real explanation of the sudden and dramatic worsening of Anglo-American relations. The British capitalists, feeling easy about the European position, feeling that France and her allies can well take care of the German danger, have felt freer to face outwards against their Western antagonist, American Imperialism.

Anti-American feeling in British governing class circles cannot be exaggerated. The debt default, and the embarrassment which this has caused to the British capitalists in their attempts to collect their German loans have but brought their suppressed irritation to a head. All over the world the British capitalists more and more discover that they are face to face with American rivalry.

It is in order to meet this situation that a new and vitally important orientation of British policy in the Far East, I understand, is about to be inaugurated. A very close understanding with Japan has been reached by the British Government. This means, in fact, though not in form, the renewal of the old Anglo-Japanese Alliance. It is said, however (though this, no doubt, must be treated with the utmost caution), that the new alliance is not on the basis of a Japanese attack on the Soviet Union. It is said to be, on the contrary, on the basis of a recognition of Japan's prior claim throughout China. China is to become a Japanese protectorate, but on the understanding that British commercial interests there are not too ruthlessly sacrificed. It is American interests which are to suffer primarily. In return for this measure of British cooperation, the Japanese are to cease casting covetous eyes upon India. The full "point," as the diplomats say, of the new Japanese *rapprochement* will, no doubt, be felt (it is, indeed, beginning to be felt already) in the negotiations on the new Naval Treaty.

In general, it may be said that the basic antagonism of the modern world, the rivalry between the two greatest capitalist Empires, Britain and America, is, after a period of apparent latency, coming sharply to the forefront. At any time, no doubt, Europe may blow up, and the explosion there may seem to overshadow Anglo-American rivalry. But European antagonisms themselves might well, had we all the necessary information, prove to be but expressions of Anglo-American rivalry. The investments interests of America and Britain in Europe criss-cross in a bewildering fashion; but Mussolini and Italy, at any rate, are probably so dependent upon America as to be regarded as an American sphere of influence; the same may become true of Germany.

Meanwhile, behind and above this incredibly tangled and swiftly moving world situation, in which the great powers maneuver desperately for position, there is felt the growing strength of the U.S.S.R. This, and the presence within every capitalist state of an organized and internationally unified revolutionary movement, is the fundamental difference between the present situation and the 1904-14 decade. It is a difference which will utterly change the character of the new war if it comes. It is a difference which enables us to feel confident that, for whatever sacrifices, the next war will not result in the triumph of this capitalist group or that, but in the overthrow of Capitalism in wide areas of the world.

Cattle in the Gravel Pits

ALBERT MALTZ

SISSETON, S. D.

NINETY miles out of Minneapolis going west the horizon is suddenly covered with black storm clouds. I stop the car and am occupied with the side-curtains for a few minutes. When I look up, the black clouds are barely visible. In front of them, driving down hard, is a swirling, gray cloud. I have never seen a cloud like this before and I try to recall what a "twister" is supposed to look like. This cloud doesn't seem dark enough to be a twister, so I keep on driving. In five minutes I have to switch on my lights. After ten minutes I stop at a gas station. The man laughs and says it's only a little dust storm. "We have 'em every two or three days."

This "little dust storm" is a drought phenomenon. It never occurs in wet seasons. And it explains a great deal. It explains the cattle set out to crop the roadside grass—cattle with shrunken flanks and loose skin. They walk with drooping heads, muzzle at a clump of thistle and move on. It explains the wheat that will never be threshed, the stunted barley, the corn that has tasselled too soon; and the pastures that are gray and dark brown and black—pastures of late fall and not of mid-July. It explains also the ditches that are being hastily dug, the abandoned gravel pits for which a use has now been found, and the good milk cows, the calves, the beef steers, the sheep which are being slaughtered by the hundred thousands and thrown into those ditches and gravel pits. Prices in Chicago go up. The flies and speculators feast.

It is difficult to picture accurately the effect of the drought. It has covered a very wide area and rainfall has varied from state to state, from county to county, even within counties. A dozen miles from Sisseton, South Dakota, there was a good shower three days ago. This may still mean the saving of some corn that will be useful for feed if not for market. But the rain passed over Sisseton. "Rain clouds mean a dust storm here."

However, the general rule is that as one proceeds west from Chicago the effects of the drought become more apparent, more consistent and more devastating. Through a good deal of Wisconsin and Minnesota the corn, hastily planted after the failure of the small grains (wheat, oats, barley and rye), has been receiving sufficient moisture still to be a possible crop. But the river beds are still dried out with wild shrubs growing in the bleached soil, the pastures are burnt, the hay is lost, the cattle have been sold at a pittance or are being shipped or slaughtered by the government. And from Minneapolis on, the corn will not be good for even fodder unless there is immediate and recurrent rain. "If I could make rain," said a South Dakota farmer, "and if I could make it come as much and as hard as I wanted, we might still get some corn and a little hay or millet. But it'll take as much rain as that to get anything at all." And the cattle that remain to the farmers are tethered along the road where the thistle grows wild, or they are herded for miles to a scrubby patch of woodland, or they cluster in a corner of a pasture field and make no effort to crop because there is no grass.

It is difficult also to picture accurately the administration of relief since this varies from county to county. It depends, among other things, upon the make-up of relief boards and upon the degree of militant organization amongst the farmers. But it will help illustrate the drought situation and the farm problem in general to take up a specific county.

Roberts County in South Dakota is illuminating because it has been among the worst sufferers in the drought. There has been no rainfall "more than would drown a grasshopper" since last fall. And Roberts County was burned out by drought last year as well.

It is illuminating also because it possesses one of the strongest and most effective units of the United Farmers League.

South Dakota was opened for homesteading in the eighteen nineties. A farmer was given a free grant of one hundred and sixty acres of land. A few years ago this land was worth one hundred and fifty dollars an acre. Today it sells for twenty-five dollars—but today there are no buyers.

The homestead territory was largely populated by Norwegians, Germans and Irish farmers and city workers. Today these men, their grown sons and daughters and their families make up the population of sixteen thousand. (Roberts County was once an Indian Reservation and there are about twelve hundred Indians living here under Federal jurisdiction.)

These men farmed well. There is no soil in America better suited for grain than this prairie land. They were farming rich soil in a rising market. The wealth of the country accumulated, industry expanded, prices rose, the farmer bought more land, sowed more wheat, bought more machinery. When the World War came this process was accelerated. The farmer mortgaged his land to buy more land and sold his wheat at a still higher price. Finally there came a time in 1918 when wheat sold at $3.05 a bushel and an average Roberts County farmer walked home with a check of seven thousand dollars for his wheat crop alone.

The farmer was prosperous. He built a larger barn, he replenished his machinery, he painted his house, he bought a new automobile. But shortly after that the market for farm products fell. The cities could not consume what the farmer had to produce to keep his business going. The long twelve-year depression began. For many farmers the automobiles bought shortly after the war are the ones they still possess. I have seen more Model T Fords in Sisseton, the county seat, than in any other town in five thousand miles of travel. And the carnivals who played here the last two days report the largest attendance but the worst business throughout their whole circuit.

For some farmers the falling market meant immediate destruction as the stock market crash bankrupted certain speculators and industrialists. The degree to which others have held on has depended upon the extent of their overexpansion during boom times. The mortgages told the story and for many farmers a few years of falling prices spelled the end.

But now the drought of the last two years writes the final chapter in the post-war period. The drought is not a farm crisis in itself. It is merely an added calamitous blow in a crisis twelve years old. From now on, with only rare exceptions, the farmers of Roberts County will be tenants of the banks or the insurance companies or the government. I spoke with a farmer who was pointed out to me as one of the few who still had their land free and clear. He had maintained this independent position through a combination of shrewd farming, of personal frugality and of a policy which preferred less efficient farming to the use of machinery which would load him with debts. "I don't know what I'm going to do," he said. "I used to have money and no debts. Then I had to sell my loose land. Now all that money's gone. The money I get from the government I have to give right back in process tax for hogs and in income tax. Now I have to mortgage and how long will it be before I can't pay on my mortgage and the insurance company forecloses? This is something to work all your life for, isn't it?"

This is the picture of the Roberts County farmer. He was once an independent producer. Now he is either a tenant farmer or an unemployed worker, dependent upon the charity of the State. And this is the blueprint for the American farmer everywhere. Only a small class of wealthy farmers will remain.

In the last few weeks many of the farm belt statesmen have been asserting that had the government been able to forecast the drought it would not have embarked upon its crop and cattle reduction policy. This is oratorical nonsense. The truth is the reverse. The A.A.A. has done and is doing all in its power to accentuate the catastrophic effects of the drought. The clue to the New Deal in

Agriculture cannot be found in the puffed up statistics about the amount of cash which has so generously been placed in the hands of the farmers (from which it soon passed to the banks, insurance companies and wealthy farmers). The only clue is the statement of Professor Tugwell that there is overproduction and that two million farmers must be forced off the land and absorbed into other industries. This is economic trend and government policy in the same bowl.

The drought is merely nature conspiring to help the A.A.A. Had they the power, the Agricultural Brain Trusters would have written Drought in as their ace policy. Such a policy destroys more effectively than a government slaughterer and at the same time absolves the government from guilt and permits pious camouflage in the way of unreal drought relief.

If the government had been interested in drought relief, adequate relief could have been provided. The Farmer's Emergency Relief Bill put forth by the United Farmer's League demonstrates how this can be done. But the government has not been interested in drought relief. The government has been interested in capitalizing upon the effects of the drought in order to keep up the price of beef.

If the government had been interested in saving the farmer's cattle it could have given him immediate feed relief, instead of paying out enormous sums to kill the cattle, sums which in most cases have gone to the mortgage holders on the cattle and not to the farmer.

The policy of the government has been to delay feed relief while putting through a widespread slaughtering campaign. In South Dakota alone approximately one hundred and forty-five thousand head of cattle have been shipped or destroyed already. Contracts have been signed for three hundred thousand more head of cattle and slaughtering will go on at the rate of four thousand head a day. The same program is being carried out in other states. With this in mind, Secretary Wallace's shameless statement that "The drought is a blessing" becomes clear.

The drought is not only a means whereby the poor farmer can be forced out of business. It is also being used by the government to force the middle farmer into tenancy. Farmers who have hitherto been able to keep their cattle free of mortgage loans are now being forced to accept feed loans from the government. These feed loans must be repaid and in repaying them the farmer will spend his last dollar. And, similarly, a farmer who sells his cattle for slaughter because he cannot feed them, is forced to become party to the reduction program of the A.A.A. For the small farmer the A.A.A. means penury. For the city worker it means higher prices for bread this year (the wheat crop is the smallest in forty-one years) and exorbitant prices for the cheapest meats in a year or two.

What is the policy behind the pure idiocy of asserting that two million farmers must be absorbed into other industries? Professor Tugwell knows that industry itself can never absorb its old workers or the new ones coming forward. The policy is that of subsistence farming—subsistence farming for evicted farmers, subsistence farming for unemployed miners or city workers. In western South Dakota a section of five hundred ten-acre plots has already been established. Unemployed farmers are given a shack to live in and told to raise varied crops for their own needs. If they want to go to town they are free to ask for a permit to ride in the government truck. In West Virginia the same thing is being done with the miners. A whole village is being constructed under the personal supervision of Mrs. Roosevelt. And this policy is being pushed forward everywhere. Millions of workers and farmers have no longer any function to perform in American capitalism. The government policy is to render them harmless and quiescent through a subsistence life.

What relief is the farmer receiving? In Roberts County he has been getting ten dollars a month feed relief provided he worked this out in advance on government projects. For many farmers the necessity of working in advance for the feed has meant neglecting the corn crop. They have been getting food relief amounting to about six cents a meal and less. And for some time now they have been receiving cash payments for slaughtered cattle. These payments have varied from one dollar to twenty dollars, depending upon the age and condition of the animal. With this money the farmer has been supposed to buy feed for his other stock. But since most of the cattle is mortgaged, the farmer has to pay this money right over to the lien-holder.

Next month the farmer will receive govern-

ment feed loans of seventy-five cents for each sheep, three dollars for cattle, and four dollars for a horse. In practice much of this money will go right over to the lien-holder. Although the contract officially provides for the lien-holder to waive his right of foreclosure till January 1, 1935, the farmer must secure that waiver to get the loan and before he can secure it he is forced to make a private contract to pay over all the money or part of it to the lien-holder. Furthermore, this loan is only for a month. If the farmer wants to renew, he must make out a new application. It may not be granted. If it is, his debt increases with little hope of paying it back. If it is not granted, it may take him weeks to get back on the county relief rolls since he is cut off from county relief as soon as he receives a Federal loan.

How is the farmer re-acting to this? What is he doing? For many of them the ballyhoo bubble of the A.A.A. has burst. "The farmer will sign anything," I was told. "He will sign anything because he has nothing to lose and he's willing to swallow any plan that permits him to work his farm (or the insurance company's farm) a little longer." To believe that the number of farmers who have entered into government allotment plans, acreage reduction plans, etc., indicates a widespread approval of the government policy is to misunderstand what has been taking place. The farmer has agreed because he has had no other recourse. But no amount of ballyhoo, no Brain Trust, no President will ever convince the farmer that it is right to slaughter young hogs, to plow down cotton, to dump milk. I have heard more uniform criticism of the government, more bitter prediction for the future on this score than on any other. Whether they were small farmers or county tradespeople, I have never heard anyone champion the reduction policy. They have accepted it because they have not known what else to do.

The farmer knows that the processing tax supposed to be paid by the consumer has been shunted on to him because the packing trusts refused to raise their prices. He knows that the Home Loan Plan of President Roosevelt is a fraud because evictions have gone on steadily and attempts to evict are increasing. And he knows that even the government plan for canning meat from some of the slaughtered cattle and giving this meat to the unemployed, he knows that this too is a fraud because most of the meat is being buried and in the canning process little of the meat can be used.

The farmer has worked under the A.A.A. and seen his fortunes go down under it. In Roberts County 46 percent of the population was on last week's relief payroll. Of this number 75 percent received food for themselves as well as farm relief. And it is the conservative estimate of the relief board head that 80 percent of the people will be on relief next winter (if there is money to provide for them).

