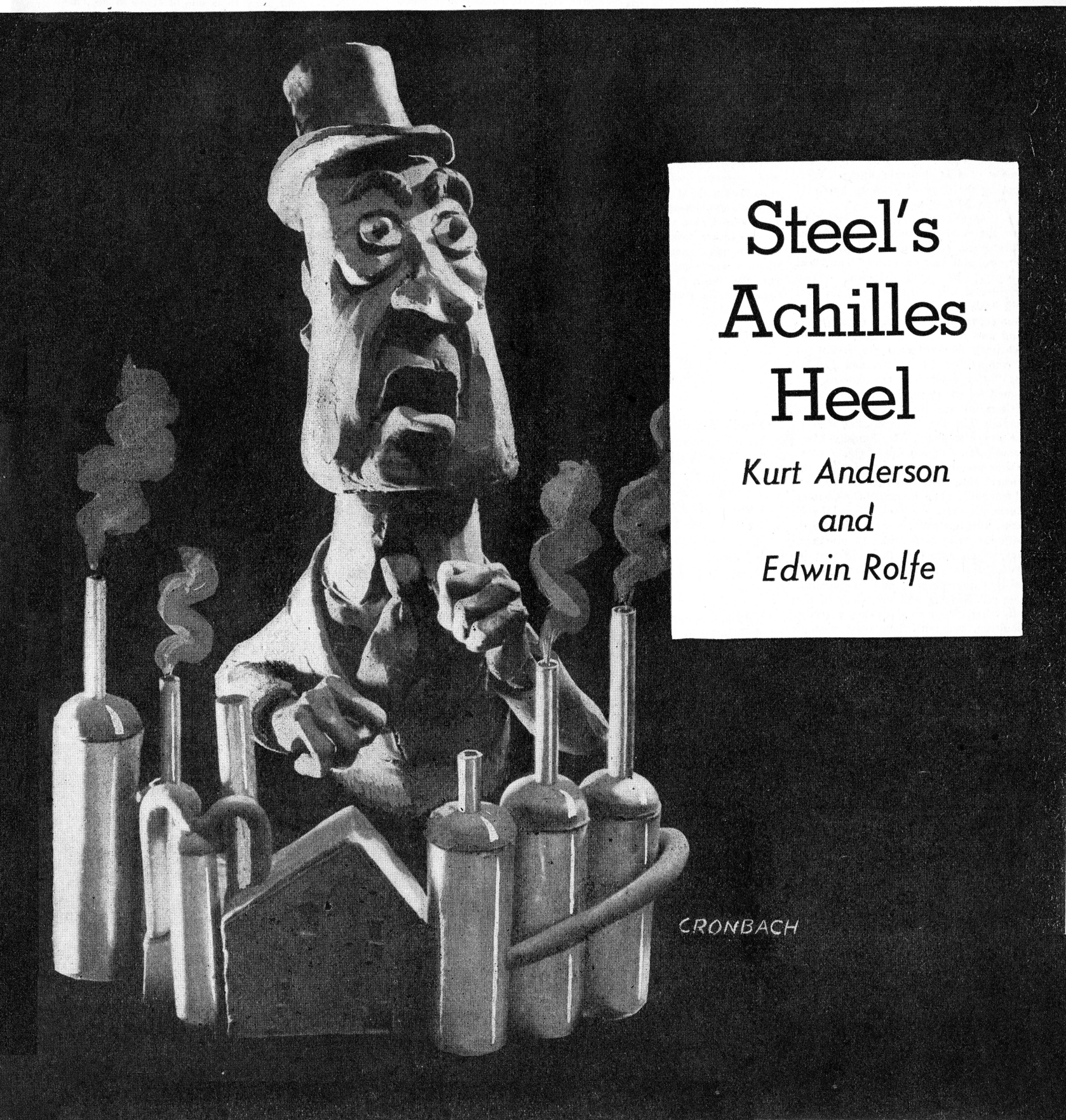
WAILING WALL STREETERS
Robert Forsythe

THE REDWOOD MURDER
John Mullen

NEW MASSES

MARCH 16, 1937 FIFTEEN CENTS A COPY



Steel's Achilles Heel

Kurt Anderson and Edwin Rolfe

BETWEEN OURSELVES

NEXT week we will begin a historic series—the story of John L. Lewis. The beetle-browed, truculent helmsman of the C.I.O. has had a career which has been highly picturesque, to say the least. There have been periods when other adjectives have been freely used. There was a period when his present right-hand man, John Brophy, and Lewis were thundering broadsides against each other. There have been periods during Lewis's captaincy of the United Mine Workers when that union was losing membership by the scores of thousands. Through a generation, John L. Lewis has been a storm center, and the storm today is the class warfare between labor and capital over the division of the fruits of labor's toil. This is an epic struggle, and at its center is a man who through sheer force of personality and recognition of the significance of the struggle he is leading, stands head and shoulders above most of his contemporaries in the American trade-union movement. Bruce Minton and John Stuart have told the whole stirring story in their profile of this dynamic figure. Start reading the story of John L. Lewis in the NEW MASSES next week.

We mentioned something last time on the hands-across-the-sea theme. This week comes a variation. The very popular cartoon series "Unnatural History," by John Mackey, which brightened our pages during the fall and early winter months, has had its counterpart in the British *New Statesman and Nation,* which in its issue of February 20 published the results of a competition set by Norman Collins for "brief zoölogical descriptions, designed for the popular enlightenment of visitors, of any three of the following exhibits [in the "Westminster Zoo"]: the prime minister, Mr. Ramsay Macdonald, Mr. Anthony Eden," etc. A competitor pseudonymously styled "Towanbucket" submitted this item on Ramsay Macdonald: "The Jrammac (or Greater Turncoat): One the Zoo's oldest inhabitants, this melancholy pale pink bird, with the hairy beak and dull plumage, was, when added to the collection in 1906, bright red in color and rather noisily quarrelsome and dissatisfied. The red feathers and the whole of the left wing disappeared during a recent moulting, and with them went most of the bird's wild temperament. The Jrammac is now only occasionally peevish, and accepts meekly whatever food is left in the cabinet. Curiously shy of his own kind, he appears to prefer the society of the Golden Oofbird. He flies in wide, rhetorical circles, always returning to the same spot, a habit due, perhaps, to the loss

of his left wing. His favorite food is flapdoodle, which he regurgitates. . . ."

Speaking of birds who have turned reactionary, there is a small warning which NEW MASSES readers in and around New York should take to heart. At the Filmarte Theater there is being shown a compilation of news-photo clips under the title *Tsar to Lenin,* arranged and with running comment by Max Eastman. This film is a vicious distortion of history, and the distortions which it indulges in are of the sort calculated to defame the Soviet government and its leading figures, and to play up as heroes of history Trotsky and others of those who recently confessed to treason against the first workers' republic. The film is so edited as virtually to eclipse the role of the masses in the October Revolution. The Filmarte management has persisted in bringing out this picture despite growing mass protest—a protest which pointed out that there could be no objection to the pictures themselves except perhaps on the ground of their incompleteness, but that when edited and with commentary by Max Eastman, they could not be anything but consciously anti-Soviet. The Filmarte has decided to go ahead with the showing, apparently on the theory that anti-Soviet elements will support it well enough to make it good business in spite of working-class opposition. Friends of the Soviet Union will know how to act in the future toward the Filmarte so that its management learns, as other pictures are shown, that in the long run the business gamble it took in showing this reactionary film was a bad one. Showing this film is an affront to the devotees of peace and freedom which will not be lightly forgiven or soon forgotten.

In connection with Trotskyism, Editor Joseph Freeman had a chance, while he was in Mexico, to observe the treatment accorded there to the man who has called for the forceful overthrow of the Soviet government. Freeman's story of Trotsky in Mexico will appear in the NEW MASSES next week.

Reverting to the question of reader support of theatrical ventures, a good way of driving the lesson home to the reactionaries is not merely by abstention where a reactionary offering is on view, but definite support where a progressive program is to be seen. In this connection, we should like to relay the comment of Contributor George Sklar to the effect that the Theatre Union needs strong support now if it is to be able to make a long season of it. Those of you who have been planning to see *Marching Song* some time soon, therefore, can make it possible for a great many more to see it than otherwise might, if you go now. And seeing *Marching Song* is one of the most successful ways we know of combining social duty with private pleasure.

THIS WEEK

March 16, 1937

VOL. XXII, NO. 12

Art work by Robert Cronbach (cover), Arthur Getz, A. Ajay, Louis Lozowick, Bertrando Valloton, Hans, Jacob Burck, Soriano, Gardner Rea, Aimé, Marty, Gus Bundy, Gropper, Frank Davidson, Dan Rico, Theodore Scheel.

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

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Who's Who

KURT ANDERSON, who makes his NEW MASSES debut with this issue, is a graduate student in economics at the University of Pittsburgh. He is responsible for the material on U. S. Steel's profits and wages. His collaborator, Edwin Rolfe, is labor editor of NEW MASSES. . . . Ruth McKenny, who did the memoir of Ben Leider at the request of the editors, was formerly a co-worker of Leider on the staff of the New York *Post.* . . . John Mullen has contributed before to our pages, on matters in the field of trade unionism. . . . The drawing by William Gropper on page 16 is one of those in his current one-man show on the Spanish civil war at the A.C.A. Gallery in New York. . . . Herbert Rosenblum is a student and translator of French literature and history. . . . Erskine Caldwell is the author of *Tobacco Road, God's Little Acre,* and *Kneel to the Rising Sun.* He has written an introduction to a forthcoming volume of short stories by Contributor Ben Field entitled *The Cock's Funeral.*

What's What

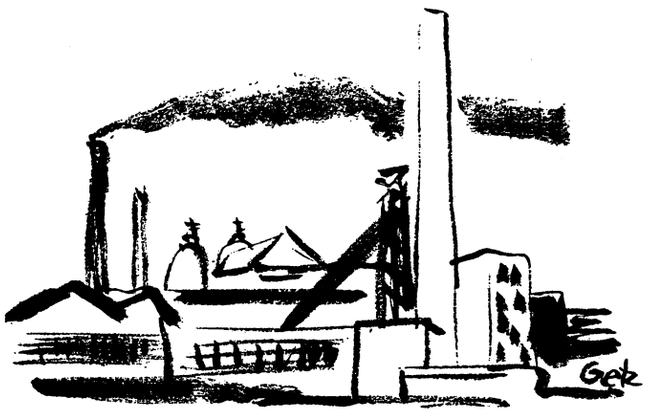
HERE'S something to paste in your hat: "The library at the University of Kentucky will put every paper and periodical in the reading room that is sent them. At the present time, they are carrying the *Nation* and the *New Republic,* but loads of reactionary stuff to offset even that. If we were financially able, we would pay for a sub to the NEW MASSES for the library, but since we are flat broke, don't you think . . . ?" Other letters from other readers show that there are many such instances of libraries too strapped to subscribe to NEW MASSES, or unable to get authorization to subscribe, which would gladly stock it if it were sent by someone interested enough. So . . .

Flashbacks

"LOWER your guns and turn against the common enemy who deprives you of light and air," pleaded true socialist Karl Liebknecht, addressing the Prussian Diet in 1916, on March 16. That day nineteen years later, Brown-shirted Fanatic Number One menaced the peace of the world, announcing, "Germany will rearm!" . . . In place of the imperial czar was soon to be the Soviet star, many foresaw, when the Little White Father ab-

dicated March 15, 1917. . . . Sun Yatsen, hero of China's labor and liberation movements, died March 12, 1925. . . . The first opposition to bourgeois society which workers engaged in as a class, began in Nottingham, England, with the Luddite (machine-destroying) movement, March 11, 1811. . . . "On March 14 at a quarter to three in the afternoon, the greatest of living thinkers ceased to think. He had been left alone for barely two minutes; but when we entered his room we found that, seated in his chair, he had quietly gone to sleep—forever." Thus Friedrich Engels described the death, in 1883, of Karl Marx.

NEW MASSES
MARCH 16, 1937



Arthur Getz

Steel's Achilles Heel

The toppling of one of the biggest firms before the C.I.O. drive is significant of an unstable equilibrium traceable to the profit sheet

By Kurt Anderson and Edwin Rolfe

"THE steel industry will be unionized," Mr. Wattles, the neighborhood labor expert, used to say, "when hair begins to grow in the palm of my hand." Mr. Wattles would reinforce his prophecy by citing Homestead and the 1919 steel strike. "Even though," he would add, "1919 won the basic eight-hour day. But that," and his head would shake sadly, "was just a cup of rice."

Mr. Wattles is no longer with us. For all we know he may be fumbling over his heavenly rice bowl, his motion impeded by the new growth in the flat of his hands. But the steel industry, about which he used to theorize and prophesy so sagely, is no longer the ferocious lion of Mr. Wattles's day. The taming process has begun.

At that, Mr. Wattles was essentially correct in his estimate of the steel trust's strength. It was and is America's greatest industrial corporation, employing half a million workers. It had the power, the money, the arsenals, the spies and thugs, with which to scuttle any semblance of labor organization for fifty years. Even John L. Lewis, leader of the C.I.O., described steel in his characteristic rhetoric as "a crouching lion in the pathway of labor." This was only three weeks ago. But, heartened by the triumph of industrial unionism in the General Motors strike, Lewis turned from rhetoric to subtle and effective challenge, declaring: "I hope that the U.S. Steel Corporation will approach the problem of union recognition in a rational and constructive way. I do not know what they will do. I know what they said they would do last July in their full-page advertisements. I do not know if their fingers were crossed then. I am willing to learn."

Lewis did learn, and so, evidently, did the steel barons. Less than a month after the United Automobile Workers won union recognition and a wage increase for labor in auto, the largest U.S. Steel subsidiary—the Carnegie-Illinois Steel Co., employing 120,000 men—has signed on the dotted line with the Steel Workers' Organizing Committee (S.W.O.C.). The terms of this agreement provide for a forty-hour week and time and a half for overtime. A new wage increase has been secured, the second since last November, when the giant corporation announced a pay rise in order to stem the gathering strength of the S.W.O.C. and in order to save its own crumbling company unions. The largest and most powerful steel plant in the world, which, just six months ago, was so arrogant in its opposition to genuine workers' organization, has been forced to grant recognition to the S.W.O.C. as the bargaining agent for all the workers in its huge plants. As in the General Motors settlement, the face-saving statement was made that the union was recognized as "the collective-bargaining agency for those employees of the corporation who are members of the Amalgamated Association of Iron, Steel, & Tin Workers (A.A.)." In the light of the generally improved conditions, however, this agreement constitutes *de facto* recognition of the union as the representative of all the workers in the industry.

The present agreement, which destroys in all but name the dwindling and insignificant role of the Carnegie-Illinois puppet company union, covers an entire year. Between now and February 28, 1938, however, negotiations will be in progress to establish a solid basis for future contracts. The machinery for such negotiations is provided for in the present agreement itself.

This agreement, and the creation of means whereby future negotiations may be pursued, is the greatest labor victory of 1937, which seems to be destined to go down in American labor history as a year of unparalleled triumphs for the working people. It is the third solid victory in the field of our basic industries. The first was the successful West Coast maritime strike; the second achieved its major objectives and opened a wedge for industrial unionism in the entire auto industry. But the triumph in steel, which for half a century has fought the closed shop and union recognition with murderous methods unrivaled in this country, is without doubt the most significant triumph of all.

DESPITE this victory over Carnegie-Illinois, labor's fight in steel has just begun. The S.W.O.C. has, within the remarkably short time of a year, rallied 200,000 steel workers under its industrial unionism banner. Another 300,000 remain to be won over, but the initial success is expected to accelerate the process considerably. With the fear of company intimidation removed, with hundreds of capable organizers active in the entire field, the time will soon be ripe for a national steel workers' convention, which in turn will add impetus to the organizational drive.

What the steel workers won in the Car-

negie-Illinois agreement was more than the right to bargain collectively, more than the reduced hours and increased wages. It was the right and the conviction that it can go ahead to greater successes, to the battles that will be waged in the next few years for still higher wages, for its right to an adequate share in the enormous profits that United States Steel has amassed in the last twenty years.

Examining the corporation's own figures on profits, we find certain years in which they were exceptionally large. During the war, for instance, huge windfalls came its way. The Federal Trade Commission found earnings on bonds and stocks for the years 1916 to 1918 to be as follows:

1916	$361,000,000
1917	538,000,000
1918	493,000,000

The size of these earnings can perhaps best be grasped by noting that had they been divided among the average number of employees for each year, each worker would have received, in addition to wages, the following amounts:

U.S. Steel's Earnings Per Employee	*Average Wage*
1916 $1,427	$1,042
1917 2,007	1,296
1918 1,833	1,685

During the twenties, earnings were also large. In 1929, for example, net earnings were $260,000,000. Had this sum been divided among the workers, each would have received $1,156 in addition to his regular wages. In other words, this would have made up the difference between a living wage and a bare subsistence and often a sub-subsistence wage.

Now let us examine the profits of the corporation for two periods: the years 1902 to 1929 (the prosperous years) and the years 1902 to 1935 (which cover the entire history of the corporation, including the depression period.) From 1902 to 1929, the steel bosses chalked up a profit of $4,326,000,000. From 1902 to 1935, the additional profits boosted this figure to $4,600,000,000. Even on the basis of these figures, which are conservative, since they do not include billions of dollars of profits lost in the steel trust's own double-bookkeeping and accounting system, the enormity of U.S. Steel's exploitation of labor is fully indicated. Even during the depression period, according to these figures, the corporation piled up profits of $274,000,000. And again we should emphasize the conservative nature of these figures; capitalism's profit system has always been a double-dealer in its calculations of earnings, and labor has always been the victim of this two-faced system.

To show how great has been the fleecing of steel workers during the history of U.S. Steel, we need merely cite the following figures on average wages for steel employees throughout the corporation's history:

1916	$1,042
1917	1,296
1918	1,685
1919	1,902
1920	2,175
1921	1,737
1922	1,501
1923	1,800
1924	1,793
1925	1,828
1926	1,846
1927	1,860
1928	1,866
1929	1,867

Now, these figures do not tell the whole story, for the situation is even worse than they indicate, even during the so-called years of prosperity in steel. For many workers earned far less than the average (in which are included the exorbitant salaries of high-priced executives). And this in the period when all workers were supposed to be wearing silk shirts!

