

new
Masses

MARCH 20, 1934

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A Letter from America

To the *PRESIDENT*

Are Newspapermen Workers?

By *PHILIP J. CORBIN*

My Approach to Communism

By *KENNETH BURKE*

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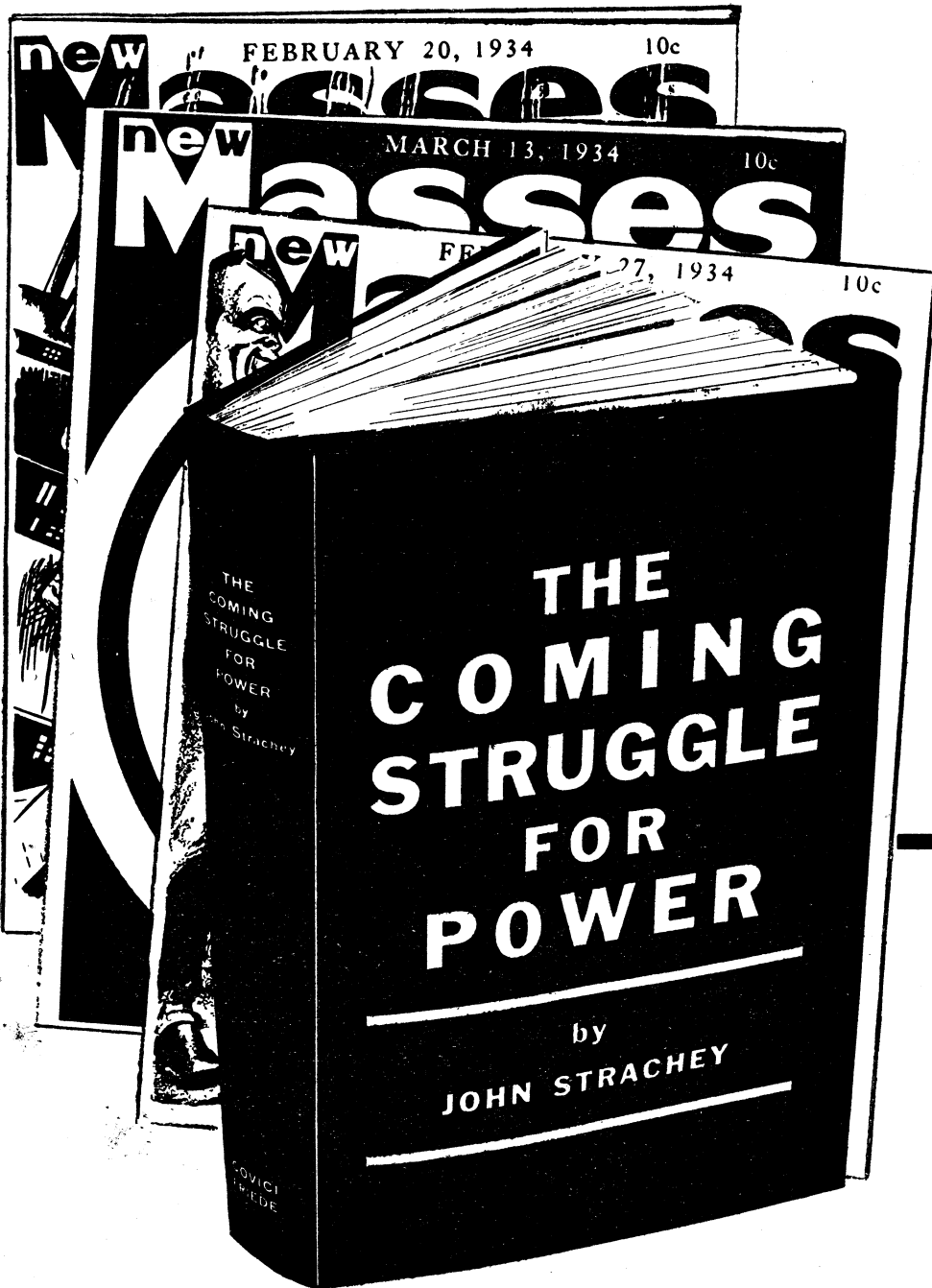
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MARCH 20, 1934

RARELY has the true character of the American Federation of Labor leadership been so neatly exposed as by General Johnson in his advice to 4,000 "gentlemen who control industry." "Their interests are your interests," explained the N.R.A. Administrator as he confided: "I would rather deal with Bill Green, John Lewis, Ed McGrady, Mike MacDonough, George Berry and a host of others than with any Frankenstein that you may build up under the guise of a company union." A few months ago there was no need for resorting to the A.F. of L. bureaucracy, for company unions had increased nearly 100 percent, stripping over 700,000 workers of their collective bargaining powers. But recently workers all over the country have bitterly fought against the company union shackle, as in the notorious Budd and Weirton cases. Right now in New York 4,500 Parmelee taxi drivers are defying the company union. There are also the Bethlehem Steel workers in Baltimore. And the Gary steel workers in Indiana. . . . To remedy the situation Johnson turns to the A.F. of L. bureaucracy as the logical instrument for employers to utilize for suppressing labor. "Here is a way out," he advises them. "Play the game!"—with the A.F. of L. leaders who have shown their true mettle by helping to write the codes, to lower wages and living standards, and by instituting speed-up, discriminating against Negro workers, and breaking strikes. What further proof do the industrialists need but the A.F. of L. leadership's long history of sell-outs, treachery and graft with the demagogic phrases brought forward occasionally to save its face?

NONE of the industrialists took issue with Johnson's warning that the country faces "the worst epidemic of strikes in our history." Under the New Deal the working class has been suffering drastic reductions in real wages, as the following figures (from the A.F. of L. Federationist) show. From April, 1933 to January, 1934 the cost of food rose 16.7 percent and of clothes 27.5 percent while wages increased only 7 percent. Meanwhile, as

a National City Bank survey proves, 810 corporations changed a loss of \$45 million into \$440 million profit since the N.R.A., railroads alone gaining 127 percent. Such enormous growth of corporation profits has been the direct outcome of the speed-up, lowered wages, rising commodity prices, and inflation forced upon American workers—a working class oppression which obviously cannot long continue.

ALREADY a series of nation-wide strikes has begun. Even postal clerks, civil servants deprived of the strike weapon, are organizing against speed-up, pay cuts, and the present \$8.40 weekly wage for substitutes. In Utica, N. Y., Canton and Peoria, Ill., Fall River, Mass., Richmond, Va., thousands have compelled the C.W.A. to listen to their demands. In Milwaukee, Racine, and Kenosha, Wis., 5,000 auto and tractor plant workers have demonstrated against speed-up and low wages. Having been previously sold out by A. F. of L. officials, they themselves are forcing the issue. Shoe workers in Haverhill, Mass., and fur workers in New York City have forced employers to sign agreements. Members of the

Marine Workers Industrial Union in Baltimore tied up five ships and won their demands by a glowing example of Negro and white solidarity. Plymouth auto workers in three departments won a victory, and workers in Buick, Chevrolet, Fisher Body and Ford plants are either striking or planning strikes. In Walker County, Ala., 20,000 miners have voted to strike, 8,000 men already having walked out. Troops and airplanes have been dispatched into the area although Brig. Gen. Parsons admits that "no violence has been reported." Fighting the company union, demanding better hours and wages for themselves and for Negro workers, they are striking against the express demands of the N.R.A. board as well as the United Mine Workers (A.F. of L.) union. In fact American workers are daily furnishing evidence of a growing disinclination to submit any more easily to A.F. of L. betrayal than to the anti-labor company union tactic, which is Roosevelt's New Deal to labor.

MISS DOROTHEA GILBERT, member of the staff of the Presbyterian Hospital, has brought to the world's attention a new discovery con-



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—Lawrence Dennis

Lou Bunin



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cerning the importance of radicalism. Sufferers from nervous diseases are cured, according to her report before the American Association of Hospital Social Workers, by joining the International Labor Defense and other radical organizations. "It [radical activity] worked perfectly. It had a definite therapeutic effect." On the assumption that Miss Gilbert is a competent social worker, one might conclude that she regards her radical advice to depression victims as an attempt to "adjust them to reality;" the goal of all intelligent and honest psychiatry. But Miss Gilbert's notions of therapeutic procedures have not advanced to this dangerous level. Curing of emotional sufferers is, according to her standards, still a matter of doping, of nostrums. Just allow the victims to "vent their spleen against society" and they will be able to resume their place in the same society—without their spleen. That the reactions of the unfortunates to their society is normal and inevitable, and that the disease and morbidity to which they are a prey are to be found in society, is not mentioned even to be disparaged.

AT the same gathering of hospital workers, Dr. Frankwood E. Williams proceeded to put meaning into Miss Gilbert's words; meaning which she cannot be accused of having suspected. Dr. Williams, after a survey of conditions of mental diseases in the Soviet Union, reports that the number of neuroses and emotional disturbances there has decreased remarkably. His explanation is no less interesting than his finding. In substance, the Soviet Union is eliminating the breeding ground of emotional disorder by *abolishing the exploitation of individuals*. We must conclude, therefore, that although Miss Gilbert is on the right track, she has yet to see that the patients she assigns to radical organizations are not only curing themselves thereby but are working for the creation of that society in which their disorders will be eliminated by the *adjustment of reality to individuals*.

SIMULTANEOUS action by thousands of Spanish Communists, Socialists and Syndicalists is forcing a showdown which the Lerrox Cabinet has tried to avoid. No longer trusted by the working class, Lerrox's third Cabinet under the republican regime is coolly regarded by the Agrarians (landowners'



party) and openly scorned by the Catholics, the largest party, which has not Cabinet representation. Robles, Catholic leader has already spoken of adopting methods advocated by the Fascist, Primo De Rivera. Flinging a threat of armed assault at the rising worker solidarity, Robles has warned that any earnest of labor action "will force us to take an anti-democratic attitude. This will lead to extremes of which I dread to think." All of which has failed to impress a rising proletariat that has called out over 100,000 on strike. Over 80,000 building trades workers, for example, have struck because 10 percent of the employers failed to carry out the 44-hour week agreement negotiated by the government.

WITH classic demagogy Lerrox's republican government threatens to force "both sides to comply," and "for this purpose" has been empowered to call extra Assault Guards, Civil Guards and national troops. But whom is he using these forces against?—the employers, who have already organized armed Fascist vigilantes to protect all Spanish business from labor? Is he ordering his troops against the strike-breakers whom the employers boast of having hired? As always the government of a bourgeois democracy can never hide its true character when put to a test. When workers in printing trades and street railways struck, the government's armed forces were used to break the strike. Assault Guards, whose reputation for brutality is well earned, were ordered to drive through Madrid labor districts "to preserve order." Already the headquarters of the Federation of Labor, Communists and Socialist Youth have been closed as the reactionaries begin their anti-labor terror. But against them are mobilized thousands upon thousands of deter-

mined workers who are defying official and employer terror from a rapidly consolidating proletarian front.

A STRIKING example of what Fascism means for workers is found in a recent report of the German Insurance Fund Gazette. Free medical service has been so seriously curtailed since the Hitler gang got into power that less than one-third as many workers received free medical treatment from the Reich Insurance Fund as had received it in 1930. And this decline is not because workers are in better health. As the Gazette itself explains: "Mere fear of losing their jobs has induced tens of thousands to refrain from applying for needed medical care. Furthermore, social insurance offices, progressively crippled in funds, have been forced to limit medical treatment to a few selected diseases." In health services as in everything else, Fascism thus proves itself the direct opposite of Communism. Social insurance funds are crippled in Germany. In the Soviet Union there is genuine social insurance for workers for the first time in history. Workers in Germany are too fearful concerning their jobs to apply for medical treatment. In the Soviet Union every factory scientifically cares for the health of its workers. And who suffers most in Nazi Germany? According to this very German Gazette, the decline in public health service has been "catastrophic for our wage-earning youth." And it reports that about one-third of those under age are unfit through defective health. Fascism not only wields the axe but it murders the working class in this systematic wholesale way.

WHEN Roosevelt took office he promised to drive "the money changers" out of the temple of our national life. The success of his campaign can be gauged by a report published recently by the American Banker. The report gives a factual analysis of the rapid centralization and concentration of finance capital. It proves conclusively that the new deal has accelerated the growth of the big banks. At the end of 1932 the 200 largest commercial banks controlled 58 percent of all commercial deposits. At the end of 1933, a year of severe financial crisis, the 200 largest banks controlled 63 percent of all commercial deposits. These 200 banks controlled 20 billion dollars; fourteen thousand smaller banks controlled the re-



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maining 13 billion dollars of commercial deposits. An even better picture of the money trust is given by an examination of the super-giants—the 100 largest banks. At the end of 1926 the 100 super-giants controlled 16 billion out of a total of 40 billion dollars, or 40 percent of all commercial deposits. There was a wholesale decrease in the deposits of the small banks during the crisis, but the 100 largest banks actually increased their control of the financial system. At the end of 1933 they controlled 17 billions out of a total of 33 billion dollars, or 52 percent of all commercial deposits. It should be remembered that these 100 super-giants are controlled in turn by the 10 largest banks. Thus through a series of interlocking controls, 50 to 100 bankers and industrialists literally own America. The new deal, far from driving them out, has increased their power tremendously. The Annalist—the leading American financial journal—in commenting on this fact says that “The large aggregates of financial capital stand to benefit substantially in the long run from the new regime—the elimination of competitive methods, the closer welding together of the private banking with the governmental financial apparatus, the increasing control and coördination—all are elements of strength for the future of financial capitalism.”

THE Writer's Digest is one of the trade papers of American pulp writers. A market grade listing magazines and their requirements appears in its year-book, the 1934 edition of which has just been issued with a leading article by Upton Sinclair. Characteristically almost half of the article is an advertisement of his latest book and of his candidacy for governor of California on the Democratic ticket. The article includes two significant statements. “During the Spanish-American War I killed one Spaniard after the other for the entrancement of dime novel readers. This work gave me enough money to exist; it schooled me in the technique of turning out from six to fifty-six thousand words a week.” A literary slaughter of Spaniards for American jingoes—a fitting opportunistic start for this old Socialist and master opportunist! Further on, describing his EPIC plan to End Poverty In California he says “it means a new hope, *not merely for workers but for all useful producers in our state.*” Now who are the useful producers? And what is their new hope? Are they, perhaps, the capitalist angels financing your campaign, and is a guarantee of profits their hope? Are they also the Democratic state bosses, smiling up their sleeves, who are delighted to find

so perfect a demagogue as yourself and are looking in other parts of the country for their graduates of that perfect school of Demagogy, the leadership of the Socialist Party?

ACCORDING to an interview reported in the Gastonia Gazette, Ludwig Lewisohn has decided to give up creative writing. In as crassly materialistic an era as ours “boots are more important than books.” So, with a sigh, Mr. Lewisohn leaves literature to its fate. The so-called “materialistic” writers of the revolutionary movement, however, are building up, by devotion and self-sacrifice, a vigorous and fruitful literature. In their working class readers they are finding the most alert audience of modern times. Literature will not suffer by Mr. Lewisohn's desertion. After all, Mr. Lewisohn, in common with many other bourgeois writers, puts his art to exhibitionistic uses. Literature will be cleansed and revived when it is no longer used for the expression of such abnormalities of egotism as Mr. Lewisohn's.

HOW does Mr. Lewisohn, the Jewish chauvinist, view the situation in Germany? In the interview referred to above, he declares the persecution of Jews—he mentions no others—to be one of the most colossal mass crimes in history. Strangely enough, however, Mr. Lewisohn hopes to see Hitler stay in power. “If Hitler were to fall,” he asserts, “Germany would be in even far worse a condition than it now is.” The Jewish chauvinist shakes hands with his brother in lunacy, the German chauvinist.

OTHERS beside Mr. Archibald MacLeish are addressing themselves to the men of Wall Street. Mr. Arthur Murray, dance school owner, is talking like a real father to them, in a series of advertisements. He knows the strain under which these great men labor; he deplores their jumpy nerves; he is anxious to keep them fit to cope with their weighty problems; he offers them the services of “really good partners.” Mr. MacLeish invited them to take mental exercise; Mr. Murray offers them exercise “without strain,” “with really good partners.” We are afraid the geniuses of Wall Street will accept Mr. Murray's invitation and leave Mr. MacLeish, hat in hand, waiting.

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A United Front—With Whom?

IN OUR correspondence section for this week, we publish a letter from Anita Brenner, one of the signers of the Open Letter criticizing the Communist Party on the Madison Square Garden affair, which we incorporated in an editorial addressed to John Dos Passos in the March 6 issue of *THE NEW MASSES*. Miss Brenner does not approve of our editorial. She particularly objects to being classified as either a "shady" or a "stupid" person. *THE NEW MASSES* did not apply any such epithets to Miss Brenner. What we said was that several of those who signed the letter with John Dos Passos were like him "honest but misguided." That may happen in the best of families. Certainly, men like Robert Morss Lovett, or Meyer Schapiro, or John Chamberlain, etc., could scarcely be described as "shady" or "stupid." We do not speak officially for the Communist Party, but we venture to assert that the Party would certainly be very pleased to receive the coöperation, the sympathy and, yes — the friendly criticism of such people.

Among the signers there were also people whose political affiliations stamp them as declared enemies of the Communist Party. Edmund Wilson has formed an unholy alliance with the "shady" Max Eastman and the still "shadier" Calverton and Hook. James Rorty is a member of the so-called American Workers' Party, an organization which at the present time is impotently trying to split the ranks of the working class. James Rorty, we know, went out to collect the signatures for the "open letter." Surely he was not interested in offering friendly criticism to the Communist Party. Seizing upon the false reports in the commercial press as a pretext, he and his confrères hastened to concoct a letter which they thought would embarrass the Communist Party, would discredit its policies and tactics before the working masses. We know also why the letter was sent to us. We understand it was sent in the hope that we would not publish it and that we would thus provide a "good" reason for releasing it in the capitalist press.

We are not certain to which category Miss Brenner belongs. Let her look into her own heart and find the answer there. If she really is in sympathy with

the aims of the Communist Party, as she protests she is, her tone does not fully convey it. When one chooses a safe little spot on the remotest fringe of the movement, when one refuses to assume the responsibilities, dangers, and sacrifices of open and energetic membership in the Communist Party, one should be a little more modest in one's manner of addressing those who do not shirk responsibilities, who are willing to come out before the whole world and take the consequences of organized revolutionary action. The Communist Party is not infallible. Its leaders are human. They make mistakes. But even so, it is a little queer to have a person like Miss Brenner "require the Communist Party to defend its position."

The Communist policy that according to Miss Brenner needs defenses so badly is that of the "united front from below." The "riot" at the Garden, she thinks, was the inevitably disastrous outgrowth of that policy. On the basis of her recent study of Spanish politics, she contends, it has become obvious to her that the "united front from below" tactic has proved a hopeless fiasco and should forthwith be abandoned. Unfortunately, Miss Brenner's communication, despite its air of injured innocence, is not distinguished by complete candor. She has something up her sleeve, as will be demonstrated next week in our discussion of the role of the intellectual in the revolution.

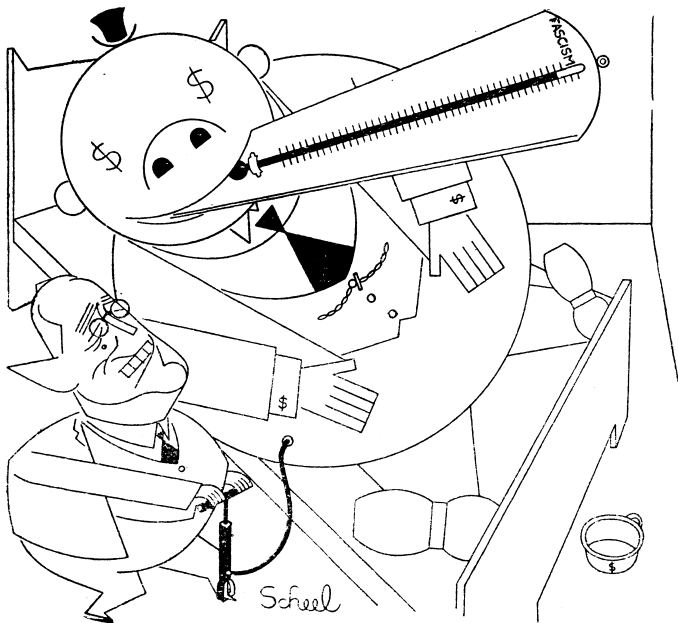
Here we shall simply confine ourselves to the question of the united front which, we all agree, is really "the core of the matter." There are all kinds of theories pertaining to the united front and how to accomplish it. Miss Brenner, no doubt, has her own pet theory which she has so far declined to reveal to us, though, frankly speaking, we surmise its nature. The Austrian Social Democracy also had a theory of the united front, a theory which brought it finally to a tragic dénouement. The Austrian workers believed in, and indeed achieved a certain kind of unity. The overwhelming majority of the Austrian workers were organized in trade unions. The Austrian Socialist Party was supported by almost the entire working class of the nation. The Communist Party was quite small. Miss Brenner is absurd in suggesting that it was the

Communist policy of united front from below that was responsible for the Austrian catastrophe.