What does the farmer say to this? There are some who still quote the Bible and maintain that these are the seven lean years and we must tighten our belts. There was still some scattered applause in Sisseton the other day when Governor Tom Berry called Roosevelt the greatest man who ever lived and said that the farmer must not be disgruntled at the low price he is receiving for his slaughtered cattle because this is an effective means of preventing the big man from squeezing out the little fellow. (A slight error in logic undoubtedly due to confusion at the size of his audience. The slaughtering campaign means that the small farmer is left with no cattle and no money, while the big cattle raisers like Governor Berry are left with prices up and the field to themselves.)

There are some farmers who shy away from the United Farmers League because the politicians and rich men have hatched the Red Scare, or because they listen to the local Lutheran minister preaching against the stoppage of evictions, or because they read the mimeographed pamphlet put out by the local Catholic church which contains sulphurous sermons and cartoons on the subject of religion in the Soviet Union.

But there are others who say: "The machinery is breaking down, can't buy new ones . . . the cows are being killed off, can't buy new ones . . . no crops to sell . . . tractors too old to run . . . nothing to do . . . Hell, they're striking in the cities, we might as well strike too."

There is the farmer in Benson, Minnesota, who said, "I've never heard such kicking in all my life. The farmers around here are almost Reds. They're just about ready for a revolution, I'd say."

There is the South Dakota woman who wrote in a letter, "They had the sheriffs come out to the farm just as we were geting out of bed one morning when it was cold and took my husband three-quarters of a mile and dumped him out on the highway. . . . So we were driven out like cattle with no place to go and no ways of paying rent in town. . . . When things like this go on, we say organize and don't delay . . ."

There is the United Farmer's League and the militant rank and file of the Holiday Association. In Roberts County, where the U.F.L. is strong, there hasn't been a successful eviction in eighteen months. In June when seventeen members of the Unemployed Council and the U.F.L. were tried on a count of rioting and violating an injunction in stopping an eviction, a farmer jury found them not guilty. The farmers are looking for leadership and they are finding it. The U.F.L. is growing rapidly. It is mobilizing support for an Emergency Farm Relief Bill which provides for immediate two billion dollars cash, feed and seed relief, for the cancellation of all debts, for the stoppage of eviction and the repeal of the A.A.A.—the money for this purpose to come from taxation on gifts, inheritances and all incomes over five thousand dollars. It is mobilizing forces for a simultaneous relief march on all capitals in the drought states.

"Since you are so capable at writing codes," a local of the Nebraska Holiday Association wired to Secretary Wallace, "just suppose you make a rain code. And if you have any suspicion that you are not capable of making it rain, you had better turn the A.A.A. into a F.R.R.A. (Farm Relief Right Away) and get some feed started out here for our cattle and food as well as clothes for us and the wife and kids, or we will look for a means to get it. The situation is getting desperate and we are getting awfully tired of it."

Mopping Up in China

HAROLD WARD

A RECENT REPORT on "The Future of China" in the Manchester Guardian Weekly, discussing "The Burden of the Army," states that "Approximately 50 percent of the national expenditure is earmarked for military purposes and another 40 percent is swallowed up in the amortization of outstanding debts, leaving only 10 percent for running the country."

Another report, sponsored by the London Times, referred to the recent mission to England of Chinese aviation experts under the command of General Wong Kong-yue. This mission was escorted through the plants of Armstrong-Siddeley, Handley-Paige, de Haviland, Fairey, Vickers, Hawkers, and given all privileges by the Royal Air Force. Heavy orders are expected to come of this. In fact, the Nanking and Canton Governments, under the stubborn leadership of the renegade Chiang Kai-Shek, have combed the world for armaments with which to fight Soviet China. The Japanese journal Asahi, as reported in Trans-Pacific, presents the following extraordinary data on recent importation of arms and munitions into China within the past year:

England: The secretary of Commerce reported to the House of Commons that from September 1932 to February 1933 a total of 51,816 pounds of high explosives were shipped to China. In four months, from July to October, 1933, further shipments included: 1,000 rounds of ammunition for 40mm guns, 100 50 kg. airplane bombs, 6 torpedoes, 80 bomb racks for airplanes, 4 mechanical mines, 20,000 pounds of explosives, 8 7.9mm machine-guns, 150,034 rounds for .303mm machine-guns.

Two motor torpedo boats ordered from the Thornycroft Co. arrived at Hongkong on January 7, 1934, destined for use by the 1st squadron of the Canton Navy. In March the Vickers-Armstrong Co. contracted with the Chinese National Government for 12 6-ton tanks, 12 light tanks and 32 cases of cartridges.

France. During 1933 the National Government of China arranged for the purchase from French armament interests (Schneider-Creusot, Hotchkiss, etc.) of large quantities of armament and ammunition, including 12 high-altitude guns and a little less than 200,000 cartridges, to the value of about 500,000 Yuan. Negotiations with General Liu Wen-hui, Commander of the 24th Route Army in Szechwan Province, for the purchase of 6 bombing planes, bombs, machine-guns and explosives, fell through because of the (doubtless only temporary) opposition of the General's staff. In March of this year, however, a contract was concluded between the Governor of French Annam and the Chinese authorities of the Kuanghsi Province covering supplies of airplanes, field guns, machine-guns and other war materials to the value of 5 million Yuan.

Germany, despite the frantic haste with which she is trying to build up her own war machine in order to fulfil her world destiny as sketched out in the Thyssen, Rosenberg, Schlieffen and other grandiose "plans," is still quite able to attend to some of her far eastern business. Thus, in April of this year, the firm of Carlowitz and Co. secured a contract to supply China with 50 armored cars and 12 tanks (and Hitler's Reich states that it is not making any of these toys for herself!) A month later the Chinese war lords signed on the dotted line for 10,000 Morsel rifles.

Italy, whose own war expenditures are proving, as we have seen, an excellent method for preventing Italian brains from becoming too "sumptuously furnished," shipped to China, via the "Africa," 800 tons of rifles, machine-guns, pistols and ammunition. This was in February, 1933: repeat orders were no doubt anticipated—and received. In May, 1934, an unknown number of rifles landed at Hongkong from Belgium; from that port they were presently forwarded to Lungchow.

Czechoslovakia. This little country has made a name for itself as an arsenal. It cares little for the source of its orders, believing, like the Roman emperor Vespasian, that "money does not smell." Thus, in January of this year the Skoda Works contracted with the Canton Government for the supply of 8 12-inch cannon and 8 8-inch cannon to be installed in the Tiger Gate garrison at Canton; 12 6-inch and 12 4-inch cannon for the reinforcement of the garrison at Huanpu, Tungkiang, Hotou and Peikiang. This contract is valued at 4,500,000 Hongkong dollars. Two months later, in March, the same company arranged with the Nanking Government for the supply of 5,000 rifles—which, however, are rumored to be intended *as a gift from the government to the Panchen Lama of Tibet* (whose intense reactionary views are sufficiently well-known).

Gardner Rea

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United States. Despite all the recent ballyhoo over the so-called prohibition on the sale of arms to Bolivia and Paraguay, this country, like the walrus, takes all the armament orders it can get—from China. The far from complete report before me goes on to state that there were landed at Nanking last year from the United States: 11 anti-aircraft guns, 3 fort guns, 15 anti-aircraft machine-guns, 15 15-centimeter mortars, 12 search-lights and 20 grenade-projectors. Landed at Amoy in August: light- and hand machine-guns and accessories for fighting planes, an armored motor-car equipped with 3 machine-guns and destined for the Wuhan garrison headquarters; 5,000 rifles, 100 machine-guns and 30 other artillery pieces (all these for the 19th Route Army, whose ranks have been so depleted by desertion to the Red Armies). Also, in March, 1933, the Canton Government signed a contract with the Federal Laboratories, Inc., for a supply of 1,000 "fragmentation pumps" for military use, at a cost of $79,000.

While we are on this pleasant subject, add for England (as reported to Parliament by Mr. Runciman, in reply to a demand made on May 15th): in the four months from November, 1933, to February, 1934, the following war material was licensed for shipment to China: Armament for 4 airplanes, 51 rounds of 6-inch practice-shot, 101 rounds of 4-inch practice shot, 160 torpedo firing cartridges; (December), 4,410 lbs. of gunpowder and 9 sets of machine-gun sights; (January) 1 light amphibian tank with a 7.92mm machine-gun; (February) 1 sound locater, with equipment, and 1,205 pounds of various samples of explosive powder.

It is conservatively estimated that there are under arms in China today not less than 2,000,000 men—all of whom have to be fed, clothed, disciplined—and humored by one or another of the countless bandit-generals who overrun the countryside. In North China alone there are at least 200,000 troops, nominally under the control of Nanking. Yet, so corrupt is this Government, so utterly unable to enforce elementary order within its own territories, that a marauding horde of only 3,000 men belonging to the army of General Liu Kuei-Tang succeeded in ravaging a large area within the Peking district, and escaping punishment. Such incidents, of course, are the normal outcome of conditions which favor the development of political groups based on military disaffection, economic chaos and the most extreme forms of nationalism. With the covert assistance of the Japanese government, flanked on the north-east by the Soviet Union and in the south by ominously growing Chinese Soviets, Chiang Kai-Shek is actually helping the old Chinese Republic to commit suicide, under the delusion that a new, "democratic" China will be born, grow and peacefully mature beneath the guns of Imperialism.

But—to quote from the Manchester Guardian—"the Kuomintang has fallen into disrepute. From a vital and dynamic force it has declined to the position of a sort of political trade union to which Government employes belong as a matter of expediency rather than principle. Formerly a badge of distinction, membership of the party is now referred to contemptuously as a 'meal ticket'; by many classes of Chinese, including the students . . . the Kuomintang is openly disparaged."

And the leader of this water-logged body of careerists, opportunists, adventurers and reactionaries, despite six fruitless campaigns of unexampled ferocity, still believes that, with due international support, he can "mop up" a *stabilized* Soviet domain equal to one-sixth the entire area of China!

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

V: *Problems of the Fellow-Traveler*

JOSHUA KUNITZ

IT IS reported that when Nicholas I saw Gogol's immortal comedy, *The Inspector General,* for the first time, he laughed uproariously through the entire performance. So blind was the Czar to the evils of his regime that he interpreted the corruption and venality revealed in the play as either an isolated provincial phenomenon or a curious figment of Gogol's playful imagination. It was the opposition that discerned and acclaimed the broader significance of the social criticism implied in *The Inspector General.* It was the fiery Belinsky and critics like him who used the play as a devastating social tract. Gogol himself never realized the explosive nature of his product. A loyal son of Czar and Church, he had no thought of undermining the established order. Venality and corruption, he was certain, were not inherent in Czarism. What he intended was criticism from the inside—self-criticism. The effect, however, was greater than Gogol anticipated; his play had struck a mighty blow at the centuries-old Romanov regime.

It is indeed difficult at times to draw a clear line of demarcation between self-criticism and subtly presented inimical propaganda. I recall reading a Soviet novel entitled *Feather and Down.* (The name of the author has escaped my memory.) The novel purported to give an insight into the bureaucratic and dishonest methods pursued by the executives in a certain feather and down factory. The picture it presented was bad; but what struck me most was the little prefatory note addressed by the author to the "dear reader," in which the "dear reader" was warned against generalizations, "since the novel's intention was to draw a picture, not of Soviet industry as a whole, but of one special factory with which I was familiar." Was the note ingenuous? Or was it, by negative suggestion, an actual invitation to the "dear reader" to generalize? Personally, I inclined to the second conjecture. To me at least, though evidently not to the censor, the queer little note conveyed a disconcerting overtone of insincerity.

Camouflage is a part of war technique. In times of social revolution and open class war, the retreating though as yet "unliquidated" class often finds camouflage the best means of continuing the struggle. When other weapons are denied it, the "hidden foe" finds in the realm of ideology—science, art, and especially literature — excellent possibilities for camouflage.

Let me cite a few examples. The reader will recall the famous Industrial Party trial held in Moscow in the winter of 1930. He will recall that one of the crucial points in the strategy of the bourgeois experts, engineers, professors, and economists on trial had been the wrecking of the cotton industry of the workers' and peasants' Republic. The Communist Party's slogan had been "Cotton Independence." Both from the defense angle and from that of developing a self-sufficient textile industry, cotton independence was an essential part of the Party program. But while the kulaks were fighting cotton in the Central Asian villages by refusing to sow it, the engineers fought it in their offices by concocting absurd irrigation, reclamation and electrification schemes; the experts, the professors fought it in the State Planning Commission, in the universities, and in the learned journals. For years there raged a ruthless war on the cotton front, war with all its concomitant evils —treason, espionage, sabotage, subtle ideological camouflage. Read such books and articles as *Cotton Cultivation in Turkestan,* by V. I. Uferev, or *Agricultural Economy,* by N. N. Kozianov, or *The Hungry Steppe as a Cotton Region,* by Yaroshevitch, or *The Technique of Cotton Cultivation,* by S. Grigoriev, and finally *Cotton as a Monoculture,* by A. A. Fedotov—what a remarkable mélange of insincerity, ambiguity, innuendo, false reasoning, misinformation and cant, all dished out in a sauce of scientific objectivity!

Here is Mr. Fedotov, the gray-headed, dignified gentleman who shed bitter tears on the witness stand, entreating the proletarian court for mercy, for a chance to live and atone his sins. In 1925 when he was still considered one of the leading cotton experts in the Union and was honored and trusted by the workers' government, the same gentleman, in an effort to cool the Bolsheviks' zeal for cotton, wrote:

> The beautiful sunny South of the United States suffers from the white plague. This is a well-established fact involving a whole agricultural population of the South, a region predominantly agricultural. Indeed, cotton, instead of being a blessing, has now become a curse; it certainly has reduced the people's vitality, and everyone in that region, old and young, has become the slave of cotton. . . . Cotton growing has brought about the pauperization of the agricultural population, it has aggravated the race problem, it has exhausted the best soil in America, it has increased the number of tenant farmers and reduced the number of farmer proprietors, and, also, it has led to perennial clashes between the creditors and the soil tillers. That is not all—we should add spiritual impoverishment. Cotton growing limits one's interest, limits one's agricultural technique, cramps one's spiritual growth; it renders one narrow, helpless; it makes one a slave. . . .