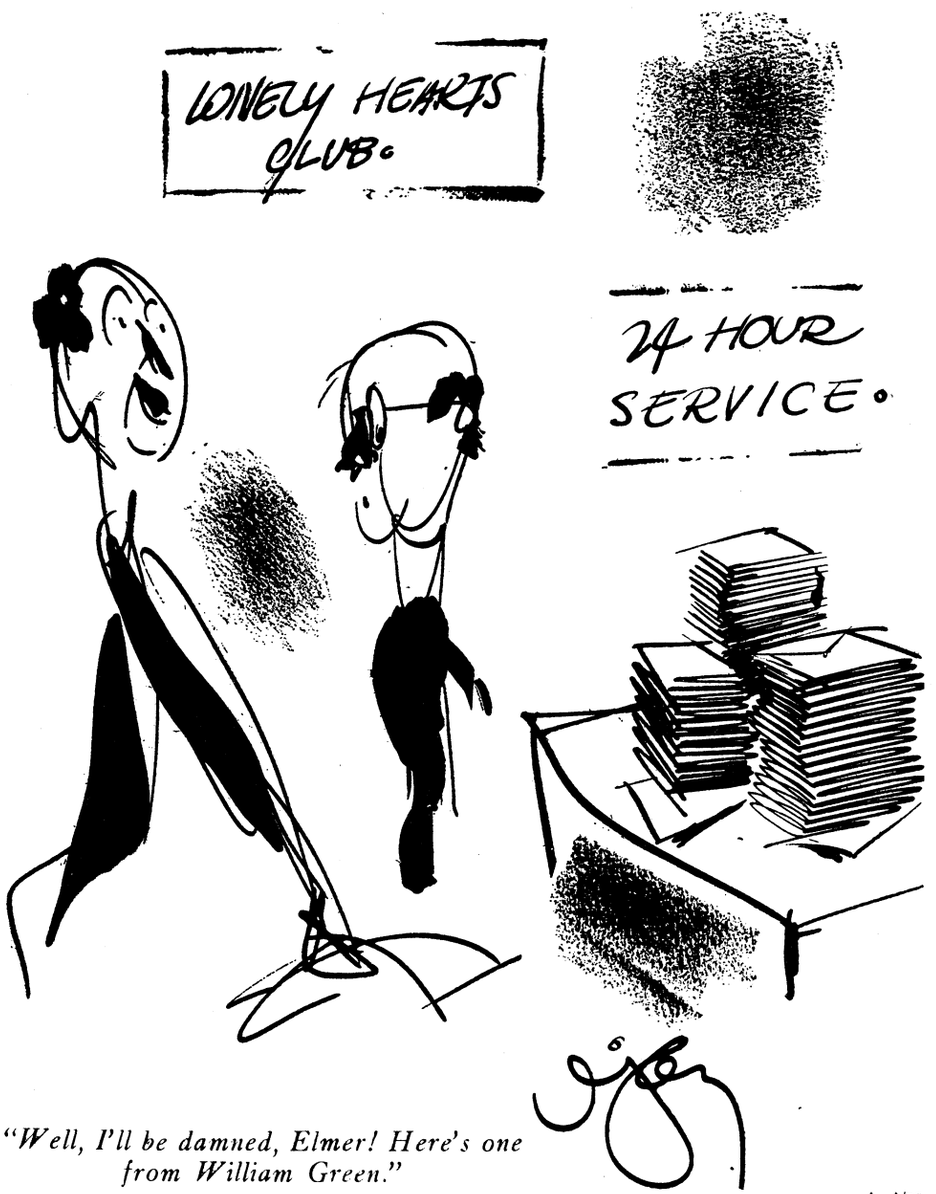
From 1930 to 1935, the wages dropped disastrously, as the following figures show:

1930	$1,854
1931	1,310
1932	847
1933	945
1934	1,109
1935	1,292

Here, too, the figures include many enormous executive salaries.

Many employed workers (and we must not for a moment forget the widespread joblessness in steel, as in other industries, during the last six years) suffered much more than the above figures indicate. The magazine *Fortune* reported a study of the wages of 160 unskilled workers of the Duquesne mill for 1935. Six employees received less than $100 and forty-seven less than $300, with an average wage for all of $368. Harvey O'Connor found that 134 men in the same mill averaged $423 in 1934, with about 43 percent of these getting between $200 and $400 for the year. And these figures show only the tragedy of the employed workers. Many other workers lost their jobs completely.

Recognition of this state of affairs in steel spurred the militant S.W.O.C. to the efforts



"Well, I'll be damned, Elmer! Here's one from William Green."

A. Alzy

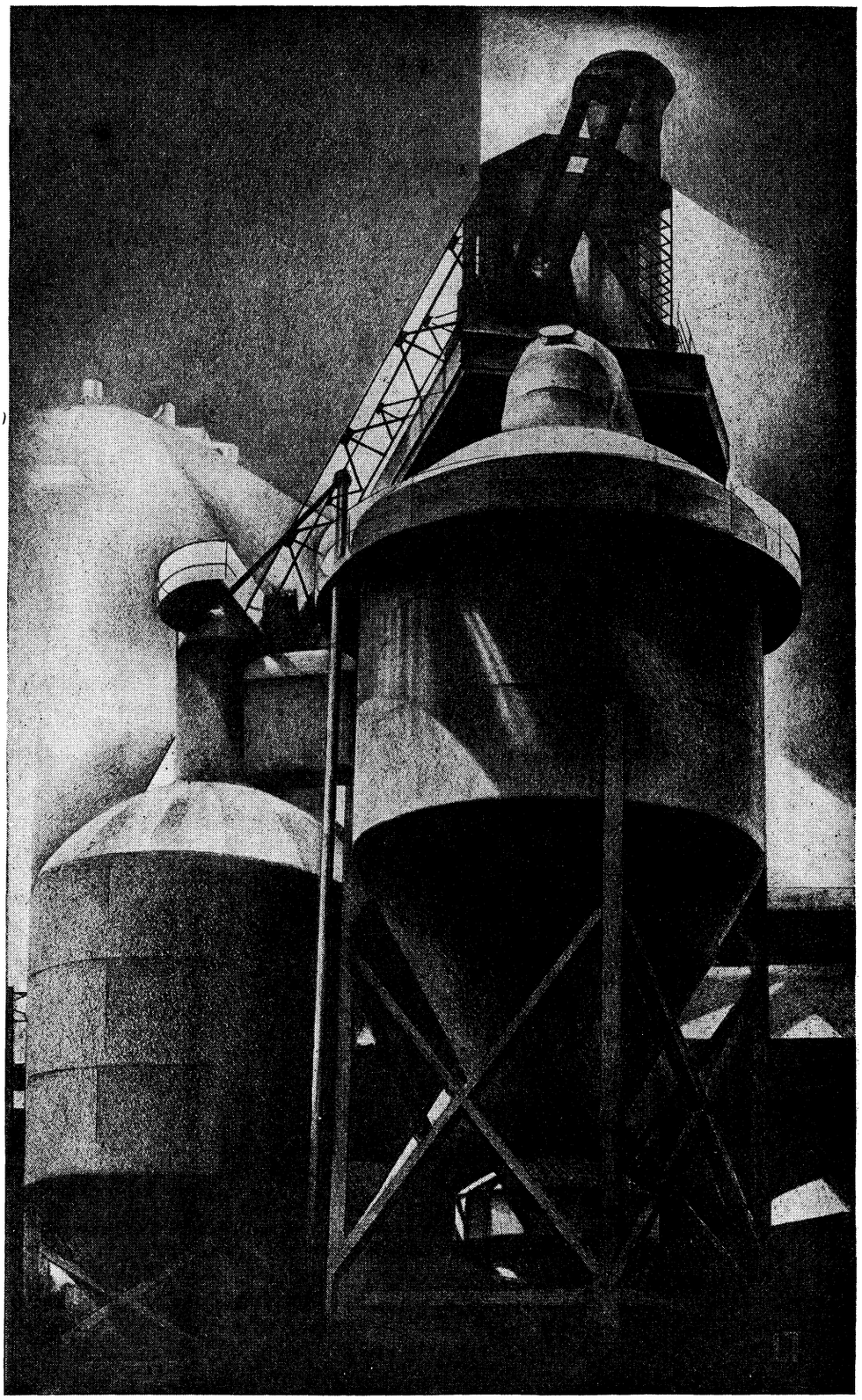
which enabled it to organize 200,000 men in this hitherto open shop industry. The success of this drive, coupled with the collapse of the company unions in the face of the C.I.O.'s effective organizational tactics, were among the major causes of the steel workers' victory. The tremendous profits of the steel industry, cited in the figures above, stirred widespread resentment among the masses of workers who felt cheated out of their just share of these profits—their right to a decent standard of living. This, too, was instrumental in forging the victory. And, finally, the insistence of labor generally that President Roosevelt carry out his pre-election promises—the right to organization and collective bargaining—helped considerably.

That the prestige of the C.I.O. has been tremendously strengthened and extended by the steel pact is unquestionable. The "crouching lion" has been forced to give way before the lion-tamer. Not only to John L. Lewis and his aides, but to the hundreds of rank-and-file organizers in the field must go the credit for this victory. Essentially, however, the achievement is a tribute to the persistence of those forces in this country working for industrial unionism today, and to those who for years have fought for such organization in the face of the powerful opposition of the old-line American Federation of Labor leaders. Steel would never have capitulated before the weak and divided unionism of William Green and his cronies, whose class-collaboration policies have been disastrous for American labor.

The way is opened now not only for the continuation of the drive in steel—the emergence of the Amalgamated Association of Iron, Steel, & Tin Workers as a power capable of holding its own in its battle with the steel trust—but also, and what is more important, for the unionization of the vast majority of America's unorganized labor body. The point stressed by William Z. Foster, leader of the 1919 steel strike, the necessity for a unified command and the organizational and ideological solidarity of all workers involved, has been solidly proved to be effective, not only in an actual strike, but in the pre-strike offensive when the power of labor is crystallized for battle. The C.I.O., specifically the Steel Workers' Organizing Committee, was fortified by the fact that all elements and races among the workers were united: the Negro Conference for the Organization of Steel Workers prevented the recurrence of the artificial racial divisions fomented by the steel trust in 1919.

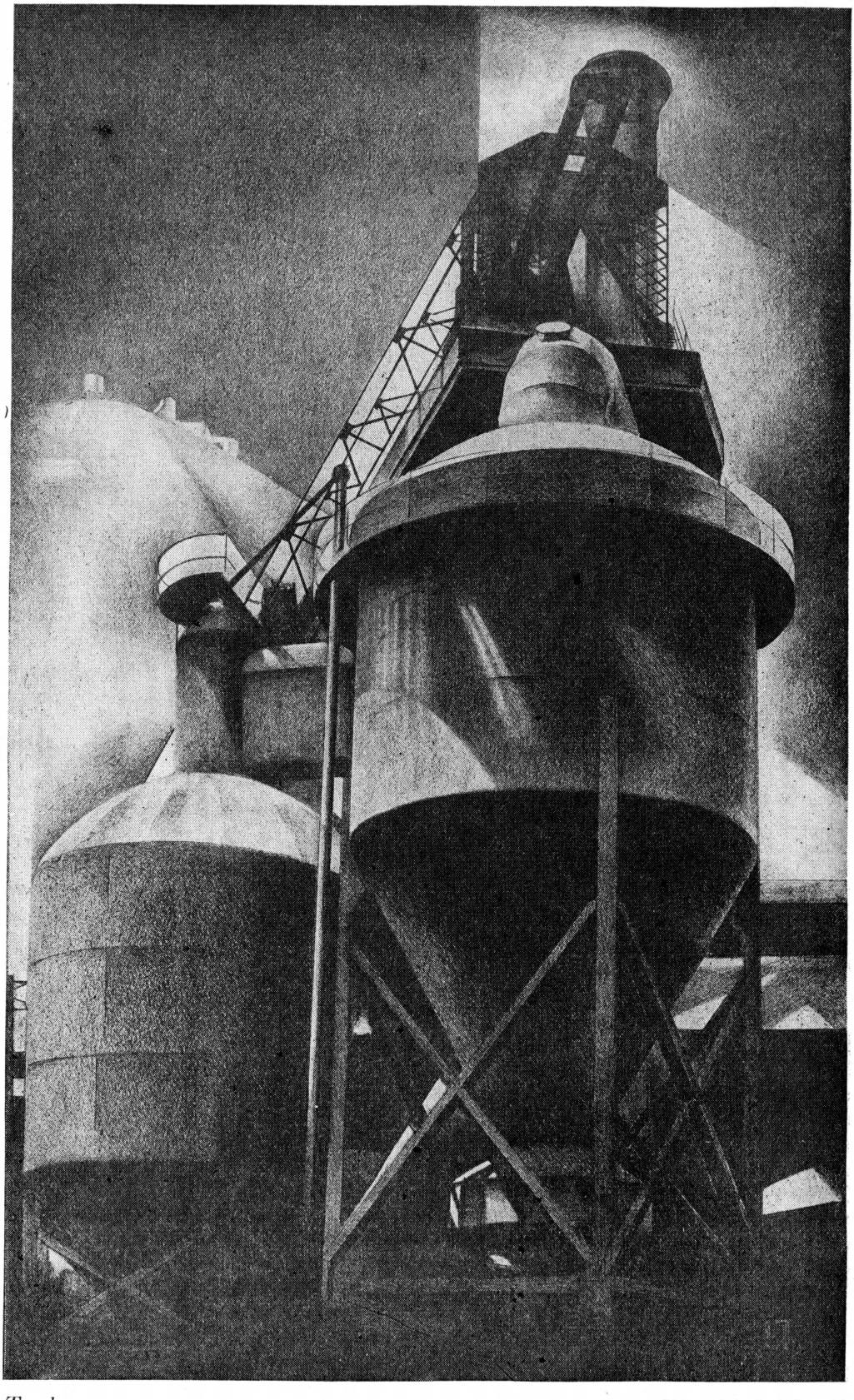
The future of organization in the steel industry is now assured, but the utmost courage and unity will have to be exerted to prevent anti-labor elements, both in the government and in big business generally, from attempting to steal labor's new gains. Steel was forced to capitulate this time, not only because of labor's strength but because it did not want to jeopardize its continued profits. With steel mills throughout the country operating at 85 percent of capacity, a strike at this time would have cut its sources of profit. It was in defense of these profits, as well as in enforced and inevitable deference to steel labor's strength, that Carnegie-Illinois signed its agreement with the S.W.O.C. Unless the unionization of steel workers gains in scope and power during the coming twelve months, it may try to pull its classic double-cross, with its equally classic variations. Labor should prepare for this by organizing the unorganized workers everywhere, to better the conditions of these workers, and thus remove any possible labor sources that the steel corporation may seek in attempting to fight future battles against organization.

Meanwhile, as the hair continues to grow profusely in Mr. Wattle's palms, the first great encounter with the steel trust is won; and the danger to guard against is the old menace, beloved by advertising copy writers the country over, of falling hair. For the palm may be no less subject to dandruff than the pate.



Tanks

Lithograph by Louis Lozowick



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Lithograph by Louis Lozowick

In Memoriam, Ben Leider

The newspaperman-aviator who recently died in Spain left a heritage of which we can be proud

By Ruth McKenny

BEN LEIDER, my friend, is dead. He was an American aviator, killed in action, fighting for the freedom of Spain and of the world.

I do not like people who parade their private sorrows before the world, asking strangers to mourn their dead. But Ben's death is no private wound to lick in some dark corner. His death is your sorrow, as it is mine.

Ben died last month, shot down by some German or Italian plane. He must have died, as aviators do, in a blinding glare of fire, and with the whine of his falling plane and the sickening sound of the crash as his requiem. I hope that his death was sudden: only a sharp report, only a few minutes of the terrible fall through space, and then blackness. But even if he died in a single moment, there was still time for an agony of regret, a lifetime of fear.

I knew Ben Leider—and what pain to write of him now in the past tense—and I am absolutely certain that even in those last moments, even when the earth rushed up at him like a giant's brutal hand, to crush and kill him, even when he knew that his life was all but over, that even then he had no fear and no regret. I know, as I can spell my name or tell you my address, that Ben was proud to die for the freedom of working people everywhere.

This Ben Leider who died last month in Spain—it should be easy for me to tell you about him. He was a very simple person, not pretentious, not sophisticated. It should be easy, but the pain and the loneliness left by his death keep getting in the way of the words.

Only two things in life mattered to Ben. The first was the Communist Party and the other was flying. He never separated the two. He was absolutely certain that one day he would use his aviator's skill to fight for working people. Yet—and this will seem strange to those who know their newspapermen from the movies—Ben was a talented and capable New York reporter. But even among his own kind, the newspapermen, Ben was very quiet, shy, almost lonely. His face, dark and rather handsome, was customarily grave, his black eyes ordinarily bitter and stern.

But for those few who finally had the rare fortune to call this man a friend, the silence dissolved into eager talk, the grave eyes lighted with fire from the heart. We learned to know Ben through working with him in the Newspaper Guild. Although he wanted every spare moment to be at the airport with his little plane—the plane he bought from going without lunches, with painful savings from a reporter's salary—he worked faithfully night after night for his union.

Bertrando Valloton

Ben Leider

Once we walked through the quiet Greenwich Village streets together after one of the endless meetings. We were tired and at first we walked silently. Then suddenly he began to talk—in the beginning casually, and then bitterly and fiercely.

"Listen," he muttered, "I'm not such a great talker as some of you guys, and I don't say so much. But listen, I couldn't sleep nights thinking about kids in this country not eating regular, thinking about what Hitler has done to the poor little guys in Germany, even if I weren't a Communist."

I said, "Yes," looking at the pavement, feeling a little embarrassed. Now Ben stopped still, and you could see his fists clenched in his pockets.

"My mother damned near killed herself working so her kids could have schoolbooks and get an education," Ben said, and his voice was almost a growl it was so bitter; "and I'm not one of those guys who forget where they came from when they get some middle-class job and start eating regular."

He scowled. "Listen, I know about poor people; Jesus, how I know. And how it burns me up, what the big guys do to them."

We stood still there in the quiet street. A cab went by, going fast, and you could hear its radio blaring some cheap, sad tune as it went down Seventh Avenue.

Finally Ben spoke again, his voice rasping with the difficulty of saying the words. "Look, I ain't hot on dying; I got too many things to do. I got a way of taking pictures from the air worked out that I figure will help the boys over in the Soviet Union, and a lot of other things. But I ain't kidding myself. You take your chances even flying the mail, and dodging machine-gun bullets in an airplane is no way to live to a ripe old age."

"Ben, Ben," I said looking away in a sudden feeling of sorrow.

"I want to do it," he answered fiercely. He paused, and his voice turned tender and sweet. "Jesus, I never cover a story in Williamsburg or walk down Catherine Street, without watching the dirty, hungry little kids. I look at 'em and I think, 'never mind, you kids, never mind, we'll fix it up for you.' And we will, too, by God!" He turned and looked directly at me. "You think it isn't worth dying for?" he asked.