The Austrian working class had boasted of a unity so broad as not to be matched by any other working class in the capitalist world. Yet what was the result? Paralysis, weakness, helplessness before the advance of the hordes of Fascism. What kind of "unity" was it that led to disaster? It was a "unity" of the workers and the bourgeoisie, a "unity" calculated to prevent the development of the class struggle. It led to the acceptance of Dollfuss as a "lesser evil," it lulled the workers with pious chants about bourgeois democracy and painless development into Socialism. It showed them the Karl Marxhof and bade them to forget the barricades. The "united" working class of Austria labored under Social Democratic illusions: it did not have a sufficiently strong revolutionary vanguard to throw its united forces into effective struggle against the Heimwehr, the Nazis, and for a proletarian dictatorship, a Soviet Austria. Only to the extent to which the working class broke the bonds of this Social-Democratic unity did it manage to put up any kind of resistance to Dollfuss.

Similarly in Germany: The tragedy here was that the Communist Party was not strong enough to sufficiently expose the Social-Democratic policies to the overwhelming masses of the German proletariat. As a result the Social Democratic leadership mobilized the German working class in the presidential elections of 1932 to support Hindenburg who shortly afterward ceded power to Hitler.

What is happening in France? When the Stavisky scandal implicated the Socialist-backed Daladier Cabinet, the masses, roused to fury, swarmed into the boulevards to express their indignation with the corrupt government. Here the Fascists tried to take advantage of the situation. The Socialists cried: Keep calm—stay off the streets. Don't endanger our Republic. This pusillanimous policy would have permitted the Fascists to win the masses then battling the police in the streets. But Communists do not "calmly" stick in cubbyholes. They went into the streets to vie for the hegemony of this mass movement. Again we see wherever the So-



FREE AIR

Theodore Scheel



"THIS IS SHORE BIG ENOUGH FOR ALL OF THEM!"

Anton Refregier



"BUT, YOUR HONOR, CONSIDER HIS HONORABLE RECORD AS A STRIKE-BREAKER!"

Jack Kabat



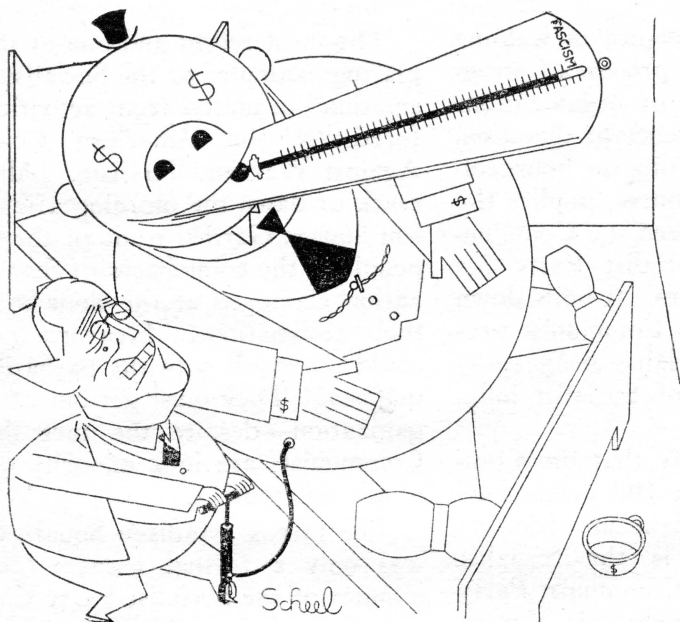
"I MUST FIND AN OUTLET, I THINK I'LL JOIN THE SOCIALIST PARTY!"

George



THE FAT OF THE LAND

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George



THE FAT OF THE LAND

Adolf Dehn

cialist leadership attempts to unify the working class it does so in order to paralyze its forces and to deliver it in bondage to the bourgeoisie. In a less spectacular degree Spain exhibits all the principal political features discussed above. Are matters different in the United States? The Madison Square Garden affair as planned by the Socialists is symbolical of the entire set-up. The Communists were not invited—the united front was being formed with the bourgeoisie; the typical Social-Democratic united front. Our American Bauers turned to the potential American Doll-fusses: the LaGuardias, the Wolls. The Socialist leaders proclaim their enmity to American capitalism, yet they revolve in the same orbit with the officialdom of the A.F. of L. which openly commits itself to the support and perpetuation of the capitalist system. The Socialist Party cries “unity”—unity under the Blue Eagle banner of the N.R.A., upheld by the Roosevelt-Woll-Thomas triumvirate as a precondition to the advance of the working class. The Socialist cry that the fight against Woll and Roosevelt is a “splitting” tactic, permits but one conclusion: unity can be purchased only at the price of submission to the agencies of capitalism.

The Socialist Party has a theoretical basis for its emphatic, its frantic rejection of any kind of unity between the workers who follow it and the workers following the Communist Party. It will go to any lengths to prevent it. Such unity jeopardizes the Socialist leaders, destroys the confidence placed in them by their bourgeois bosom-friends, the respect accorded them by their middle-class neighbors in the suburbs.

The Communist theory of working-class unity is based on the class struggle; that of the Socialists, on class collaboration. The Communists see the class struggle as the basic fact of life which will last until capitalism is destroyed—torn out root and branch by the working class and replaced by a new society—a Communist society. There is no such thing as talking away this central fact of the class struggle: it is a hard, a stubborn, an inescapable fact. The Socialists have developed the theory of the gradual transition into a classless society: coalition governments, harmonious relations with the bourgeoisie, peace with the capitalists.

The Communists understand that full unity of the working class can only be achieved with the fulfillment of the workers' historic mission to overthrow

capitalism. Every advance in welding unity is secured in the process of struggling for the creation of organizations free of bourgeois influence or direction, for the purpose of fighting the bourgeoisie. This theory, of course, implies the bitterest struggle between the Communist Party and the Socialist Party for hegemony of the masses. It boils down to this: victory of the Communist program against the Socialist program—the utter demolition of Socialist influence.

This does not signify that the Communist Party demands 100 percent acceptance of its program in order to achieve unity. Such is the Socialist Party's demand. The Communist Party constantly presents proposals for a united fight by the working class and its supporters for specific demands. It tries to set up organizations for such purposes. Not so the Socialists. We asked in our Feb. 27 issue “How can the Socialists explain their refusal to participate in the following united front actions proposed by the Communists in recent months:

1. The Tom Mooney conferences.
2. The anti-war congress.
3. The Scottsboro conferences.
4. The unemployment struggles.

How can they honestly explain their failure to act on the proposal last March proffered by the Central Committees of all Communist Parties to the Central Committees of all Socialist Parties for united-front action against Fascism.”

The Communist Party encourages its members to gain contact and commingle with the Socialist workers. For it well realizes that in the joint struggle for immediate demands the non-Communist masses come to the understanding and complete acceptance of the Communist program.

It is thus the Communist Party aims to achieve its revolutionary goal. The Socialist leaders fear the united front from below—tremble for their influence which is rapidly slipping away.

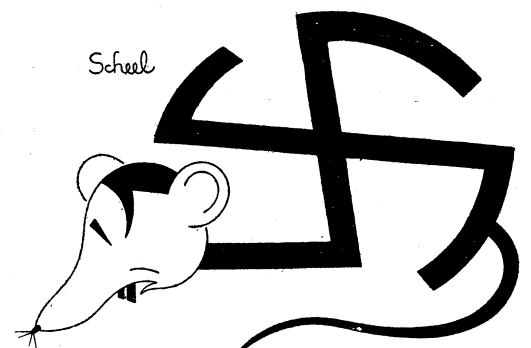
Hence the Socialists proclaim the “impossibility” of working with the ungentlemanly Communists. Their leftest adherents join with them: the jagged political fragments and groups (THE NEW MASSES described them in a recent editorial: *Disguised as Marxists*) add their voices to the Socialist clamor: the Communist Party splits, disrupts, destroys!

The most recent and one of the most glaring examples of the Socialist “participation” in united front activities is offered by the American Committee Against War and Fascism. Almost at crack of dawn the morning after Madison Square Garden some of the leading people in the committees of that organization clamored at the door to submit their resignations. Heavens, no, they could not work with the barbaric Communists! They must get out of the organization—despite the fact that the Communists are in a minority on most of the committees.

The fact is, Madison Square Garden was only a formal excuse: from the minutes of the Socialist Party City Central Committee, which we have seen, we learn that the resignation of some of these people had actually been decided upon *three weeks before* the Madison Square Garden trouble. The “outrageous” behavior of the Communists had nothing to do with the Socialist leaders' abandonment of the program which they had pledged to support.

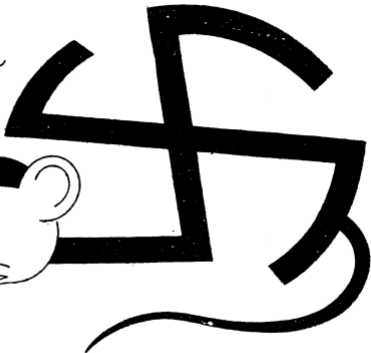
A further illuminating example of the Socialist conception of the united front is afforded by the St. Louis episode described by Joseph Hoffman in our correspondence section. There, the Communists and Socialists had actually formed the united front, but, as the letter describes, the united front principles were grossly violated by the Socialist leaders.

The lessons of Austria, of Germany, of France, and of Spain, as well as the most recent developments in this country show that the only way to achieve unity of the working class and its allies to bar Fascism, to prevent war, is to break out of the strait-jacket of Socialist-bourgeois collaboration policy and swing into *real* struggle against the war mongers, the Fascist psychopaths, the Wall Street buccaneers, the predatory Mellons, Rockefellers, Morgans and all the small capitalist fry.



Theodore Schuel

Scheel



Theodore Scheel

The C.W.A. Inquisition

THE GROSSLY insulting questionnaire issued last week to all Civil Works employees in New York City recalls the custom, prevalent two centuries ago, requiring all recipients of public aid to wear on their persons conspicuously placed pauper badges "as a mark of their shame and degradation." Through this action, the sponsors of the Civil Works program, who began by promising regular jobs to millions of unemployed, and, by implication at least, assured them that the federal government would tide them over until every last one of them was "reabsorbed into industry," now propose to end it all by pauperizing these millions. Here is a logical conclusion to the much-vaunted "planning" of enlightened capitalism which—as even administration officials are forced to admit—has resulted within a brief four months in an unparalleled degree of mass disillusionment.

The four-page questionnaire which has raised a storm of protest among New York's C.W.A. workers contains more than 400 spaces to be filled in. The worker must furnish the names of all organizations and persons who have helped him (name, address and amount received). The names and date of birth—month, day and year—of

each member of the family. The two past bosses of each one unemployed—when did they start? When were they laid off? Kind of work done? Wages received? List all your relatives (name, address, degree of relationship.) All lapsed insurance policies anybody in the family ever owned. Did they ever have bank accounts—when and how much? Has any member of the family served in the U. S. army, navy or marine corps? (What earthly relevance could this have in determining need?) One of the most sinister questions, however, is that requiring the worker to list unions and locals to which family members belong. Why should anyone want to know, except to intimidate or discriminate against members of revolutionary or independent (non-A. F. of L.) unions? As a final insult flung in the face of the workers, they were ordered to have the offensive document notarized, thus making it a veritable "Pauper's Oath."

It was frankly hoped by the Civil Works Administration in New York that the questionnaire would have the effect of "frightening off" thousands of workers who could not stomach this final indignity even at the risk of subjecting their families to starvation. "We expect that a new large number,

particularly white collar people, will decline to put themselves in the charity class," says City Administrator Delamater, who then adds cynically: "Of course, they will just be out of luck. Failure to fill in and return the questionnaire will result in immediate dismissal." And State Administration F. I. Daniels adds his unctuous regret.

In issuing the questionnaire, the authorities were not quite prepared for the tempest it has raised. Their offices have been bombarded with project delegations. Protest meetings have been held; huge demonstrations are being planned. Many thousands have either consigned the questionnaires to the flames, or sent them in unfilled, with the notation: "I consider this questionnaire an unwarranted insult. I demand that I be maintained on my C.W.A. job by the government until I am provided with another job." They point out that the fact that they are working on C. W.A. jobs is proof sufficient that they need it. They demand regular jobs or adequate unemployment insurance and point out that unemployment is a social phenomenon and a governmental responsibility and not an individual, personal problem as implied in the questionnaire and the whole system of "relief for destitution" it entails.

A Letter from America

To President Roosevelt

FRESNO, CALIF.

Dear Mr. President:

I don't suppose you will ever see this but I am writing to you to keep a promise I made to a little fifteen-year-old Mexican girl. She wanted to write to you because she had heard you were doing things for poor workers. She didn't write because she did not have three cents for a stamp and because she never went to school to learn how to write. Her earliest memories are of wandering about in an old, rattling, wheezing Ford from vegetable field to fruit field, from fruit field to vegetable field, and you can't go to school if your father needs your labor in the fields as soon as you are seven years old.

I cannot give you her name because when I told her I would write to you for her she

became frightened and pleaded with me not to mention her name. She was afraid maybe you'd write the boss and her family would be denied the privilege of working in the fields all day for thirty-five cents. She said it was all right, so I'll tell you how to find her.

Just take the main highway from Fresno, Calif., to Mendota which is about thirty miles away and turn west at Mendota for about four miles. You can't miss it because you'll see a big sign "Land of Milk and Honey." When you've passed this sign you'll see against the horizon a cluster of houses and when you come to the sign "Hotchkiss Ranch—Cotton Pickers Wanted" turn up the side road a few hundred yards beyond the comfortable farm house with its barns and cotton shelters. There's a row of fifteen outhouses along the road. That is where the migratory work-

ers and this little girl live, Mr. President.

There are two more outhouses a little away from these and those are the ones actually used for outhouses. You can tell that by the odor and the swarms of flies that hover around these two especially. This is a typical migratory workers' camp, only some have five outhouses for the workers and some have thirty. It depends upon the size of the farm. You'll recognize a migratory workers' camp because each outhouse—"homes" they call them out here—is made of plain wooden boards, dried by years of tropical sun.

The little girl lives in the third house from the front as you approach. You can't miss it. It has a large sign: SCARLET FEVER.

But don't worry about that because the health authorities here are not worrying. They just tacked up the sign on this outhouse door

and on that one there near the end of the row and went away. They didn't tell anyone to be careful about a contagious disease because that might have had the camp quarantined and the whole crop lost to the farmer, for all the cotton pickers and their children have been in that outhouse. I don't imagine it's very dangerous though for only two more children have caught it. If it had been dangerous I'm sure the health authorities would have warned them.

In this outhouse where a baby girl has scarlet fever you'll find an iron bedstead. That's where the baby sleeps, the one that's tossing around in fever while the mother tries to shoo the flies away. That's the only bed and it's one of the five in the whole camp, so you can't miss it. The other six in this family sleep on the floor huddled together; father, mother, two grown brothers, a little brother and the fifteen-year-old girl. They sleep like most everybody else in the camp: on the floor.

That barrel and rusty milk can in the corner of the room where everybody sleeps on the floor holds the water they bring from Mendota to cool the child's fever. It is four miles to Mendota and four miles back and eight miles costs a little for gas so they have to be very sparing with the water. That's why they all look so dirty—it's not because they don't like to wash. It's because it costs too much to get water—water needed for cooking and drinking. You can't waste water just washing yourself when it costs so much to get. After all, when you make thirty-five cents for a full day's work and spend some of that for gas to get water it leaves you that much less for food.

The mother isn't in the field today because the baby is pretty sick and those children playing in and out of the houses marked with SCARLET FEVER signs are too young to go into the field but everyone else is there. That's where I found the little girl for whom I am writing this letter.

Perhaps I had better tell you exactly how I found her and what we talked about so you can understand just what she wants. It would be a big favor, she said, and she would be very grateful.

She doesn't mind picking cotton bolls for thirty-five cents a day and she doesn't mind the filth and dirt and starvation but she is worried about that electric light in the shack. You noticed it, didn't you? The one with the dusty bulb right in the middle of the outhouse they live in? Well, you have to pay twenty-five cents a week if you want to use that electric light and twenty-five cents is a lot of money when you get only thirty-five cents a day and you need that twenty-five cents for food and for gas for the car so you can go get water.

It's not that she wants the light at night. She and her family get along without it but you see they've discovered that it's awfully hard to tend the sick baby in the darkness. And it's always dark when the baby seems to

cry the most. And in addition, this little girl is worried about herself. She is going to have a baby and suppose it comes at night and there is no light? She is going to have a baby in this little outhouse where her mother and father and brothers live, this little outhouse with the sign SCARLET FEVER over its door.

What she wanted to ask you is if you could possibly get in touch with somebody and have them not charge them twenty-five cents for the use of the electric light—especially when somebody's sick or expecting a baby. It's not so bad when you're well, but it's awfully hard when you have a little sick sister tossing and crying and you yourself are expecting a baby.

I explained to this little girl that you would understand about her not being so moral. She is such a frail little thing working so hard in the fields all day and you know after you get through working and you just don't know what to do with yourself and your youth just cries out to forget the days that have gone and the long years that stretch ahead of you, well—you sort of forget that maybe it isn't just quite moral to have a baby when you're not quite fifteen.

I told the little girl that you had a daughter, too, grown up now of course and she thought that if your girl had gotten into trouble when she was fifteen that you wouldn't have liked her to have a baby in a little wooden outhouse with another baby tossing in fever and no light to see anything by. I told her I didn't think you would, either, and so sitting there in the cotton field in this "Land of Milk and Honey" she cried.

But I started to tell you what we talked about and here I've gone telling you what she wanted me to write. You see, when I walked out in the field there was this little girl dragging a huge sack along the furrow, and stuffing the brown bolls into it. She looked so tired, so weary and then I noticed that she was with child.

"How old are you?" I asked.

She looked up and smiled pleasantly.

"Fifteen."

"Working in the fields long?"

"Uh-uh."

"How old were you when you started?"

She shrugged shoulders. "Dunno. Maybe eight. Maybe nine. I dunno."

"What do you make a day?"

"Sometimes in first picking dollar and a half. We get seventy-five cents a hundred. Used to get sixty cents but red agitators got us fifteen cents raise. But for third picking get only forty cents a hundred and there ain't so much to pick."

You may be interested in her phrase "red agitators." That's what the Communists were called here by the newspapers, so now everybody calls a Communist a "red agitator." This little girl didn't know what a "red agitator" was; she knew only that "red agitators" got them a raise of fifteen cents on the hundred pounds by organizing them and calling a strike.

Forty thousand out of the 250,000 agricultural workers in California have taken out cards in the Communist union. They call it the Cannery and Agricultural Workers' Union. And most of the 40,000 are from the 100,000 migratory workers—those who live in the camps like this little girl. They don't pay dues often but they carry their cards and they are strong on organization and very militant, especially the Mexicans.

You probably read in the papers about the fruit and vegetable pickers' strike in the Imperial Valley and around Sacramento and Alameda and in the San Joaquin Valley right here in Tulare and Kern counties. There have been violence and killings but the strikes were almost always won. That's because the workers felt a lot like this little girl: no matter what happened it couldn't be worse than it was. If the Communists would help them then they would be Communists. Nobody else seemed to care for them, nobody ever tried to organize them until the "red agitators" came. Business men and bankers and farmers are terrified by "red agitators"; you understand, of course, why when you read this letter that the little girl wanted me to write you.

"Last year when 'red agitators' make strike in Tulare and get seventy-five cents a hundred so we get seventy-five cents here, too," she added laughing.

Her father, a tall, dark-skinned man with a week's growth of black beard saw me talking to her and came over.

"Somet'ing wrong, eh?" he asked.

"No. Nothing wrong. Just talking to your daughter. I want to find out how much you people make a week."

A slow smile spread over his features.

"We make nodding," he said definitely.

"How much?"

"Me, my wife, my girl here. Last week we work from Monday to Thursday night and make \$2.50—all of us."

"Your daughter is only fifteen. I thought there was a law against child labor."

He shrugged his shoulders.

"Nobody come here. All children work in field soon big enough. Only time man come here is when put up sign 'Scarlet Fever'. Nobody care."

"Things any better now than they were last year or two years ago?"

"No. No better. Lots worse. Last year we buy 100 pounds cheapest flour for \$2.45. Now I pay \$3.10 same kind. Last year before President make N.R.A. I make more money dan I make now. Made lots more in '32, less in '33, in '34 hardly don't make nodding."

"I thought you fellows got a raise for picking cotton?"

"Yes. But we no get it. We make strike before we get it. 'Red agitators.' They make for us."

"How about before the depression?"

"Good times. Get \$1.50 a hundred. Very bad now. Yes, sir. Very bad."

"Now that you've finished picking these acres what do you do?"

