APRIL 2, 1935 10c

new Masses

48-Page Quarterly Issue

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By PABLO DE LA TORRIENTE-BRAU

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New Masses

April 2, 1935

WITHIN twenty-four hours, the House of Representatives at Washington voted overwhelmingly in favor of the soldiers' bonus, and the United States Senate, with an equally decisive vote, passed the administration's Work Relief Bill. The time element is significant. For weeks the Senate has been wrangling about the works bill, a fairly good-sized portion of that body favoring a provision for the payment of prevailing wages under the works program of the bill. The President, however, insisted on being granted discretionary power in the matter of wage scales, and these were in no case to be above $50 a month. Meantime, the House was debating the soldiers' bonus. On March 22, by a vote of 318 to 90, the House passed the Patman version of the bill which provides for the immediate payment of approximately $2,000,000,000 adjusted compensation, the funds to be raised by an issue of paper money—greenbacks. Then the Senate in twenty-four hours stopped squabbling and passed the Work Relief Bill. The provision for the printing of greenbacks threw a scare into the Senate chamber. This is shown by the fact that the Senate bill carries an inflationary provision for the expansion of the currency by something like a billion dollars through further remonetization of silver.

GOOD GROWING WEATHER — *Russell T. Limbach*

THE politicians in Washington could have devised no surer way of defeating the proposal to pay now the full amount of the adjusted compensation to our ex-soldiers than to couple it with this inflationary provision. Not only does this make it almost certain to fail in the Senate, but if it passes, the President will veto it. The hour for outright inflation is not yet. The government refinancing program must be completed first. In addition, the very purpose of the bill, to supply relief to a certain section of the unemployed and impoverished workers, the ex-servicemen, is defeated by this move toward outright inflation. Inflation will throw the burden of these payments right back upon the workers themselves through its effect on the price of consumers' commodities. Inflation is a form of sales tax without known limits. The 3,500,000 ex-soldiers are entitled to this meager compensation for the wages they lost while the captains of industry at home were doubling and trebling their fortunes. But the money should come not from a tax on the mass of the workers either direct or through inflation of the currency, but through taxation on the swollen incomes of the war profiteers. We know who these are. Only recently a Senate committee permitted us a peep at the list. While the workers and the sons of workers were risking their lives for the sake of "making the world safe for democracy" at $1 and $1.25 per diem, steel manufacturers and shipbuilders and munition makers were piling up earnings of 100 percent and more on their capital. What a mockery, what a political trick to give the veterans their due with one hand and to take it back with the other!

BUT if the Bonus Bill as passed by the House (it still has to go to the Senate) is a cheat and a delusion, the Work Relief Bill passed by the Senate is positively vicious. We are not concerned at this moment with the inflationary provision thrown in at the last moment as a bait to the inflation bloc. We are concerned with the patent fact that this bill provides for the means of at-

GOOD GROWING WEATHER

Russell T. Limbach

GOOD GROWING WEATHER

Russell T. Limbach

tacking the living standards of the American workers on the widest possible front yet attempted by the administration. It segregates all the employables from among those now on direct or work relief and compels them to sell their labor at not more than $50 a month. And it throws the remaining millions now on relief to the mercy of the states and localities. Under the first provision, this new low practically sets $50 a month as the new prevailing wage for American labor. It is obvious to any one who will reflect but a moment that private industry will not need to pay very much more than $50 a month to secure all the labor it will need. The entire wage structure which American workers have so slowly and through so many struggles built up in many generations will crumble and sink to these low levels. As regards the other millions of unemployed and "unemployables," of the present number on relief, the federal government will turn over something like 50 percent to the states and localities with funds equal to about 28 percent of the present relief cost. It will mean a countrywide pauperism hitherto known only in the most backward Southern states. No words are strong enough to condemn this piece of pre-Victorian poor-law legislation. Every effort must be directed to defeat it, and every effort must be redoubled to force the enactment of legislation that would safeguard the living standards of the working masses. Such legislation is provided in the Workers' Unemployment and Social Insurance Bill H.R. 2827, as Dr. Joseph Gillman proves elsewhere in this issue.

ON THE heels of the scandal about the big shots of the Relief Bureau handing salary raises to their favorites —Commissioner Hodson announced they would cost nothing because they came from the pay of discharged clerks —the Mayor's Committee on Unemployment Relief brings in a devastating report. One million wage-earners in New York City alone, totaling with their dependents 2,664,000, or 37-percent of the population, are unemployed. Only about one in every three of this number receives any relief and hundreds of thousands of new relief applications from families who have weathered the crisis thus far, may be expected to pile up this spring. The committee also furnishes the news that average family relief has dropped from $51.36 per month in 1932 to $42.15 in 1935. (In Harlem, of course, it has never been more than $31.) These figures, based on studies made by the Russell Sage Foundation, appear almost on the same day that the Senate passes Roosevelt's pauperizing Works Bill, which stops all allotments of federal relief aid to cities and levels off wages at $50 a month! Meantime prices have jumped from 20 to 50 percent on some commodities. LaGuardia meets the situation by saying "curtail New York relief," and the President goes on a fishing trip.

SO MUCH for the quantitative factor in the growth of relief rolls. Another aspect which bothers New Dealers even more is the fact that an increasing percentage of the relief applications this year are coming from middle-class families. The relief load in the metropolitan areas shows the steepest rises in districts such as Queens and Richmond, where living is far more comfortable than in the slums, and where incomes have always been considered more stable. The increase for one year in Queens is 68 percent, in Richmond 100 percent. One-half of the jobless are at the "most employable" age of twenty to forty. The middle classes are notoriously reluctant to go to public agencies for relief, and their steady trek toward the relief bureaus indicates a spread of extreme desperation through strata of the population hitherto hailed as "the backbone of the country." These revelations have long been foreshadowed by income tax figures, and are borne out by the researches of Martha Andrews, published in THE NEW MASSES, showing the destitution of American professionals. The conclusion of the report is that "Nothing but a substantial increase in the employment of workers by either private industry or on public works can save this city from an increasing deluge of families who have been finally rendered destitute by years of enforced idleness." But with private industry still "around the corner" and public works a national run around, American living standards in the near future look like "pie in the sky." After five starvation winters the nose-dive is still going on.

THE Soviet Union still gets in Emma Goldman's hair. Years ago she joined forces with Lloyd George, Clemenceau, Wilson and the other capitalist rulers of the time to denounce the Bolshevik revolution. She is still peddling her old rag-bag of discredited fables to anybody who will pay her. In the American Mercury for April she repeats the canonized lies of Archbishop Inizer of Vienna, of Isaac Don Levine, Hearst, McFadden and Will Durant. The Workers' Republic is "based almost exclusively on government coercion, on violence." "Two million people died of starvation (1932-33)." Of all the masses in the Soviet Union in 1921 (when, at least, she was there) the condition of the "former bourgeoisie" wrung her heart the most. "Bolshevism has not abolished classes in Russia; it has merely reversed their former relationship." Can it be that Emma Goldman is fretting because the soldiers, peasants and workers are getting the sunlight that belonged to the brokers and grand dukes? The great achievements of the U.S.S.R. only irritate her. She doesn't like to think of the modernized collective farms which have abolished the degradation and ignorance of peasants. She is furious because the Soviet Republics are able to defend themselves against the mad dogs of Japan and the Reich. Emma Goldman does not state anywhere in her article that she has never been near the Soviet Union for a dozen years. She ought to be spanked for a bad old story teller and reminded by her bohemian chums on the Riviera that nobody in America ever reads her any more except her lifelong enemies, who are now her only friends and rooters.

THE victories of American labor against injunction rule, which have only come after a battle extending over years, are breaking down one by one under the anti-labor New Deal. Judges have not used their power with such irresponsibility since the early days of labor organization. The vicious injunction of Vice-Chancellor Berry against The Newark Ledger editorial strikers is a case in point. In Glen Alden, Pennsylvania, a new record has been reached. This district, known as "the world's largest coal-producing center," is raging with a war against striking miners. No quarter is given. Some weeks ago Judge Valentine, of Wilkesbarre, issued the usual injunction. But a simple injunction was not enough. Twenty-nine strike leaders have been committed to Luzerne County Prison, by "mandate" of the same judge, "unless and until they comply with [the] order of the Court" to call off the strike. The fascist fiat of Judge Valentine follows a long story of violence and terrorization by the bosses. Two

miners have been killed, Frank Petrovsky shot in cold blood by a strike-breaker who is scot free. Some porches were mysteriously blown up, and the cry of "dynamiters" echoed in the company-controlled newspapers. Scores of beatings and hundreds of arrests followed the charges of dynamiting. Talking to a strike-breaker or merely visiting his home rates $5,000 bail in the Wilkesbarre court.

A TYPICAL instance of home life in Glen Alden is that of Joseph Willishevsky. Walking out of the house one morning, he met a number of troopers. He rushed back into the house and locked the door. Nine troopers broke in, wrecked the furniture, and beat Willishevsky in front of his wife. He is in the hospital with a compound fracture, and a memento from Valentine—contempt of court. The fight in these Pennsylvania collieries is between the rank and file miners, who took the strike into their own hands, and a joint dictatorship of operators and the leaders of the United Mine Workers of America (A. F. of L.) The U.M.W. leaders openly act as strike-breakers and are allies of the fascist judge and the state storm-troopers. Union contracts have been thrown away. Miners earn one-half the union wage scale. Two-thirds of them are unemployed. But 30,000 miners in the anthracite region are ready to call a general coal strike, and fight to the last ditch.

"STRIKE!" is again heard all along the West Coast. For the past six months, longshoremen and seamen have engaged in countless local strikes to enforce the terms of the arbitration award that gave them substantially every demand they had fought for. As a result of violations of the award by the owners, the seamen on coastwise oil-tankers have struck; the crew of the trans-Pacific liner, President Jefferson, has walked off the boat in Seattle; 250 longshoremen at Crockett, California, site of the largest sugar refinery in the world, have gone on the picket line in protest against dishonest union elections which the owners attempted to foist on them. Strikers forced the refinery to close. The owners are preparing to meet the situation in the manner perfected during the San Francisco General Strike—with vigilantes and National Guard. The sheriff of Crockett has brought in armed deputies to attack the picket line, and if that is not successful, threatens to call in troops.

THE maritime unions did not survive the two-month's fight last summer without learning that unity among unions and the broadening of any struggle are the best weapons against strike-breaking. They have recently formed the Waterfront Federation, embracing most organizations working the ships and docks up and down the West Coast. At the head of the committee to organize the Federation is Harry Bridges, spokesman of the Joint Marine Strike Committee and now President of the San Francisco local of the I.L.A. If the demands of the longshoremen at Crockett, the seamen at Seattle, and the workers involved in the oil-tankers' strike are not met, the Federation threatens once more to tie up the West Coast. Already the Philadelphia local of the I.S.U. has voted support to the West Coast seamen. The strength of the maritime unions and the one weapon that will force the owners to grant demands for better hours, higher wages, and improved working conditions, is the unity of the workers.

IT IS a toss-up which is the worst danger to the West Coast labor movement — the armed vigilantes and the gangster tactics of the corporations, or the "leaders" of labor itself. The A. F. of L. officials there not only cooperate with every move toward fascism, they devise new methods to speed the day of *gleichschaltung* along. Paul Scharrenberg, secretary of the California State Federation of Labor, and Edward Vandeleur, President of the San Francisco Labor Council, are undoubtedly the most adept and tireless betrayers of the interests of labor. They can be credited with doing more to sell out the San Francisco General Strike than any other two men. It was Scharrenberg who sent the now famous wire to William Green saying he could no longer hold back the seamen from strike. Vandeleur it was who refused to fight the Criminal Syndicalism Act if the Reds were to be prosecuted under it. Now these two gentlemen take another brisk step to the right: Vandeleur has put swastika epaulettes on his son and had him come out for the organization of a "Junior Union." Children from 12 to 15 are eligible. Their daily good

New Masses

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deed will be the combatting of "radical elements" wherever they encounter them. Significantly, the weekly meetings will come off under the direction of the deputy State Labor Commissioner, and to give it the proper tone, his wife. While Vandeleur puts his son to work to carry the vigilante method into the school room, Paul Scharrenberg addresses the seamen's arbitration board in the following words: "I wish we could have a war with Japan, because then the seamen would get everything they wanted, as in the World War we had everything we wanted." War would not be unacceptable to Mr. Scharrenberg who, with the other fascist heroes, would valiantly do their bit from behind a desk.

FOLLOWING up the smashing victory of the Ohrbach strike in New York City, the office Workers' Union has extended its terrain to the sacred confines of Wall Street. Recently twenty-five employes of the New York Curb Exchange were discharged for union activities and all demands for their reinstatement have been refused by the officers of that illustrious institution. The majority of the boys discharged — sergeants, reporters and pages—have been faithful employes for five years or more and the reason given for their dismissal was on the grounds of cutting down the overhead. The transparent dishonesty of this excuse is evidenced by the fact that during the past few weeks the Exchange has taken on seven new pages. The action on the part of the Exchange directors followed immediately after the abolition of the "Scotch week" which forced all Curb Exchange workers to take one week's "vacation" without pay every eighth week. The code provides for a minimum wage of $16 a week; with the "Scotch week" workers averaging $13.13. Now with this evil eliminated through the efforts of the union, workers receive $15, approximately a 12-percent increase in pay. With the refusal of the governors to come to any agreement with their discharged workers, who will not repudiate their union affiliations, the governors have now launched a campaign of terrorism against them. The workers have responded by picketing and by holding street meetings in the very heart of the financial district, where their appeals for aid have been received with sympathetic enthusiasm by the white-collar workers who are beginning to realize that only through organization can they ever obtain decent wages and working conditions.

