AUGUST 7, 1934 10c

New Masses

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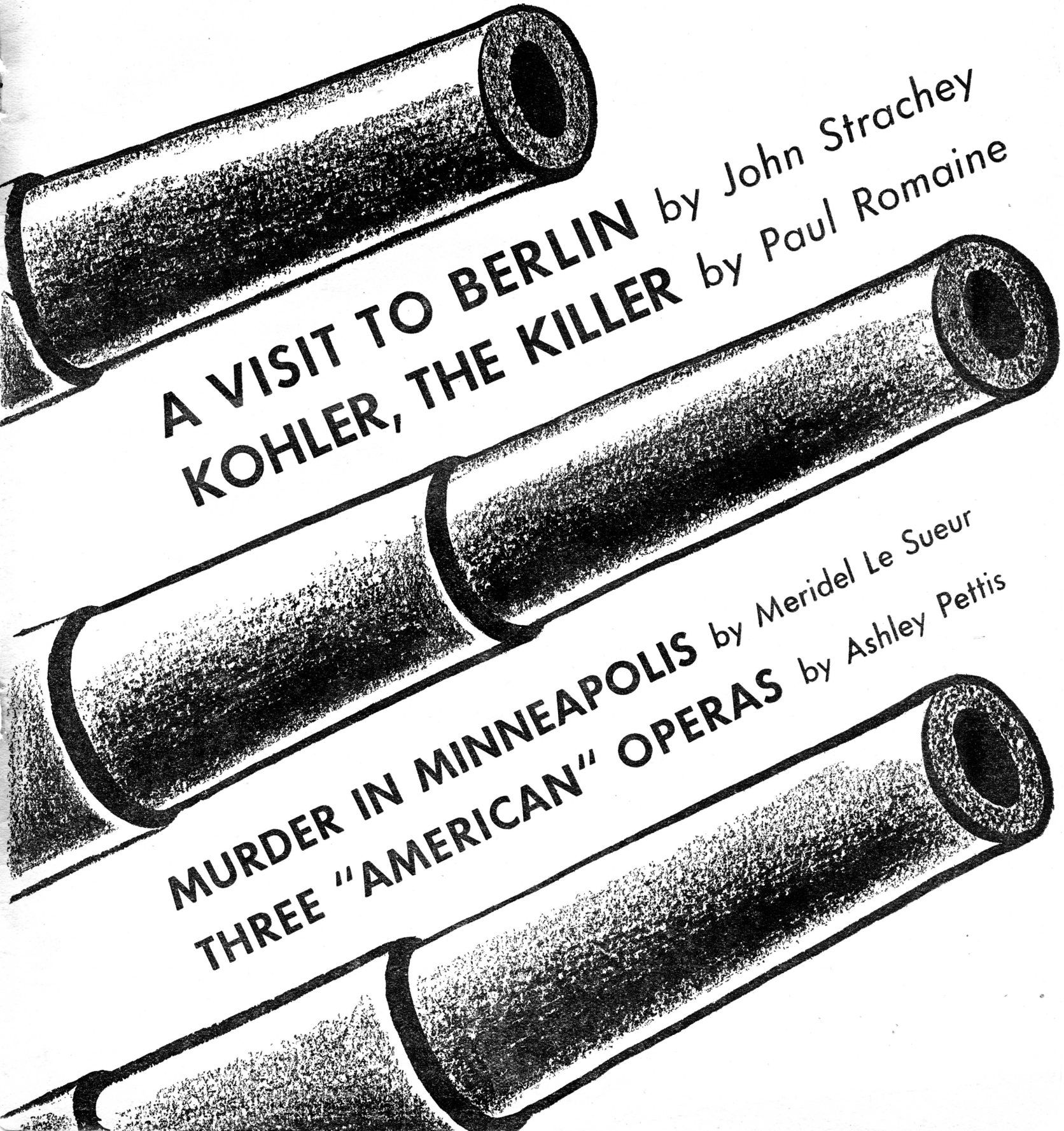

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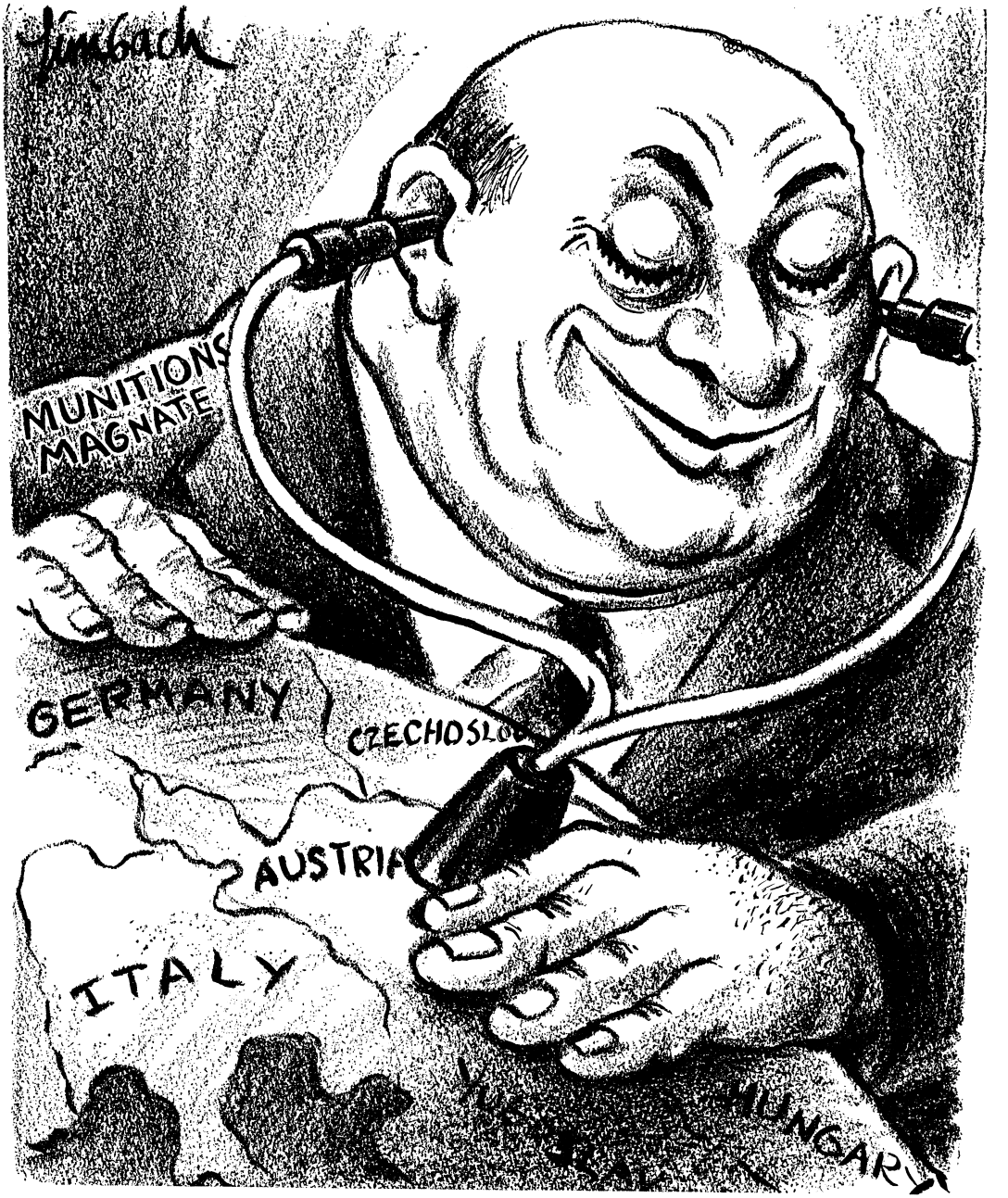
New Masses

AUGUST 7, 1934

ALMOST six months after he directed the bombardment of the working-class quarters in Vienna, Chancellor Dollfuss, responsible for the shootings of thousands of workers, has himself met death by the bullet. Almost twenty years to the day we find ourselves scanning the map at a point very close to Sarajevo. Balkan politics of gunplay and assassination have, in these intervening years, become the vogue of the more advanced capitalist powers. Hitler's June 30 was still fresh in the minds of millions when the bankrupt showman put on another show—and Dollfuss went the way of Roehm and Schleicher. It was but a few weeks before that the two supermen Hitler and Mussolini were embracing politically and their publicity men were handing out communiques attesting to the friendship of the two leading Fascists. Austria was the cause of the Fuehrer's flight over the Alps. It was believed he had promised to keep hands off Austria. But the honor that is said to exist among thieves is certainly not known to these men of destiny. Austria, at the gateway of Eastern Europe, the Danubian lands rich in agriculture, raw materials, and potential markets, is the coveted prize of both principal Fascisms. Each has its own special plan for the Versailles-dismembered land. Italy wants Austria as a key center in its imperialist plans. Rome too is driving toward the East. Mussolini dreams of an Imperial Rome that will cross the Mediterranean, the Aegean, even the Dardanelles and on into Asia. Austria is the gateway. The other Fascist power, Germany, is also dreaming of conquest. These are more than dreams; the nature of their economy, the internal class alignments, their international competitions are such that they must drive beyond their frontiers or else their capitalist structure will crumble. German Fascism, its mass base melting like yesterday's snows, is compelled to consider immediate plans for foreign conquest. Anschluss with their Aryan brothers of Austria, was Hitlerism's announced first plank in foreign policy. Hitler wanted Austria as a springboard to dive into an international attack on the Soviet Union —to lead a holy crusade against the land of Bolshevism, to dismember the Ukraine and divide the land among the hungry German Junkers.

WHILE THERE'S DEATH THERE'S HOPE — *B. Limbach*

THERE were Nazi window-shatterings, Nazi shootings and Nazi bombings in Austria for months before the ill-fated putsch. And everybody knows Hitler was behind them. There was actually no attempt to conceal the fact. Habicht, Nazi "commissar' for Austria, spoke on the radio, spoke in the streets of Austria and Germany, his statements appearing in all the Nazi press of Germany. The Austrian Nazi Legionnaires were drilled, quartered, financed by Germans. Alfred Frauenfeld, commandant of the Legionnaires, swore allegiance day in and day out to Hitler. Then the putsch, with the killing of Dollfuss, and the almost comic opera negotiations on the balcony between Emil Fey—the ferocious military man who trained howitzers on the Karl Marxhof in February—and the Heimwehr forces. Hero Fey pleaded for his life—the price for which was a promise of safe conduct across the German border for the Nazi raiders. Then the diplomatically stupid tactics of the German Minister to Austria, Herr Rieth, who negotiated, and the fatally gloating broadcast from Munich telling prematurely of the "successful Nazi coup." The capitalist press, for reasons of circulation as well as other considerations, played up the war scare the next few days. Mussolini's 100,000 troops were at Brenner Pass. Jugoslavia was moving troops, later "warning" Mussolini. Czechoslovakia was ready to fight. Doumergue warned that France "would take safeguards for the independence of Austrian independence." Downing Street too would protect Austrian indepen-



WHILE THERE'S DEATH THERE'S HOPE

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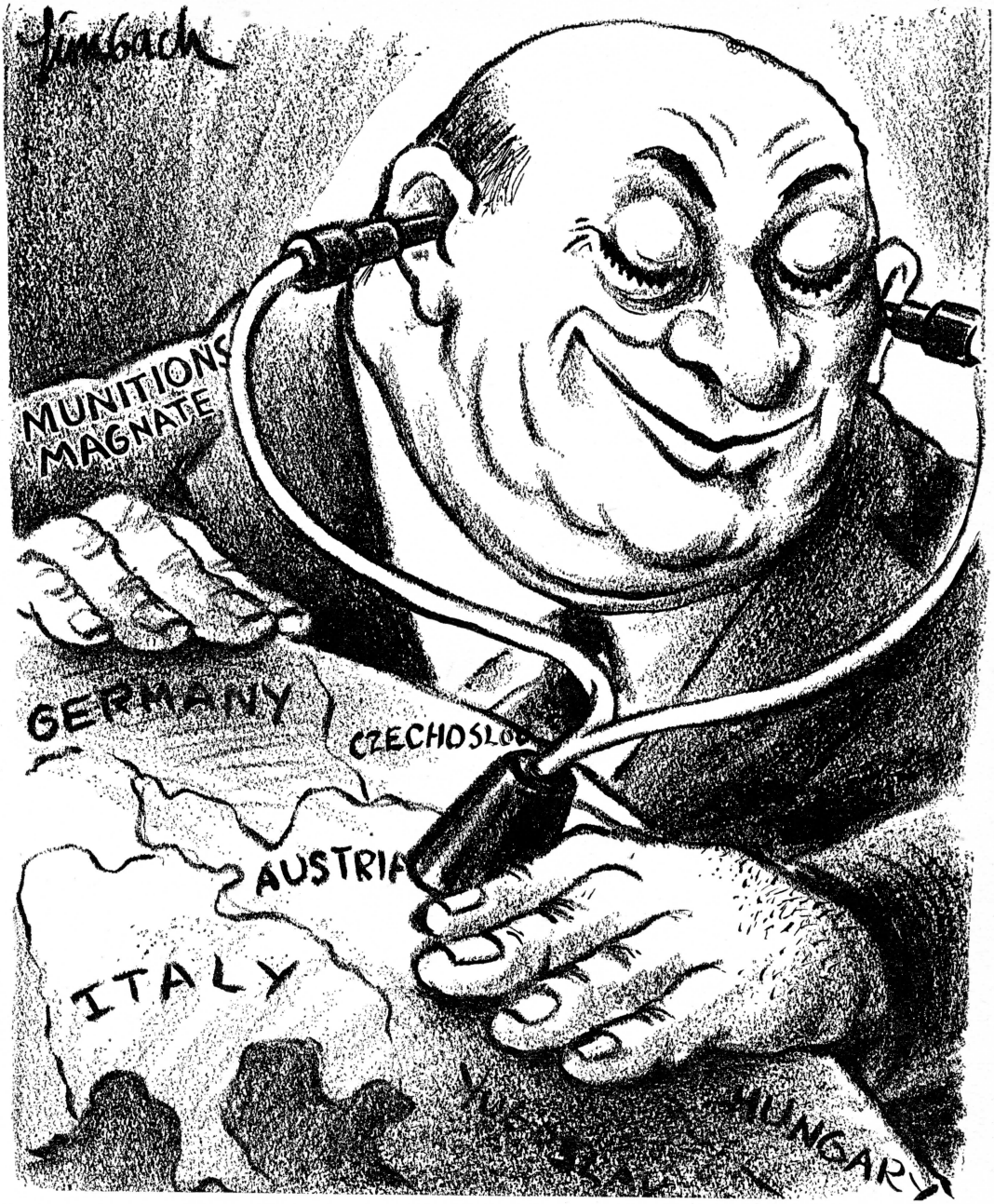

WHILE THERE'S DEATH THERE'S HOPE

B. Limbach

dence. Almost everybody would protect Austrian independence. Events threw Italy, France and Great Britain together for the time. Hitler backed water. He had quickly fired his Minister to Austria. He now repudiated the Austrian Legionnaires. He concentrated forces at the boundary line to prevent Germans from crossing into Austria to participate in the fighting between the Nazis and the Heimwehr Fascist armies (pro-Mussolini) led by Prince von Starhemberg. The fighting went on in Carinthia, Styria, Salzburg. More than 500 were killed and thousands wounded. When the Nazis were defeated, and the fighting subsided there was a new Austrian chancellor, Schuschnigg, and a new Strong Man, the dandified Prince von Starhemberg, second in command—both Italian puppets.

THE drive for war goes on, faster daily. Mussolini's men are still at the border, although it is unlikely now they will cross upon this occasion. Hitler has made the necessary representations. Austria is "independent." Hitler has appointed the Catholic Von Papen as Austrian Ambassador in an attempt to smooth over the feelings of the Papist forces. (Von Hindenburg is reported dying. It would suit Hitler's book perfectly to have the President's heir apparent tied to a desk in Vienna when the old man passes.) Within all these inter-capitalist maneuverings, the Soviet Union pursues its policy of peace by non-aggression pacts, by all means at its disposal. Litvinov says: "Not all capitalist states have an equal desire for war at all times." Nonetheless the capitalist countries may, in their incessant and feverish permutations and combinations, line up in a united front sufficiently stable to make their long scheduled attack upon the U.S.S.R. That is the military desire common to all the imperialist powers. And all workingmen and their allies throughout the world must be ever cognizant of this danger.

NO discussion of war and the methods to combat it can be fruitful without recognition of the major political difference between the pre-war period of 1914 and 1934: that is, the existence of the Third International. Entrenched in every principal country is the Communist Party—composed of legions of fighting anti-imperialists, recruits of that Lenin who formulated the slogan prior to the World War, "Turn the imperialist war into Civil War!" This slogan is as well known to the uniformed gentlemen in the War Departments of Washington, London, Paris, Berlin as to the millions of proletarians whom the militarists plan to convert into cannon-fodder: indeed more so. Does anybody doubt that the plans to attack the U.S.S.R., the plans that were scheduled to ripen in 1930, and which were forcibly delayed year after year as international Communist strength grew—that these blue-prints of destruction would have been acted upon were it not for that ever-present fear of revolution? And is not Fascism, the outright dictatorship of monopoly capitalism, with its frenetic appeal to nationalism, a preparation for war? But every time the General Staff pores over the maps and moves the little flags those fatal inches to right and left, the politicians must remind it: What about the Home Front?

THAT front is steadily becoming transformed into a United Front of all proletarians, and their allies from the middle classes, against War and its predecessor Fascism. The heartening example of the Paris workers — Communist, Socialist—marching July 29 on the twentieth anniversary of the assassination of the revolutionist Jean Jaurès, founder of L'Humanité, was apprehensively noted by bourgeois observers fearing what August 1 would become. The anti-war demonstrations in America August 1, the preparations for the Second U. S. Congress Against War and Fascism, in Chicago, Sept. 28-30, the militant anti-war expressions of many intellectuals and liberals, all these do not fall on deaf ears. The intelligence service of the war makers works overtime these days. The press of the war makers is also acutely conscious of the masses' hatred for war's glories. Witness the July 29 edition of the New York Times: barricades of type and pictures expressing cosmic horror at the barbarities of 1914-1918—and at the same time tacit and expressed conviction that war, alas, is inevitable, let us prepare, let billions filched from a poverty-stricken nation be poured into maws of the munition-makers. "What has happened before," the Times says in effect, "MUST happen again." The masses have a different prophecy.

BACK into the closet has gone that sweetly hypocritical Alice-in-Wonderland cloak which used to throw all Frances Perkins' liberal friends into orgies of ecstasy. Now she openly dons the colors of the general staff of semi-Fascism, and slips the knife into labor's back as promptly and efficiently as the best of them. Her telegram to Governor Merriam during the San Francisco strike, assuring him (as "impartial mediator") that her deportation agents would cooperate 100 percent in the terroristic red-baiting campaign against the striking workers, stands as a classic example of Fascist heel-clicking. Confronted with unequivocal evidences of her open strike-breaking role presented by a united front delegation of representatives of the I.L.D., the Civil Liberties Union, the General Defense Committee of the I.W.W., and other organizations, the Secretary of Labor was forced to confess her part through damning silences, cynical evasions and brazen admissions. (Oh, Fanny, Fanny, how could you? You who but yesteryear were hailed as "an angel at the Cabinet table," with "strength of character, devotion to the truth, wisdom, humanity and courage"! Now must the saintly Oswald, of the saintly Nation, who penned this glowing panegyric, mournfully inscribe Disillusionment No. 436,589 in his mausoleum of last illusions.) In refusing to retract the contents and spirit of her incitement-to-terror message, Miss Perkins deliberately lets stand a vicious misinterpretation of the intolerable-enough deportation law, to the effect that "any alien who teaches Communism" is deportable. This interpretation, which has been repeatedly rejected by her own officials, now serves as a dangerous precedent for anti-working-class attacks in which the deportation terror against the foreign-born is slated to play a heavy part.

AGAIN, while Miss Perkins wilfully misinterprets the existing immigration law, she merely anticipates the infamous Dies Bill, which makes it a deportable offense for a non-citizen to be caught with as much as a radical leaflet in his possession. This bill has already passed the House of Representatives, and awaits passage in the coming Senate session, having been prevented from being reported out of committee at the last session by the united pressure of workers and intellectuals. It may yet be railroaded through on the wave of anti-foreign hysteria which is being whipped up by bosses, government officials and press on the heels of the general strike on the Coast, when class forces faced each other in the open. The capitalist class knows that class-consciousness

among workers spells its final ruin, and thus does it desperately try to avert this fatality by substituting artificial race-consciousness (anti-Negro in the South, anti-Mexican and anti-Japanese in the West, and anti-Jew in the East) and "nativism," which effectively splits the workers, and blinds them to their actual class relationships. In the forefront of this attack is General Johnson, who went the whole hog in his recent jingo-rousing "America First" speech in Los Angeles, where he insidiously suggested that "if all the jobs of aliens [militant or not] were given to citizens and the former were deported, the unemployment and destitution problems would be reduced by at least one-third."

THE whole wolf-pack of the yellow press has been loosed in this red-hunt against the foreign-born. Running at the head of the pack, mouth afoam, is that grizzled hound William Randolph Hearst. Opening his barrage with a front-page signed editorial entitled *Communism vs. Americanism,* which hissed its venomous way through four more columns on an inside page, Hearst is waging a day-to-day war against "alien and subversive elements." In the news columns, features, editorials and cartoons, his giant newspaper chain runs amok crying for more stringent deportation laws to run these "elements" out of the country. What does Mr. Hearst and his fellow jingoes mean by "alien, subversive and un-American" influences? Precisely this: It is alien and subversive for workers to demand that elusive "decent American standard of living" which we have been taught to regard as our proud birth-right (where is it?). It is un-American to take seriously the guarantees of the first ten articles of the Constitution, known as the Bill of Rights. It is un-American to look upon Section 7a of the N.R.A. recognizing the right of workers to organize, as something more than a mere scrap of paper. In defense of this right American workingclass blood, mingled with that of foreign-born fellow workers, has been shed this past century and more. To these un-American and subversive Communist elements Mr. Hearst would add all these opposed to the masses-burdening sales tax, which he champions, and all supporters of the income tax, which he calls "class legislation."

HEARST'S latest, most sinister assault on the foreign-born takes the shape of a campaign to force all "aliens" to submit to finger-printing and other identification devices, giving them the status of criminal suspects *per se.* In a signed article appearing in the Hearst press on July 20 that facile lackey, Richard Washburn Child, contributes a poisonous piece in which he says: "The key to plucking undesirable anti-citizens out of our decent citizenship—weeding the garden—is the identity of the weeds." These weeds, we are informed, consist of alien criminals, "under-cover red agents, subversive propagandists" and other "pervert-breeding individuals." In his jingoistic, red-baiting article, which was followed up the next day with an editorial and cartoon on the same theme, Child is forced to admit that the American people look upon compulsory universal fingerprinting and the issuance of identification cards as abhorrent to American ideals of liberty, but he defends his scurrilous attacks on the ground that the system exists in other countries although he is constantly assailing the importation of "foreign ideas." Lest we underestimate the seriousness of this drive, it is well to note that Child states that "the subject [finger-printing the foreign-born] has interested profoundly in the last few months Attorney General Cummings and the Secretary of Labor," and that these worthies tried to put this system into operation immediately upon entering office, and were prevented from doing so only by quickly-mobilized mass pressure.