Not a word about surviving feudalism in our South. Not a word about capitalism. Fedotov attributes all the real and imaginary evils in our Southern States to cotton—cotton is a white plague! But Fedotov would not rely on mere suggestion. He must clinch his argument. He must underscore the lesson:

> The picture I have drawn has meaning also for us. . . . In our Union, the cotton grower, however impoverished he may become, can still hope to retain the right to his land; but all the other evils attendant on cotton are quite likely to occur here too. . . . In Turkestan cotton growing has been progressing by leaps and bounds. We are justly proud of our achievements when we speak of cotton. But should we have as much reason to be proud were we to examine the situation from another point of view, from the point of view of the well-being of the cotton grower? Since 1921 cotton production in our Union has increased ten-fold. It is reasonable to inquire—has the condition of the cotton grower become ten times better than before? Of course not. . . .

Similar "subtle" anti-cotton propaganda is found in the other experts' studies. When in its fight for cotton the Soviet Government began to introduce modern machinery into Central Asia, the publishing houses were deluged with "scientific" monographs proving that cotton growing was incompatible with modern machinery. "Agriculture," wrote one of these authorities—N. N. Kozhanoff—"contains a stable, conservative kernel which can never be ground under the wheels of an advancing machine technique—this holds particularly true of an intensive culture, such as cotton."

Another flood of learned treatises was let loose upon the unsuspecting public, when the Soviets, further to accelerate their march toward cotton independence, started to build and encourage State and collective cotton plantations. Figures were cited, curves drawn, examples adduced — all tending to prove that cotton can be successfully cultivated only on the basis of small scale farming.

So powerful and all-pervading were these ideological saboteurs that even the Five-Year-Plan, particularly the first draft of it, bears unmistakable traces of their influence.

"Scientific objectivity," "Pure Science," "Pure Art," "Science for Science's Sake," "Art for Art's Sake," "Form Above Everything," such were at various times the camouflage slogans which the enemy and those who unconsciously fell under the enemy's influence promulgated in the realms of ideology.

Louis Lozowick cites an interesting example of apparent camouflage in the arts: a collective farm poster showing a group of old peasants laboring in the hot sun and a lot of young people, Communists, parading in the distance with banners and music. This, Lozo-

wick suggests, may have been an actual scene, or the artist may have simply wanted to present in one picture the collective farm at work and play. But the moral some of the peasants drew from the picture was—"Sure, while we work, the Communists do nothing but parade!" Stupid arrangement of material? Perhaps. Self-criticism? Possibly. A disguised sneer? Quite likely.

We must bear in mind, I repeat, that in the Soviet Union the possibilities for camouflage are greatly augmented by the universal and much encouraged practice of Bolshevik self-criticism. And in such circumstances the task of determining whether a piece of critical or satirical or muck-raking writing is offered in the spirit of friendliness or animosity is exceedingly difficult, especially in the case of works by petty-bourgeois fellow-travelers who by origin and sympathy occupy an intermediate class position and whose psychological state is that of perpetual vacillation.

As a rule, when things in the Soviet Union run smoothly, when the conflict between the old and new seems to be in *relative* abeyance, when in their personal lives the literary members of the petty-bourgeoisie are not exposed to too much discomfort, too much pain or adjustment, they tend to lean toward the new, the "ideal," toward Communism. As soon as difficulties begin to pile up, however, as soon as the problems of food, shelter, clothes, legal discrimination, class pressure, the dangers of capitalist intervention, etc., become very troublesome, the basic, the bourgeois element of their natures begins to re-assert itself. They become disgruntled, hypercritical; they begin, sometimes quite unconsciously, to long for the vanished though not thoroughly forgotten halcyon past, for capitalism.

In this the petty-bourgeois writer in the Soviet Union is not unique. Eternal wavering between the points of view of the bourgeoisie and the proletariat characterizes such writers the world over. Take the sudden increase in this country during the last years of the number of revolutionary novels, poems, plays, little magazines, paintings, murals, etc. —all produced by radicalized members of our lower middle classes. This is no accident. In the years of "prosperity," when the wheels of the capitalist machine seemed to be running smoothly, no such phenomenon was observable. Then our petty-bourgeois writers were comparatively satisfied with the status quo. The little rebellions represented by Malcolm Cowley's "lost generation" were after all tempests in a tea-pot, revolts against "the hegemony of the banal word, monotonous syntax, static psychology, descriptive naturalism." The gentlemen around transition, Gargoyle, Broom, Secession, Tambour, Exiles, disporting in the European capitals, had little else to worry about. "The writer expresses. He does not communicate. The plain reader be damned. We are not concerned with the propagation of sociological ideas . . ." Even writers once associated with the Socialist Party, most of the people on the Socialist New York Call, found their way to lucrative jobs on the capitalist press—David Karsner, Louis Weitzenkorn, Harry Salpeter, Evans Clark, William Soskin, etc. It took the crash of 1929 and the sudden expropriation of millions of small shop-keepers, professionals, skilled workers, white collar people it entailed, it took the impoverishment of millions of workers and farmers, it took unemployment, misery, ruin, hunger to make the petty-bourgeoisie swing leftward. Suddenly dozens of middle class artists and writers discovered the working class and began to apostrophize it as the savior of the country.

The difference between the petty-bourgeois writers in the U.S.S.R. and the U.S.A. is simply this: In the U.S.S.R. the established order is the proletarian dictatorship, a transition stage toward communism; hence, when dissatisfied, these writers can swing in only one direction, toward the bourgeois past, toward capitalism. In the U.S.A. the established order is capitalism in its decadent imperialist monopolist stage; hence, when dissatisfied, the petty-bourgeois writer swings either to a happy pre-monopolist past or forward toward the proletariat. In either country, when conditions are relatively normal, the petty-bourgeois writers tend toward a kind of provisional quiescence. At no time and nowhere, though, are they fully integrated. At best their dualism is in a state of unstable equilibrium; and their reactions tend in one or the other direction—the capitalist past or the communist future—depending on the changes in objective conditions.

Almost inevitably, every work of a Soviet fellow-traveler contains both elements of this psychal duality. It simultaneously accepts and rejects the proletarian revolution, though naturally not always with equal emphasis. Thus, when I speak of smugglers of reaction in Soviet letters, it should be clearly understood that the smuggling is not necessarily deliberate or even conscious. Also, the carrier of reaction may not necessarily be a member of the middle classes. Classes do not live in hermetically sealed compartments. There is always an interchange of influences. Members of one class are very often affected by the ideology, tastes and attitudes of the other. Accordingly, in the Soviet Union it not infrequently happens that a genuine worker, even a Communist gives expression to reactionary moods and sentiments. In view of this, it should be obvious why any attempt on the part of the Soviet censor to suppress *all* the negative, anti-proletarian, anti-Communist aspects in art would be futile and until very recently would have meant the suppression of the major part of Soviet letters.

On the other hand, there *are* proletarian censors, and critics, and readers. These are always on the alert to expose and vigorously correct violent deflections from the dictates of revolutionary utility. To survive, one has to adapt oneself. In the process of adapting himself to the requirements of the Soviet milieu the petty-bourgeois fellow-traveler devises or discovers all kinds of devious methods of giving expression to that part of himself which denies, rejects, rebels against the proletariat.

One of the most serviceable methods, besides simulating direct self-criticism or shedding crocodile tears over the "failure" of "our" revolution, is donning a cap and bells, clowning, jesting, ironizing. By being a jester, the fellow-traveler can satisfy both aspects of his psyche. In the very act of ridiculing, poking fun, sneering, muck-raking, he gratifies both his bourgeois and proletarian selves. A peculiar mixture of sadism and masochism, of hurting oneself by hurting the very thing of which one is, after all, a living part. Stabbing at the regime, the fellow-traveler also stabs at himself, and thus engages in what he himself often believes to be Bolshevik self-criticism. To discover the point just where such self-criticism is transmuted into calumny is a complicated matter. Not infrequently the thing becomes so involved that no analytical scalpel, however keen, can disentangle the genuine from the simulated, the author's conscious affirmations from his subconscious negations, the places where he indulges in self-deception from those where he deliberately sets out to deceive others.

But besides satisfying himself, the writer writes to satisfy his audience. And while, under the NEP, there was a considerable number of middle-class readers willing to pay for cultural commodities that would satisfy their middle-class tastes, reflect their middle-class predilections, and project their middle-class hopes, the middle-class authors were naturally ready, even if under a mask, to satisfy those demands.

In discussing Zamiatin and Ehrenbourg—writers pandering to bourgeois audiences—I have indicated their insistence on satirizing both Soviet "ideals" and Soviet realities: The ideals were fatuous; the realities, ugly. This kind of appraisal was, to be sure, neither accurate nor just. But then neither Zamiatin nor Ehrenbourg could, strictly speaking, be called petty-bourgeois fellow-travelers of the Revolution. At that time, at any rate, even Ehrenbourg's literary journeys seemed to take him in a direction quite opposite to that taken by the proletariat. Objectively both of these authors reflected the attitude of that section of the bourgeoisie which was definitely anti-proletarian.

Sneering at Soviet ideals and realities was not, however, the only and certainly not the most remunerative way of carrying out a bourgeois line in literature. After all, it was widely known that Zamiatin's book was not passed by the censor and that Ehrenbourg's *Racketeer* was suppressed shortly after publication. A much better way, followed by such writers as A. Tolstoy, O. Mandelstamm, et al., was to provide the bourgeois reader with an escape from Soviet contemporaneity to some lyrical non-proletarian past or to some adventurous non-proletarian future, or to some exotic non-proletarian land on the edge of the world. Several writers — Andrey Biely, Yessenin, Klichkov, Kliuev—often endeavored to induct in their readers a variety of mystical, religious, or nationalist-chauvinist moods. Others, like Panteleimon Romanov, Gumilevsky, and par-

ticularly Kalinnikov, specialized in producing erotic and at times outspokenly pornographic works for the delectation of the still surviving Soviet philistines. Another method, not too widely used, but very successfully handled by Mikhail Bulgakov, was to portray the class enemy with such sympathetic understanding as to exceed the requirements of verisimilitude. Bulgakov's famous play, *The Days of the Turbins,* still running in the Moscow Art Theater, is an excellent example of how the old landed gentry and its White Guard scions, though counter-revolutionary, can be rendered so charming, lovable, tender, so nearly saint-like as to make one regret their being eliminated by the advancing worker and peasant masses. The play is pervaded by *The Cherry Orchard* mood. Of course, the Revolution triumphs. Of course, one of the Turbins actually joins the revolutionists. But so insidiously appealing is Bulgakov's art, so glowingly appreciative is he of the past, that even a confirmed Bolshevik, on seeing the play, cannot help feeling, albeit for the briefest moment, a faint nostalgia for the loveliness that is gone and perhaps also a faint irritation with the raucousness that has come. Needless to point out, in time of war, sweet kindliness for the enemy is not precisely the most urgent sentiment to cultivate.

Still, despite the NEP, even incorrigibly bourgeois writers did yield somewhat to the influence of the revolution. For one thing, there has not been a positive bourgeois hero in the whole of Soviet literature. The reason is plain: With the establishment of the proletarian dictatorship, the bourgeoisie had ceased to be a creative, progressive factor in Rusisan affairs. The NEP, though it gave the bourgeoisie a short lease on life, put it on the defensive. Even its trading functions were being rapidly taken over by the Soviet State. The bourgeoisie's present was bleak. Its prospects were nil. It lived in constant dread of being cracked down upon, of being "liquidated," taxed out of existence. It had no planners, no molders, no builders of life. All it could boast of were petty traders, speculators, gamblers, teeming in the chinks and crevices of the Soviet structure. Small wonder the bourgeois writers had not succeeded in creating a Soviet hero of the bourgeoisie. There was no such hero!

As compensation for this lack, a number of middle class writers resorted to shooting darts at the real hero of the epoch: the Bolshevik, the Communist, the architect of the new life. Note how satirical Ehrenbourg waxes when he describes the Communist worker Artem Lykov, the Racketeer's brother:

> Speaking of him, one is compelled to speak of conferences, struggles against banditism, of the rehabilitation of Soviet industry, of anything you please, except those picturesque situations which put life into the pages of a novel. . . . Good Communists, I dare say, really have no biographies. And Artem was certainly a first-class Communist. His feelings and actions were dictated not so much by Party instructions as by the collective will, not expressed in words, but tangible nevertheless—by that will that piles up ant-heaps, that makes cranes fly in triangular formation, that impels cyclopean edifices and man's new social structure. It is enough to know a fact and the attitude of ten Communists toward that fact, and we cannot possibly make a mistake as to the attitude of the eleventh, in this case of Artem. . . . When such an Artem drinks tea and nibbles on his sugar he cannot be of interest to anyone. But when millions of such Artems make an October Revolution, it makes the bedazzled world sit up and take notice, forgetting all the unique and original and spiritually portentous tea drinkers of Dostoievsky and such-like heroes. . . . Accordingly, all of Artem's emotions must be multiplied a hundred-million-fold; he himself to be taken as the index fraction. . . . As in his effort to check up anew whether or not Newton or Galileo were charlatans, so in his attitude to all details, generally unnoticed, of Europeanism, from religion to the shaking of hands, he was cautiously critical. His pure rationalism was not satisfied by a mere change of old forms. His mind was puritanical. . . . He was, of course, one of the first members of the *Time League,* wasting in his fanatical ardor no end of time in preaching the saving of time. Still, we must not think that he was a perfectly wound mechanism. . . . He was fond of good weather, fast horseback riding, and the odor of daffodils. Atavistic impulses were powerful in this young and healthy man. As regards love—he considered it a myth, no more real than the immaculate conception or Plato's cosmology, a myth as exploded as the miracle-working relics of the saints. This does not mean that he was ascetic. The moderate but clearly felt sex needs of the average man living in mid-European climate and not stimulated by alcohol and narcotics would occasionally bring him together with women. At such moments he was quiet and serious. He detested pornographic jokes. He did not know the language of kisses. . . . His casual girl friends he never remembered. . . .