AN attempt is being made to gerrymander Tammany Hall out of its strong position in New York City politics, and the Tiger's anguished howls fill the papers. The redistricting bill would give Tammany-controlled Manhattan only sixteen Assemblymen, as against the present twenty-three, and only six Senators as against nine. New York workers will be able to bear the Tiger's agony over this threatened expropriation with fortitude and in fact are likely to take only a minor interest in the battle between two rival political gangs for the large share of the loot—except for one instance, Harlem. The proposed map of Manhattan, divided into the six new Senatorial districts, reveals a clear intent to keep the 250,000 Negroes in Harlem from ever having a Senator in Albany. The dividing line between the 21st and 22nd districts runs from the Harlem River to the Hudson in zigzags that at first glance seem to be quite senseless. Actually the line cuts across the very centre of Negro population in Harlem, leaving half the Negroes in one district and half in the other—a hopeless minority in each. It is in following the center of population that the line has to jog back and forth, North and South. It seems to us that this could be made a fighting issue in Harlem, and certainly a highly educative one. A class-conscious Negro worker elected to the State Senate from Harlem would be a portent to the workers of all America.

Strachey Testifies

> I cannot conceal from you, Mr. Inspector, that I consider that for any capitalist government today to accuse me of advocating force and violence is an insolent presumption. Every capitalist government today is preparing to use force and violence on an unprecedented scale. They are not merely advocating, they are using it already. . . . How can they accuse anyone of advocating something which they themselves are so busily engaged in doing or preparing to do?—*John Strachey to Immigration Inspector William J. Zucker at the hearing, March 21.*

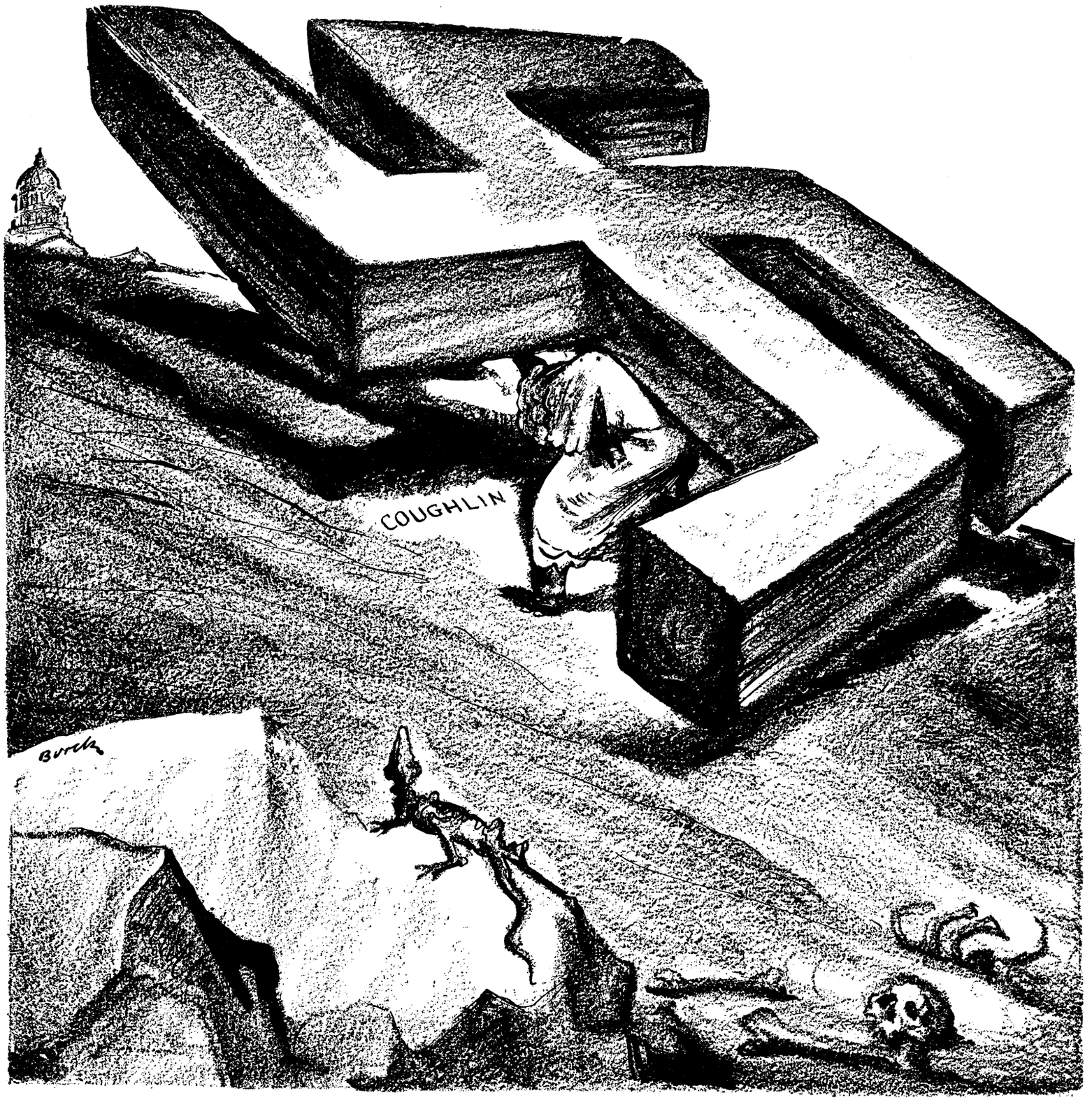
WHEN John Strachey was arrested in Chicago and threatened with deportation, Walter Lippmann, as brave a columnist as ever murdered the truth to conceal his pink past, seized a lance and sprang into the arena as the champion of capitalism. Mr. Lippmann's attack was published in his column in The New York Herald Tribune, and he spared none of the tricks of his trade to discredit Strachey.

First, he misstated John Strachey's views and saddled him with the opinions of his publisher and lecture manager. Second, he assumed the existence of full civil rights in a capitalist democracy and garbled the facts about civil rights under Communism. The fight for freedom of speech for Communists in the United States, says Lippmann, means "the right to use liberty to destroy liberty, to exploit democracy to destroy democracy." This is repeated in different words: "All Communists recognize that Communism cannot be established except by a revolutionary seizure of power, the creation of a Communist dictatorship, and *the complete suppression of democratic liberty.*"

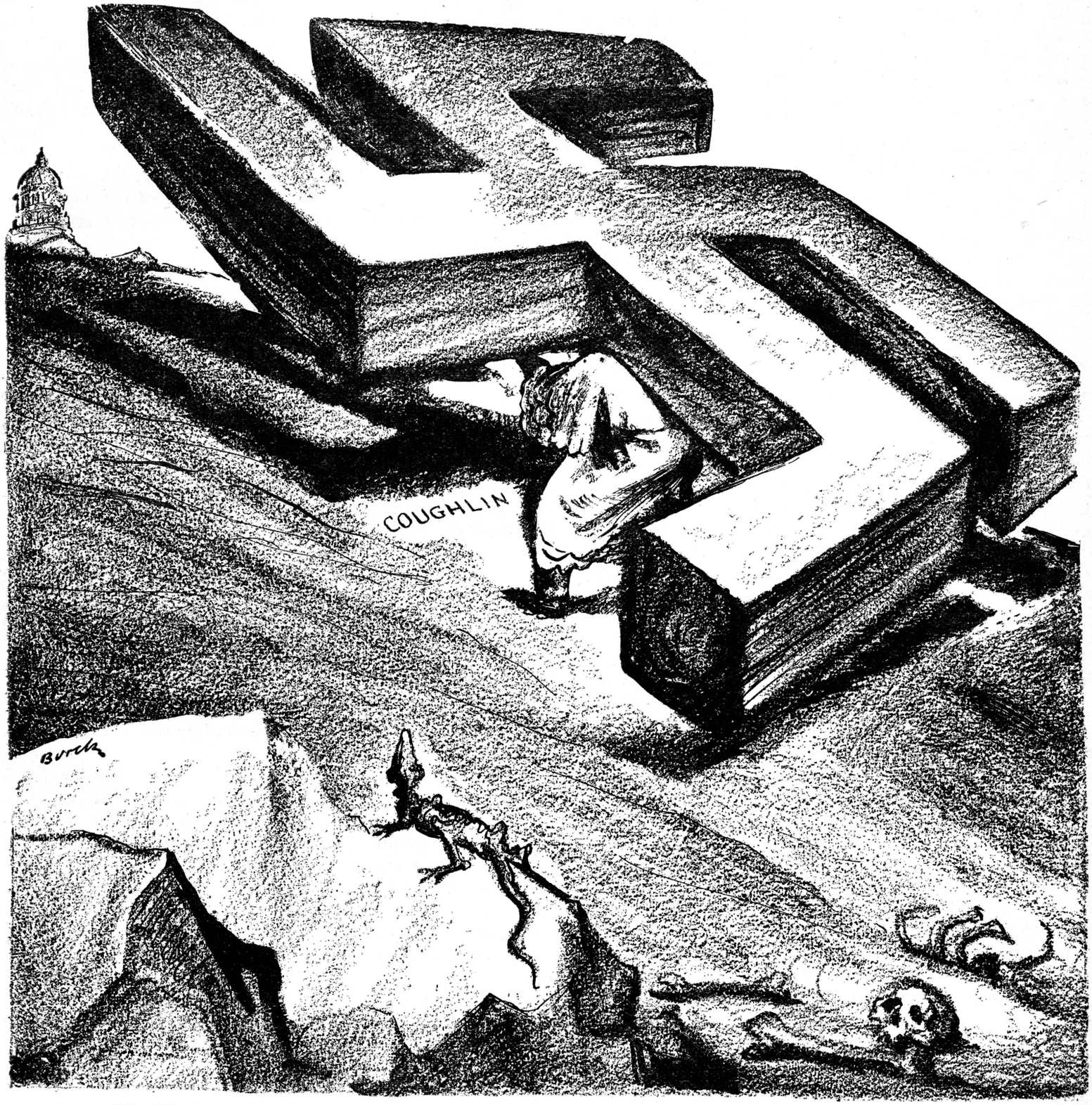
Walter Lippmann has no half-pint brain like Mr. Hearst's jingo editors. Formerly a socialist, he is aware of what he is doing when he juggles words in this manner, and when he slurs Strachey's courage and honesty. Without going into Mr. Lippmann's swivel-chair heroism, we will consider the question brought up in Strachey's reply to The Herald Tribune, presenting his position with regard to the use of force and violence.

THE NEW MASSES cannot, of course, speak for the Communist Party. Speaking for itself, it has stated its position editorially on this question during the past year. We declared that history has proven and underscored the futility of "the lone shot and isolated bomb." Before the populace can exercise what Abraham Lincoln said was "their revolutionary right to dismember or overthrow the government," we stated that three conditions were necessary:

"First, the dominant class can no longer rule; second, the turbulence of the discontented masses reaches such a pitch that they are ready to descend into the streets to fight; and third, the Communist Party must be strong enough to guide the elements of revolution into Soviet channels." When this crisis is



"OVER THE HILL TO THE WHITE HOUSE" *Jacob Burck*



"OVER THE HILL TO THE WHITE HOUSE"

Jacob Burck

reached, as Lenin said, "one must count by millions and tens of millions, not by thousands . . . Here one must ask oneself not only whether the vanguard of the revolutionary class has been convinced, but *also* whether the historically active forces of all classes of a given society have been properly distributed, so that the final battle may not be premature."

As an illustration of this, in July, 1917, Lenin knew that the decisive strata of the Russian masses were not ready for the seizure of power and his influence checked an uprising. In October, four months later, the overwhelming majority was hostile to Kerensky's government, and the seizure of power took place with almost no bloodshed.

The question remains, in answer to Lippmann, whether there exists under capitalism today any "democratic liberty" to be "suppressed." It is as always a question of "liberty for whom?" Strachey, in his letter, says:

"Communists, naturally, desire [the] change of economic system should be effected in the most peaceful and democratic way possible. It is true, however, that, hitherto at any rate, whenever and wherever the majority of the population has shown any tendency even toward the desire to change the economic system by using the democratic, constitutional process, the capitalists have first impaired and then discarded altogether all existing machinery for democratic change. Then the capitalists themselves have loosed an unrestrained violence upon the workers. Communists believe that to fail to warn the workers of this indisputable fact is to deceive and betray them."

Supporting this "indisputable fact" is the mute testimony of sixty-one strikers, murdered in 1934 by the bullets of company men and troops, because they were defending their "democratic liberty" to organize and strike under Roosevelt's Section 7a.

Supporting it are three dead Negro workers in Harlem, murdered in the past week by the blows and bullets of LaGuardia police; twenty-nine anthracite miners in Wilkesbarre, thrown into prison March 23 for an "indefinite period" because they refuse to "call off the strike"; and scores of the victims of King Sugar's army in Cuba, assassinated for the crime of organizing a general strike and resisting American imperialism. Capitalism in every country where it exists, is defending its minority rule by bayonets.