WITH eleven Negro workers lynched to date this year, with the fate of the Scottsboro boys still undetermined, with Angelo Herndon behind bars, the arguments of George Schuyler, Negro columnist, writing recently in the American Spectator are not only insulting: they are traitorous. Schuyler, writing in that nauseating style H. L. Mencken taught him (replete with references to Negroes as "blackamoors" as "Senegambians" "roasting" and "toasting" and what not) is "amazed" at the "forebearance" on the part of the lynchers. But Schuyler's arguments are well known to all who have followed the Scottsboro case. As a well known columnist in the Pittsburgh Courier, the unofficial mouthpiece for the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, he has attacked the I.L.D. Scottsboro defense in and out of season. He has stood up bravely for "gentlemanliness," for "good-will," for the "respect" of the Southern judiciary. Schuyler—having contempt for the masses, and being willing to hire out to the top powers—wonders why the Southern white ruling-class

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HERMAN MICHELSON, JOSEPH NORTH, ASHLEY PETTIS, WILLIAM RANDORF.
WILLIAM BROWDER, *Business Manager.*

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cannot be courted and won — by such gentlemen as himself. It is significant that the Spectator, magazine of the "above-it-all" literati, opens its columns to such vituperative, "un-literary" lines. It goes without saying another writer of Schuyler's literary merits—attacking the status quo, defending the militant workers' actions — would NOT get printed by the Spectator purists. The literary battle lines are formed, on the right and on the left.

FASCIST youth Storm Troops are about to be organized in the United States And the recruiting is to be conducted in the schools under the direction of a United States Army colonel. In true Fascist style, the Clean City Crusaders are to be mobilized, as the title indicates, on an innocence basis. But their organizer, heading a Clean City Committee which has suddenly materialized out of thin air, admits that they "will grow into a national organization for the general propagation of law and order." The following item which appeared in the New York Post, July 16, under the headline, Youth Sanitation Group Organized, is self-revealing:

> The nucleus of a national youth movement to combat unsanitary conditions in cities has been formed by the Clean City Committee, according to Colonel Ralph C. Tobin, commander of the 107th Infantry, who will head the new organization.
>
> A sub-division of the Clean City Committee, the group will be called the Clean City Crusaders. It will be made up of school children between the ages of ten and fourteen. Squads, each with its own sergeant and corporal, will be recruited in the schools.
>
> While the primary duty will be to fight unsanitary conditions, Colonel Tobin believes the Crusaders will grow into a national organization for the general propagation of law and order.

This youth counterpart of the present viligante movement may grow into a nation-wide menace. It calls for immediate counter-action from organizations of revolutionary youth. This is an excellent opportunity for the Young Communist League to raise the issue clearly: to clarify to prospective Crusaders just why and for whom they are being duped.

SCIENTISTS and philosophers, who have been told so long that they serve truth in a disinterested and "pure" capacity, are beginning to find that they do not exist in a social vacuum. Research appropriations in industrial plants and in universities are being stripped to the bone. The American Philosophical Association has noted recently the rapidly growing unemployment among men and women trained in philosophy. They have had to let down the bars of admission to the Association, interpreting freely the requirement of "professional" status during "the present emergency conditions." Thousands of Ph.D.'s in the sciences are unemployed because of the reduction of university teaching staffs and the cuts in industrial and scholastic research appropriations. According to the New York Pen and Hammer Bulletin of May 1, the Federal Government's research budget for 1934 is 34.6 percent less than for 1931, many public and private colleges and universities have discontinued research appropriations altogether, the Bell Telephone Laboratories have recently dismissed 1,000 men, General Electric has cut down its research division, and 85 percent of the engineers in America are unemployed. And while moratoriums on inventions are demanded, more scientists are being employed daily in perfecting new instruments of destruction for the next war. So long as capitalism was growing, science thrived and scientists were honored, for capitalism profited from their services. Today, when capitalism is plunged in crisis, science feels the restrictive effects of the general reaction. Once a help, capitalism is now a hindrance to scientific progress, and the young trained scientist finds his services unwanted. But in the Soviet Union, where science is utilized to bring the greatest material benefit to all, the development of science is given maximum encouragement. American scientists in all fields must come to see that the only solution of their professional predicament lies in taking the control over science from those who exploit it for profit and putting it into the hands of those who will exploit it for human use.

The Week's Papers

WEDNESDAY — Parching heat increases drought damage, causes 1,213 deaths throughout country. . . . Joseph P. Kennedy, chairman Securities and Exchange Commission, assures capital and investors new stock laws will not interfere with "proper profits." . . . Secretary of State Hull and Ambassador Troyanovsky open Washington negotiations on Soviet-United States debt question. . . . Mortgagor of furnishings of Hotel St. Regis, on which Vincent Astor recently foreclosed, sues to prevent Raymond Moley, receiver, from continuing to use equipment illegally. . . . Unable to enforce its ruling that the L. Greif Co., Baltimore, must pay back wages due its workers, N.R.A. removes Blue Eagle from firm. . . . Seventy small Bronx printing shops return Blue Eagle on ground they couldn't pay compositors $1.25 an hour, feeders 60 cents, claiming it doubled their payrolls. . . . General Motors Corporation profit for first six months of 1934 are $69,586,613 net. . . . Due to slackening steel demand, Bethlehem Steel Corporation is "forced" to lay off workers.

Thursday — Bethlehem Steel Corporation declares $1.75 dividend on preferred stock (first since 1932) as net profits for first half of year rise to $2,539,598. . . . Roosevelt arrives at Honolulu. . . . Martial law declared in Minneapolis in efforts to break truckmen's strike. . . . A. F. of L. leaders start drive to "purge" labor movement by ousting radicals. . . . 61,000 head of cattle killed in six weeks in Texas drought area. . . . Coolidge's old house at Northampton, Mass., offered for rent for $40 a month. . . . June factory employment, payrolls and industrial production dropped, Federal Reserve Board reports. . . . Roosevelt cables President Miklas of Austria of his "horror and deep regret" at assassination of Chancellor Dolfuss, Fascist. . . . Minneapolis military dictatorship imposes a drastic censorship on the press.

Friday — Many organizations join meeting to protest against Secretary of Labor Perkins' "red-baiting" in connection with Pacific Coast strikes. . . . Two

"THE STRIKERS ARE COMING!"

Jacob Burck

"THE STRIKERS ARE COMING!"

Jacob Burck

workers killed, many wounded, when rioting special deputies newly sworn in attack picket line of Kohler plant strikers at Kohler, Wis. . . . Drought relief plan is timed to help coming Congressional candidates (Democratic), asserts Chairman Fletcher of Republican National Committee. . . . Ten thousand attend New York anti-Fascist meeting at which Willi Muenzenberg makes farewell speech. . . . Senate Labor sub-committee receives evidence that "prevailing rate of wages" law is ignored by government contractors. . . . Army Air service "second to none" is planned by War Department.

Saturday — Three men using parachutes jump to safety near Loomis, Neb., when fabric of world's largest stratosphere balloon in which they ascended 60,000 feet, rips. . . . National Guard rushed to Kohler, Wis. . . . Joseph P. Ryan charged by Dressmakers' local with suppressing attempts to place New York Central Trades and Labor Council on record as supporting San Francisco General strike. . . . Dillinger's family to go on stage. . . . Police Commissioner O'Ryan of New York issues ukase "bona fide" labor leaders will be registered at police headquarters "for identification purposes only."

Sunday — National Longshoremen's Board announces Pacific Coast strikers agreed to resume work Tuesday. . . . Navy League lauds Roosevelt's promise to build Navy up to Treaty strength within three or four years. . . . Representative Dickstein renews verbal onslaughts on "disloyal aliens." . . . Minneapolis truck drivers continue strike. . . . Norwich, Conn., strikers at American Woolen Co. plant vote to end strike. . . . Kohler, Wis., strikers demand arrest of Mayor, deputies' chiefs, as responsible for death of two in picket line attack. . . . In June, $20,214,458 was spent in New York State for relief of 496,577 families, involving 2,105,500 individuals. . . . Paul Crouch and James Warner arrested as "vagrants" in Danville, Va., while trying to organize workers into National Textile Workers Union. . . . Chicago stock yards still tied up by strike of live-stock handlers and commission men.

Monday — Secretary of Treasury maps plan to drive out bootleggers springing up under Repeal. . . . Special "riot squad" of 1,200 picked cops starts drilling in New York as many large strikes impend. . . . Associated Marine Workers vote for strike. . . . 12,000 painters walk out. . . . Knitgoods Workers' prepare for strike. . . . General strike in heavy industries looms in sympathy with strike of tunnel workers, and may involve 100,000. . . . Mother tells court $3,000 a month for care of her seven-year-old daughter, Lucy Cotton Thomas, is insufficient and she wants allowance raised to $5,000. . . . Minneapolis truck strikers demand military cease "licensing" trucks in obvious effort to break strike. . . . Packing House workers may join strike of stock yards men. . . . Chief Technocrat Howard Scott's erstwhile laboratory at Pompton Lakes, N. J., is auctioned to highest bidder for $133 in attempt collect rent due. . . . Exports of scrap iron and steel used for munitions and other war equipment rose 108 percent to 738,848 tons in first six months of 1934, with Japan and Italy the largest buyers.

Tuesday—United opposition grows against attempt by O'Ryan to have police register "reputable" labor leaders, while not one labor leader registers. . . . New York Knit Goods Workers vote for general strike. . . . Federal intervention asked in New Orleans as Senator Long, after mobilizing National Guard, is reported planning to seize police department in political feud. . . . San Francisco strikers begin resumption of work. . . . New York Assembly passes Ives Bill to compel teachers take "loyalty" oath. . . . Hoover finishes book on human liberties throughout the world and giving his views on Fascism, Socialism and Communism. . . . Retail food prices hit highest peak since 1932, Bureau of Labor Statistics announces. . . . Corliss Lamont in Newark Federal court tells of police brutality in Jersey City strike. . . . Country-wide demonstrations planned by workers against imperialist war and Fascism in observance of August 1, international anti-war day. . . . Fifteen pickets arrested in Minneapolis truck drivers strike by National Guardsmen held for trial by court-martial.

The Fascist Terror Moves East

THE time to fight Fascism in the United States is now. We said that last week—must repeat it with greater emphasis this week. For in the past seven days' terrorism, official and unofficial, has increased. The American people are coming to closer grips daily with the plain fact that Fascist methods by capitalism, through its servants the politicians and the police, are increasing and will increase.

Last week the attention of the American people was focussed on the attack on the Communist Party by the so-called Vigilantes on the West Coast; this week there are Minneapolis, Kohler, and New York City. Two outstanding developments in official terrorism occurred in New York. Here we saw:

1. An attempt at police regulation of unions by the city administration.

2. The formation of O'Ryan's Rifles, a police storm troop of 1,200, armed with every weapon for use in strikes, demonstrations—or any "emergency."

Last Saturday the police teletype flashed instructions to every precinct in New York that all "responsible" unions should, in the future, supply their leaders with letters bearing their photographs and an endorsement by—not the rank and file—but by Chief Inspector Valentine. The authorities have the effrontery to propose that a policeman sanction the workers' choice—that before a labor leader can function he must have a stamp of approval from the police department.

When the liberal Mayor LaGuardia sanctioned this proposal to institute a duplicate of the Fascist state-controlled "unions" of Germany and Italy, he did not bank on the storm of protest it would arouse. Rank and file labor is protesting, joined by its allies in the middle classes—for what happens to industrial labor today will happen to the white collar workers and professionals tomorrow. And the purpose of the police visa for union officials is clear: Where the workers' choice is a militant, a Communist, the police blacklist would operate, he would be officially outside the "law"—a law unknown to the Constitution.

The liberal Mayor LaGuardia stops at no provocation. The same week he

also sanctioned O'Ryan's Rifles, the regiment of 1,200 six-footers organized by the martinet police commissioner. The regiment is now drilling in the armories. What for? O'Ryan denies they are for strike duty. He is quoted as saying they are preparing for an emergency. In the thoroughly Fascist mind of New York's police commissioner, the presence of working men and women in the streets, whether for mass picketing, demonstration, or any other form of struggle for their rights as human beings—this constitutes an emergency. Such emergencies are coming, for hunger has laws of its own. With the curtailment of relief in New York, the renewed downward swing of industrial employment, the coming winter again raises before the authorities the menace of mass hunger and mass action. They are preparing.

All preparations are made according to the latest dictates of the Blue Eagle. When General Johnson swings his recently acquired Phi Beta Kappa key and calls for violence (not only against militant labor, but also against all foreign-born) the signal is not merely local. Down in Washington Secretary Perkins swings jauntily into action with the proposal to the State Department that W. W. Husband, assistant secretary of labor in the Coolidge and Hoover administrations (what recommendations!) be sent to Moscow to seek an agreement under which "unwanted aliens of Russian nationality may be deported to that country."

Despite the vehement protests of the Labor Department that Husband's appointment did not "signify any new drive to rid the country of radicals" the nationally-coordinated activities of the authorities give the lie to this statement.

Last week it was the West Coast, and General Johnson inciting violence against workers. THE NEW MASSES cannot believe for a moment that the General was talking on his own. Johnson speaks for the New Deal. And that is Roosevelt's. And both are the creatures of the dominant wing of monopoly capitalism in this country today. The drive against the Communist Party, against militant labor, the rapid fascization of the state and municipal apparatus, the sweep onward toward imperialist war—these manifestations of American Fascism must be laid at the door of the ruling class—and Roosevelt is its prophet.

THE NEW MASSES calls upon all opposed to Fascism and War to join in united front and fight back NOW. To all who are honestly concerned with fighting for civil liberties THE NEW MASSES offers a means of combating the terroristic drive. We call upon all to show the Federal authorities that we will not be supine before Fascism: that we are prepared to fight together, individuals of all political parties—all who believe in the right of workers to organize, to strike, to publish their papers, to speak unmolested by official and unofficial terrorism.

We call upon all readers of THE NEW MASSES and their friends to sign the statement which follows. Signatures are coming in—more than we can print. We want more signatures, thousands of them, to present to President Roosevelt. We have formulated the statement to President Roosevelt so that it makes the minimum demand for civil liberties in this country—a demand upon which everyone, of whatever political party or grouping, can unite. The fight for civil liberties is right now the essence of the fight against Fascism. The attack upon militant labor, upon the Communist Party, upon its press and personnel, the destruction of its headquarters and equipment—this is the forerunner of a general attack upon all workers' organizations everywhere. To protest the Pacific Coast attack now, to defend the Communist Party now, is to fight off later attacks on liberals, on professionals, on all who create and are exploited.

To protest now, by signing this minimum demand for civil liberties, places the signer on the side of those who refuse to permit abrogation of the rights ostensibly guaranteed the American people by the Constitution. Sign and get your friends to sign before it is too late.

TO PRESIDENT ROOSEVELT:

A series of illegal raids on workers' organizations on the Pacific Coast has been given the sanction of the Federal government by the provocative statements of General Johnson. Workers have been assaulted, arrested without warrant, their offices and equipment wrecked. We regard this as the introduction into industrial conflicts of openly Fascist methods with Federal government approval.

It is common knowledge that employers throughout the country are organizing so-called vigilante groups to intimidate and suppress all attempts of labor to better its conditions. In the absence of any word of censure from the head of the government this tendency toward terrorism against workers must gain headway.

We call upon you to disavow any Federal sanction for the raids on the Pacific Coast, and for the provocative statements of General Johnson, which have fostered these violent assaults upon the fundamental rights of the workers to organize.

THE EDITORS OF THE NEW MASSES.

Readers are urged to add their signatures on the blank lines below, and mail to THE NEW MASSES, 31 East 27th Street, New York City

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A Visit to Berlin

JOHN STRACHEY

LONDON.

A SINGLE question dominates official circles in Germany today,—Who will shoot whom next?

This was the main impression which I derived from a visit to Berlin over the last week-end. My business was to form part of a delegation sent to inform the German government of the strength of British feeling which had been roused at the suggestion of charging Thaelmann and Torgler before the recently constituted "People's Court."

As I got out of the station, I noticed an immense change from the last time that I had seen Berlin,—in February, 1934. In a moment one realized what it was. In February Berlin had been a city in uniform. Today it is a city in mufti. Here was the outward and visible sign of the demobilization of the Storm Troopers. As a cynical Swiss paper puts it, "Germany is trying to take a holiday from the Third Reich." Bourgeois crowds in the West End of Berlin were visibly affected with that recurrent human longing, which the late President Harding expressed so inartistically, but accurately, in the slogan "back to normalcy."

But there is no "normalcy" on the horizon for the German people, whether bourgeois or working-class. I have little doubt that Hitler, Bloomberg and Frish, Commander of the Reichswehr and, most people say, the most important man in Germany today, are dreaming of a return to a nice, quiet, respectable Conservative capitalist regime, much after the pattern of Mr. Baldwin's. Indeed, I found that this was the perspective to which the ordinary Conservative foreign correspondent in Berlin was looking. Startlingly bereft of any understanding of what had caused the crisis, what had driven the German capitalist class to employ the frenzied demagogy of Hitlerism, they supposed that it would now be possible to scrap all this and to carry on the rule of the German capitalist class as if nothing had happened.

But a great deal has happened. In 1933 the German ruling class succeeded (because of the treacherous poltroonry of the Social-Democrats) in changing its mass basis. In 1934 this new mass basis of the few million Storm Troopers has cracked under it. And it has cracked for the same reason as did the old basis, namely, the relentless pressure of the economic crisis.

Amidst all the endless and contradictory stories which one was told of the events of June 30th and the next few days, this process of cracking and shifting, of frightful uncertainty and desperation, was the dominant impression. One of the chief things that is noticed by informed observers is that Goering in Berlin waited for five hours after Hitler had struck at Roehm in Munich. He waited till he had the fullest assurance that Hitler had won out, and that Roehm was under arrest and most of his friends dead. Goering was fully prepared, if things had gone the other way and Roehm had won out in Munich, to kill Hitler's friends in Berlin instead of Roehm's. At the same moment Goebbels, now universally hated and despised, rushed from his flat and fled by fast aeroplane to Hitler's side. He knew that there alone in Germany was he physically safe. If he had remained in Berlin, Goering would have taken the opportunity of settling accounts with his hated little rival. Goebbels would have been shot at his desk. Goering would have announced that he had in his possession proof that he was implicated in the plot.

It would be idle even to discuss whether these stories are true or false, but their currency illustrates the atmosphere of Government circles in Berlin today. No single member of the Cabinet, even, trusts the other for an instant. Each knows that their own lives are at stake and that in the last resort they can only save themselves by killing their opponents.

I have never seen foreign correspondents so utterly at sea. Nobody, of course, knows what *will happen;* but there is no agreement even about what *has happened.* Most foreign observers deny that there was any Storm Troop plot. They consider that the entire massacre was an act of provocation analogous to the Reichstag fire.

A minority believe, however, that the dissatisfaction amongst the Storm Troops had grown so great that Roehm, Ernst and Heines were prepared to use it for their own personal aims. This school of thought believes that the Storm Troopers would have been mobilized at 5 o'clock on Saturday afternoon and would have occupied the Government buildings in Berlin. It is said that Ernst was not quietly arrested in Bremen, as reported, but drew a Thompson machine-gun when the S.S. Guards approached him, He drove the guards off, jumped into his motor car and was only caught after a running fight covering a distance of fifty kilometres.

The food situation is evidently becoming acute. It is true that the immediate shortage of potatoes, which appeared in Berlin a fortnight ago, has been overcome by hurried imports from all the surrounding countries. This shortage was due to the failure, owing to the drought, of the German early potato crop, on which it is hardly too much to say the living of all the poorer sections of the German working-class predominantly depends, is in danger. It is said that if rain does not come before the end of this month this crop will be an appalling failure. It remains to be seen whether Germany will have sufficient foreign exchange to import foreign potatoes to meet this shortage if it arises.

Again, one hears startling stories of the fodder shortage. The price of meat is very low. At one moment a pound of meat actually cost less than a pound of potatoes; but this is not considered by any means a good sign. On the contrary, it is attributed by most observers to the fact that livestock is being slaughtered wholesale for lack of fodder.

Thus there seems little doubt that the coming winter will be dark indeed. But it would be, in my opinion, most unwise to suppose on that account that there will be any automatic collapse of the Hitler regime. There will, no doubt, be further killings and reshufflings. It is quite possible that the Reichswehr, which is now in fact in power, will have to assume power much more openly, even though Hitler himself will almost certainly be maintained as the figurehead. But all such shiftings will make little difference to the German workers.

What is not realized by most observers is that the only real change that *can* now happen in Germany is the overthrow, not merely of Hitler, but of the whole German capitalist class, and the establishment of a Soviet Germany. This will happen, and must happen; but it would be idle to pretend that such a tremendous world event could happen automatically. It can only happen by the successful organization by the German Communist Party of all the seething discontent which exists. If and when this has been accomplished, and the heroic efforts of the German party are ceaselessly working to that end, Hitler and, what is far more important, Thyssen, Siemens, Krupp, and the rest of his paymasters can be overthrown.

It is, at any rate, not too much to say that this eventuality is now quite distinctly upon the agenda of events in Europe. I do not believe that the capitalist classes of other countries of Europe are now strong enough to prevent the assumption of power by the workers of Germany. It is quite untrue to suggest, as do the defeatist elements amongst the Social-Democrats, etc., that a German workers' regime would be overthrown by the Polish or French bourgeoisie. The Polish and French bourgeoisie has quite enough to do to keep itself in power against the rising militancy of its own workers, without going out to save its German colleagues. (Moreover, German capitalists are rivals as well as colleagues of the other European capitalist classes). It is, indeed, urgently necessary that the European, and not less the American, workers should be mobilized in order to prevent counter-revolutionary intervention in Germany; but this can be done and, so far as France is concerned at any rate, is being done.

Kohler the Killer

PAUL ROMAINE

KOHLER, WIS.

AS YOU walk down Michigan Avenue in Chicago, the Tribune Tower Building of the "World's Worst Newspaper" is bound to catch your eye. Upon approaching it one of the first things that attracts attention is a ground floor display room of beautiful plumbing fixtures, protected from the elements by huge plate glass windows bearing the legend, "Kohler of Kohler." Replicas are to be seen throughout the United States by millions of workers to whom modern sanitation in the wealthiest country in the world is an unrealized dream.