So Ben is dead now, before he told the boys in the Soviet Union about the way he had of taking pictures from the air. He is dead, and he was only thirty-six years old. He was a young man, and his life had been difficult and hard. He is dead, and my little brother Jack who is just fourteen, cried last night, when I told him that his friend, Ben Leider, had been killed in Spain.

I never knew a man who was so tender and gay with children as Ben. I took Jack out to Roosevelt Field one day last summer for his first airplane ride. Jack was so excited, when the great moment came, that he had to screw up his freckled snub nose to keep the nervous tears from his shining blue eyes. Jack wants to be an aviator, you see, and all his life he had been waiting to really meet one. Ben took one look at my shy, nervous little brother, and then his own dark, grave face was lighted by a smile from the heart.

"Hi, Jack," he said, very casually, as one aviator hails another, "give me a hand with checking the old crate over, will you?"

"Gee," my brother said, and Ben smiled and put his arm around the boy's shoulder. So Ben is dead now, before he had a son, and he loved children. He is dead, and his thin face, that I remember best lighted by a sudden brief smile, is destroyed. His death makes his friends who truly loved this silent, quiet man, full of loneliness.

Ben hated fascism, hated it darkly and fiercely. So of course Ben went to Spain. Naturally.

Ben would have hated the tears we cannot help but shed for him. The only epitaph he wanted was someone to take his place. He believed, as I believe, that the Spanish struggle for freedom is a life and death fight for world democracy. He died for it. Now what will you do for Spain? What will you, who still live, while Ben lies dead, what will you do to make sure that fascism does not pass?

Wailing Wall Streeters

Don't look now, dear reader, but isn't that a crocodile?

By Robert Forsythe

THE saddest men I've seen lately are capitalists worried about the failure of socialism in Russia. They are really taking on. Whenever I see a man approaching with a look of distress on his face, I know he has just come out of the Union League Club where they have been discussing the matter. There are a lot of sad hearts in this town.

My most recent encounter was with the owner of a shirt factory who was in my class in college and has never before given any indication of his feelings. The fact that he is on a committee fighting the Wagner Labor Bill probably misled me, and I had doubtless been too greatly influenced by a strike at his plant last summer when the police used gas bombs on the picket line. He started nodding his head sadly even before I got close to him.

"I suppose you've read that article?" he said before I could even say hello.

"What article?"

"That article by Max Eastman about socialism being a failure in Russia," he said, and a slight clutch got me at the throat, because I could see there were tears in his eyes.

I said I had read the article.

"Well, isn't it terrible?" he said. "I was talking with Mr. Anderson of the First National. . . . You know, a lot of people have read that article."

"And they all feel badly?"

"Well, from what Max Eastman says, it looks like the jig is up over there. Under that Stay-lin fellow, they're going right back to capitalism. I guess it just shows about human nature. You can monkey with a man just so much."

"Oh, there have always been fears like that," I said. "Back in 1923 they were saying the same thing about the N.E.P."

He looked at me suspiciously.

"Did Max Eastman say it?" he demanded.

"No, but practically everybody else did," I said weakly.

"Well, when Max Eastman says it, it means something. You got to admit that, don't you? He's a Communist himself. A big Communist. One of the high-up guys. I guess they just couldn't pull it off over there."

I started to say something, but he was ahead of me.

"If you work hard over there, you get a lot of dough; if you don't work hard, you don't get any dough; that's what Eastman says," he continued. "Working guys have cars, just like here, he says. Things are just the same. It's a failure. Won't work."

"I should think that would make you pretty happy," I said.

"Eh?" he said. "What? Oh, sure. . . . But it ain't working."

"On that basis I guess you'll be pretty friendly with Stalin from now on," I suggested.

"Friendly?" he said. "Say-y, he's a Red. It's all right to read an article. . . . Besides, Max Eastman don't like him. Says he's no good."

"But if he's a capitalist, why do you worry? There must be a lot of capitalists you don't like but still you're friendly with them."

"Stop your kidding," said my friend. "The sooner all those guys go back where they come from, the better it pleases me. This ain't no place for those foreign doctrines. I got a couple of those birds working in my place, and they raise more hell than all the rest combined. Always belly-aching and telling how swell things are over in Russia."

"You ought to encourage fellows like that," I said. "It's obvious from what's happened in Russia that they're just potential capitalists . . . the sort of men you could develop."

"All right, all right," he said. "Kid me. Go ahead. But you read Max Eastman; that's all I got to say to you. Things are going to hell over there. They started out having socialism and now they ain't got socialism. It's that Stay-lin. You read what Max Eastman says. It was in some magazine. You can find it."

When I left him, I gathered the impression that his life had been changed by Mr. Eastman and would never be so carefree and happy again. He admitted that business was good in shirts, but he couldn't get his mind off Russia. Socialism was a failure, a high-up guy like Max Eastman said so, and he was depressed about it. There was only one time when I got him stirred up to a normal pitch.

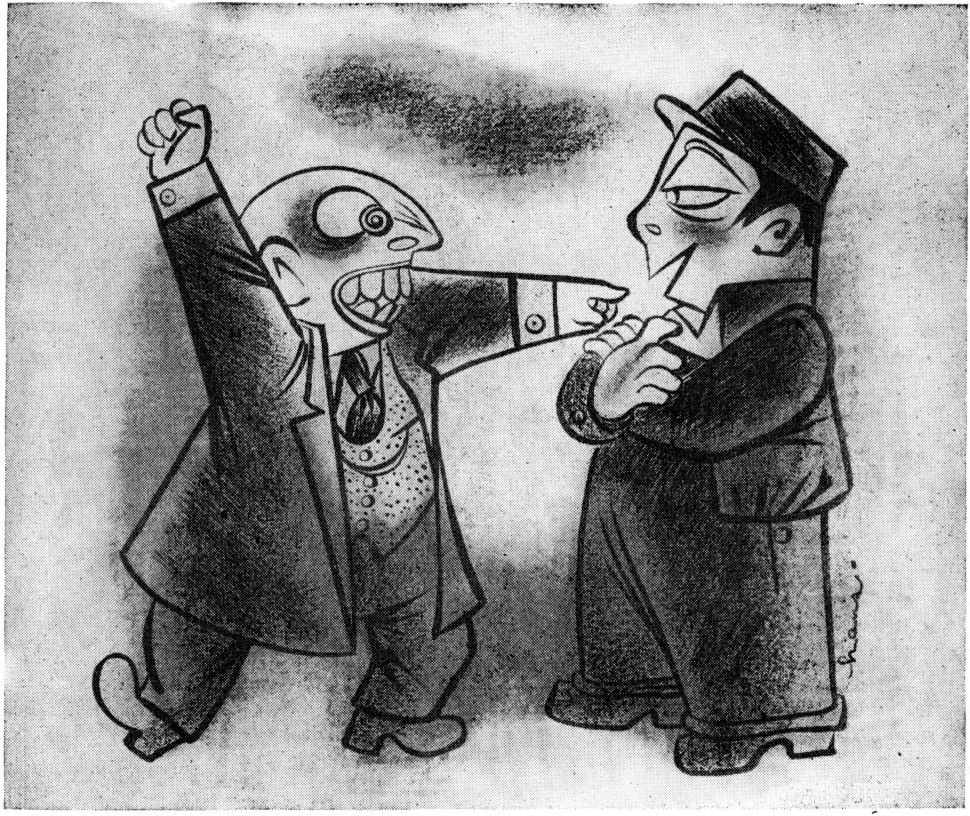
"I suppose you were shocked by that part of the Eastman article which told about a man in Russia who had made so much money he could order an expensive American car shipped in. A lot of people didn't believe that, among other things."

"Why wouldn't he have an American car shipped in!" my friend flared up. "Where could he get a better car than an American car!"

It seems there are bankers, brokers, industrialists, reactionaries all over the world depressed about the failure of socialism in Russia. As I think about it my heart aches. I never thought they cared.

Hans

"You'll appreciate me if you ever get a guy like Stalin for a boss!"



Hans

"You'll appreciate me if you ever get a guy like Stalin for a boss!"

Jacob Burck

DAY DREAM

"War to Stop C.I.O. Led by Green"—Headline.

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DAY DREAM

"War to Stop C.I.O. Led by Green"—Headline.

Covering the News

Covering the events of the week ending March 8

FOR the first time since the historic Homestead strike of 1892, representatives of the giant steel trust met with union officials, and, what is more, were forced to sign on the dotted line. The Carnegie-Illinois Steel Co., largest single steel-producing unit in the world and Goliath of U.S. Steel's subsidiaries, agreed to a forty-hour week, an eight-hour day, a wage increase, and recognition of the Steel Workers' Organizing Committee or its successors (see p. 3). This major victory was, moreover, only one of a number of similar gains which kept the C.I.O. in the headlines during the week.

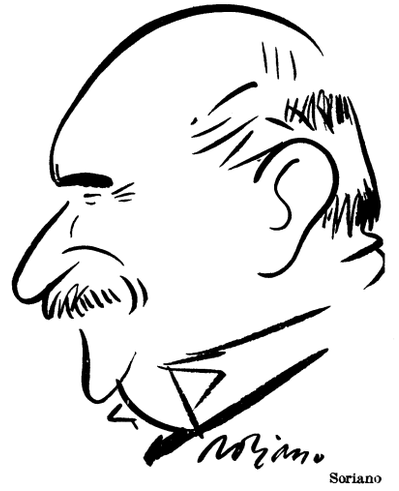
Seventy-five thousand workers, members of the United Automobile Works, struck in Detroit as negotiations between the Chrysler Corp. and the union collapsed after the company failed to accede to the union's demand for sole collective bargaining rights. Three plants of the Hudson Motor Car Co. were closed by sit-down strikes. The Chrysler strike call came after several days of negotiations and after the company-union system collapsed: 103 out of 120 "employee members of works councils" resigned to join their forces with the C.I.O.

After signing up Carnegie-Illinois, Philip Murray, S.W.O.C. chairman, predicted that the smashing victory would no doubt be followed by attempts of industrialists to filch labor's gains. This was verified within three days when company-union officials approached William Green with a request for "aid in organization" against the C.I.O. The A.F. of L. president cagily and officially refused his dwindling organization's help, but it was regarded as highly significant that the picked company representatives had seen fit to invoke his protection. A few days before the company men came to him, Green, together with reactionaries John P. Frey and William Hutcheson, of the Metal Trades Department and Carpenters & Joiners, respectively, had called upon all state and city federation bodies to suspend C.I.O. unions. Cleveland engineered the suspensions (see p. 17), but the San Francisco Central Labor Council tabled the order by an overwhelming vote of 158 to 44. A nation-wide fight against Green's splitting tactics was launched by militant labor on a national scale.

The Carnegie-Illinois steel victory had the same effect as the auto victory of a month ago. Many independent steel producers raised wages voluntarily in a last-minute effort to stave off the surge of unionization. Meeting in Pittsburgh, organizers of forty steel sub-regions heard Philip Murray declare that "a universal contract for all the steel workers in one large industrial union" was the S.W.O.C.'s goal. Jones & Laughlin Corp., powerful steel independent, acceded to labor demands, declaring that "on March 16, 1937, the corporation will adopt the forty-hour week, eight-hour day, with time and a half for all time over forty hours per week and eight hours per day." In Denver, the Colorado Fuel & Iron Co. announced the imminence of a similar wage and hour adjustment. Strikers at the Lebanon, Pa., plant of the Bethlehem Steel Corp. voted to demand recognition of the C.I.O. as bargaining agency for its members and a minimum wage of five dollars a day. "They're going to have to sign our contract," said local C.I.O. organizer Garfield Lewis to an enthusiastic steel workers' mass meeting, "whether they want it or not."

PRESSING forward in other industries, the C.I.O. chalked up further gains. Gerard B. Swope, president of General Electric, announced that a series of collective-bargaining conferences with the C.I.O. would be held in New York City beginning March 15. James B. Carey, president of the United Electrical & Radio Workers of America, a C.I.O. affiliate, was expected to be the union's representative at the conferences. In Akron, O., 10,000 workers were out as the United Rubber Workers voted to strike unless recognized as the sole collective-bargaining agent at the Firestone Tire & Rubber Co. The largest unit of the Aluminum Workers' Union at the New Kensington plant of the Aluminum Co. of America broke with the A.F. of L. to join forces with John L. Lewis and the C.I.O. Three victories in Detroit were recorded at the Timken-Detroit Axle Co., the Detroit Stamping Co., and the Allied Products Corp. A total of 2500 workers in these three plants returned to work after agreements had been signed with the United Auto Workers. Still another industry felt the effect of the C.I.O. drive when a number of shoe and leather strikes in Massachusetts, traditional center of America's shoe industry, successfully won wage increases. The end of a busy week of organization found the C.I.O. with a membership variously estimated to be between 2,500,000 and 3,500,000. Membership in the A.F. of L., on the other hand, was dwindling; some reports placed its remaining forces at between 1,500,000 and 2,000,000. Next in line for widespread organizational drives, John L. Lewis declared, would be the 1,000,000 workers of the textile industry and the 500,000 in his own mining field.

While C.I.O. activities continued without let-up, three wealthy associates of J. P. Morgan, read reports, met in "the thick-carpeted quiet of one of the nation's leading banks" and made "the flat prediction" that "in the near future the American worker would be organized completely along industrial lines." Their recognition of labor's forward march, however, evoked from them the threat of incorporation and government regulation of unions, and a check-up system for union funds, the fond dream of open shoppers (see p. 11).



Morgan—Bowed to the C.I.O.

IN one of the most effective and important speeches of his career, President Roosevelt launched his first major attack on opponents of his plan to enlarge the Supreme Court. Answering the accusations that the plan concealed dictatorial possibilities, Roosevelt drove home the argument that American democracy was faced with disaster unless the federal government could carry out the will of the people. And this, he said, required the assurance that "the three-horse team of the American system of government will pull together. . . . If one horse lies down in the traces or plunges off in another direction, the field will not be plowed." Should this assurance not be forthcoming, the President of the United States cannot tell "just where American democracy is headed nor just what it is permitted to do in order to insure its continued success and survival." (See p. 17.)

Reactions to the speech were immediate, and they were strongly favorable. At the White House, 162 messages were received immediately after the address. Of these, 143 expressed unqualified approval; nineteen were in opposition. Senator Minton (D., Ind.) reported that his mail was now running two-to-one for the plan, as contrasted with the flood of adverse letters received in the first few days after the President's proposal was made to Congress. These early letters, moreover, were, according to Minton's analysis, 99 percent from "hard-shell and hard-working Republicans." Senator Pope (D., Idaho) further substantiated the reactionary nature of the opposition by exhibiting circulars attacking the plan which bore the imprint of the Ku-Klux Klan.

While Senator Burke (D., Neb.) denounced the proposal as a "diligent and surpassingly cunning and deceptive program to discredit the Supreme Court in the minds of the people," eloquent defense was forthcoming in the House of Representatives. Most stirring speech of the week was that of Rep. Flannagan (D.,

Va.), who challenged the people to "remember that political and religious freedom are but mockeries without economic freedom," which, he declared, "is coming because our democracy has developed to the point where an awakened national conscience demands it." Anticipating success for the President, opposition Democrats already talked of the certainty of a new party alignment in 1940.

In a week that brought Secretary of State Hull little glory, his department issued a startling edict forbidding Americans to go to Spain. The policy, it was made clear, will include a ban on those who would organize ambulance and other humanitarian units to aid Spanish loyalists. Passports will be issued only to persons who swear that they have no intention of going to Spain, with prosecutions for perjury promised in cases of violation. The department's ruling drew a fiery protest from Dr. Harry F. Ward, national chairman of the American League Against War & Fascism, who condemned the move as an "outrageous and unprecedented interference with the freedom of American citizens." And from a group of thirteen educators, including seven members of the Harvard Medical School staff, came a letter of protest to President Roosevelt. "This ruling," said the group, "would bar the ministrations of mercy that have become traditional with our people." (See p. 17.)

The State Department's action was one of a number of significant matters discussed at the Eastern Seaboard Emergency Legislative Conference, which met for two days in Washington under the leadership of the American League Against War & Fascism. More than 500 delegates attended the sessions, representing some 1,291,000 persons. The conferees went on record in unanimous support of President Roosevelt's Supreme Court program, called for drastic amendments to the proposed McReynolds neutrality bill, endorsed the C.I.O., demanded federal legislation establishing minimum wages and maximum hours, and condemned the industrial mobilization plan which would regiment labor in wartime. The Sheppard-Hill bill incorporating that plan (see "Regimenting America for War," NEW MASSES, March 9) was likewise denounced by Senator Nye at the conference's "national defense round table" and by Representatives Coffee (D., Wash.) and Honeyman (D., Ore.). Modifications demanded in connection with the McReynolds bill included elimination of the ban against soliciting funds for Spain, extension of the embargo to all war supplies, and withdrawal of "discretionary" powers for the President in connection with neutrality embargoes. The conference was addressed by André Malraux, distinguished revolutionary novelist who has been in command of the Spanish loyalist air squadron. Malraux pleaded for medical supplies, urgently needed at the front. "When I left Spain," he said, "there wasn't a single X-ray plate in Valencia."

HIGH spot of the congressional week was the passage by the Senate of the Pittman neutrality resolution. As isolationist as the McReynolds bill in the House, the Pittman measure was regarded by progressives with only little less aversion because it did not contain the discriminatory clause which would bar the raising of funds for Spanish democracy. The resolution, as passed, called for an embargo on arms, munitions, and loans to all belligerents or to factions in a civil war; prohibition of American travel on belligerent ships; a ban on all trade with belligerents except on a "cash-and-carry" basis; and a prohibition against transporting of contraband goods on American vessels. Denouncing the isolationist policy behind the measure, the Communist *Daily Worker* declared: "The false moves of neutrality, because they obviously encourage the war aggressors, can become the most dangerous items speeding the world into war."

Goebbels—Of the poison tongue

LEANING over backward on "neutrality" toward Spain was apparently not enough for the obliging State Department. Having bowed toward France, Mr. Hull followed through by an obsequious salaam in the direction of Herr Hitler in one of the most absurd episodes in recent State Department history. It all started when New York's fiery Mayor La Guardia suggested to a group of women the idea of a "chamber of horrors" at the coming New York World's Fair, in which chamber, said the mayor, he would like to see a "figure of that brown-shirted fanatic who is now menacing the peace of the world." When La Guardia's mild suggestion reached Berlin, the Nazis broke out in a wild rage that gave many Americans their first real insight into the Nazi character. Officially, apologies were asked for, and in the Nazi press removal of that "dirty Talmud Jew" La Guardia was demanded, along with a threat to "take an interest in American events which would not be too agreeable." Among the epithets hurled at the mayor in return for "brown-shirted fanatic" were "procurer," "master Jewish gangster," "underworld character," and "well poisoner." Completely unbridled, Herr Goebbels's *Angriff* opined that the White House should "have sufficient power to forbid procurers who climb high to tell their dirty stories to a thousand women instead of to one woman." The Nazi sheet, demanding the "courtesy to which we have been accustomed for 2000 years," characterized Americans as "a people who have the habit of putting their feet on the table and keeping their hats on in the room while spitting chewing gum against the opposite wall."