"Go to peas field. Everybody go in car or truck. We take everything except house. We get nodding but house when we come. When finished peas fields we come back for grapes."

"What do you make a week when the whole family is working? In good times?"

"In good times? Oh, sometimes make \$8, maybe if work very hard, make \$10."

That seemed to be the height of his earnings and he sounded very pleased that he and his family were able on occasions to earn that much.

"Well, I got to go back pick bolls." He said something to the girl in Spanish. She flushed and started picking again.

"My father he say better work," she said.

"Yes; well, you go ahead and work while I walk alongside and talk to you. Are you married?"

She flushed again and shook her head.

"No. No marry."

"Looks like things are not so good for you people, eh?"

"Oh, they awright. Things gettin' better—everybody say. The President, he take care of poor people."

"Is he taking care of you?"

"No, sir. Not yet. Things very bad for us. But he got lots to do and he never hear about cotton pickers. I wanted write and tell him hurry up because I going to have a baby

and things very bad for us. He do something for poor people if he know how things very bad, eh?"

"Why didn't you write to him, then?"

She blushed again.

"No got stamp."

"Oh," I said, "I'll give you a stamp."

"Thank you but no can write."

"Sure, you go ahead. The President will be glad to hear from you."

"No can write," she repeated. "No go school; work in fields all the time."

"If you'll tell me what you want to write, I'll do it for you."

She looked at me with a swift smile and giggled.

I took out a pencil and some paper and asked her name. A look of terror spread over her face.

"No! No! No write the President!" she begged.

"Why not? Didn't you want to write to him?"

"No! No! I just talk. Just talk."

"What are you afraid of?"

"No write the President, Mister, please."

She straightened up and looked at me pleadingly. "If you write for me to the President my father get in trouble. Maybe the President get mad and my father, he no get no more work."

"I don't think so," I assured her. "But if you don't want me to tell who you are I can

write to him and tell him about it without mentioning your name."

She looked up with a sudden hope.

"You do that?"

"Sure. I don't have to give your name. I'll just say a little Mexican girl in a cotton field four miles from Mendota."

She looked earnestly at me for a moment.

"Please, you write the President. Tell him my baby is coming," she said in a low tone. "I dunno when the baby come. Maybe at night and we got no light. Please, you tell the President things very bad. We no make maybe nothing. My little sister she sick and if baby come I no can have bed. I got to have baby on floor and if it come in night how I have baby?"

I nodded, unable to speak.

"You please tell the President maybe he tell boss here not charge us twenty-five cents a week for electric light so I can have my baby."

"I'll tell him exactly what you said," I promised.

"You no fool me?"

"No, I'm not fooling you. I promise."

That is all, Mr. President. I don't know whether you will ever see this but I just wanted to keep my promise; and if you do see it you'll know why "red agitators" are making more headway here than anywhere I've been so far in this country.

JOHN L. SPIVAK.



"WAKE UP! YOU'RE ON NEXT!"

Herb Kruckman



"WAKE UP! YOU'RE ON NEXT!"

Herb Kruckman



"WAKE UP! YOU'RE ON NEXT!"

Herb Kruckman

Are Newspapermen Workers?

PHILIP J. CORBIN

WITH characteristic romanticism the leaders of American newspapermen are now trying to guide their rank and file toward a united front. That is, a united front within their own ranks. Through the newly organized American Newspaper Guild they hope to reap all the advantages of collective bargaining without approaching anything like a working-class solidarity.

How much they will reap is apparent to everyone but the leaders of the Guild. Buoyed by the fact that Roosevelt appears to be on their side at the minute and hopeful of wringing some immediate concessions from the publishers they are maneuvering toward a right-wing trade unionism. By combining a policy of watchful waiting with "gentlemanly" demands they hope to wrest a decent livelihood for editorial workers from the publishers.

Everything, in their opinion, depends on the final form of the Newspaper Code. Roosevelt's pronouncements when he signed the temporary code they regard as heartening. They threw their hats into the air when the President demanded that a specific regulation covering working hours be written into the code within the next sixty days.

What this specific regulation will be is clearly indicated by the temporary regulation. It requests—there is nothing mandatory about it—that all newspapers having a circulation of more than 75,000 in cities with more than 750,000 inhabitants, put their editorial workers on a five-day week. Since this regulation cannot affect more than ten cities in the entire United States its benefits are likely to be more imagined than real.

The chances are that the newspapermen will have to content themselves with just such imagined benefits not only so far as hours are concerned but so far as many other things go too. Beyond asking that one be set, there was no mention of a minimum wage for editorial workers in the temporary code. Such minimums as were set will not apply to professional workers; and according to the publishers, editorial workers are professionals.

As yet the Guild has done nothing about a minimum wage. It has requested that the Bureau of Labor Statistics make a survey of editorial wages, but whether or not this survey will be made is a matter of only incidental importance. Even the newspapermen themselves, as obtuse as they are in other matters, know that they are in a precarious position economically. They need no survey to tell them that their wages are on a scale far below that of the printers and minor white-collar executives.

An experienced reporter looking for a job in New York today may not be able to tell what the average wage for his type of worker

is, but he will jump at a chance to work for \$25. He will consider this a high wage no matter how great his experience. In 1929 he might have been able to command at least \$50, but today he is more than willing to take what he can get. Copy readers, if they are expert, may expect more but on the whole they and the re-write men are content with \$40 a week even on the biggest of the metropolitan dailies.

Unfortunately, newspapermen are seldom offered jobs even at these wages. Following the signing of the National Industrial Recovery Act, there was some hiring done at this level. Since then there has been practically none. Worse than this, the publishers have been economizing. As always this has meant the further discharge of editorial workers.

When replacements are absolutely necessary, harried editors are generally forced to move each man on the staff up a step and bring in a new recruit fresh from college to fill the lowest place. If the recruit is simple-minded enough—and he usually is—he can be induced to work for very little. In rare cases the recruit shows exceeding ability and he must be paid \$18 to \$20 a week. The run-of-the-mill beginners may be paid \$15 a week if they work full time. As a rule, outside of New York, the beginners can be utilized on part-time work and the expense to the publisher is almost nil.

But a low wage scale is not the only burden being borne by the newspapermen. Unemployment among them has reached unprecedented heights. Figures on the national situation are not to be had but some idea of them may be gleaned from the situation in New York, the land of promise for all good newspapermen. The local branch of the Guild carries on its rolls some 800 unemployed editorial workers. The Guild leaders admit that even under the best of circumstances very few of these will find work in the newspaper business again. Those who do will be paid between 30 percent and 70 percent less than they received in 1929.

These conditions are the inevitable outcome of the stupidity of American newspapermen. While their English and Continental colleagues were uniting to form strong unions, they were building a romantic tradition about their work. In England the journalists thought first about their working conditions and last about their individuality. In this country newspapermen ignored the conditions under which they worked and encrusted themselves with bizarre notions concerning their superiority over their fellow workers.

They have spent years building a saga of nonsense concerning their prowess. It sparkles with such absurd tales as that of the daring

tabloid reporter who stole the jawbone of a dead girl from the office of a coroner. The motive for the theft was an attempt to prove that the dead girl was the missing daughter of a socially prominent New York family. When a dentist declared the jawbone was not that of the missing debutante the reporter returned it to the coroner through the mails.

Dressed up with the proper overtones of fancy, this story is a never ending source of delight in editorial rooms. Its companion piece is the tale of the Manhattan reporter who kidnaped the mistress of the Mexican minister of finance causing a minor breach of diplomatic relations between Mexico and the United States.

Fact or fancy, such tales deaden the pain of editorial existence. They are told most frequently and fervently when the economy axe is hovering overhead. Like all white-collar workers the newspapermen live in constant fear of being fired. Summary dismissal is a bugaboo that not only drives them to romancing; it also makes them tread with pathetic caution around the whims and prejudices of their bosses.

This caution reached no greater nor more futile heights than it did recently when 150 members of the Newark branch of the Guild were guests at a dinner given by Paul Block, publisher of the Newark Star-Eagle. Block gave the dinner, as he put it, so that he could talk over with the newspapermen their relations with their employers.

To the dinner came a few malcontents who were opposed to the Guild tactics and the policies of Block. It was their plan to confront the publisher with some of his past dealings with newspapermen and ask for an explanation. By this step they hoped to point out the futility of dealing, except in militant terms, with a man like Block.

A hasty poll of the membership just before the dinner began assured the Guild leaders that the rank and file would oppose any such "impoliteness" to their host. Thus buttressed by the weight of numbers the leaders arranged to have the dissenters surrounded by the more stalwart of the conservatives. Faced by an obviously hostile bloc the leader of the dissenters contented himself with waiting until Block left the dinner before trying to speak to the newspapermen. Even then he was shouted down and shown the door in short order.

And what did this excessive solicitude for their host gain the newspapermen? Exactly nothing. The next day eight of them were fired from the Newark Star-Eagle. They had no chance to talk their difficulties over with Block like gentlemen even though he had suggested that this was the way to do things. Block wanted to economize—perhaps to make



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up the cost of the dinner—and the newspapermen were fired.

Subsequently the Guild did wring a concession from Block. They forced the publisher to agree to pay a stipulated amount to discharged workers. The amount to be paid will vary with the time the newspaperman serves with Block. It begins with one week's salary for one year of service and ends with three months' salary for ten years. The joker in this concession is that few if any newspapermen last more than a year on the Block papers.

It is impossible to predict how much longer this farce will continue. Newspapermen have a truly remarkable ability for anesthetizing themselves. Theirs is a dream world wherein all newspapermen are swashbuckling bravos breathing fire and defiance. When this dream-world collapses they rebuild it without any difficulty. Year in and year out they go on believing that because of the peculiar nature of their jobs they have a real influence over politicians, bankers, businessmen and others at the top of the financial heap.

Without any effort they ignore all facts to the contrary. Some time ago an astute Brook-

lyn reporter gathered the facts that led to the exposing of the now famous laundry racket. He watched amusedly while Mrs. Rosalie Loew Whitney, now Commissioner of Licenses for New York City but then only a politician struggling for a foothold, announced, through her press agent, that she would drive the big bad racketeers from the laundry industry.

Her announcement was given reams of space in the capitalist press. Heartened, the press agent announced privately that he would make his client the leading candidate for the Republican nomination for the Governorship of New York. This, the crusading reporter felt, was carrying things too far, particularly since the racketeers were making Mrs. Whitney seem foolish by continuing their racketeering.

The reporter decided to call a halt to the whole thing by showing how and why Mrs. Whitney had failed to make good her promise to drive the racketeers from the laundry business. He gathered his facts slowly and three months after Mrs. Whitney had started her campaign he was prepared to show that conditions were, in reality, worse than ever.

He called on Mrs. Whitney and her press agent and asked for a statement. Mrs. Whitney stormed and the press agent threatened. The reporter laughed. Wasn't his publisher fearless and independent? He took the matter up with his fellow workers. They agreed with him. His publisher was fearless and independent. He would help the reporter keep Mrs. Whitney from riding to Albany on the backs of the laundry workers.

The reporter offered the story to his managing editor only to have it rejected. Pressed for an explanation the managing editor said that the publisher had no desire to be unfair to Mrs. Whitney. She should be given a few more months in which to make good. The situation in Brooklyn grew steadily worse but the reporter never saw his story published. It was obvious that the publisher had no desire to offend so politically and socially potent a family as the Whitneys.

Did this teach Brooklyn newspapermen a lesson? It did not. No other town in the country is half so racket ridden as Brooklyn and in no other town do the reporters talk more about the stories they will some day break. They know full well that even if they do write these stories they will never appear in print.

They know that even though the old Evening World flirted with labor racket stories and the Journal recently ran an exposé of the “kick-back” no paper in Brooklyn has had the courage to print the story offered twenty times within the last five years by the rank and file of A. F. of L. workers in the building trades unions.

So far as the newspapermen are concerned the Evening Journal stories wipe all debits from the books. The fact that every newspaper in New York knows, and has known for years, the extent of labor racketeering means nothing to them. Pressed on the point the individual newspaperman may admit that Keats Speed, the managing editor of the Sun, was right when he said:

“There is no money in publishing a crusading newspaper in New York.”

Speed threw off this quaint sophism when the Evening World and the World were sold to the Scripps-Howard chain. Unfortunately this sophism has no personal implications for the newspapermen. In their minds it applied only to the newspapers. It does not touch editorial workers. To admit that it did would be to admit that they are tools of the capitalist press and this is the last thing in the world any newspaperman will do.

This is not surprising. It took a major economic upheaval to pound into the heads of the newspapermen the fact that they are impotent economically as individuals. Even today there are hundreds of newspapermen who still believe that they can beat the system on their own.

It was to lure these rugged optimists into organizing that the Guild took the archaic title it bears. Any hint of trade unionism would frighten away many editorial workers.

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who virtually deny that economic forces have any influence on the market for brains, that is brains of the kind they possess.

In honeyed accents the Guild Reporter, official organ of the organization, calls to them:

"There will, indeed, be many among our membership, truly professional, who will not relish descent to the level of business and artisan groups, running to legislators with pleas and pressure for their special interest. There are, to be sure, many who do not care much for the principle of collective bargaining, and who would not be engaged in it, or working at Guild organization to the interruption of their life work and major interest, were not the necessity for protection of themselves and their fellows so all compelling.

"To all these, and the unionists also, this code may be valuable [*i.e.*, the proposed newspaper code] as a plain indication of one policy for the Guilds to follow."

What then is the policy to be followed? Precisely that suggested by the tone of the appeal.

To quote the Guild Reporter again:

"We would do well not to expect too much from the newspaper proprietors until after a long period of education. It would be folly to expect much from government until our ranks are solid throughout the country and until we learn those arts of political pressure

which some others practise — and we become able to stomach the exercise of them."

And so with overtones of the purest snobbery, as much of the Guild policy as has been formulated points the way to compromise and indefinite thrusts at action. Even so conservative a step as affiliation with the American Federation of Labor was howled down by the Guild leaders. They flatly refused to identify themselves, as newspapermen, with any other workers.

Yet they refuse to carry this point of view to its logical conclusion. When it was suggested at a recent meeting of the Guild leaders in New York that a policy of mediation and arbitration be definitely formulated the newspapermen complained that if they did this they would lose the club which possible affiliation with the A.F. of L. might give them.

Such grotesque fumbings satisfy the Guild leaders. To them it smacks of jesuitical subtlety. It all comes under the heading of outwitting the bosses. As newspapermen they are incapable of viewing critically their own antics.

They profess to be realists as far as politicians are concerned. Yet witness their devotion to Franklin D. Roosevelt. They claim to be impartial gatherers of news. Yet anyone in the radical or labor movement can bear witness to their bland perfidy. They profess to be cynical about publishers and their mo-

tives. Still they can see nothing wrong with their behavior when they behave as they did at Block's dinner.

Obviously newspapermen relish the kiss that marks them for economic assassination.

There are, as strange as it may seem, a few realists in the Guild. Unfortunately for revolutionary journalism these men are too few in number to influence the Guild policy. What is more unfortunate, from the point of view of these men themselves, the left wingers will probably soon be out of their jobs. In these days loyalty is esteemed above competence and newspapermen are free to speak their minds only when they are in agreement with the publishers.

The Scripps-Howard papers boast that their employees are free to speak their minds even in print. Granting that this policy is completely sincere which it is not—it in no way changes the position of the American newspaperman.

His leaders will continue to march with Roosevelt, as they put it, to the left of the center. In short they are hurrying toward Fascism as fast as their warped mental legs will carry them. Whether the rank and file realizes this is not important. The chances are the majority does not. Most newspapermen probably will look on, with police cards in their hats, when the class struggle reaches its climax.

British Labor Declines to Starve

JOHN STRACHEY

LONDON.

THE MAIN event of recent weeks in Great Britain has been the arrival of the Hunger Marchers in London and their demonstration in Hyde Park last Sunday.

That it is possible to say this, is itself a very great tribute to the efforts of the British Communist Party and the other revolutionary groups which organized the March. The new Unemployment Insurance Bill, which savagely attacks the interests of the two and a quarter million unemployed and their dependents, is now passing slowly through the House of Commons. And it was an enormous service to the British unemployed to have forced the attention of the nation upon their plight at such a moment.

It is an astonishing commentary on the state of decay into which the British Labour Party has fallen that even this, in itself, simple agitational task has fallen entirely upon the revolutionary organizations. It is an illustration of the fact that in the present condition of capitalism even elementary work of working class protest and agitation has become revolutionary. The reformists will no longer

carry out even such tasks as this because these tasks now have revolutionary implications. Before the war the Labour Party and trade union movement would undoubtedly have undertaken this kind of work. The fact that today these organizations have boycotted and attempted to discourage the March in every possible way is a perfect indication of how they have moved to the right, and how the situation has moved to the left.

Certain minor concessions in the new and atrocious Unemployment Bill have already been won. But even if no concessions were won at all, the British unemployed understand perfectly well that any shreds of relief which they have retained are only held to the extent to which they make their presence felt. If they obeyed the advice and instructions of the Labour leaders and did nothing at all, the British governing class would be encouraged to go on worsening their conditions without any limit.

The undeniable fact that it is the Communist Party (and other revolutionary groups) alone which have done anything for the unemployed is worth many million words of revolutionary argument. The British unem-

ployed cannot have failed to notice that the official leaders of the British working class were saying exactly the same things as the British capitalists. Both of them were telling the unemployed that the March and all other forms of mass agitation, demonstration and action were useless, futile, and must on no account be indulged in. Indeed, "starve quietly until the next election, when you will have the inestimable privilege of putting us back into office," is in the last analysis a summary of the advice which the unemployed get today from Trade Union and Labour Party leaders.

As readers of THE NEW MASSES probably know already, two of the most prominent Communist leaders of Britain, Harry Pollitt and Tom Mann, were arrested on the day of the arrival of the marchers in London. Somewhat surprisingly, however, they were released on bail and were able to appear at the important Congress of Action, composed of delegates from all kinds of working class organizations, which was held in London in conjunction with the March. The effect of the arrests was to secure unparalleled press publicity for the March and the demonstration over the week-end. Moreover, the ar-

rests were not followed up by any further repressive action. It is difficult to resist the impression that there were divided councils amongst the authorities. Either to repress the March by stern measures or to ignore it entirely, would both have been comprehensible policies from the Government's point of view. As it was they seem to have fallen between two stools. This kind of incident shows us that our enemies, also, sometimes make mistakes!

For the rest, the British situation remains dominated by the crisis in Europe. Every day the struggle between Italian and German Fascism over the corpse of Austria becomes more acute. Today, for example, a high Italian official is reported as saying: "Austrian independence must be maintained at all costs. Anything else means war." It would be amusing, if it were not tragic, to confront all the purblind and feeble liberals of the world, who have been telling us for the last year that Hitler had turned a pacifist, with the facts of the present situation. Just one year after the creation of the second Fascist power in Europe, these two rival Fascisms are at grips. At present they are fighting out their struggle, it is true, by means of puppets; Mussolini pulls the strings of Dollfuss; Hitler pulls the strings of the Austrian Nazis. But if either puppet seems to be getting the worst of it there will be a strong temptation for its backer to intervene. We see confirmed, more rapidly than we could have supposed, the general truth that Fascism leads straight to war. The imperative needs of the monopoly-capitalist economies of each Fascist state, drives its leaders, whatever their personal preference may be, to expansion and so to struggle.

The ever-increasing fascization of the European continent is still reacting strongly upon the minds of the British governing class. The need for the establishment of some form of capitalist dictatorship in Great Britain is more and more being realized by the governing class. For the moment, however, the most important interests seem to be strongly inclined towards forming their own dictatorship, using the existing Conservative party as a basis, and preserving some shadowy pretence at democracy, rather than handing over to Mosley or any other British Fascist mass movement.

Lord Rothermere's support of Mosley does not appear to have had the expected reaction of exposing the wholly reactionary character of his movement to the working class. It secured him several thousand recruits, but it is said, almost entirely at the expense of Conservative organizations. It would be utterly utopian, however, to pretend that the British working class, so long as it follows its present leadership, will be able to prevent the establishment of a capitalist dictatorship by one method or the other. It is only if important sections break away from reformism and take the revolutionary path, that the workers have any hope of avoiding the terroristic rule of the capitalists in the last phase of the system.

Broad-Minded Medici

STEPHEN ALEXANDER

WHEN the first news of the destruction of the Rivera Mural by the Rockefellers became known a storm of indignation arose among both artists and lay public against such a callous act . . . an act of mean, narrow hatred, anti-cultural, anti-human in character. Artists of different æsthetic and political beliefs were united in their outspoken denunciation and resentment of this latest of outrages perpetrated by one of America's greatest of "art-patrons." So intense was this resentment against the Rockefellers that many of the artists who had been invited to exhibit in the Municipal Art Exhibition in Rockefeller's RCA Building withdrew in protest. Many of these are among the most prominent artists in the country and of *widely divergent political views*. (The reason for this emphasis will soon become clear.) When Leon Kroll announced that the Society of Painters, Sculptors, and Gravers would withdraw, representing some ninety artists, it became pretty evident that the exhibition could not be held in Rockefeller Center. When Mayor LaGuardia was asked if there would be any objection to moving the exhibition to some other place he said he had none. If the artists wished another place for their exhibition, he was willing that they should have it.