Many years ago, Walter J. Kohler toured Europe, making a study of modern housing for workers and "socialized" relations between workers and their exploiters. He returned to Wisconsin and founded the "model" village of Kohler a few miles from Sheboygan. There he established his factories, his workers' homes, and Kohler "castle," where he lived. The whole village was laid out according to a carefully thought out plan. Everything from the ground beneath to the sky above was owned by Kohler of Kohler. All he touched turned to gold—profit in the soil, profit in the brick houses and of surplus labor time and power there was plenty. America was ridding itself of B.O.—it became a mania amongst the bourgeoisie—and fancy toilets and bath tubs sold like Cointreau at the Dome. Hundreds of workers invested in homes in Kohler and it became famous throughout the U. S. A. as the model industrial town. These workers were held in the iron grip of their Master, Kohler. Their wages on payday paid an installment on one of Kohler's houses, paid the grocery bill at one of Kohler's stores. Kohler Castle became the citadel of industrial feudalism where the Master, tiring of all the goodness he had created, decided to enter politics.

He became the governor of Wisconsin and this eliminated for a period of years the payment of income taxes. Life was full and good for the Master. A strong company union "took care of the interests of the workers" and made strikes "unnecessary." In 1929 the crisis of capitalism deepened and with the passing years 17 millions of American workers found themselves jobless. Kohler village went blithely on, however, immune to the cold, grey world about it. No agitators of any kind disturbed its peacefulness—not even the Reds. On the surface all was calm and bright, but beneath the placidity smouldered resentment against the company and Kohler. It seemed to the workers that they could never get out of debt, that their hours were too long, that their wages were too low.

Then came the N.R.A. and the New Deal from the slippery fingers of the Roosevelt administration. Here indeed was the panacea for all their ills, thought the Kohler workers. But the minimum wages under the code became their maximum wages and their hours of work a week, forty. With all the turmoil of the class struggle everywhere manifesting itself in the United States in strikes that sometimes even took on a political character—the capitalist press of Wisconsin pointed to the serenity of Kohler of Kohler. Here was no Harlan, Imperial Valley, San Francisco—here the antagonisms of capital and labor had been solved. Kohler leads the way!

Then at dawn, July 16,—consternation in the camp of the bourgeoisie and their lying press—a picket line was thrown about the Kohler foundry! STRIKE! A STRIKE AT KOHLER!

It was almost unbelievable to the bourgeoisie. Federal union 18545 of the A. F. of L. had presented a set of 14 demands to Kohler, based on the N.R.A. code. Kohler had replied to the demands—point by point. The union rejected the reply and called a strike; 1,200 workers walked out. Their basic demands of the 14 were the recognition of the union as the collective bargaining unit, a minimum wage of 65 cents an hour, a 30-hour week and seniority rights.

On the first day of the strike a few shadows of subsequent events were cast. The pickets derailed a coal train and would permit no coal to enter the yards of the plant. A gas barrage was the answer of the deputies, but without effect. A guard that struck a picket was beaten up by the workers and brief skirmishes took place.

Mackey

"The existence of a highly trained unit will effectively increase the efficiency of police to meet emergency."

—COMMISSIONER O'RYAN.

The second day of the strike found a picket line that might just as well have been a high stone wall. About 500 were in the line and they carried a heavy rope from hand to hand. Walter Kohler was the only person allowed to pass through the lines. The employes who were scabbing could not leave the plant. The company had cots and food on hand, however, for their temporary residence. A locomotive that attempted to enter the grounds was stopped, street cars and autos were turned back.

On Wednesday a 24-hour picket line had been established and the Master was highly indignant. "How can there be bargaining with law violators who have never worked for us?" Meaning, of course, that employes were not picketing, which was so much nonsense. Rev. J. W. Maguire, from the regional Labor Board, was sent up from Chicago to begin maneuvers for the sell-out. He is one of the numerous God's Men that the N.R.A. has been effectively using to break strikes.

On Thursday, because of the effective picketing that prevented coal from entering yards to supply the plant that furnished the water supply to the town, a water famine was threatened and all negotiations were directed to solve this problem. Friday, the strikers permitted one carload of coal to enter on the promise that it would be used only for the town's water supply. The heat of the day was intense and picketing was cut down in numbers. Food entered the besieged plant under the protection of the United States mails.

Early Monday morning found the picket lines larger than ever before and the Kohler plant turning out billies which were supplied to three hundred petty bourgeois citizens and misguided workers who had been deputized. In the ensuing days picketing continued militantly; all mediation had failed. The officials became desperate in the face of the effective picketing. Kohler was raging—he'd smash the strike with armed force and show the world who owned Kohler, that he was still Master. Master.

On the second Friday of the strike the deputies launched a surprise attack on the picket line. Sticks which many of the pickets had been carrying were taken away from them in brief skirmishes and the ropes they had used since the beginning of the strike were yanked out of their hands. At first they were amazed by this action. Most of the workers had never been in a strike before, had never felt the consciousness of their class, had never been face to face with armed agencies of the ruling class. As in so many recent American strikes, the strikers, indignant at such treatment, felt that they had been wronged, that they possessed certain constitutional rights

Mackey

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which had been swept aside. They didn't quite know what to do for a moment other than to accept what action had taken place and reflect on its implications. Then three workers were evicted from the American Club across the street from the picket lines, their belongings thrown onto the street. They had been accused of union activities and aiding the action of the picket lines by messages and signals from the club. At first pickets and sympathizers were amazed—they had never seen an eviction in the little village. Their anger against the company now reached new heights. They reorganized their picket lines into solid fronts. Evening fell. Women filled their lifted skirts with rocks; men and boys crammed their pockets with rocks; giant slingshots made their appearance; and thus armed, the ranks of the thousands of pickets and sympathizers advanced down High Street, now nick-named the "Western Front."

A terrific barrage of stones broke every window in the south end of the foundry. The workers were on the offensive. They turned to the west and shattered the windows on that side of the foundry, the employment offices and the infirmary. On they swept to the general offices of the Kohler company. Street lights were broken all along the route of attack. At the general offices the anger and fury of the workers against their exploiters grew even fiercer—every window was smashed and the tinkling of the glass was lost amid the cheers of the workers. It was an emotional replica of the street car strike I saw in Milwaukee.

Suddenly, at the height of the attack upon the general offices, the well planned strategy of the deputies went into action. They had not attempted to stop the demonstration of the pickets up to this point; they had drawn them into a trap—within range of the gas guns. Suddenly the darkened street was studded with the flares of gas bombs flying into the crowd. Billows enveloped the demonstrators. Women and children became panic-stricken. They bumped into each other blinded by the gas and darkness. Hell broke loose in a block on High Street. The street was cleared by the deputies who now numbered 500 steel helmeted protectors of capitalism in Kohler.

The pickets recovered from the gas effect in a short time and reorganized their ranks. From all streets they took the offensive and general street fighting began. Fifty black shirted husky men, who now made their first appearance in the strike, rushed from the factory gates in support of the deputies. Although armed to the teeth, they and the deputies were driven, by the attack of the workers, behind the barricades of the black armored cars that had patrolled the streets during the day. Suddenly from all sides in the darkness, gunfire met the workers, their wives and children. It came from machine-guns, rifles, shotguns. Dozens fell. The gunfire continued. The workers fell back. Gradually the firing ceased and from behind the barricades emerged deputies and company thugs with butts of guns, clubs and billies. Mercilessly they fell upon retreating workers without discrimination as to sex or age. Clubbing them, cursing them, they drove them out on the highways of the once peaceful village and Kohler of Kohler came into his own once again—for the time being.

As dawn broke over the beautiful countryside of Kohler, death stalked in its wake. Within 24 hours three workers died of their wounds—Lee Wakefield, 25, Henry Engelman, 27, and Alex Weinert, 42—all riddled with bullets through the back, head and chest. Thirty-nine more men, women and children filled the hospital at Sheboygan; the youngest 13, the oldest 45. These were all the newspapers reported to the public; I found upon investigation, however, that about 150 wounded were never reported.

The National Guard was immediately called out and at this writing 750 guardsmen are stationed in a town of 1,500 residents to preserve "law and order" and protect Kohler of Kohler. Four "mediators" are being rushed from Chicago and a very "special" mediator from Washington to break the strike. Meanwhile the picket lines are again in action in front of the plant and the village is closed to entrance of "outsiders." Nevertheless the Communist Party distributed 3,000 leaflets on Sunday in Kohler and Sheboygan, demanding the withdrawal of the national guard and meeting of the demands. The workers of Kohler have had their first lesson in class warfare—and such lessons are not forgotten!

Murder in Minneapolis

MERIDEL LE SUEUR

MINNEAPOLIS.

WITHIN the sound of a gunshot from where I am writing, Chief of Police Johannes' gun squad is on call; two blocks west the military is massed under the dictatorship of Governor Olson, supplied and instructed in the use of machine guns, gas, vomit gas, and all the instruments for class war; six blocks away, in the center of the business district, in an old garage, opposite a swanky clubhouse, where more money changes hands in a poker game than these men have ever seen, are the striking truckmen, now denied the right to picket, standing in a dark, swarming dive.

But something further has been known in Minneapolis since the strikers on Tuesday buried their dead, Henry Ness, shot down by order of Johannes, stool and slave of the Citizens Alliance, an organization of employers and fascist-minded middle class backed by the two biggest banking interests in the Northwest, a vigilante organization in embryo.

Henry Ness was shot down on Friday, July 20, when Johannes fired into a squad of peaceful picketers who were bare handed, observing Father Haas's truce while negotiations were under way. Over forty were blasted and turned into sieves by buckshot in the back. Again it has been demonstrated that negotiation and arbitration are paid for by the blood of the workers, the muffling of the strike, and by giving time for the red herring, now rotten and decomposed, to be drawn across the trail.

The Committee of Employers with lying ads in the papers, the Citizens Alliance, the Minneapolis Journal, have held Minneapolis in a barrage of lies, so cunning, so deliberate, and so wholesale that the citizens of Minneapolis, to learn anything of the truth, have had to pass it by word of mouth, and read it in the daily newspaper edited by the strikers themselves.

These practiced liars have stated time after time after time that the strike was over. For answer the pickets went out by the hundreds, tying up the trucking of the city. (With one exception: the alliance between strikers and the Farmers' Holiday Associations, by which agreement the farmers bring in their goods unmolested directly to the consumers.)

They stated that 90 percent of their employes had never quit work. As answer thousands massed at strike headquarters, the picket lines grew twice their former size. The unemployed councils swelled the lines. Words, words have barricaded the city, have been a cover for the bloody tactics of feudal capitalists.

There were cries in the press about the small band of strikers who dared dictate who should use the streets, the "insurgents" who forced the policemen to shoot them down along with neutral citizens. There was a great hue and cry about this "small band of insurgents."

At any dinner table you could hear graduates of Yale and Harvard, supposed repositories of nineteenth century culture, saying they themselves would arm and shoot these men down like rabbits who dared ask for bread.

But when labor buried its dead this was changed. To the amazement of the Minneapolis Journal, the Citizens Alliance, the banks, etc., forty thousand people marched behind that body of Henry Ness, father of four children. Thousands massed the side-

walks. The Woman's Auxiliary of the strikers marched a block solid, four abreast, with their little children, in the broiling heat, through twenty blocks in the heart of the city, tying up traffic for nearly three hours. There were six blocks solid of marching overalled men. There were cars that took an hour and a half to pass, filled with men, women, children—workers.

From office buildings leaned business men, aghast. "My God," they asked each other, "who are these people?" An official from the City Hall tried to break that cortege and he was repulsed with anger by the young pickets. "You don't pass the cortege of labor," they said. "Nobody breaks our funeral line." And nobody did.

Labor gave its answer to the words of arbitration and negotiation.

Following the refusal of the employers to accept the agreement of the Labor Board which Gov. Olson attempted to force upon the two contending forces, the city is under martial law. There are no signs of the employers agreeing to any settlement. Their attitude is barbaric, feudal. Gov. Olson said at the first there would be no picketing and no convoying of trucks except by permit, which admits of wide interpretation. Picketing has stopped entirely, under protest by the strikers, and at the same time more and more trucks are being moved by permit of the military.

The militia patrols the streets, young boys who are startled by their sudden duties. Two commanders have asked to be relieved of their command and it has been granted. Military courts are being set up. The employers are entrenching themselves bitterly. Amidst this stands the old garage of strike headquarters like a live coal on the dark streets, alive with its closely packed swarm of men. Cars drive slowly by. Big splendid cars with furtive men and women looking out of them at the strikers. The windows of office buildings are filled with eyes. Everyone knows since that funeral that there is a live, ominous force stirring beneath the city, a mass rising beneath them.

This is the power which asks the withdrawal of the militia and calls "General Strike!"

On Black Friday, July 20, Chief of Police Johannes, backed by the Citizens Alliance and the mayor, against the sentiments of the Governor and Father Haas, fired into a bunch of pickets who were totally unarmed, without even sticks or clubs. They fired from all sides into the men as they were picketing the market area in the truck drivers' strike, shooting with sawed-off shotguns, peppering them with buckshot like rabbits. The murder was deliberately planned. The strike was going peacefully. The Citizens Alliance and the advisory committee to the employers (a high pressure staff drawing down a good salary) wanted trouble and wanted to force the hand of the strikers.

Johannes told his men they had shotguns and they knew what to do with them. The Mayor said: "You are not carrying those instruments for pleasure." Thursday, the day

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before the shooting, they deliberately tried to provoke strikers into stopping hospital trucks, using a decoy truck. The drama was prepared beforehand, with cameramen and newspaper men present, and an extra was out almost before the event had happened. A convoy was present of a hundred and fifty policemen with guns sticking out of every car. These to convoy a truck with a hundred and fifty pounds of merchandise in it! But the strikers did not fall into the trap.

The next day carloads of armed cops were in the market area. Carloads of pickets matched carloads with them. By noon the market was alive with pickets, sympathizers, cops with guns. It must be remembered that at this time there was presumably a tentative truce while Father Haas was carrying on negotiations. However, the seriousness of arbitration, truces, negotiations as considered by the employers is shown in the Minneapolis strike as clearly as in the Toledo and San Francisco strikes. The employers never have any intention to arbitrate or negotiate.

At two o'clock this bevy of cops prepared to convoy a truck, which was obviously a decoy containing only a few boxes; and amidst a crowd of spectators in a clearing in the street an action took place which should be looked at, ignoring all the fine literature of negotiations. This action reveals the real intention of the reactionary business man, who had given over fifty thousand dollars to break this strike at any cost BEFORE NEGOTIATIONS HAD EVEN STARTED. If this strike wins, they say, Minneapolis will be a closed shop!

The employers' truck started moving. The picket squad cars drove toward it; the two crashed in the middle of the street. A couple of blocks away summer business was going on, women were shopping. It was two o'clock. The men, obeying the tentative truce, waiting for the tentative and poisonous and futile arbitration, were totally unarmed. They were barehanded, peacefully picketing. The police opened fire with sawed-off shotguns, splaying a fire of lead and NOT into the sidewalk, or at the feet of the picketers as the papers contended, but into the unprotected vitals of living men coming toward them with bare hands. When the strikers turned for cover they shot them in the back. Henry Ness who died had thirty-eight slugs in his body. He was shot in the chest and as he turned for cover, he was shot again in the back.

In the hot afternoon for five minutes they fired point blank into the bodies of truckmen, most of them trying for cover. The street was littered with bodies. An old man on the sidewalk was seriously wounded, a young messenger boy was shot. Two men were lying in the pickets' truck, had not even gotten out of the truck, which shows how quickly the police opened fire. Instantly from the picket lines in the face of this fire, which came from BOTH sides of the street and from the center, young pickets rushed forward to pick up their wounded—and were fired upon. The pickets behind them came forward—unarmed men, without compulsion, without orders, advancing again and again in a colossal tide that filled the gap the instant it was opened by a prone man.

The strikers picked up what wounded they could and took them, not to the hospitals, but to their own headquarters, where they had set up their own hospital. What wounded men the police picked up were instantly arrested—for violence! A great many of these men were veterans and remarked that even in the war they were allowed to pick up their own wounded.

The wounds from buckshot are most ghastly. One shot splays and splinters the bone instead of penetrating cleanly, and opens the body in a dozen places like a sieve.

One day after the burial of the murdered men, the following communication was sent by the Employers Advisory Committee to Governor Olson:

> All Minneapolis business firms are endeavoring to carry on their normal and lawful business, keep thousands of employes at work and preserve and maintain industry in this community.
>
> The truck drivers union, Local No. 574, has arrogantly assumed to control our streets, prevent operation of business, dictate what, if any merchandise can be transported through our streets, and assumed to block and shut off streets to travel. The Mayor and Chief of Police are doing their duty to uphold their oaths of office and to clear the streets. . . .
>
> We are informed that you are endeavoring to have the Mayor and Chief of Police cease aiding the transportation of merchandise through our streets. Such action only serves to uphold the hands of these law violators by compelling cessation of normal business and yielding to the determination of Local No. 574 to act as the official arbiter of what business shall be permitted to run in Minneapolis.

Father Haas and the committee have submitted arbitration to both sides. Governor Olson waited until noon on Thursday, July 26, before declaring martial law.

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White Gold in Soviet Asia

LANGSTON HUGHES

IN THE autumn, if you step off the train almost anywhere in the fertile parts of Soviet Central Asia, you step into a cotton field, or into a city or town whose streets are filled with evidences of cotton nearby. The natives call it "white gold." On all the dusty roads, camels, carts, and trucks loaded with the soft fibre go toward the gins and warehouses. Outside the towns, oft-times as far as the eye can see, the white balls lift their precious heads.

The same thing is true of the southern part of the United States. In Georgia and Mississippi and Alabama you ride for hundreds of miles through fields of cotton bursting white in the sun. Except that on our roads there are no camels. Mules and wagons bear the burdens.

About two years ago, when I was in the South all winter, I spent some time in Alabama, fifty miles or so from world famous Scottsboro. I wanted to visit the big cotton plantations there.

"It's dangerous," my friends said. "The white folks don't like strange Negroes around. You can't do it."

But I finally managed to do it—and this is how: During the December holidays, I went with a section of the Red Cross (a Negro section, of course, as everything is segregated in the South) to distribute fruit to the poor—the POOR meaning in this case the black workers on a rich plantation nearby.

We set out in a rickety Ford and drove for miles through the brown fields where the cotton had been picked. We came to a gate in a strong wire fence. This passed, some distance further on we came to another fence. And then, far back from the road, huddled together beneath the trees, we came upon the cabins of the Negro workers—cheerless one-room shacks, built of logs. A group of ragged children came running out to meet us.

The man with the Red Cross button descended from the car and spoke to them in a Sunday-school manner. He asked them if they had been good, and if they had gotten any presents for the holidays. Yes, the children said, they had been good, but they hadn't gotten any presents. They reached out eager little hands for the apples and oranges of charity we offered them.

We went into several of the huts, and while the Red Cross man talked about the Lord, I asked a few questions. I asked an old man if the cotton had been sold. He answered listlessly, "I don't know. The boss took it. And even if it has been sold, it don't make no difference to me. I never see none of the money nohow." He shrugged his shoulders helplessly and sucked at his pipe. A woman I spoke to said she hadn't been to town for four years. Yet the town was less than fifteen miles away. "It's hard to get off," she said, "and I never has nothing to spend." She gave her dreary testimony without emotion. The Red Cross man assured her that God would help her and that she shouldn't worry.

A broken-down bed, a stove, and a few chairs were all she had in her house. Her children were among those stretching out their skinny arms to us for charity fruit. Yet the man who owned this big plantation lived in a great house with white pillars in the town. His children went to private schools in the North and traveled abroad. These black hands working in white cotton created the wealth that built his fine house and supported his children in their travels. A woman who couldn't travel fifteen miles to town was sending somebody else's child on a trip to Paris. Thus, the base of culture in the South.

Economists call it the share-crop system. Ironical name—for cotton is a crop that the Negro never shares. The plantation owner advances every month a little corn meal and salt meat from the commissary, gives seed and a cabin. These advances are charged to the peasant's account by the plantation bookkeeper. At the end of the year when the cotton is picked, the plantation owner takes the whole crop, tells the worker his share is not large enough to cover the rent of the cabin, the cost of the seed, the price of the corn meal and fat meat, and the other figures on his book. "You owe me," says the planter. So the Negro is automatically in debt, and must work another year to pay the landlord. If he wishes to take his family and leave, he is threatened with the chain gang or lynch-terror.

How different are the cotton lands of Soviet Central Asia! The beys are gone—the landlords done with forever. I have spoken to the peasants and I know. They are not afraid to speak, like the black farm-hands of the South.

It was the height of the picking season when I visited the Aitakov Kolkhoz near Merv. The Turkmen director took us to the fields where, in the bright morning sun, a brigade of women were picking cotton, moving rapidly through the waist-high rows, some stuffing the white bolls into the bosoms of their gowns until they were fat with cotton, others into sacks tied across one shoulder. Thirty-two kilos of picked cotton was counted a working day, but the udarniks picked sixty-four kilos or more a day. And many of the women I was watching were udarniks. This brigade had fulfilled 165 percent of its plan, according to the director of the farm. In their beautiful native dresses of red and green with their tall headdresses surmounting moon-colored faces, these women moved like witches of work in a sweeping line down the length of the broad field, taking the whiteness and leaving the green-brown stalks, stuffing into their sacks and bosoms the richness of the earth.

On this particular day, while the women worked in the fields, the men were repairing the irrigation canals near the main stream, the director told us. But the men also pick cotton when there is no heavy work to do.

I remarked at the absence of children in the fields. In our American South they would be picking along with the parents.

"Here, they are in school," the director said. "Our kolkhoz has a four-year school. And in the village nearby there is a school for five hundred pupils where the older students go. There is a teacher here for the grown-ups, too. You will see during the rest period."

The director went away and left us with the time-keeper and his assistant, a young student learning to keep the books. They were both Turkmen with marvelously high black hats of shaggy lamb's skin towering above their heads. With them I could not speak a word. My bad Russian did not work. But Shali Kekilov, the poet of the Turkmen Proletarian Writer's Union, translated. We sat on the grass under the fruit trees bordering a dry canal and learned the facts about their kolkhoz, and the success of collectivization in their districts. Within the village radius of eight kilometers, out of a population of 2,700 people, only twenty individual farmers remained. On the Kolkhoz Aitakova itself there were 230 workers, ten of them members of the Communist Party, and eleven candidates. (Two of the Party members were women; and two women were candidates.) There were twenty-eight Komsomols, or Young Communists League associates.

When the rest period came, a boy brought tea and bread to the fields. The women sat in a group on the grass and, as they ate, a girl teacher moved among them with a book, helping each woman to read aloud a passage—thus they were learning to read, a thing that in all the long centuries before, women in Central Asia had never done.

The men sitting on the grass with us were proud. "Before the Revolution there weren't twenty-five women in the whole of Turkmenia who could read. Now look!" A woman peasant sat on the edge of the cotton field *talking* out of a book. Something to cry with joy about! Something to unfurl red banners over! Something to shout in the face of the capitalist world's colonial oppressors. Something to whisper over the borders of India and Persia.

In the afternoon, I helped pick cotton, too, for the fun of it. Then a young man came to take us to the tea-house for dinner. There

I answered many questions concerning the Negroes in America. It was dusk when we walked across the fields to the cluster of buildings that formed the center of the kolkhoz. They were preparing the nursery as a guest-room for us, moving back the little chairs and tables of the children and spreading beautiful hand-woven rugs on the floor that we might sit down.