The upshot of the affair was that Secretary of State Hull apologized twice to the Nazis, spoke of the "complete and mutual respect" between the two governments, and never so much as hinted that an apology might be in order from Berlin.

ANOTHER German-American development of the week gave good reason to suppose that the Berlin fury was carefully and deliberately whipped up by Nazi officialdom for the purpose of diverting attention from other aspects of Nazi existence. This development was a statement issued by the American Securities & Exchange Commission warning American holders of German bonds that Germany has a large floating debt of undisclosed proportions, and pointing out the uncertainties of the Reich's financial position. The commission estimated the German "unrecorded" obligations at something like five billion reichsmarks, but neutral financial observers in Berlin said the figure was more likely between twenty and twenty-five billion. There was also, perhaps, the desirability of making a lot of noise to cover an attempted Nazi coup in Hungary, which failed to come off. For all the rumpus over Mayor La Guardia, however, the eyes of European diplomats remained glued on Berlin for more ominous reasons, persistent rumor having it that a Hitler "surprise" is scheduled for the middle of March—perhaps, it was hinted, a bellicose move in the direction of the Czechoslovakian republic.

The week in Spain definitely went to the loyalists. Overcoming desperate fascist resistance, government militia swept into the heart of Oviedo in the north, and confidently expected to be in full possession of the city in short order. More melodramatic, perhaps, was the approach of the loyalists to Toledo, where last summer they were compelled to abandon their siege of the Alcazar. Madrid's defenders pounded the fascist forces in the West Park and University City sectors, in return for which the rebels shelled the heart of the city. The arrival of 18,000 fresh Italian and Nazi soldiers at the Madrid front was believed by observers to herald a new major offensive on the Madrid-Valencia highway, if not on the capital itself.

From Japan came dramatic news to substantiate evidence given at the recent Moscow trial concerning Trotskyist plottings with Japanese agents. Asked how he knew certain facts concerning the Soviet Trans-Siberian Railroad, General Sigiyami, Nippon's Minister of War, replied: "In Russia, there are elements in opposition to the present government, and it was precisely through them that we learned."

Formula for Murder

The events behind New York's Redwood case point a moral for trade unionists

By John Mullen

TAKE one part "The Six," who control the building-trades craft-union racketeering in the New York metropolitan area; one part contractor, and one part Tammany clique, operating through its stooge, the said contractor; one part union official who will not "play ball"—shake well, and you have such a murder as that of R. Norman Redwood, "sandhog" union leader.

On the night of February 19, R. Norman Redwood, business agent of the Compressed Air, Subway, & Tunnel Workers, Local 102, was shot to death as he stopped his car in the driveway of his Teaneck, N. J., home. Eleven days before gangland's guns tore Redwood's skull apart, the sandhog leader called a strike on the Sixth Avenue subway and the Ward's Island sewer project in New York, contracted by Sam Rosoff, tunnel czar.

Three days before Redwood called the strike, "Subway Sam" Rosoff openly threatened Redwood's life in the presence of several witnesses. Shaking his stubby bediamonded finger under the sandhog leader's nose, Rosoff shouted:

"I'll kill you deader'n a stone. Nobody ever pulled a strike on Sam Rosoff and got away with it!"

On February 8, Redwood pulled the strike. He, personally, didn't "get away with it." He died "deader'n a stone."

THE average addict of mystery tales, considering the evidence of this chain of events, would snap, with a Sherlock Holmes gleam in his eye, "It's an open and shut case!" And so it seems, at first glance. But there are ramifications of the slaying of R. Norman Redwood that lead in a dozen directions.

Coming at the precise moment when some of the craft unions were in a state of nervous jitters over the Dewey investigation in New York, the murder of the sandhogs' business agent precipitated a panic among reactionary union officials.

The New York press plunged into an orgy of conjecture and, peculiarly enough, for the first few days after Redwood's death, went hammer and tongs after Sam Rosoff, whose two projects Redwood had tied up in strike.

Simultaneously, the extreme right wing of the press, smelling blood, howled more raucously for the incorporation of all trade unions, the fond dream of the open-shoppers.

Immediately following the slaying, Rosoff, to put it in his own words, "was shoved around by the press." There was a reason for that shoving around. Shortly before the murder of Redwood, it was widely rumored in political circles of New York that Subway Sam had fallen out of the good graces of Tammany—that the boys from the Wigwam were greasing the skids for their stooge. The story went that Rosoff, who had been a mere front for a group of Tammany chiefs linked with William J. McCormack, big sand and gravel contractor, had begun to show alarming signs of independence, and had actually started to kick over the traces. Through Rosoff, who is by no means the multi-millionaire he was at first reported to be, the McCormack Tammany group, and Jimmy Hines, powerful chieftain of Manhattan's Eleventh Assembly District, had been sopping up on a lot of municipal and private building construction gravy—so the story went.

Rosoff is supposed to have incurred the

"Violence! Who will buy my violence?" Gardner Rea

wrath of his real bosses when he got the contract for the Sixth Avenue subway. At that time, I was told, Tammany instructed Rosoff to tack an additional half million dollars to the bill for the Sixth Avenue job—and to kick in with that amount for the 1937 election campaign.

Although Rosoff up to that point had been a willing tool for his Tammany pals, he had, during the past few years, piled up a considerable bank account, and a reputation as a big-time contractor. He had aspirations of his own long before he signed for the Sixth Avenue job—and enough credit in the building supply field to swing the subway project by himself.

So, when confronted with the orders to come through with a half million, Subway Sam shocked the Tammany boys by replying, in substance: "I've been in this racket long enough to cut in heavier from now on. I'll come across with a wad for the campaign fund —but no five hundred grand!"

Tammany envisioned the loss of a juicy slice of graft, and was enraged. Subway Sam, himself, is semi-literate, a pushover for even the clumsiest seductress, and got where he is today only because Tammany put him there. Incidentally, any newspaperman in the city who has got within shouting distance of Subway Sam will tell you that he would make an engrossing subject for a psychiatrist.

THE BREACH was, supposedly, partly healed—but Tammany never forgives or forgets the doublecross, and the New York newspapers knew what was going on. The Hearst press in particular reflected this knowledge of Subway Sam's position with Tammany, and for the first few days of the Redwood scandal it gave Rosoff "the works." As many as three and four full pages were devoted to the slaying, and Rosoff's threat against the murdered man was played up in each edition.

Then the tone of the press began to change perceptibly. For one thing, Tammany itself became alarmed when the press made it the leading story for days on end. Although, in the parlance of Tammany, they were preparing to "get" Rosoff, they were not yet ready (note the fine distinctions in terminology) to "throw him to the wolves." They feared that Sam would squawk and create a stink to high heaven. Tammany still had a hangover from too much Seabury.

Secondly, the giant open-shop employers saw an opportunity to institute a campaign against the trade unions, and further their ambitions to discredit the unions and drive through legislation for compulsory incorporation.

The press from then on began to reveal this changed attitude, and a vicious movement was initiated to put the entire blame for the murder on a "jurisdictional fight" between the trade unions themselves.

We have so far considered two leading factors in the murder of the sandhog union official. One of the factors—Tammany—has been carefully excluded from the general news reports in connection with the slaying. The reason is obvious to the reader. Tammany, especially since the Seabury investigations, has been extremely wary, and nowadays covers up its corrupt trail with expert care. The opposition press knows the facts but can't prove them—yet.

But the connection with Tammany and Rosoff exists—and if the investigating authorities in the Redwood case don't clamp down shortly, the facts will become known.

Now to dig deep down into the immediate dramatis personæ of the murder of Redwood.

The business agent of the sandhogs' Local 102 was murdered because, although apparently honest himself, he became involved in a situation rife with corruption—graft, shakedown, and violence on a major scale—became involved with the dominating labor racketeers in control of the building trades in New York City.

IT IS an established fact that, in the building trades, the field, on the whole, is riper for employers to bribe union officials than in any other industrial setup. Some of the major union-racket scandals in American trade-union history have been centered in the building trades. The reason is comparatively simple.

Building construction is one of the chief sources of municipal-political graft. City buildings, bridges, sewage systems, tunnels, subways, and a hundred other categories of construction have always been the happy hunting ground of big- and small-time politicians. And grafting officials can tie up and ruin a contractor by interpretations of the building code if he doesn't "play ball."

Because the building industry is highly seasonable, there is usually a time limit in the contract which compels the contractor to complete the job within a given period. Weather, of course, is an additional factor requiring speed on the project. Crooked union officials who clamp a strangle-hold on building trades unions are, therefore, in a stronger position to dicker with the employers than similarly ambitious racketeering officials in other unions. A few days' delay may mean breach of contract with the forfeit of a bond.

Consequently, there exists a more fertile ground for collusion between dishonest union officials and the employers, who are never averse to corrupting the officialdom. Millions

"You understand, Mrs. Dinwiddie, the wolfhound will be extra." Aime

"You understand, Mrs. Dinwiddie, the wolfhound will be extra."

Alm 6

"You understand, Mrs. Dinwiddie, the wolfhound will be extra."

Alm 6

of dollars in cross-payments and graft are milked from the trade union rank-and-file itself and from the general public, which pays taxes to the city and state, through the following established practice:

Crooked building-trades-union officers agree to work for employers who buy their material from monopoly contractor-supply firms. All builders who buy elsewhere find themselves in a heap of trouble. The builders, in turn, find it profitable to submit to shakedowns from the union officials.

It's an "in the bag" combination.

THE RECENT scandal in the Jersey City building trades in 1933 is typical of the above mentioned setup, and bears out the analysis perfectly. The Brandle-Hague clique at that time created a furore that reverberated in union circles nationally. "Ted" Brandle, a deep-dyed union faker, was head of the Building Trades Council and of the Bridge & Structural Iron Workers' Union. He was at the same time allied with the Iron League, a powerful employers' group. No outside contractor could win a bid—for if they underbid the members of the employers' Iron League, Brandle would call a strike and tie up the construction.

Brandle had the support of the notorious Mayor Hague, and did things handsomely. He soon tired of the narrowness of the field, and ambitiously branched out into trucking, building materials, and even banking. However, the scandal finally broke, and Brandle was "thrown to the wolves" by Hague and the Iron League. Although Brandle has been ousted from the labor movement, he is today an extremely rich man.

Brandle, incidentally, was the offspring of a long line of similar building-trades-racketeer forebears. Chicago, for example, has had its "Skinny" Madden, who levied tribute on both employer and worker, fining the former for "infractions" at the same time that he bled the rank-and-file membership with "insurance." It netted him a huge fortune.

Then there was colorful "Umbrella Mike" Boyle, who had the quaint habit of calling on the employer prior to a contract, and finding, strangely enough, packets of thousand dollar bills in his umbrella, which he always parked near the employer during his conversation about the weather. Chicago had, and still has, many such crooked building-trades-union officials. But New York City and Jersey City racketeers can hold their heads well up when Chicago is mentioned. They play second fiddle to no one.

William Z. Foster long ago ripped the veil from New York shakedown artists in the building-trades field, and indicted before the eyes of all trade unionists such notorious super-crooks as Sam Parks and Robert P. Brindell, who turned building-trades graft into Big Business.

Philadelphia had its Frank Feeney, president of the Building Trades Council; Cleveland had its Brandle prototype in Charles B. Smith; San Francisco had its gunmen-gangster crowd headed by P. H. McCarthy. All of these gentlemen have their descendants among the gang in control of many craft unions today—the identical gang that righteously voted last November at the A.F. of L. Tampa convention to split the labor movement by ousting the C.I.O. unions.

THE CLIQUE in control in New York City today—and named by Bergen County, N. J., prosecutor John J. Breslin as directly involved in the murder of R. Norman Redwood—is known in the union-racket underworld twilight zone as "The Six."

Joseph S. Fay, head of one of the key building-trades unions, Local 125 of the Operating Engineers, is reported from a dozen sources to be chief of "The Six." Others named as alleged members of the group are John O'Rourke, official of Teamsters Local 282; Joseph Delaney, Fay's right-hand man in the same union, and Charles ("Red") Johnson, head of the Dock Builders and staunch ally of William J. Hutcheson, international president of the Brotherhood of Carpenters & Joiners.

Fay was up to his neck in the Jersey City scandal, and was expelled from the American Federation of Labor shortly afterward. But he did not lose much time getting back into the labor movement—he turned up after the 1933 episode with an "appointment" as head of the New York hoisting engineers—appointed by the general president of the union, John Possehl.

Anyone with an "in" with shady officials of the building-trades unions in New York will tell you that "The Six" meets regularly and fixes "prices" on construction work. The "price" naturally is divided among those in the racket, and the contractor receives, in turn, assurance that he will not be bothered with strikes during the contract.

Subway Sam Rosoff was intimately acquainted with the gentlemen composing "The Six." In fact, the alibi he offered to the police was that at the time of Redwood's murder in New Jersey, he, Sam Rosoff, was in New York being identified by Charles ("Red") Johnson cashing a check in a restaurant.

Fay and Rosoff, it is said, have long done business. When Rosoff received the Sixth Avenue subway contract, "The Six," so the story goes, were paid $50,000 by Rosoff for "protection."

It is widely known that Fay was a bitter enemy of Redwood, and that he had repeatedly clashed with the sandhog union leader over jurisdiction on tunnel work. Fay was more or less the power behind Local 45, also composed of tunnel workers, which at various times became involved in jurisdictional fights with Redwood's Local 102.

The murdered official had, on several occasions, complained about Rosoff to the Board of Transportation, charging that Rosoff was violating the city's prevailing wage-scale terms carried in municipal contracts. The strike called by Redwood on the Sixth Avenue subway job and the Ward Island sewer project was partly the reason for the walkout.

Redwood thus stepped heavily on the toes of Fay and "The Six." He also trod sharply upon the bunions of Rosoff when he tied up the two jobs. He was murdered shortly after he called the strikes. Write your own ticket.

Behind the murder of Redwood, therefore, stands the whole slimy super-structure of graft and class-collaboration nurtured and developed by the William Green advocates of craft-unionism, and the blood relationship of this element of officials within the craft unions with the politician-employer groups. These elements are always ready and willing to befoul the trade-union movement at a price.

WHEN, AND IF, the police run down the actual triggerman who blasted the life out of Redwood, they will not have apprehended the real criminals.

Those responsible for the murder are the despoilers and splitters of the American trade-union movement—the class-collusionists who prey on the rank and file with either the psalm-singing righteousness of a William Green, or the gun-toting rotten elements among the officialdom of certain craft trade unions.

The police are positively not the answer or the solution to the problem. The only answer is—a battle on two fronts: an aggressive "let-the-chips-fall-where-they-may" battle of the rank and file within the craft unions to rid themselves of their betrayers, and a healthy progressive union movement based on the organization of industrial unions, and controlled by the worker at the point of production.

Course

Years before action when the will alone
has ammunition to threaten weakness down,
when thriving on discovery, we speak and wish a world
that wishing may not make.

Stretching our nerves, we touch a broader street
crowded with hostile weapons and the weight
of death suggesting we see peace at last and quiet cities,
rip out the eyes, and have our rest.

But we are set enough to clear a space
ample for action in this eccentric house.
An army of wishers in a dramatic grip and crazy with
America has heat to keep its purpose up.

Determined to a world that Mr. Fist
and all his gang can't master or digest,
strengthened against the world that cannot hush words singing down
the fever voice of death working against the wish.

MURIEL RUKEYSER.

★

Sword and Pen

In considering the relations between art and politics, an important question arises as to the nature of peace

By C. Day Lewis

THE versatile mongoose, which was alleged to express opinions on subjects outside its own orbit, created a recent *cause célèbre*. That the mongoose, a highly specialized animal, whose lifework is the destruction of snakes and rodents, should so behave seems to many people little more outrageous than that the writer (another highly specialized animal) should concern himself with politics.

A meeting of the International Association of Writers in Defense of Culture was held recently to discuss Malraux's speech on the Cultural Heritage. The discussion hinged on three questions: What is culture? Can and should writers "defend" it? If so, how must they set about defending it? The best definition of culture seemed to me Randall Swingler's, who said that, since writing is a product of social deficiency, the cultural tradition is itself a developing body of the aspirations of mankind. We may link this up, perhaps, with Matthew Arnold's famous dictum:

> Culture has one great passion—the passion for sweetness and light. It has one even yet greater, the passion for making them *prevail*.

How, then, shall we make "sweetness and light" prevail? How shall we defend culture? A minority opinion at the meeting, reflecting maybe a majority opinion among English writers and the general public, held that writers must protect the cultural heritage strictly within their own sphere of activity; that is, through their specific function of creating imaginative work and recreating language. Let the mongoose, in fact, stick to its snakes. Now it is undeniable that the ideal state for the writer is one in which he may concentrate exclusively on his specific function. But, just as in former days shepherds and tillers of the ground found it sometimes necessary to wear arms, to station sentries against marauding bands, so now the writer must be prepared to defend himself against the bandits that threaten his own field of activity. Like the shepherd or farmer of earlier times, he may be a little hampered and distracted in his natural work by thus paying attention to self-defense. But he has to choose between distraction or destruction; for fascism is the deadliest enemy to "sweetness and light" that has arisen since the dark ages.

"The triumph of culture is to overpower nationality," Emerson said. And the triumph of nationalism is to overpower culture. When we consider the literature of any country, we see that it is frequently stimulated and enriched by the literature of other countries: English literature, for instance, was enriched

Portrait of the Artist Woodcut by Gus Bundy

by Greek and Roman at the renaissance, stimulated by Voltaire and Rousseau in the eighteenth century; modern English poetry has gained much from the French Symbolists; the modern English novel has been affected by twentieth-century American writers. By its chauvinism, and its attempt to militarize the whole nation, fascism sows dragons' teeth in the universal field of culture. Give it half a chance, and the sword will generally prove stronger than the pen. In the fifth century B.C. it was democratic Athens, not militarist Sparta, that created a literature. Fascism, besides maiming the literature of its own countries, wars relentlessly against free trade in culture. As Malraux said: "Fascist ideology by its very nature rejects universality and rejects change—it is permanent and particular"; whereas, "in the movement which is bringing works of art and knowledge to an ever-increasing number of men, our aim is to uphold or to recreate not permanent particular values, but dialectical and humanist ones."