Now let us see what it was that almost overnight changed the situation so completely as to bring back into the exhibition Leon Kroll's Society of Painters, Sculptors, and Gravers, and many individual artists who had withdrawn. The writer first learned of this sudden change in the situation from several artists who "had heard rumors" that the protest against Rockefeller was unjustified because Rivera had sent them a letter authorizing the destruction of the mural . . . even thanking them for it! The next day the press carried stories which "explained" why the artists had gone back. It seemed that Rivera had authorized . . . or practically so . . . the destruction of the mural. And besides, hadn't he admitted that he had intended it to be propaganda!

A careful reading of these press accounts would quickly enough have revealed the nature of this piece of lying trickery. By means of clever insinuations, and distortions of Rivera's meaning by lifting a single sentence from its context the absurd idea that Rivera had agreed to the destruction of the mural was left to be inferred. Heroic efforts were necessary to save the exhibition for Rockefeller's Monument. Artists were quickly appealed to . . . by phone, by telegram, in person . . . and every possible device was utilized to bring them back. Misstatements, innuendoes, economic pressure . . . not only the lying distortions of Rivera's meaning, but

also attempts to drag a red herring into the picture by referring to the protesting artists as a "small group of radicals."

Several artists reported that art dealers had been appealed to, to force their artists to exhibit, and had in a few cases succeeded in "persuading" the artist to go back. Rumors were circulated that a number of collectors and "patrons of art" would blacklist those artists who had decided to protest against Rockefeller by withdrawing their works. When a sufficient number had been induced by one means or another to return to the exhibit, then still another device was used: "Practically all protesting artists have come back into the exhibition. There's no use in protesting. So-and-so has changed his mind and will exhibit. And so-and-so, and so-and-so. You may as well come back too. C'mon, be a good fellow, etc., etc." To other artists it was put this way:

"Yes, of course we agree with you that the destruction of the mural was deplorable, but this exhibition is to help the artists and it would be a hardship on them if the exhibition were not held." The inference being that to take it away from the Rockefeller real estate development was equivalent to not holding the exhibit anywhere else.

LaGuardia had expressed his willingness to hold the exhibit elsewhere if the artists wished it, and there is no doubt that an adequate place could have been found, but a more powerful interest was intent on keeping the show at Rockefeller Center. Beneath the surface of the art patron and lover-of-art one can easily discern the real motivating forces behind this apparent desire to play Santa Claus to the artists by lending the exhibition place. By developing a reputation for being a "Center of the City's Cultural and Business Activities" the value of Rockefeller's Real Estate would be enhanced, thousands of people would be attracted to business enterprises located there, in coming to see the exhibition, and in short, it would be good advertising.

Which brings us to a consideration of "What is to be done about it?" We believe that there are enough artists who consider their ideals well worth fighting for, who are willing to make some sacrifices for the ideas they hold, and who will try to prevent the Hitlerization of American culture. One of the most effective ways of striking back at this Fascist tendency in art is to strike at its *economic roots*. We mean boycott Rockefeller Center. If artists will refuse to exhibit in the Independents' Exhibition, the Salons of America, and any exhibition held there they will be using their most effective weapon. The public is called upon to cooperate in making this boycott effective.

My Approach to Communism

KENNETH BURKE

THIS article is to concern itself with four approaches to Communism, which might be designated roughly as rational, ethical, historical, and esthetic. The rational approach attempts to show that capitalism must break down because the salient conditions proper to its flourishing are being radically altered. The ethical approach attempts to show why Communism is adequate morally as a replacement of capitalistic motives, while Fascism is not. The historical approach attempts to present Communism in a historical sequence as the "fourth rationalization," following the rationalizations of magic, religion, and science. And the ethical approach, considering Communism as the necessary basis of a "new equilibrium," discusses the connection between poetry and stability.

First, as to the rational approach. Capitalism is an expansionistic system par excellence. In fact, orthodox capitalism is so well suited to expansion that it cannot survive without expansion. Were we to open up new markets on Mars today, another capitalist boom would start tomorrow, and would probably flourish until we had all the Martians' money or they had developed "sales resistance" and factories of their own. Capitalism's great suitability to expansion explains its great aptitude for inducing military and economic invasion. If there is any justice to Darwinian theory, the very fitness of capitalism for the intensities of nineteenth-century expansion should argue its unfitness once this expansion is accomplished.

Confining the issue to America, we may say that during the era of expansion there was a sufficient redistribution of wealth taking place to keep the system in order. First we had the era of internal geographical expansion, the constant westward movement of the frontier. It was the heyday of the "American system," a kind of intestine imperialism made possible by the fact that the westward movement of population was building up new markets for our industrial products largely within our own borders. Much land was distributed either cheaply or without cost to a vast aggregate of individuals. Similarly, in this stage, even the fabulous amount of natural resources which were corruptly surrendered into private hands or obtained by financial chicanery partially served the same distributive function: the banquet table was so laden that substantial crumbs did fall to the populace in accordance with the standard Hoover philosophy, the notion that the great exploiters necessarily cause a vast turnover of wealth in building and operating their enterprises.

In the main, however, the possibilities of the "American system" were gravely restricted before the century had closed—and it was at this time that the international banker,

as an exporter of American credit, began to function in earnest. Foreign loans are an excellent stop-gap, since they extend foreign markets by giving the foreign populations the money with which to buy our goods. In time however, the expansionistic development here also is frustrated: the mounting interest charges become prohibitive, much of the material exported enables the importing peoples to build up productive plants of their own, and we cannot maintain the two-way flow of trade by importing in proportion to our exports without endangering our own production. The evil day can be put off, and was put off, by a great extension of "consumer credit" which, with the attendant bond flotations for private and public construction, makes for a kind of "introverted expansionism." The extension of "consumer credit" taps new domestic markets for a time by making people bigger buyers than their incomes warrant. It permits them to purchase in one year what they could only earn in several. Any credit device, if broadly used, can temporarily conceal even gross faults in the distribution of income, since it enables people to buy beyond their wages. Hence, if the range of consumer credit were to be still further extended, permitting great masses of people to incur debts now which they should not have to pay for twenty years, we could have another typical interlude of "Coolidge prosperity," until the inevitable deflationary day of reckoning arrived.

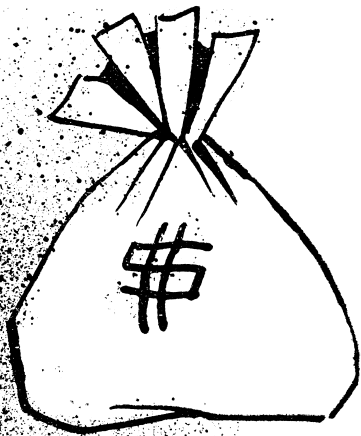
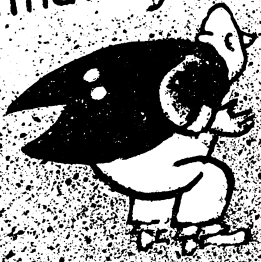
The ultimate unsoundness of the capitalist method was still further concealed by the fact that, however, grossly underpaid the industrial worker was, he was profiting by a greater proportionate impoverishment of the agrarian worker. Because of the inequality between farm prices and the price of manufactured goods, the city worker was getting his farm commodities at a lower figure than the farmer was paying for his factory-made and office-distributed goods. This unequal process could be upheld for many decades by the gradual transformation of the farmer from an owner into a borrower, from a borrower into a bankrupt, and from a bankrupt into a tenant. The process was slow as regards the country as a whole, but it was inexorably under way. In fact, despite the great toll in interest charges which the farmers as a whole now owe the Eastern insurance companies, the disclosure of ultimate impoverishment can probably be still further delayed. As usual, the concealment must be done by the devices of credit: the extension of government financing into the home loan and farm mortgage field, for instance, can give another push to the dwindling purchasing power of this group. As long as there is something left to lend money on, and some public or private agency

to lend the money, a man can be kept in the purchasing class to a larger extent than his income equips him to be. All such devices, of course, are but temporary, and are made worse in the end by the dilemmas of compound interest.

Perhaps the first clear break in orthodox capitalist theory is symbolized by Ford's doctrine of high wages. That Ford's "high wages" were more of an advertisement than a fact is another matter. The doctrine nevertheless exposes the beginning of the capitalist's problem in earnest: for it shows an awareness of the fact that mass production requires mass consumption, and mass consumption requires mass purchasing power. Under modern conditions, "exploitation" is not the simple process of preemption that it was under feudalism. In order profitably to "exploit" the masses today, you must sell them radios, automobiles, refrigerators, furniture, houses, patent medicines, five-foot shelves of books, and a thousand other manufactured commodities—otherwise you cannot keep your factories running, and hence cannot make your profits. Out of this bewilderment a surprising effort arises: we find the capitalist nations engaged in a deliberate scramble to depreciate their currencies in order that more of their goods can be sold abroad. By this method it is hoped to force upon unwilling foreign peoples vast amounts of commodities and manufactured goods which, if these peoples tried to take them from us, we should fight with all our national valor to defend and retain. But no self-respecting capitalist nation will permit such bounty to be thrust upon it without a struggle. Demands for tariff and quota barriers promptly arise, in order that local enterprises may be "protected." And since our own workers cannot be employed producing this unwanted surplus, they are without wages and cannot buy the output of the factories that would have gone for home consumption, with the result that still more of them are dropped, to lower purchasing power by so much the more, etc., ad inf.

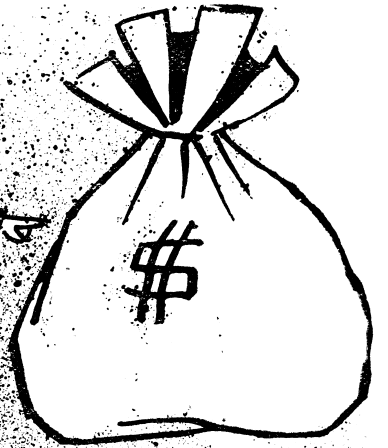
In addition to the stop-gap of credit extension (with its corollary, inflation), we may see evidence of another stop-gap, which will probably gain in prominence. Again we may borrow from Ford, and designate this other tendency away from orthodox capitalism as "self help." In the large it is the attempt to organize, within the purchase-economy of capitalism, a kind of barter-economy, a schema of bare subsistence, to take care of those who are eliminated from the dwindling class of purchasers. In this category we should include all barter plans, back-to-the-farm plans, and government-fostered mutual-aid groupings which are expected partially or wholly to

heck!
it's
dwindling!



1.

GIMME
THE PRESIDENT!



2.

YOUR
COUNTRY
NEEDS
YOU

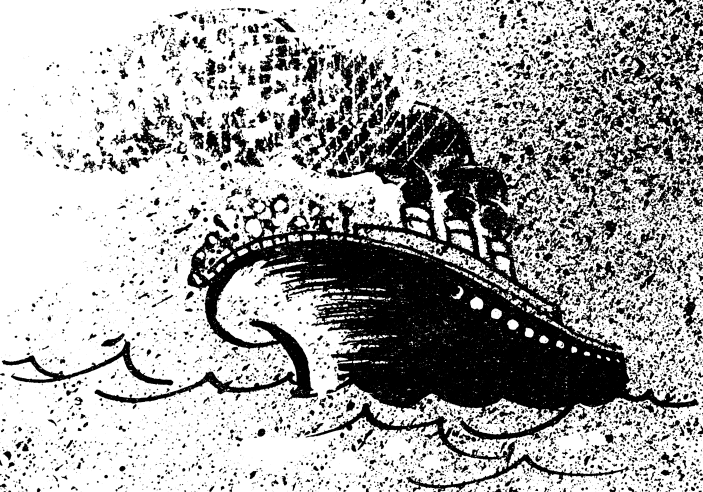


3.



JOIN
THE
ARMY

4.

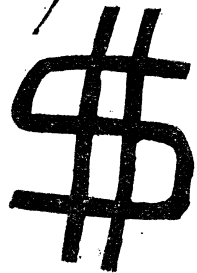


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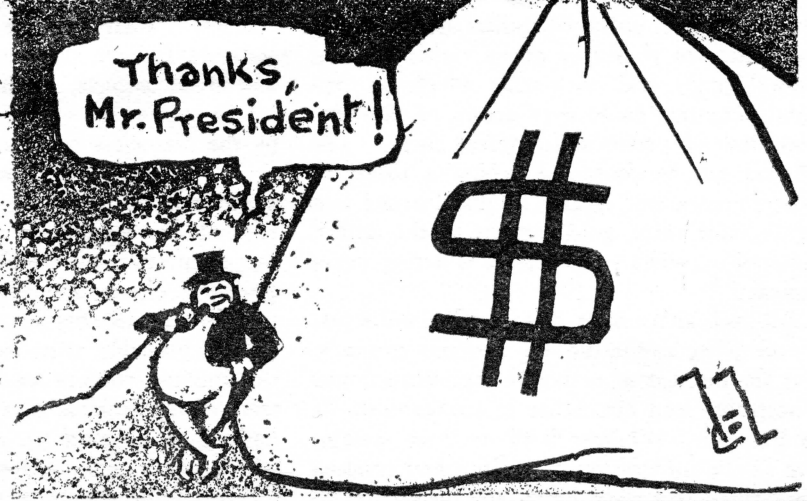
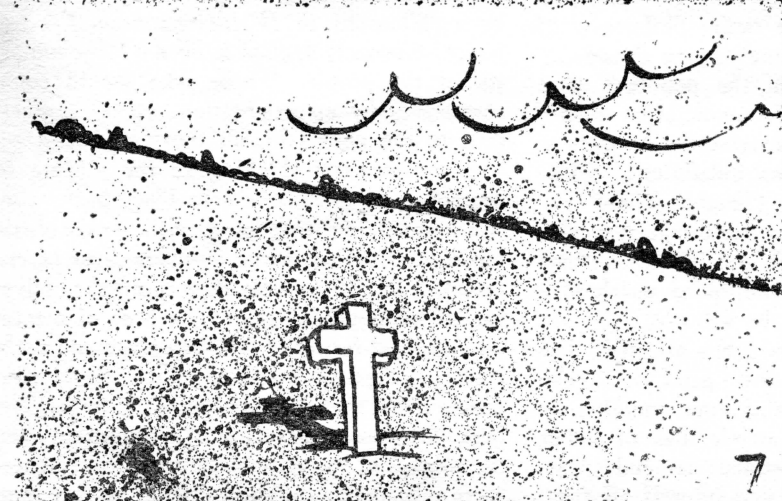
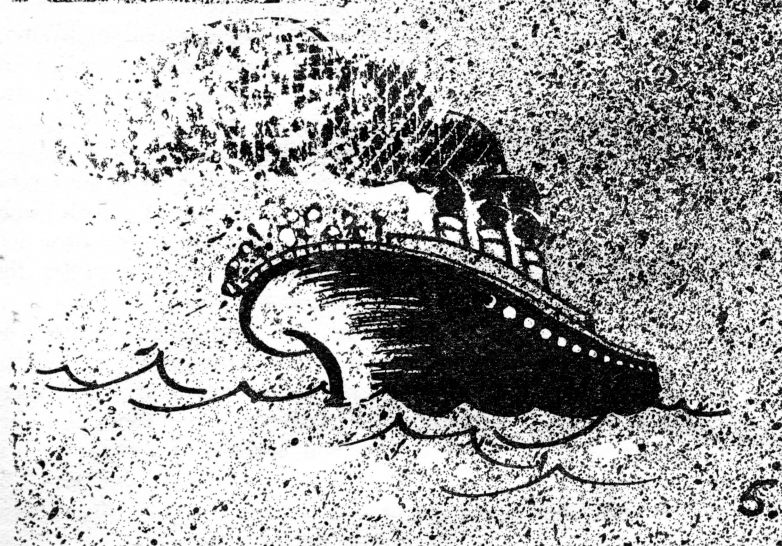
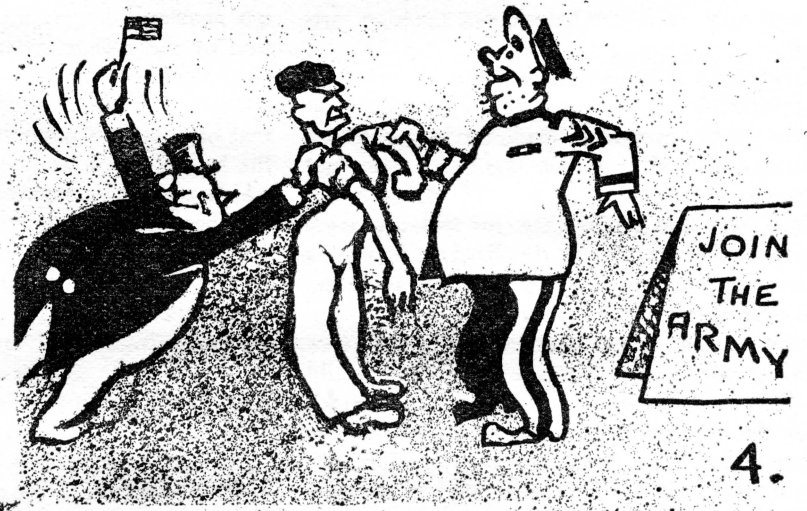


6.

Thanks,
Mr. President!



7.



exchange goods and services outside the framework of sales, purchase, and taxation that is the "classical" basis of capitalism. Hitler seems to be organizing a large portion of his unemployed along these lines, with the help of patriotic slogans, a newly invented ideology of co-operative morale, etc. Roosevelt may turn to a similar device in caring for the millions directly and indirectly affected by the dropping of the C.W.A. However, it also is but a stop-gap: for in proportion as you train people to grow their own vegetables or forego the output of the factories, you eventually throw still other men out of work. A straight dole would be more serviceable, since it would keep the unemployed masses in the orthodox purchasing class, and hence would uphold the customary sales-purchase-money-taxation set-up.

There is only one arrangement I can think of whereby the "one-way flow of profits" that goes with capitalist exploitation could be maintained: if capitalists were to become not investors, but squanderers. If the millions that went into Radio City, for instance, were to have been spent by the Rockéfillers on a vast and fabulous nursery for their children, so that Radio City were in the class of "consumer goods" rather than in the class of "capital goods," this fantastic super-toy would present no difficulties. But when it is erected for the purpose of obtaining a "return on the investment," the matter is entirely different. It immediately becomes a competitor to other ventures similarly seeking a return on their investment. Gigantic factories erected purely for the "esthetic pleasure" of their power and whirring wheels, enormous oceanic steamers as parks for the rich man's friends, mighty causeways to be used for nothing at all—were our capitalists to put their money into such ventures as these, they could continue to keep the masses frantically at work and capitalism would be saved. But when they attempt to reinvest their earnings in factories and utilities producing goods and services for the masses, they ultimately make the one-way flow of profits a physical impossibility. They discover that they must give a man the money which they would take from him. This dilemma can be concealed for a time by the contraction of ownership: there are still many little-ones to be gobbled up by the big-ones. But in the end, unless capitalists are to become purchasers of consumer goods rather than of capital goods, and on a scale which no Oriental potentate could ever dream of, the one-way flow of profits must defeat them. The process can be concealed behind a forest of expert economists' figures, behind learned talk of discount rates, gold content of the dollar, bimetalism, what you will—it is acting nonetheless.

All such antics offer reasons for the distrust of orthodox capitalism on rational grounds. But the distrust of orthodox capitalism might conceivably lead one either to Communism or to Fascism. Whereas both of these systems aim at the integration of politics and production, there is a very important distinction in

their basic approach to this problem: whereas Fascism seeks to produce this integration through business as intermediary, thus "perfecting" the control of the state by business men and business ideals, Communism aims at this integration by the elimination of business, placing production squarely beneath the control of politics. The Fascist retention of business as the keystone of its scheme leads logically to the attempted subjugation of the workers, precisely as the Communist elimination of business leads to their establishment as the fulcrum of the governmental policies and purposes. But the business ideal, with its perennial hope for a "return on the investment," belongs necessarily to an expansionistic age, requiring an endless process of widening economic imperialism (a constant extension of the economic frontier which, starting as commercial invasion, tends ever to become military invasion). Hence the logical demand that one choose Communism, which eliminates the hegemony of business, as against Fascism, which would attempt to erect a stable economy atop the contradictions of business enterprise.

But the matter of business (with its great complexity of "rights") may serve as the turning point from purely rational considerations to ethical ones. So we next consider the approach to Communism from the ethical standpoint.