Soon guests began to arrive, teachers from the village school came, and then the men who had been out on the irrigation works all day, and among them musicians. They came in twos and threes and larger groups until the room was full. One oil lamp on the floor was the only light, and as they sat around it, their tall hats cast tremendous shadows on the walls. *Chainiks* of tea were brought, and a half-dozen bowls were shared by all. As the tea-pots emptied, they were passed continually back and forth from hand to hand to the door where a man replenished them from the water boiling over an open fire outside in the dark.

Many stories were told to us there in the nursery by the men who shared their little bowls of tea; stories of the days when women were purchased for sheep or camels or gold. If you were rich enough—young women; or, if you were poor, you worked three to five years in the field to receive an old wife that some rich man had tired of. Stories were told of the beys who once controlled the water, and whose land you must till in order to moisten your own poor crops. Stories were told of feuds, and tribal wars, Tsarist oppression, and mass misery. And all this *not* a hundred years ago, but *only* ten or fifteen years past. These men in the tall hats had not read about it in history books. It had been their life. And now they were free.

Then the boys began to sing to the notes of their two-string lutes. The high monotonous music of the East filled the room. Two singers sat cross-legged on the floor, face to face, rocking to and fro. One was the young man who, during the day, learned to be a time-keeper. The other, a peasant who, between verses threw back his head and made strange clucking sounds with his throat. They sang of the triumphs of the Revolution. Then they sang old songs of power, of love, and the beauties of women whose faces were like the moon. Sometimes they played, without singing, music that was like a breeze over the desert, coming out of the night to the cotton fields.

A sheep had been killed and, from the fire outside, great steaming platters of mutton were brought which we ate with our hands. Most of the men left at midnight, but several remained to keep us company, and slept on the floor with us. For a while I sat up by the single oil lamp writing into my note book.

I visited several other cotton kolkhozes in Turkmenia and Uzbekistan, and one sovkhoz. I filled two note-books with figures and data: the number of hectares under cultivation, the yield per hectare, the percentages fulfilled according to the plan—some not always good—the method of irrigation, the amount the state pays for cotton in rubles and wheat and cloth and tea. I stayed for two days at the mechanization station for farm machinery near Tashkent; and another day at the seed selection station where a number of American Negro chemists are employed at work they would seldom be allowed to do in the United States. I saw the cotton college. I visited the big building of the Cotton Trust at Tashkent. I looked at statistics. I studied charts.

The figures, sooner or later (important as they are) I shall forget. Maybe I will lose the note-books in my travels. But these things I shall always remember that the peasants themselves have told me: "Before, there were no schools for our children; now there are. Before, we lived in debt and fear; now we are free. Before, women were bought and sold; now no more. Before, the water belonged to the beys; today, under the Soviets, it's ours."

What Has the Great War Taught Me?

THEODORE DREISER

I COULD limit my reply to one slang American word—plenty.

It made changelessly clear that the entire social order that preceded that war was decayed, and worse, rotten to the core. The organized religion of that day and since, what a farce it proved to be. The boasted democracy of England! What a trashy material scheme for bolstering up and maintaining a decadent and disgraceful leisure class at the expense of the masses! They fought and died, and the remainder were given a dole.

And then the antiquated King and Emperor business of the rest of Europe:—The Kaiser, for instance, with his cracked notions of a place in the sun for the Imperial Hohenzollern family. But who else? The Czar, neurotic and mentally defective, yet dominating Russia through a neurotic and defective court and leisure class! And in Austro-Hungary, the Hapsburgs, a collection of defectives out of an asylum, yet masquerading as Dukes and Princes and Princesses and supported by a brutal shameless and disgraceful church. And Spain with its frayed and defective King and a religious hierarchy so antiquated and mentally threadbare as not to be able to recognize its own unbelievable lunacies which were destroying the very body of the people on which it depended for its existence.

Italy the same.

Roumania the same.

Loafers, wasters, sybarites, enthroned as Lords and Kings and all bolstered by armies and navies and statecraft and priestcraft, maintained by the almost unrewarded labor of the masses, who at the same time were taught that their masters were divinely ordained!

And then America! Wilson shouting about making the world safe for democracy and believing that by wasting forty billions of American money, he had done so. And yet as they said of Mary's little lamb afer it arrived in Pittsburgh, "Now look at the Goddam' thing!"

And afterwards, here in America—its democracy made "safe"—for what? Only consider our Trusts and Holding Companies, the Standard Oil Company, Telephone Trust, the Power Trust, the Railroad Trust, the Steel Trust, the Aluminum Trust, the Food and Textile Trusts, holding everything that they had and exacting, as might any tyrant in any part of the world, all that the traffic will bear, all that the man with fifty cents an hour can pay and more. Yet shouting of Democracy, of maintaining American standards—doing things in an American way. And worse, while borrowing a few ideas from Russia—the only decent ones they have—the minimum wage and the thirty-hour week, denouncing Russia as an unbelievable tyranny. And you ask me what has the great war taught me?

Well it has taught me this—that fifty cents an hour and thirty hours a week for labor won't make up for unmeasured privileges and monopolies bestowed upon our entrenched money aristocracy whose one dream is not the advancement of the mass—nor even the superior mental development of a class, but aimless, meaningless, social leisure and show. And until these monopolies are broken, the masses properly rewarded and the so-called "classes" aligned with the masses as workers and nothing else, I will not believe that, except for Russia and the hope that it still holds out to the world, the Great War accomplished anything. And that is what the Great War has taught me.

P. S.—Not that I believe that human beings are going to be made angels by law, but that by law, for a time at least, they are going to be prevented from being downright devils.

Hearst's Campaign for Purity and War

I: Silent, White and Beautiful

ROBERT FORSYTHE

WHEN the historians of the future begin to sum up pre-Soviet America they will have to devote a special chapter to hypocrisy, one of our most entertaining and predominant traits. If they decide to set the chapter around a personality, they will undoubtedly select William Randolph Hearst who is still in front in any such contest and riding hard. Strangely enough, hypocrisy appears to be a queer perverted form of satire and this may account for our thousands of hypocrites and utter lack of satirists. In satire you appear to be writing about one thing when you are actually writing about the reverse. Hypocrisy consists in saying and doing a certain thing when at heart you are entirely otherwise.

However that may be, Hearst is our man and never was he in such form as in the present campaign for purity in the movies. Unless your evening is spoiled without a copy of the New York Journal, you may not know that Mr. Hearst is heart and soul with the churches in the matter. More than that Miss Marion Davies is with the churches. It is to be assumed also that the Hearst newspapers and the Hearst movies (Cosmopolitan pictures) and the Hearst magazines are also for the churches and for stern morality and the strict coverage of naked limbs.

The plight of a Hearst picture editor at a time like this is almost too dreadful to contemplate. He has been brought up in an atmosphere of female knees and now he sees Papa Hearst writing indignant words about Hollywood and he is in a quandary. One thing you must not be in the Hearst organization is in a quandary because if your intuitive powers should fail you at a critical moment and a picture of Sally Rand without the fan should appear in conjunction with a view of the Evanston, Ill., Woman's Club bearing a petition to Will Hays, you will get a telegram from a gentleman named Mr. Willicombe, who is very near to Mr. Hearst, asking that you be taken up to the eighth floor and dropped into the alley.

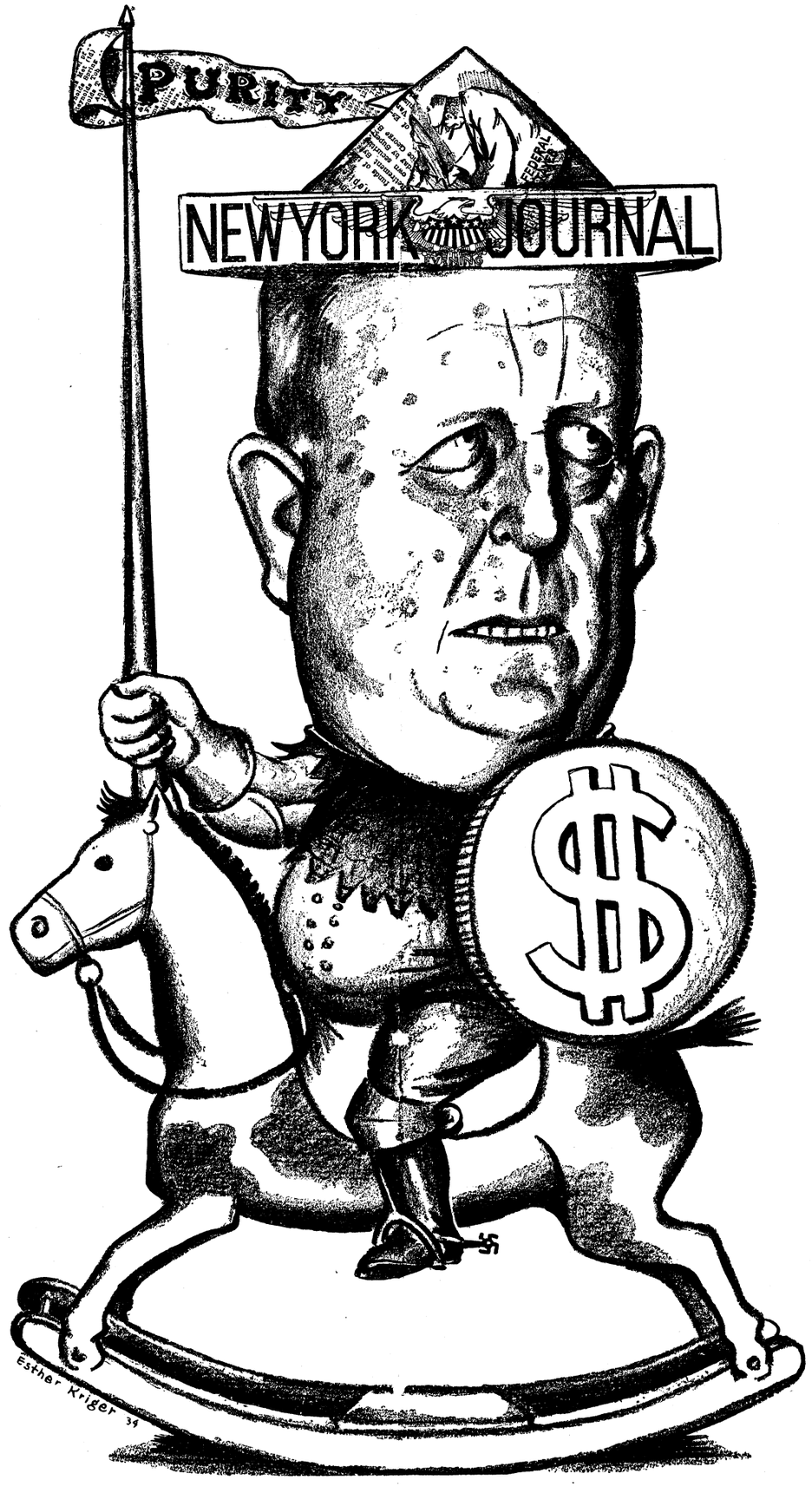
Of course a man of the virility and varied talents of Mr. Hearst is not content with one crusade. He has been doing well also with the Red Menace. The gentleman's outstanding quality of viciousness has long been recognized and cherished. He is given credit for creating the Spanish-American War for the sake of the circulation of his newspapers. As a stimulator of mob passions and a perverter of plain facts for the purposes of fomenting murder, he has had no superior since Caligula. Anybody who knows California realizes that Governor Merriam and Mayor Rossi were well aware that they had Hearst's backing before issuing their provocations to slaughter. Hearst has been seeing red for many years. Formerly he saw yellow. It was the yellow menace of Japan. As the owner of San Simeon, the most stupendous and fabulous piece of private property in America, he is not keen for expropriation and not anxious for the common man, to whom his press caters, to acquire ideas which might disrupt the personal harmony of his moral establishment. We must remark, however, that the spectacle of Mr. Hearst living in unholy wedlock with Marion Davies and protesting against the sexual code of Beverly Hills is only equalled among the more colossal episodes of history by Herr Hitler's amazement on discovering that Captain Ernst Roehm was not a nice Christian boy.

This would all be delightful enough if we could forget the Communists beaten to death in the San Francisco raids and if we didn't foresee the future of Mr. Hearst's purity campaign. It would take a very naïve individual indeed to believe that the censorship drive will end with the moral regeneration of Adolph Zukor. The repressive instinct is one which grows upon itself. Anybody over the age of thirty can remember when the word "damn" was forbidden in American magazines and when Theodore Dreiser's *Sister Carrie* was suppressed by Doubleday, Page even after they had accepted it and printed it. The signs are plain that the present Hearst-inspired crusade is going to get around to literature eventually. The publishers are expecting it and planning ways to fight it. But it is a difficult thing to fight. More subtly still it affects the editorial judgment of publishers even when there is no actual suppression impending.

But what actually are the moral crusaders concerned about? Is it just a protest against the prolonged movie kiss and stories which indicate that Maggie had a wee one without benefit of clergy? If you will analyze it even in the most casual fashion you will see that what the purity people are concerned about are ideas. They are fighting for established ideas in all fields—religion, state, social relationships. Hollywood is only a symbol and an easy target of attack. The church people may not even be conscious of their deeper intentions. They know only that respect for religion is waning. The Catholic Church for several years has been issuing lists of approved shows and books and movies. Nobody has paid any attention to them but they are an indication of what will happen on a larger scale if they can win the movie fight.

The situation in literature is most serious of all, for it is in that field that independent thought still has an opportunity—for the time being at least. No radical group can hope to have its own motion picture company or its radio chain. The cost is prohibitive. But books are still open to us. In the past few months there have been issued here three books which would easily come under General Hugh Johnson's definition of an alien agitator. I refer to Céline's *Journey to the End of the Night,* André Malraux's *Man's Fate* and Sholokhov's *And Quiet Flows the Don.* Céline shows the horror of the life of the common man under the lash of capitalism. Malraux reveals the amazing courage and fine qualities of the Communists who led the revolt in China in 1927. Sholokhov is in even a worse situation. The early portions of his book about the Cossacks of the Don are lusty and bawdy and very human. After that they are very human and revolutionary.

If alien agitators are to be deported, what is to keep literary agitators from being barred? When you begin thinking of it, various connections suddenly present themselves: The Vigilantes, stirred to hate and brutality by Hearst and California officialdom; the Catholic Church (bitterest enemy of Communism) and the drive for Purity in the movies; General Johnson's murderous speeches; Miss



II: Seducti

LEO HA

THE deluge of war propaganda in the capitalist press is reaching new heights of eloquence. Among the many voices luring the American worker to slaughter, the most seductive is that of William Randolph Hearst. The methods used in the recent campaign of the Hearst newspapers give an example of the perversion of what are commonly considered instruments of peace propaganda into material to incite war.

"To maintain peace we must prepare for war," quotes the New York American. Under this pious banner it has just completed a long series of "uncensored pictures of the First World War," followed by inflammatory articles on the world political scene. Many of our liberal intellectuals persist in the delusion, concerning war pictures in general, that they induce an anti-war psychosis. Yet such pictures are almost always given a heavy sugar-coating of sentimentality and an atmosphere of remoteness which, instead of arousing horror and repulsion, surround warfare with the glamor of a drum corps on parade. Mr. Hearst has done even more than exploit these common foibles. The "horror" pictures have been so carefully censored and edited with illuminating comment, that they indeed prepare the worker for war, by deliberately glorifying war and fomenting war hatred.

Hearst's Campaign for Purity and War

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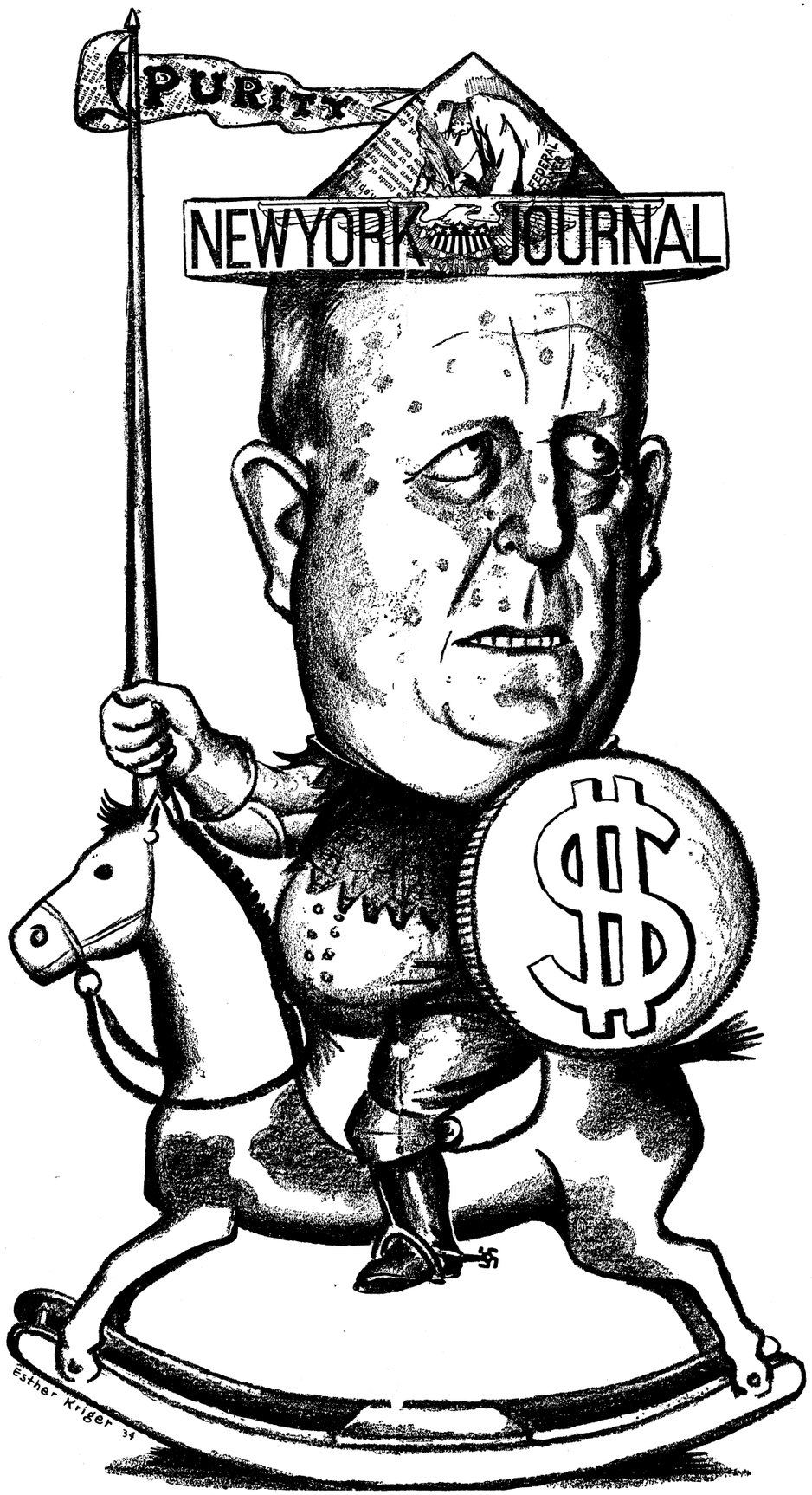
You may consider this farfetched and the usual Bolshevik method of making a mountain out of a molehill. If the Communists are anything, they are realistic. They never fool themselves. In California at this moment, the open sale of THE NEW MASSES is impossible. Friends have begged us not to write or wire them out there for fear of the consequences to themselves. The more open reign of terror is well known. Women have been dragged from their homes and beaten. Hundreds have been arrested on faked charges. In the face of all that, do you think a book store in San Francisco would dare show copies of Strachey's *The Coming Struggle for Power* on its shelves during this period? Do you think Mr. Hearst or Archbishop Anybody or other would hesitate to proscribe any book which they felt might give comfort to radical thought or even to liberal thought? Do you think they would stop with proscription when the courts are so anxious to be pleasing to the ruling forces? Do you think they would halt at raids if everything else failed?



II: Seductive Horrors

LEO HASKELL

THE deluge of war propaganda in the capitalist press is reaching new heights of eloquence. Among the many voices luring the American worker to slaughter, the most seductive is that of William Randolph Hearst. The methods used in the recent campaign of the Hearst newspapers give an example of the perversion of what are commonly considered instruments of peace propaganda into material to incite war.

"To maintain peace we must prepare for war," quotes the New York American. Under this pious banner it has just completed a long series of "uncensored pictures of the First World War," followed by inflammatory articles on the world political scene. Many of our liberal intellectuals persist in the delusion, concerning war pictures in general, that they induce an anti-war psychosis. Yet such pictures are almost always given a heavy sugar-coating of sentimentality and an atmosphere of remoteness which, instead of arousing horror and repulsion, surround warfare with the glamor of a drum corps on parade. Mr. Hearst has done even more than exploit these common foibles. The "horror" pictures have been so carefully censored and edited with illuminating comment, that they indeed prepare the worker for war, by deliberately glorifying war and fomenting war hatred.

A detailed study of the so-called horror pictures is most enlightening. We see starving, naked Armenian children ("Suffer, little children"), civilians dead in East Prussia ("without glory of uniform"), Servian peasants hanged by invading foe ("When war comes, no one is safe"), wasted bodies of famine-stricken Russians, ravaged villages, ("Innocents starve," "Civilians behind the lines show the horrors of hunger and desolation.") Pictures of mutilated corpses, gruesome skeletons, skulls shattered, heaps of cadavers, horrible bodies without heads and heads without bodies, of German, Turkish, Russian, Austrian troops. Among the hundreds of pictures we look in vain for a single, definite horror picture of Americans? Is the American soldier exempt?