Hunger in Harlem

NOW that the smoke of the police revolvers has cleared away in Harlem some facts are becoming clear to the naked eye. Harlem, the largest city of Negroes in the world, has a population of well over a quarter million—a large proportion of which is among the most impoverished of all Americans. Out of this fact grew the events of last week which are described elsewhere in this issue by an eye-witness, Louise Thompson, national organizer of the International Workers' Order. The events in Harlem on March 19 frightened the authorities out of their wits and started a train of activities that may provide a great impetus in the fight of the twelve million Negroes in the United States for freedom. The authorities are so well aware of this that they are rushing about clamoring "Reds!" to anybody who will listen to them.

What are the fundamental facts about Harlem? Why did the beating of one Negro boy set off a popular explosion that ripped open dozens of stores, brought thousands of police to the scene, threw the fear of the proletariat into them to such a degree that they fired their guns to intimidate the crowd.

> First of all 65 to 80 percent of Harlem is without jobs.
>
> Landlords there are thieves who jack up the rents fully 100 percent to Negro tenants.
>
> Harlem is the dumping ground for all inferior food products in the city.
>
> The owners of the large stores practice such brazen discrimination that they refuse to hire Negro workers: the very ones who create the wealth of the Kresses and other millionaires there.

Every authority's hand is against Harlem: The Negro, to them, is a sort of third-class citizen. He is among the "first to be fired and last to be hired." He is paid less when on the job; when unemployed he receives one-third less relief than the customary amount.

In Harlem the average relief per family is only $28 a month, whereas the average relief in New York is $41 a family. The relief supervisor for Harlem, one Victor Suarez, has admitted spending only $214,000 to feed, house and clothe more than 7,500 Negro and Latin American families on relief. Harlem reports an increase of 330 percent in relief cases in the period fo one year.

These are some of the factors which were powder to the spark last week. The authorities, as usual, attempt to lay the blame on the Reds, on the "agitators." The Hearst press lays it on thick. The socialist Forwards follows the Fuehrer. District Attorney William C. Dodge steps into the limelight to make his brave announcement: "My purpose is to let the Communists know that they can't come into our country and defy our laws." The Mayor, more subtly, puts it this way: "A very small fraction, one percent of the population, took part in the demonstration and violence. . . . The maliciousness and viciousness of the instigators are betrayed by the false statements contained in mimeographed handbills and placards."

What did some of these "malicious" placards say? Here are extracts from one signed by the Communist Party and Young Communist League: "For unity of Negro and white workers . . . don't let the bosses start race riots in Harlem . . . demand the immediate dismissal and arrest and prosecution of the special guard and the manager of the store. [The Kress store where the boy was beaten up.] . . . Demand the release of the Negro and white workers arrested . . . demand hiring of Negro workers in all department stores in Harlem . . . don't trade in Kress's."

This is the "incitement to violence"; this represents the work of the "instigators" who invade Harlem distributing their "mimeographed handbills and placards."

The events have already provided Washington, in its current anti-Red spree, for sufficient excuse to ship Department of Justice agents to New York to "investigate" not the hunger and the misery of Harlem, but the "activities of Communists and other radicals." According to the New York Sunday Mirror this action was ordered by J. Edgar Hoover, chief of the Division of Investigation, on the request of District Attorney Dodge. That heroic official declares that his investigators have "barely scratched the surface" in the hunt for the "anti-American hordes responsible for the disturbances."

He promises many more arrests of persons "advocating the violent overthrow" of the American government.

But the gutter paper gives itself away. It unconsciously defines those activities described as advocating violent overthrow, etc., etc. The definition: "Communists were charged with exciting Friday night's riots in Harlem where they and other radicals have organized groups to *demonstrate against existing conditions there. . . .*"

That constitutes criminal syndicalism, sedition, and all the rest of the brass-button "100 percent American" terms.

Truly, unless the entire American people is aroused to immediate opposition, any man opening his mouth to criticize even the lowest functionary in power, will find himself summarily jailed as a "violent anarchist." The papers will describe him as an "alien" with blood in his eye and a bomb in his brief-case, bent on blowing the government to perdition.

The March Toward Moscow

BY THE time this issue is on the stands the much heralded "exploratory" missions of Sir John Simon and Anthony Eden, Lord Privy Seal, will be in full swing. Sir John and Eden are to "explore" Hitler together, and by the end of the week we may learn whether Britain intends to pursue her anti-Soviet policy of supporting Hitler, Poland and Japan, or intends to play ball with her old friends, France and Italy.

Last week Eden, Foreign Minister Laval and Suvich, Italian Under-Secretary of Foreign Affairs, held a conference on the subject of unity, but though it was hailed by the newspapers as "clarifying the situation," it is evident that Laval still distrusts the outcome of Sir John's "exploratory" mission to Berlin. He has refused to postpone his visit to Moscow until after April 11 when Sir John is to report the results of his conversation to Italy and France.

Foreign correspondents also report that Sir John, speaking for England only, will ask Hitler to make a number of important concessions, among them being that Germany will return to the League of Nations, that she will restrict her air force and naval program, that she will guarantee Austrian independence, and that she will support an Eastern Locarno. It is unbelievable in the light of Hitler's present mood that he will grant a single one of these concessions except, of course, on the most advantageous terms. And these terms, it becomes more and more evident as Hitler rattles the sabre and screams for war, are that Britain must acquiesce in Germany's *Drang nach Osten*. In the conversations March 25, Hitler, as reported, explicitly stated his refusal to enter into a "mutual assistance scheme," which he called "a guarantee of bolshevism."

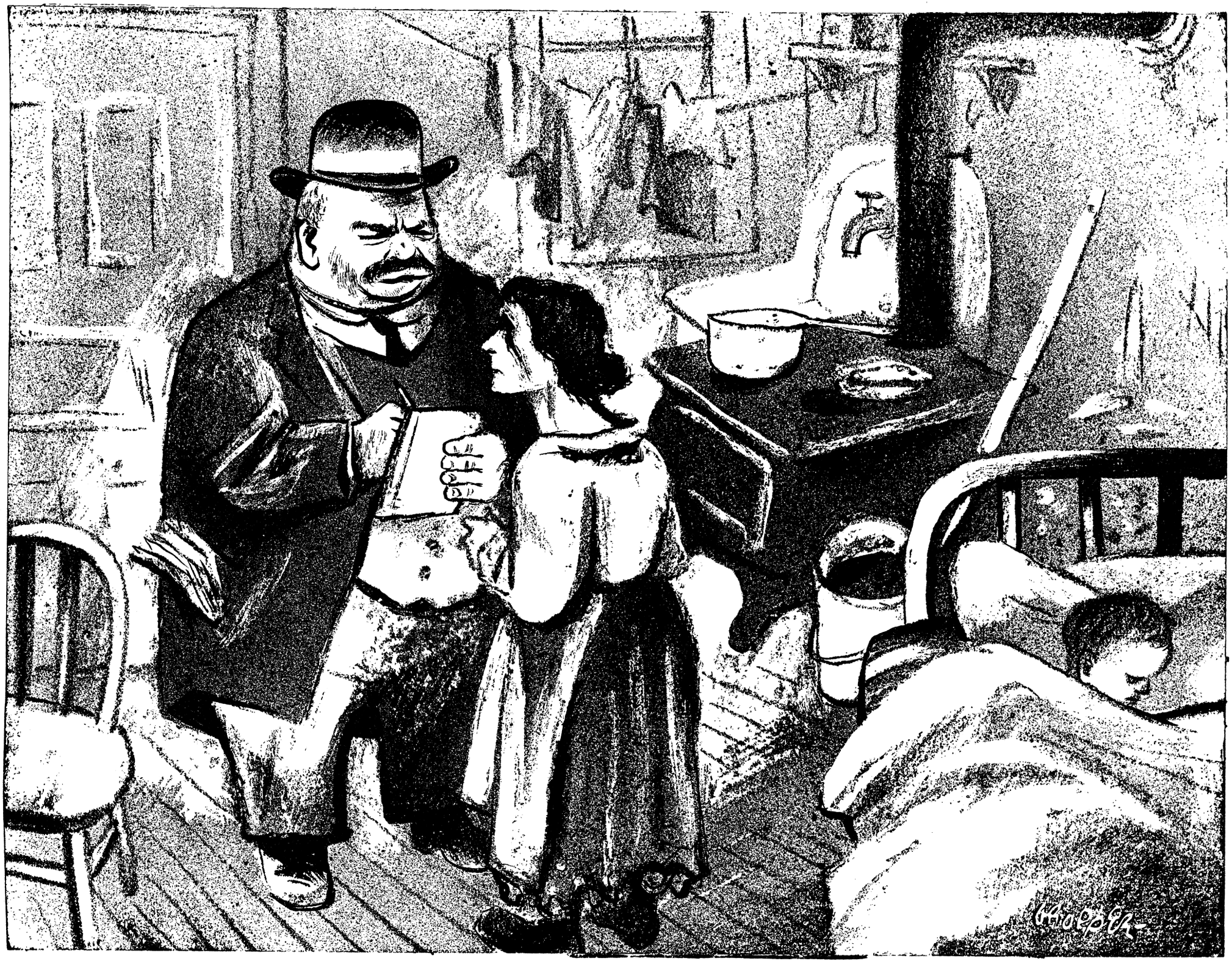
While Sir John talks to Hitler, and Eden travels from Warsaw, to Moscow, to Prague, the newspapers reecho the old story we heard so frequently just before the last World War. Give us diplomats, they cry, who by waving wands and mumbling incantations can prevent the capitalist nations of the world from plunging civilization into new oceans of blood. "The World War," the London correspondent of The Herald Tribune, for example, writes, "might well have been avoided if any of the great powers had been led by a statesman of genius like Bismarck or Disraeli." Fairy godmothers and Merlins still exist in the imaginations of our "political observers."

That Hitler and the jingoists behind him are eager to utilize war as a last desperate measure to shore up the Nazi economic system which during the past months has shown signs of collapsing utterly, becomes evident from the fact that conscription, along with the huge arms and naval program Hitler envisages, will go far toward solving the desperate problem of unemployment which is a constant threat to his dictatorship. Conscription will take a million out of the vast army of unemployed while the intensive manufacture of arms and a possible increase in the naval program (Germany is seeking parity with Italy) will place several hundred thousands more at work in shipyards and munitions factories. If your own economic system, the Nazi line of logic runs, can't feed and give work to everyone, get them all jobs destroying an economic system that can do both.

At the present moment, with Britain vacillating (to express it in its most flattering terms) it is impossible to predict what the eventual line-up will be. Poland and Finland will undoubtedly back Germany in any drive upon the Soviets and though the relations between Japan and Russia seem to have improved since the sale of the Chinese Eastern Railway, there is no doubt that the Japanese will miss no trick in their imperialistic plans for eventually placing all China under their suzerainty.

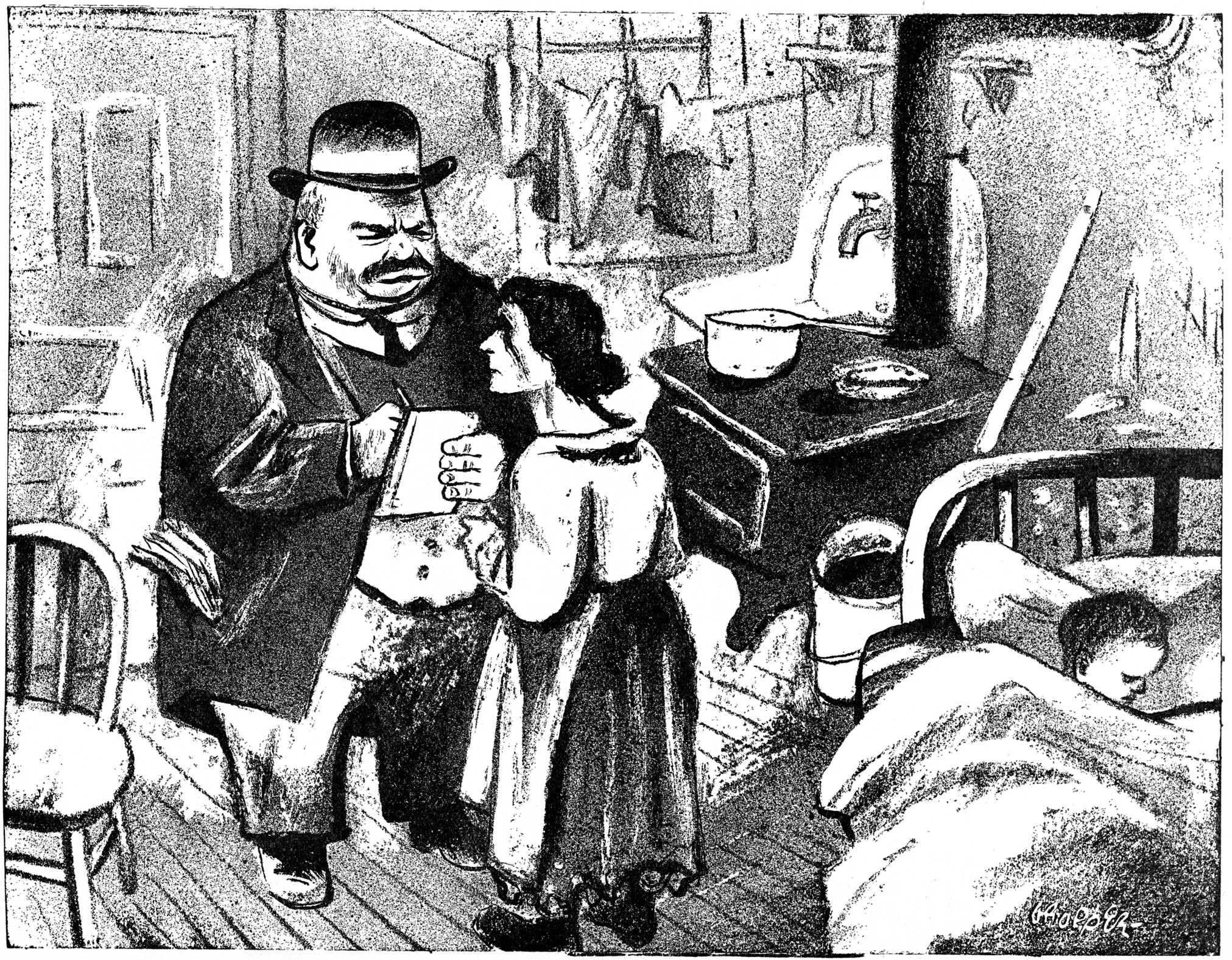
The danger of an aggressive war against Russia is still as great as it was three weeks ago when Hitler tore up the Versailles treaty and came out openly for superiority in armaments. Since war has become the highly mechanized science it is at present, the Reich, being the most intensely industrialized nation in Europe, is potentially more powerful than any of the Allies, considered as distinct units. Military power is not now estimated so much in terms of man-power, as it is in terms of tanks, planes, munition factories and those other "war potentials" which Germany has geared up her enormous industrial system to produce. Nevertheless, though the danger of war upon the Soviets is great, we must not forget that for the past two years they have been watching the distant armies of their enemies approach and can readily place at least two million men in the field. Though they have not made the actual figures of their mechanical potentials public, they have published the increase in the production of war materials. In the last two years the Soviet air forces have been increased by 300 percent, the number of light tanks by 760 percent, heavy artillery by 210 percent, machine-guns by 215 percent.