In one respect, Fascism has always been with us. Indeed, in the days of Coolidge prosperity, Mussolini wrote tributes to the prevalent theory of the times (mass prosperity as a radiation from Wall Street super-prosperity), testifying to his belief that America was exemplifying the Fascist ideal. Throughout the history of American politics, and particularly since the Civil War, there has been a considerable amount of integration between politics and industry, though this state was constantly disturbed by the clashing interests of various industrial groups and by the gradual confiscation of industry by the monopolists of credit. The period might be called the era of "naïve Fascism," in contrast with the present rise of "critical Fascism." Naïve Fascism "just grew." It required no comprehensive scheme of planning or forcing, and on the whole could derive much of its strength from the fact that it was backed by the "national virtues." That is: The entire philosophy of individual effort, the "canal boy to President" legend of success, made the populace as a whole acquiescent to an economic order whereby the financiers could extend the borders of their economic kingdoms indefinitely. The orientation by which our Genghiz Khans confiscated the arteries of a continent was also the orientation by which the humblest, least assuming citizen fondly hoped to purchase a tiny plot of security in the suburbs.

It is probably true, as often asserted, that the Puritan concept of the "good life" gave tremendous impetus to this same impulse, by tending to promote an ascetic idea of living which could make investment an end in itself, prodding a man to shut himself off from

all normal physical and sentimental gratifications of which a human being is capable and to attempt instead the stilling of vague symbolic hungers through the abstractions of "power" and "wealth," unnatural cravings which by their very nature could not be gratified since there is always more and more to get control of, and a host of equally avid power-seekers to combat. The very inability of such efforts to procure human contentment served by the vicious circle to stimulate further efforts in the same direction—for once a man had assiduously trained himself to seek the good things of life in such a channel, he had necessarily lost his understanding for humbler ways. "Retirement" became a psychological impossibility, even after millions of dollars had been accumulated. The alternatives became: further conquest, or "corruption," and corruption would in the end invite the inroads of rival manipulators. But when I say that the people as a whole backed this system by their "virtues," I mean simply that the same ideals of purpose, training, and method galvanized the victims as the victors.

The only clearly formulated resistance to this attitude was to be seen in the various attempts to found co-operative "colonies" of one sort or another, though these were generally destroyed in time by the fact that the trends of the century were too strongly against them. In the purely esthetic sphere, the resistance is manifested by the bitterness, anguish and loneliness of the nation's profoundest writers. For all the optimism that seems to have buoyed up the popular philosophy as a whole, these more "barometric" minds were already registering their sensitiveness to the errors of the national psychology. Perhaps the only "answerer" of any stature is Whitman, who stands in the somewhat ambiguous position of enunciating a philosophy which sometimes looks like the *bona fide* vision of a better world and at other times suggests the poetic adumbrations of Rotarianism.

In any event, the gradual development of the factory system, and the growth of monopoly through the manipulation of credit, have brought the relatively naïve connection between politics and business to a critical stage. Individual enterprise, old style, becomes less and less of a possibility. Hence, the men at the top cannot longer attain their advantages by a philosophy or *Weltanschauung* that can be spontaneously applied to even a large minority of the people. Those who would equip themselves by an orientation wholly acquiescent to the new demands must gradually accommodate their thinking to the schema of promotion-by-nepotism, sales-by-cutback, success-by-toadying that goes with monopolistic business. Further, large numbers must be eliminated entirely, unless they equip themselves for the economic struggle by a code of mental and physical brutality (the gangsters and racketeers). Against the laws which would pauperize them, they defend themselves by lawlessness. Obviously, as such a situation progresses, the control of the state by business must henceforth rely upon a different kind of efficacy than

prevailed at a time when the still unfulfilled possibilities of expansion provided sufficient psychological nourishment for the myth of "equal opportunity for all." Under critical Fascism, the method of control must move definitely into the category of conscious and organized strategy.

I do not mean to imply that the conscious manipulation of courts and legislatures for the ends of private gain is a new thing in American life. The history of big business is the history of fraud. The point I am trying to make is this: In the earlier stages of our national life, these opportunities for fraud were backed by a "morality" which, however one may disagree with it, was genuine. Most of the people who directly or indirectly upheld the existing order by which such fraud was regularized were men of sincerity and conviction. The millionaire, for instance, who gave vast sums to a university could do so without any definite intention of shaping the institution's educational policies. And the professors who taught under the aegis of this endowment could accommodate themselves to its genius quite "naturally," by the naïve process of "goodwill." The same also applies to the function of "goodwill" as a force for imposing the attitudes of advertisers upon editors. It is not *per se* corrupt that a man should hesitate to "bite the hand that feeds him,"—and by merely closing the mind to the issues beyond this point, by merely failing to ask oneself too rigorously how the money for this feeding was obtained, or perhaps by adding a few superficialities about the "survival of the fittest" to console oneself with the thought that in the wars of success a great number of the populace would have to be sacrificed anyhow, one could remain a fairly reputable man under such a state of affairs, could feel decent enough in his own eyes, could assist the current set-up by "following his conscience," and in a general way could quiet misgivings with the laudable thought that he was working "for wife and children."

As the process of monopoly nears its completion, however, the moral issue becomes of a different sort. Such a muddled philosophy becomes less and less possible: one is forced to a *choice*. The processes of naïve goodwill are no longer enough. The critical stage has begun in earnest. Allegiances must be definitely and avowedly purchased, guided, and coached. "Education" must clearly become an instrument of enslavement and misrepresentation. The featuring and suppression of news must become a strict matter of "policy." Censorship must be *knowingly* shaped to the ends of upholding an unjust and oppressive order. And when these various adjuncts of exploitation have reached the stage where they must be manipulated consciously, one who concurs in them is forced more and more to think of himself as a schemer, a deliberate bought-and-paid-for henchman of privilege. In a democracy, where people are permitted to vote, one moulds their minds and then "leaves them to their own choices." But as the issues become more stringent, this moulding of the people's

minds must be done by cunning and awareness. Hence, to summarize, I should say that whereas under "naïve Fascism" the system of privilege could be largely upheld by the "bourgeois virtues," it will from now on have to rely more and more definitely upon the "bourgeois vices." In the end, this situation must prove intolerable, for in the long run people must be able to think of themselves as "moral." When corruption becomes systematic, deliberate, critical, a distinct matter of choice, it is on the road to passing. A "priesthood" (of either ecclesiastics or educators, copy-writers and journalists) is truly vigorous and effective only so long as it can genuinely respect its function. (A "priesthood" is a group specifically charged with upholding an orientation.)

Further, it is easy to see how the "theory of business enterprise" makes squarely for a radical moral dilemma. (There is another treatment of this subject in my article, *The Nature of Art Under Capitalism*, which appeared in the *Nation* of December 13, 1933.) With its primary emphasis upon the competitive, business at best fails to provide an adequate orientation for harnessing the potentialities for "force and fraud" to wholesome social ends. The powers of muscle and mind, the "combative" or "competitive" tendencies, are simply fitted into a system of organized "economic warfare." Even when given ample expression under expansionistic conditions, this state of economic warfare constantly leads to its military counterpart. And in proportion as the expansionistic trends are restricted, as they necessarily are restricted for large numbers of entrepreneurs by the growth of monopoly, such a simple carrying over of jungle patterns into the patterns of civilization becomes doubly menacing. The direct encouragement of the combative attitudes provided by business is bad enough—it is still worse when frustrated. Communism alone provides the kind of motives adequate for turning the combative potentialities of man into coöperative channels. Under monopolistic business (Fascism) they are simply thwarted. The thwarting of such impulses can naturally give rise to their hysterical expression, particularly in nationalistic wars or demands for racial vengeance, which do manage in a way to fuse the combative and the coöperative, since the group in organizing against a "common enemy," does for a time attain a maximum of the coöperative spirit among the members of its camp. The Communistic orientation is the only one which successfully produces the combative-coöperative fusion under conditions of peace, hence the only one upon which a permanent social structure can be founded. It does not eliminate the competitive genius, since that is ineradicable, being rooted in the very nature of man. But it does permit of its maximum harnessing to the ends of social cohesion.

Our third, or "historical" approach, involves a somewhat personal manipulation of a Marxian doctrine, the teaching that the nature of man's productive forces determines

the nature of his thinking. How might the "three great rationalizations," magic, religion, and science, fit in with this thesis? Each of these three rationalizations seems to have been framed largely for the control of a different order of "productive force." Magic rationalized the control over the forces of nature, evolving a schema, largely erroneous but also largely correct, for utilizing the forces of nature, promoting the fertility of crops, insuring the recurrence of the seasons, avoiding or mitigating drought, etc. I say "largely correct" because, though the theories of the magicians as recounted by Frazer in his *Golden Bough* were vitiated by the doctrines of "homoeopathic magic," they stimulated a set of practical procedures which were satisfactorily attuned to the environmental conditions. The religious rationalization served largely in developing the maximum control of the "human coöperative forces." The very etymology of the word (*religio*: a binding) would suggest this coöperative function. Indeed, it promoted the coöperative attitude so thoroughly that, at the height of feudalism, servitude was almost a "voluntary" attitude on the part of the serfs, and would probably have remained so had not the burden of exploitation gradually become too great and new methods of production entered to make this burden still greater. The third rationalization, that of science, was aimed mainly at the control of a third productive order: technology, the machine. In fact, its emphasis was so strongly placed upon the problems of production and invention in themselves that the human aspects of the case were relatively slighted, the coöperative attitude being largely left to take care of itself as a survival for precisely the religious orientation which science was discrediting. The typical scientific test of "success" was perfected by a technique of "isolation" which correponds with the entire individualistic trend of all post-Renaissance thought. A chemist, for instance, might invent a new explosive or poison gas—and if it exploded or poisoned in accordance with expectancy, it was pragmatically proved "successful." A wider kind of test, the question as to how "successful" such inventions might be when released upon society as then constituted, was omitted. Such questions were left to take care of themselves, as belonging to a field of reference outside the strict field of the laboratory.

It is customary to point to capitalism with pride as being largely responsible for the rapid "progress" which scientific invention made during the height of capitalistic enterprise. But as we get a longer perspective upon the acute disorders of the nineteenth century as manifested in the cultural sphere (and particularly in the anguish of the romantics, who revealed the troubles of the century most clearly), we find reason to turn this boast of capital's apologists into a curse. For it was unquestionably the psychotic drives of the competitive which led to so rapid an introduction of new methods. This newness, it begins to seem, was forced upon the world at so fran-

tic a pace that the powers of cultural assimilation were nearly wrecked. Furthermore, the development of science under the stimulus of the profit motive rather than by reference to the criteria of humane gratification led to the intense production of countless goods which could have no possible service in the promotion of better living, and were often drastically sinister, as in the case of patent medicines, deleterious foods, and munitions of war. There likewise arose economic compulsions making for extreme centralization of living, which produced positively grotesque conditions even for those whose wealth may have permitted them to live in "Park Avenue slums." And lastly, by intensifying the need to develop customers and salesmen rather than citizens, the combination of science and capitalism tended to warp the educational processes, partly through the schools and partly through advertising and the "literature" of the advertising mediums.

I should cite the thinking of the English "scientific mystics" as evidence that the full force of the scientific rationalization is drawing to a close. These men have completed the circle by producing a kind of "scientific introversion," training upon science itself the skepticism which science had formerly trained with such devastating effects upon non-scientific modes of thought. They have disclosed the "esthetic" element in scientific doctrine, the fact that not "objective truth," but "human preference," underlies the basic assumptions upon which the investigations of positive science are based. This trend is often taken as a mere symptom of England's decay, but I should interpret it differently, holding rather that it points once again towards the re-emphasizing of the *human* factor, as distinct from the criteria of "impersonality" which informed scientific doctrine in its heyday. It may be seen as an indication of the growing conviction that science is "not enough," that scientific thought and purpose must always be evaluated with reference to human genius: it is the first step towards the "re-humanization of science," and as such might properly be expected to reveal itself first in that nation which had been the first to develop scientific applications and perhaps still rates highest in the discovery of "key" inventions.

The only organized body of thought which seems competent to serve as the "fourth rationalization" is Communism. Its humane emphasis allies it to the religious rationalization in one notable particular: it is a doctrine aimed at the regularizing of human coöperation on the basis of the productive and distributive problems brought about by science and commerce since the close of feudalism. Under Communism, the technological equipment can be tested with reference to its serviceability to cultural and humane ends as a whole, whereas under the economic warfare of capitalism the human demands must be shaped and warped to suit the needs arising from the profit motive. Though aware that the word "mediaevalism" is in disrepute at present, since it usually suggests to those bred on liberal histories only



thoughts of serfdom and inequality, with side-glances at Hitlerite "reversions," I should suggest that Communism aims at a kind of "industrial mediaevalism." And I should hasten to define my meaning as follows: The mediaeval system, at its best, was a period of maximum cultural stasis, as distinguished from the highly unstable and transitory nature of living since the rise of bourgeois commercialism. Had property been communally owned in such a way that the parasitical class of nobles and clergy were eliminated, this cultural stasis might have continued, and even the new modes of invention might have been introduced without such vast disruption to the traditional patterns of thought. In any event, as I understand the Marxian references to a "new equilibrium," they have to do with the stabilizing effects that should follow from an adequate system of communal ownership, such as seems to have prevailed partially during the middle ages for the period when the church properties were available for the service of the congregation as a whole and were not yet extensively preempted by the class of nobles and "writers."

But the matter of stabilization, or a "new equilibrium", brings us to the fourth of our approaches, involving the relationship between stability and culture. (Both the third and fourth points are considered at greater length in my essay *On Interpretation*, in the *Plowshare* of February.) Culture is not a "luxury product," like icing on a cake. In the end, a people can be satisfied with nothing less than a very profound culture. For a culture is the adaptation of our spiritual values to external necessities. As such, it is radically necessary to human happiness. And it seems obvious that for such an adjustment to be successfully made, in the unwieldy process of history, there must be a marked constancy in the nature of the external situation, and the demands arising from this situation must be such that, in accommodating ourselves to them, we may stress attitudes useful to the group as a whole. Hence we get to the "esthetic approach," which considers the relation between Communist stability and art.

The language of art thrives best when there is a maximum of stability in our ways of livelihood and in the nature of our expectations. A medium of communication is not merely a body of words; the words themselves derive their emotional and intellectual content from the social or environmental texture in which they

are used and to which they apply. Under a stable environment, a corresponding stability of moral and esthetic values can arise and permeate the group—and it is this "superstructure" of values which the artist draws upon in constructing an effective work of art. In periods of marked instability, such a superstructure tends to disintegrate into individualistic differentiations.

In particular, the capitalist way of life gives maximum insecurity, or bewilderment of expectation, to the great body of its citizens. Now: "meaning" and expectation are integrally intermingled. The "conditioned reflex" of Pavlov illustrates the relationship in its simplest form: I refer to his classic experiments in which, by repeatedly ringing bells when food was presented to dogs, he taught the dogs to salivate at the sound of bells as they would normally have done only at the sight or smell of food. It is obvious that, if this bell-ringing were not regular, if the bell had sometimes been rung when food was presented, at other times been rung when no food was presented, at other times been rung when the dogs were punished, at other times been rung when nothing happened at all, and at still other times been left silent when food was presented, the "food-meaning" of a ringing bell could not have been established. Thus, the "artist" (experimenter) could not have "symbolically" induced in his dogs (the "audience") a "food-response" (salivation) by manipulating the "superstructure of values" (bells as a food sign). This is what is meant by our saying that esthetic values arise out of permanency, and take on their meaning as "goods" and "bads" by their association with painful and pleasurable anticipations.

Treating the same matter from a different angle, we can consider a kind of relationship between instrument and purpose, thus: If A would like to go to location B, the conveyance which takes him there becomes a "good" because his purpose was a "good," the money which hires the conveyance becomes a "good," and the work which obtains the money becomes a "good." Under an unstable and hysterical way of living, such charging of instrument by purpose can be of a very low order. The need to reach location B, for instance, can be so intense that even a filthy conveyance can become a "good," and similarly even a despicable way of obtaining the money can become a "good." It is by such a device, a kind of "any port in a storm" psychology, that even intolerable conditions are made bearable. In this way the hovels of a gold-rush town, or of a run-down agrarian area, or of a city slum become "good," simply because shelter *per se* is a "good." Such a low order of values thrives particularly on conditions of maximum insecurity wherein a few fundamental purposes (such as the drive towards mere survival) are made uppermost.

In sum, great instability both interferes with the firm establishment of the moral-esthetic superstructure which the artist draws upon, and often imparts an inferior cultural quality to whatever fragments of such a superstructure are established.



Mayo

Mayo

Correspondence

Elmer Rice Declined

TO THE NEW MASSES:

Among the names of the signers to the open letter to the Communist Party in your issue of March 6, is that of Elinor Rice. The typographical similarity of this name to my own, has apparently given a number of hasty readers the impression that I am one of the signers of the letter. As a matter of fact, I was asked to sign but declined for several reasons, among them my membership on the board of the American Civil Liberties Union which has been conducting an inquiry into the Madison Square Garden meeting. May I ask the courtesy of your correspondence columns for this letter?

ELMER RICE.

"United Front from Below"

TO THE NEW MASSES:

Your Open Letter to John Dos Passos, in answer to an Open Letter to the Communist Party, which I signed along with many other friends of militant labor, seems to mean that if Dos Passos had not also signed it, the letter would not be worth answering because the people who wrote it are not worth serious attention from a revolutionary writers' and artists' magazine. Your letter slanders us as a group and attacks several of us specifically, myself among them, for presuming to criticize the Communist Party without being revolutionary leaders. You also imply that all the signers except Dos Passos belong to one of two categories: either we are shady people maneuvering against the Communist Party, or else we are stupid people allowing ourselves to be used for that purpose.

I believe all of us realized that to sign that letter was a serious matter; we all had serious reasons for doing so. I do not know whether they were the same reasons in every case, but I want to state mine because I believe they involve a matter of enormous concern to the revolutionary labor movement, and I hope that you will publish and publicly answer my letter on that level without resorting to insults and sneers.

First, I want to state that to my knowledge, the letter was signed by each of us as independent individuals, not as members of a group. We knew who had written it and we believed it to express sincerely and clearly, our own position. Second, I want to call your attention to that portion of the letter which states who we are and why we think we have a right to criticize the Communist Party. In that statement we do not pretend to be revolutionists or revolutionary leaders; we do not presume to speak from the same position and with the same justification as would a Foster; we do not claim any more rights than those of friends who have all been called friends—and comrades—by the Party, because we have performed the small services for the revolutionary movement that sympathetic intellectuals such as those who contribute to THE NEW MASSES are able to perform, and because we have only taken a position in sympathy with the aims of the Communist Party. I do not see why, if we are asked to support certain Party activities and if our assistance as sympathetic intellectuals is accepted, we should not also be entitled to ask questions and make criticisms of those policies or acts of the Party which we feel to be harmful to the militant labor movement as a whole. The Party does not claim to be infallible, you say; is it infallible then only so far as the questions and criticisms of sympathetic intellectuals are concerned?

In answering Dos Passos, you recognize that the core of the matter is really the question of the "united front from below." This was my understanding of it also, and the reason why I signed the letter. It seemed clear to me, as you recognize, that the Madison Square Garden riot grew out of

an application of the united front from below tactic. I recognized it because I witnessed the application of that policy in Spain, frequently, and in each case, to my enormous dismay, it had the result of disrupting and paralyzing mass action at crucial moments when true unity was very badly needed, and the secondary result of further dividing and confusing the workers. The Spanish government hailed this sort of thing with delight; its stools and agents provocateurs were—and are—aiming at just such disruption and paralysis. I came to the conclusion that, after the criminal treason of the leadership of the Spanish Socialist Party, the one thing that would be most responsible for the triumph of Fascism would be precisely the disrupting effect of the "united front from below" policy.

Do you agree that the one thing that can beat Fascism is united mass action? Can you tell me of any occasions in which the "united front from below" policy has accomplished that? We all know of the catastrophes in Germany and Austria, the enormous defeats possible because united mass action was not obtained. Defense and explanation of the "united front from below" policy is your only possible answer to myself and all the signers of the letter, Dos Passos included: can you answer us in that way, can you convince us, or do you just want us discredited and alienated from the revolutionary movement because we require the Communist Party to defend a position that needs defense badly?

ANITA BRENNER.

[Letters in a similar vein were received from Louis Berg and George E. Novack.—THE EDITORS.]

Socialist Party "United Front"

TO THE NEW MASSES:

The St. Louis Socialists arranged a united front demonstration with the Communist Party, to take place at the Austrian Consulate, 220 North Fourth Street, Friday, Feb. 23 at noon. To mobilize for the demonstration the Socialist Party called a mass protest meeting at the Gayety Theatre, Thursday, Feb. 22, to protest the slaughter of Austrian Socialists by the Dollfuss government.

The meeting was opened about 8:30 p. m. by the chairman, Clark Waldron, a Socialist. Four to five hundred men and women were present. About one-quarter of these were Communists.

A Civil Liberties Union member, the first speaker, told the audience that if anyone believed President Roosevelt was at all controlled by Wall Street he was hopelessly wrong, and repeated, "President Roosevelt stands between us and a revolution." Shouts of "Let a Communist speak" followed his last word.