The purpose is clear. There is an intentional remoteness in these horrors which is calculated to create an illusion of immunity for the American. With regard to the mass of the people, the individual is incapable of projecting himself into the person of a despised, alien, unfortunate being. This capacity does exist, however, as our popular cinema and fiction testify, to the extent that he will identify himself with the person of the hero of a situation; and these war pictures deliberately glorify the American's heroic role in the last

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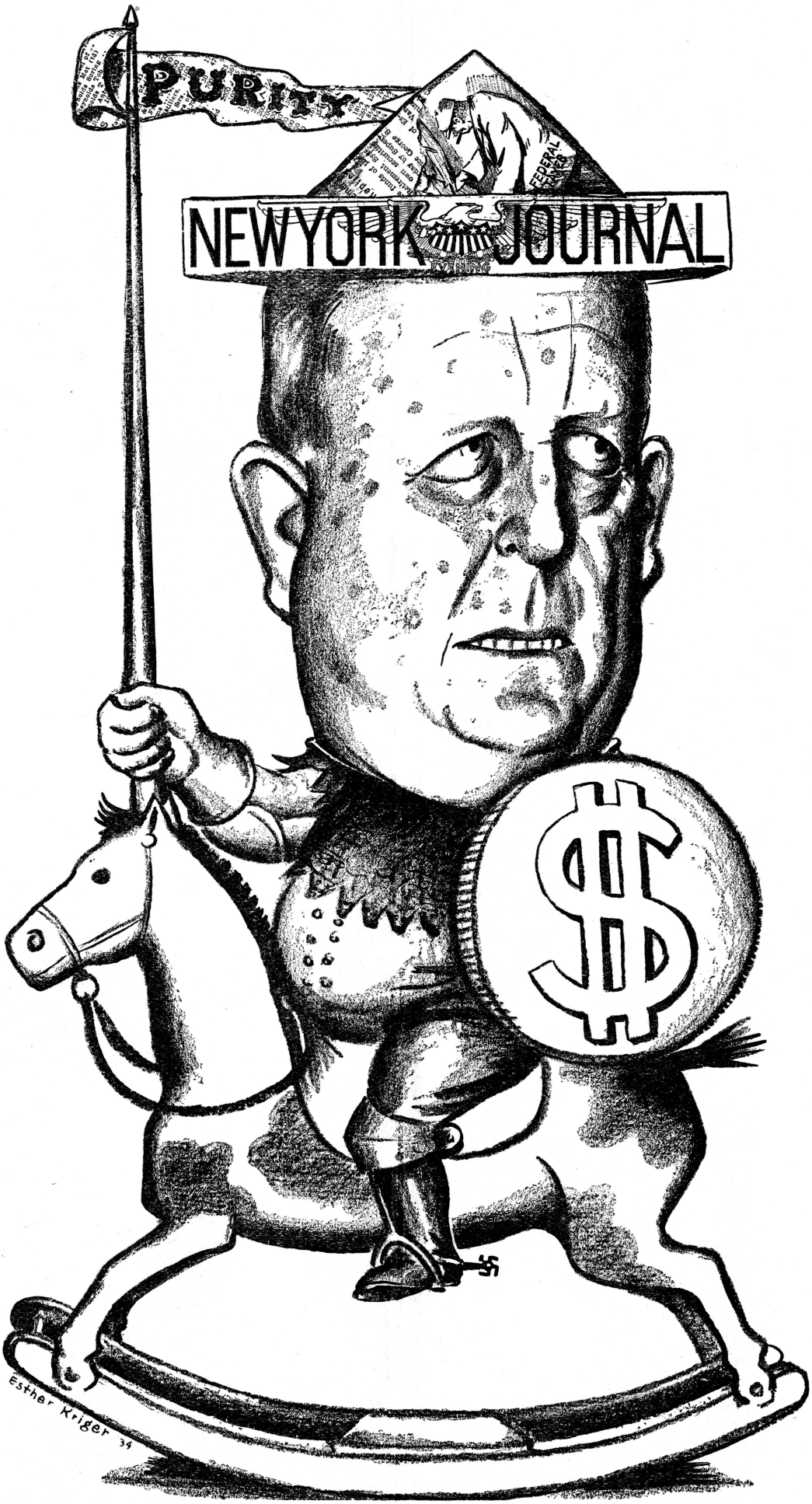

war and vilify the part of the Central Powers.

Mr. Hearst's precautions are excessive. He becomes unduly alarmed that his pictures may have aroused a feeble spectre of civilian suffering, so he hastens to exorcise it. "U. S. self-contained. Has all elements for perfect liberty. No combination of nations could starve us or cripple our defense if we use our resources."

To prepare the worker for future slaughter, it becomes necessary to justify America's role in the last war. Directly and by insinuation, Hearst resurrects the defunct war hatreds, war guilt lies. Somewhat inconsistently, the tar-brush does not spare the Russians; but in Hearst propaganda, the Russians have acquired the status of an enemy people.

We see pictures of villages in flames, peasants executed ("Bayonets for babies"), grim pictures of atrocities all committed by the "hated foe," Germans, Austrians, Hungarians, and also Russians. "Our own American boys" are shown "dedicating themselves to the Republic's life." The American "died for his country" and "to save the world," while, on the other hand, "these Russians tell in death how inadequate equipment sent them by treacherous officialdom cost them their lives. Stay-at-home profiteers cared nothing whether they had proper weapons or ammunition to defend themselves." The Italian "patriots, soldiers of the kind, marched to victory over their former allies of the Entente," but "Austrian troops pay with blood for an Emperor's dream of conquest." The American died "for Humanity"; the enemy "died in vain." Horrible pictures of Russian dead on the Eastern front are displayed as an object lesson of German preparedness. A picture of American dead bears the caption: "These men had gone into war unprepared." When he shows pictures of mutilated Germans, Mr. Hearst maintains a discreet silence about the vaunted German preparedness.

Is God on our side? Of course. The odor of sanctity hangs heavily over these pictures. We see a regiment receiving the blessing of Cardinal Farley. We see, "Asking God's mercy, an American chaplain giving his beloved doughboys the Holy Sacrament." Another photograph shows us "What the Savior saw. In the ruins of this once stately cathedral American wounded found sanctuary. Shell fire has shattered the walls. But the painting of the Savior still looks down on war's victims." Nowhere do we see the German receiving the protection of God. Alas, the enemy! God is with us.

Parallel to the contrast between the American and enemy motives in the war, the Hearst series presents a contrast between the United States soldier and the enemy soldier. "Warfare," says the American editorially, "in the pages of Homer and Virgil, seems entirely noble and heroic, but warfare, in actual human experience, is the most tragic of all occurrences." "Glamor gone, friend and foe find common fraternity in death." How touching! But in order to combat any feeling of common fraternity between the living American worker and his foreign brother, Hearst consistently exalts the noble and heroic and glamorous in the American soldier and maligns the character of the enemy soldier as cowardly, cruel, and treacherous. While the enemy commits atrocities against helpless civilians, the American is portrayed magnanimously giving aid to a wounded enemy. "American troops lacked training, but not heroism." "America's unprepared boys bravely faced death." American dead are "bodies of our slain heroes." German corpses are labeled, "Like a load of logs." Our boys go into battle "scornful of the bullets which will soon greet them." They advance "to death or glory," but, for the craven German, "imprisonment was better than death." "Hands up, no tricks. The Yank is a trusting soul, except in war. These German prisoners were given no opportunity to attempt any trickery against their captors."

"The Yanks are coming. Unflinching and

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deliberate in the face of a murderous fire, . . . advance on strong enemy position. . . . There was no stopping once they started, even against insurmountable obstacles." What, no glamor, Mr. Hearst? "The fighting Seventh pushes the enemy back along the Somme. Under a direct German fire they charged across a wide gap of country in an unfaltering line."

"Some of the enemy surrendered. Others tried to kill the Yanks from ambush and were in turn killed." Treacherous enemy. Serves them right. "Bringing in the wounded under fire . . . shoulder-to-shoulder feeling and spirit of self-sacrifice that animated the American troops at the front." Gallant American. But witness the following triumph of innuendo. "Turkish soldiers are grouped around a pile of the heads of soldiers who deserted the ranks. What tortures were inflicted before these heads were severed can only be conjectured."

What is the essential purpose served by these horror pictures? Mr. Hearst unwittingly gives the answer himself! "The pugnacious instincts of the U. S. fighting forces had to be preserved."

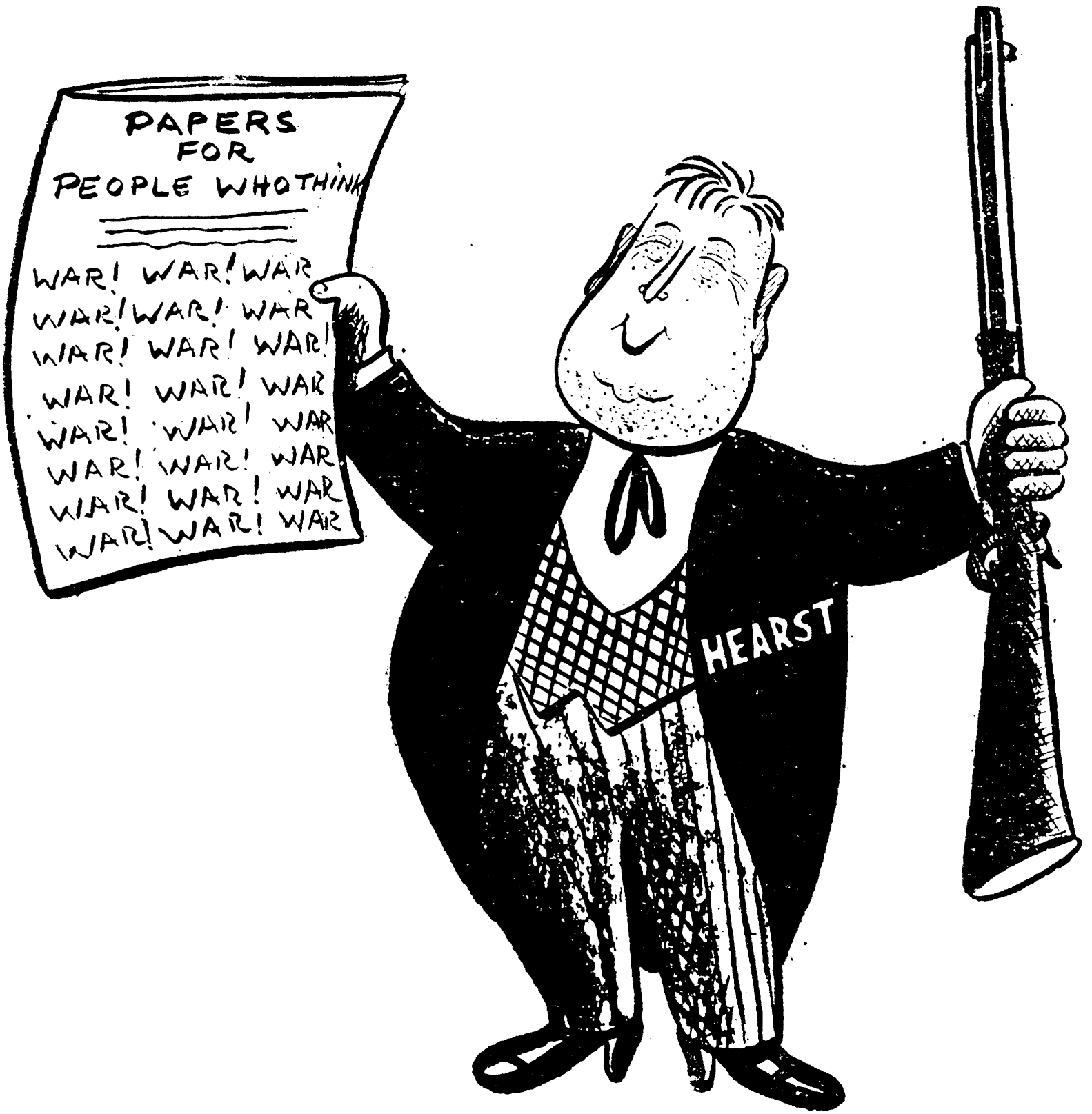
The crowning touch of imbecility in this series is supplied by the "Tragic letters of dying American soldiers to their loved ones." They have the same sentimentality of the advertising copy that sells us soaps, mouthwashes and laxatives. Only Mr. Hearst is selling us War. ("What thoughts flashed through the tortured minds of these thousands of soldiers who died in the World War? Love was uppermost in their minds.") Never bitterness, never anger, only "tender memories" prevailed as death closed in. Hearst's selling points, besides love, are patriotism (the glory of dying for one's country), and religion (faith in God with the promise of a life hereafter). These themes run through all the letters with a startling uniformity.

"It had to come some time, and I'm sure I prefer dying for my country than in a long illness at home." "You will be proud I go this way and not by some lingering illness." "I was granted the privilege of dying for my country."

As if such glory were not its own compensation, the hero is offered a reward in Heaven. "If it were not for this Belief, parting would be terrible." "Don't feel too sad, Alice. The next act will be on soon, and we will be together again." "Until we meet again." "We both believe in a hereafter, so please don't grieve. You will join me later." "Rendezvous with wife fixed by dying soldier in his last love letter." "Be sure of one thing, there is no Death, just a change. A little wait, and then we will be together for all eternity, to learn a fuller meaning of what we feel here when I say, I love you, dear." To the wives and sweethearts, who may wonder, when the time comes for the celestial orgy, whether their heroes are morally and physically untainted, Hearst offers adequate assurances. "Don't you believe all that stuff Larry wrote home about these French girls. All of them put together don't look as good to me as your little finger." "Since I got over here and seen these French wimmin, I realize how much better ones we got at home."

Mr. Hearst does not fail to point out that the glory of serving one's country transcends all differences of faith and rank. "Yes, I am that saloon keeper's son. You are a minister's daughter. I was a Catholic, you a Protestant." In one letter the writer tells the moving tale of the death of three men in an isolated shell-hole. Catholic, Protestant and Jew. They expire dramatically after each, in his own way, had offered a prayer to God. Evidently, the faith of these dying men did not permit of any doubt. "I do not waste time wondering what kind of God permits such a slaughter. I wonder why mankind tries to kill God."

"Would I be vain," writes another, "to ask you to be a little proud that your husband died for his country instead of poor and destitute?" Go, you starving masses, go to slaughter! It is much more glorious to die of bullets than to die of hunger. We do not give you bread, but we offer you a warrior's Valhalla. "Go, ye heroes, go and die."


PAPERS
FOR
PEOPLE WHO THINK
WAR! WAR! WAR
WAR! WAR! WAR
WAR! WAR! WAR!
WAR! WAR! WAR
WAR! WAR! WAR
WAR! WAR! WAR
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WAR! WAR! WAR
HEARST

Hoff

Correspondence

A Purist Comes Out of His Shell

To The New Masses:

Reuben Nakian, a very good animal sculptor, has up to now resisted efforts to turn his art into a social weapon. But he has come out of his "tower." Have the stirring events of our age, the battles in Europe, the strikes, the struggles, increasing misery in this country, the war danger, stirred this artist? He has become aware of the class struggle and is using his art as a weapon. But not to aid the oppressed, the workers, the new rising cooperative social order. He has chosen to aid, to exalt the oppressors, to forge weapons against the oppressed, against the workers, against the rising civilization. He is going "to glorify twelve New Dealers," by making busts of Johnson, Perkins, Hull, Wallace, etc. One might excuse an artist if he takes on a paid commission and simply performs a "portrait" job. But Mr. Nakian is doing this for nothing (undoubtedly he has his eyes on future financial developments). He feels that Johnson's face "suggests the ruggedness and power in ancient Roman emperors."

One wonders whether Mr. Nakian knows what he is doing, whether he knows the New Deal, Johnson, and what it means to the people of America. To some artists Johnson's face suggests the murderous lust, brutality, bigotry, viciousness, and greed of the Roman Emperor. Perkins, Johnson, Hull and the rest have unleashed and encouraged by public speeches the most vicious terror against the workers of America that this country has ever seen. They are fighting for a "Deal" that calls for increasing misery of the workers, for ruthless suppression of human liberties, human progress, that encourages lynching of revolutionary workers, destruction of libraries, meeting rooms, workers' organizations, that urges arrests, beatings, terrorizations, not only of workers, labor organizers, Communists, but of artists and writers as well.

Yes, Mr. Nakian is forging his art into a weapon. But a weapon against the workers, against progress, against art—he glorifies the beginning in this country of what Hitlerism is in Germany. Of course Mr. Nakian may approve of that disease that is now scourging the world, Fascism. We warn him, however, as a fellow artist, that he is betting on the wrong horse. In fascist countries, in "New Deal" countries, under crumbling capitalism, no art, no culture flourishes. Artists, writers, musicians, flee such places like the plague. Even for mere opportunism, to ride with the tide, to get what one can out of it—a "New Deal system" has little to offer. It will not last long enough even to build a monument to itself. While it lasts it even destroys its own adherents, as the German, Italian, Austrian, "New Dealers" have done. I may say to Mr. Nakian and to all other artists, your art cannot become a great lasting social force or even exist when it glorifies a system—the kind Johnson and the rest of your "New Dealers" are fighting for and ushering in. It can only flourish in a workers' society, when it expresses the true aspirations of humanity, the struggles of the workers for a Communist state.

Leo Fischer.

I Saw Angelo Herndon. . . .

To The New Masses:

It's warm in Atlanta these days, and Fulton Tower shimmied in the heat waves like a fairy castle. In appearance, the structure resembles a mediaeval fortress, with round tower, turrets and all.

As we walked toward the Tower, John Geer, one of the Negro attorneys who defended Angelo, said: "For the past two months they treat us like dogs when we go to visit him. They never let us see him in private any more; they stand over us while we talk through a screen, and they growl every time we say anything."

At close hand, the prison is a forbidding place. It's old, very old, and the accumulated filth of years casts a sickly atmosphere over the whole place. Inside it is dark and foul; one can only imagine what the horrible cells are like. It *is* a mediaeval castle; all the tortures of the middle ages live on in these blackened dungeons. After two years, Angelo's health is ruined; it's a marvel that he has lived through it.

It's a shock if you look too closely at the guards and door tenders. The masters choose the most bestial and brutal of their lackeys to act as jailers.

I was announced to the chief custodian of the gate as a New York attorney who is working on the appeal, and we asked for the right to interview Angelo "on the bench"—in semi-privacy and with camparative comfort.

The chief custodian glared and grunted, but wrote out a pass.

We were forced to wait about fifteen minutes before Angelo appeared from somewhere inside the dark interior of the black Tower. The inside gate was opened, and we went to a corner of the room where we three sat together on the end of a bench. From the center of the room a fat and ugly guard glowered at us from time to time.

The fighting spirit and enthusiasm of Angelo Herndon is an inspiration to the whole working class. Despite his severe illness, he is fairly bursting with energy. He has not forgotten how to laugh. He wants to know about every phase of the revolutionary movement. And he knows that he is going to be freed. He is absolutely confident of the power and the strength of the toiling Negro masses and the entire working class. Two years of unbelievable tortures, of inhuman degradations, have served to strengthen him, steel him, until today he has developed into one of the outstanding members of the revolutionary forces of toiling humanity.

Angelo refers to his captors as barbarians and savages. These are mild terms when one considers what they have done to him. They keep him confined in a tiny dark, unventilated and bug-ridden cell twenty-four hours a day. Usually they place two other prisoners in the same cell with him—making the place unbearable. Regularly they threaten to put sexual perverts into the cell with him.

They deny him all literature and books. They tamper with his mail, and withhold letters from him. When he writes, he never knows that his letter will reach its destination. He receives only such letters as his jailers choose to give him. Money sent to him is stolen by the barbarians and savages.

Visitors to him are often refused admittance. His lawyers can see him only occasionally, and then under conditions that make it almost impossible to converse.

Working class pressure forced the officials to take Angelo to a hospital for an examination. But the doctors, servants of the State, falsified their reports and Herndon is not receiving adequate medical attention. A sympathetic doctor who was interested in the case gave him an independent examination and found him on "the verge of a complete physical breakdown." This doctor bought medicine for Angelo. The medicine filled a large shoe box, which was delivered to the County Physician who promised faithfully to deliver it to Herndon. But only two small bottles reached Angelo, who was told that the County Physician "donated" it. The County Physician kept the rest of the medicine for himself.

Herndon is sick—terribly sick. He does not complain, and is reluctant to talk about his condition. But the report of the friendly doctor and Herndon's own apearance show that the horrible prison regime has undermined his health. His lungs and stomach and nervous system are out of order, and the body-wrecking treatment in prison is constantly aggravating his condition.

It can only be said that it is the immediate task of the working class to wage a relentless struggle for the *life* of Angelo Herndon.

The Herndon case now is being used as a spear-head in the attack against the Negro masses in the South. The decision of the Georgia State Supreme Court is being interpreted by the white ruling class as making illegal all workingclass organizations throughout the South. Immediately after that decision was made, a reign of terror was begun in Atlanta which has not yet subsided. The Red-baiting, Negro-hating prosecutor Hudson announced his intention of "driving every Communist out of Georgia." He threatens to bring the "Atlanta Six" cases to trial.

The ILD and other organizations are outlawed in Georgia, and membership in any organization is held sufficient for prosecution on "inciting to insurrection," which carries the death penalty.

Another development since the Herndon decision is the announcement that the Ku Klux Klan is being reorganized on a National scale with headquarters to be established in Atlanta.

Comrade Herndon imparted to me some of his own confidence. As I left him I felt just as certain as he that it would not be long before the masses throughout the country, swinging into action in a mighty defense campaign for Ernst Thaelmann and Herndon, would compel the bosses of Georgia to open their prison doors for Angelo, who will return to activity in the revolutionary movement as one of the best and most heroic fighters against capitalism.

Peter W. Madison.

Birmingham, June 26, 1934.

As we go to press the International Labor Defense informs us that the campaign to raise $15,000 bail for Angelo Herndon seems to have succeeded. More than 550 individuals and organizations have contributed—loaned, rather—money to free Herndon from the chain gang pending a retrial. The sums ranged from $1 to $1,000. Bail, however, is not enough. To press the case of Herndon through the Georgia courts will require additional funds, and this money must be spent, not put up as bonds, to be returned to the lenders. The address of the International Labor Defense, where contributions should be sent, is 799 Broadway, New York City.

—The Editors.

Post Office Intimidation

To The New Masses:

Halper's article on the *Plight of the Postal Sub* was most opportune, to say the least. Efforts by Postal authorities to break up the National Association of Substitute Post Office Employes—the only rank and file organization of post office workers—have reached a threatening stage.

Individuals are being singled out for disciplinary action because of their union activities. Two cases deserve special attention. Grand Central Post Office Station in New York City, as Halper correctly pointed out, was formerly a vault. The ventilating system is utterly useless. Oppressive heat in the summer and intense cold in the winter make Grand Central a veritable hell-hole. During the recent heat wave, conditions became unbearable. The secretary of Grand Central, Moses Siegel, was authorized by the men to send a letter to the Board of Health revealing the conditions under which the men were forced to work. The Board of Health turned the letter over the the Post Office authorities. Siegel was called down by Assistant Superintendent

Tobin, grilled, and charged with having brought the service into disrepute. The men in the station rallied to Siegel's support. Petitions protesting against the attempt to discipline him were circulated.

Three petitions were seized by foremen, and turned over to Tobin. Individuals were called up to Tobin's office, and grilled. The N.A.S.P.O.E. called a meeting, and elected a committee to interview Postmaster Kiely, to protest the attempt to railroad Siegel. Kiely refused to see the committee. Siegel has been given a five-day notice, which means the possible loss of his job.

Benjamin Cohen, a sub clerk, while off duty and outside of the station, was distributing bulletins issued by N.A.S.P.O.E. The bulletins called for a meeting to discuss ways and means of remedying the working conditions of the Grand Central Hellhole. Cohen was called down to Tobin, grilled, and charged with distributing material to cause discontent among the employes.

These are but two attempts at intimidation, aimed at breaking up the first real rank and file organization in the Post Office, N.A.S.P.O.E.

Siegel's case must be publicized if his job is to be saved, if the rights of the Post Office workers are not to be jeopardized.

May I suggest that your readers give Postmaster Kiely a taste of mass pressure. Letters protesting his intimidation tactics should be addressed to him, General Post Office, New York City.

Fear of going through the routine of Tobin, a grilling, and threat of dismissal for "bringing the service into disrepute" compel me to withhold my signature.

A POSTAL WORKER.