The Soviets in recent years have been forced to curtail the socialization program in order to build up the largest and most powerful fighting machine in all Europe. However, with enemies lying on both the east and the west, with diplomats scheming and munitions makers prodding them on, with capitalism ready to catch at a last straw to save it from inevitable destruction, the danger of a united front against the Soviets daily becomes more threatening. Soviet Russia, which during the past few years has shown itself ready to make sacrifices, to grant concessions of every kind in order to save Europe from the holocaust of imperialist war, still remains the foremost protagonist of peace, but how long she will be able to stave off hostilities depends not only on the power of her enemies and her own power to resist them, but also on the pressure that the friends of peace and the Soviets can exert upon the rulers of their own governments.



THE LANDLORD

William Gropper



THE LANDLORD

William Gropper

I Escaped from Cuba

PABLO DE LA TORRIENTE-BRAU

(The following is a few leaves from the diary of one of the editors of Masas, an anti-imperialist magazine which the Mendieta government suppressed just before the general strike in Cuba. More fortunate than some of his colleagues, Torriente-Brau, hunted for days by the Gestapo of the Mendieta-Batista-Caffery government which is rapidly establishing a Hitler dictatorship on the island, managed to escape to the United States only two weeks ago. We present this vivid first-hand account of three days of terror in Cuba in the hope that our readers will protest against Batista's terroristic methods against the 800 imprisoned students, peasants and workers, a number of whom are sentenced to be executed.—THE EDITORS.)

March 7, 1935.

EVEN THOUGH they are after me I still go to the University, to the meetings of the Strike Committee. It is easy, after all, to come in and go out by all the numerous entrances in the beautiful building. The boys are working feverishly in the basement. Apparently everything is quiet. The University is empty, as in vacation days. X—— and Y——, however, have gone to a meeting of the *Sindicates,* in order to complete certain details. They are the two who have worked hardest to bring about the strike. Despite all the activity, there is a certain hesitancy among us. Very soon it will be necessary to form an effective General Committee of Struggle. This afternoon there will be a meeting of all the delegates, of the secretaries and other associates, in order to give the date of the strike. Yesterday I saw Pepelin. He had scars on his back from the butts of rifles and blackjacks when Sargento Lopez took him out to the suburbs to kill him.

I had a hunch I ought not go to the University this afternoon. The police surrounded the building and besieged it. Inside there were Tete, Maria Teresa, Alberto and a lot more friends. The employes and teachers who were holding an important meeting were attacked. Immediately the radio stations broadcast the news, and the city is in a state of high tension. You feel a serious situation developing. I took advantage of the moment to go to the University. I went around trying my best to evade the *Perseguidoras* (Pursuers). I saw it was difficult to make a getaway from the University. I hid my identification cards, so that in case of arrest I could give a different name. From the University I went in my car to the house of Z——. They were not searching cars yet. Together with Z—— I found V——. We debated how to get a car and a machine-gun out of the University. By accident a machine-gun had been left inside. If the soldiers decided to get into the University and found a machine-gun there, the authorities could claim that we used the University as a place to hide our arms—which would be untrue. In Q——'s home, I learned that W—— and K—— were planning to attack the University so as to be able to free those inside. I thought this would be an impossible thing to do, and tried to locate them to dissuade them, but could not find them. I naturally believed that in the event we were the aggressors, the people inside would be the sufferers, as the soldiers would fire on the University if the aggressors tried to help the prisoners. Besides, on account of the wide-open stretch surrounding the University, the people inside would scarcely have time to make a getaway. But those boys have guts. Unable to find them I went back to the University to join the group in case they decided to attack.

But the soldiers were smart. About nine o'clock they left the University and allowed the besieged to get out. All the comrades who had been imprisoned were released. I went back to my hide-out. A little later they told me that one of the boys had wanted to get out and had been stopped. They also told me how all the boys had kept their chins up all the time, and even exchanged jests with police and soldiers surrounding them.

They informed me that the police and the army have entered the University grounds. Too late, though, to find anything. If they stay in the University, we'll know what to do.

March 12, 1935.

A few days have passed and I haven't had time to write anything. The atmosphere is charged with uneasiness. A fiery reign of terror, worse than Cuba has ever before witnessed, has been the Government's answer to the strike movement. Armando Feito, "funny, fatty Feito," so many times imprisoned during the Machado regime, he who was always so obliging in our prison days and many times prepared breakfast for his comrades (President Mendieta among them, the Mendieta who today is the docile mule of Colonel Batista), Feito was assassinated in the vilest manner, torn away from his family together with his father-in-law, despite the pleas of their wives. Feito said goodby to his little son, only a few months old. It was no use trying to get justice from the police. The bodies of Feito, and his father-in-law were found full of lead in the suburbs. Feito was holding handfuls of grass and earth in his hands.

I was lucky this time. When they tore down the electric cables and most of the city was left in darkness, heavy shooting broke out that lasted more than a half hour. When the cables were again connected, the army started to search every building in the neighborhood. I was within the area, and it would have been impossible for me to evade the search. But they did not reach the place where I was hiding. Very early the following day, I moved.

The rumor spread that they had killed Dr. Gustavo Aldereguia, a leading authority on the treatment of tuberculosis, but, fortunately, the news was not true. The same was said about Dr. Alfredo Nogueira. They murdered many, however, because they resembled these men. Rene Lago was murdered. They say he talked before he died. Enrique Fernandez, the best brain among the *Autenticos,* was assassinated. Somebody in the Parque Maceo heard him shout when he was carried to his death. And he was also found in the suburbs, together with the chauffeur of ex-President Carlos Hevia, their bodies riddled with bullets. Fernandez's forehead had been crushed in by the butt of a gun! Their bodies were left, undressed, on the wet grass, robbed of everything they had on. . . . Eight more bodies have been found in the suburbs. Another died in the first-aid ward. They say that in the last two days in Havana thirty more have been murdered. The secret service, inspired by Batista, had a list of forty-five names. From the interior, only rumors. Every time one goes into the streets, one comes back with the feeling of disaster. The streets are empty. A man walking along the avenues is an unusual sight. He attracts attention. Everybody follows him with his eyes, from balconies and windows. In the street one sees only boys, playing baseball, unconscious of what is going on, happy because they can play freely without fear of passing cars. It is almost worth one's neck to go out in the street. Yesterday, when I went out, I was, for a moment, scared to death. One of the soldiers I had accused in the Presidio Modelo of various crimes, passed close to me. . . . But he was proudly displaying his new uniform and didn't even look at me. If he had recognized me, I would be six feet under by now. . . . One sees only marines, soldiers, policemen and Porristas.

We are handicapped by lack of means of communication. I am writing daily reports to be broadcast, in order to counteract the news of the Diario de la Marina, and the lying army releases that this paper prints. The hatred against this yellow sheet cannot be described. But our radio station is very weak and doesn't work properly. Through Q—— I have attempted to contact T—— to find out if we can broadcast from another station. . . . But he told me that this is impossible for the moment, and warned me that I should protect my skin. Yesterday they didn't

come to get my reports, and this angered me. If they don't come before three o'clock today I will take them myself, to the house of A——.

The total lack of news depresses the people. The government frantically resorts to lies. They announce that everything is back to normal. But just today the bakers have gone on strike, and there's no bread, or coal, or meat. . . . The city is impressively quiet. There are decrees legalizing shooting. I can't understand why the opposition hasn't started systematic attacks against the armed forces. If the opposition political parties don't get into the struggle, the cause will be lost. I feel violent and impotent. What are they waiting for? . . . Do they expect the workers' party alone, and the students, to overthrow the government for them to take over? But it is early yet. Even today something very important might happen. Later on I'll write more.

March 13, 1935.

Today the strike has been completely lost. Yesterday was the decisive day. It was heart-rending to realize the total lack of unity among all elements in the struggle. By noon they came for news. I made an attempt to contact our group, because they assure me something will be done tonight, out of desperation. But it seems it's all a lie. Nothing effective and well organized is intended. None of my four companions knows anything about it. They are also desperate, half-crazy, flinging cruel invectives against the leaders who fooled them. A.B.C.'s, Autenticos and Guiteristas are responsible for the collapse. . . .

We experience only a few hours of such intense emotion. I sent Tete to the home of her parents, who haven't heard from us for several days. When Tete left I felt it was the last time I would see her. And I wanted to caress her because I had been mean to her lately. The government, through its spy system, discovered that during the night a desperate attack would be attempted, and issued a proclamation forbidding, under penalty of death, traffic of cars and pedestrians after nine o'clock. This measure seriously impeded the slow machinery of the opposition and the mobilization of shock-groups (in the event such a move had even been considered). Promptly at nine the shooting commenced, begun by the police, marines and soldiers. The shooting lasted a few hours. From the roofs snipers weakly responded to the fire of Springfields and machine-guns with pistols. . . .

Today, the discouragement that began yesterday is clearly visible. Many have been forced to escape to Miami, Fla. The street cars run normally again. There is talk of printing the newspapers. The government threatens to take over the printing plants. They have already destroyed the newspaper La Palabra, the weekly La Semana Comica, and Accion. The armed forces occupy the offices of La Semana, Ahhora, El Mundo and El Pais, and have also sacked the Federacion Medica (Medical Federation), even seizing the safety-deposit vaults. Batista has handled the situation well, for he is sure of Caffery's aid. He has smashed the movement and now what's left? The military forces, buoyed by this new and sensational victory, will grow — if that is possible — more insolent, more powerful. The people will remain oppressed. Corporals and sergeants are now mayors. A corporal will be Dean of the University, over which flies the army's flag . . . barbarism will reign and Cuba will be —more than ever— a colony subdued by the terror and exploitation of the cruellist imperialism. Batista's triumph rests on the aid lent by Caffery, who realized that the general strike was a struggle against Yankee imperialism.

But where is the political vision of the opposition parties in Cuba? . . . Weren't they aware that there have been many psychological moments to strike? . . . Weren't they aware of the necessity for desperate struggle, because defeat meant a smash-up. I don't know what they thought! . . . I only know that we must continue fighting . . . begin again . . . I think that at least the Cuban masses learned a definite lesson in this last struggle. They learned the truth of our slogan: "The united fight against Yankee imperialism is our only way to liberation."

March 17, 1935—Miami.

Yesterday afternoon I arrived by plane. After going from house to house, the University Committee agreed that I must leave Cuba, because of my role in the campaign against the Army and the constant murders that they have committed. Lately there has not been much difference between the Machadistas and us—we have been treated like Porristas. We have been sought out, our houses where we lived have been destroyed. And with the butts of guns they destroyed the pictures of Mella, Trejo, Pio Alvarez, Rubierite, and other heroes of great struggles! . . .

After our arrival we were told not to mention how we had escaped, because Roosevelt's government is a friend of Batista's government! . . . That is why I do not dare to say more. . . .

Keep Them From Thinking!

JAMES WECHSLER

THE facts of contemporary life are unmentionable in the majority of American schools. This is almost unequivocally true of elementary and preparatory institutions; with varying degrees of completeness the same principle can be applied to the so-called abodes of higher learning. It is no new phenomenon; the stereotypes promulgated by financial-pressure groups have been with us for generations. But in this era when the paradoxes and inanities of American society are being propelled to the surface, the lid has been clamped down with unprecedented ferocity. Hearst's current onslaught is characteristic of growing panic lest the disturbing realities be set forth in the classroom for the victims to ponder and evaluate.