This portrait of Artem is coldly schematic. One cannot, of course, condemn Ehrenbourg for not creating a living proletarian Communist hero. The real proletarian hero of the epoch will be created—as he now actually is being—not by a bourgeois, but by a proletarian writer, that is, by a writer to whom revolutionary ardor, collective work, Communist discipline, socialist competition, shock brigading are not schematic concepts derived from casual outside observation, but vital flesh-and-blood realities. What is a little surprising, though, is that an artist like Ehrenbourg had not even attempted creatively to identify himself with his Communist character. He simply used Artem's gray collectivist virtues, at which he slyly poked fun, as a contrast to the radiant, mischievous, adventurous, irresponsible, individualistic and naturally fascinating rogue Mikhail Lykov, Artem's brother and the hero of the novel.

Focusing attention on a rogue was frequently the petty-bourgeois writer's way of supplying a substitute for a genuine hero typifying his class. Illustrations: *The Price of Life,* by Vladimir Lidin, *The Thief,* by Leonid Leonov, *Semi-Precious Stones,* by Voinova, *The Embezzlers,* by Valentine Kataiev, *Three Pairs of Silk Stockings,* by Panteleymon Romanov, *Dog Lane,* by Lev Gumilevsky, *Twelve Chairs* and *The Little Golden Calf,* by Ilf and Petrov, etc. At one time the Soviet literary market was deluged with such tales. There is no need of enumerating them all. I am simply confining myself to such novels as are obtainable in English translations, so that American readers may check up on my judgments in case they appear too harsh or arbitrary. All these novels deal with criminals. In nearly all cases the plots revolve around murders. Naturally, frank glorification of the speculator, the nepman, the parasitic middleman, the gambler, the embezzler, the thief, the murderer is altogether too preposterous to be indulged in by any writer, however reactionary. Instead, crime (which by implication reflects the individual's revolt against society) is depicted in such glowing, romantic colors as to render it infinitely more alluring than the gray, austere virtues of the honest, moral, hard-working Communists who, according to Ehrenbourg, are never in "those picturesque situations which put life into the pages of a novel."

Inevitably, virtue triumphs at the end; generally at the very, very end. But this triumph is merely tacked on. The best, the most convincing, because most sincerely felt, parts of such novels deal with "sin" rather than "virtue." Thus, after 335 pages of ostensibly indignant description of how his hero Kiril, a Communist, degenerates into a speculator, a gambler, and a murderer, Lidin, in one paragraph, at the end of the book, suggests his redemption. Characteristically, the petty-bourgeis author prefers to dwell on the degeneration of a Communist, though even during the NEP this was not at all typical of the average Bolshevik.

Similarly, Leonid Leonov, after 566 pages of carefully tracing the transformation of a Communist into a thief and a murderer, adds in his last paragraph:

> The rest—how Mitka came to the woodcutters and was first beaten and then kindly received; how he worked in their guild and surfeited on the food which he earned with the heavy labor of tree-felling; how he toughened and went into a factory and studied [the great period of study had come into the land], and how he won again the name he had lost—all that is outside the scope of this story.

A JOB ALONE

You hate your job,
your slow-death life of small deceits,
yet can't—alone—forswear defeats.

You are not free,
can't slip the shop, evade the mold
of gain-sucked days—not when you're sold.

You know the way
this profit-world of crippled fools
is run today, you know the rules,

You know job-fear
that numbs and shrivels minds with loathing,
you know that work alone solves nothing.

You lose your job
and emptiness slips in
where living should begin.

WARREN C. HUDDLESTONE.

Dixie Jew

TOM JOHNSON

I MET Sam the night I arrived in Steelton. I was a Communist organizer, the first to reach that section of the South. My instructions were: "Go to Steelton, connect yourself with local Negro and white workers and build the Party organization. Report regularly to headquarters." It was impossible to be much more explicit. All we in the North knew was that Steelton was the nerve center of Southern industry, that wages there were considerably lower than in any other section of the country and that the violently open-shop A.B.S. Corporation owned the town— lock, stock and barrel. We had just one connection in the whole territory; his name was Sam Beckman and he was a subscriber to the Freiheit, the Communist daily in the Jewish language. Beyond this I knew nothing of him.

It was past midnight when my bus pulled up before the frowzy, dim-lit station and came to a stop. I had very little money and late as it was, decided to look up Beckman at once; perhaps I could stay the night at his place and save the price of a hotel room.

Instructed by the night porter, I found my street without difficulty and started down it, watching the numbers as I went. It ran through the heart of the Negro business section, but at this hour it was pretty well deserted. A couple of Negro miners, coming off a late shift and dead tired, clumped stolidly by me in their wet pit clothes, their red-rimmed eyes glued on the sidewalk ahead of them. A soft voice called from a doorway, and the graceful figure of a Negro girl, her childish face rouged and painted, detached itself from the shadow and smiled at me timidly.

Number 739 at last! It was evidently a store, housed in a ramshackle one-story frame building. Closed, of course, and not even a night light burning. But as I pressed my face against the window, I thought I saw a thread of light in the rear. I pounded the door with a will and after a minute or two a light was switched on and the door opened. It framed a tall, gangling figure—barefoot and in long cotton drawers. From their setting in a narrow, sensitive face, now covered with a two-days' growth of stubble, a pair of abstracted, unhappy eyes looked me over without interest.

"What do you want?" he asked quietly.

"Is Sam Beckman here?"

"Yes, that is I," he replied in a strongly accented voice.

"The editor of the Freiheit gave me a letter to you and asked me to look you up."

"The Freiheit! Then you are a comrade?" I nodded. He stared at me incredulously for a moment and then repeated, "A comrade! A comrade here in Steelton! But come in, dear comrade, you are welcome!" He hung his arms about me and fairly dragged me through the door. "Zaller!" he called to someone behind the curtain that separated the living quarters from the front of the store, "Come here quick! A comrade from the North has arrived!" He pulled me along with him, his arm still around my shoulders, and flung the curtain aside. A sweating porpoise of a man was swinging himself upright on the bed. He was fat and broad and he was much excited.

None of us slept that night. For years these two had been isolated from their world; the world of the revolutionary movement, and they could not hear enough. Was it true the Party gained strength steadily in the North? Then why so few votes in the last election? How was the miners' strike going? Did I think war against the Soviet Union would come this year or next? Between questions they told me their story.

Both had been needle workers in up-state New York when the slump of '21 put them on the street. Somehow in their anxious search for jobs they had wandered South. Two years of odd jobs followed until at last they decided to pool their resources and go into business. This pitiful little grocery store was the result.

"For seven years we have been chained to this hell hole of a South," Sam declaimed passionately. "We could not leave, for who would buy our stock and fixtures? We tried to agitate, to work for the movement at first but we are foreigners—Jews. These Southern barbarians hate us. And because we are white the Negroes do not trust us and will not listen. We have been like dead men, lost to our comrades, lost to ourselves. But now all will be changed! With you, an American, here to help us, to show us how, we will work, we will build the Party. Only tell us what to do and we will do it. This I pledge!"

Sam kept that pledge. For months his grubby store was our headquarters. We slept there, always three and sometimes four in the big bed. We ate from the shelves of the store and cooked our food on the pot-bellied stove in the corner. We fitted the back room with a door and muffled the walls with quilts so that the sound of my typewriter and the mimeograph machine running off leaflets would not attract the attention of those in the store. The first Communist leaflet to appear in Steelton, or in the state for that matter, was run off in that room. And eight men—four Negroes and four whites—gathered there late one night behind drawn shades to form the first unit or "nucleus" of the Communist Party in the deep South.

Sam's customers were mostly Negroes of the neighborhood. It was the first year of the crisis, but already many of them were close to actual starvation. A man can't save on wages of 15 cents an hour, and when he's laid off—well, his family will go hungry in three weeks. Sam couldn't turn them down. As the greasy ledger in which he kept his charge accounts grew steadily fatter, the stock on the shelves dwindled in proportion. There was less and less money in the till to buy fresh supplies; the unemployed were slowly eating up the store.

It worried Zaller, but to Sam it was a relief. To him the store was a personal enemy which kept him from giving all his time to the movement. To him it summed up all the pettiness and chicanery that is the essence of the petty bourgeois soul. He hated it and despised it. On occasion he spat upon it. More than once, when the arrival of a customer found Sam busy at the crank of the mimeograph, or in the midst of a heated discussion on Communist policy in the back room, I have seen him open the door a crack, stick out an angry face, and shout to the astounded customer: "I'm busy! Can't wait on you now. You'll have to come back later or go somewhere else!" The door would slam shut and Sam would dive once more into the center of the argument.

Later, when we were about to hold our first mass meeting of the unemployed in Center Park, Sam insisted that he and Zaller both attend the meeting. We three left the store together. Sam turned the key and hung a crudely painted sign from the knob. It read:

STORE CLOSED
HAVE GONE TO CENTER PARK TO DEMONSTRATE FOR MORE RELIEF. GO THOU AND DO LIKEWISE.
S. Beckman, Prop.

Then the terror clamped down. The store was raided and all Communist literature confiscated. Sam protested to the prosecutor and demanded its return. He was told the police would return only such of his books as might also be found on the shelves of the public library. Sam diligently hunted through the local library and emerged triumphant with a copy of the *Communist Manifesto* and Sinclair's *The Jungle*. That's all he got back from the police. He was insistent and threatened to sue the city for the return of his property. The police were annoyed and Sam was promptly thrown in jail as a "suspicious person." They held him 72 hours while the police terrorized Zaller at the store.

They decided to drive him out of business and out of town. Inspectors from the Department of Health appeared and nothing suited them. State men raided the store on the pretext that Sam sold cigarettes without affixing the four-cent state tax stamp. They found one pack without a stamp and Zaller pawned his ring to pay the $50 fine.

A Ku Klux Klan parade of a hundred cars wound slowly through the Negro section. One car stopped at the store and six burly men came in. They looked long at Sam behind the counter.

"If you know what's good for you, you'll leave this town before you're shipped out in a box, you nigger-lovin' Jew," one said. Then they turned and left.

The next morning found three foot-high letters splashed in red paint on the window with a smaller line below them:

K K K
NIGGERS KEEP AWAY FROM THIS STORE.

One night a bomb shattered the front of the store. A can of coal oil caught fire and the flimsy building went up like a torch. Sam and Zaller were asleep, but they managed to escape unhurt through a rear window. The next day I stood with Sam beside the smoking ruins. He turned to me and his sad eyes filled with tears, but he was smiling gently, happily.

"At last, comrade, I am a free man," he said. "That cursed store is done for. From my heart I thank God for the thugs that set that bomb! Now I can really work! I will sell the Daily Worker in front of the shop—Let them arrest me! I will win many workers for our Party. At last I can give all I have within me to the revolution!"

He has.

Dewey, Russell and Cohen

Why They are Anti-Communist (Concluded)

PAUL SALTER and JACK LIBROME

OF these three opponents of Communism, Cohen is by far the most sophistic, the most patently reactionary. This is no surprise to those who know his philosophical and legal writings. Cohen has told elsewhere how he came to philosophy through the study of *Capital* for propaganda purposes. Here again he proudly relates what he owes to Marx, and protests that he holds "no brief for the injustices and stupidities of the present capitalist regime." But where he differs is on the question of the dictatorship of the proletariat. "To be sure," he says, "this dictatorship is to be in the name of the *Proletariat,* just as the fascist dictatorship is in the name of *the whole nation.* But such verbal tricks cannot hide the brute facts of tyrannical suppression necessarily involved in all dictatorships." Now no Communist tries to hide the suppression of the dictatorship (though to call it "tyrannical" is a misuse of terms). The question is, who is suppressed and for what end? Are the masses of workers now suppressed under capitalism suppressed under the proletarian dictatorship? Has Professor Cohen heard of unemployed and oppressed people being smuggled into Germany and Italy as they are into the Soviet Union? (Recent dispatches show the existence of large-scale rackets in Poland for the smuggling of unemployed workers across the border and into the Soviet Union.) What Cohen fears, of course, is the suppression of the bourgeoisie, especially of the reactionary petty-bourgeoisie that he so fervently represents.

Probably never before has Cohen so brazenly shown his true nature as in his attack in this article on civil war. He is so horrified at the notion of civil strife that he upholds and approves of imperialist war. The arguments Communists use against the World War are more cogent, Cohen alleges, against civil war. Civil wars are "more destructive of all that man hold dearest than are wars between nations." He hates the Bolshevik revolution whereby the world is seeing a new and better society evolve, but has nothing to say against the World War with its slaughter of 10 million men and the wounding of 20 million more for capitalist profits and a new division of spoils that is fast moving us toward a new and greater slaughter. "Wars between nations are necessarily restricted in scope . . ." A new imperialist slaughter which will probably involve every power in the world, which will take, if civil war does not prevent it, tens of millions of lives, which will cost hundreds of billions of dollars, will be "necessarily restricted in scope." But Cohen's main point, the truly great virtue of foreign wars, is that they not only do not prevent but "to a limited extent they even stimulate cooperation within a community." This sophist, in short, so believes in class-cooperation in capitalist society that he finds even international holocausts worthwhile when they foster that cooperation. And he is a respected college teacher of philosophy! Unlike the virtue of imperialist war, civil war "dislocates existing social organs and leaves us with little social capital or machinery to rebuild a better society." The capitalist world, we suppose, has been rebuilding a "better society" since the world war. But in the Soviet Union, apparently, as the argument runs, there is not the "social capital or machinery" for this. Cohen will thus betray mankind to protect his class. He also objects to the hatreds that fratricidal wars develop, for they are so much more lasting than those of the nicer wars that end in treaties. Cohen is the impartial philosopher who recommends the study of Spinoza for the spiritual life, and who now, under this same guise of impartiality, says: "We must be as critically-minded in considering the consequences of armed revolution as in considering the evils of the existing regime." But to do this is to support the existing regime for the very reason that it happens to exist.