Dialectical Materialism

TO THE NEW MASSES:

It was disappointing to find your magazine recommending in its July 10 issue V. Adoratsky's *Dialectical Materialism* as a "brilliant introduction" to the subject. The uneven quality of the book had caused me so much difficulty in my attempts to educate recalcitrant intellectuals that I had hoped for some thorough and incisive review in your periodical.

Adoratsky is not only not brilliant; he is sometimes quite unclear and confusing. On page 28 and 29, for example, he tries to define the very difficult concept of the "unity of opposites." As the prime instance of this he takes the famous Zeno paradox about the arrow in motion, and holds this up as a dialectic paradox! Actually, as has been indicated by formal logicians, Zeno's paradox depends merely upon verbal confusion. It surely cannot be taken as an example of unity of opposites. Adoratsky should have taken heed of his own caveat, that "the application of the dialectical method does not mean arbitrarily combining all and every contradictory assertion." To find the director of the Marx-Engels-Lenin Institute falling into such an egregious error is puzzling and not a little disturbing. In other places, the author presents such over-simplified explanations that the presentation is far from convincing.

A great need of the communist movement in its battle for the professional and intellectual is a clear, thorough and exact essay on dialectical materialism. Short of that, we should have liked to see Salter and Librome, for example, who have done such a good job with Russell, Dewey and Cohen, review the Adoratsky essay. Is it too late?

M. VETCH.

Divided Loyalties

VI. *Problems of the Fellow-Traveler in Soviet Letters*

JOSHUA KUNITZ

A NEW MASSES reader, in a letter to me, suggests that my treatment of the fellow-traveler in the Soviet Union savors of heresy-hunting. I am sorry to have given that impression even to one reader. My intention has not been the pursuit of "heresy." All I have been trying to do was to concretize the conception of class war in literature, by showing how the literary exponents of a receding class contrive to maintain and exercise their influence even under the watchful eye of the Dictatorship of the Proletariat. I must repeat: The old world does not surrender without fighting. Even after it is beaten, it continues guerrilla warfare. In the realm of ideology this war takes on an infinite number of devious forms. An apparently innocuous philosophic doctrine or scientific hypothesis or esthetic principle, an apparently innocent image or symbol or theme or mood invariably reveals on closer scrutiny a class content. The conflict of class attitudes does not always occur on the plane of consciousness. The rôle of the subconscious in such matters is too manifest to need elaboration. Furthermore, this conflict of class attitudes is almost invariably mirrored in the psychal conflicts of the individual with an intermediate class position. If that individual is an artist, his psychal conflicts find expression in the content and even in the form of his work. In my effort to comprehend and interpret the literature of the most complex epoch in [modern] history, I naturally could not confine myself to surfaces; I had to delve a little deeper, to throw the light of inquiry into obscure places and dark corners.

I have been trying to prepare the ground for a critical survey of the history of the Russian Association of Proletarian Writers—the RAPP. One cannot possibly understand the origin, development and final dissolution of the RAPP, one cannot understand its slogans and its intolerance, its revolutionary services and excesses unless one understands the class forces that confronted the proletarian writers and critics when they first attempted to define, express and assert their own class in the realm of culture. My only regret is that space does not permit a more searching and detailed analysis. Still, a few more examples of unproletarian, un-Communist works are, I believe, essential to an adequate comprehension of the struggles led by the RAPP as well as of what has been taking place in Soviet letters since the RAPP's demise.

Take Voinova's *Semi-Precious Stones*. The central character of this novel is the villain Okromeshkin, a saboteur in an important Soviet industry who is finally exposed in the last chapter. In the words of the Prosecutor, Okromeshkin, "one of the monopolists of science and engineering," was an "unsurpassed cynic," a "secret destroyer" and a corrupter of the "moral foundations" of Soviet life. The entire story is told by Okromeshkin in the first person. Seen through the eyes of this "unsurpassed cynic," the Soviet Union is a perfect madhouse, peopled with idiotic Communists, disgusting children, promiscuous women, lunatics, ne'er-do-wells, former intellectuals sunk to the level of rogues, and similar riff-raff. In short, a picture of the workers' and peasants' Republic on a par with Tchernavina's *Escape from the Soviets*. To the objection that that was not exactly a truthful depiction of Soviet life, Voinova may very plausibly say: "Yes, but it is Okromeshkin, a villain, who does the describing. Naturally, he would be blind to all that is noble and beautiful in *our* reality. Perhaps it was unwise, but I conceived the novel from Okromeshkin's point of view; and verisimilitude under such circumstances demands distortion."

Now this may or may not be the real answer. In actual practice, however, and I am not certain that Voinova was not aware of this, every disgruntled reader, every "hidden foe" in the Soviet Union would tend to disregard the author's subtle psychological motivations and would see the distortion, not as a distortion, but as something very close to reality. It is not surprising that the bourgeois publishers of this book in this country acclaimed it a "subtle" satire. Actually, of course, the satire is not so subtle. Ostensibly written with the intention "to unmask" Okromeshkin, "morally to isolate him, and, as a source of contagion, to destroy him," the book in reality panders to the tastes of the "hidden foe" whose perception of the world is not very different from that of Okromeshkin, and who no doubt gets a great thrill at seeing the workers' and peasants' country treated thus unceremoniously. This is mere surmise on my part. Yet there is inner evidence that Voinova's intention was just that. Surely, all those thrilling scenes of love, jealousy, murder and mystery were designed for no one else but the petty bourgeois consumer of literary wares in the Soviet Union. If Tchernavina had decided to

write her book while still in Russia, she could not have chosen a better pattern than the one supplied by Voinova. Perhaps Voinova took a saboteur as her mouthpiece because the psychology of the saboteur was most comprehensible to her.

Putting caustic comment on the Soviets into the mouths of negative characters—sometimes in order to evade the censor—is not Voinova's original invention. It is the established practice among many Soviet writers. In *The Little Golden Calf,* for example, Ilf and Petrov make a scoundrelly Soviet official, a grafter who feigns madness so as to escape punishment, say the following:

> The insane asylum is the only place where a normal man can live. Everything else is superbedlam. I prefer to live with the genuine madmen. At least they are not trying to build socialism. Besides, here they give you to eat, while there, in the bedlam, you merely work. . . . Here at least there is personal liberty, freedom of conscience, freedom of speech. . . .

Whatever the authors' motive, the effect of such talk on enemies of the proletariat and Communism can well be imagined.

Once in reviewing *The Little Golden Calf* I ventured to disagree with Anatol Lunacharsky's characterization of its authors as "very gay people . . . not baffled by the sordidness of life." I then suggested that Ilf and Petrov, under a mask of gayety, superficiality and innocuous buffoonery, had written a very earnest book, that they had aimed to hit, and hit hard, at the most vulnerable spots in the Soviet organism. It even seemed to me that in places the authors had crossed the bounds of Bolshevik self-criticism and actually challenged the basic principles of collectivism and the Communist state.

I have since been assured by several of the authors' friends that Ilf and Petrov are perfectly loyal and devoted Soviet citizens. Of this I never had any doubt. But my judgment of the novel is not based on its caustic depiction of inefficiency, bureaucracy, peculation, graft, nepotism, hypocrisy, and cant in the Soviet apparatus. Such depiction might have been prompted by a sincere desire on the part of the authors to expose and thus help eradicate evil. Viewed in this light, *The Little Golden Calf* might actually have been written by a couple of ardent Bolsheviks. What reveals the un-proletarian, un-Bolshevik character of the novel is not the mordant criticism it contains, but the peculiar combination of that criticism with a distinctly perceptible overtone of pessimism and doubt—typical petty bourgeois ailments in the Soviet Union—which runs through the entire book and is implicit in the very plot. Let us examine the novel a little more closely.

The Little Golden Calf is a sequel to Ilf and Petrov's other well-known extravaganza, *Twelve Chairs.* The central hero in both works is Ostap Bender, a delightfully unscrupulous rogue who, in the company of a few mercurial aides, roams through the highways and byways of the vast Union in pursuit of a hidden treasure. In the first book the hero is frustrated, for he finally discovers that a Soviet organization had accidentally unearthed the treasure and used it for building a workers' sumptuous club. In the second book, the "great schemer" is more successful: he finally tracks down his quarry—a sub-rosa Soviet millionaire—and extorts a million dollars from him. But his success is illusory. To be a millionaire in Soviet Russia means neither power nor glory nor leisure. To remain unexposed and unmolested, the Soviet millionaire is condemned to toil hard at a miserable wage, wear tattered apparel, eat nondescript food and keep eternal watch over his money-laden satchel. Profoundly disappointed, the new plutocrat with the dream of a resplendent and remote Rio de Janeiro glowing in his breast, attempts to steal across the Rumanian border, but he is nabbed by the myrmidons of capitalist law and order and stripped of all his valuables. At the end we behold our jovial, dexterous, daring, ingenious and, in his own way, great-hearted rogue, now ragged and beaten, his romantic notions of Rio de Janeiro shattered, crawling back to his native Soviet shores. "No ovations necessary, citizens," he shouts into the stillness of the night. "I have not become the Count of Monte Cristo. Methinks I shall have to master the trade of janitor!"

One does not know whether to exult or grieve over the hero's sudden resolution to learn the janitor's trade, for behind the resolution of this blithe, casual, effervescent, romantic, rather lovable schemer, one feels not a deeply inevitable conviction of the sublimity of labor and good citizenship, but a melancholy resignation to the "drabness" of Soviet life and an ironical bow to the demands of Soviet morality. In the final analysis, the authors manage to give the reader a feeling, not of a stirring moral conversion, but of a shameful spiritual collapse, a collapse too pathetic to be comic and too mean to be tragic.

In this connection a Gogol episode, famous in the annals of Russian letters, comes to mind. Once, the story goes, Gogol was reading to Pushkin chapters from *Dead Souls.* At first the great poet laughed whole-heartedly at Gogol's incredible Chichikov and his roguish schemes. Gradually, however, as the reading progressed, and as the distressing gallery of grafting officials and savage serf-owners passed before his eyes, the poet grew terribly silent and morose. At the end, utterly crushed, he muttered: "What a wretched, wretched place our Russia is!" Whether Ilf and Petrov wished to communicate to their readers a similar feeling about Soviet Russia is hard to say, but that they leave the reader depressed—of this there can be no doubt.

A novel strikingly similar to *The Little Golden Calf* in conception and mood is Valentine Kataiev's famous *The Embezzlers,* the story of two Soviet citizens—a henpecked, middle-aged accountant who in his reveries of "high life" imagines himself to be "that wonderful and unattainable Count Guido . . . who . . . leaped on his charger . . . etc. . . ." and an impressionable, hero-worshiping little cashier, his subordinate. Inadvertently, as a result of a few innocent drinks on top of a romantic disposition, these most ordinary citizens launch upon a dizzy career of embezzlement and drunken debauchery. They begin in Moscow but, before realizing it, they find themselves, with the payroll in their pockets and a harlot by their side, enroute for Leningrad, the imagined El Dorado. Thereafter, through a phantasmagoria of trains, cabs, clubs, and doss-houses, in the company of prostitutes, ex-princesses, paupers, and peasants, our adventurers, while the money lasts, fatuously pursue a "vaguely imagined" but "never attained" ecstasy. Finally the moment comes when, their money gone, they are forced to pawn their overcoats and, beaten and despondent, make their way back to Moscow. The story ends with the sorry spectacle of two desolate knights-errant marching to prison.

It is significant that the English translation of *The Embezzlers* is introduced by Stephen Graham, a rabid anti-Bolshevik. He praises the book as being "very clever . . . more real in detail and color than any picture given us" of the Soviet Union. Mr. Graham assures us that he has found the book the cause of much "whole-hearted laughter." What caused him to laugh is beyond me, except perhaps his malicious glee at reading about "the strange peculations prevalent in the offices of the Soviet trusts." Actually, *The Embezzlers,* like *The Little Golden Calf,* is a sad book. And what makes both these books sad is not the evils of NEP society which they satirize. We know these evils—vestiges of an evil past—and we know that the workers' government has been successfully coping with them. It is the larger implications of these books that are depressing. It is the realization that these stories, but for the local color, are as American or German or Chinese as they are Russian, and that the unfortunate heroes, so pathetically frustrated in their delirious pursuit after a will-o'-the-wisp, are replicas of the vast majority of men in our still discordant human society that is depressing. As I have said, these stories contain neither the purifying exaltation of tragedy nor amusing relief of comedy. Both are tainted with the typical petty bourgeois ailment—skepticism, pessimism, and, above all, a dark, persistent, haunting and, in its cumulative effect, utterly crushing overtone of irony—an irony which, being the expression of that vast, historically doomed and already frustrated social category to which Stephen Graham himself belongs, should have elicited from him anything but "whole-hearted laughter."

One need not impute anything sordid or deliberately anti-Soviet either to Ilf and Petrov or to Kataiev or to most of the other writers of the petty bourgeois intelligentsia. One can understand and even sympathize with their darker moods when one realizes what happened to their class—or at least to that portion of it that had remained in the Soviet Union and had managed to survive the tribulations of the Civil War period—after the in-

"Just because your greedy workmen decide to go on strike I can't have a new Mercedes. Somehow it doesn't seem *fair.*" *Crockett Johnson*

auguration of the NEP, after all hopes for foreign intervention had been pretty thoroughly shattered.

The period of reconstruction afforded large opportunities even to the former bourgeoisie to participate in the rehabilitation of the country. The proletarian state called upon the members of the intelligentsia to cooperate as specialists in the various professions and revitalized industries. For them to continue to keep aloof, especially since their stock of personal belongings they might sell on the market was rapidly waning, was becoming increasingly difficult. The more adaptable, therefore, heeded the call. Many abandoned the Chekhovian idealism of the old intelligentsia and adopted the pursuits of Nepmen, specialists, bureaucrats. Years of famine and the loss of ordinary comforts had taught them a bitter lesson. They became intensely practical. What interested them now was profits, salaries, fees, overtime pay. In the words of the teacher Ozhegov *(Diary of a Communist Undergraduate,* by N. Ognyev), ". . . they became so callous as to be ready to cut the other man's throat for the sake of money, to raise intrigues against him, to crawl before the powerful on their hands and knees, to grab whatever they could lay their hands on, to do their term in jail so long as they were allowed to start all over again." Of course, the actual work of rehabilitating the country did not interest them; it might go to the devil for all they cared. This work was not their work. "Hence their bureaucratic spirit, the spirit of don't-care-a-damn, hence the low standard of production in so many fields of intellectual labor. . . ." In brief, most of the erstwhile intellectuals had abandoned their last claim to spiritual superiority and refinement and became indistinguishable parts of the new, unscrupulous, self-seeking bourgeoisie in the strangely hybrid, proletarian-bourgeois, NEP society.

There were other members of the intelligentsia of course, those who valiantly tried to reach out toward the new, to grasp it, to comprehend it, to live it, and in doing that gradually to lose their petty bourgeois identity. Some of them were successful, the greatest number were not.

The old intelligentsia was disintegrating. Within a few years it had practically vanished. (Of the new proletarian intelligentsia that has arisen since then we shall have occasion to speak when we come to the period of the five-year-plans.) Once the intelligentsia, as a group, had stood for cultural acceleration. The Revolution deprived it of this lofty function. Now it was the working class that was building the new order, the new forms of social life. Now it was the Communists who acted as cultural accelerators. The dynamic elements in life, the initiators, the moulders, the builders of the new order were the Communists. Indeed, soon there was no intelligentsia, in the old sense, left. "It has vanished as completely as the gentry, the aristocracy, and the old Civil Service," complains Ozhegov; "there are Nepmen now, and specialists, and Soviet employees, and new lawyers, but the old intelligentsia is gone, gone for ever."

Note the regret in these words of the idealistic old teacher. He deplores the passing of the old intelligentsia, which, despite its futility in periods of storm and stress, was after all the carrier of those amenities and imponderable values which in more tranquil days do make life more bearable and enjoyable.[1]

[1] The following seven paragraphs are taken from my chapter *Men and Women in Soviet Literature* (*Voices of October,* by Joseph Freeman, Joshua Kunitz, Louis Lozowick).

A similar note is struck by Professor Arseny Arsenievich Bakh, one of the characters in Fedin's novel, *Brothers.*

> As I crossed the Neva [says the professor to his Communist interlocutor], I again began to feel that the man who is so irrevocably passing out of life, that that man is not less worthy of admiration than the new man. We do not know the beauty that you will create. We do not know how you feel your new beauty. But never again shall our feeling be repeated, for never again shall the man of our epoch be repeated. Yet we knew how to feel, Rodion, we could create the beautiful and be carried away by it! And it grieves me, Rodion, that the new humanity casts us out of life so ruthlessly. It is sad; for the complete disappearance of our type will be as much of a loss to the future, as the complete disappearance of zoological species is to science. We carry within us emotions which you combat not because they are harmful, but because you are devoid of them, because you refuse to see their significance. . . . Is it possible that the new humanity will forever, forever lose even the faintest idea of our—well, try to understand me, Rodion—here (striking his breast), is there nothing beautiful here? Is it possible that this will escape you forever, and that posterity—No! We have a right to preserve and pass on to you all the mighty stirrings of our souls! . . .

These are characteristic words. The old professor is vaguely aware of a new humanity and a new beauty descending upon this earth: action, movement, logic, science, skyscrapers. . . . But what about contemplation, quiescence, introspection—are not these values worthy of preservation? What about the idyllic Noblemen's Nests and the lovely Cherry Orchards —are they doomed to extinction, oblivion? The gentle Arseny Arsenievich has caught a glimpse of the inevitable, and his heart grieves. Too old to adjust himself to the demands of a new humanity, he resignedly awaits his end, intoning a threnody over an age that is dead, over a beauty that is gone. . . .

The professor is too old and too deeply rooted in the past to be the victim of a psychological dualism. He belongs wholly to the past, he remains a loyal worshiper of the gods of his generation. Infinitely more tragic is the fate of those sincere members of the intelligentsia who have been caught in the Revolution at a period in their lives when they were too young to be resigned to extinction and too old to be effectually metamorphosed, *i.e.,* that section of the intelligentsia to which most of the fellow-travelers belonged. "The Revolution has descended upon us when we were of middle-age," said Marietta Shaginian—now, I understand, a member of the Communist Party—in her essay *The New Life and Art.* "This, of course, was a little too late for us to enlist as *pioneers* [Communist organization for youngsters below sixteen]; on the other hand, it was also a little too early for us to retire to the hearth." Shaped by the past, subtle, decadent, reflective, this "refined intelligentsia" was nevertheless not ready to withdraw from the scene, to give up in the face of the new humanity, by saying with the old professor Bakh: "We do not know the beauty that you will create, we do not know how you will feel

"Just because your greedy workmen decide to go on strike I can't have a new Mercedes. Somehow it doesn't seem *fair.*"

Crockett Johnson

your new beauty." On the contrary, they were anxious to know, eager to learn and adapt themselves. To quote Marietta Shaginian again:

> Life has placed us amidst a new species of people. . . . These new people have accomplished a social overturn, and are continuing with tremendous exertions to labor over our national wealth and over the re-creation of economic relations the world over. Life has checked up their work, and has approved of them; they are the victors. Whatever our attitude toward them, we cannot ignore them. The new people have brought with them a new theory and a new practice . . . a new objective. . . . We cannot retire; for the old economic order which has brought us into life has not yet completely retired. Nor can we become transformed; for we have no support in those new economic relations which have actually been created, have taken root, are developing, and are promising us new forms of consciousness and giving us a new psychic atmosphere. Why can we not rely on these relations, and be fructified by them? Because these relations are germinating in the depths of another class; we have no access to them; they are still too frail, invisible, blanketed, and their fructifying breath cannot reach us behind our screens. . . .

Let us get near you, closer to you, appealed Shaginian to the new people; "let us touch what grows from your very roots," give us a chance to choose, do not make "beautiful Josephs of us,—Joseph might have come to love Potiphar's wife had she not hastened to cut off his volition impulses, had she not taken away from him the freedom of choice."

Freedom? queries the new man; but freedom is a relative concept; free will is one of man's delusions. By appealing for freedom the intelligentsia once more reveals its incorrigible *bourgeois* nature. If a rock could think, it would no doubt maintain that its fall was an act of free volition rather than the inevitable result of pre-ordained natural laws. "A proletarian writer," asserts the Communist critic Auerbakh, "inevitably serves his class. This inevitability is his freedom. He does not feel this inevitability as an imposition. It is within him, it lies in his class nature. What the bourgeois writer, therefore, feels as an infringement on his freedom, the proletarian writer feels as a lawful, natural, free manifestation."

This was a fundamental difference fraught with pain and enmity. Still, Shaginian's impassioned plea for a rapprochement, her entreaty, "Let us touch what grows from your very roots," was typical of many intellectuals in that period. They yearned for support from the new economic relations, craved to be absorbed in the new humanity, to lose their sterility by contact with the mainsprings of contemporary life. Most of them failed; some succeeded.

A fascinating example of the dualism of writers belonging to this intermediate social category and the tortuousness of the path which the non-accepting, negating part of their psyche takes in order to achieve a modicum of self-expression is, I believe, N. Ognyev's already quoted *Diary of a Communist Undergraduate.*

I first met Ognyev on the way to the Kharkov Conference of Revolutionary Writers in 1930. He was in the same compartment with the noted Soviet poets Eduard Bagritsky and Mikhail Golodny. In the real Russian fashion, we sat up all night discussing literature, American, European, and of course Russian. My companions were eager to know what the outside world thought of Soviet writers; they were especially interested, quite naturally, in my reactions to their own works. As for me, my interest during that night was centered on Ognyev. I was extremely anxious to verify certain conclusions concerning him I had once made in reviewing his *Diary of a Communist Undergraduate* for The Book League Monthly.

Here, in part, is what I had written in that review, at a time when I had no other information about Ognyev except that provided by his two books:

> The *Diary,* though revealing is not wholly satisfactory artistically. The form is loose; the style journalese; the characterization of the Communist youth not very convincing. The author, apparently a typical middle-aged revolutionary intellectual, is not completely identified with his subject; he neither fully understands nor fully sympathizes with the loud, confident, effectual, assertive, irreverent Soviet youth. Because of this lack of complete psychological identification of the real author of the *Diary* with the ostensible one [of N. Ognyev with Kostia Riabtsev] there are frequent violations of artistic unity, inevitable shifts in point of view, unmotivated insertions of extraneous matter—excessively long speeches and letters and comments by people other than the supposed author—which detract from the literary worth of the book.
>
> In view of his purpose, the author's choice of the diary form was unfortunate. This form, unless it is the direct outgrowth of a complete identification of the real with the apparent writer, is bound to suffer in convincingness. Ognyev, however, instead of identifying himself with the Undergraduate Kostia whose self-revelation the *Diary* purports to be, has, it seems, reincarnated himself most completely in the old populist teacher N. Ozhegov. The fact that Ozhegov's letters and speeches and arguments in defense of the intelligentsia are the most eloquent and persuasive in the book and the further fact that the very name N. Ozhegov is so strangely reminiscent of the name N. Ognyev, both in sound and derivation (The first initials are the same. What is more, both Ognyev and Ozhegov are derived from the same word—*ogon,* fire.), are rather significant. And if our surmise is correct, that is, if Ozhegov really represents Ognyev, then the book would have gained in psychological consistency and artistic unity had Ognyev written the *Diary* from Ozhegov's point of view. As it is the reader is always conscious of the author's *divided loyalties,* of his *psychological dualism.* On the one hand Ognyev endeavors to speak from the point of view of the Communist Undergraduate, the supposed diarist; on the other, he cannot resist the temptation of injecting his own point of view through the doubt-ridden Ozhegov.
>
> Ognyev protrudes everywhere. No wonder the concluding, the most lyrical pages in the book are given to the old teacher. Caught between his two loyalties, Ognyev decided to give the last say to the old rather than the new. Hence the final words in the Communist boy's *Diary* are not Kostia's: "There is an outlet for my energy: Science, Socialism, Struggle," but the old teacher's *populist-nationalist* dithyrambs: "Onward, my Russia, onward! . . . "

When I frankly told Ognyev that an analysis of the formal weaknesses of his book suggested to me his psychal duality, his sincere sympathy with the new, but his deeper identification with the old; when I cited as evidence the similarity between his name and the name of the populist-nationalist teacher, as well as the fact that the final say in the book is that of the teacher, Ognyev shrugged his shoulders, laughed, a little forcedly I thought, and said: "Very ingenious, comrade, very — excellent detective work — a literary Sherlock Holmes. Unfortunately your analysis has nothing to do with the truth." The glances exchanged by Bagritsky and Golodny, however, told an entirely different story. I did not press the point.