Percival Chubb, leader Emeritus of the Ethical League, a Fabian, and former member of the Civil Liberties Union, made known that he was against violence; that he believed in the "Roosevelt Revolution." Again came the cries of "Let a Communist talk. . . ." "We want Chaunt!" from the Communist group in the rear.

Schnied, local organizer of the Amalgamated Workers' Union following Chubb, did the best he could under the circumstances to exhort the Socialists to be revolutionary, and to be ready to fight as the Austrian Socialists had done instead of waiting and waiting until it was too late and they had injured the cause as the Social Democrats of Germany and other countries had done.

The Communists demanded, louder and more insistently: "Let a Communist talk. . . . We want Chaunt!"

Clark Waldron flared into action and pointed an accusing finger at the Communists in the rear seats. He shouted almost frantically, "I'm going to put you Fascists to the test! You'll have a chance to

show whether you really want solidarity with the workers of the world or whether you are here to break up this meeting! I am chairman and I intend to run this meeting my own way. You will show your solidarity the way I want you to show it or. . . ." He then called for contributions and sneeringly added, "Here's the chance for those in the rear to prove they are true revolutionists! Who will give ten dollars?"

Several attempts had been made to question the speakers. Waldron said there would be a period of discussion later. Demands to hear Chaunt (the Communist organizer) continued. The shock troopers, members of the Young Socialist League formed small groups along the aisles to the rear, ready for battle with those they had just recently agreed with on a united front.

A minister, introduced after the collection, related that he had the past week exchanged pulpits with a Negro minister. He then asked, "I wonder how many Socialists will fight side by side with their Negro brothers if we have a revolution?" There was loud applause from the Socialists, among whom sat three or four Negroes. About one-third of the Communists present were Negroes. A few of these applauded the speaker's words, but for the most part the Communists were meaningfully silent.

The first response from the Communists came when the minister said, "I will make my talk brief to give the Communists a chance to talk." His next words silenced the applause and rejoicing turned to bitterness. "Of course, I'm not running the show and it will depend on what the chairman says."

As he turned, his talk completed, encouraging shouts of "Chaunt, take the floor!" came from the rear of the theatre.

Communists on every side questioned. "United front?" "Is this a united front?" "Will the Socialists ever allow a Communist to speak at their meeting?"

A woman, a Socialist, answered, "Maybe, they will let them speak later."

"Yes, at the demonstration tomorrow, they will let us speak and get our heads cracked and let us be jailed."

"Chaunt, take the floor!"

Chaunt advanced toward the front. The lights went out.

The Communists broke the ominous silence, hurling at the Socialists, who had again tricked them, the words of the *Internationale*, in a flaming tempo. The *Internationale* was their reply; their rebuke to the Social Fascists.

St. Louis, Mo.

JOS. HOFFMAN.

Chamberlain on Violence

TO THE NEW MASSES:

Enclosed is a copy of a letter I have just sent my friend John Chamberlain. You may publish it if you wish.

MURRAY GODWIN.

Dear John Chamberlain:

Excuse me if I remark that your line in the March 8 Times has given me cause to wrinkle the facade of reason's temple in astonishment. For example, you say:

Nevertheless—and here is where we squirm in our indecisiveness—the Bolshevik tactics were all too easily copied by the Hitler Brown Shirts, as *Nazism: An Assault on Civilization* proves. The difference between a Hitler and a Lenin is, to our mind, the difference between a confused fanatic who doesn't know where he is going, but who tortures "non-Aryans" on the way, and a fanatic who knew exactly what he wanted and indulged what seemed to him a minimum of violence. If the world must have violence, we

prefer the sort meted out by Lenin; it is, at least, intellectually clear. Yet it is perfectly true that *any* advocacy of violent changes, no matter what the idealism behind it, is two-edged; what one man does, his enemy may copy. And that is the mistake which the followers of Karl Marx in the Western countries have made; they have said "these things will be settled on the barricades," but they have not reckoned with the other side having the guns. And they have paid a terrible price, in Germany and in Austria, for having preached violent class war when, as Hilaire Belloc puts it:

*Whatever happens, we have got
The Maxim gun, which they have not!*

Suffering weakfish! How can you? After the centuries of terrorism loosed against the proletariat by ruling classes here and abroad, can you honestly believe that the Nazis learned their stuff from the Reds? One only wishes your theory were true, for then, surely, the West European proletariat would have learned much more readily and quickly that only the exertion of a more decisive force can stem the coming-to-power of the enemy, and hence never would have temporized until it was hopelessly under the gun. Dr. Otto Bauer, in that case would doubtless be in exile, as he is today, but he would not be explaining to the world how the Socialist leadership in Austria had but two alternatives, both excluding decisive mass pressure, and that defeat, because of the cruel nature of the notorious meanie, Herr Dollfuss, would have been certain regardless of which one was tried. *Au contraire*, he would be composing denunciations of the Communist minority to whom the rank and file would have turned for leadership in the crisis, and who would have "cynically" crucified that *gemütlich* liberty in which Socialist leaders take too much innocent joy to see it sacrificed for anything other than a Right-wing victory.

Again, you say: "And that is the mistake which the followers of Karl Marx in the Western countries have made; they have said 'these things will be settled on the barricades,' but they have not reckoned with the other side having the guns. And they have paid a terrible price, in Germany and Austria, for having preached violent class war..." Say, look-a-here! *Is* that precisely why they paid the terrible price? *Is that* why they paid the ten-times-more-terrible price in 1914-18? *Is that* why they have sweated to pay vast war debts incurred on behalf of their exploiters, and thoroughly cheated by parliaments, and put on the spot by their "evolutionist" leaders, and the rest of it? Surely, as the kindly Dr. Bauer admits without realizing the terrible implications of his admission, they got their recent and continuing beating in Austria precisely because they failed to *practice* open class warfare at a time when they could have won—that was what was ruinous; and for the outcome they have to thank exactly those leaders who meticulously avoided the "mistake" of "violent class war."

Nowhere, apparently, save in Russia, have the leaders of the working class dared fully to realize that the ruling class never compromises except to gain time to mend a weakness in its own forces or to bring about a relaxation of vigilance and militance in the forces of its opponents—and this against the day when open terrorism may be initiated, with the certainty of victory, for the suppression of the working class. . . . And honestly, you don't believe that "they (the Marxians) have not reckoned with the other side having the guns"! How, explain, could the Austrian workers have reckoned on anything else? To "keep the peace" their leaders permitted them to be disarmed, and to show their disapproval of Dollfuss' tactics their key office holders stepped out of the government, thereby removing the last difficulty in the chancellor's task of arming their opponents. The Austrian workers knew perfectly well that their opponents had all the advantage in arms and other war equipment; and they fought, not because they thought they could win, but because they could not bear to deliver themselves, without firing a shot,

to the existence of starvation and serfdom which the victors would not fail to decree as the fitting mode for persons of their status. I do not doubt that Dr. Bauer, a sympathetic man with Socialistic inclinations, will drop many a bitter tear over the lot of his followers; but I note that his main regret regarding the conduct of the crisis is that, despite his most meticulous efforts, the disarmament of the workers was not utterly complete. Had it been so, there would have been no bloodshed, at least among the Heimwehr; and Dr. Bauer would have the heartacheless satisfaction of feeling that, like a true champion of peace at any price the proletariat can be made to pay, he had ended his stewardship and surrendered his flock without fracturing a single statute of the law so sanguinely and shamelessly flouted by his opponents.

Somehow, John, it strikes me that this is the kind of leadership which is being intently built up through "united front" meetings like that held in the Garden not so long ago; and I feel regretful that you are among those finegled into giving it encouragement and defence, as you have done in the review under inspection and also in a certain protest which had all the earmarks of having been fabricated, with malignant intent, by careerists who mean neither you nor the workers well. . . .

MURRAY GODWIN.

A Note on the Garden

TO THE NEW MASSES:

The Modern Monthly, in its March issue, attacks the Communist Party for its behavior recently at Madison Square Garden. And it draws far-reaching conclusions about the hopelessness of the present Communist Party and the need for a new one.

Unfortunately for the Modern Monthly the whole attack rests on a glaring inconsistency of argument.

The Communist Party at Madison Square Garden, the attack says, had "an opportunity . . . such as has never before occurred in the United States to picture to the workers of the United States what Fascism really means. . . . Here, furthermore, was a golden and unprecedented opportunity to present the necessity of revolutionary action to the American workers, the refusal to use which had so obviously

failed to save the Austrian workers from brutal attacks by reactionaries, and so to attach the growing militancy of the American workers to a revolutionary objective."

Just how the Communist Party could do this *at that meeting* the article fails to point out. The meeting, as the article recognizes, was in control of the Socialists. And the Socialist Party, they admit, is "unquestionably wedded to social-democratic policies." The American Socialist Party is clearly the counterpart of the Austrian Socialist Party. It sponsors the very policies that led to the Austrian massacre.

How could the Communists make a protest against such policies at a meeting dominated by the Socialists? Where was their golden opportunity to proclaim the necessity for revolutionary action? How could they do that and at the same time keep peace with the Socialists who absolutely would not allow them to do that?

DONALD MORROW.

A Correction

TO THE NEW MASSES:

I am writing to make some slight correction of your reference to me in your issue of March 6 under the head "The Contributors" where you say: "Bill Dunne, formerly editor of the Daily Worker, is writing his autobiography which will comprise the history of American labor in the twentieth century."

1.) I never authorized any such statement for publication in THE NEW MASSES or elsewhere.

2.) I am *not* writing an "autobiography which will comprise the history of labor in the twentieth century."

3.) I *am* writing on the conditions of the American working class from 1900 to date. I am also writing a pamphlet replying to the attacks on the Communist Party, and the demand for its suppression, together with the suppression of all organizations which support its program or various points of its program, especially struggle against Fascism and imperialist war, hunger and slavery for workers under N.R.A., etc., made recently by President Green of the A.F. of L., and Matthew Woll, acting president of the Civic Federation. BILL DUNNE.



"COME ON! GET MOVING!"

Phil Bard



"COME ON! GET MOVING!"

Phil Bard



"COME ON! GET MOVING!"

Phil Bard

B o o k s

A Personal Record

MURDER—MADE IN GERMANY, by Heinz Liepmann. Harper and Brothers. \$2.50.

NAZIFICATION, and its inseparable terror, got under way gradually in Germany. Though at a much faster tempo than in Italy, power and position were swallowed up piecemeal; the apparatus of intimidation, repression, espionage was built up stage by stage, even after the device of firing the Reichstag had supplied the pretext for "cracking down". On the scene in Germany, if you were at all aware of what events really meant, a few weeks of the nerve-racking tension seemed like half a decade. And by the end of March, less than a month after the "national" Reichstag election, you felt as if the slow nightmare suffocation had been under way indefinitely. It was hard to remember vividly that it had ever been different.

But *Murder—Made in Germany* brings the breath-snatching shock of a sudden, total immersion. Progressive initiation into the degrading realities of Fascism in action had been denied the crew of the steamer *Kulm*, 900 tons register, as late in the evening of March 28, 1933, they rounded Cuxhaven and entered the Elbe bound for Hamburg—and home. On board was a cargo of fish and eleven men differing greatly in politics, religion, training; a mixed sample of the Fatherland they had left the day after Christmas, 1932. The *Kulm* had no radio; no letters or communications had been received. The men shared a working comradeship, and ignorance of current events in Germany. Both were quickly dispelled.

A vessel sighted flying the swastika was the first hint. Immediately the sycophantic first officer who formerly had played Social Democrat, reacted appropriately. He addresses the cook as "Jew!" After the symbol flapping aloft, the wretched reality: an expiring swimmer is picked up, horribly gashed, unbelievably beaten. A Jew. Before the ship docks, he flings himself again into the night channel, rather than be returned to his native soil.

Oswald Spengler, super-charlatan of right wing Fascism, obediently echoing assertions of propaganda dictator Goebbels, has bumbled: "the national revolution of 1933 . . . a mighty phenomenon . . . by reason of the elemental, super-personal force with which it came and the spiritual discipline with which it was carried through." The best refutation of this kind of rubbish is a book like this, compacted of actual events rearranged in the form of a novel. The misnamed "national revolution" was carried through—Nazi "coordination" was forced—not by the lavish hysterical propaganda (which played a pre-

paratory and a distracting rôle) but by gangster methods which were sub-human and excruciatingly personal.

Principles did little or nothing to guide the crashing down of the brown avalanche. It was—and remains—a mad, vindictive scramble for the most individual of all satisfactions: offices and influence, political preference, business and professional advantages (at rivals' expense). This national shake-down has been accompanied by every kind of sadistic caprice and excess—mean victimization, senseless physical torment, economic persecution ranging from petty graft to deliberate annihilation. Nazi "principles" have been scrapped.

The crew of the *Kulm* all learn this, each in a different way; and so too learns the reader of this stark book, "which is meant to be not a novel but rather a human document" according to the author's own foreword. Probably it is not a very fine or finished novel; it is spotty, frequently inconsecutive, and occasionally disjointed. But it is a terrific projected record of the descent of the blight on Germany, more condensed than a diary or personal narrative could be. And it is true in detail, true in total effect. Here is the rank stench and the filth of Fascist triumph as millions are experiencing it. As this reviewer too saw it, indelibly.

"There is not one character whom I did not know personally, not one incident which I did not see with my own eyes or which was not witnessed and described to me by some friend . . . for whose reliability I can vouch." So writes Liepmann, who himself suffered and witnessed in a concentration camp, and made his escape—though not by the same methods as "Martin" in the narrative, who is obviously otherwise identical with him.

Defects of form suggesting haste and strain are overshadowed by the positive worth of the book. Despite an occasional outcropping of sentimentalizing and a few unwelcome tricks of writing, which suggest artifice rather than restraint or necessary documentation, *Murder—Made in Germany* is far more than a stringing together of atrocity stories from the Hamburg district. For readers who have not had personal contact with Fascist reality, certain parts of the picture are especially worthy of attention: the prevalence of official spies and amateur denunciants, infesting every phase of public and private life; the powerlessness of such extenuations as honorable war record, non-political past, innocence of the crime charged, to protect or save individual victims from the terror troops; the early underground work against Hitler Fascism, its desperate risks, ingenious devices, and epic heroism.

There is plenty in this book to arouse

Americans to fight desperately, to search out and batter down the advanced preparations for imposing the same kind of reality here.

ARTHUR HELLER.

A Victorian Atheist

CHAMPION OF LIBERTY: CHARLES BRADLAUGH, a symposium. The Free-thought Press Association. \$2.00.

"I will be faithful and bear true allegiance to Queen Victoria, her heirs and successors, according to law, so help me God." This oath, required of all parliament members, Charles Bradlaugh, when he was elected in 1880, hesitated to take. He was an atheist, he said, and the words, "so help me God," could mean nothing to him. He ought to be allowed to omit them, but he'd pronounce the words rather than lose his seat.

For taking this stand, however, Bradlaugh did lose his seat. And when he protested, respectable opinion turned furiously upon him. Petitions of bankers and merchants, statements in pulpit and press reviled him for being atheist. "No public man within my recollection," wrote W. E. Adams, a journalist of standing, "was the mark and object of more calumnies and falsehoods than Charles Bradlaugh."

The English bourgeoisie had not always been so strong against unbelievers. In fact during the previous, the eighteenth, century they weren't so religious themselves. They had just won their fight against catholicism and the feudal lords, and the struggle with the working class had not yet begun. There was no enemy to use religion against. And so, as science advanced, they were allowing it to die a natural death. Even "the higher clergy in the English Church," says the historian Muir, "were largely sceptical."

But toward the end of the eighteenth century the workingmen were growing numerous and centralized. And then suddenly came the French Revolution with its stirring call for freedom and equality. What an impression it made on the enslaved English workingmen and what a scare it threw into their masters! Maybe the common people of England would follow the example in France and wage a revolution!

All through the early nineteenth century these fears continued, for the workers began to rebel against the new factory system. They destroyed machinery. They staged unemployment marches and great meetings where orators used revolutionary language.

The English rulers met this uprising with bloody repression. But they soon found subtler methods: not only democracy, but as the textbooks put it, "The Revival of Religion." The revived Puritan theology which so fast overwhelmed the country, taught the poor, a bourgeois historian, R. M. Rayner says, in *Nineteenth Century England*, to "be contented with that condition of life to which it had pleased an all-wise Providence to call them." This theology "restrained the revo-

lutionary spirit which was more than once on the point of breaking out." And so throughout the nineteenth century religion grew again. Though science advanced, though Lyell and Darwin wrote, the official organs of the English ruling class continued to pour out steadily the religious opium.

Charles Bradlaugh, in his many writings and especially in his stand against the parliamentary oath, was hampering the spread of the befogging religion. Hence the clamor against him. It would be interesting to know just how many of his most vehement critics were, in private, atheists or doubters themselves.

After putting up an able and courageous fight, Bradlaugh in 1886 finally took his seat in parliament. The next, and last, five years of his life were devoted mainly to political matters, in which he was a mere liberal. What he did against the ruling class in religion he made up for in politics. He thoroughly believed, as he himself put it, that "capital has rights," and he opposed even the mild socialisms of his time. Before he died the House of Commons erased from its journals resolutions made against him in the earlier days.

The new book adds little to what is known of Bradlaugh. But it does assemble, in convenient form, the chief events of his life, excerpts from his speeches and writings, articles (written especially for this book) concerning intellectual trends in Bradlaugh's day and his contribution to them, and appreciations of him made at various times by eminent men.

DONALD MORROW.

On and Off the Square

RED SQUARE. Samuel Andrew Wood. Dutton. \$2.

REVOLUTION. Adolph Gillis. Duffield and Green. \$2.

Red Square was published during 1933 in the Blue Book, a pulpwood magazine. It is typical of a new genre of popular fiction in which the Soviet Union is described as a land of Oriental intrigue and in which G. P. U. agents are made into stock villains. In this lurid thriller, Koregorvsky, bald Tartar and Deputy to the Public Prosecutor of the "Three Letters," hatches murder plots like a "wrinkled spider there in his web." He commissions a Chinese girl revolutionary to kill her husband, a Mongol priest who is a leader of the "Red Brotherhood of Man" movement in Asia; she executes him neatly by pinning him to the statue of a headless Buddha with his own sword.

An American society woman who has joined the Communist Party (!) and an American architect are caught in the web of the conspiracy. They are constantly pursued by the villain, a "velvet revolutionary," formerly a Greenwich Village artist and now "court" painter to the Politbureau as well as a "Knight of the Hidden Blade" (read G. P. U.). They are saved from his clutches by Sasha the Frog, head of a band of *bez-*

prizorny, "ditch-delivered brats of Chaos who still lived Ishmael-like all over Russia, in this, the first year of the second Five Years Plan" (!). Altogether amazing is the hero's escape from the execution pit of the Butyrka. Again he is rescued by Sasha the Frog, who directs him through the sewers of Moscow. Sasha is a careful student of the manners and customs of the millions of rats that infest the "subterranean city" beneath the Kremlin. During this perilous journey Sasha amuses the American with a few similes in which the Soviet people are compared to the rodents in the "underground city."

In this connection it is interesting to note the curious changes made in the story when it was published in book form. For example, the American characters are transformed into Britishers. Apparently this was done, as a result of the recognition of Russia, as the easiest way of removing the sting of the innumerable slanders in the book directed against the Soviet government. It indicates the up-to-the-minute quality of popular bourgeois fiction, which is frequently a barometer of "public opinion." An even better illustration is a new serial entitled *Sabotage*, which has just appeared in *Argosy Weekly*. This melodrama is probably the first pulpwood novel about Soviet Russia in which the villains are not Russian officials, but enemies of the Soviet Union. It tells the story of a young American engineer who wins the gratitude of the Russian people by uncovering a foreign plot to wreck a gigantic dam.

Revolution also opens with a scene in the Red Square. Although it is written not by a pulpwood hack but by a budding literary critic, it is not easy to tell the difference—except for the literary veneer; as a matter of fact, in terms of plot and action it is inferior to the average pulp product. It is an anti-Communist novel, written with the deliberate (and ambitious) intention of checking the leftward movement among American intellectuals, particularly teachers and students. "Distressed like thousands of his kind by the threatened decay of capitalist civilization," Professor Stone visits Moscow and is stirred by the great "experiment." He returns to his classroom, convinced that the capitalist world is crumbling. This feeling on his part is deepened by a twenty percent wage cut. Always an idealist, maladjusted in a smug bourgeois civilization, he is ready for revolution. It comes.

Then, for a hundred pages, all of the bogies bestowed upon the Soviet Union since 1917 are transplanted upon American soil—wives

become harlots, Liberty is raped, "millions of human beings are drained and thrown upon the refuse heap" by the revolution, and war, pestilence, and terror parade through the land. Professor Stone is gradually disillusioned and finally faces the firing squad.

And then he "awoke with a cry." It was all a dream—a hundred-page nightmare. Whereupon Professor Stone "strides into the classroom" and delivers a sermon to American teachers and students: "We shall fight our way through, not with tears but with patience, not with pride but with sacrifice. We shall learn to endure" (that is, endure twenty percent wage cuts and unemployment). The story is so thin that even the bourgeois critics will probably find it safer to label the novel as a stupid book.