Now Cohen insists that he is not opposed to *all* revolutions. He believes in bourgeois revolutions, not revolutions of the proletariat. The supposed reason is that the former "approximate national unanimity in the cooperation of diverse classes." This would also justify the fascist seizure of power for is not that the cooperation, the *Gleichschaltung* of diverse classes? Cohen's "good" revolutions are the American Revolution of 1776, the French Revolution, and the March Russian Revolution. Peasant revolts, Roman gladiatorial revolts, the Moscow uprising of 1905 are "bad" revolutions. If Cohen were not serious one would think he is parodying the middle-class as two Englishmen have parodied English patriotism in a history of England in which every event is judged good or bad according as it helped to make England "top nation" or the opposite. But Cohen is in dead earnest. A revolt of the middle class is good, one of the proletariat bad. He says that "When armed uprisings have been undertaken by single oppressed classes . . . they have left a deplorably monotonous record of bloody massacres and oppressive reaction." And Cohen carefully avoids mentioning the victorious Russian Revolution of October, 1917, apparently because it represents neither national unanimity nor the uprising of a single class. But that is just the nature of the proletarian revolution. For it to be successful the proletariat must have allies, and for it to be a revolution it cannot approximate "national unanimity."

Thus Cohen rambles on in his opposition to Communism. He argues that the Marxian belief in the inevitability of revolution is a product of Hegel's dialectic, which Marx borrowed from Hegel and Schelling, and which Cohen dismisses as being "an outgrowth of speculation carried on in theological seminaries." Then Cohen denies that a class only gives up its power with a bloody struggle, by instancing the English reform bill of 1832, and the freeing of the serfs in Russia in 1863. The simplest answer is that these are not instances of a class giving up its power, but merely of reforms forced by revolutionary ferment. From here he goes on from bad to worse, using every trite argument against revolution that has ever been concocted, and using them regardless of whether or not they fit to-

gether. In rapid succession come arguments such as: to this day Russian peasants are unalterably opposed to Communism; the capitalist class in America cannot govern without the cooperation of the farmers and the middle-class; the farmers are the dominant political group even in Pennsylvania, New York, and Illinois; the middle-class is increasing in numbers; any threat of revolution will strengthen the reactionaries; and so on *ad nauseam*. And he concludes this peroration with the great shibboleth of all conservatives: "If our working-classes find it difficult to learn what are their true interests and do not know how to control their representatives in the government and in the trade unions, there is little prospect that they will be able to control things better during a rebellion or during the ensuing dictatorship." This argument is on a par with Hamilton's dictum that the people aren't able to rule, for if they were they would be ruling.

Cohen, like Dewey, wishes to maintain the existing class relationships. Real improvements in the future he holds can come about only through cooperation between different groups. Sympathy is the real motive in human history. The freeing of serfs and slaves, the elimination of the grosser forms of exploitation (to Cohen they have apparently been eliminated already), and the like, cannot be explained without sympathy. And then, driven to the wall, he suddenly shifts and says: "Trite as it sounds, it is nevertheless true that no human arrangement can bring about perfection on earth." This is the last resort of the sophist. The appeal to the impossibility of perfection has always been the excuse for present evils.

But he has yet two more important ideas to give the world. In the face of a hostile nature our human conflicts are less important than our fundamental identity of interest. It is a shabby trick thus to invoke a hostile nature in order to show the exploited that they have really the same interest as their exploiters. Class conflicts would thus seem to be merely

Crockett Johnson

"If liberalism were dead, I should still maintain that it deserved to live."
—MORRIS R. COHEN.

the result of myopic vision. Viewed *sub specie aeternitatis* they disappear in the face of the platonic man in conflict with a hostile nature. It is the old appeal of the French Socialists: "Jaurès is murdered; We will not murder France." All differences must now be forgotten, the fatherland is in danger. Only Cohen puts it in a world-historical perspective. The master appeals to his slaves not to rebel since all men are doomed to die. But Cohen has another argument: "If liberalism were dead, I should still maintain that it deserved to live."

Nor does Cohen stop here. His fertility is quite boundless. Communists, when they get into power, are not so much different from others. (Earlier he showed the evils of Communists in power; now he shows that it wouldn't make any difference if they were.) We must adopt an experimental attitude and treat principals not as dogmas but as hypotheses. Labor leaders such as John Lewis keep their power by bureaucratic methods, therefore perhaps Stalins will do the same. This "philosopher" heaps argument upon argument against militant action on the part of the working-class. And he closes with a statement of what he "prefers to hope." He feels that in being offered the choice between Communism and Fascism he is offered the choice between being shot and being hanged (perhaps he should say, between being shot and being beheaded). He prefers to hope that this fanaticism will recede. It has in the past, why not now? Thus Morris R. Cohen substitutes a pious formula in the place of serious scientific analysis.

Many details in these arguments have had to be omitted. Many points seemed too obvious to us and our readers to dwell on in detail. One thing, however, is clear. These men are no revolutionists. These fine peace-loving philosophers (Bertrand Russell is the only one who did not kowtow to the war lords in the World War) preach to perpetuate a system whose essence means incessant misery for the masses of mankind, incessant starvation, torture, degradation. Time and again it has been shown that to adopt their position is to hold out against any significant advance in civilization, to move backwards as in the case of Italy, Germany, and Austria. Under their cloak of liberalism is a deep-rooted fear of wide social change. Their philosophy stands helpless before this fear and this belief in bourgeois class interests. They pretend to examine Communism objectively, impartially, when actually they see it from a class viewpoint—when actually to understand Communism is to embrace the viewpoint of the proletariat. All three are writers on scientific method, and all three forget conveniently to make scientific analyses of the social forces about them. In the face of rising militant mass action they have no escape but sophistry.

Repentant Judas

JOSEPH KALAR

When the five o'clock whistle blows,
he comes to stand beside the iron gate,
faint hunger in his eyes and twitching shame
in his hands, lips mumbling old stories
known as lies. Pressing against a car,
glancing at the men swarming from the mill
with swinging dinnerpails and a walk
much too stiff for buoyancy, not an eye
that sees him but grows hard and cold,
not a lip but tenses into a sneer,
not a hand but twists into an iron vise.
He stands there monument to our shame,
ugly echo of the day we lost our fear,
and felt it fall from us a heavy weight
and STRIKE! felt the power in our hands
thrust toward the ceiling in a chorus of ayes,
yes, by god! STRIKE and saw eyes shining
with remembered purpose, knew again
the proud magic of a clenched fist. He led us,
his words were the mirror to our hopes.
Day after day, the net of his phrases
spun craftily, unbeautifully encompassing,
water drenching clear flame to cold ashes.
Then one day, a conference held secretly,
the nodding of heads, the scratch of a pen,
and cigars chewed quite powerfully
by sleek sullen jaws. And we went back,
knowing again the old story forgotten,
some with feet leaden and the spirit dark,
some thrusting a finger into every wound,
and some braver for defeat, pain and hate
generating visions of a new dawn. While he,
he stayed outside. Alien eternally to our dreams,
our suffering, our hate, to die at last,
potbellied and alone, brother only to contempt!

Crockett Johnson

"If liberalism were dead, I should still maintain that it deserved to live."

—MORRIS R. COHEN.

Correspondence

"Are You Better Off?"

To The New Masses:

Apropos of Roosevelt's intimate questions over the radio: Several days later the Columbia Broadcasting system held a beautifully faked street-symposium in half a dozen cities, asking the "people" these questions relating to life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness. I say "faked" because it was obvious that the announcers, who asked the questions, were choosing "at random" the best-dressed, best-fed, happiest-looking individuals they could find at the various street intersections. What a conglomeration of newspapermen, vaudeville actors, salesmen, race track gamblers, stenographers, small businessmen and housewives! Nevertheless, in many instances the radio interviewers got more than they bargained for.

Only a decided minority could answer affirmatively to the question, "Are you better off than you were last year?" Only a few could boast of any bank account at all; and while the majority of this angellically white-collar crew still thought their individual future "more firmly grounded," there were some dissenters who thought otherwise. There was, for example, a dress manufacturer in Philadelphia, employing eighty people, who confessed he had no hope for the future, production was kept apace only of demand—no future production—that it was harder to borrow from the banks, and, in so far as he could judge, his workers were no better off in working conditions.

When the "mike" was shifted to Detroit, I said to myself, "They're bound to find a proletarian now." And, sure enough, the radio boys had the bad luck to select two of them. The first was a house painter. He had been unemployed for two years. Didn't have a dime in his pockets, said he, how could he have a bank account? Said he didn't have any hopes from the present regime. Guarded answers, taking no chances of being run in on vagrancy charges. The second fellow was a tool-dye maker, very belligerent. (The poor radio boys!) Yes, he was employed—but only for the seasonal business. Working conditions were maddening. And the future? And then the belligerent proletarian blasted into the "mike": "I see no hope in the future unless the capitalist system is abolished." "Very pessimistic, aren't you?" murmured the radio boys. Then they switched the "mike" to Kansas City and asked a race-track tout what he thought about the depression. "Never heard of it," he wisecracked. After a while a band played *I Wish That I Were Twins.* The unemployed didn't.

W. J. Waller.

A Professor Stands Up

To The New Masses:

Nineteen workers and students were sentenced by the courts of Massachusetts for peacefully demonstrating against the German fascist ship, the *Karlsruhe.* All are out on bail, pending an appeal to the higher court. Their sentences vary from heavy fines to seven months in prison. Among the number are five Tech men who received the same brutal attack by the police and received the similar injustice dealt by the courts as other workers. They narrowly escaped expulsion from Massachusetts Institute of Technology only because of the firm anti-fascist stand of one of the country's greater mathematicians.

Prior to the trial, the Dean of Undergraduate Students, Harold E. Lobdell, who has already expelled one student for anti-militaristic work, was lunching with members of the faculty. In his dinner table conversation, he politely remarked of the impending trial of the students: "Unless those students mixed up in that affair in Charlestown stand up in court and plead guilty tomorrow morning, I'm going to see that they are all expelled. They should learn to take their medicine on the chin like men. Wasting their time with the National Students League and Communistic affiliations, they cannot expect anything else."

In a hurried meeting of some more liberal members of the faculty, the matter was discussed in detail. A few of them had seen the attack of the police on the protest meeting. From the group sprang a man equal to the occasion.

Professor Norbert Wiener, mathematician and philosopher, rushed to the Dean's office. He told the pro-fascist, pro-militarist yes-man of big capital what some of the lesser professors dared not to do.

"If those boys who protested against Fascism are to be expelled, my resignation from this narrowback institution becomes immediately effective. Had I been younger, I would have protested against the reception afforded the fascist ship in Boston. Culture, science, worker's and racial liberties have been suppressed in Germany. And if these students are expelled, I'll resign and tell the world why I did so."

One professor had the courage to stand and tell a carbon copy of a man his convictions. What can thousands of workers throughout the world do? What can their protests accomplish?

Cambridge, Mass. Lawrence Emery.

The Living and Dead

To The New Masses:

The enormity of the recent massacres in Germany will probably obscure the murder of certain heroic individuals who must not be forgotten, nor confused with the dead freebooter captains such as Roehm, Heines, etc.

First, the cold-blooded killing of Richard Scheringer, idealistic and youthful lieutenant sentenced to fortress imprisonment for pro-Nazi activities in the Reichswehr, converted to Communism through contact with fellow-prisoners, and thereupon re-sentenced to a longer term. Released during the Nazi regime, he was seized at once by the political police and now has been murdered in the general blood purge. Scheringer, though a Reichswehr officer, sought and found the road to social justice, then never budged from it.

Secondly, the "suicide" of Erich Muehsam, in the most dreaded of all concentration camps, Sonnenburg. Muehsam, mistakenly called a Communist in the press dispatches, was in fact an anarchist—a brilliant mind, a gifted and upright character, an incorruptible fighter.

Many words would be needed to tell the historic and symbolic importance of both of these heroic figures. However, that has been done better than I can do it by the collective authors, members of the Association of Revolutionary Proletarian Writers of Germany, who wrote the pamphlet *Brains Behind Barbed Wires,* which it was my privilege recently to translate and edit.

The shocking news of the murders of Scheringer and Muehsam confirms—if confirmation was necessary—the appeal made in that document for protest on behalf of the intellectuals imprisoned by Hitler: writers and fighters against the brown plague.

Scheringer and Muehsam must be stricken from the list of those it is still possible to save. But others remain—Carl von Ossietsky, editor of the *Welt-Buehne,* a great journalist, a brave and honest man—and hundreds of others.

Scheringer, now dead, and Ossietsky, now being done to death, in their lives both rose above the limitations of their professions—professional soldier and democratic journalist.

Such dead can be commemorated by us and such living rescued in one way only—PROTEST, unending, resourceful—here and all over the world against the fascist regime of murder, bestiality, and unchecked degradation of every humane impulse. Make this protest heard! The regime is tottering, crumbling. Outcry will help bring it down.

Herbert A. Klein.

Guarding Academic Freedom

To The New Masses:

During the last few years the educational system of the city of New York has been subjected to a long series of attacks by the banking and business interests, which have resulted in pay cuts, reduced state-aid, neglect of the health of the students, and a general crippling and impairment of educational standards. In attempting to fight back these onslaughts, a small number of teachers who had fought most bravely and fearlessly, met the inevitable fate of those who oppose the entrenched interests—they lost their jobs and with that their only means of livelihood.

Amidst the host of teacher organizations there was not one which had as its primary function the financial relief and legal defense of teachers unjustly dismissed. One might lose his job for teaching the truth as he saw it, or for engaging in some extra-mural activity, or for fighting too openly in defense of teachers' standards, and there would be no organization to which he could turn for immediate financial help. Was it any wonder then, that the ordinary teacher was a veritable "Casper Milquetoast," timid and fearful, and reluctant to express his opinion on any controversial question?