For three days a year Columbia University offers a concentrated exhibition of this attempt to divert the attention of students into "safe" channels. The scene is the Columbia Scholastic Press Association Convention, which was held during March.

The "great man" complex is still a powerful weapon. It is the central theme of the convention. These 1,500 high school editors are drawn from almost every state of the Union, from every conceivable kind of school. They assemble on Morningside Heights with the spotlight of the news services focussed upon them. And hardly have they settled themselves in their seats when the parade begins—the parade of journalistic "greats" in whom the delegates are to see a vision of themselves. The speeches are almost without exception an insufferable bore. But that is extraneous. The fact is that the speakers are men with a message, "examples" for ambitious boys and girls.

There is bitter competition among the metropolitan press. Edwin L. James, managing editor of The New York Times, delivers an address which is reprinted in full in The Times. Associate Dean Brucker, of the School of Journalism, hails the typography of The Herald Tribune and this is recorded prominently in The Herald Tribune. Arthur L. Patterson, of the Herald Tribune sports staff, announces that sports writing is important. Allen H. Seed, of the New York City Club, emphasizes that a prerequisite to obtaining advertising is to convince the advertiser that he should advertise. The aviation editor of The Times emphasizes the significance of aviation news. . . . All this goes on for three days with happy intermissions.

The conference is ostensibly designed to "discuss the mutual problems of high school editors." To the extent that they are deluged with material anent copy-reading, proof-read-

ing, mimeographing and other countless arts, the advertisement is justified. But the impression is irresistible that there were some exceedingly immediate problems which the convention ignored. In fact it appeared more notable for what it didn't discuss than for what was on the agenda.

Despite the elaborate preparations which went into the event, two sour notes emerged. The first was the sudden cancellation of Mrs. Roosevelt's address. The other intrusion must be blamed upon certain irreverent elements in Columbia University. On the second day of the delegates' visit a leaflet on the impending student strike against war was circulated. It was so avidly read and provoked so many inquiries that Joe Murphy, the director of the conference, was forced to interrupt a general session and solemnly inform the delegates that "this conference is not associated with the propaganda you've received." But no one genuinely suspected that it was. So much interest was aroused, however, by the mention of the strike that there must have been real alarm among the advisors who had brought their prodigies to town. The most ludicrous spectacle of the three days was the sight of a matronly woman snatching a leaflet from one of her delegates and warning him to "keep your mind off those things." It was evident that he wouldn't. The final day of the conference a special edition of The Columbia Spectator was put out by the delegates. And three of the four editorials were devoted to the war danger and the economic crisis. Truth will out.

The vital problems which high school editors and their fellow-students face were never mentioned on the floor of the convention. In accordance with custom, I spoke to a sectional meeting on "censorship"; it was the only session which even hinted at the fundamental issues so blithely ignored in the general meetings. I found the delegates receptive, interested—but subject to an unbelievable reign of terror. In virtually every high school it is a crime to mention editorially any of the crucial events of the day; there is either an overt or thinly-veiled censorship which sharply limits the editor to a discussion of school functions, athletics and the fatherliness of the principal. This is almost uniformly true—from New York to California. It is symptomatic of a school system which is frantically striving to preserve illusions, to stifle discontent with the miserable future facing the student.

Yet despite this iron ring of suppression, abetted by frightened teachers, curiosity is beginning to emerge. Vital lessons are being taught in the home, not in the school—in thousands of American homes where the economic crisis is routing the last vestiges of security. Conversing with the delegates, I sensed their growing apprehension, their resentment. While they were being told in the convention halls of the limitless opportunity awaiting them, they were contemplating the prospect of leaving school because they couldn't afford to go to college. While they were being hailed as the future moulders of American opinion, they were thinking in terms of a possible twelve-dollar-a-week job. This is not an overstatement; these are elements in their every-day life.

The Columbia Convention is just one more effort—on a high-pressure scale—to make them believe that things are better than ever, that they are headed for the executive offices of The New York Times. On the assumption that these bright boys and girls are destined for fame, it would have been an affront to invite a spokesman for the Newspaper Guild to address the convention. Nor was it in order for them to be confronted with "anti-war propaganda." While The Herald Tribune was distributed free to the delegates, members of the anti-war committee were forcibly ejected as they handed out literature.

Despite these frantic publicity stunts, carried on by our leading liberal university and dedicated to the preservation of the success illusion, the truth has penetrated. These were the sons and daughters of America's sinking middle class. Columbia's advertising is getting diminishing returns. One of the delegates with whom I was walking on the campus looked at me quizzically and then commented:

"Nice buildings you got here. But how are we supposed to pay the tuition?"

The Convention never answered the query. It recited the stereotypes which the passage of time and the intensification of decline are dispelling. It hurled out the dragnet for a fruitful freshman class of 1936—but who will foot the bills?

Inadvertently the latest circus in Dr. Butler's bailiwick served a notable function. Word of the coming student strike against war and fascism was spread to points never before contacted. The existence of a student movement became known to hundreds who had never before been reached. Delegates from all sections of the country could compare depression notes while wind was being freely unleashed from the speaker's platform. War, retrenchment, fascism—these were the issues discussed behind Mr. Murphy's back. It is not astonishing that he made his urgent plea to "disregard the propaganda." What will the trustees and boards of education back home say? Didn't he promise to take care of their innocents in the big city?

Fight the Gag Bills!

ROGER BALDWIN

NEVER in years have the reactionaries mustered such forces behind their drive for suppression as today. They are fairly flooding Congress and the state legislatures with bills to outlaw all movements which can be construed to advocate "force and violence" and to send to prison for long terms anybody on whom that doctrine can be hung. The new political theory, dignified by many court decisions, is that judges and juries can readily distinguish those radicals who advocate violence from those who do not. But the theory blindly ignores the advocacy and practice of violence by reactionaries in defense of the property system.

Although the Congressional Committee "investigating un-American activities" pretended to maintain a neutral attitude between Nazi and Communist propaganda, its recommendations hit the Communists, not the Nazis. Although three-quarters of its hearings were devoted to Nazi and fascist activities, it wound up in a blaze of anti-Communism. The debates on its bills have ignored the Nazis and fascists. Thus the "patriots" run true to the form established in all lands. Ignoring the violence used by the defenders of the existing order, they prosecute for mere language those who threaten it.

This is, of course, familiar class "justice." The new drive would not be dangerous unless for the first time in years the "patriots" had created a united front on a common program. Up to now, they have each gone his own way, and with indifferent success. Not since the drive on Reds and labor just after the war have they accomplished much. Their raids on aliens have flourished briefly and died out. "Shirt" organizations and the Klan have gathered in the dollars of the fearful and have pretty much folded up.

But the "patriots" have at last become genuinely alarmed. Fear of working-class revolt has brought them together. The wave of strikes over the last two years culminating in the San Francisco general strike and the great textile strike aroused them to action. They saw that growing disillusionment over the New Deal hypocrisy would create greater revolt. Unrest and disillusion are the raw materials of radicalism. Therefore militancy must be curbed by law.

The initial shot was fired last fall by the U. S. Chamber of Commerce in a report on subversive activities broadcast by an anonymous committee. It outlined in detail the legislative program since followed, backed by the American Legion, the D.A.R., the Benevolent and Protective Order of Elks and the

Army and Navy lobby, with the Hearst and MacFadden press as their advertising agents. Not since the days of Attorneys Mitchell Palmer and Harry Daugherty has there been such unity among the Tories.

The present political line, voiced for this outfit by Hearst, pretends to be anti-fascist. Suppress Communism, he says, in order to avoid incitement to fascism. The rest of the outfit does not bother with such high-falutin' theory. They are for suppressing the Reds as the means of attacking working-class militancy. Consciously or blindly, they support the suppression essential to fascism. Sedition and criminal syndicalism laws have never been used merely to prosecute exponents of revolutionary theories. They have always been used as weapons in class struggle against a fighting working-class leadership.

The Congressional gag-weapons the reactionaries are forging are:

First: A sedition bill like the state criminal syndicalism and sedition laws, under which it will be a crime to advocate "the overthrow of the government by force and violence" or the use of violence to advance any political end.

Second: A bill to make it a crime to "spread disaffection" among soldiers and sailors. This is aimed at Communist propaganda; but it could and would be used to reach workers opposing the use of the National Guard in strikes, and publishers of anti-war books and magazines which happen to get into the hands of soldiers and sailors. As the war cases show, convictions can be obtained even in the absence of proof of the intention to induce soldiers or sailors to disobey orders, or of any effect on them. This absurd and sweeping legal theory of "constructive intent" means that if the result which the law punishes *might* conceivably happen, any language tending to it is a crime. This too is the theory of the almost identical British sedition act recently passed.

Third: A new bill against aliens more far-reaching than even our already stringent laws. It proposes to deport any alien found to be engaged in "spreading propaganda from foreign sources." Aimed by Congressman Dickstein at Nazis and Communists, it could of course oust any other aliens in the United States engaged in any activity; Zionists, anti-Nazis, anti-Communists, Irish Republicans, the advocates or opponents of any foreign government, or, in principle, Roman Catholics, or the spokesmen of international religious movements.

But worst of all the proposals to come before Congress are not these bills, but a move to restore the federal secret political police of the days of Palmer and Daugherty. In those years the Communist Party was driven underground. Government sleuths and spies were everywhere in the left movements. Not in all the years since, *officially anyhow,* have they taken any part in prosecuting radicals or trade unionists. But now, alarmed by the defenselessness of the government against the Red menace, commercial and patriotic organizations demand the restoration of a political secret service. More surely and insidiously than any gag law, they would undermine working-class organizations by honeycombing them with spies and provocative agents.

Not content with congressional action, the "patriots" are also turning to the states. There they are promoting three types of the gag bills.

First a brand-new proposal to outlaw left political parties by denying the ballot to those found to advocate "force and violence," "sedition or treason." No party could get on the ballot against which such charges are made and proved, to the satisfaction not of a court, but of mere election officials. The honor of adopting this unprecedented proposal goes to Tennessee, the state which first gave the world the anti-evolution law. Arkansas, Indiana, Delaware have already followed. In all these states the bill went through almost without debate, roll-call or public notice. The American Legion backed it, as it is doing in some eighteen states. Where strong opposition was organized by radicals and liberals, the bill has been beaten. The courts will soon have a chance at it, with some prospect that both constitutional guarantees and common sense may knock it out. The bill, by denying the ballot to left parties, of course promotes the very violence it seeks to prevent.

The second bill before the state legislatures is the familiar sedition statute, now penetrating the South for the first time. For years the South had no such legislation. They had little contact with radicalism, and when they did, they had shorter methods of dealing with it. But today the legislatures of Alabama, Georgia and other southern states are adopting sedition laws to curb the menace of Communist influence on Negroes. In Arkansas, the bill got out of hand and was beaten by the combined opposition of radicals, educators, liberals, a labor lobby and a few cool-headed newspapers.

The third proposal before the state legislatures is that old favorite of the D.A.R., the teachers' loyalty oath bill, designed to stop the spread among school teachers of "radicalism, internationalism, and advanced ideas" (this is the precise language of the D.A.R.). This bill, hard to beat because it demands only a formal, patriotic loyalty, is already on the books of fourteen states.

Where liberal, radical and labor forces are united in opposition, the tide can be turned. It has been turned in one state after another. Even the A.F. of L. unions have joined in the fight, for they clearly see in sedition bills a weapon against them.[1] While they do not, of course, see the new drive as clearing the road to fascism, they sense a new line-up of forces. They begin to realize what radicals have long known — that only the organized power of workers and farmers can beat reaction. The mounting discontent aroused by the failure of New Deal hopes and promises will either turn to the fake programs of demagogues or crystallize solidly into trade unions, farmers' organizations and a class-conscious labor party. The choice is clear and the drive on the left makes it clearer.

On a national scale the American League Against War and Fascism and the American Civil Liberties Union have joined in a common effort to arouse opposition directed to Congress and to every state where the issues arise. To dramatize this common unity, these organizations are holding a huge mass meeting in Madison Square Garden in New York City on Wednesday evening, April 3, at which the wide range of speakers will symbolize the forces united against the reactionaries. The New York meeting is only a forerunner of meetings to be organized in other cities as part of a national campaign, conducted also by pamphlets, radio and pressure on legislatures.

[1] Readers of THE NEW MASSES can get complete information about the bills in Congress and the states by addressing either the American League Against War and Fascism at 112 East 19th Street, New York, or the American Civil Liberties Union at 31 Union Square. Full instructions will be given as to when and how to act.

Two Poems

I

Not mine this day, this hour not mine,
but yours and yours, my brothers.
Here where the wind drives sunlight before it
over this long laked wilderness of white and
gold
I stand and know
your days, factory brothers, have built the
path of all the days here,
your hand put flesh on houses, tore roads out
of earth, pistoned the wind, pulled
the levers that moved this place into being.

Sinews of Detroit, geared to the mad conveyor,
why do I hear beating under the steel lake ice
the heart of your rising Spring?