A few nights later, in Kharkov, Ognyev, irritated to distraction by the RAPP and its leader Auerbakh, sought surcease in a few drinks. In one of his expansive and confessional moments, he turned to me morosely: "Perhaps you were not so wrong after all in what you said." But by that time his admission was superfluous.

A passage from one of Ozhegov-Ognyev's speeches flashed through my mind:

> By the inevitable course of events, these people [the intelligentsia] are placed in the Hamlet dilemma; there they are crucified on the crossroads, while life goes rushing past them, bringing new creative forces to the surface. . . . What can the crucified do? . . . We intellectuals who have followed the Revolution are all going to be crucified in the end—crucified not by the Central Government, but by the raging spring torrent of the people themselves! . . . These shipwrecked intellectuals are bound to put the question to themselves: To be or not to be? To live or not live? . . . Yes, you can live, when those around you love and trust you, and listen to your words and watch your actions, which to them are the result of an honest attitude to life and a desire to progress. But when there is no faith, no love, no trust—you inevitably ask the question: To be or not to be? and say, No. . . . We are in a prison cell, without air. . . . What are we? An amputated limb, a useless fragment, a piece of emptiness, internal émigrés—

Such was the tragedy of even the closest fellow-travelers. They wanted faith, love, trust from those around them. The proletarian and poor peasant masses, however, were still in the early stages of self-definition; they still lacked the self-confidence implicit in an ungrudging appreciation of representatives — however sincere—of an alien class. The psychological atmosphere changed with the achievements of the five-year plans, the great successes of industrialization and collectivization, the rapid growth of a young generation of communist proletarian intellectuals, and the profound sense of expanding Soviet power at home and abroad. The fellow-travelers were finally lifted and swept along by the creative surge of the Revolution. The proletariat, secure in its power, was now in better position to appreciate some of the values represented by the old intellegentsia. A rapprochement was a natural consequence of these changes. But of this in my last chapter.

Books

The Great Planner

THE COMING AMERICAN REVOLUTION, by George Soule. Macmillan. $2.50.

I WAS LUCKY enough to have visited Washington shortly before reading Mr. Soule's book. There I made the acquaintance of leading left-wing Brain Trusters —"the Felix Frankfurter boys"—Commissioner Jim Landis, Tom Corcoran of the N.R.A., Ben Cohen of the P.W.A., etc. In New York I had talked at length with Adolph Berle. They all looked somehow like Walter Lippmann twenty years ago. They wore their halos carelessly but were extremely self-conscious about their much-advertised mental equipment, about their responsibilities in running the government, about their achievements as practical politicians. Actually the achievements were nil.

Not only were these Brain Trusters not running the government but they were the veriest flywheel in the machine that others were running. At President Roosevelt's suggestion, Corcoran and Cohen wrote the original Stock Exchange Regulation Bill, but the law that was finally adopted might have been written by Richard Whitney, president of the New York Stock Exchange; it was in fact much less drastic than the draft actually submitted to Senator Fletcher's committee by Whitney. The function of Corcoran and Cohen was to do preliminary spade work and to supply liberal phrases for a program suitable to the purposes of the big business interests who dominate the Roosevelt administration. Liberal phrases are a necessity for American capitalism at a time like the present.

This does not mean that the administration always functions as a "purposeful unit." Far from it. The administration comprises right wingers and left wingers. Some of the latter doubtless like to see themselves as working toward a new social order, though they must have to use distorted lenses nowadays to look into the mirror and get any such result. President Roosevelt does not mind their vagaries. He calls them "Tom" or "Ben" or "Jim" or "Rex" and favors them with the ubiquitous Presidential smile. For they are dependent on his favor and he knows it. They are his prisoners, more completely even than he himself is the (quite willing) prisoner of the reigning financial oligarchy in this country. When any major governmental policy is in the making every old-line politician in Washington knows that the will of these precocious little nobodies will have nothing to do with its ultimate character. And with every succeeding "practical compromise" that they accept, it becomes more difficult for the little ones to deceive themselves as to their status as ambitious political whores. Most of them will go on making these "practical compromises" until they no longer regard them as compromises.

Meanwhile, those of them who have not lost all illusion concerning themselves may take heart. George Soule has written their *apologia*. I have not the slightest doubt that *The Coming American Revolution* is already a topic of the most earnest and appreciative conversation among the "Felix Frankfurter boys."

Mr. Soule begins by what at first seems a mere pretentious laying down of the platitude that revolutions are not made overnight, that violent overturns do not come until conditions are ripe for them, that "revolution is a part of evolution, and would be impossible without it." However, even in this opening discussion he indicates the special line of his emphasis. His concern is with "the minor and continued changes" and he is at pains to deprecate the influence of what he calls "the mob." Violence, he says, is usually unavoidable but is comparatively unimportant and usually takes place after the revolutionary shift of power. Soon he gives the kernel of his theoretical position in the following two recapitulatory paragraphs:

> When the people are in their most desperate and miserable condition, they are often least inclined to revolt, for then they are hopeless. They usually are ignorant of the real cause of their miseries and have no leadership or poor leadership. Only after their position is somewhat improved and they have sensed the possibility of change, do they revolt effectively against oppression and injustice. What touches off insurrection is hope, not lack of it, rising confidence, not bleak suffering.
>
> When a shift in power actually occurs, it is usually begun, not with a seizure of power by outsiders, but with reforms by insiders. These reforms are the cracks in the dam which invite the flood. They are caused, not by sudden violence, but by the irresistible pressure of events.

To support these theses he discusses the Puritan revolution in England, the American revolution of 1776, the French revolution, and the Russian revolution. In all this discussion the emphasis is placed on "the granting of reform from above" rather than on the struggles that forced these reforms. Yet the author admits elsewhere that the Duma would not have been established but for "a popular insurrection" in 1905, and that in 1917, when Miliukov and his fellow moderates saw fit to become "the inheritors of power," there was a situation in which "the soldiers in St. Petersburg and Moscow would not put down the strikes, attempt seriously to clear the streets, or defend the public buildings, but went over to the people!" He does not admit, what soon became evident to the whole Russian working-class, that "the fiery Kerensky" was pushed into the limelight to satisfy the dissatisfied masses and prevent them from developing the crisis into a proletarian revolution.

Soule's general position boils down to the following two propositions:

1. That systems are overturned not by exploited classes but by those whom the evolutionary process has already made great and powerful, and who are thus in a position to sweep away old forms that hamper their freest development.

2. That revolution proceeds "from the top down" and is given initial momentum, sometimes unconsciously, by those near the center of authority.

There are elements of truth in both propositions. Taking the first proposition first, it is true of course that no class can overturn a system until it has become powerful enough to do it. However, power must not be confused with wealth and social position. The bourgeoisie rose to power through the possession of a particular form of private property, capital, which already had given individual capitalists high standing in pre-capitalist society. To overthrow the rule of private property entirely, a different sort of power is necessary. That the German working-class, for example, propertyless and persecuted under the lash of Hitlerism, as it is, nevertheless possesses a tremendous cohesive power of its own no one in his senses will deny.

As for the second proposition, it is true that reforms instituted to preserve a social system sometimes provide impetus for attacks upon it. But if the system were not already weakened in some respect the reforms would not have been felt necessary. Moreover, the essential function of social reform is to ward off radical change, not to facilitate it. To maintain, in any basic sense, that revolution proceeds "from the top down" is to maintain a grim Chestertonian paradox, whose acceptance would tend to bolster up the authority of the old regime and to demoralize the struggle against it.

Soule's ideas are not new. They have been put forward again and again by those who distrust the working-class. However, Soule has given them clearer and more fully organized expression than anyone else in our generation. With *The Coming American Revolution* he emerges as the theoretician of all the bourgeois intellectuals who would "take the revolution away" from the working-class.

He recognizes some of the "changes under the surface" of American capitalism which render the present system increasingly unstable. But, he tells us, capitalism has survived "the crisis of the thirties" and is likely to survive subsequent crises until "the spread of collective ideas" makes itself felt. Then "it is entirely possible that political realignments will take place in this country leading to the formation of a party having some real power, and avowedly hostile to the worst practices of capitalism. "Such a party," he says, "would safeguard the rights of organized labor, seek regulatory legislation of various kinds, and try to extend public ownership. On account of the growth of the ideas of social planning, *it might even attack capitalism at more significant points than older socialist parties have done.*" (Italics mine. M. G.)

While mentioning the ultimate possibility of such a party, Soule does not dwell on it at

length. He is interested in what we are to regard as contemporary intermediate steps in the revolutionary process which is "still far from its climax." Prominent among these steps is the New Deal.

Soule is frank to say that the Roosevelt administration has proved itself an agency of capitalism against the working-class. His way of saying it is interesting, however. It is softened and modified by paragraphs like the following:

> In this happy-go-lucky manner, the President tried to keep all factions and schools of opinion contented. But in the nature of the case he could not have kept the executives of private capitalism contented if he really took from them any of their power. Since he was prepared, either in his own mind or by the organization of the social and political forces behind him, to press the issue against them, he had to surrender to them. This was called by polite names like "cooperation." He asked private industry to cooperate with the recovery effort; in this exchange it gave the very last it was compelled to give and took all it could. No doubt the President did not understand how much it was really taking. . . .

Meantime, it is suggested, the New Deal is by no means all dross, even though it does serve the capitalists. "In a broad sense, then," he says, "the New Deal gives us a foretaste of the rise to power of a new class, and this foretaste does have a distinct revolutionary tinge, just because it indicates a shift in class power."—What is this new class? "The forefront of the white-collar workers, the productive professions," who "are just beginning to assume some of the political prerogatives which their actual place in a highly organized industrial society warrants, and to which their superior competence in matters of social theory entitles them."

This then, is the class which is to prepare for the coming order from "very near the top of society." This is the class which has the power and will and "competence in matters of social theory" that the proletariat lacks! The bourgeois intellectuals, traditionally waverers, of whom George Soule himself says, "when a regime is stable and immune against overturn," they, "whose sensitive antennae feel most truly whatever is in the sursounding atmosphere, are occupied in celebrating, adorning and justifying the existing order!" The bourgeois intellectuals whose very pretensions rest upon fear of the embittered farmers and striking workers!

Soule's summing up of the New Deal is an *apologia* not only for the "Felix Frankfurter boys" but, by implication, for Roosevelt himself.

> The virtue of the New Deal will probably be seen, in the light of history, not as successful social planning, but as a step in the educational process which is necessary if the workers, the farmers and the professional and white-collar classes are ever to become sufficiently mobilized and conscious enough of a program so that they can engage in successful social planning. It has already helped to pose issues, to organize the struggle about essential problems, to sift people into groups according to their real interests.

Is it necessary to point out that a leading function of the New Deal has been to *confuse* issues, to *disorganize* the struggle about essential problems, to *prevent* the sifting of people into groups according to their real interests? Any progress that may have been made in these matters has been through disillusionment with the New Deal and the New Dealers. The New Deal itself bears the same relationship to such progress as George VI's Navigation Acts bore to the progress of the First American Revolution.

By now it will be plain there is nothing inflammatory about *The Coming American Revolution*. Soule maintains that the revolution is coming with the speed of a not too ambitious snail. The revolutionary process, as old as evolution itself, is under way, but "still far from its climax."

And the climax? Soule admits modestly that he does not know what it will be, but he hazards a guess. Here is his guess:

> Capitalism comes out of this crisis the victor, but in the long run weaker both physically and morally. Some time in the future—perhaps not for another generation or two—there is likely to occur another equally serious breakdown of capitalism. If by that time the ferment of ideas has done its work and the rising classes have attained sufficient status and confidence, the two essential ingredients of the revolutionary mixture will be present. If the incompetence of the rulers and their lack of faith in themselves has proceeded far enough, they will either call in representatives of social planning to run industry, or they will retire before a popular demand that new ideas be applied. In such a crisis the resistance that they are ordinarily able to oppose to socialist movements will be immensely weakened. . . . At such a time, probably by peaceful and possibly even by constitutional means, the control of production and exchange may easily pass to one of the more moderate movements opposed to the profit system.
>
> After that, who knows what will happen? . . . What is likely is that there will be a prolonged period of turmoil and uncertainty, that the moderates will ingloriously fail, that there will be fighting, swings to the left and reaction. . . . Eventually the outcome will be the final disappearance of the profit system.

Meantime, there is not much use in trying to strengthen the revolutionary working class movement, because revolution proceeds "from the top down." Don't worry about the revolution. Hats off to social planning!

MANUEL GOMEZ.

An Adman's Honeymoon

RED THUNDER, by Roy S. Durstine. Charles Scribner's Sons. $2.

Although it is nowhere announced as such, this is the chronicle of a honeymoon. The author, adman and a partner of Bruce Barton, changed wives last year and set out upon a tour of Soviet Russia, Germany, and Austria, with his new bride—a radio singer known to the audiences of the Durstine directed advertising programs.

The honeymoon itinerary proved ill-chosen. The vexations, indignities, and irritations experienced in Soviet Russia seem to have been fairly continuous! The Durstines quite frankly do not approve of Soviet Russia. Indeed, one deduces from the very first page that they loathe and detest every inch of its land, its people, and its sinister flag, "the color of dried blood," — also the Soviet officials, "dressed like Union Square merchants of small calibre."

Marching up to the desk of Moscow's National Hotel they found an insolently disdainful clerk, who, we are told, snapped to fawning attention when impressive letters of introduction were produced. "You see, I didn't know you were so important," he apologized. The food was "anathema." "There isn't a lemon in Russia." The waiters are "worried old men whose hands are trembling as they put down the plates" (presumably in terror of the Ogpu). On the streets they encountered the wretched figures of beggars. "One observer counted all the dogs he saw in Moscow for a week. There were three. 'The rest have been eaten,' said a Russian franker than most. 'We tried cats too, but they gave us tummy aches, so we gave them up.'"

The Durstines went everywhere, looked at and sniffed at everything as only two smug little petty bourgeois *can* sniff. They were shocked (why *they* should have been is a mystery) at what they saw at the marriage bureau, "where the bonds are tied," "with speed and precision are torn asunder"—where facts and statistics of sexual diseases, the prenatal care of mothers, and the care and feeding of babies are indelicately "explained in every detail on wall charts."

At a day nursery—which "reeks of disinfectant"—they found "boys and girls all mixed up." And, most touching of all, "one dark baby was crying as if her heart would break," while two calloused women attendants looked on and found it only "very amusing." But the old radio "Mammy" spirit sprang to the rescue: instantly "a pair of *American* arms swept her up. An *American* breast comforted her. An AMERICAN voice whispered to her. The sobbing lessened and ceased. It wasn't very amusing." And,

LOUIS ADAMIC

. . . has written the tremendous record of social violence in America—and, by the addition of more than fifty pages, has brought up-to-date his full, dramatic history of the bloody strife which has marked the increasingly serious struggle between labor and capital in the mills and mines, on the railroads, on the docks and across the plains. Sinclair Lewis writes: "That this should not have a huge sale is a disgrace to the entire country."

DYNAMITE

The story of class violence in America, 1826-1934, first published in 1931 and now reissued, completely revised to date, at the popular price of $2 (Formerly $3.50).

THE VIKING PRESS : NEW YORK

if the reader is not too nauseated to continue, there is much more—all equally gagging.

In the Red Square, during the November 7 demonstration, there "occurs something which is an odd commentary on the system of Communism. A small contingent of men in white aprons with shovels and brooms rushes into the square. There were street-cleaners, even in a country of comrades." Apparently the Durstines had expected Communists to clean streets by some system of necromancy.

But in Nazi Germany the honeymooners breathed easier. Here, everything was spick and span, things clicked, especially the heels of the smart brown-shirted attendants. Even the aeroplanes flew better, and landed *gently*—not with "a jounce that shook the spine" as in barbarous Russia. Everywhere were "smart little German officials"—"people doing their jobs with zest, whatever the hour and whatever the job." "Young Germany" was "businesslike, courteous, intelligent." "It was a people hopeful, and going somewhere."

Mr. Durstine fairly panted with admiration as he watched Minister of Propaganda and Enlightenment Goebbels arriving at the Adlon Hotel to lunch with the Foreign Press. "Through the door limped the little Minister. His face seemed drawn, harassed . . . even sinister. All at once he saw the Nazi salute from the assembled staff. Up went his right arm. His face lighted with a happy, triumphant smile. You forgot his crippled foot, his rhythmic limp. His charm filled the place, radiated to every corner."

In Austria, the bridegroom met Dollfuss, whom he also fervently admires—and whom he closely resembled in stature and contour. But it is the Hitlerites who fire his imagination most. And he is saddened by the bad press they have received throughout the world. As he quaintly puts it, "Wouldn't it be nice if the news were just news instead of news interpreted to further somebody's selfish ends?"—which is as funny a line as you will find in this very poisonous little Fascist book.

The author deserves a place near the head of his class—right beside Carvath Wells and Isaac Don Levine.

FRANK THOMPSON.

Much-Praised Poems

THE CROWS, by David McCord. Charles Scribner's Sons. $2.50.

This, David McCord's second volume of verse (his *Floodgate* made no stir in 1927) is, we are told, the work of a man "who might well be called a representative American." If the blurbwriter had taken the trouble to indicate which cross-section of American citizenry McCord represents, he might have made this otherwise absurd statement more illuminating. But still the reader would be left to explain how the following lines flow from the lips of a representative American 37 years old and entitled to be considered conscious of his time and place in 1934:

> This bit of marmalade
> which I've not ate,
> this almost square of toast,
> they'll save me yet.
> Until I spread the one
> upon the other,
> brother,
> until I shade
> the edges carefully with my butter blade,
> I am as safe as Ptolemy from time. [etc.]

Or

> Come back, come back, O sweet immortal hyla!

McCord's own characterization of his verse comes nearer the truth: "honest words That a poet had For a lass or lad Or a flight of birds." After reading a dozen of his poems one is reminded of the quantity of verse popular in England ten years ago, in which citypent poets celebrated the joys of weekending in the country. McCord, who has been citypent doing editorial work in New England for eleven years, is similarly revisited by memories of picturesque or cherished episodes and objects which he encountered while living close to nature in Canada, Oregon, and New England. He tries to communicate his significant experiences to the reader, but on the whole he does not succeed. Frequently his failure comes from overstraining for effect (as in *The Boat in the Bottle, The Tramp,* the slightly absurd *8:15).* Too often he *tells* the reader that such and such was marvelous instead of proving it; for example, in the poem *Belle Isle* McCord advises us that "we watched a great show" but does not recreate this experience for the reader.

A poet whose chief concern is nature usually finds himself delving into the relations between man and cosmic forces. We find McCord's conclusions in such fragments as:

> syllables we stole
> Of the clear morning and the rippling noon,
> Returned to us more perfect and more whole
> In the high gardens of the soaring moon,
> Wherein we walk and know ourselves to be
> The gods whom, waking, we shall never see,

And men, who are "the pawns" of the heart:

> Still look upon the sweet illumined skies
> And ask for wonder for the wonder's sake. . . .

One of his characters, à propos of "beebread":

> As if the bees went after more than clover
> And brought us home free particles of God.

Finally, his philosophical admonition:

> Surrender in gentle rest:
> This of all life is best.
> The crow against his hill
> Cries the sweet world be still;
> Over the field a bird flies to her nest.

It would be gratuitous to refute the premises of this philosophic program for the benefit of NEW MASSES readers, or to stress McCord's unawareness of or disinterest in the America he is alleged to represent. By this time the reader understands that if McCord has anything to offer it is in flashes of psychological perception and of poetic insight. These are unfortunately rare—a half-dozen lines at best. Even in the chiefly descriptive poems one misses the timbre of McCord's own voice. Frost echoes up and down the pages and occasionally the hand of Ridgely Torrence is seen pruning down lines to starkness. And once in a while we retaste the flavor of Thoreau's more intolerable figures of speech (the beehive: "a company whose stocks were liquid gold.")

This book was gushingly hailed in The Saturday Review of Literature, etc.

STANLEY BURNSHAW.

Brief Review

OUR DAILY BREAD, by Gosta Larsson. Vanguard Press. $2.50.

This is a pleasant, old-fashioned story about the daily life of a Swedish family. The father is a lacemaker, who watches with fear the introduction of machinery into his shop, and the mother not only raises five or six children but also works as a charwoman evenings. In the latter half of the book we get a description of the Swedish General Strike of 1909, but it is the family scenes that are emphasized, and are most moving: the pay day, for instance, when the father brings home a piece of pastry for each child; the emotions of the mother as she carries the family clock to the pawnshop; the visits of the two old friends bringing pennies to the children. On the whole, however, the book lacks vigor. Its resemblance to *Little Women* becomes almost fatal. The characters are, after all, hardly more than sympathetic shadows, and of the strike we are given only the externals—speeches and poverty. This is the first volume of a trilogy, but we can expect little more from the remaining volumes. Rather obviously, we are going to get more and more of Erland, the twelve-year-old poet of the family, and less and less of the struggle for bread. Though the author is honest, proletarian, and able, he will have to sharpen both his ideas and his technique.

ONE HAPPY JEW, by Nat J. Ferber. Farrar and Rinehart. $2.

A frivolous treatment of a serious subject, assimilation among the Jews. Mayer Marmelstein, having taught his children only too well that the lot of the Jew is hard, observes with increasing dismay the courses they take. Two, Armand and Marcel de Belvedere, become French and Episcopalian. Justin Marmaduke Gooderson becomes English. Yusef ben Mameluke goes to Mohammed. Only Pincus, the East Side teacher, retains his Jewish identity. Mr. Ferber rings in these changes with ingenuity and even plausibility, but his thesis—that the happy Jew is the one that has the courage to remain a Jew—is hardly an adequate solution of the Jewish problem. The book is amusing and extremely readable, but we are still waiting for a novel, or even an expository work, that will treat the Jewish problem as it should be treated: as a problem fundamentally no different from that of the Negro under modern capitalism. Any book that would link up adequately the peculiar customs and psychology of the Jews

with the ancient, medieval, and modern economic conditionings that gave them birth (the Ghetto is an instance that immediately comes to mind) would be definitive. "Racial narcissicism" and other half-baked theories neither explain conditions nor point to the cure.