But English writers have not only to defend themselves against war and fascism. Since the beginning of the modern capitalist era, conditions have grown steadily less favorable for the original writer. The bourgeois philistinism against which Arnold inveighed, has set up, in place of literary values and taste, a general criterion of commercial value. Worse, it has widened the gulf between the serious writer and his public by making tendencious distinctions between "highbrow" and "popular" writing. For this reason Montagu Slater said, at the meeting I have referred to, that our task is to set free the mass of mankind to produce its own culture; to disarm the repressive agents—whether governmental, commercial, or academic—which are fighting against freedom of expression and the free interchange of ideas. Liberating "the mass of mankind to produce its own culture" does not, of course, mean that everyone is to become an artist. It means that everyone should be enabled (through economic security, equal educational opportunity, and a more valuable incentive than "escape") to share in the cultural heritage to the utmost of his potentiality; and that—out of this widespread, quickened interest—a new and catholic culture should emerge. Carlyle summed it up: "The great law of culture is: let each become all that he was created capable of being."

In a recent article Herbert Read says: "Art is a part of culture; it can only develop in a favorable climate of social amenities and cultural aspirations." Clearly, then, the writer is interested in seeing to it that these amenities and aspirations shall increase. He is, therefore, justified (as a writer, apart from motives of common humanity) in supporting any political movement that he believes will subserve these ends.

At the same time, Read objects to any forcing of art "into the foreground of cultural strife," because he considers this is forcing it "into false moral issues." Art, he would maintain, "is an autonomous activity, limited like all our activities by the material conditions of existence, but on the plane of knowledge at once its own reality and its own end." This latter is the point of view of many sincere artists and critics: most of us, indeed, would agree with it but for the last three words. The "end" or meaning of a poem, for instance, surely includes the effect of that poem upon the reader. In fact, as Read himself says later, "In all its essential activities art is trying to tell us something: something about the universe, something about nature, about man, or about the artist himself. Art is a mode of knowledge." Once you admit that "art is trying to tell us something," however, though in a different mode from science or philosophy, you cannot claim that art is "its own end." For this reason it seems to me that we must beware of phrases like "forcing art into the foreground of cultural strife." Art does not need any such forcing: it is there already: the question for writers is not—how are we to disentangle art from "cultural strife"? It is—what direction do we wish this strife to take?

Portrait of the Artist

Woodcut by Gus Bundy

The Bullfighter

Young Corazon always had ambitions to appear in the bull-ring at Badajoz, but when he did, the auspices were not glamorous

By Prudencio de Pereda

IN Badajoz on Sunday the fat little man knelt behind closed shutters on the top floor of his home and watched them go by. The house he lived in was old and decaying, and the bottom section of one of the shutters had sagged down a little bit and left a crack, so that now he could look through it at the street and see all of his friends and neighbors go marching quickly and quietly by, with their hands held high in the air and being led by Moorish soldiers, who had dark shining faces and wore rolled turbans on their heads.

They were taking them to be shot. He knew this, and he kept cursing and crying as he watched them go by. In another part of the city he could hear the trucks. Trucks take them faster, he thought. Then a woman came quietly up behind him and touched him on the shoulder, but he did not turn around.

"Come on, Eusebio," she said. "Let us go. Let us go before they come."

"Go away," he said. "Go and hide, you. I know what to do."

"But they are going to kill you. They are killing everyone."

"They will not kill me. Go away from here." They will not kill me, he thought. I have no bruise on my shoulder. I was using a pad. I know their tricks, the sons of dirty whores!

"Where are they doing it?" he asked the woman.

"In the bull-ring. You can hear them in the yard."

The woman thought that she should stay with him. She felt that she ought to stay with him, but she could not do it. She was tired. She wanted only to go and sit in some quiet corner. "Ten days," she said. "I'm tired. I'm too tired to stay any more. I'm going, Eusebio." The man did not even turn his head, and she went back to the stairs and down.

He kept watching the marching groups. He was seeing a bunch of boys go by now. Even the boys! *"Coño,* there goes Corazon," he whispered to himself; "Corazon!" Corazon was a boy of sixteen. He had been given the name, "Corazon," which means "heart" in Spanish, because he had always been saying that he wanted to be a bull-fighter but that he did not have the heart. *"Si yo tuviera corazon!"* you heard him saying—"If I only had the heart!"

Eusebio remembered how he had always seen Corazon at the *corrida* every time a big matador from the city was fighting. Look at him now, he thought. He really is brave. He could have truly been a bull-fighter. Now he is going into the ring, anyway.

He leaned back a little to be able to see them go further down the street, and he watched them until he saw them march around the corner.

And in the street Corazon and the others walked between the soldiers that they hated without thinking of anything, only that they were tired and that they were not ashamed. They did not blush. They had defended the city to the very bitter end. Corazon had the feeling that he was a part of this tired, moving body, and that would be the only thing that he would feel until the end. Then when they stayed on the avenue, and he began to see where they were going, he had a feeling that made him move out a little from himself and that he could not identify at first, until he went through the big corridor with the rest of them and then into the ring, and then he knew that he was happy.

And even when he was fully inside, and he saw how they were doing it—even when he made out through the smoke the two machine guns and crews directly in the center, and how they were lining up the men along the wooden barrier first and then working in slowly, so

Fascist Murals Marty

Fascist Murals

Marty

that soon the entire floor of the ring would be filled with the bodies of the defenders—even then the feeling did not all go away from him. That he had felt like that made him feel, now, a little bit alone.

A group of Spanish officers had been walking back and forth across the ring between the hard-working guns, laughing, talking, one of them shouting out curses every time that the gun stopped chugging. A Moorish corporal walked with them. He wore his native uniform.

When the boys came into the ring, the officers were right by the entrance, and they stopped and looked at the boys.

"Here are the young Reds," said the general. "Now we shall have the young Reds." The others laughed.

They were still marching in. Now a boy near Corazon stopped walking and turned his face towards the officers. "Could a priest confess me?" he said. He had a boyish voice and he tried very hard to keep it low.

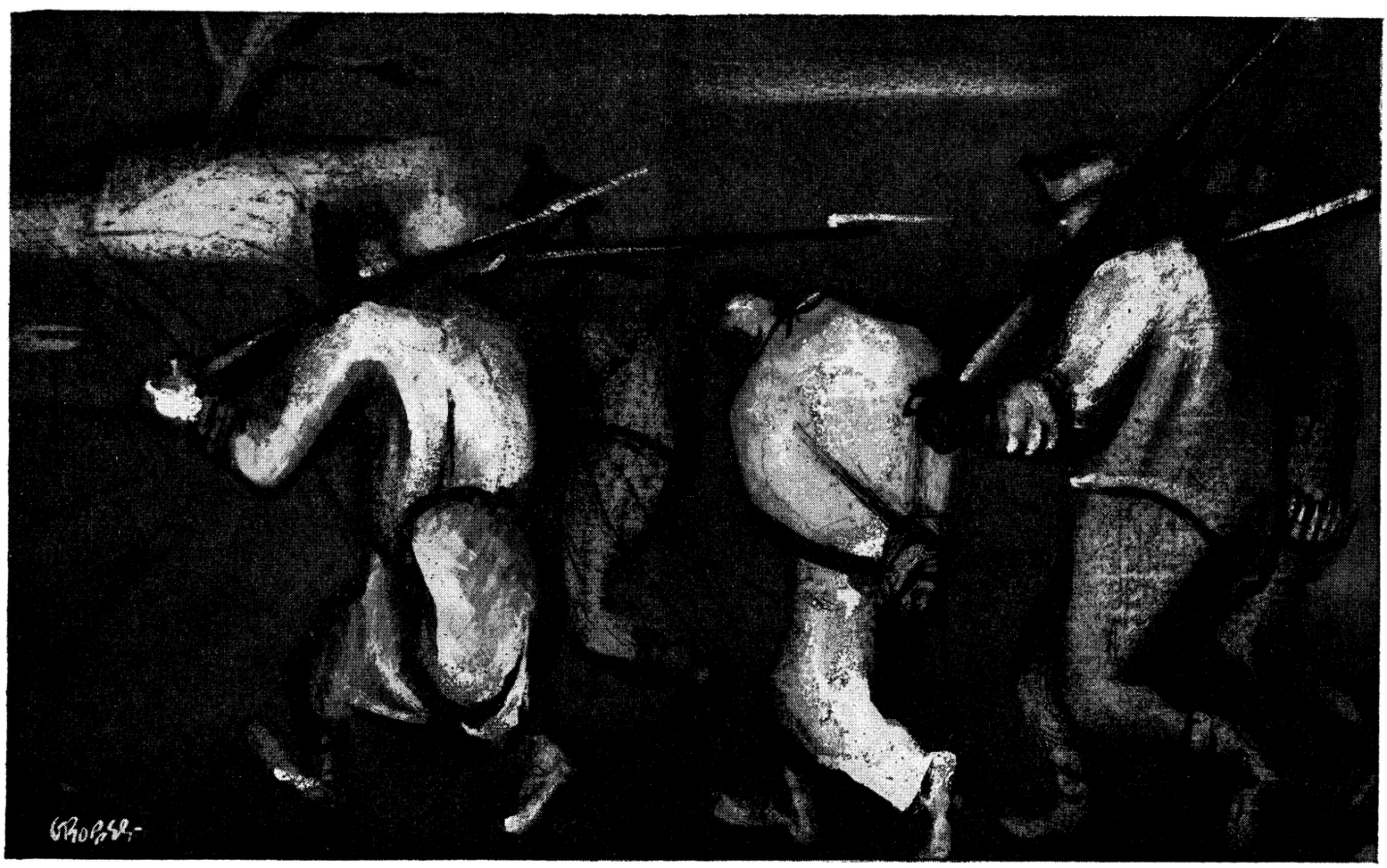
The group stopped moving and the officers did not say anything for a moment. Then Corazon saw one of them take a pistol holster and strap from around a fat belly and walk over to them. As he came, they saw him compose his face professionally and take a stole from out of the pocket of his soldier's tunic. "I am a priest. I will confess thee," he said. He put the stole around his neck.

All during this time, the Moorish soldiers looked at what was going on with blank and sullen faces. They did not like the delay. One of the Spanish officers kept looking at them. He spoke to the corporal with his group. The corporal walked over to the Moors and said something to them and they put their guns down and leaned on them. Then the general of the officers turned around to the other entrance of the ring and yelled, "Another bunch from there," to the men standing on guard there. This was the entrance through which the bull came in when there was a *corrida* on. Now the general did not wish the routine of the executions to be hampered.

The first boy had whispered his confession to the nodding priest and two others went up. Corazon waited at the side and watched the guns. He stared at them, and as he kept looking at them closely, he began not to see them clearly, and soon they had disappeared.

Where the guns had been, in the center of the ring, the big, black brave bull Sereño was standing. Corazon knew him. That was the bull that he had always thought of when he dreamed of himself as a *torero*. He had seen the great Domingo Ortega fight Sereño in the last *feria* of the season, and now he saw that the bull-fighter walking quietly up to engage Sereño was not Ortega but he, Corazon. He walked in the pigeon-toed fashion of Ortega, and he held his head a little on the side like that, but it was really Corazon; and then, with his fists clenched and his feet pushing into the sand, his face so lighted that the Moorish soldier near him stared, fascinated, Corazon watched as, out of the center of the ring, he went through every beautiful pass and movement of the *faena* with which Ortega had fought Sereño with *muleta* and sword. He pulled in his stomach as he watched the bull shoot past him in a superb *pase de pecho*, the horn going past at a distance of one inch, and again he almost heard the man in back of him say, "Look at that; doing that with the biggest bull of the *feria!*" as a man had said of Ortega that day. He moved his hand a little back and forth, as when out in the ring the bull-fighter knelt before the bull and calmly stroked his muzzle. And as the man—he, Corazon—went in with the sword to kill, he could only close his eyes for a moment and then open them again to the roar of the crowd as the bull began to go down, the sword in all the way, and then roll over with his feet going up in the air. The roar got louder, sharper, and became the familiar sound of the gun, and Corazon was back there again and beginning to move with the rest to the place where the bodies were packed. The soldiers had their guns up and were pushing them needlessly, for they went on quietly with their hands held up and their faces calm and looking ahead as they lined up before the gun.

They were all together now. Looking at them, you could not tell which were the Catholic Reds and which were the other Reds, and Corazon did not feel alone any more. He began to feel that he had killed his great bull, and then, just before the gun coughed out, that now he belonged very much among these brave little men. He had the happy knowledge of his heart.



Wash drawing by William Gropper (A. C. A. Gallery)

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NEW MASSES

ESTABLISHED 1911

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Signpost for Democracy

WE are not content with a democracy which is only partially democratic politically, and economically not democratic at all. But as opposed to fascism, we would defend this democracy and see it strengthened.

There are certain liberals, however, who, wanting this particular kind of democracy more than anything else, simply will not permit it to do the things it must do to save itself. To us it seems obvious that democracy rests with the masses of people rather than with nine judges. When an overwhelming majority voted for Roosevelt last November, they chose his program in preference to the social philosophy of the Supreme Court; they were clearly opposed to allowing those nine judges to cancel those of Roosevelt's activities which are progressive. But when Roosevelt plans to enlarge the Court in order to remove an immediate barrier to the people's wishes, the very liberals who wish to see democracy preserved are afraid that he will have too much power to carry out the will of the country!

The President himself indicated a possible alternative in his speech at the Democratic Victory Dinner. "If we do not have the courage to lead the American people where they want to go, someone else will." Who is the "someone else"? Certainly not the Republican Party. Nor is it likely that the President thinks America ripe for communism. What he meant was that a fascist demagogue would arise and *promise* to "lead the American people where they want to go." Where the fascists would in fact lead us must be plain even to Walter Lippmann and Dorothy Thompson.

There is nothing fantastic in such a threat. Social Democrats in Italy and in Germany blocked their own road to successful democracy just as these purblind liberals of America would do, and two egomaniacs, promising everything the Social Democrats had promised, rode into power on the frustrated desires of their people. It should startle liberals to hear an American President say, as Roosevelt said last week: "Nor can I tell you, under present circumstances, just where American democracy is headed nor just what it is permitted to do in order to insure its continued success and survival." To such a pass has American democracy come.

But it is certainly not too late to stave off the "someone else." Little as we are disposed to trust Roosevelt as a savior of democracy, we agree wholeheartedly with him that in the United States, democracy "does not need to fail." To this very end, every effort must be addressed. The people need—they demand—federal legislation to protect their economic interests in agriculture and in industry, to safeguard civil rights, to protect them in their determination to organize as workers. The Supreme Court has thwarted them in all these things. But American democracy, limited as it may be, must be viewed as bigger by far than any one of its institutions. If the Court cannot adapt itself to the will of 1937 America, then plainly the Court must be altered. Let the Court remain as it is, ignoring the needs of the people, and Americans will look to "someone else" for the satisfaction they now seek in democracy. The day that happens will be a bitter one for short-sighted liberals, as for all of us.

Slow Suicide

EVEN the most dubious of doubting Thomases cannot but be convinced of the effectiveness of the C.I.O. drive after the successive major victories chalked up by labor in auto and steel during the past month. Yet William Green, president of the American Federation of Labor, has consistently minimized these triumphs in public statements timed to do the greatest damage to the cause of labor organization. His words have been harmful enough, encouraging both to the weak-minded elements in labor's ranks and to the industrial barons forced by C.I.O. militancy to submit to their employees' major demands.

But when William Green and his two reactionary cronies on the A.F. of L. executive council, William Hutcheson and John P. Frey, carry their activities into the open field of union splitting, it is time for every American to recognize them for what they are: anti-labor forces whose deeds are no less dirty than the espionage of the Pinkertons, to whose employers they bring ammunition against the workers.

Such an act of labor splitting and virtual strike-breaking was their announcement of a national drive against the C.I.O. and its chief, John L. Lewis, which was followed closely by the suspension from the Cleveland Federation of Labor of all unions affiliated with the C.I.O. The meeting at which this choice trick was pulled was packed with craft-union and metal-trades delegates, the latter hand-picked by Frey.

A day after the Cleveland suspensions, it was reported that "a committee of employee representatives, the company union from eighteen mills of the Carnegie-Illinois Steel Corporation, asked William Green for assistance in their fight against the John L. Lewis industrial union."

Who were these men who ran to Green for help? Not the rank and file of the steel workers, for they have welcomed the Steel Workers' Organizing Committee with open arms, deserting the autocratic company unions by the hundreds. Green's suppliants were the picked representatives of the corporation. They were open evidence of behind-the-scenes collaboration between the reactionary A.F. of L. leadership and the big industrialists. This was the culmination of Green's entire record of divided unionism, first playing indirectly into employers' hands, and then taking the form of undisguised class-collaboration and anti-labor activity.

But militant labor is already on the offensive against such misleadership. The impetus for a united labor movement is so great that it cannot now be stopped. The answer to Green will be a deluge of protests, and an even greater flood of solidarity greetings to the C.I.O. Meanwhile, the words of a Cleveland worker, a member of the Amalgamated Clothing Workers (a C.I.O. affiliate), are prophetic. Speaking to the Cleveland body which expelled his union, he declared:

"What we say here will probably make no difference [in changing 'your steam-roller tactics']. But you are making a great mistake and condemning the American Federation of Labor to slow suicide."

READERS' FORUM

The "Nation's" Mr. Krutch on Thomas Paine—Two kinds of foreign forces in Spain—Criticizing criticism

● It is seldom that one comes in contact with such a mean-spirited, contemptible disposition as that shown by Joseph Wood Krutch in his snobbish and false comments on Thomas Paine, in the *Nation* of February 6, 1937, and proves how pertinent and applicable is the refrain of an old time song the clown used to sing at the circus:

"Strange how much you've got to know,
Before you know how little you know."

Prejudice, flippancy, and conceit give the rhythm of Mr. Krutch's shrewish tirade against Thomas Paine. It should be set to music, for it sounds like a screed from the Liberty League or the D. A. R.

Artemas Ward once said, "I had rather not to know anything, than to know so many things that ain't so."

If Mr. Krutch had read the authentic biography of Thomas Paine, by Mary Agnes Best, published in 1927 by Harcourt, Brace, & Co., he could have avoided making such an egregious ass of himself.

In the first place, Thomas Paine was not an atheist, and he was not a confirmed drunkard, nor did he die in the gutter, Mr. Krutch to the contrary notwithstanding. Mr. Krutch, in his usual supercilious manner, says he was no scholar, or *littérateur.* Of course, Mr. Krutch is a super-pundit and infallible.

However, Thomas Paine, being no scholar and just a small village atheist as Mr. Krutch asserts, seems to have done tolerably well with his writings, holding his public in the hollow of his hand, selling copies by the hundreds of thousands, and still going strong. His writings have survived for over one hundred and fifty years and more people are reading them than ever before. Now this a pretty fair record for a small village atheist and no *littérateur* to accomplish. . . .