II

And I was walking with Lenin down the road,
and felt the big tall wind of him blowing
over frozen fields where, planted and growing,
snow climbed up where yesterday it snowed.
And down the lake it blew, down and over
to windless places.
I knew its breadth and length,
I knew its earthrooted heart, its factory
strength—
and I would be warm tonight with this wind
for cover.

Comrade of all the roads, fisted and tall
wind of the world, beside us and ahead
(who can unfill our mouths with your own
song?),
we hear, our Lenin, and follow where you
tread.
To take this twisted life, to grasp it all,
and feel and know our hands—your hands—
are strong!

A. B. MAGIL.

What Happened in Harlem

An Eye-Witness Account

LOUISE THOMPSON

ABOUT five o'clock on the afternoon of March 19 a small group of people were gathered in front of the Kress Five and Ten Cent store on 125th Street in Harlem. Inside, near the doorway, stood another small group. Though there seemed to be little excitement, it was evident that something had happened and I stopped to ask one man in the crowd what was going on inside the store. He didn't know, but like the rest of the group was waiting to find out what it was all about. I entered the store.

Most of the girls behind the counter were still in their places but no floor-walkers or officials were in evidence who might have given an explanation why the little clusters of people were standing here and there in the store. I approached one woman who was standing quietly by the candy counter and asked her what it was all about. "I don't know," she said. "They say some kid was beaten up when they caught him trying to steal a piece of candy." I approached another group, in the midst of which was a tall, handsome Negro woman engaged in a heated conversation with a Negro man. She seemed to be remonstrating with him.

"What's up?" I asked. "A little colored boy was beaten up by a sales-girl and the manager of the store," she replied. "What are you doing now?" I continued. "We are going to wait right here until they produce that boy," she replied. "Yes," said another woman of slight build, who stood holding two large sofa pillows she had just purchased in the store, "we'll wait here if it means all night."

So they stood waiting, patiently, quietly. The tall, dark woman scolded some small Negro boys who began to scuffle with each other. "Hush, you all!" she said. "Stop your foolishness. Don't you realize a colored boy's been hurt?" The group continued to wait, but as they waited patience began to give way to indignation. Their voices rose. They demanded that the manager produce the injured boy.

"She didn't have no right to touch that boy," said one woman in the group, "and you know that white man wouldn't have kicked no white child."

"No," said the tall, dark woman. "Just think, it might have been my child—it might have been any of your children. And, to think, he may now he dying, just for stealing a little ole piece of candy. I'm going to stay right here till they bring that boy out and he better be all right, too."

About this time a few policemen began to filter into the store. At first they did not approach the group standing near the candy counter. They walked back into the store, evidently to get "their orders." Then they came back and approached our group.

"Come on, now, move along. Get out of here," said one.

"I ain't movin' nowhere until they produce that child," answered the woman.

Just then a woman screamed in the back of the store and the crowd surged forward, the tall woman in the lead. The cops drove them back toward the front of the store. The tall woman was the last to leave. The cops began to get rough. In retaliation one woman took her umbrella and knocked over a pile of pots and pans. Simultaneously, dishes began to be broken, glasses were knocked to the floor, a few more screams were heard, mingled with the closing bell of the store. The more timid hurried out into the streets. The more aggressive stayed behind refusing to move until they got some information about the boy. The cops formed a ring at the door to keep out the rapidly gathering crowd on the sidewalk. The women inside refused to budge and stood by their leader, the tall woman with the umbrella in her hand.

"Don't you realize a colored child's been hurt, he may be dying, and we can't find out nothing about him?" the tall woman said.

"Get out of here," shouted the policeman. "What the hell can you do about it? Go on home before you get into trouble."

Immediately a chorus of women's voices answered him, stridently, indignantly. I approached one of the policemen. "Can't you give us some explanation," I asked. "Surely these women are entitled to know if the boy is injured and where he is."

"If you know what's good for you," he replied, "you'll get on out of here. What do you suppose we're here for? We'll take care of the kid."

"Yes, you'll take care of us just like you do when they lynch us down South," a Negro woman answered. "We'll take care of our own. I'm a mother. It might've been my child. Colored folks don't get no protection nowhere, in New York or down South."

They began to shove us out of the store. The last to leave was the tall, dark woman. A cop threatened her with his night-stick. "Hit me. Go right on and hit me," she challenged, clutching her umbrella all the firmer. The cop lowered his night-stick. We moved toward the door. By this time the crowd had grown into a huge mass, pushing forward to find out what was happening.

As we backed into the street, we heard the clang of an ambulance. The crowd became tense. An interne with his bag hurried into the store, escorted by a number of cops who completely blocked the entrance behind him.

In the street, I had my first opportunity to look about. The crowd before the store had swollen to hundreds. Across 125th Street stood thousands. Shrill sirens of police cars. Increasing excitement. I was pushed toward a tall Negro woman. We simultaneously locked arms. A woman approached us. "He's dead," she shrieked. "What do you mean?" asked my companion. "Who's dead?" "The boy," she replied. "How do you know?" I asked. "Somebody saw them carrying him out just now on a stretcher with a sheet over him from the 124th Street entrance of Kress's." My companion was beside herself. "Dead," she said. "Oh, no, you don't mean that. He can't be dead. No, he can't be dead jus' for stealing a piece of candy." "Yes," replied the woman. "You know that two ambulances drove up here and they didn't take nobody away. Now they have taken him away with a sheet over him on a stretcher."

The rumor spread like wildfire. We walked toward Eighth Avenue. Everyone was saying that the child was dead. Whenever we stopped for a moment, the cops would rush us. "Move on, there! Move on!" We reached the corner, and were quickly surrounded by a group, only one of the many groups that now choked 125th Street between Eighth and Ninth Avenues.

We walked along the street to Seventh Avenue, urging the people to follow us, telling them to keep their heads, advising them to keep away from the cops who were becoming ugly in their attempts to break up the increasing throngs of people. On Lenox Avenue we stopped. There were only three of us, I and two of the women whom I had met in the store, my tall friend and another woman who had remained in the store until the last. We went into an office of a friend. Small groups of Negroes began to filter in to find out what it was all about. Others, on learning the facts, were all for smashing up the store. We reasoned with them that this would do no good. If the child were dead we must demand that the authorities prosecute the guilty parties and at the same time take steps to prevent other Negro children from receiving the same fate.

We went back to Kress's. By this time crowds were swarming the street, worked into a feverish pitch of excitement by all sorts of rumors. The resentment of the people had widened beyond indignation about the boy. "We ought to close up every damn store on 125th Street," said one man. "This ought to make the colored people wake up and do something against these high rents and high prices for bad meat and food we are charged

in Harlem," said another. "Yes," said one member of a group who had picketed 125th Street last year demanding jobs for Negroes, "you women wouldn't listen to us last year when we told you not to trade in these stores unless they gave us jobs. Maybe you'll learn some sense now."

We finally worked our way through the crowds back to Kress's. As we approached the store, we saw a young Negro set up a ladder in front of the store. He climbed the ladder and began to speak. It was difficult to hear him, few members of the crowd stopped talking to listen.

The young man on the ladder continued to speak. I was able to gather that he was for "Negro and white solidarity against police-provoked race-rioting." When he had finished, a white man climbed up to speak. He had scarcely begun when there was a crash. From somewhere in the crowd the first stone was thrown to break the window of Kress's store. Quickly the small crowd about the speaker was broken up, the speaker jerked down, ladder and all, by the police and arrested. We scattered, and I lost my companion.

The so-called "race riot" in Harlem had begun.

In a few minutes all the windows on 125th Street, Harlem's shopping district, were smashed. Anger and resentment swept like wildfire through the streets massed with Harlem's starving thousands. Young men took radiator caps from cars parked along the street and hurled them through plate-glass windows.

Whole detachments of bluecoats arrived on the scene and set to work. Brigades of mounted police cantered down the street, breaking into a gallop where the crowds were thickest. Horses' hoofs shot sparks as they mounted on the glass-littered pavements.

The crowds fighting doggedly, gave way. The women more stubborn even than the men, shouted to their companions, "What kind of men are you—drag them down off those horses." The women shook their fists at the police. "Cossacks! Cossacks!" they shouted here in Harlem on 125th Street.

A policeman charged at a boy on the pavement. "Get on there. Move on—move on," he raised his night-stick. The boy stood there stubbornly marking time, his feet moving up and down but he did not give way an inch.

The police forces grew. They sweated and grunted, ploughing their way through the crowds for an hour. The repeated charges of the mounted police began to scatter the people. About nine o'clock the masses began to give way, dispersing up the side streets. Just as the crowd seemed routed, another group broke through the police cordons, swept down to Kress's once again. Few windows remained intact in the store.

Every plate-glass window from 116th to 145th Streets was smashed. The only ones spared were those with signs posted "Colored shop" or "Colored work here."

Many grocery store windows were smashed; hungry Negroes scooped armloads of canned goods, loaves of bread, sacks of flour, vegetables, running to their homes with the food. On Seventh Avenue workers tossed sacks of flour up to their companions leaning out of the windows from the floors above.

The long green riot cars of the police department began to converge from all directions. Shots were heard. Cops appeared in the middle of the streets with their guns in their hands. Plainclothesmen, their hands on their holsters, passed up and down the streets trying to drive the people into the doorways. The moment the police passed, they were out again.

This all went on until dawn.

The early editions of the morning papers brought the workers of Harlem the first information about the boy who "started the riots." They said his name was Lino Rivera —a sixteen-year-old Porto Rican boy. They pictured him, whole and smiling, in the protecting embrace of a Negro policeman. According to the papers he had stolen a knife from the counter of the Kress store. He was, they said, threatened with a beating. They admitted that much because bystanders overheard the store detective's threats. "I'm going to take you down to the basement and beat hell out of you." That remark was heard by several persons nearby. Instead, however, according to the press, he was taken to the rear door and turned loose.

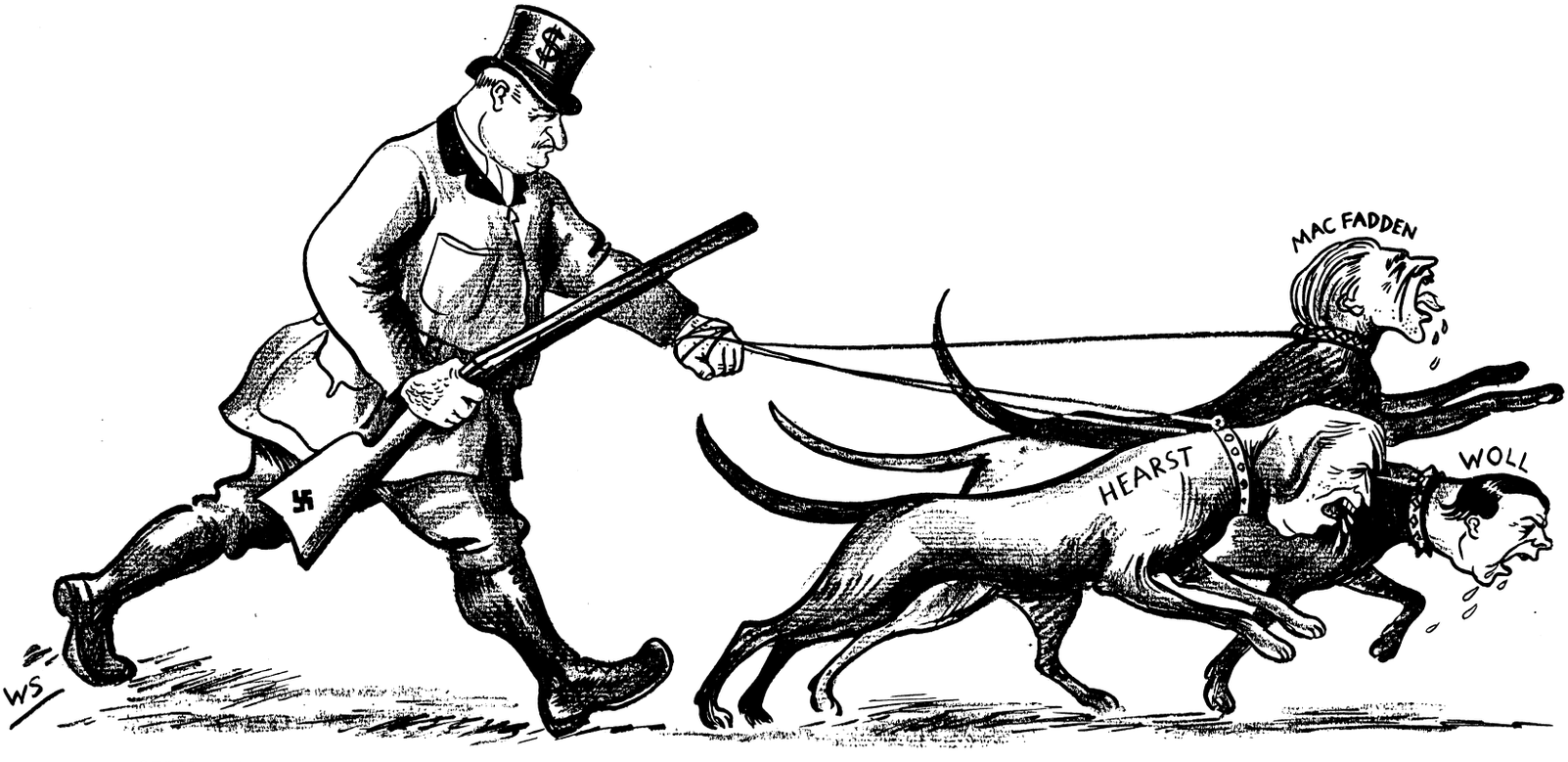
I spoke with a woman who was in the store when the detective grabbed the boy. She told me the boy was about ten years old—not a sixteen-year-old boy as the newspapers reported. She said he was "a little black child." Lino is sixteen years old—tall for his age.