It was to fill this obvious gap in teacher organizations that we have organized the Teachers' League for Academic Freedom. Our aims are to advance the cause of academic freedom in the most effective and practical way—by coming to the financial relief and legal defense of any person who shall be a victim of the violation of the principle of academic freedom. Any instructor who shall be punished for his political and economic beliefs, or for his activity in defense of teachers' standards will know that he can come to us for financial help. We have already during the last five months, expended close to six hundred dollars in aiding Mrs. Burroughs, Mrs. Silver and Mr. Begun, three of the teachers who lost their jobs in the defense of their fellow teachers.

All teachers are eligible for membership. The dues vary with the financial circumstances and personal wishes of the member—from ten cents to one dollar per month. We shall also accept contributions from all those outside the teaching profession who may be interested. Please make all checks payable to Mr. A. Zitron, Secretary, 1346 Elder Ave., Bronx, N. Y. For any further information communicate with Mr. Fromowitz, chairman, 5102—11th Ave., Brooklyn, N. Y., or with Mr. George Rosenbloom, executive secretary, 12 East 60th St., New York City.

The Teachers' League for Academic Freedom.

Announcing "The Vanguard"

To The New Masses:

The rising wave of lynch terror and the increasing fascization of this country has confirmed the need for a publication which will clarify the role of the Negro misleaders and fight effectively in the liberation struggles of the Negro masses. With this in mind, the Writers' Group of THE VANGUARD, a group of Negro and white intellectuals, announces the forthcoming publication of a magazine which will serve such a purpose.

Available articles, stories, verse, drawings, etc., are earnestly requested at once. Address all communications to the Writers' Group,

The Vanguard.

235 W. 135th Street, New York City.

Books

The Breath of Revolution

AND QUIET FLOWS THE DON, by Mikhail Sholokhov. Alfred A. Knopf, $3.

THE extraordinary stream of people and events of *And Quiet Flows the Don* is given unity and importance by the single red thread of incipient, developing, and finally full grown and struggling revolution. Beginning with peace times, the people of the Don Cossacks are carried through war, revolution, and civil war to the final scene, where brother shoots brother and the front line of men of reaction witnesses the killing of the red Cossacks. The red soldiers fall into the trench, but the words of Podtielkov, the leader, ring out over the shamed crowd. "You are blind . . . ignorant. The officers have tricked you, have forced you to kill your blood brothers. Do you think it will end with our death? No. Today you are on top, but tomorrow it will be your turn to be shot. The Soviet government will be established over Russia. Remember my words. In vain you are shedding our blood. You're a lot of fools." The earth is shoveled over the soldiers, and the revolted Gregor Melkov spurs his horses away from the scene. Someone plants a melancholy shrine over the body of a red Cossack slain as he seeks to join his comrades. But bustards build a nest at its roots. If Tolstoi's *War and Peace* ended with the rich life of the woman and mother, this book ends with nature itself, with a bird hopefully laying new eggs at the foot of a decaying shrine.

To discuss in this way the end of the book rather than its beginning is to indicate at once its significance. The vital early scenes of the book are not there to develop Gregor the man so much as Gregor the Cossack. The scenes of fishing, reaping, wood cutting, loving, and child bearing, lavish and fully detailed, are the soil nourishing a people swept into historical events greater than their individual lives. Gregor Melekov is a Don Cossack, an average one, with love for home and the river Don deeply imbedded with him. He loves illicitly, is married against his will; the war carries him unwillingly away from his own deep instinctive concerns. He is revolted at bloodshed, but as a Cossack, crosses for bravery are awarded him.

The Don Cossacks were destined by the Czarist generals as shock troops against revolt within the ranks. They were stationed at strategic points along the entire front. The passionate and brave nature on which the generals relied was undermined for the duty assigned them by homesickness and craving for their land. It made the Cossack regiments susceptible to Bolshevik propaganda and pulled entire regiments into revolutionary ranks. With the provisional government tottering, Kornilov attempted a military dictatorship, the backbone of which was snapped by the desertion of the troops. When the Cossack regiment deserts the wagon carrying the men to Petrograd, their officers attempt to trick them into surrender. The conservative Cossacks vacillate at the tempting arguments held out by the officers, waver, and are whipped into final desertion by their leaders uncovering the trick and flagellating their pride.

This vacillation, this deeply conservative nature, the going a little ahead, then a little back, the continual movement of civil war involving a people who are drawn into bloodshed while yearning for land and home, is focused in Gregor whose sensitive reaction to bloodshed leads to desertion of the Bolsheviks when they summarily kill the officers who would trap them.

The killing gags Gregor, but not conclusively; he is only wounded and obscure in his beliefs, uncertain, and returning home to a wife and twin babies, cannot sink into forgetfulness of the horrors of civil war. The struggle follows to his very doorstep; he is called out to take sides against the Bolsheviks, does so as a spectator, and is again horrified at the slaughter of his former comrades. A blind pity for the personal fate of the dead stifles his ability to judge the cause for which they were slain.

But if there is uncertainty in Gregor, there is none in the red soldiers as they are shot down and the words of the leader are above death. The so-called propaganda thread of this narrative, the red thread, provides an incandescence to the naturalistic passages, the descriptive scenes, the river Don itself, the humor and intensely colloquially inventive language of the Cossacks, all so satisfying in themselves but raised to a higher power of significance by this underlying motivating force.

The pull this book undoubtedly has is due not to the love affairs, the war, and the descriptions of lust, drunkenness, and passion, but to the challenging sweep of forces that speak today with more than a novelist's voice in every land. Anyone in this country in touch with the working-class movement or the revolting farmers will find curiously familiar and close to home the doubts and arguments of the Cossacks, who sick of war and government betrayal, find in "propaganda" that burning interest so difficult for the comfortable middle-class mind to understand.

Quite frankly, this writer does not create "characters" of the old school. He creates living people in the flux of vital events that endow his very prose with fertility and excitement. This book richly rises to the living concerns, impulses, and driving forces of today, and when I say today, I do not mean today in Soviet Russia only but in every country in the world.

JOSEPHINE HERBST.

Traps for the Farmer

A LIVING FROM THE LAND, by William B. Duryee. Whittlesey House. $1.50.
CHANGE IN THE FARM, by T. Hennel. Cambridge University Press and The Macmillan Company. $3.50.

The more capitalism in its last agonies crushes the workers and farmers, the more distractions and medicated plans do capitalism's agents advance to keep the aroused masses from finishing up the monster. Subsistence homesteads and a return to the simple life are dangled before the eyes of the toiling masses to get them ready for the serfdom under Fascism. Both *A Living from the Land* and *Change in the Farm* are the works of reactionaries whose chief function is to help in getting the exploited workers and farmers backed up between the shafts.

A Living from the Land is by the Secretary of the Department of Agriculture of New Jersey, a former county agent and assistant manager of the Walker-Gordon Milk Co., and chairman of the New Jersey Milk Control Board, which was created by the milk trusts to maintain their spread of profit by milking the small farmer with one hand and the consumer with the other.

"Homesteading days are here again," sings Mr. Duryee. Hurrah for the old oaken bucket, home fruit and bees, poultry, the garden where the worker can water his soul in the evening if he has any soul left after putting in a hard day's work at the factory. There is no other way out because today "we know that many urban industries will operate on a seasonal basis and we know too that periods of unemployment and shorter working days will provide more leisure and probably lower incomes for hundreds of thousands of families."

Reactionary statements stud this book, but its class character is most apparent in the chapter on "Financing and Protecting the Investment," which greases the worker who has a little money to put it into the hands of the banks and mortgage companies, the only ones making a living from the land these days. All Mr. Duryee's evasions and flinging about of bushels of roses cannot hide the fact that it is not machinery which has "become an octopus" and so is responsible for the depression, but that capitalism is the octopus and men like Duryee are the cups on its tentacles. His plans are no solution but a trap for even members of the lower middle-class who may stumble upon his book. Going back to the land is no help when even during "prosperity days" only 15 percent of American farmers had piped water, 13 percent electric lights, 34 percent telephones, 13 percent tractors, 13 percent trucks, and only 8 percent inside toilets and tubs.

Change in the Farm is one of these pious works abounding with love for the English countryside and quaint customs and tools and outbuildings. It is in the tradition of Constable and W. H. Hudson, placid and satis-

factory to foxhunters and beefy guzzlers. Yet Hennel is a closer cousin to Duryee than he may suspect. For the Englishman at the start bemoans the neglect of the hoary methods of farming by the "practical, unprosperous young farmers of today." He would have the farmers return to the backbreaking handsheafing, to a medievalism when the peasants had to keep the frogs quiet in the pond while the master snored in the big house. "When farmers have laid aside the formidable engines, hooks, and harrows of modern agrarian reform, they may return like Cincinnatus to their fireside turnips and consider how things were done when tools were simple and the land was fed upon straw-yard muck."

It is to the profit of Mr. Hennel's class to keep the English farmer a peasant whose conditions are not much better than those Marx so well described. It is in the "Merry England" that M. Hennel seems to be so proud of that 2,000 people own half of the arable land and that the farms above 300 acres produce only 3 percent of the crops. It is in such an England, where new John Balls and Wat Tylers will rise, that 60,000 farm workers lost their jobs in 1930 and 1931 and wages for 52 hours a week are 30 shillings and less.

In spite of the Hennels and the Duryees, the farmers of America and England cannot be fooled with homesteads, fireside turnips and nostalgic comment on England's green and pleasant as gall. The fight against tithes and evictions in England and the rise of such militant organizations as the Cannery and Agricultural Workers Industrial Union and the United Farmers League in America show how grinding capitalism is whetting the farmer's brain and brawn. He fights for his home and bread. He will pay back in blood the most brutal of all oppressors and take over the land for himself. BEN FIELD.

A Novelist in the Theatre

THREE PLAYS, by John Dos Passos. Harcourt, Brace. $2.50.

"Let's have a theatre of depression, a theatre that perhaps will be able to mould the audience a little instead of everlastingly flattering it." This is John Dos Passos' cry from out the kind of wilderness that the last two decades were lost in. The New Playwrights' Theatre was a "crude forerunner" and the Theatre Union is the first realization of the kind of theatre Dos Passos yearns for. But such groups, no matter how worthy their aim, live and die by the quality of their plays. It wasn't enough for The New Playwrights of the Theatre Union to have an idea; the important thing was how well and dramatically that idea was projected. In a medium where ideas are rare, you've got to be twice as good or else your prospectus, glittering and shiny with names as it may be, will gather dust and die still-born. This may be one of the reasons why The New Playwrights' Theatre failed.

Dos Passos was one of the most competent of The New Playwrights. In this book we can read three of his plays: *The Garbage Man,* titled also, *The Moon Is a Gong* (1923), *Airways, Inc.* (1928), and *Fortune Heights* (1933).

There is no question that Dos Passos has come far, ideologically, in the last ten years. *The Garbage Man* is a fantastically symbolic pot-pourri which ends on what was, in 1923, a fashionable note of mysticism. The pages of the play takes us through burlesque, realism, satire, and Maeterlinckian nether-wordliness. The play reflects, among other items, the mad days of the Palmer raids, the callow disillusion of post-war intellectuals, the post-war Fordization of minds, and the queasy scramble for wealth; but it does so with much confusion, little form, and less drama. A fire engine running up and down a stage may be exciting, but it cannot hold our attention for long, nor can we identify ourselves with it and in that way be moved and moulded by it.

Five years later *Airways, Inc.* was written. Dos Passos had recognized the secret of playwrighting in the interim for, in this play, he not only narrowed down the world he commented on, but also, and what was more important, he placed the emphasis of his story on character. He revealed a middle-class family on whose lives beat the recurring waves of industrial struggle and industrial exploitation. The tragedy of Martha Turner is not a Hamlet tragedy, for her defeat is engendered not only by the flaw in her that prevents her from consummating her love with Walter Goldberg, a strike leader, but also by the whole *gestalt* of economic and industrial warfare. Though many aspects of pre-depression bourgeois life are included, it is with Martha, however, that we identify ourselves and she has no comprehension of the issues which caused Goldberg's framing and subsequent electrocution.

Fortune Heights, although a much better play than *The Garbage Man,* is not unlike it in its lack of form, its extraneous characters and situations, and its incredible use of accident. While technically inferior to *Airways, Inc., Fortune Heights* is clearer in its revolutionary implications. Both plays deal with the middle-class. In *Airways, Inc.* Martha Turner represents her class at a time when it was being crushed, on one side, by the brutal exploitation of the upper class, and on the other side, by the virile upsurge of the working-class. For her and her class, at that time, there seemed no way out. But in *Fortune Heights* Owen Hunter represents the middle-class in the depression years when it has been forced to ally itself with the working-class or die. It can stomach no longer the old middle-class fictions.

John Dos Passos has evidently taken as his dramatic province, at least in these three plays, the vagaries of the middle-class. It is by no means a minor revolutionary task to attempt to neutralize or radicalize that class. Although this latest play would seem to indicate a slightly humorous and despondent attitude on the part of Dos Passos, it is not due to this that *Fortune Heights* fails. It is due rather to its technical weaknesses which makes it more like a scenario for Dos Passos, the novelist, than a play by Dos Passos, the playwright.

P. S.—I have just learned that Mr. Dos Passos is rewriting *Fortune Heights.* If he succeeds in pruning from the play its inconsequential characters and scenes, thereby making it more compact and integrated, it is my belief he will have a play that will honor the revolutionary theatre.

MICHAEL BLANKFORT.

Exhibit A

ALL TRIVIA, by Logan Pearsall Smith. Harcourt, Brace and Company. $2.

There is something hateful about this collection of philosophic odds and ends. Written in simple, leisurely style over a period embracing the World War, the October Revolution and the disintegration of capitalism, these sweet, too sweet, ruminations concerning charm and religion, the mind and the stars, futility, and spring in London, sedulously avoid any reference to the life most of us know. The pleasant, inoffensive cynicism of the book, expressed in short reflections and apothegms, makes it ideal bathroom literature for those members of the bourgeoisie to whom the world of money-grubbing has turned slightly sour, owing to unfortunate investments, and who are now ready for the Better Things of Life in the form of Beauty and Truth and the lambent refulgence of the moon over an English landscape.