ALAN CALMER.

Still Life

THE FIRST BILLION, The Stillmans and the National City Bank, by John K. Winkler. *The Vanguard Press.* \$2.50.

The trenchant tradition of muckraking in American letters has given way largely to the practise of namby-pamby narrative which pretends to searching analysis but reveals nothing. In the field of biography, John K. Winkler

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has become perhaps the ablest exponent of this latter-day departure. One can only agree, regretfully, with the jacket blurbist, who recommends Winkler's biography of the elder James A. Stillman on the grounds that it is written "with irony but no rancor" and "always with perfect good humor." Not even the most enthusiastic blurb-writer could accuse Winkler of revealing any basic facts concerning the slow but deadly grip which Stillman's octopus fastened on the financial life of three continents over a period of almost half a century.

What was the real relation of Stillman and his bank to the Morgan and Rockefeller groups? What was the stake of the Big Three (Morgan, Baker, and Stillman) in the Spanish American War? How many revolutions has the National City Bank engineered in Central and South America since the turn of the century? How was this vast and rapid concentration of wealth affecting the American workers who created it and whose labor made possible Stillman's awe-inspiring manipulations of credit and gold? None of these or other basic questions are answered in Winkler's book save by the vaguest implication.

The book is particularly silent on the machinations of American finance capital during the second decade of the century although the quoted correspondence of Frank Vanderlip and Stillman is revealing—but again by implication. Winkler does make it clear that Stillman saw the vista of world hegemony opened to American imperialism by the war when he quotes the following from a letter written by Stillman two months after the war started: "I want to say very positively that this is probably the most important letter I have ever written to you, from my point of view, brief and casual as it may seem. Much as we flattered ourselves we comprehended the situation when I was in New York none of us really yet knew what this war will probably mean or what is going on even. *These things cannot be written and I may send verbal messages to you.*" (Italics mine. P. S.) But what the verbal messages were or what their effects were in establishing world domination of the dollar, Winkler doesn't even try to guess.

In dealing with Stillman's personal life, the book is much more than satisfactory. It is enlightening to know that Stillman inflicted intense mental torture on his family, servants and bank underlings alike by the various and progressive forms of his megalomania—and that he was never rude to a man of importance.

In spots Winkler deviates from his vein of "good humored" evaluation long enough to say about Stillman and his associates, for instance, that "only the crassest of stupidities could have prevented them from profiting through the country's natural development." But then only the crassest of stupidities can keep a biographer from making a telling observation occasionally.

By ordinary standards, Winkler's book is

informative and interesting, but it still remains for some militant researcher to take up the real stories of the Stillmans, Morgans, Bakers, Rockefellers, etc., where Gustavus Myers left off. PHILLIP STERLING.

Last Testament

AN ALTAR IN THE FIELDS, by Ludwig Lewisohn. Harper. \$2.50.

Lewisohn's novels have always been concerned with two themes: the proper conduct of the Jew in an alien world and the problem of satisfactory adjustment in marriage. On the Jew he has urged the necessity of clanishness, the need for the preservation of his spiritual and cultural heritage if he is to survive. On men and women he has urged the necessity of finding their proper places, of not presuming to disrupt the status life has decreed for both. The warning is directed primarily at the women. His current novel is a restatement of the problems, a confirmation of past convictions, and an elaboration bringing his conclusions up to date. It is, in short, his last testament: one feels certain that whatever may follow will be merely a codicil.

The novel is ostensibly the quest for certainty on the part of Dick and Rose Belden, a young American couple disillusioned with life as the post-war era spelled the word, estranged from one another because neither knows exactly what he wants or how to get it; fleeing blindly and desperately over half the earth in search of the answer to their unformulated questions. The heart of the book, however, is the conflict between two irreconcilable worlds, the static world of religion and the dynamic one of Communism; the one a long step backward, the other a magnificent leap forward.

While the Beldens look on, two men (companions on a trip to Africa) battle for their allegiance. Dr. Weyl, like the Beldens, is on the wing; but wandering, he explains, because he is a Jew, because no land admits him as its own, because he is a plant rootless. Ralph Brown's explanation is simpler: he is on a vacation.

Weyl attacks Brown's Communism and wins the decision. It is a defeat of which Brown need not be ashamed. Lewisohn has made him a set-up, crippled him before he entered the ring. A real Communist could surely have disposed of arguments like these: human nature is permanent and will invariably reassert itself; a Communist society can be built only at the expense of those values which at present make life bearable; Communism means the spiritual death of the individual. Finally, the *coup de grâce* (and the nadir of Lewisohn's reasoning as well), Communism and Fascism (the German variety specified) are essentially identical: both sacrifice the individual to the state. Weyl recommends, therefore, that the Beldens return to religion and the simple life, to the discipline of an inner check and the preservation and enrichment of their national cultural heritage.

For Rose specifically—*Kinder und Küche*.

The Beldens pick up wonderfully on this. They admire the Arab losing himself in his god, and reflect with how little he contents himself. The wretched alone have found the door to serenity. Let us observe them. They return to America. Dick buys a farm as the easiest way of getting back to the earth and Rose is big with the concrete achievement of a baby. Weyl is left to his wanderings and Brown to his Communism.

What has happened to Lewisohn is clear. Like many other quondam liberals and sceptics he found it impossible to maintain the unsatisfactory position of liberalism any longer; he perceived that events are remorselessly crushing anyone who stands still. But when it came to a choice between revolt and flight, he chose flight, disguising it with the convenient euphemism that he was retaining his spiritual integrity. He escaped into the trackless, metaphysical dark; and now he sonorously affirms the negations which he calls the answer to starvation and corruption and the cry of men bewildered, lost in a world without meaning or hope or possibility of regeneration. He affirms these negations as the answer to the rich new dawn already gleaming on the horizon. GILBERT DOUGLAS.

Stage Irish

SHAKE HANDS WITH THE DEVIL, by Reardon Conner. William Morrow. \$2.50.

Power dams on the River Shannon and the irksome realities of the class struggle (Fascist blue-shirts and all!) may have hushed Lady Gregory's rural seers. Getting rid of the stage Irishman, the Amos and Andy of Anglo-Irish relations, however, appears to be a more difficult job. Here he is again with as painful a set of "becripes" as ever stepped out of the pages of Samuel Lover's mongrel school of "Irish" literature.

Mr. Conner's boys—they are brutes as well as nitwits, we must note—are the members of the Irish Republican Army in which Kerry Sutton, half-English, half-Irish, is compelled to join after getting mixed up in the shooting of a British officer. Among such uncultured louts, who shoot informers, ambush black and tans, and burn anti-republican newspapers, Kerry doesn't feel at home. He revolts when beautiful Lady Moira Walsh ("she had the thighs and legs of a thoroughbred and the slim ankles that denoted good breeding") is captured and shot by the I. R. A. as a reprisal. Turning informer, he leads the tans to the rebel dugout. The tans shoot the rebels and then shoot Sutton.

That's the story. Undoubtedly incidents

CONCERT

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around which it is built happened in the Anglo-Irish war. But to recreate them into living literature they must be understood as surface incidents, as bloody episodes in an ancient struggle for national independence that was something more than a haphazard succession of bomb-lobbings. Conner does not even glimpse the broad sweep of this struggle and *Shake Hands with the Devil* suffers accordingly. His supercilious imperialist prejudice prevents him from accomplishing even capable reporting.

For instance: British officials used to complain that Cork was "rotten with Sinn Fein" even before the 1916 insurrection in Dublin. But Sinn Fein is one of those nasty Irish affairs that this hostile tourist does not rec-

ognize socially. "No one of the general public had heard of it," he writes of Sinn Fein in 1915, coolly foisting upon the "general public" his own comprehensive standards of ignorance.

Some of the observations are worthy of the best traditions of London's most tory Morning Post. Thus the sensitive Sutton sorrowfully contemplates Wicklow's "divine sands and excellent climate . . . wasted on a handful of peasant brats."

Sutton, on the other hand, has all of the virtues we have a right to expect from a 50 percent English gentleman. Chivalry—"Kerry lay on his bed that night in an agony of shame as he thought of Lady Moira lying in that extraordinary room. There was no lava-

tory attached to the quarters. . . ." And intellect!—Sutton was "too intelligent to regard the Irish language as anything but an affectation."

The author's sturdy Anglo-Saxon, by the way, bristles with such unaffected simplicities as: "The elms along the road lifted hoary arms in silent Hallelujah to their Creator." "Several dogs were nipped off the tree of life." "God is the Ultimate Purpose of Life."

I trust that esthete critics will not consider it irrelevant if I point out a possible source of Mr. Conner's jaundice. His father was an English secret service man put out of the way by the Irish Republican Army.

MORTON MORIARTY.

Heresy Hunters at Work

THEODORE DRAPER

THE RED-BAITERS, the stools, the Hearst syndicate and the National Civic Federation, the Ralph Easleys and the jingo Congressmen are on the loose again. Every Hearst paper in the country has been carrying an "exposé" of the "Communist menace in America." The series is signed by Ralph M. Easley, founder and chairman of the executive council of the National Civic Federation, associate of Hamilton Fish and Matthew Woll. The current revelations are no better and no worse than past performances. They lie and romanticize. They pickle commonplaces in the sauce of really incredible stuff. But their danger must not be minimized. They call for tighter espionage laws and a federal secret service inquisition. They were released almost immediately after the most swollen war budget ever presented in America and ten days after National Defense Week. The authorities may well begin to crack down upon those attacked in the first few installments—the growing, fighting student movement in America.

To date, they have almost exclusively concerned the Communist plotters in our schools who "are fighting all forms of preparedness so seizure will be easy when the revolution comes." The specific object of attack is the National Student League.

Some of the Hearst papers were more enterprising than others. The New York American, for example, merely ran Easley's piece with assorted photostats in the first installment. But the Boston Advertiser successfully converted an anti-Communist drive into a sex story. In a second, special article, the headlines reveal: "Girls Used in Red Plot to Win U. S." All this turns out to mean that there are N. S. L. chapters at Wellesley, Radcliffe, Smith and Mount Holyoke. To prove the point, the Advertiser ran the picture of pretty Nora Bergin, of the Tufts chapter, coy-

ly holding a Student Review on her lap. In the second installment, however, the American caught up and also featured a girl holding a placard reading "Friendships Not Battleships." Actually, neither the girl nor the slogan represents the N. S. L. Anyhow, visual evidence like that cannot be denied.

How do the heresy hunters work?

In every installment thus far, they have devoted almost half a page to reproducing "documentary" evidence, portions of articles and editorials from the Student Review, letters from the organization's files, leaflets, and even a sample membership card. Nothing reprinted was of such a nature that needed or could be kept a secret. Application cards are freely distributed at meetings, the Student Review is sold openly, leaflets are thrown away and the correspondence for the most part reiterated what could have been read elsewhere. It goes without saying that the files were rifled, and innumerable letters stolen. But even the application card had to be stolen. They reproduced a card which not only was stolen but was probably taken from the mails. Even the mailing list of the Student Review was reproduced item for item. The figures were obtained from the circulation manager's books which "disappeared" at the Washington Convention. Easley may be interested in knowing that revised statements were sent out for the December issue of the magazine on the basis of his "exposé" because the stolen figures were the most accurate ones, much more accurate than figures found elsewhere. These custodians of Americanism will persecute the National Student League because it is undermining the Constitution. But larceny is all right. The best people do it.

Even more extraordinary than the ethics is the logic of the patriots. Remember that what troubles Easley most of all is the threat to preparedness and national defense. He knows

what the National Student League stands for on that question. It is opposed to imperialist war, and any preparation or propaganda for imperialist war. Since its concern is primarily with schools, it is for the abolition of the R. O. T. C. and against the use of classroom and laboratory for research or propaganda for war purposes. But Easley is especially bitter on one point and he repeats it in both articles. He is bitter against the "demand that funds now being spent on national defense be turned to educational use." Take Chicago for example. Isn't it un-American that "renewed effort will be made to cripple National defense by taking advantage of the school situation in Chicago"? The National Civic Federation thinks it is and they are in on the whole secret. The secret is that the National Student League in Chicago makes a special point of stressing that "all military funds be turned to school use." Now, someone might suggest that if the National Civic Federation is anxious to prevent such nasty strategy as "taking advantage of the school situation in Chicago," they might help remedy the situation. They could agitate to pay the salaries of Chicago's desperate teachers. They could work towards the restoration of the full curriculum of the Chicago high schools which has been hacked to pieces during the crisis. They could help restore what was once one of the very few free colleges in America, Chicago's Crane Junior College, now charging tuition. Radicals cannot "take advantage of a situation" that does not exist. But Easley writes as though the students were responsible for the crisis and its impact on the schools. What if it is true that students join workers on the picket line in New York, New Haven, Northampton, Utah, California? What if it is true that "in the newer 'literature' of the N. S. L. the jobless future facing students 'because of the failure of the capitalistic system' is a key-

note reiterated in many forms"? Notice what happens. By an adroit shift of emphasis, it is the agitation by "student revolutionists approved by Moscow" who "take advantage of unfortunate situations" that is branded criminal, not the underlying social and economic causes back of those "unfortunate situations." It is easy to fall into Easley's trap. He wants to argue only on whether you were on the picket line or not. We want to argue why it is necessary to form picket lines, what it means to isolate students from that and similar problems. People who ask "did you" or "didn't you" are scarcely interested in your answer. They are interested in driving you underground.

In fact, anyone at all who raises his voice against the militarization of our schools, the discrimination against Negro students or retrenchment in education is either an agent of Moscow or is "being used to forward the aims of the Communists sowing seeds of revolt in the colleges." Everyone knows that the National Student League is not a Communist organization and is in no way affiliated or obligated to the Communist Party. But upon certain student issues such as those mentioned, the National Student League will fight implacably, has in fact been the chief force behind whatever student consciousness has been aroused on these problems. Does that mean that whoever joins the fight against military training is a Communist? Do Commu-

nists alone oppose retrenchment in education? That is a sort of left handed bouquet for the Communists. That is not however the basis upon which the National Student League operates. Although Communists may be sympathetic to its partial and limited program, many others besides Communists should and do fully subscribe to its aims. The National Student League draws certain broad, fundamental generalizations which can be substantiated within the experience of students. To find the causes of retrenchment, it is necessary to go beyond the schools. Plainly the causes are profoundly social. No doubt, some students draw more drastic implications, Communist implications or liberal implications as the case may be. The point is that the program of the National Student League is broad enough to include all sincere and militant spirits in the American college today.

The way to answer Easley and Hearst is to organize more student anti-war conferences, more anti-retrenchment drives, more action on Negro student problems. And students will be tested in the very near future. The immediate objectives ahead are the student anti-war demonstrations in the week beginning April 6, the date of the entry of the United States into the last war, and the one-hour student strike on April 13 as the culmination of the demonstrations. Of course that will make the patrioteering pack yelp the louder, but their cries will be those of anguish.

Singing Workers

ASHLEY PETTIS

THE recent concert of the Freiheit Ge-zang Farein at Brooklyn Academy of Music emphasized the peculiar significance of this extraordinary organization. Composed of approximately 300 class-conscious workers, under the leadership of Jacob Schaefer, one of the few genuinely proletarian musicians of notable attainment in this country, this society of non-professional singers again demonstrated not only their technical proficiency but their great vitality, both in the material presented and the style of the singing.

In addition to revolutionary Russian mass songs, by Buglai, Davidenko, Scheinin, etc., the oratorio *Two Brothers*, a composition of Jacob Schaefer, to poetry by Peretz, was presented.

This work, that of a gifted proletarian composer, is important for several reasons. The splendid choral writing, which is deeply impregnated with the character of Jewish traditional and religious music, is of a nature which appeals profoundly to the consciousness of the singers of the Freiheit Society.

Its traditional character is such an inherent part of their very fiber, that the chorus gave an unique performance. One must take into consideration the fact that Schaefer wrote *Two*

Brothers about eleven years ago. In his more recent work, he shows more revolutionary tendencies in his writing, notably in the harmonization. This earlier work, however, is significant because it is representative of the traditional musical culture of one of our national minorities, profoundly so; yet the subject matter is universal in its significance and appeal.

The story of the oratorio has to do with the lust for gold, the degradation and enmity which developed between two brothers as a result of their all-consuming greed. The story symbolizes the universal class struggle between exploiters and workers.

The difficult solo parts of the oratorio, in which a definitely Wagnerian influence is felt, were competently sung by Emma Redell, who also demonstrated her versatility and beauty of voice and style in a group of arias from Gluck, Moussorgsky and Tchaikowsky. David Shapiro rendered stylistically sensitive piano accompaniments.

The one unfortunate aspect of the concert was the playing of the orchestra. They were, indeed, put to shame by the perfection of the chorus. This was noticeable to such an extent, that the most vivid memories of the eve-

ning are of the *a capella* singing. The audience was large, attentive and enthusiastic.

International Music Week, organized by the International Music Bureau as a demonstration against Fascism and war, was celebrated March 4, in New York, at the Civic Repertory Theatre.

The speakers were Harry Martell and Charles Seeger. The music consisted of revolutionary and folk songs by the Daily Worker Chorus, conducted by Lahn Adohmyan, the Shostakowitsch Piano Sonata, played by Norman Cazden, of the Juilliard Chapter, N. S. L., and orchestral numbers by the Pierre Degeyter Symphonietta. Unfortunately, the greatly anticipated performance of Elie Siegmeister's musical setting of Michael Gold's *Strange Funeral in Brad-dock*, did not take place, due to the illness of the scheduled singer. The Freiheit Ge-zang Farein also contributed revolutionary songs.

The singing of the Daily Worker Chorus, under the baton of Lahn Adohmyan, was the surprise of the evening. In songs of the oppressed of various nationalities, this singing society, although not large, demonstrated its spirit and freshness. From a technical standpoint they showed excellent preparation in accuracy and precision of attack, as well as purity of intonation. This singing is far from the perfunctory, spiritless performance of "professional" choruses which have surfeited audiences so frequently in the past.

The Shostakowitsch Piano Sonata received a remarkably lucid and spirited performance by Norman Cazden. This sonata, the work of one of the outstanding young composers of Soviet Russia, is a work of singular "leanness" and vitality. Frequently the demands seem to be for orchestral rather than piano color, notably in the percussive basses. It has been said that this music shows influences of Scriabin and Stravinsky. Yet surely the realistic directness, the genuine drama of this score is far removed in spirit from the crystal-gazing mysticism and hysterical sensuality of Scriabin. Certain analogous characteristics to earlier works of Stravinsky possibly may be seen; yet Shostakowitsch here stands firmly on his own feet, clear-eyed, vigorous, permeated with a youthful revolutionary spirit, together with a firm-handed control, which elevates him to the front rank of modern music. Comparisons have been made between music of present-day Russia, with that of Czarist Russia by half-informed, completely prejudiced critics. The evidence is rapidly accumulating that the best of the Soviet composers have everything to gain and nothing to fear from such comparisons. The reception of the sonata was magnificent, and was due not only to the appeal of the work but to its splendid performance by young Norman Cazden.

The performance of the Pierre Degeyter Symphonietta, heard in Mozart's *Eine Kleine Nacht Musik*, showed a notable improvement in ensemble and style over previous performances by this group. It was conducted by David Grunes.

In the Money

Alas, They Must Spend!

“WHEN you read that list of corporation salaries, put out by the federal trade commission, we wonder whether it aroused envy or pity. We think not many would envy if they knew all the liabilities that go with big incomes these days.”

The foregoing commentary is from the ineffable Chicago Journal of Commerce, which, believe it or not, goes on to exclaim: “Verily the man in the cottage is the lucky citizen today.” No recognition is given to the fact that most of the cottages are mortgaged. It might be fair to ask if the classification of “lucky” citizens is meant to include not only the humble cottage dweller but also the inhabitant of city tenement and park bench.

“What the trade commission should have done,” continues the palladium of middle-western capitalism, “was to publish along with the figures of salaries, the amount of income taxes paid, the number of chauffeurs employed. It would have been enlightening, especially to some who think but halfway through a story, to have set up in each case the number of club employees, the number of secretaries, etc., etc., that each big income receiver supports through the SPENDING [emphasis in the original] of his income. Off in the right-hand column would be an item showing the remainder that is invested in stocks and bonds or real estate.”

Any remarks of my own on this masterpiece of complacency would be superfluous. My only concern is that readers will be inclined to doubt its authenticity. I can only refer investigators to the front-page editorial column of the Chicago Journal of Commerce, Feb. 28, 1934, which can be consulted at any well-equipped public library.

Washington Is Embarrassed

Little girls who remember their history know that in Nov. 1903, there was a bloodless “uprising” on the Isthmus of Panama, as a result of which the isthmus was detached from Colombia and declared independent. The “uprising” was instigated by the President and Secretary of State of the United States, and was carried out under the protecting guns of United States’ warships. “I took the Canal Zone,” boasted Theodore Roosevelt several years later. And that is how American imperialism came to have a Panama Canal.