I also spoke with another person who was in the store—a certain Mr. Brown. He corroborated the woman's description.

Harlem is not yet convinced that Lino Rivera is the boy.

By dawn, one man, James Thompson, had been shot to death, taking food from a grocery store. Two more had been mortally injured. Over a hundred wounded. One hundred and twenty were in jail. Negroes were given the third degree on the way to jail and in the cells. Dicks shoved their captives into cars and beat them with blackjacks.

But many workers in Harlem ate hearty that morning for the first time in months.



OPEN SEASON ON REDS

William Sanderson

Cuba—Sick for Freedom

JOSEPHINE HERBST

HAVANA.

MACHADO was ushered out of power with a convulsive general strike that did not stop until it had rid itself of the hated ruler. Mendieta, head of the fourth provisional government since August, 1933, was greeted by a strike wave when he stepped into office in January, 1934. The present general strike in Cuba is a boiling ferment of a deep underlying movement that will not be finished by jails or bullets. Mr. Caffery, Cuban politicians and commercial interests like to imagine that the present strike that took the strongest terroristic measures in the history of this island to repress, is caused by the juggling of political groups, now out of power, to get in.

Nothing could be sillier than the glib assurances put forth by administrators of sugar mills, commercial interests and representatives of the United States government that the Cubans are childish people, politically irresponsible and bent on quarreling.

This strike is the testimony of the people. Its motive power is hunger for bread and freedom. Its leaders, workers and sympathizers of many varied groups, are now in jail. Hundreds have been killed. The rights of assemblage, free press, free speech, free movement of any kind have been crushed for the moment. Batista's assurances that the government would stop at nothing—clenching his fist, raising it, bringing it down like a hammer, the pale opal ring holding the eye like a monotonous portent—have been kept. Whether or not he is using this unrest to slide into an absolute military dictatorship is not so vital to determine at this moment as to remember that this strike boils up from a people sick for freedom. Even greater than the terrible need for food and shelter is the now universal craving to be free, to feel some personal security; for the family at home not to sit with sinking hearts if the son does not return, for the student to be able to speak without being beaten sometimes to death; for terror to be finished.

Terrorism on this island is of two kinds: that of the terrorists who in despair, irresponsibility and sometimes opportunism have used bombs and deaths to signalize their hatred of a regime that offers no solution to the young or old, and terrorism, calculated, planned and within the law, of a government whose police are military, where no legal court has jurisdiction over a military tribunal. The Urgency Tribunals, set up as an excuse for order, have not run down terrorists of the A. B. C. and Autenticos, but anyone who appears to fight for the rights of freedom or livelihood. Before the strike began, over three thousand political prisoners crowded the jails of Cuba.

The present coalition government of Mendieta began dissolving not because of some pressure from other political groups, but because a general strike of teachers and students on the entire island became the signal for an upsurge leading to the general strike. New cabinet officers have been stuffed into the seats of those resigning; Batista is reported to be shopping among the customers of various groups, anxious only to keep in power, but the groundwork of the profound discontent will be found sooner or later to have been unified, not dispersed by machine guns. Just as the arrest of the six editors of Masses was a signal for a united front movement of groups until that moment disunited, so will present tactics prove a cement. On a political program the united front demands were for freedom of speech, freedom of assemblage, free press, right to strike, legalization of all parties and unions, freedom of political prisoners. In different sections certain local demands played a part; the teachers adding demands for new schools, equipment and free lunches for undernourished children.

The old-line parties, sensing the way the wind was about to blow, had been busy prior to the strike holding forth bait to the public. Even the old Liberal Party tried to get rid of the smirch of Machado by promising a solution of the unemployment problem. Only the Autenticos party of Grau San Martin, the party of Guiteras to the left of Autenticos, the Agrarian Nationalist Party and the Communists were unrepresented in the Mendieta government. The A. B. C. was represented but sought to get rid of Mendieta without sacrificing Batista.

When the old glove began splitting, an attempt was made among old-line groups to sew up the seams and announcements kept appearing that they would get together and make some statement that would completely reassure the people. Elections were promised but no one believes in elections any more. There has been no democratic election on this island as far back as most grown-ups can remember, which means never. At the same time, all opposition groups including the A. B. C. were attempting to form a united front of leadership to back the general strike. The leaders did not agree. But the rank and file bolted and followed the leadership of the Confederation of Labor and the Agrarian Nationalist Party in a general strike. And the general strike was waged at base on a purely anti-imperialistic line.

In Havana the intense hatred of American penetration of this island is obscured if one sticks closely to the business interests and the wealthy section of Vedado. But sit on a park bench, talk to people in stores, ride on busses over this island, and the hatred that foreign capital, particularly American, has bred in masses of people is as clear as daylight.

This island, never free of interference, never free of the kind of greed that made Cortez say petulantly, "come here for a gold mine, not to work like a peasant," is bound hand and foot to a system of economy that brings only a starvation standard of living to the masses of people. Leadership of political parties may be only too glad to play ball with United States but that is no sign of the simple instinctive reaction of the people. American officers fraternized with Spanish officers after the Spanish-American War and Cuban patriots were forgotten except by General Wood who cleaned up the island for the health of American business men and ordered a decree that would annul the communal land holdings and initiate a system more amenable to the acquisition of private property. That little maneuver has now piled into a system of *latifundo* land ownership that is demoralizing to the people. That Mr. Welles trumpets the abolition of the Platt Amendment at this late date is nothing; the hands-off policy of the United States is not trusted on this island where we continue to hold a naval base at Guantanamo and Mr. Caffery sees eye to eye with Mr. Batista as a man of practical affairs.

At this moment the streets are empty at night, the nine o'clock curfew can strike death if defied. The student running the elevator in my hotel has a serious face. He was smiling a little when the strike began. Many people of a neutral bent were not sure of themselves but a few nights of terror have set their beliefs. The brief regime of Grau San Martin with its Social-Democratic phraseology appears to have given people many doubts. So little was accomplished, they say, so much promised. Distrust of politicians has eaten into them like cancer. It is from the deepest depths that the movement comes. The unafraid are the really desperate, who have nothing to lose. But if one reads the papers, all government-censored, Mendieta has broken the strike and the government was never so strong. One must remember that no government, however backed by force, holds out forever without offering something to its people. Even Hitler had an unfriendly outside world and the humiliations of Versailles to aid him; Mussolini built up an "ideology." Batista has nothing but an army. Whether he is a "man of the people" and not so much a killer as he seems, is as unimportant now as it is to decide whether Mendieta is or is not a personally honest man. Both are in the grip of a machine more powerful than any individual.

The entire economic machinery of this

island that has set the lives of its people in a jelly of misery, is also geared beyond the power of anyone adequately to control it. Profits run thin; even now sugar-beet interests in the states deeply intrenched in Philippine and Hawaiian cane, maneuver for high tariffs that will wipe out Cuban sugar as if it did not exist. The Reciprocity Treaty is the last sponge to stop the flow of blood. Figures prove that exports and imports have practically doubled over last year. The sugar business has been propped up with a crutch for the benefit of the sugar business.

"Spill a little water on this table," said a doctor in Santiago to me, "and it will give you an idea of how much benefits soaked through to the people. The top layer feels the water, the underlayers never know a drop was spilled." Children beg, hundreds dangle lottery tickets in front of your eyes, the crazy framework is geared to an industry that cannot feed the country on which, in the past at least, it has fattened.

In order to control sugar quotas, small farmers have been crowded and their contracts cut, workers have been fired from more skilled jobs for the cane fields. The entire business of the mills needs a steady all-day, all-night, all-week grind until the job is done. The rubbish from cane feeds and runs the mill's machinery. All day the huge carts topple cane into the giant maw. The speedup and the shortened quota have shortened the season for the *zafra.* Whatever profits come to the people come only through wages and with a shortened season, the long dead season where there is no work looms more ominously than ever. Moreover prices have risen, even when wages have gone up. In most mills the cutter of cane working the field gets just what they want to give him, no more. It may come to thirty cents a day, may rise to fifty, the most anyone dares say is paid, is eighty. Most field workers see no money. Scrip is their lot, redeemable at company stores. The Mercedes, an American mill, gives chips of metal; yet scrip is illegal.

Only laws against labor seem to be enforced; the others ride by the board. The death penalty for sabotage has been the excuse to jail hundreds of workers all over the island. Many have been driven from tiny huts to wander to relatives in towns. Carlos Garcia has a big family and he made a garden but they gave him twenty-four hours to leave. He belonged to a syndicate. Vincente Castillo was a sugar boiler; he was beaten for belonging to a syndicate, told to march on. Sugar workers, half smiling, shamed, tell of humiliations at the hands of soldiers, of heads shaved, of the *chapapote,* a hot, small red pepper, used for torture. These are details. The whole fabric is rotten; the life a lottery where only a few in Havana who can sneak into government jobs hog money. Small Cuban business men and bigger Cuban operators naturally lick the hand that feeds them but underneath, the population simmers.

Big business is largely in the hands of the American and British; smaller businesses and shops in the hands of Spaniards. There seems nothing left for the Cuban but graft. No wonder a cynicism has been bred in the intellectual worker, the doctor and journalist and often the teacher. Some of them disbelieve too much. It is only from below that belief bubbles and forces its way up into a strike, into continual demands that filter out to other classes, purge teachers and students and unify them all. Young men graduating from medical school, lawyers, teachers, all focus their hopes upon Havana, the one city into which money pours. The interior is drained.

Too many doctors, they say, while children in sick huts on mountain tops die with nothing to relieve their pain. There is only too much sugar here, that is all. Too much on top, too little below. Salaries for medical men today, even in Havana, are not very big plums. Doctors are in a bad way, with salaries of from $25 to $50 a month and private practices ruined. The mutual organizations of hospitalization, while excellent in detail, work out pretty much as everything else on this island. Due to hard times, membership has dropped off. Of those remaining, the rich pay no more than the poor, and many of those who once thought $2 a week a fair sum now should pay much more for the private rooms that they seem to get through political pull when they are ill. The doctors are striking too, demanding government aid, demanding that the rich pay more, the poor be served free, that doctors have membership on governing boards now controlled by business men.

"Things are better," say hopeful business men, "look at rents, they are up, a sure sign." But the answer comes from the head of the Tuberculosis Sanitarium on this island. "Tuberculosis is on the up grade. We have 500 beds and need 5,000. People are hungry because rents take too much money. All diseases are on the increase."

"Vegetables have increased in the export trade," reads an article but the farmer cannot wriggle from the commission man to whom he signs away his crop before it ever grows, to whom he is always in debt. The *colono* growing cane and subsidized by the mill owner would have to turn over every cent coming to him for four years in order to liquidate his present debt.

This top-heavy structure is smothering the island. It will not let the fisherman sell fish directly to the poor field worker. It compels him to sell to the canteen of the sugar mill which in turn gets a profit for selling to the field worker. A whole people have been demoralized but they continue to raise their heads. The students have a word *Tangana,* meaning to make a big noise. They do not believe in promises of politicians any more. When six secretaries came to Santiago when the province of Oriente refused to pour taxes into Havana any more, they promised the boys a new school but the students continued their strike just the same, continued to make a big noise.

A big noise fills this island, even if under repressive measures it has become for the moment a whisper. Americans like to patronize Cubans, to say they are shiftless, do not want to cultivate land, cannot run their political affairs. All the while they forget that Cubans have never had freedom. They are renters in their own country, with only the pride to struggle in the bravest way for freedom. They may not cultivate land, but they die for freedom, without which cultivating land is only slavery. Much of what Cubans earn goes on the back. Shoes are precious. People are often on the move, going from cane fields to coffee mountain, hunting for food. Driven by hunger.

The sugar-cane worker who is three months or less at *zafra* must put on his shoes if he has any and maybe go to the coffee mountains. Sometimes he doesn't get to wear his shoes even if he gets to the coffee mountains. That's the rainy season and his feet swell, his belly swells, sometimes he dies and his shoes don't ever go on his feet any more. There's malaria in the *barracones;* it's hard to find a dry place to put a sack to lie on. Sometimes the women never get to wear a good dress; just a gunny sack. It's hell all right on the coffee mountains. Then there's wood cutting too, deep in swamps. It's full of mosquitoes there, and standing in water half to the waist isn't healthy. The army doesn't get around to boss things so much though in a place like that but they came lately to a swamp near Havana and beat workers who had struck in sympathy with the secretary of their union, in jail in Havana.