On the dust jacket of Mr. Smith's book, Robert Lynd—the genial "Y. Y." of the liberal *Nation and New Statesman*—who specializes in polite literary nothings himself, gives *All Trivia* a magnificent send-off by exclaiming, "How many loudly trumpeted works of our time this little book will survive!" That may be true. In the year I after the English Revolution, I expect to find a copy of *All Trivia* in the Revolutionary Museum —formerly the British Museum—carefully preserved under a glass case, with the explanatory legend: "Curiosity from the year 1934 (old calendar)—Plaything of that Defunct Species, the English Gentleman."

CONRAD SEILER.

I Went to State College

STARS FELL ON ALABAMA, by Carl Carmer. Farrar and Rienhart. $3.

Mr. Carmer's book does for the state of Alabama what Lauren Gilfillan's did for a small town in Pennsylvania. Mr. Carmer taught for six years at the State College in Tuscaloosa, but, with the firm intention of "writing a book," he wandered over the entire state. His theory is that "Alabama is a strange country," and he emphasizes those customs and legends which are most exotic. But his story has the unmistakeable ring of truth. Alabama telescopes a dozen historical periods, ranging from the most primitive to the most modern, and not a single one is civilized. A delegation of his students visited him to protest against his enthusiasm in class concern-

ing the picturesque quality of Tuscaloosa streets. The charge was that he had made the inhabitants out to be "no better than a bunch of foreigners!" In the midst of a "man hunt," Mr. Carmer visited a Negro church and listened to the preacher shout, "Anythin' the Lord do is right." These are Alabama "extremes."

With placid curiosity Mr. Carmer describes conjure women, poor whites, planters, a Big House with servants taken from the chain gang, and peculiar sea and land folk like the Creoles and the Cajans. The picture of savagery and brutality that emerges is appalling. It includes not only lynchings and chain gangs but also the racial chauvinism of poor whites, some of whom never saw a Negro until they were full-grown men, the complacent cultural backwardness of the ruling class, and the industrial slavery existing in Birmingham.

But Mr. Carmer retains his temper throughout, has no idea of any solutions, and our conservative and liberal friends will be able to read this book with the same delighted horror, and futile pity with which they read *I Went to Pit College.* Only Communists will continue to vex that Southern ruling class which believes that Alabama and Paris are the only places where "civilized man can comfortably live."

SAMUEL LEVENSON.

Sweetness and Barter

THE BARTER LADY, by Evelyn Harris. Doubleday, Doran and Co. $2.50.

The subtitle, "A Woman Farmer Sees It Through," is importantly misleading. Mrs. Harris does not solve the agrarian crisis or even, unless this book happens to sell well, her personal problems. She does get to the end of a year's diary, describing the doings on the farm and her attempts to pay off last year's debt with next year's crop. She reveals herself as a typically petty- bourgeois farmer with a big capital investment, a good-sized mortgage, and a large crop. Mrs. Harris, of Howell's Point Farm, Eastern Shore, Maryland, is, except for her cultural pretensions, like most fruit farmers, who differ somewhat from other classes of farmers because of their dependence on seasonal labor. She wants the good old ways back again, dislikes city workers, and has a vague idea that maybe Big Business is to blame.

Mrs. Harris has discovered that she is expected to sell her fruit below cost of production and still pay interest on the mortgage. She has not discovered that finance capital has a grip on the cultivated land of this country and is determined to put the burden of the crisis on the workers and farmers. Because she has a large crop and cheap labor, she is more interested in the price than in the debt. She thinks that the commission men are all foreign-born racketeers (some of them may very well be) and if the government would enable the farmer to sell direct and would keep all foreign products out of the country, all would be well again. She also maintains that city workers generally do not deserve their high union wages. The idea of socializing distribution without destroying private property, when combined with nationalism and a longing for the rugged innocence of grandfather's day, sounds mildly fascist. Meantime, bartering hogs for books and pears for opera tickets is a temporary solution that permits Mrs. Harris to go on being brave and sweet and literary.

It is a good thing for the lady that her economics is haywire; else her optimism would be impossible. And without her optimism, so encouraging to those who have an interest in the back-to-the-land movement, her articles would not have been likely to appear in the Saturday Evening Post. She nowhere touches on the real problems of the great mass of farming people, almost half of whom are tenants. They have not the wherewithal to barter, and their problems cannot be solved by writing sweet sentiments about the land for the magazines. Only struggle can save them. In that struggle Mrs. Harris will not join. But one can count on her to keep picking away at the typewriter with indomitable courage.

DAVID LURIE.

Modern Russia

MODERN RUSSIA, by Cicely Hamilton. E. P. Dutton and Company. $2.75.

There appears to me to be little excuse for a book of this type. Everything in it has been better written before. It is a loosely knit account of a short tour through European Russia which rambles from one subject to another and back again with the detachment of an after-dinner conversation, and as such it serves as an excuse for much moralizing on civilization and ethics. In the preface Miss Hamilton records her prejudices: she is an individualist and she believes that "thought of the Highest cannot be embodied in man but strives beyond him to a God." She might have mentioned another prejudice but she did not know about it. She went to the U.S.S.R. confident that if she remained unruffled and serenely liberal she would understand what she saw. Not once did an economic or social idea, beyond her natural democratic ones, enlighten her in her observations. When she found that she could not reconcile the Soviet Constitution and the power of the Communist Party, no glimmer of the meaning of the class struggle came to her aid. When she was unable to explain how men could live without God she solved the question neatly by calling Communism another religion. Always she found an explanation for everything in terms of "historical continuity," "human nature," or "slavic temperament."

On the whole Miss Hamilton writes as though she were considering a savage tribe; she is polite, but completely at her ease in the knowledge that she is not a partisan. The liberal approach is certainly a wonderful cloak for ignorance. When an author becomes so engrossed in proving that he is only recording facts it never seems to occur to him to what extent he is selecting his facts. In the case of Miss Hamilton, she was so busy being objective that she presents very few facts indeed. Had she openly attacked those things of which she did not approve, criticism could be given to some purpose. As it is, she contributes nothing to the enormous mass of travel literature on the Soviet Union. Rather unfairly, I think, she poses questions in her book which she did not ask of her interpreters for fear of embarrassing them. In fact, she seemed to be suffering under the delusion that she might get people into trouble if she got them to admit any failures or paradoxes in the "Soviet experiment" as she chooses to consider it.

The new world appeared to her mainly as a drab ant heap with no shop windows, no freedom, and people dressed in monotones. Something is wrong, she is sure, in a country teeming with so many paradoxes: preaching internationalism and cutting itself off from the outside world, striving for Communism and urging people to invest in the Five-Year Plan loan, boasting employment for everyone and declassing kulaks. Nor did the standards of food, clothing, and shelter appeal to her as commensurate with a workers' paradise. That people can deliberately deny themselves physical comforts for the sake of building a secure and pleasant future never seems to have occurred to her.

Just for her own amusement, Miss Hamilton might read a few more books on the "Soviet experiment." And now that she has seen how the workers live in modern Russia, a proletarian neighborhood in England might be of interest to her. Also an evening stroll through the heart of her own delightful London would be illuminating; in the back streets she might even see people asleep in doorways. And when she is near Piccadilly she could settle for herself the definition of a tenement by looking at Newport Buildings. Or better still, she could peep into the crypt of St. Martin's and catch a glimpse of the crowded and damp living quarters of some of the English public. Churches used as museums might not appear a matter for so much comment after that.

The kindly, liberal attitude towards a new phenomenon is not enough to justify a book; the author needs a little background and comprehension too.

ALICE WITHROW FIELD.

The Skirts of Norway

THE ROAD LEADS ON, by Knut Hamsun. Translated by Eugene Gay-Tifft. Coward-McCann. $3.

The new bank, the movie-house, the road up the mountain to young Gordon Tidemand's country place—it was by signs like these that civilization was thrust on Segelfoss. Norway, in Knut Hamsun's more than five hundred pages, is a place of rudimentary needs, dependent on sheep and herring and potatoes for its

livelihood. In a book that continues the stories of some of the characters of *Vagabonds* and earlier novels, he makes it clear that the concerns of the fishing village are not the concerns of a world of cities and industry. The young gipsy-eyed heir is made British Consul, and begins his rise in affairs, sending his traveling salesmen south with store-made dresses; but at home the women go from house to house to borrow, according to tradition, a fine skirt in which to carry home the hay.

Knut Hamsun has always been master of the epic treated familiarly; *The Road Leads On* is constructed in magnificent proportions, and told in the most informal conversation. The characters are rich, savory folk: peasants for the most part, shepherds elevated for a while to road-workers or bicycle-boys; ladies who sparkle into middle age, like Tidemand's mother, Gammelmoderen, who could always find a place to meet Otto Alexander, the Gipsy, even though he might have to jump two stories to safety in the end; the druggist, the hotel-keeper, the English guest, the doctor who had his eye torn out by Aase, the witch-woman; and finally August, enterprising, a Munchausen of the North, with his amazing capacities as man-of-all-work, and the shabby weaknesses of the pioneer in industry. He comes to Segelfoss as a symbol of the world of automobiles and competition, descending with his ingenuity on the peasants for all the world like a nightmare Machine Age on a terrified bunch of artists. Not that Hamsun endows his villagers with any false subtleties; they are all painted in the raw primitive colors of truth. But August, for all his charm, comes as a disrupting influence; he is baptized under the waterfall, it is true, but he gets drunk to cure his chills after the ordeal; he fires his pistol in the air time and again to stop the village fights; he curses the knife-wound in Gammelmoderen's breast; but "it was his mission in life to father all forms of progress and development, and he had left behind him desolation in one form or another wherever he had gone."

In such dubious innocence, he brings the twentieth century to Segelfoss, enchanting even London-bred Gordon Tidemand with his invention, and stunning the community brilliantly with his wealth when he receives a long-overdue lottery prize of forty-thousand kroner. Distributing ten-ore notes to the children, buying up sheep by the score, he makes a figure of himself in the town. He has imposed a mechanistic civilization on them, but he still can impress them with the feudal magnificence of himself and his overlords.

The Road Leads On is a folk-tale, slow, rambling, simple. The very competent translation carries the folk-quality well. Money and competition exert their power, but not in far-reaching sweeps; tides and weather are more important. What must be pointed out, as industrial life seeps into these margins of the world, is the necessity for order in its meaning; merely a mechanistic civilization will indeed ruin a farming and fishing country, as far as its culture and the charm of its people is concerned. Knut Hamsun has pointed this out without any mention of the class struggle, which seems a long way away from Segelfoss. It is only in the flashes of poverty, of sudden rise through profit, that we can see the implications of the modern world's encroachment on a land alien to large-scale industry and cities' sprawling influence. Geography, if nothing else, has made Norway's life simple; the valuable miles of coastline do not allow much room for metropolises; and shrewdness and unplanned development can do a lot towards the ruin of such a country. All this lies implicit in the novel; for the rest, *The Road Leads On* is a slow, good-natured story of slow and simple folk.

MURIEL RUKEYSER.

Required Reading

LIFE AND TEACHINGS OF V. I. LENIN, by R. Palme Dutt. International Publishers. 50c.

This is without any question the best introduction to the study of Lenin that is available. And it is much more than an introduction. Despite its brevity, it is so thorough and so thoughtful that the most careful student of Lenin will, I believe, profit from reading it. It seems to me that Dutt might well undertake a much longer work on Lenin, applying in detail the analytical methods that he uses so skillfully in this little book.

The aim of the book is to show Lenin "as a world leader at a critical turning-point of human history," and this Dutt accomplishes by describing at every point the background of Lenin's thought and the setting of his actions. After a short introductory chapter on the historical epoch in which Lenin lived, Dutt briefly but precisely outlines the fundamental Marxist theories, traces the conflict between Bolshevism and Menshevism, describes Lenin's work during the war, summarizes the Bolshevik Revolution, and portrays the founding of the Communist International. Thus he makes clear the extraordinary unity of thought and action that characterized Lenin's life, and prepares the way for his excellent analysis of Leninism. The book closes with a discussion of the events of the past decade and of the work of the Third International, "the heir of Lenin."

All in all the book seems to me a model of its kind. There are omissions, of course, but I am amazed at what Dutt has managed to include in his ninety-two pages. The only pertinent comment is unqualified recommendation.

GRANVILLE HICKS.

Capital's Private Armies

PRIVATE POLICE, by J. P. Shalloo. The American Academy of Political and Social Science. $2.50.

Revolutionists would do well to read this book, if only to familiarize themselves with the enemy's resources and organization. The author, a typical "impartial" professor, is muddled in his outlook and apologetic for the corporations, but the information he supplies is valuable.

For example, it is important to know that the railroads in the United States employ more than 10,000 police at an annual payroll in excess of $20,000,000—ostensibly to protect valuable freight shipments and to carry on routine police work. But — the roads have arsenals for their police, which include "riot guns, tear bombs, submachine guns, revolvers, clubs, badges, rifles, shotguns, cartridges, rule books, and all other equipment necessary for any emergency. The riot guns and submachine guns are used in protection of value shipments . . . and also for protection of property and strikebreakers during an industrial crisis."

It is interesting to know that that paragon of class collaboration, the Baltimore & Ohio, uses its police to find out "what is going on in all shops and among its employes at all times." Other roads, such as the Pennsylvania, use private detective agency men as spies. "Every railroad uses some system of espionage." A detailed exposition of the organization and methods of these undercover men makes this section particularly valuable to organizers on the railroads.

The material on coal and iron police and undercover men in general, while largely familiar, is useful because it is compact and inclusive. To be sure, it is rather sickening to read of the Molly Maguires as "a group of criminals" and that at Homestead "the strikers were responsible for the bloodshed and destruction far more than were the Pinkertons" —but it is worth it to learn such facts as that Governor Pinchot, that eminent "friend of labor," sponsored a bill supposedly abolishing the coal and iron police in Pennsylvania—and supplanting them by a special state police force to perform the same functions at much less cost to the coal operators! It seems also that this amiable gentleman showed his devotion to the cause of labor by pardoning a coal and iron police officer a few days after the thug had been sentenced for assault!