The fame and reputation of Thomas Paine rests secure for all time, for the services he gave so freely to this country are held in grateful remembrance and appreciation the world over by all friends of humanity and the common people, while the vaporings of Mr. Krutch will remind them of a cipher with the rim cut off. WILLIAM R. JOHNSON.

German Forces in Spain

● Your readers will probably be interested to know that the *Deutsche Volkszeitung,* the organ of the newly formed German's people's front headed by Thomas Mann, in its issue of Jan. 24, 1937, lists the following German army detachments now operating in Spain against the republic:

The Ninth Infantry Regiment of Potsdam, the Fifty-sixth Infantry Regiment of Ulm, the Seventy-fifth Infantry Regiment of Freiburg, the Eighty-seventh Infantry Regiment of Fulda, and the Langensalza Infantry Regiment, also, the Fifth Tank Regiment of Wünsdorf, the Sixth Tank Regiment of Neuruppin, the Twenty-ninth Tank-Defense Section of Cassel, the Machine-gun battalion of the Ninth Army Corps of Cassel, and the former Ludwigslust (now fully motorized) battalion. In the air, the Richthofen Pursuit Squadron, the Immelmann Pursuit Squadron, the Schleissheim Air Squadron, and the Schwerin Air Squadron. The rest of the 30,000 German troops in Spain consist of so-called "volunteers," chiefly units formed of the Elite Guards, the "Adolf Hitler" regiment, and the "Herman Goering" regiment.

Prague, Feb. 10. KURT DASCHER.

The Garibaldi Battalion

● As an Italian American, it was with great shame that I read of Mussolini's slaughter of the Ethiopian defenders. With greater shame have I read of Mussolini's support of the Fascists in Spain. The name of Mussolini's Italy has become synonomous with barbarism and cruelty.

Mussolini is besmirching the name of Italy. Only the presence of the Garibaldi Battalion on the Madrid front restores to true dignity the name of Italy. Only these brave fighters establish in me, and thousands of Italian anti-Fascists like me, a feeling of pride in my native land.

The Garibaldi Battalion, part of the International Brigade, is composed of more than a thousand Italian anti-Fascists from America, Belgium, France, Switerland, and Italy itself. The battalion has been in the thick of the fighting, holding fast the anti-Fascist lines around University City, repulsing the onslaught of their Fascist fellow-countrymen on the Valencia-Madrid highway.

The members of the Italian Anti-Fascist Committee are doing all they can to further the work of the battalion. Our forces are limited, and although the anti-Fascist sentiment among American Italians is growing rapidly, we need the support and aid of other liberal and democratic forces and organizations.

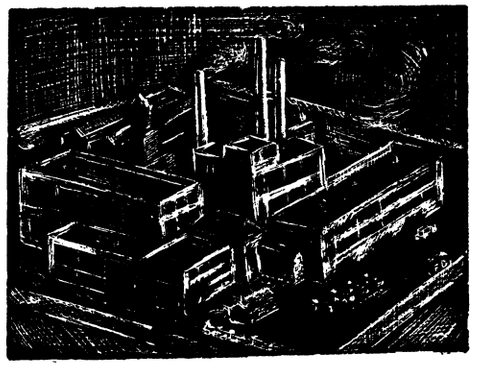
In the name of the Garibaldi Battalion, we appeal to all our friends to help us continue this work. On March 21, Sunday afternoon, 2:30 p.m., the Italian Anti-Fascist Committee is holding a meeting at Mecca Temple to protest Mussolini's invasion of Spain. John T. Bernard and Arthur W. Mitchell, members of Congress, and Arturo Giovanitti, Joseph Freeman, and Elizabeth Gurley Flynn will speak. The film, *Spain in Flames,* depicting the heroic stand of the Spanish People's Front supporters, will round out the program. The proceeds of the meeting will go for food, clothes, and medical supplies for the Garibaldi Battalion.

GIROLAMO VALENTI,
Editor, *Stampa Libera.*
Chairman, Italian Anti-Fascist Committee.

On Marxist Criticism

● Liberal writers have come to expect peculiar and arbitrary appraisals from conventional critics, but I think your D.S.'s one-paragraph review of my book, *Singing Flesh* [Brief Reviews, March 2], hits a new low for "Marxist criticism" gone haywire. D.S. concludes that I am "fairly competent" when it comes to the "traditional, sweet little lyric." I pass over the mild sarcasm and ask: What's sweet or traditional about "Paper Coffin for Hank," "Blonde Actress," "Chant of the Yellow Journalists"—to mention but three? He feels I "labor" when I try to write about "tugboats, New York City, and working people." If he had merely pointed out my deficiency when I did this, I would have no complaint. But I happened to have been born among working people in New York City, and have lived among them all my life. I don't have to "try" to write about them.

The occult, ritualistic concept of revolutionary writing is what really gets me. D.S.'s conclusion is that I am "another one who proves that it is difficult to mould a necessarily new technique to a revolutionary philosophy, no matter how deeply the poet accepts that philosophy." Since when did the Marxist philosophy admit of ultimate, static qualities in anything, including writers? Isn't it obvious to your critic that the liberal writer of today may well be the revolutionary writer of tomorrow? Isn't it more the function of Marxist criticism to guide and instruct liberal expression, rather than to cloak the new art with an occultism which would reserve its function for only a chosen, esoteric, ritualistic few? If Browder saw the advantages of a united front against Landon, isn't the wisdom of this same principle as applied to liberal writers obvious to your critic? Or are we required to learn new hand-grips and passwords. . . . THOMAS DEL VECCHIO.



Frank Davidson

Southern Labor Colleges

● To all of those interested in bringing about economic and political democracy in the United States, the South has always seemed an impossible area. Once its slavery dragged the nation into a civil war. Now low wages and poverty among industrial and agricultural workers are proving a menace to the well-being of the entire nation.

These conditions, which Secretary Wallace described as "poverty more abject" than he had ever seen among any peasantry of Europe, prove, as we know by experience, a fertile field for fascist demagogy. The South has been the birthplace of most of our Ku-Klux and other intolerant movements. It is a constant source of danger to any liberal movement in the country.

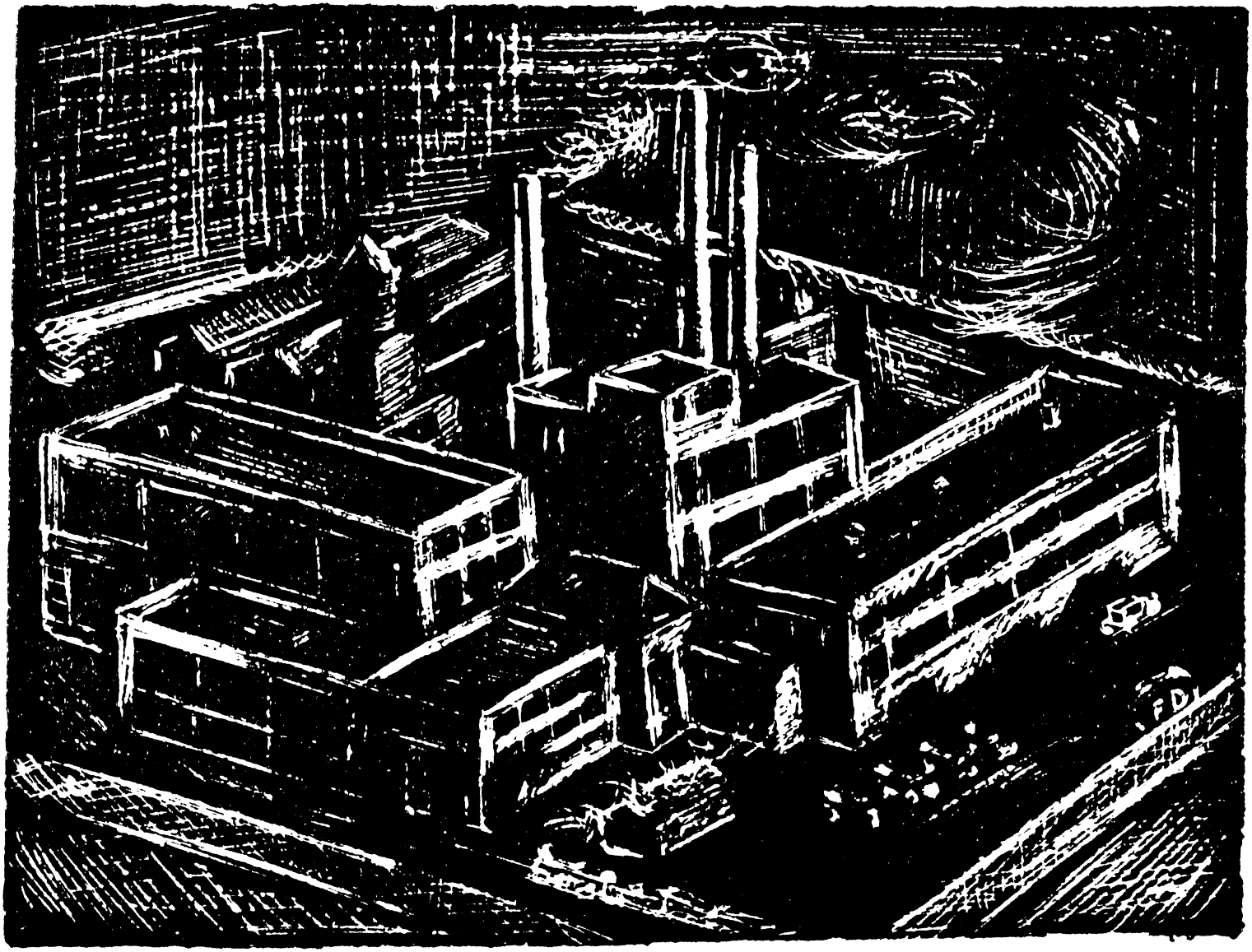
The labor movement of the South, however, is developing rapidly. And the two resident labor colleges, Highlander Folk School in Tennessee and Commonwealth College in Arkansas, have been heroically and effectively training southern labor organizers to work among their own people. I say heroically because their faculties have served without compensation since the schools were founded in 1930 and 1923 respectively, and both students and teachers have done all of the manual labor to keep living costs at a minimum.

If these two schools are to go on doing this work—which is probably as valuable as that being done in any part of the labor movement—they must be financed. A Committee has voluntarily organized with members and sponsors all over the country, which is starting a drive to keep the good work going. IRENE THOMAS.

From Stage Designer Gorelik

● Your review of Jack Lawson's *Marching Song* indicates a healthy desire to learn something about the dynamics of stage production. I hope that, in the future, reviews of plays will be more analytical than heretofore: that the work of the designer, for instance, will be understood constructively. It would not hurt the readers of the NEW MASSES to know that the setting for *Marching Song* was conceived by a young designer named Howard Bay, and that it is an honest report of environment rather than a "beautiful" distortion of it. To call it a "magnificent setting" and let it go at that is slight praise. This work is different in direction from that of the romanticist scenes which continue to have a virtual monopoly of the American theater. We want truth in the American theater, and that goes for the scenery too. MORDECAI GORELIK.

[Correspondent Gorelik is right in wanting bays for the brow of Designer Bay, who also did the settings for the Living Newspaper's vigorous new *Power,* reviewed last week. As to making NEW MASSES play reviews more analytical, we are not sure we agree. This raises a question of general publishing policy. We are not sure that such reviews are not more appropriate to such specialized journals as *New Theatre & Film* and *Theatre Workshop.*—The Editors.]



Frank Davidson

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REVIEW AND COMMENT

Edwin Seaver's social novel—About Catherine de' Medici and Romain Rolland—John Steinbeck and Vardis Fisher

EDWIN SEAVER has published two novels during the present decade. *The Company,* published seven years ago, was a profound summation of the era of Big Business that ended in 1929. Seaver's new novel, *Between the Hammer and the Anvil,* is a sincere and praiseworthy attempt to present the panorama of the epoch of little business that reached its lowest level in 1932.

This new novel,* written in a curious but altogether successful form, is about the large middle class in America. This middle class, as conceived by Mr. Seaver, is composed for the purposes of this story of lawyers, doctors, students, clerks, and housewives. The economic condition of these people is following the general economic curve downward. His characters and the depression reach their lowest ebb coincidentally.

The characters of this book have almost incredible names. Strangely enough, they prove to be in the end among the most real in modern fiction. In this age of photographic exactness, it is amazing that a novelist can use such names for his major characters as Mr. and Mrs. John Doe, and their sons, Tom, Dick, and Harry, and make those names convincing.

The John Does might be any average New York family in 1932. The father is bankrupt, striving vainly to find his way out of a morass of debt; the mother is attempting to keep the family and herself together by buying on credit; the three boys are launching themselves into criminal careers. In the end, the John Does emerge irreparably scarred by the economic forces that beat them down. The father is in the hands of shyster lawyers and loan sharks; the mother is still struggling to keep her self-respect in the face of denial of credit on every hand; the boys are dead after trying to steal automobiles. But this bare outline by no means encompasses the story that Seaver has to tell.

Revolving around the John Does are the lives of a half dozen or more families. These are the important people in the novel, deviating from the average family as represented by the John Does. Dr. Samuels, for instance, is an idealistic physician who saves a new life on one hand while taking an old life on the other. He is confused and troubled in his own mind about why he does such things. Then there is Rosenberg, a young lawyer, serving an apprenticeship handing out eviction notices, always bewildered by the injustice of an economic system that forces him to make a living by dispossessing others.

Seaver himself is as clear as his characters are confused. His deep and sincere conviction could come only from a writer who was sure of his subject, and surer of his purpose. In spite of the kaleidoscopic effect of the whole book, you feel that Mr. Seaver is writing as one who has lived these events with his characters, not merely observed them from the outside.

There is a basic quality to the novel that produces a satisfying soundness. The use of a tabloid newspaper item—two boys carrying through the theft of an automobile—might have turned the book into merely a thrill for sensation seekers. As such, it would have been worthless. What Seaver did was to adapt a story familiar to millions in such a way that it takes on problems of human conduct that are startling in their implications.

This was achieved by employing a story-montage, the breaking of the main story at intervals and the insertion of many other stories which seem at first to have little or nothing to do with the theme. But this is a device which is much more powerful than straight narrative. Seaver is not the first writer to use story-montage, but he has adapted its use to his purpose much more effectively than others have done. What might appear to be a deliberate attempt to confuse is actually a desire to make clear his intent.

Aside from being a life-sized mirror of the depression, this book is much more surely social fiction than most of the recent stories written about an individual's struggles for existence. Novels like *Between the Hammer and the Anvil* are the mainstay of American fiction at present, and in the future they will guide and lead the course of writing. Edwin Seaver has made an important contribution, and next year, and the year after, evidence of his influence will begin to be seen.

ERSKINE CALDWELL.

Woodcut by Dan Rico

* BETWEEN THE HAMMER AND THE ANVIL, *by Edwin Seaver. Julian Messner.* $2.50.

A Medici in France

CATHERINE DE' MEDICI AND THE LOST REVOLUTION, *by Ralph Roeder. The Viking Press.* $3.75.

CATHERINE DE' MEDICI was one of the last of the stormy breed of the Medici who rose from the crowd in Florence to lead that turbulent Italian city-state to preëminence in affairs of state and art. Marriage brought the girl, already accustomed by orphanage to a shifting fate, to France. The social turmoil, compounded of dissatisfaction of every class, that racked all Europe, had France in its grip when Catherine arrived there. During her forty-two years as queen and queen-mother, she was perpetually confronted by the problems of a troubled society.

The period of Catherine's life was the period of the rise of the commercial bourgeoisie of France to partial consciousness and strength. Above them, a semi-feudal monarchy, assisted by the nobility and the clergy, gutted the resources of the nation. Below them, a populace of artisans and peasants starved, fought the wars of their "betters," and at times rebelled. The "lost revolution," which is Ralph Roeder's concern in this work as much as is Catherine, was the unsuccessful effort of the Third Estate to achieve a measure of political power. This attempted revolution, and the wars which accompanied it, tore at the fabric of society, bore down with insufferable weight on the producing classes, and left France weak and prostrate, ready for the absolute monarchy brought by the Bourbons, who succeeded to the throne left vacant by the assassination of Henri III, the last of Catherine's royal sons and last of the Valois to head the monarchy. It was during the comparative peace of the reigns of the Bourbons, whose struggles rose in an ascending line to the absolute autocratic monarchy of Louis XIV, that the bourgeoisie changed character, became more predominantly a producing class, and in 1789 and the years thereafter carried through the French Revolution.

Catherine's character, her opportunism, her quick grasping of any straw to withstand the storms of the times; her concept of the monarchy as a personal possession to be held, used, and passed on to one's heirs; her penchant for compromise, for blunting the edge of controversy to prevent its resolution through "unavailing" strife; all this made her typify

Woodcut by Dan Rico

(as Roeder puts it) "that pseudo-revolution which, sterilized by its own inner contradiction, unable to advance or retreat, static, destructive, without purpose, without policy, without leaders, without the generous emotion of justice which might have supplied them, degenerated into morbid anarchy."

Mr. Roeder's portrait of political life in France during the Renaissance, as epitomized by Catherine de' Medici, is a worthy contribution to the study of European history. The book teems with detail, yet is history, not chronicle. Upon the basis of a study of the various factors of the social scene, Roeder strives to link the separate parts of his study, and the influence of the Marxist method in historical science is evident. He has not, however, used the vital tool of Marxism unerringly. He occasionally strays into historical idealism, laying changes to a changing spirit of the times, though he elsewhere recognizes the basis in social-economic development and the class ideologies developing out of them. He is at his best when showing the motivations of individuals as related to their immediate surroundings; he is at his weakest when showing the sub-structure of these surroundings. This can best be seen in his purely political analysis of the rise and development of the various revolutionary and counter-revolutionary leagues which beset the monarchy from either end. Here all is discussion of statecraft; hardly a word is said of economic developments, of prosperity or crisis. The occasional pointed references to economic facts are unrelated, abstract, with little understanding of their *differences* from other social data.

A word, finally, on Roeder's literary technique. He amasses his data from a multitude of sources, but reworks and transforms them into a pattern which he himself sets. His style is vivid, precise, but not marred by impressionism. As a presentation of the period, his book is, though not complete, invaluable. Its high level of political consciousness, its sympathy for the downtrodden, its interweaving of personal and social motivations, make it a welcome contribution.

HERBERT ROSENBLUM.

Romain Rolland's "Conversation"

I WILL NOT REST, *by Romain Rolland. Translated from the French by K. S. Shelvankar. Liveright.* $2.25.