THE ELDER HENRY JAMES, by Austin Warren. The Macmillan Company. $2.50.

When the grandfather of William and Henry James amassed his fortune, he started something. Neither the elder nor the younger Henry James could have been what he was without an inherited income. The elder Henry James has been largely forgotten, not only because his face has been eclipsed by that of his two sons, but also because his books are so profoundly unreadable and so completely unimportant to a later generation. He was, however, a vigorous if eccentric thinker, with a mild dash of radicalism. Professor Warren has written a competent academic account of the man and his ideas, and his book throws some, though not very much, light on the intellectual currents of the pre-Civil War period. The chapter on Fourier—who, with Swedenborg, greatly influenced the elder James — suggests how much might be done with the nineteenth century Utopian socialists and their American influence.

"American" Operas

ASHLEY PETTIS

OUR ears no longer being filled with detonations from the unprecedented ballyhoo which accompanied, the presentation of three new "American" operas in one season, we can now judge these much-discussed works in clearer perspective.

The three native operas which received world premieres are: *Merry Mount,* music by Howard Hanson, libretto by Richard Stokes, produced by the Metropolitan Opera Co.; *Helen Retires,* music by George Antheil, book by John Erskine, produced by the Juilliard School of Music; and *Four Saints in Three Acts,* music by Virgil Thompson to "words" by Gertrude Stein, sponsored by Harry Moses, producer of *Grand Hotel,* etc.

The history of American opera shows an imposing list of works (presented by the Metropolitan and Chicago Opera Companies, as well as elsewhere) only a small percentage of which have dealt with native subjects. Aside from poetic, idealistic effusions on tales derived from Indian folk-lore, or an adaptation of Hawthorne's *Scarlet Letter,* the vast majority of our operas have ignored the significant American background, and, above all, the tremendously expanding drama of contemporary life. They have followed the hackneyed operatic tradition, dealing with far-removed, fanciful subjects; attempting to supply the glamor of illusion to unreality. They have dealt with fairy tales, ancient non-American folk-lore, poetic, fantastic twaddle on this, that and the other; with no less a personage than Cleopatra and even the love affairs of a general in Charlemagne's army! The subject of the Negro race in America, replete with genuine vitality and vast dramatic potentialities, has been ignored. Eugene O'Neill's stage success *Emperor Jones,* with sound effects by Louis Gruenberg, can scarcely be said to have touched upon this subject, since O'Neill, in spite of his undeniable gifts, sees dramatic possibilities only in the exploitation of those characteristics which have been developed by the white man's oppression of the Negro.

The American librettists have, in the main, by choice and treatment of subjects, continued that most pernicious of European operatic customs of depicting characters either dwelling upon Olympian heights, or, at least, in the realms of titled aristocracy; or in folk-lore sufficiently removed from the consciousness and experience of the auditor to lend the glamor of enchantment and illusion. An appeal had to be made to the vanity of the patrons of the opera, to portray for their delectation characters equal or superior in social position to themselves. If an Indian girl, she must at least have been a "princess"! The "illusion" of opera must be preserved; the "diamond horseshoe" flattered!

Because of the fundamental lack of vitality in subject, as well as in literary and musical treatment, most of our native operas have justly disappeared from company repertoires, and none has traveled beyond our shores.

In view of the weaknesses which have largely nullified the value of our native opera, it may be worth while to consider our recent operatic output, and to determine to what extent these works are of value and vitality.

Our Not-So-Puritan Fathers

The story of *Merry Mount* was suggested to Stokes by Hawthorne's *The May Pole of Merry Mount.* However the story is not confined to the scope of Hawthorne's tale, but expands it. Stokes, being acutely aware of certain characteristics and contradictions peculiar to American life, has endeavored to trace these to their original source.

Briefly the story is as follows: A scene in a Puritan village on a Sabbath morning, in the year 1625. Tinker, the sentinel, stands guard on the roof of the church. Desire Annabel, a sinner, and her partner in misdoing, the Shaker, Jonathan Banks, are in stocks and pillory, near a whipping post. An Indian Samoset, with a squaw at his heels, looks on. From inside the church comes the invocation:

> Be as a lion, dread Jehovah,
> And tear the flesh of unbelievers;
> Tread down the necks of froward men,
> And break the teeth of the ungodly.

Wrestling Bradford, the pastor, is heard imploring Heaven's deliverance from "plots of hell and witcheries of Satan." Bradford is saluted as a "sweet young saint," "a princely preacher," "a holy painful shepherd," "a candlestick o' the gospel." He warns his flock Satan is launching plots against their settle-

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ment. He turns upon the erring Annabel, who asks pardon for her sins; but Jonathan Banks curses the Puritans and their Bible and is beaten and driven from the scene.

To Praise-God Tewke, Father Elder of the Church and father of the maiden Plentiful, Bradford now confesses that he is in evil case, tormented by visions of the Hellish Rendezvous and of the fair Astoreth, "daughter of the horned moon," whose dream kisses are "dulcet agony." He cries out to be saved, to which the practical Tewke rejoins, "My son, thou'rt overripe for marriage," and suggests a union between his daughter and Bradford. Plentiful is summoned. Bradford proposes that they wed this very day. When the girl, alarmed by his vehemence, draws back, he savagely kisses her, then—: "Away. Thou hast no drug to medicine my wound."

Puritan children play. Bradford scolds them for their levity and leaves with Plentiful. Jack Prence, a clown who has just landed from a ship with a company of Cavaliers, begins to teach the children the old game of barley-break. But Myles Brodrib, discovering Prence and the purpose of his company—to set up "an Empire of Jollity, with song and pastime, revel and Maypole dance"—has the clown tied to the whipping post and thrashed. In response to the yells of the fool, Lady Marigold Sandys and Bradford enter the scene from opposite directions. She strikes the preacher on the head with her riding crop. His reaction is masochistic. He believes, to his vast agitation, that Lady Marigold, for whom, on sight, he has conceived a violent passion, is like the Astoreth of his dreams. Marigold calls to her aid her lover, Sir Gower Lackland, her uncle, Thomas Morton, and the Anglician priest, Scrooby. Faint-not Tinker sounds the alarm for the Puritans. Weapons are drawn, but strife is halted by Tewke, and a truce is agreed upon until the morrow. But when Bradford discovers that Marigold and Gower are to be married, he counsels an immediate attack upon the newcomers, in spite of the truce. "Honor with infidels kept is God's dishonor."

Act 2 is the episode of the dancing and singing about the maypole, and the christening of Merry Mount. Scrooby appears to unite Gower and Lady Marigold in marriage. At this moment armed Puritans led by Bradford intervene. The Cavaliers are taken by surprise and the maypole is demolished.

Act 3 opens in another part of the wood. Marigold is dragged before Bradford by two Puritans. Bradford, wrestling for her soul, makes overtures of love, which she repulses. Gower rushes in. He is killed by a Puritan pike-thrust. He dies in the arms of Marigold. She cries out to quickly join her lover on the other side of life. Tewke accuses Bradford of treachery. Bradford, praying for pardon, falls asleep, and dreams his evil dream.

It is the scene of the Hellish Rendezvous. There, in the valley of Tophet, assemble all the hosts of the underworld. To the tortured imagination of the sleeper, Gower appears in the guise of Lucifer, asking Bradford to sign the Book. Though tempted by the hellish concubines, he refuses, but now comes Astoreth, who is none other than a distorted vision of Marigold. For her proffered love Bradford signs away his soul, curses New England and consigns it to destruction. Branded on the forehead with Satan's brand, he is left alone with Astoreth. This scene closes with a duet which is textually a paraphrase of lines from the Song of Solomon.

Act 4. The curse of Bradford's dream is working. The Indian Samoset, insulted and struck by a Puritan, is attacking the village with fire, tomahawk and scalping-knife. A tomahawk crashes the head of Love Brewster, and Samoset is shot as Bradford appears with Plentiful Tewke. Again he is asked to pray for his flock. He answers by confessing the crime of his dreams. Lady Marigold wanders in, distracted, denouncing the murderers of her lover. The Puritans are about to stone the pair to death, when suddenly, to their horror, Bradford reveals on his forehead Satan's brand. He seizes the now unconscious Marigold, and leaps with her into flames that are devouring the church. As the curtain falls, the Puritans kneel in terror and supplication, and chant the Twenty-third Psalm.

Stokes has made a profound study of the authentic terminology of the period, and certain parts of the drama are portrayed with admirably sustained realism. It may be held that Wrestling Bradford, the parson (Lawrence Tibbett), is not truly representative of our not-so-Puritan fathers, and that he is exceptional and pathological. Yet, this character is an exposure of middle class hypocrisy and a thousand-and-one repercussions which have echoed in our socio-political life. Especially significant is the analogy which one must deduce from the interrelation of sexual and so-called religious frenzies. The transgressions of the Puritans are not attributable to the popular notion of "the swing of the pendulum." As has been frequently pointed out, it is a very short step from the fanatical adoration of "heavenly" things to matters "worldly" and "sinful."

Unfortunately, Stokes has weakened the convincing realism of his drama by the injection of melodrama. There are such familiar devices as a dream vision (vide: the Collier-du Maurier-Deems Taylor *Peter Ibbetson),* and a pact with Satan, which is as old as Mephistopheles himself. The Maypole scene is unduly prolonged, and Hanson has written for it particularly undistinguished, though authentic, Morris dance music.

In many instances the music enhances the libretto. The strongest moments are in the mass scenes, in which the choral writing is masterly and effective. The *a capalla* music in the first act is a stylistic achievement in which not a "sinful" chord sullies the tight-lipped rigor of Puritan religious feeling; not even a passing dominant 7th! Olin Downes, in the New York Times, spoke of Hanson's "Debussyisms," particularly his use of "chords of the 9th." It is news to us that chords of the 9th are the peculiar property and attribute of Debussy! It is a favorite device of critics to "discover" in new compositions music that is "derivative," not realizing that the history of music largely nullifies the value of such criticism. It may be of interest to know that much of this music is "derivative"; from previous works of Hanson, notably his organ concerto.

Hanson makes effective use of the opportunities for contrast in the Puritan and Royalist characteristics, with which the drama is replete. Yet, in the end, the sensuous moments pall. They become *"linkéd* sweetness long drawn out"—much too long. Some of the climaxes seem mechanically built up through the use of too obvious sequences. Moments which should be convincingly cumulative merely sound pompous, and somewhat banal. Arias are interpolated with too great frequency, particularly in the role of Lady

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Marigold, resulting in an interruption of the story and the flow of action. But Hanson brings a ripe technique, a sure hand, a knowledge of instrumentation, sincerity of feeling and an ability to evoke the inherent quality of extremely opposed styles, in which field he has had excellent preparation, notably in his symphonic poem, *Pan and the Priest.* He is a veritable Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde of musical composition!

The performance of *Merry Mount* was lavishly staged, sometimes with the rococo effect of a movie palace show, rather than the realistic demands of the drama. At least one auditor wondered why John Charles Thomas, who created the role of Wrestling Bradford in the Ann Arbor, Mich., concert performance of last year, was not chosen for this part in New York. Was this the result of petty politics? or has Lawrence Tibbett become such a matinée idol that his services, as one "overripe for marriage," were indispensable to the success of the opera from the point of view of the box office? All the roles were well portrayed, the Amazonian Madame Ljunberg being infinitely more effective than in Salomé. The outstanding feature of the production, however, was the singing of the chorus.

Gospel According to (St.) John (Erskine)

The life of Helen of Troy seems to bear an irresistible attraction for John Erskine, formerly head of the English department of Columbia University, head of the Juilliard School of Music, well-known author of several best sellers, bearer of many degrees, poet, pianist, favorite after-dinner speaker, raconteur, society man, Pooh Bah of the American social-intelligentsia, etc., etc.

As head of the Juilliard School of Music, he occupies a "leading" position in American musical life, inasmuch as this school is entrusted with an endowment of some $18-$20 million for the furtherance of music in America. What could be more understandable, then, than that Erskine, having control of these funds, should use some of the money for the expensive presentation of a "real American opera," of which he is the distinguished librettist, even though he might possibly gain more in the process than the aforementioned "American music?"

The title of *Helen Retires,* the opera in question, for which George Antheil furnished the music, is somewhat misleading. The retirement is only temporary, as will be seen by the story, and we may expect future revivals of tales concerning Helen, perhaps even best-sellers!

In this story it seems that Erskine has endeavored to depict his idea of the "eternal feminine," *i. e.,* womankind, unsatisfied with the inadequacy of her various love affairs, on the eternal quest for new thrills, a new, great love—even "one new word of love!"

After Troy, Helen and Menelaus return to Sparta. "There, in the course of time, he died of old age, greatly exasperated with her imperturbable beauty, which refused to be

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embarrassed and which was undamaged by time." Whereupon, in search of Achilles, who seems to be the most eligible candidate for new attentions, Helen sets out for the Island of the Blest, where Achilles resides as a ghost, apart from sunlight and women—"content to be dead, thankful that in the Greek heaven men and women are segregated." Helen arrives. The ghosts know they ought not to look at her beauty, but "one by one they succumb," Achilles last of all. "She vamps him successfully. He comes suddenly to life, and carries her off to a more secluded spot. Their happiness is all that Helen hoped for. They spend eternity in a prolonged duet."

An old fisherman, with a group of young men, interrupts the beatitude of the lovers. The fisherman is angry. He is on the way home after long toil in the deep, and his boat, for no good reason, has grounded on the Island of Blest, and can't be got off. He suspects magic. Helen explains that the magic is the attractive aspect of their immortal love. The old fisherman is not impressed. He wishes to get home to his wife. Helen wants to know if he loves his wife so much. The old fellow laughs. It's fifty years or so, he says, since he was in love, but she's his wife, and he's used to her. In pity, Helen lets him go, and he departs, dragging after him one particularly handsome and reluctant young fisherman, who has been watching Helen. Helen becomes thoughtful. She asks Achilles if their love could possibly be happier. If not, they might as well be the first two who ever stopped in time. Against his will she sends him back to be a ghost, and she prepares for death, having, as she thinks, exhausted the possibilities of a good life. But the young fisherman returns. He refused to go home with the others. Helen now reconsiders her intention to retire.

The story is told in Erskine's most elegantly risqué style. The most exquisite sensibilities are in no danger of being outraged, even though one could from time to time hear politely suppressed giggles from the begowned, bejewelled audience, which listened to the scented *double-entendres* of the tale with slight blushes of pleasure. This was in the favorite pink-tea style to which they were accustomed; they felt themselves at home. This stuff is not decadent—we should not elevate it by such a word: the plain word *rotten* comes much nearer the truth.

The music of George Antheil to *Helen Retires* seems as strange a hodge-podge of styles as was ever utilized by a composer. This playboy of American music proves in the course of the opera that he can express gayety in a Viennese style (brought up to date, of course, with the interpolation of dissonances here and there), write jazz with equal aplomb, even a fugue—the kind of fugue in which the musically unlearned nudges his neighbor at each recurrence of the principal subject. The program notes by Albert Stoessel, who conducted with all the vigor he might have brought to Bach's *B minor Mass,* assert: "A 'salty' quality characterizes the Old Fisherman's Song." Upon reading this I was prepared for a real sea chanty, but to my astonishment I had not a whiff of salt water, but a gust from Tin Pan Alley. Antheil again demonstrates the essentially inorganic quality of his writing plus a dangerous eclecticism. If Hanson is a Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde in *Merry Mount,* Antheil is Proteus—with an amazing lack of relevancy—is *Helen Retires.*

The production was obviously lavish and expensive (under the circumstances, why not?), with some curiously ineffective attempts at a novel treatment of the function of the chorus, which merely resulted in producing static, in spite of the adequacy of the singing. With the exception of a virile bit of dancing by Arthur Mahoney as the Young Fisherman, the performance was undistinguished and amateurish.

Gertrude Pulls a Fast One

Four Saints in Three Acts (some thirty-odd saints), being in Gertrude's well-known Steinese, spare one the labor of recording the

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story—there being none! There are merely remarks — sometimes at remarkable length— but since she has said elsewhere "remarks are not literature," we are spared the trouble of appraising the book of the opera from a literary standpoint.

In the case of this opera one may plunge at once into consideration of the effect of the whole — music and words. It must be admitted that the music vastly enhances the words; and not merely for reasons of rhythm. Sentences which may be read and re-read without perception of their intrinsic meaning (if any) suddenly leap into life and lucidity upon being wedded to music. This sounds like a species of alchemy—but it is nevertheless a fact.

When the opera was presented in New York many attempts were made to explain the reason for using Negroes in the cast. The generally accepted explanation was that these singers were more natural than available white singers and actors, and that they could portray the roles and sing the words, which to most seemed mere gibberish, without being self-conscious.

In the preliminary press release of the opera is a paragraph which, to me at least, sheds new light upon this much discussed point. I quote: "Having been assured by various dignitaries of the Catholic Church that there was nothing that could offend the devout in the opera, it was decided not to have the Saints played in whiteface." There seems to be a subtly concealed meaning in this statement. Saints (and angels) must be white (probably as snow) and there is no relevance in having black faces in such parts. These are not bona fide saints—hence no blasphemy! So Gertrude, by this palliative gesture to the Catholic Church, was enabled to have her opera produced, with the portrayal of saints in the authentic ritual of the church, with authentic church music, without incurring ecclesiastical anathema. With solemn, religious mien, Gertrude was thus enabled to put one over on the church; for throughout the opera I could sense nothing but satire—all the more effective because she and her producers protest (too much) that there is no underlying meaning, disclaiming "all recondite interpretations of her work."

This satirical quality of the opera is vastly enhanced and penetrated by the musical setting. Foibles and every-day commonplaces of human beings are sung in eminently appropriate music, with such a complete lack of sophistication, with no tongue-in-cheek quality, that one is conscious of the ludicrousness of all sorts of habits, remarks, and trivial actions of our existence, without having the philosophical depths stirred at any time. Perhaps this quality is more apparent in retrospect. However the fact remains that these saints, with beatific, black faces, sing and perform the commonplaces of every-day existence, set to appropriate music, so that one sits apart and laughs at himself first and his fellowmen afterward. A Gilbert and Sullivan moment is utterly authentic, and at the same time ludicrous. The authentic ritual, musically enhanced, of the Catholic Church, seems as though it has always been absurd. Suddenly in the midst of all this appears a Spanish fandango, and one wonders why he ever listened to such a thing. Before one has had time to reflect upon this, comes: "If by pushing an electric button, one could kill 5,000 Chinamen, would one do it?" It is, perhaps, the shadow of Japanese imperialism. The trite conventionalities of every-day life; "How are you today?" "Very well —thank you. How are you?" set to revealing music, have a new emptiness. So it goes. And the ridiculously euphonious "Pigeons on the grass, alas," which, as in retrospect I contemplate the whole extraordinary production, with its complete lack of sense—words, words, words—resounds in my mind as:

Satire on the Mass, alas,
Satire on the Mass, alas,
On the Catholic Mass, alas

* * * * *

If it is not satire; what is it?

However, it is not yet time to despair of our native American operatic productions, for are we not promised a new American opera at the Metropolitan next season, namely, to wit: *The Eunuch; In the Pasha's Garden!* What could be more American than this, more vital, more pertinent, more relevant to the tremendous drama of modern life, to the reality which is sweeping away all the bunk and deception of the past?

Current Films

Paris Interlude (Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer): Vincent Lopez was the main attraction at the Capitol, but Major Bowes threw in Metro's version of S. J. Perelman's bad play *Americans All* about American newspaper men and would-be writers who get drunk and love at the American Bar in Montparnasse. It's oh so sophisticated and dull as hell.

Cockeyed Cavaliers (R.K.O.): An abortive attempt at humor and satire on *Henry VIII* and *Queen Christina.* All the gag men on the Radio lot will never make the Marx Bros. out of Wheeler and Woolsey.

She Learned About Sailors (Fox): More propaganda for the Navy, with Alice Fay and Lew Ayres. One of the films awarded the "Seal of Purity" by the Production Code Administration of Will Hays' organization.

Wild Gold (Fox): The Mayfair Theatre is the host to a usual Fox Western about a modern gold rush. It has Romance, Vice, Gambling, Shooting, Drinking, Murder, and a Jewish clown named J. Lorrilard Pushkin played by Joe Green.

Cash (London Film Productions): The English subsidiary of United Artists officially recognizes the existence of the depression. A "modern comedy drama" which succeeds in being neither modern, comedy, nor drama, but is "slightly" anti-semitic and (upper) class-conscious. I. L.

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Between Ourselves

THE Labor Sports Union writes to us: "We have been informed that some of the writers connected with THE NEW MASSES are interested in sports and could be induced to write sport sketches for the New Sport and Play." This publication, official organ of the Labor Sports Union, is edited by Mac Gordon and is located at 114 West 14th Street, New York City.

An international competition is announced by the Workers' Music League (the United States section of the International Music Bureau) for "the best choral works for three or more voices. Compositions must be of high artistic quality and must have a mass character, that is, adaptable for use by workers' choruses as well as suitable for worker audiences."

Three prizes are offered: first prize, 1,500 rubles, and two second prizes of 750 rubles each. For foreign composers: first prize, three weeks' stay in the U.S.S.R.; second and third prizes, ten days' stay in the U.S.S.R. The competition closes on October 11, 1934. Full details may be secured from the Workers' Music League, 5 East 19th Street, New York.

Another international competition is announced—by the International Union of the Revolutionary Theater, for the "best play, skit or scenario for the professional and amateur children's theater." Themes may be taken "from the life of the workers' children in the U.S.S.R. and in the capitalist countries."

Awarded in honor of Felix Kohn, "for his heroic struggle in the first ranks of the revolutionary proletariat and on the front of art within 50 years," this competition is announced as a permanent, annual award. Prizes—for foreign authors: a first prize consisting of a free trip to, and a three weeks' stay in, the U.S.S.R.; second prize: free trip and ten days' stay. The contest closes January 1, 1935. Details of the competition will be published in this column next week.

A booklet has just been issued, *How to Sell the Daily Worker,* which should prove of considerable interest and help to all who wish to aid the Daily Worker in its present circulation drive. Single copies may be purchased for 2 cents each from the Circulation Department, 50 East 13th Street, New York City.

What Has the Great War Taught Me? published on page 15 in this issue, was written by Theodore Dreiser in answer to a request from Izvestia for its special number issued on the twentieth anniversary of the World War.

Meridel Le Sueur, whose report of the Minneapolis strike we publish this week, lives in St. Paul. She has contributed short stories to the American Mercury, Scribners, etc.

The cover design for this issue was drawn by B. Limbach.

The cartoon accompanying Albert Maltz's *Cattle in the Gravel Pits* (THE NEW MASSES, July 24, page 15) appeared without any signature. The artist, James Guy, is a member of the New York John Reed Club.

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