There is plenty of other material in the book which makes it useful to those who are daily battling against these "lowest forms of human life" and their employers. To get such information one can endure the professor's smug bourgeois moralizing.

JAMES STEELE.

Hearst's Lackey Reports

THE BOILING POINT, by H. R. Knickerbocker. Farrar and Rinehart. $2.50.

As part of his intensive campaign to whip the American public into a war-acceptance and preparedness mood, William Randolph Hearst sent Knickerbocker on a tour through Europe to "get the facts" on the war-danger there. The task of this trusted lackey of the yellow press was an easy one; war is scrawled all over the face of western Europe. His series of dispatches, based on interviews with some thirty kings, dictators, ministers and generals, and

featured with daily scare-heads in the Hearst papers, have been gathered together to make this book. Knickerbocker asks, "Is war coming in Europe?" With one voice, his subjects answer piously: "We want peace; we are preparing for war." When will it come? Few believe that it "can be averted" for ten years. Many admit that it may break tomorrow. Foreign Minister Barthou of France finds it "unsafe" to predict that it won't come this year (1934). And the evidence is everywhere discernible; the world hurtles toward war at a feverish speed.

The book is replete with the brilliant inanities, glib superficialities, and slick distortions that are well-known features of Knickerbocker's reportage. It opens with a stupid non sequitur: Many predicted that war would break out when the Nazis captured control of Danzig; this did not happen; therefore "Ten million European lives [the next war's estimated toll] have been saved in this city of Danzig." Because King Boris of Bulgaria "walked almost to the door" to greet him, Knickerbocker finds justification for the paradox that "the kingdom of Bulgaria is a democracy." This on the eve of the fascist coup engineered by Boris, with thousands of workers rounded up and tortured in concentration camps! While weighing minutely the possibilities of war among the smallest Balkan states, Knickerbocker studiously avoids speculation on the ever-present danger of concerted attack on the Soviet Union, the largest country in Europe. True, he does mention in passing, the notorious Hitler-Rosenberg plan for immediate war upon, and the partition of, the Soviet Union, but he presents this as an isolated fact entirely unrelated to the European scene. Our "penetrating" reporter seems strangely blinded to Japan's military agents, who are openly scurrying about Europe in frantic efforts to line up allies for her planned war on the U.S.S.R.

Ironically enough, at the very moment when the Reich's financial collapse is emblazoned in daily headlines, we read in Knickerbocker that Germany's economic condition is steadily improving under Hitler, and we hark back to the scurrilous series on *The Red Trade Menace* of several years ago when, conversely, Knickerbocker was gleefully predicting the collapse of Soviet economy on the very eve of the successful completion of the Five Year Plan in four years!

HENRY COOPER.

Chaucer at Harvard

GEOFFREY CHAUCER AND THE DEVELOPMENT OF HIS GENIUS, by John Livingston Lowes. Houghton Mifflin. $2.50.

With his customary professorial charm and scholarship, Lowes does no more than restate the accepted facts of Chaucerian scholarship—Chaucer's activity in the world of affairs, his fluent narrative gift, his "broad" understanding of "the human comedy," and similar clichés. He traces the usual medieval influences on Chaucer, the poet's wide literary acquaintance with Latin classics, *Roman de la Rose,* Dante, Boccaccio, Petrarch, Froissart, Machaut, etc. Such data are, of course, essential to an understanding of the poet, but any critical work pretending to validity must adequately relate the poet to his social-historical epoch. Such a relation Lowes fails to establish.

Life in Chaucer's England was more than a series of jolly pilgrimages, pleasant days, and courteous knights. Actually, social forces were intensely active: witness, for example, the Wat Tyler revolt of 1381. This spontaneous reaction to objective conditions by the rural masses and the urban proletariat of apprentices and artisans historically was part of the struggle between a decaying feudal system and a rapidly expanding commercial economy. Led by Wat Tyler and John Ball, a radical preacher who had long advocated socialist doctrines, the starved masses marched through town and countryside, pillaging landlords' homes, burning manor rolls, hunting down bailiffs and justices. They converged upon London, where they sacked the palace of John of Gaunt—powerful Duke, Chaucer's patron, and hated symbol of oppression to the rebels. Confronting the young King Richard II. Tyler and his followers demanded the abolition of villeinage and the commutation of feudal dues and services. These were granted; but at a second meeting when further demands were presented (abolition of differences in rank and status, confiscation of church lands, etc.) the king's followers resisted. In the resulting dispute, William Walworth—Mayor of London, and Chaucer's friend—attacked Tyler and killed him. This broke the spirit of the rebels, who were soon mercilessly put down, their leaders hanged, their temporary concessions rescinded. But their outbreak served to hasten the downfall of the manorial system.

It is probable that Chaucer witnessed these events in London. As Controller of Customs for the Port of London during the revolt, he may have been present, along with Walworth and other merchants and officials, at the negotiations with Tyler. Yet in all his poetry there is no reflection of the turbulence of the epoch—it reflects chiefly the concerns of medieval leisure class literature (for example, his translation of Boethius, the courtly love conventions in *Troilus and Criseyde,* etc.). This makes it impossible to justify the perennial notion of Chaucer as a "realist." Even in the *Canterbury Tales* the poet is writing in a literary tradition directed solely at the entertainment of the upper classes. Thus, when "low" characters are introduced—miller, reeve, cook—they are treated in the manner of the *fabliau*: as churls, cuckolds, butts of obscene jests. Like his own character, Pandare in *Troilus and Criseyde,* Chaucer served his masters well.

And Professor Lowes, by abstracting him from the turbulence of his times, enters with Chaucer in those regions above the battle whose dwellers do nothing more significant than radiate "sanity," "good sense," etc.

ANTHONY KYE.

Speaking of the Dance

ROBERT FORSYTHE

THE charm of being a regular contributor to a magazine is that you can start by reviewing *The Thin Man* (Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer) and before the editors know what is happening you can be ending with a dissertation on the place of joy in Communistic behavior. I have had ideas on the latter subject for a long time, but my excuse for mentioning it here is Mike Gold's remarks (in the Daily Worker) on the dolefulness of the revolutionary dance groups. I am not a devotee of the dance and my sole contacts with the subject have been when dance groups have appeared as extra added attractions at evenings given over more largely to other purposes. The subjects on those occasions have been War or the Scottsboro boys or Tom Mooney and the dancers have shown the tragedy and revolutionary fortitude under torture, but I am always hopeful that one of the dancers will rise and shout (if the thing can't be done better in pantomime): "To hell with this ugly world; we're fighting with joy for a new one!" However, I hasten to add that I am not condemning the dance groups and do not want to single them out as culprits. The illustration came easily to hand and was used for that reason.

Strictly speaking, it is a great treat being a Communist. This is true because Communism is the only sane and hopeful and optimistic idea in the world. What is there left for anybody with brains and a heart.? There is the retreat to feudalism which Fascism affords. There is the pathetic clinging to a lost cause which democracy and capitalism allow. As a philosophy, as an idea, and as a concrete reality in the Soviet Union, Communism is on top of the world. It is a success, it is established, it belongs to the solid future. On that basis a Communist has every reason to assume an attitude of superiority. We must fight, we must struggle against a decaying capitalism and its brutal forces of reaction, but we need never fight with despair. Communism can't lose. It may have setbacks, it may be longer in coming than we should like, but it is in the stream of history and there is no stopping it.

From the mere standpoint of being on the inside of history, a Marxist has an immeasurable advantage over anybody else. The most recent example is the N.R.A. Even the

humblest student of Marx could foretell the outcome of that fabulous adventure. The Daily Worker and THE NEW MASSES not only predicted the collapse of the plan, but indicated the mile posts where the collapse would come. There was no mystery about it. The fact that the N.R.A. appealed to the Liberals was even more symptomatic and in a sense even more flattering to the intelligence of the Marxist. It was possible to sit back and smile at the antics of the Soules and Lippmanns and Keynes and New Republics and Nations. They talked again of socialism through evolution when even a child could see that if anything came out of the New Deal it would be Fascism. More than that, they talked of recovery through the New Deal policies when it was apparent that the only recovery would be the recovery of corporation profits at the expense of the employed worker and without fundamental relief for the unemployed. These are not things which the Communists are saying after the event, but things which they predicted in almost minute detail prior to the undertaking.

It is for this reason that I have ideas about revolutionary journalism. I may be wrong in my feeling, but I can never think of our bourgeois literary opponents, for example, in any but a pitying way. They struggle so hard, they have so little to work on, they back and fill, and charge and retreat, and it is all so hopeless from their point of view. They no longer have a philosophy to sustain them. They can't believe in democracy and capitalism any more than they can believe in tea-leaf readings. When J. Donald Adams begins to scream about Russia in the New York Times, it seems to me an excellent thing. He ceases to fool even his staunch conservative readers with his pretenses of impartiality. In a paroxysm of hatred he makes the point which we have never been able to make ourselves: that the Times book reviews are consciously partisan and vicious when they concern the Soviet Union or Communism.

As for Putzy Hanfstaengl, I know what he was over here for, I know that he represents the murderous gangsterdom of German nationalism and I could bear up manfully if something happened to him upon his return, but he is in essence a pathetic figure, running about with his tin busts hoping to gain friends for a system which cracked with a hideous noise at the very moment he was taking part in another burlesque spectacle, the Astor-French nuptials. Is there anything to envy in these Hanfstaengls and Astors? Far from being envious of them, we can afford to laugh at them. They are so infinitely puny and worthless it is almost an act of cruelty to attack them.

If we must have symbols, I don't want to see a picture of J. Pierpont Morgan sitting as a huge figure on his money bags while the masses struggle against him from below. I want to see a huge, strong, youthful figure of labor looming over a cringing little Morgan on his bags of gold. This is putting it crudely, but the second version happens to be the truth and the first ones does not.

It is going to be a fight to the death, but we have nothing to worry about; we're going to win. The others are the ones on the defensive and I want to keep them there from this time on. We happen to have reason and common sense on our side. We also have brains and courage. The thought that Communism should be snobbish is perhaps carrying the idea too far, but it is more fitting than that we should feel inferior to our enemies. Mike Gold wants the dancers to show the joy and hope of revolution. That is also what I want and I want it carried over into all our cultural activities. Capitalism is dead and you won't find even among its most highly paid prostitutes any who will defend it as a philosophic idea. The most they will say is that there is nothing better to take its place. But there is something better in Soviet Russia and there will be something a great deal better in the Soviet World. It is the job of revolutionary writers and artists not only to capitalize on that fact, but to readjust the cultural values so that Communism will assume its proper place in the scale of events, which is to say, first with all others following.

The Thin Man (Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer) is a fairly good Hollywood melodrama, with a wire-haired terrier doing the most important acting.

Historical Hash

LAST year Fox Films glorified British imperialism by making a film version of Noel Coward's *Cavalcade*. The Nationalist film critics of London raved because it took an American to make the first important British film. The Americans raved because it brought English "dignity" and Art to the local screen. It was a hit;voted the best film of the year. Fox films then commissioned Reginald Berkely, who adapted *Cavalcade,* to do for America what Coward had done for England. But Berkely isn't Noel Coward, and we have *The World Moves On:* an Aryanized *House of Rothschild;* a hopelessly confused and confusing movie, preaching lies and the usual perverted "pacifistic" sermons about imperialistic war; a film that is terribly written, badly directed, slovenly edited, and outrageously lit and photographed. In one sequence the director outdid himself. The battle scenes are graphically portrayed and intelligently directed. But John Ford, director of *The World Moves On,* didn't do them. They are lifted right out of the Pathe-Natan (French) film, *Crosses of Wood,* which Fox purchased sometime ago.

Berkely gathered together *Cavalcade, Berkely Square, Power and the Glory, Four Sons,* and "married" them. Thus the new film is a potpourri of human and American history: Love, Hate, Religion, War, Peace, Industrialization, High Finance, Depression, Rearmament, and Brotherly Love.

The story follows the general line laid down by *Cavalcade:* it traces the history of an Anglo-American family from 1825 to the present time. By the outbreak of the World War the Girard-Washburtons have spread their cotton business through America, England, France, and Germany. In order to stress the "futility" of war a German cousin sinks the liner which carries his American and British uncles. They are immediately avenged by the British navy. Later on Mary Warburton (English) refuses to manufacture munitions in her textile factory. Her cousin Richard Girard (American) refuses to marry her. But in the nick of time the British confiscate the factory and make their own gunpowder. Later Mary and Richard become wealthy and they are happy. (*Power and the Glory.*) With the crash they Lose All. There follows the last meeting of the members of the Family. The meeting decides that the war was useless, but that only another war will bring back prosperity. Mary delivers a passionate plea (as a future mother) for brotherly love. This is broken into by a newsreel compilation purporting to show how all the world: (Hitler, Mussolini, Stalin, France, United States and Britain) is re-arming for another war. Finally Richard and Mary go back to their "simple" family home in New Orleans to start all over again. The film ends with a close up of the Cross (as it began) and a prayer on Mary's lips.

IRVING LERNER.

Between Ourselves

FR. LESCHANI, whose engraving, "U. S. S. R." appears on page 7, is one of several hundred members of the Austrian Socialist Schutzbund who went in two contingents to the Soviet Union, after the civil war in Austria last February, to work and help build Socialism. This engraving, symbolizing the union of peoples in the Socialist Republic, and the growth of industry, agriculture, science and the arts, was made in celebration of the eleventh anniversary of the constitution of the U. S. S. R., July 6.

The cover design this week is by Mackey.

Albert Maltz, co-author with George Sklar of *Peace on Earth,* has been traveling through the drought area as part of an extensive trip of investigation of conditions generally.

Joshua Kunitz's next article will deal with the formation of the R. A. P. P. (Russian Association of Proletarian Writers).

Joseph Kalar, of the middle-western group of revolutionary writers, was one of the four poets represented in *We Gather Strength.*

Tom Johnson writes from long experience as an organizer in the South.

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