AT a time when so many of the world's intellectuals are making, to put the matter mildly, a sorry spectacle of themselves, by wavering, floundering, by petty vanity and petty treason, the venerable figure of Romain Rolland stands out, silhouetted against more than half a century of honest, self-respecting, in the truest sense dialectical self-criticism and self-growth, with a tireless and fearless pushing back of mental and social horizons. The adjective "dialectical" is not employed at random. Glance over the present compilation of political documents, letters, controversies, odds and ends, covering the fifteen years from 1919 to 1934; or get the literary side of the picture

from the *Compagnons de Route,* published in France last year and spanning the first thirty-four years of the century—dip into either of these volumes, and you will not be slow in perceiving that Rolland's life has been an Eleatic *conversation,* with himself and with the world, proceeding by thesis, antithesis, and absorbing, resolving, forward-moving synthesis.

What is dialectics, after all, but another word for drama, the action and the conflict with the resulting change and growth which are the very substance, the essence of life? In the present instance, the theme of the drama is Romain Rolland and Soviet Russia. It is a drama that we see played out with superb fidelity in the pages of *I Will Not Rest.* The protagonists—or the dialectic interlocutors, as you choose—are Rolland, the great peace-loving, violence-hating humanitarian and libertarian, on the one hand, and on the other hand the Workers' State with its promise of a world of peace and freedom, but which, born as it was amid the throes of revolution, was seemingly to be achieved only through violence.

The synthesis? (The Greek dramatists called it a *"lysis,"* an untying of the knot.) Turn from those early days of 1921-2 when Rolland was engaged in his controversy with Barbusse, to that "Good-bye to the Past" penned on Easter Sunday, 1931. Turn from page 25 to page 277 of this volume.

What repelled me, even more than the violence which is imposed on all living creatures by the implacable necessity of living, was—as I said in my third letter to Barbusse (April, 1922)—the apology for violence, as it was made in those days by the madmen just come from the war. They applied the worst lessons of the war to the Revolution, the object of which is to free us from them.

And then:

The experience is not yet over. I will recount the sequel some other day . . . how the very march of events, this *Anagke,* which Marx reduced to the iron law of economic materialism, and which, severing the world into two camps, daily widened the gulf between the colossus of International Capitalism and that other giant: the Union of Proletarian Workers, had ineluctably led me to cross the abyss and range myself on the side of the U.S.S.R. It has not been a march without its weariness and its torments. And the voyage is not yet at an end. But it is rather like that of Sinbad the Sailor. And when I have come to the end I shall say:

"Blessed Peace. Rest, my head: rest, my feet. You have labored well. The route was hard and full of vicissitudes. But it was fine, in spite of everything. It was worth the trouble of shedding blood in the course of it."

What has happened, in other words, is this: the antithesis (violence) has as always *absorbed* the thesis (capitalistic "peace"), and the "negation of the negation" is to be found in the synthesis of an all-peaceful Soviet world to be.

However, do not get the idea that there is anything coldly diagrammatic in Rolland; that would be the greatest of misconceptions. The life-dialogue of the author of *Jean-Christophe* is invariably clothed in the flesh and blood of warm and palpitating human feeling. Indeed, Rolland in the past has only too often been accused of thinking too much with his heart and too little with his head. If that is true, his heart has not led him far wrong. It was his emotions which impelled him, in October 1919, to protest "the starvation blockade, the suppression of the Russian Revolution by the coalition of the bourgeoisies of Europe—Allies, Central Powers, and Neutrals." He found it impossible to accept, in 1921, the "infallibility of the fundamental laws" of Marxist "social geometry"; yet he none the less realized that the Marxist-Leninist revolution was "a tremendous social experiment, of which we may say, without prophesying its success, that it alone has any practical chance of leading to social salvation." In 1931, he writes:

I attach no importance to the words, idealism and materialism. . . . It is a question of sharing and apportioning human labor equally; and of restoring to millions of human beings, by the mere fact of such equitable distribution, the right to leisure, and the possibility of individual development. The parasites which are eating into the tree of life must be torn away from it. Nine-tenths of the sap is today guzzled down by the blood-suckers. . . . You do not bother about the dogmas of your gardener. He may be wrong (to err is human). But the Lenins and the Stalins seem to me old and experienced gardeners. They know the soil. They have worked all their lives. We can learn much from them. Having watched them for a long time, I have faith in them. The future will show. . . .

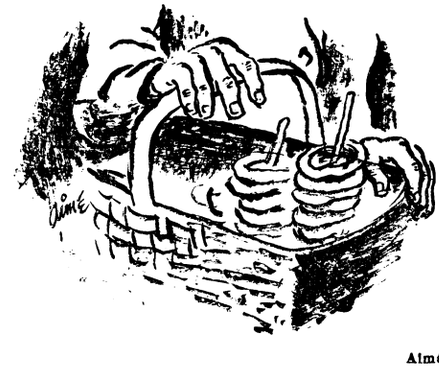
SAMUEL PUTNAM.

Insidious Innocence

OF MICE AND MEN, *by John Steinbeck. Covici, Friede. $2.*

IN American literature, the formula of greatness seems to be very simple nowadays. Bursts of applause, cheers, and raves are virtually all we have heard from the reviewers since the publication of John Steinbeck's new novel, hailed as a (or the) masterpiece of our time. It is hateful to be cast in the role of a killjoy; the most elementary critical honesty, however, demands a more sober evaluation.

But first let us try to see what Mr. Steinbeck possesses that can validate at least some of the assertions made in his behalf. One quality that is admirable, I think, is his frequent ability to handle people living in brutish circumstances and on a low level of consciousness without robbing them of their essential human attributes. By reason of this understanding, it becomes possible for him, in this narrative of homeless men drifting from ranch to ranch, to touch in his characters what is most real in them: the ache of loneliness, the dream of com-



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panionship, and the yearning for the simple human satisfaction of "belonging" some place they could call their own. To elude loneliness is to elude catastrophe in a society as atomized as ours, where the alienation of man from his fellows takes such a cruel toll. ("I seen them over and over—a guy talkin' to another guy and it don't make no difference if he don't hear or understand. The thing is they're talkin' or settin' still not talkin'. . . . It's just the talkin'. It's just being with another guy. That's all.") The speech of these people is behavior in dialogue form, and several of the episodes—as in the conversation between Crooks, the stableboy, and the two white men, and in the scene when Candy's dog is shot—have the natural humor and elegiac sadness of a folk-tale brought up to date. Particularly evocative is the portrait of the girl, done in a few sure strokes, who is a perfect robot of mechanized pleasures, the jazz-conditioned "good time" on two feet.

But the story revolves around George and Lennie, the two ranch-hands who form an inseparable pair. The resourceful George loves and pities Lennie, whose Caliban body holds the soul of a little girl. Lennie is obsessed by the impulse to stroke and pet soft things—smooth fabrics, mice, rabbits, and puppies—but his mind is so feeble that he cannot stop his enormous hands from strangling the very things he fondles. This last is the fatality which loses the pair every job they get, and which finally causes Lennie's death.

Lennie is the central character of the story. It is he who bears the brunt of its symbolism, whose simple meaning can be summed up in the question: how can one function as a human being in an inhuman environment? His craving for tenderness is a craving for humanity, yet it is precisely he who is wholly not a character. The reason he cannot control his hands is not that he is child-minded, as has been suggested by the blurbs and the enthusiastic reviewers, but that he is an imbecile. Now, an imbecile may have habits, but certainly no character: hence he can be considered dramatically non-existent. Also, it is entirely fitting that an unmanageable mind should find its true organ in unmanageable hands—all of which, in terms of creative validity, adds up to a stratagem, a transparent simplification, a mechanical formula. Once the fatality of destiny is transfixed in the biological, which is arbitrary, instead of being unfolded within the movement and fluidity of social relations, all talk of drama becomes unreal. An animal tropism is not a human response, and conflict cannot be represented in terms of the nonconscious. Being immobile, imbecility may serve the dramatic as a piece of exotic stage-property, but it can never make up its true development. Lennie is simply George's charge, like a dog. His death arouses in us the sort of pity we might feel at the death of a sick animal, but elementary sentiment is no substitute for tragic emotion.

Mr. Steinbeck's story touches on significant problems, but they are evaded by the poverty of his conception of them. The *milieu* he

describes presupposes a primitive human landscape; a deep chasm, however, separates the primitive from the inert. Given this failure in perception, his root-idea could not but have an aborted birth, thus making inevitable the sliding down into the kind of sentimentality and insidious innocence that would gratify Dr. Canby, enchant Mr. Woolcott, and at last bring ecstasy to Mr. Hansen.

PHILIP RAHV.

Off the Mark

EDUCATION AND THE CLASS STRUGGLE, *by Zalmen Slesinger. Covici, Friede.* $3.

MR. SLESINGER'S volume, which grew out of a doctoral dissertation at Teachers College, Columbia University, professes to be "a critical examination of the liberal educator's program for social reconstruction" from a Marxist point of view. By the liberal educator he means men like Counts, Kilpatrick, Bode, Watson, Redefer, and many others of the same general views in the Progressive Education Association and among the contributors to the periodical, the *Social Frontier.*

The liberal educator, in Mr. Slesinger's description, seeks "the cultivation of an integrated social mentality growing out of the American tradition and culture and suitable to the changing needs of an industrialized dynamic society," and "a collectivistic economy." Furthermore, the liberal educator favors alliance with progressive social forces, an organic relation between education and the community, devotion to the welfare of the masses, opposition to the tyranny of privilege, warm international kinship, bold social experimentation, militant teacher organization, the reinterpretation of the meaning of democracy in terms of present needs and social forces, and, *as a last resort,* the method of revolution.

This philosophy and program presents, says Mr. Slesinger, "a fundamental challenge to the approach and program of the Marxist." He points out properly that these educators tend to deny the existence of the class struggle (cf. Kilpatrick's statement, February 26, at the Progressive Education Association meeting in St. Louis: "I deny the class struggle here. I am no Marxian.") He has valuable documented chapters that should prove (but they did not do so in the case of Kilpatrick, who supervised the dissertation and has written an introduction to the book) the existence of classes and the path of the class struggle in America.

But in the remainder of the book, Mr. Slesinger, it seems to me, blunders repeatedly. First of all, in criticizing the liberal educators for favoring the democratic technique in social reconstruction, he needlessly alienates them by counterposing democratic and "anti-democratic" or "non-democratic" means. Despite the fact that, on p. 31, Mr. Slesinger had admitted that the liberal educators are not averse to "the method of revolution," the use of violence "as a last resort," he completely neglects this admission thereafter, and attacks the liberal educator for his adhering "unconditionally" (p. 242) to the democratic technique. Is it Mr. Slesinger's opinion that Marxists are irresponsible, reckless users of mass, revolutionary violence other than as a last resort? Would not, for example, the liberal educator's desire to reinterpret democracy in modern terms lead him to see that the Spanish democratic government is using a democratic instrument, armed popular force, to crush the Fascists? And did not Lincoln, as the head of a democratic government, use a democratic weapon, armed force, to crush the slave-holders' rebellion? Yet Mr. Slesinger, by needlessly identifying the democratic technique with "parliamentarism," can say: "Only once in American history was a democratic technique tested as a means to resolve a fundamental economic issue—the issue of slavery; and it failed to be effective." It is the relationship between bourgeois democracy and proletarian democracy, the fact that bourgeois democracy is the best possible condition under which to deepen the struggle for proletarian democracy—a relationship brilliantly set forth in Lenin's "Two Tactics of Social-Democracy in the Democratic Revolution"—that Mr. Slesinger tends to forget.

Secondly, the author criticizes the liberal educator for paying too much attention to economic factors, without considering "non-economic mentalities" like religion, nationalism, and racialism. Mr. Slesinger wants a "simultaneous reorientation" of our economic and non-economic mentalities, and therefore ends in this sectarian blind alley:

> We can hardly hope to build up mass organization and mass unity in the interests of economic reconstruction *as long as* the socially dividing forces of religion and racialism are not subjected to a fundamental reorganization and reorientation. Effective unity and organization would seem to demand the *elimination of all conditions* that now breed conflict and division within the ranks of the masses. We cannot expect to become effectively organized and sufficiently challenging to the existing economic order *unless* the interests which unite us are non-economic as well as economic. (p. 264; my italics.)

But did the General Motors sit-down strikers iron out all religious and racial differences *before* they sat down in struggle? Or did the Russian masses eliminate all conditions that divided them *before* they united to get land, peace, and freedom, a Soviet Union? In other words, do only Marxists, only Communists, engage in effective struggle even for the ultimate aim of socialism? Is it not the task of Soviet power to continue the social revolution into cultural, non-economic channels, *to change human nature,* in fact? But Mr. Slesinger seems not to have heard of Soviet power, or of the Soviet Union, which wins no mention in his book.

Mr. Slesinger, however, admits that he is not thoroughly devoted to Marxism. To him, the Marxian description of the American scene is "not wholly adequate" (p. 267). Similarly: "The plausibility of the Marxist program is not wholly dependent upon the plausibility of the Marxist philosophy in all of its metaphysical ramifications. It is conceivable that the Marxist class approach to social reconstruction may be accepted without accepting the Marx-

ist philosophy in all its aspects" (p. 268). It is such eclecticism as this (at a time when the French Communist Party is insisting upon dialectical materialism as a necessary principle upon which to build one united party by merging the Communist and Socialist Parties) that leads the author to his greatest defect, lack of faith in the ability of the masses to become conscious of their need and to organize for effective action. To him it is "problematic" whether "a majority of the people under present conditions can become intelligent about the ends and means involved in a program for social reconstruction" (p. 226). Such an attitude denies the possibility of a revolutionary struggle, and makes the putsch the only alternative.

In view of these defects, his last chapter, in which he defines a program of action, seems to have little connection with what went before. Mr. Slesinger favors organizing the unorganized, the united front (but he does not mention the people's front), "a radical labor party," and the development of a revolutionary ideology and organization (but he does not mention the Communist Party). It is significant, however, that he does not here specifically show what the liberal educator can begin to do to learn in practice, perhaps, what he is not yet fully willing to admit in theory: to join the American Federation of Teachers, to take greater interest not merely in adult education but in *workers'* education, to join farmer-labor parties that are growing up and tending towards a national farmer-labor party, in short, to become active in the struggle and thereby learn that it is in fact a class struggle.

Marxian criticism of the liberal educator is necessary; but it should be soundly grounded, and practical. Mr. Slesinger's, it seems to me, is neither.

MORRIS SCHAPPES.

Ariel in Idaho

APRIL, *by Vardis Fisher. Doubleday, Doran, & Co. and Caxton Printers, Ltd. $2.*

APRIL, subtitled *A Fable of Love,* seems a strange title for the new novel by Vardis Fisher, who recorded in his Vridar Hunter tetralogy the dark, volcanic, and titanic passions of a tortured soul. Despite its title, its rural setting, and its plot, *April* is far from being a placid pastoral idyll. It has humor, true enough, but the wry, twisted humor seen on the puckered mouth of a man who has eaten an astringent green persimmon. Mr. Fisher has said that it is impossible to conceive of any other kind of humor than ironic humor, and his grins are invariably strongly tinged with the sardonic.

Somebody has described Samuel Johnson as "an Ariel encased in the coarse hulls of a Caliban," and this might also apply to Mr. Fisher's heroine, June Beeg. She is short, dumpy, and plain, but her head is full of poetic fancy and whimsy. She feels the urge to love and be loved by a male, but the country bumpkins she knows will have nothing to do with her. They are attracted more by a pretty face and a trim shape than by a beautiful soul hidden within a lumpish body. There has

been a procession of farmhands on her father's farm, but June has never had much luck with them. There comes an anæmic stripling who fondly believes himself to be a poet, and he bewails the sorry state of affairs when a college man and a creator of literature to boot has to trudge along in the dust behind a plow. June is attracted to him, and sets out deliberately, in her faunish way, to win him. There is a scene of impressive dramatic power in which the callow youth repulses her advances, and June with simple dignity and pathos lays bare her heart.

June's mother, fat, indolent, and silly, is eternally engrossed in the synthetic romance found between the covers of cheap novels, and is disappointed because her wild, shaggy husband does not conform to her ideas of a true lover, engendered by the sissified heroes of fiction. June's father is a character in the authentic Fisher tradition of men whose footsteps shake the earth with thunder, men with heaving, hair-matted chests, men who howl with agony-shaken voices at a lightning-riven sky, though he is pretty well subdued and hopeless when the book begins, and is given to long periods of disappearance to get away from it all, only a sad shadow of the ring-tailed squealer of former days.

Through it all, faithful Sol Incham, an elderly bachelor, has been coming to see June every Sunday, often bearing a bouquet of woodland posies. He is plainly the only one who has any conception of June's other, inner self, a sprite keenly responsive to the beauties of life and nature. Even his understanding is an incomplete and somewhat distorted one.

It is always difficult and unwise to approach Mr. Fisher's characters with a come-day-go-day-God-send-Sunday yardstick, and one may even make out a plausible case for the thesis that no such people ever trod the earth, this being particularly true of the more intellectual ones. *April* is in spots a fable in very truth, but the fantasy is of high flight and epic dimension. The most credible and appealing character of the tetralogy was Neloa, Vridar's half-Indian sweetheart and wife, and in *April* it is upon the more inarticulate characters that Mr. Fisher bestows the attributes of earthiness and reality that made of Neloa such a saving contrast to Vridar's theatricality and inner turmoil.

Mr. Fisher's ability to recreate in all its turbulent hues and savage splendor the antelope country he knows so well is here used to magnificent advantage. This reviewer has never before encountered so striking a portrayal of a fire in the woods, and this episode ranks with the very finest descriptive prose of our day or any other day.

There is something annoyingly Gene Stratton Porter-ish about the happy ending in which June suddenly becomes cognizant and appreciative of Sol's heart of gold and flies to his shack and bosom, the sprite becoming a domesticated hewer of wood and fetcher of water in the twinkling of an eye, as it were. But Vardis Fisher has been so admirably revitalized by return contact with the earth that first nurtured his creative muse, he has so successfully cast off the sickly introspection and pure argumentation that marred the final volume of his tetralogy, he relates a tale with such persuasive grace, that one feels inclined to blink at trifles and offer thanks for a job well done.

JACK CONROY.

Brief Reviews

METTERNICH, *by H. Du Coudray. Illustrated. Yale University Press.* $4.00.

For nearly forty years up to the revolutionary year, 1848, Metternich, continually Foreign Minister or Chancellor of Austria, dominated European affairs. His effort, pursued with great skill, was to keep the heritage of the French Revolution from being fulfilled in Europe. Miss Coudray calls this a mission of peace; but it prevented no wars and only intensified conflict and insecurity. The rule of the bourgeoisie, whether under a republic or a constitutional monarchy, was inevitable in France, as was, also, the unification and independent national existence of Germany and Italy, which Metternich attempted to hold back in the interests of Hapsburg absolutism. Metternich is very much a hero to Miss Coudray, who sees him loyally with his own eyes; her very clever and epigrammatic book, charged with a brilliance scarcely equalled since Lytton Strachey, is, therefore, very limited in its value, especially in its stupidly snobbish indifference to those economic realities which give the key to the profound failure of Metternich's successful-seeming career.