There was, however, a treaty. Signed in 1904, it obligated the government of the United States to pay the Republic of Panama \$250,000 gold coin a year in perpetuity for the rental of the Canal Zone. The gold coin specifically mentioned was that of 1904.

American imperialism is now writing a new

chapter of the Canal Zone spoliation. It is trying to “welch” on the amount of the annual conscience money it had agreed to pay in justification of its continued control over the territory. When the time for the 1934 payment arrived, United States “gold currency” was on a bullion basis and represented 40.94 percent less gold value than in 1904. Panama has returned a check payable in this new money and has demanded the gold coin of 1904, or the approximately \$150,000 more in 1934 currency that would be required to represent equivalent value to \$250,000 in gold coin of 1904.

Since then President Roosevelt and two of his department heads have been “in a huddle,” as Arthur Krock writes from Washington. Legally, it is admitted that Panama could claim the treaty has been abrogated and seize the Canal. Actually of course she could do no such thing, because the marines wouldn’t let her. Nor is Panama expected to sue for the money in the United States courts; there is no way to sue the United States government without its consent and furthermore, domestic courts probably would support the act of Congress that made it illegal to pay obligations, public or private, in gold. What is worrying Mr. Roosevelt and his department heads is that Panama might take the question to an international court of arbitration. Washington has always posed as the friend of arbitration in disputes between the various Latin-American nations but this is a different matter. There is considerable reason to believe that the decision would favor Panama.

“Should that happen,” writes the New York Times’ correspondent, “the United States would be in the position of making Panamanians even more unfriendly by refusing to accept the court’s ruling.”

Of course things will not come to such a pass. It would be too embarrassing for the colossus of the Western World. Under the pressure of the situation Washington might well discover some way in which it can satisfy the claim for the extra \$150,000. Or it might make use of other means to quiet the usually compliant Panamanian government. In any case it is embarrassing enough that Panama should be the first country to protest the United States’ default on its external financial obligations. This is true not only because it calls fresh attention to the circumstances of the Canal Zone steal but also because it undermines the claims of Wall Street bankers against Latin-American countries that have defaulted on loans.

“Miscellaneous”

There is one item that never finds its way into the rather detailed reports of steel production. The item of output for military and naval uses. Now and then it will be an-

nounced that the Bethlehem Steel Corporation is to make the armor-plate in connection with a \$15,000,000 government contract with its shipbuilding subsidiary, or that the Midvale Company has secured a substantial government order for munition steel of one kind or another. But what proportion the total of such tonnage bears to the steel output as a whole is never made public. Twice a week we are informed as to the extent of steel operations, classified into the subdivisions of “automobile steel,” “steel rails,” “structural shapes and bars,” “tinplate,” and “miscellaneous.” The latter classification includes everything from farm implement and kitchen stove requirements to armor plate.

Domestic steel production increased to 2,224,698 tons last month, as compared with 1,540,000 tons in November. Production this month will be greater than last. And according to Iron Age less than half of the increase since November is accounted for by orders from the automobile industry, which was mentioned frequently as the biggest factor in general industrial demand. There has been some new rail business of late but the item is still comparatively insignificant. Tinplate output is large but shows no important fluctuations. Structural steel tonnage is extremely low. On the other hand a substantial increase is noted in the *miscellaneous* classification. How much of this is going into munitions?

It is the understanding in the industry that United States naval and military orders ordinarily are divided among the leading steel companies in accordance with their respective output capacities. As I have indicated, some figures covering such orders are made public from time to time. There are no figures whatever on orders from foreign governments. Here the deepest secrecy prevails. The most that one can find out by diligent investigation is that business of this kind is very profitable and that United States Steel, Bethlehem, Midvale and Republic all are working on important foreign contracts at the present time.

MARKET FOLLOWER.

LORD’S PRAYER

Give me, O Lord, my daily bread
And the daily bread of my brother
That I may gorge and he grow lean
And both of us hate each other.

O FOLKWAY! O MORES!

Ridiculous society
Of mingled lust and piety,
I see in your absurd advance
Half juggernaut, half ambulance.

AD LEGISLATORES

Adhere to our dear constitution!
Revise not a scene or an act!
Who cares if it’s somewhat senescent,
Our glorious suicide pact!

MICHAEL FLYNN.

A Playwright Sees a Play

YELLOW JACK, "a history," by Sidney Howard in collaboration with Paul de Kruif; setting by Jo Mielziner; directed and produced by Guthrie McClintic at the Martin Beck Theatre, New York.

WHEN THE curtain goes up on the first scene of *Yellow Jack*, the audience is projected at once into grandeur such as is rarely found in the theater. The limitless vault of the blue cyclorama, the formalized laboratory, the symmetric steps are as effective as Greek architecture on a clear night. Jo Mielziner's set is imaginative and beautiful. But after the same cyclorama, the same laboratory, the same steps and the same pinched fore-stage become an office in London, a laboratory in Africa, a parade ground in Cuba and a hospital ward, etc., the very nobility of the setting gets in the way of the effective re-telling of the historic war against yellow fever.

Like the setting, the play promises too much, at least much more than it is able to give. By reaching up to the sky itself, its failure to touch the moon is more obvious. Yet the fact that it tries is something. It is so much more than one usually gets in the theater that one comes away elated with the feeling that there is still greatness in the theater and in mankind.

Yellow Jack opens in the London office of Stackpoole, a general in the war against yellow fever. To him come a major of the Royal Air Force (Imperial Airways) and an official of Kenya Colony to demand repeal of the six day quarantine for plane passengers arriving from West Africa and going to any and all parts of the Empire. It hurts business, says the major. Here the capitalist-imperialist urge for profit, for expansion of trade and air armament comes in direct conflict with the humanitarian facts of man's fight for life and his fear of death. There's promise of dramatic conflict in that situation, but Sidney Howard drops it to go back to West Africa for a recital of the discovery of the fact that Indian monkeys, alone among animals, can be inoculated with the yellow fever germ and its promise that, as a result, a serum is nearer. Of course, all Howard intended was to dramatize de Kruif's story. If so, he should not have suggested more. The future conflict dwarfs his story as told.

The play gets going on its own terms in the Cuban scenes. Despite McClintic's neurotic direction and occasional stretches of boy scout lines, the scenes build to genuine dramatic moments, as when: the laboratory experiments to find the microbe is abandoned and the search for the disease carrier begun; the visit of Reed, Lazear and Carroll to Finlay, who for nineteen years had been called a quack because he insisted that a certain type

of female mosquito was the carrier; the decision of the three Americans and Agramonte, the Cuban scientist, to experiment upon the susceptible among themselves, and, finally, the volunteering of four soldiers for experimentation. It is of such scenes as these that great plays are made. In them Howard achieves good theater.

Yet in these very scenes he doesn't get out of the situation everything inherent. His characters are, when officers, too stuffy; when enlisted men, too comical. In his anxiety to show that both were human, he makes them less than heroes. He disparages them even as he praises them, giving them attitudes and motives which ask for derision, particularly for the enlisted men. His Walter Reed is a pompous prig, a Park Avenue specialist in a white uniform with the highest starched collar permitted under regulations. Howard seems to have been hobbled by the past vogue in biography which made such a point of heroes' clay feet that readers either didn't get, or forgot, the reasons which made the hero a hero and worth writing about at all. Presumably he felt that he was underlining the reality of his play instead of weakening its power.

I felt, as I watched the doctors and the soldiers allowing themselves to be bitten by the infected mosquitoes, that there was something terrible and beautiful in their action. As anyone who has lived in tropical countries knows, yellow fever is nothing to laugh about. Most people who get it die. When the plague strikes a community there is a pall of horror which no one who has not lived through a typhus or bubonic plague can possibly understand. It is enough to wonder whether you are to be the next to be stricken; but to subject yourself deliberately to the disease—that takes courage greater than is demanded by war. Howard overlooked the panic that assails a community struck by yellow fever. To volunteer in the face of it is pure heroism; nothing to laugh about, nothing to deride. It is a heroism not propelled and propped up by flags nor music nor surge of mass feeling. They did it singly, without hearing applause. At the play, I resented having to smile at their over-emphasized frailties. I wanted to be lifted to a frenzy of praise for them. *They did it!* It cost some of them their lives. It was noble. Why not say so!

But, as I write this I realize all over again that seldom has the theater been used to such good purpose as in *Yellow Jack* to project

the hope and grandeur there is in people, to show men doing dramatic, dangerous, great and useful things without the profit motive, largely because they are untouched by it. In it is a thrilling promise of what civilization can achieve if men and women are given the chance.

It is true that *Yellow Jack* isn't a great play, but it is enough that Sidney Howard, who can work for Hollywood or Gilbert Miller, chose to write a play on such a subject. It will be memorable long after *Mary of Scotland*, *She Loves Me Not*, *Men in White* and other expert trivia of the theater are forgotten.

CLAIRE SIFTON.

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Between Ourselves

IN CARRYING out one of the most necessary jobs of a revolutionary magazine—self-criticism—we recently sent out a questionnaire to some four thousand of our subscribers. We believe the number of replies is remarkably high. Nearly 700 subscribers have sent in their questionnaires, and each mail brings more. Tabulation of the replies is now under way, and we will be able to report the results fully on this page very soon. A great many bouquets came our way—a few of them, to be sure, wrapped around bricks. We are grateful for the bouquets and expect to be able to use some of the bricks in building material for the magazine.

Perhaps the most frequent single demand made by the readers is for more "Letters from America." We have several times permitted other things to crowd out these first-hand reports on life in this country today, but now our mind is made up. We're going to have "Letters from America" even if we have to send somebody 3,000 miles to get people to write them. That's what we did for this issue. We believe John Spivak's letter is worth it.

WE HAVE ALSO had many inquiries about the quarterly supplement, which we had hoped to issue within a month or so after the appearance of the weekly *NEW MASSES*. It hasn't been possible to organize ourselves for this as quickly as we planned, but the quarterly will appear. The issue of April 3 will contain forty-eight pages, with a sixteen-page literary supplement.

One of the features in the supplement will be the first of a series of seven articles on *Revolution and the Novel* by Granville Hicks. Earl Browder thinks Hugo Gellert's book *Karl Marx' "Capital" in Lithographs*, has not been adequately treated in the revolutionary press, and in an article in the supplement he will tell why. Several of Gellert's pictures will appear also.

We will also present, in the April 3 issue, the full text of the first half of a new play by Samuel Ornitz, called *In New Kentucky*. Ornitz was one of the writers' delegation to visit the Kentucky mine strike area in 1931. He has spent considerable time among the

miners since then, and his play is about them and their struggles. He is back in California after a flying visit here, during which we arranged for the publication of the play.

KENNETH BURKE, who writes on *My Approach to Communism* in this week's issue, is one of the foremost American literary critics and author of *Counterstatement*.

Gardner Rea, whose poem *Blizzard 1934* we publish this week, is of course more widely known as an artist. His drawings will appear in *THE NEW MASSES* from time to time.

Claire Sifton, is co-author with Paul Sifton of *1931, American Beauty*, and *Midnight*. The latter play has just been released as a moving picture directed by Chester Erskin.

Philip J. Corbin is a New York newspaperman.

Theodore Draper is one of the editors of the *Student Review*, organ of the National Student League.

Among the artists represented in this issue, Louis Bunin and "George" are appearing for the first time. Bunin is well-known as a puppeteer. Phil Bard has just completed a series of murals for the Daily Worker Volunteers at the Workers Center.

NEXT WEEK'S issue will include a story by Joseph North, *Hex Woman*, and a survey by H. E. Briggs of the present status of the veterans' organization; a situation which is now very much to the front, with the bonus fight on in Congress.

WE HAVE LEFT one important announcement for the last. With this week's issue, Michael Gold becomes once more an active editor of *THE NEW MASSES*. He will write on the theatre, and his piece next week is called, *The Theatre No "Critic" Knows*.

BLIZZARD, 1934

Snow sifts through the gaping cracks
Slowly, relentlessly, rhythmically;
Bitter, the storm without—
Within, bitter . . . but within
No snow sifts down into your collar from
above
Where God is . . .
Snow only through the chinks and cracks,
Snow through the burlap window-panes
And rag-stuffed crevices, across the floor . . .
Toward the baby's box.

*"Blizzard the Worst in Years. The Stock
Exchange
Was an Hour Late in Opening!"*

Towards the baby's box, rope-hung—
To make it harder for the rats—
The snow sifts, powdering the stove
Whitely—whiteness remaining white.

*"\$50,000 Needed for the Philharmonic
Lest Our Culture (Your Culture and My
Culture)
Perish."*

Along the wall, narrowly, the bed;
Silent, uncreaking.
From a box a frightened cry, then silence:
Man silence, woman silence,
Frantic silence fraught with a shivering hope
For warmth . . . amoeba-like . . . non-tumescent—
Body to straining body, seeking warmth;
Seeking, in coalescence, strength . . . forgetfulness. . . .

*\$410,000 Granted for New Housing,
For New Housing
For the Zoo."*

Seeking only to live . . . till tomorrow;
Jobless, shivering, empty-bellied . . .
For tomorrow. . . .

*\$1,000,000 for Wild Game;
Our Wild Game Must Be Fed!"*

For tomorrow is another day . . .
Icily, hungrily, bitterly
Another day. . . . **GARDNER REA.**

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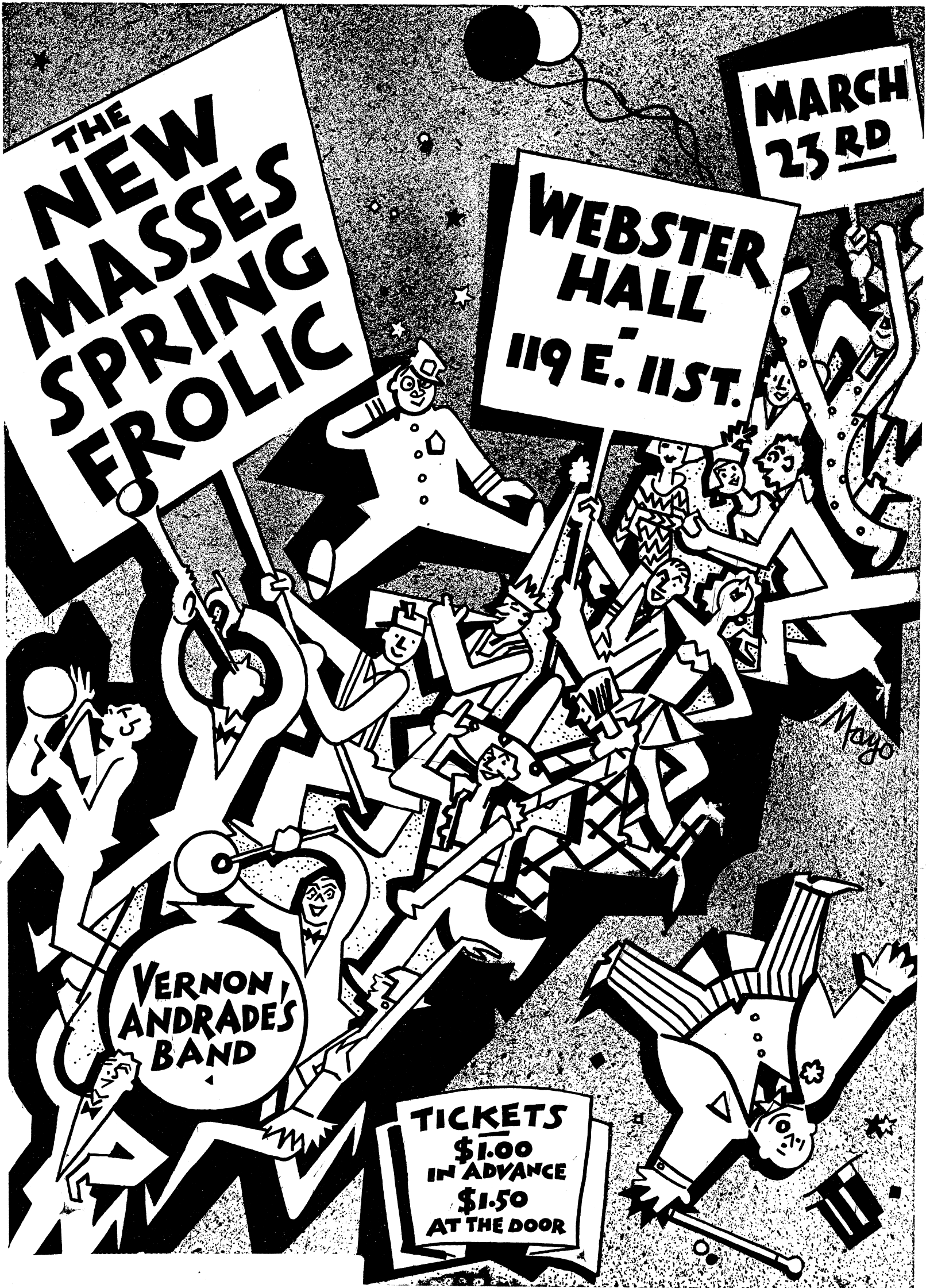
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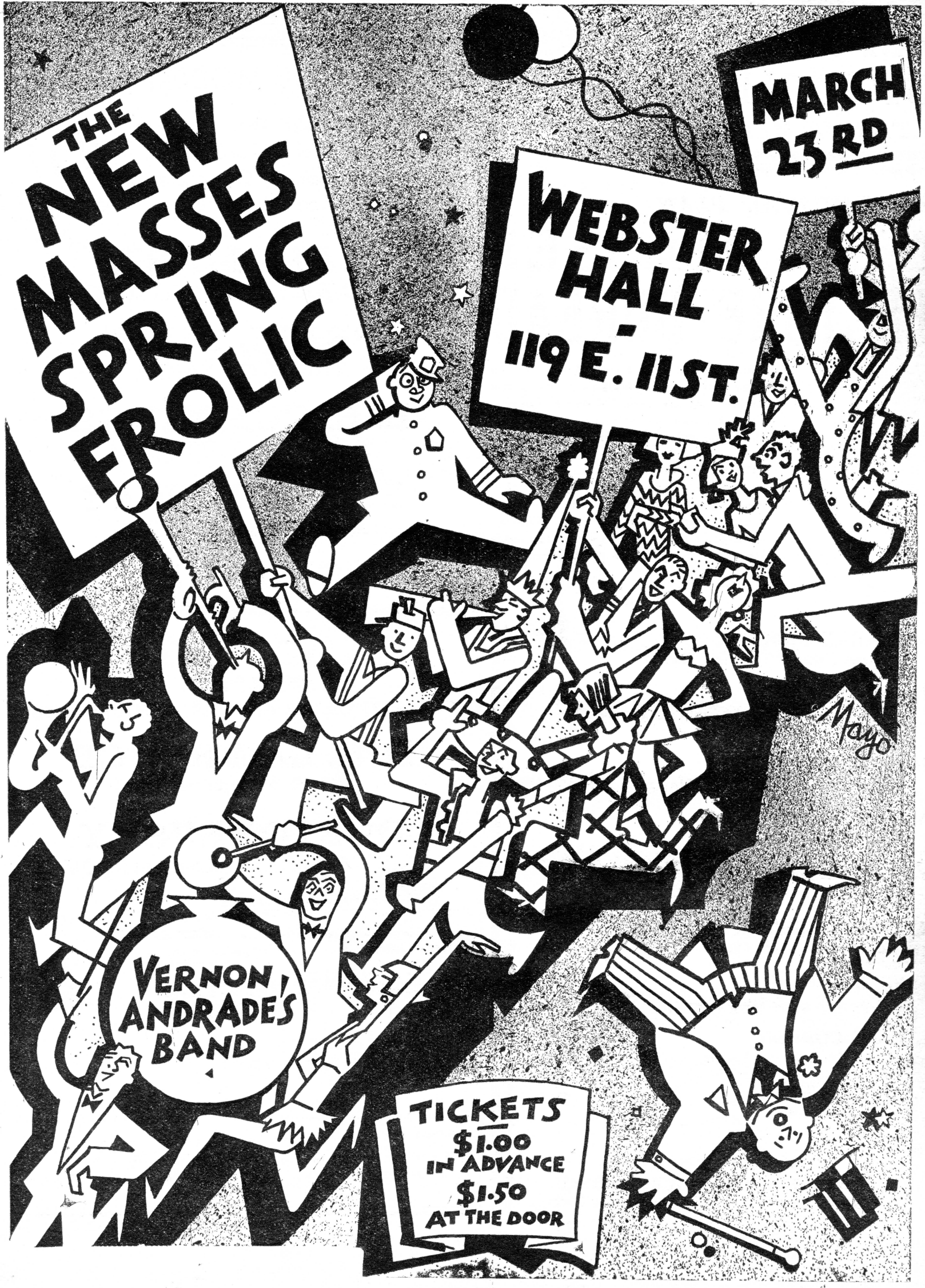
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