THE BALKAN STATES 1. ECONOMIC, *Oxford University Press.* $2.00.

DRUMS IN THE BALKAN NIGHT, *by John J. B. McCulloch. Illustrated. G. P. Putnam's Sons.* $3.00.

The first of these volumes was prepared for the Royal Institute of International Affairs, organized in England in 1920, on the proviso that no "opinions" were to be expressed in its studies. There is certainly the strictest avoidance of "opinions" in this volume, which consists of statistical charts and explanatory text. The book is very valuable for reference, however. It requires no very elaborate study of the material to see the economic misery, sharpened by foreign control of all valuable resources, which has made the politics of this region a record of violence.

The second volume is a step above the ordinary tourist account. Mr. McCulloch is far from profound; he is, in fact, overanxious to appear to be a good fellow; but he is intelligent, observant, and a lively writer; and not inattentive to the currents of imperialist influence in the Balkans. His book is worth looking into.

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On This Island, by W. H. Auden. Random House. $1.50.

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America Today, a book of 100 prints exhibited by the American Artists' Congress. Equinox. $5.

Idaho: A Guide in Word and Picture, prepared by the Federal Writers' Projects of the Works Progress Administration. Caxton. $3.

This Is Your Day, by Edward Newhouse. Lee Furman. $2.50.

SIGHTS AND SOUNDS

The Bach family in a musical competition—That James Hilton picture—Serious dance and light drama

THOSE who drew tickets on the favorite in the Bach family sweepstakes run-off at Town Hall on March 1 had a rude shock, for the combined weights of Hans Lange and the St. Thomas's Church choir were a handicap that even the mighty old J. S. couldn't carry. All three of the colts he sired were bunched in front at the finish, and it required no camera eye to discern the dark horse, the ornery Friedemann, a good head and shoulders in the lead.

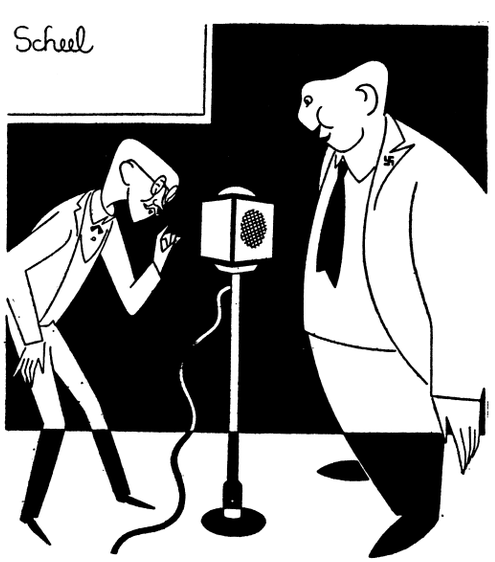
The turfy metaphor isn't as far-fetched as it might seem to anyone who missed the last Philharmonic-Symphony Chamber concert in the Bennington series, for it was a sportive if not entirely sporting affair. I've been to better concerts, but few that gave me more fun, excitement, and—at its best—solid satisfaction. It was unfortunate only in giving Sebastian a rather dirty deal: the cantata (No. 98, *"Was Gott thut"*) that should have been the climax of the program was an inept choice to begin with, and the shoddy performance dulled even the interest that Bach ordinarily commands in his most pedestrian moments. Recommended study for Dr. Noble and his chorus: the Bach recordings of another St. Thomas's Church choir, that of Leipzig. The fifth Brandenburg concerto, with Yella Pessl to play the virtuoso harpsichord part, was ideally chosen, but here the conductor relaxed his grip on the sinewy, high-spirited music, and—to go back to the race-track notion—broke the pace and by bad jockeying pulled up a sure winner.

It was a different story with the three sons on the first half of the program: a rapid succession of three works both unfamiliar and first-rate, and the best performances that Mr. Lange has turned in since the unforgettable Purcell *Fantasias* a season ago. My delight in the Philharmonic-Symphony Chamber Orchestra's skill has largely been occasioned in the past by the wind section, but K. P. E. Bach's third sinfonia gave the strings a chance to demonstrate their equally superb musicianship. They played out boldly with no softening of color or blurring of line: a vibrant, vivacious, sure-handed performance of top-notch caliber. Nor was there any relaxation in the Christian Bach concerto or Friedemann's sinfonia, although Miss Pessl's deft harpsichord playing rightly took the spotlight in the former and the composer held the stage alone in the latter. The "London Bach" was blithely charming (one can understand Mozart's admiration), but it was the black sheep of the family, the wastrel eldest son, who was not only the star of the evening, but a revelation that alone made the concert one of the most significant of the entire music season. Like many others, I have read so often that Friedemann dissipated his genius and been given such scant opportunity to discover just what established the reputation he blemished, that it was a miraculous discovery to meet another true musical giant. Friedemann may have turned out as willful and irresponsible as the textbooks paint him, but if he never wrote anything more than this D-minor sinfonia, with its magically poetic introduction and tautly spun fugal allegro, he made rich atonement for all his peccadilloes.

The other highlight of the last month and also one of the most satisfying evenings I have spent in a concert hall this year was the Pius X choir's treasure box of Gregorian and early polyphonic music last February 16. Julia Sampson and Achille Bragers demonstrated a keen understanding of the problems of choral conducting I have referred to before in these pages. Not impressive themselves, their performances were; and it is the ear rather than the eye that is the test of a conductor. The economical but telling use of gesture, the insight into the peculiar demands of the music with which they deal, the obvious care and skill with which they have trained their naturally little-gifted chorus, resulted inevitably in performances of uncommon distinction. To be sure, the striving for dead accuracy of intonation was achieved at the cost of iciness and brittleness of tone; they have yet to attain the same flexibility and variety of color that they have got in the rhythmical element of their works. And the virtuosity of the Palestrina *Ascendens Christus* that closed the program is still a bit beyond the grasp of their girls. But any concert that boasts such delectable mountains as Tallis's *Sancte Deus* and the astonishing Taverner *Audivi* (in truly worthy performances) is a landmark not only of a concert season but of one's entire musical experience.

The Mozart-Haydn series seems to be the most successful of the multitudinous Federal Music Project activities in New York, and instead of concluding on March 5, it is to be continued indefinitely. The concert's merits vary with those of the various conductors, and the standards set by Arthur Fiedler on the opening night have yet to be approached. Incidentally, Mr. Fiedler is to return for a program with the Federal Symphony Orchestra on March 14, and he shouldn't have much difficulty in topping—by a wide margin—the present level of the Sunday evening concerts. That for February 28 touched bottom with Lamar Stringfield's just too exquisite pantomiming and the unhappy resurrection of John Powell's *Rhapsodie Nègre,* an example of "aristocratic nationalism" at its snootiest, written in bad musical and worse programmatic taste.

R. D. DARRELL.



Theodore Scheel

THE SCREEN

THERE comes a time in the life of a Hollywood director when he will be entrusted with the task of making a multi-million dollar spectacle; and in the history of a studio known for its low-cost films there comes a period when it will be in the position to join the took-more-than-a-year-and-more-than-a-million-dollars-to-produce class. Mr. James Hilton's glib adventure tale (*Lost Horizon*), imbued with the pleasant narcotic philosophy of escape, gave both President (of Columbia Pictures) Harry Cohen and Director Frank Capra their chances.

Mr. Capra is without question one of the most important directors making films in Hollywood. He is a sensitive man who sincerely loves his medium. That sincerity and knowledge began to show itself in a series of films which began with *The Bitter Tea of General Yen* and reached its climax with *Mr. Deeds Goes to Town.* But no one ever accused Frank Capra of being a literary critic, and it is painful to read in *The Making of a Great Picture* (a glorified press-book on *Lost Horizon*) the following sentence by Mr. Capra: "I saw in the book [Lost Horizon] one of the most important pieces of literature in the last decade." It makes one wonder about the kind of literature that is sold in Hollywood bookstores.

At any rate, like all of Capra's films, *Lost Horizon* begins with a bang. Robert Conway (Ronald Coleman), a British imperialist but in reality an idealist, saves ninety white people from being "butchered in a local revolution." There are five people in the final plane bound, presumably, for Shanghai. But the pilot has been changed in a mysterious fashion, and the five passengers find that they are being kidnapped to Tibet. So far the film has been an exciting *Grand Hotel* kind of melodrama with some interesting aerial photography. They finally arrive in the Utopia of utopias, Shangri-la. As in Hollywood, the weather is always perfect, while outside of Shangri-la the world is stormy and terrifying. It is here that Chang, the lieutenant of the Grand Lama (Sam Jaffe), tells Conway: "Our general be-

lief was in moderation. We preach the virtue of avoiding excesses of every kind, even including excess of virtue itself." That's the payoff. For the film stops at nothing in order to *avoid* moderation. The sets are colossal; the speeches unbelievably lengthy; the melodrama in such quantities that it loses its excitement; the number of long pauses where nothing happens are too numerous to catalog; and the total length of the film itself, fourteen reels. Not since the days when Capra made *Dirigible* and *Submarine* has any one of his films contained so much that was trite, such little characterization, and such stupid and dangerous philosophy. We have in recent years stopped talking about the Hollywood film as a means of escape. We have taken it for granted. If this film were produced anywhere but in Hollywood, we might be able to read into it a satire of all escape films. In a sense, *Lost Horizon* is an autobiography of Hollywood. It emerges as the apotheosis of escapism. The opening subtitle reads:

In these days of wars and rumors of wars—haven't you ever dreamed of a place where there was peace and security, where living was not a struggle but a lasting delight? Of course you have. So has every man since Time began. Always the same dream—sometimes he calls it Utopia—sometimes the Fountain of Youth—sometimes merely "that little chicken **farm."**

By comparison, *Lost Horizon* makes M.G.M.'s *The Good Earth* a brilliantly realistic motion picture.

Fire Over England (London Films-United Artists) is a typical historical film that boasts everything excepting historical reality. It is presumably the story of what went on behind the scenes in the defeat of the Spanish Armada in 1588. Paramount's *Maid of Salem* is a pretentious story of witchcraft in early America. Frank Lloyd has earned for himself the reputation as a genius for his work on *Cavalcade* and *Mutiny On the Bounty*. Except for some minor episodes showing lynch terror, the new film is superficial and dull. PETER ELLIS.

THE DANCE

IN a program of solo and group compositions which uncommonly stirred the audience that packed the 92nd Street Y. M. H. A. in New York, Anna Sokolow moved forward as a leader in the American dance field. A keen intelligence for selection of substance, a direct, poignant treatment of subject matter, an unpretentious choreography, excellent in design and constantly moving, her compositions are contemporary, sound, and for the people both in sympathy and execution.

Case History No. —, the first of the two new works given, moves an unemployed solo figure in simple, colloquial jazz rhythms through a neurotic bravado from "street corner to poolroom, from mischief to crime." Unlike the simple and not unpleasant satire of her *Ballad (In Popular Style)*, built on similar jazz tones, the *Case History* (Wallingford Riegger wrote the music) develops in a minor key that at once exposes and condemns not the unemployed but the "background which begins with unemployment,"

and from which "a study of a majority of case histories shows that the petty criminals usually emerge." The dance is a poignant indictment. If the composition falls off towards its curtain, perhaps the acceptance which climaxes the choreography is somehow foreign to the sense of the dancer's accusation. Or the fault may be with the dancer's identifying herself too completely with the figure and an antagonism which is more in the nature of a compensating resentment than the result of analysis and directed attack. Whatever the case, the composition is a forceful and moving document on youth in a "packed" society.

Excerpts from a War Poem (the poem from the pen of the Fascist F. T. Marinetti) is the more ambitious work. A vigorous satire on the trumpeted Fascist philosophy and the decadent and destructive manifestations of it, the composition is a series of swift analytical sketches, searching, precise, a thoroughly effective ironic statement—anti-war, anti-Fascist.

The composition is developed through five "excerpts." "War is Beautiful," the first movement, is divided between a thoroughly nervous series of group movements interrupted by a group in mechanized precision. The second movement introduces the three graces: bull-like "Strength" in red (Mussolini), the pale glory-that-was-Rome "Harmony" in white (emasculate Cæsar), and the romantic heart-on-the-breast "Kindness" in green (Gabriel d'Annunzio). The red, white, and green of Il Duce's Italy play stylized mechanical gestures with each other: "War is Beautiful because it fuses in Strength, Harmony, and Kindness." No dancer has dealt more keenly, more ironically with the hypocrisy of the Fascist "civilizers."

In the third movement of the composition, "War . . . realizes the long-dreamed-of metalization of the human body," the "metalization" is the final grotesque death mask that consumes the faces of the mechanized bodies while the Roman female chorus sloths off into its sleep—to continue its dream, no doubt. The fourth movement is a series of single and duo figures of disintegration—hurried, frantic, utterly futile efforts to bolster the diseased "culture" which faces an inevitable and running destruction: "War . . . creates the spiral smoke of burning villages."

"War is Beautiful because it serves the greatness of our great Fascist Italy" is the last movement, the movement in which all four preceding phrases are harmonized in a brilliant choreographic structure, the "greatness" of Fascist Italy summarized in mechanical rigidity, hypocrisy, death, the brutalization of its people, and the putrefying marrow of its reactionary composition.

And the Dance Unit of the New Dance League performing the work (for which Alex North provided an admirably adequate musical score and for which Anton Refregier designed ingenious costumes) danced with the precision the work demands, and did well by the rest of the program, which included Mike Gold's *Strange American Funeral.* The

League plans to present Anna Sokolow and the Dance Unit in late spring; they should be seen. OWEN BURKE.

THE THEATER

WHEN a convincing passion for scientific research becomes the motivation for murder and other high crimes, we can say that what Broadway happily refers to as the Who-done-it? drama is going places. The case in point, *The Amazing Dr. Clitterhouse,* a crime comedy by Barré Lyndon which Gilbert Miller has put on in New York, tells the story of a physician who is fed up with taking pulses, and decides to do a little research into the physiological causes and consequences of criminal practice. Good scientist, the doctor realizes he must depend on laboratory methods, and so goes in for crime, taking notes on his physiological reactions and on those of a gang, of which he becomes the brain guy. When not snatching pearls or silver foxes, he takes the blood pressure and looks down the throats of his accomplices. The fence through whom the gang disposes of its swag, however, is a fretful man who is bothered by the fact that the gang's leader has a secret other life. He manages to learn his real identity, and, when the doctor has completed his researches and withdraws from criminal practice, the fence tries to blackmail him into continuing. It is at this point that the doctor realizes he has no first-hand data on murder, and proceeds to get it. From here on in the story our lips are sealed.

Apart from the deftness with which the scrip is written, Lewis Allen's direction and the acting of Cedric Hardwicke in the title role must be credited with bringing to satisfying dramatic fruition a series of ideas and situations which might well have seemed rather barren. Mr. Hardwicke's style is that of a highly disciplined duelist, whose foot- and blade-work are poised and fluent, and who sees his openings and drives his point home without bluff or fluster, but with decisive effect.

Of eight playgoers at the Theatre Union's *Marching Song* who filled out a questionnaire designed to get a hasty sampling of audience reaction, five expressed "positive liking," one expressed "indifference," one expressed "disappointment," and one expressed positive liking with the symbol "½." The two proletarians who filled out the questionnaire (there were four white-collar and professional answerers, and two who neglected to state their vocation but who seemed to reveal themselves as white-collar folk) liked the play, and both liked the character Woodrow Wilson Rosenbloom best (as did two others). The person who expressed disappointment seems to have been of something of an anarchistic type, because, although apparently developed enough to grasp the significance for such a survey of questions as to age, sex, trade-union membership, kind of work, and political views, these questions were left unanswered. This answerer was the most sophisticated playgoer, having seen a dozen other plays this season, and all of the Theatre Union productions. This person declared that the idea of the play was the

most pleasing element, but complained that the scope of the play was too broad and rambling and that the characters, except for Rosenbloom and the chief strikebreaker, were unconvincing. The person who expressed indifference was not a trade-union member and failed to answer the question as to vocation. Judging by the handwriting, however, this twenty-nine-year-old woman was a librarian, who commented, "Propaganda all the time—during intermissions [whatever that means!]. I came to see a drama, not a series of speeches." This person, with another, was the second most sophisticated playgoer, having seen six other plays this season and *Stevedore*. All four trade-union members expressed liking for the play. As to political sympathies, the person who expressed disappointment failed to answer the question, the person who expressed indifference was a Roosevelt supporter, and the six who expressed liking were four Communists, one Socialist, and one Farmer-Laborite.

ALEXANDER TAYLOR.

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Forthcoming Broadcasts

(Times given are Eastern Standard, but all program listed are on coast-to-coast hookups)

John Haynes Holmes. "The President and the Judiciary," Thurs., March 11, 6:30 p.m., Columbia.

Debate. U. of Pittsburgh vs. U. of Washington on "Resolved: that Congress be empowered to pass maximum-hour and minimum-wage legislation for industry." Sat., March 13, 2 p.m., N.B.C. red.

Civil Liberties. "The Freedom of the Press." The U. S. Office at Education's weekly program, Mon., March 15, 10:30 p.m., Columbia.

Problems Before Congress. Members of the House of Representatives discuss them Wednesdays at 3:30, and Senators Thursdays at 5 p.m. Columbia.

Senator Norris. Speaking before the National Conference on Constitutional Amendment, Thurs., March 18, 8 p.m., N.B.C. blue.

Debate. U. of Southern California versus New York U. on "Resolved: that Congress should be empowered to over-ride decisions of the U. S. Supreme Court," Sat., March 20, 3 p.m., N.B.C. red.

Recent Recommendations

MOVIES

Prisoners. Amkino's release on the "social engineering" during the White Sea canal construction.

The Woman Alone. Director Alfred Hitchcock's version of Conrad's *The Secret Agent,* with Sylvia Sidney.

The Man Who Could Work Miracles. Roland Young in a funny H. G. Wells story.

PLAYS

Power (Ritz, N. Y.). The Living Newspaper's powerful and amusing attack on the utilities racket.

The Sun and I (Adelphi, N. Y.). A free rendering of the story of the Biblical Joseph, by Leona and Barrie Stavis.

Having Wonderful Time (Lyceum, N. Y.). Marc Connelly direction and Arthur Kober authorship of a play about young love at one of those summer camps.

Marching Song (Bayes, N. Y.). The Theatre Union's strong production of John Howard Lawson's play about an auto strike and other things.

Yes, My Darling Daughter (Playhouse, N. Y.). A pleasant comedy about a former-free-loving mother's unavailing efforts to prevent her daughter from following her example.

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