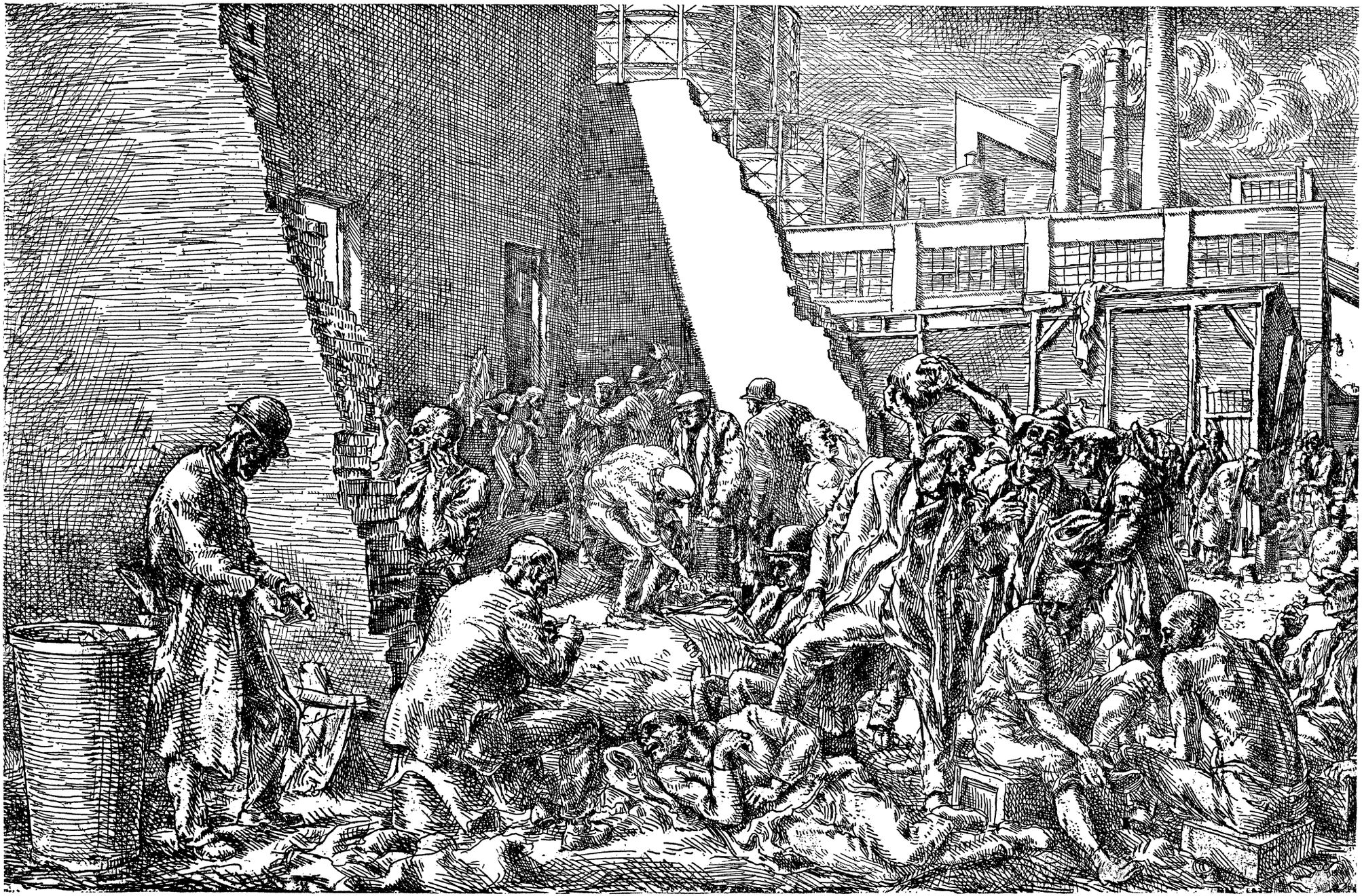
It's funny to hear foreigners talk about the way the cane workers don't know how to raise gardens. There are few gardens on the island it's true but when sugar was high, gardens were forbidden by those that own the land, those who are not the cane workers. But even on the coffee mountains they made a union. A Jamaician told me about it, smiling and nodding, telling how he hid under piles of rubbish when soldiers came to look for him.

The interior of this island is the answer and the explanation of the strike. When the interior is answered, when the people of Realengo have their land in peace and can get goods for their hard labor on their land, when schools come, when sanitation and electric lights are common, then strikes will cease on Cuba. "We don't have lights," a worker says, "only the moon." Little children eight years old go on strike in Santiago for pencils and paper. In an academy of fine arts in the midst of crumbling busts and plaster casts without arms or noses, students were patiently trying to learn to draw; an orchestra rehearsed on broken chairs; but over the doors of the rooms that crumbled, the names of students who have been murdered by regimes of tyranny on this island, stood out boldly in white paint, on each side of each name, a gleaming white star:

Mella. Rubiera. Trejo.

Tangana—a big noise.

Try and stop it.



EAST TENTH STREET JUNGLE

An Etching by Reginald Marsh

Can We Pay for H. R. 2827?

DR. JOSEPH GILLMAN

THIS article is intended to answer the question which is most commonly raised concerning the Lundeen Bill, namely, "Isn't the bill really impractical—can the government foot it?"

The Lundeen Bill, as everyone should know by now, provides for unemployment benefits at full "average local wages" for the full duration of unemployment to "all workers and farmers—unemployed through no fault of their own" and compensation to the same extent to "all workers and farmers who are unable to work because of sickness, old age, maternity, industrial injury, or any other disability."

To answer the question, we shall deal with three factors: First, how many persons would be eligible for the benefits of this comprehensive scheme of social insurance; that is, what is the number of the unemployed, and of those over sixty-five years of age without means of self-support, etc. Second, how much would all these benefits run up to. And third, where the funds are to come from.

According to estimates of Drs. Thorp and Kuznets, published in *National Income* 1929-1932, even in 1929 there were as many as 2,200,000 unemployed in the country, and 5,300,000 in 1930. The average number of unemployed for the year 1932 they estimated at 14,400,000. Incidentally, the government never, as far as I know, gave publicity to these figures, although they were computed as part of a senate document and were prepared under the auspices of the United States Department of Commerce.

By the same methods that Drs. Thorp and Kuznets used, I find that the number of those fully unemployed in 1934 was over 14,000,000. And this is a most conservative figure. It does not include, for instance, the million or so unemployed family farm labor. Nor does it include the millions who are employed but one or two days a week.

The figures do show, however, that with all the ballyhoo of Roosevelt, Richberg, Frances Perkins and the Blue Eagle, the net increase in the number put on the payrolls by N.R.A. between 1932 and 1934 was only 500,000. The gross average increase was two millions. But between 1932 and 1934 a million and a half new workers became available for jobs. These, apparently, the administration does not count when it figures the number it has "put back to work."

How much will it cost to provide social insurance under the specifications of the Lundeen Bill when 14,000,000 are fully unemployed? If we were at all consistent, the answer would be "at least all that the workers are losing through unemployment, etc." In 1930 they received $4,300,000,000 less in wages than in 1929; in 1931, $12,000,000,000 less; in 1932, $21,000,000,000 less; and in 1933, $23,400,000,000 less than in 1929, a total loss in income of $60,900,000,000 in the course of four years.

But we shall be conservative rather than consistent. Let us assume that the entire amount of benefits paid under the Workers' Bill would appear in the market as new purchasing power. We know that only sixty cents of every dollar thus appearing in the market would become available as wages, that is, as re-employment money. That was the ratio of wages and salaries to income produced in 1929 and in 1933. Also, I have calculated that the average loss of wages per unemployed in 1934 was $1,147.[1]

On this basis we arrive at the following figures:

With 14,000,000 as the number of unemployed, the annual gross cost of the Workers' Bill would amount to $18,374,000,000. From this sum would be deducted the $3,875,000,000 currently (in 1934) spent by various governmental agencies to relieve unemployment and in payment of old age and other benefits to the dependent classes. That leaves a total of $14,499,000,000 as the net benefits under the Workers' Bill. This sum, as new purchasing power, would provide $8,699,000,000 as new payrolls and re-employment (60 percent of $14,499,000,000). This leaves a balance of $5,800,000,000 as the sum that would have to be provided, in addition to current governmental expenditures for relief, etc., to meet the cost of unemployment insurance, old-age pensions, etc., under the Lundeen Bill.

It must be admitted, however, that the amount of re-employment that might follow the adoption of the Workers' Bill is uncertain. Would every dollar paid as benefits under the Workers' Bill go wholly to the market as new purchasing power for consumers' goods? A goodly portion of these sums might go to pay debts, and some go into hiding for a "rainy day." Then, again, we should take into account the amount of commodity stocks on hand and how rapidly they would be used up and how soon workers would have to be put back to work to increase and replenish them. Also, account should be taken of the extent of industrial rationalization and technological advance in the past six years of depression. According to recent findings of the National Industrial Conference Board (Bulletin of December 10, 1934), seventy-seven workers can now produce as much as 100 did ten years ago. Unless these displaced workers can find employment in new occupations, they must remain permanently idle.

Will the cost break the Treasury?

No! The Treasury, through the R. F. C., and the other alphabetical agencies, has already spent on "recovery" a great deal more than the amounts called for under the Lundeen Bill. And the tangible results thus far have been the doubling of the number of millionaires in the country and increasing the number on the charity dole to over 22,000,000 persons, the largest number that ever stood hat in hand for a meal in the history of this country, or, for that matter, in any civilized country in time of peace. This is because much of the money thus put forth by these government agencies has been largely of a nature of a transfer from one pocket into another. It has been lent to railroads to pay their debts to banks, and to banks to strengthen their capital structure. Little of these moneys has reached the ultimate consumer. In the second place, but for the amounts going to direct relief (perhaps not more than 20 percent of all the expenditures), the rest of these billions were made to percolate from above, through the hands of employers of labor, who took their rake-off before any of them reached the workers as wages. Furthermore, the financing methods thus far pursued by the Treasury to bring about "recovery" have been largely of an inflationary nature. The moneys paid out to the farmer came directly, through the processing tax, from increased prices of the necessities of life.

The Lundeen Bill proposes to raise the funds not from borrowing or from sales taxes, or from increasing prices of the necessities of life through inflation, tariffs and subsidies, but from the accumulated wealth of the country and from the current income of those who can best afford to pay. It proposes to raise the money by taxing those who are growing richer during the very time that millions are growing poorer. Section four of the Lundeen Bill reads:

> All moneys necessary to pay compensation guaranteed by this Act and the cost of establishing and maintaining the administration of this Act shall be paid by the Government of the United States. Further taxation necessary to provide funds for the purpose of this Act shall be levied on inheritances, gifts, and individual and corporation incomes of $5,000 a year and over.

These moneys go directly to the consumers,

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[1] All the details in these calculations were given to the Sub-committee of the House Labor Committee, Matthew Dunn, Chairman, and will appear in the Hearings on the Lundeen Bill. The writer wishes gratefully to acknowledge the help given him by J. Roland in making these and most of the rest of the computations.

and find their way into the market place as sure-enough purchasing power.

Let us look at some of the figures:

1. *A tax on individual incomes over* $5,000. If the tax rate employed in England were applied to the incomes of these brackets in America, four times as much would have been collected by the federal government in 1928 as was collected. And this does not cover the flagrant evasions practiced by the wealthiest families in America, the Morgans, the Mitchells, the Mellons, the Wigginses. Nor does it cover the millions of income from the billions of tax-exempt securities.

2. *A tax on corporation profit.* Under the present tax rate, permitting deductions, which might very properly be looked into, the amount collected in 1928 was $1,184,000,000. At an average rate of only 25 percent applied to corporation profits of over $5,000, this source would have yielded $2,615,000,000.

3. *An estate or inheritance tax.* In 1928, the gross amount of inheritances reported was $3,500,000,000, and the tax paid was only $42,000,000, or about one percent on the gross. On an estimate of an average inheritance tax of only 25 percent, $888,000,000 would have been provided for the federal government.

4. *Corporation surplus* (accumulated from annual earnings). The net corporation surplus in 1928 was $47,000,000,000. These are the sums set aside by corporations as a source of funds from which to pay interest on funded debt and capital in times of lower earnings. Interest payments have continued throughout the depressions with but slight decreases in 1932 and 1933.

This accumulated surplus represents the result of the cooperative efforts of capital and labor. If, in times of depression, payments out of surplus continue to be made on capital claims, why should not a portion of this surplus go to meet the needs of workers? In times of depression, when a machine stands idle, it continues to draw returns. Yet, when a worker becomes idle because the machine is idle, he remains unprovided for.

A 25-percent tax on the corporation surplus for 1933 would have yielded nearly nine billion dollars to meet just such needs as this bill aims to provide for.

Of course, this corporation surplus is not all in the form of liquid funds. Much of it, perhaps as much as 50 percent, has been transformed into expanded physical plant and equipment. The other 50 per cent is in cash or investments. As a rule, 50 percent of annual corporation earnings is put away as surplus and undivided profits. A goodly portion of these should automatically be turned over to meet the costs of social insurance.

Probably the most overlooked feature of the Lundeen Bill, because it is so obvious and taken for granted, is the provision for immediate benefits. It is the only bill that makes that provision. All other bills, calling as they do for the accumulation of reserves before benefits can begin being paid, postpone the actual operation from two to four years. The Wagner-Lewis-Doughton Bill requires nearly four years. The Wagner-Louis-Doughton Bill proposes that the federal government impose a tax on the payrolls of the separate businesses in each state. This tax (90 percent) would be returned to the states and credited to these businesses, if they in turn through a similar tax on payrolls provide a fund from which unemployment benefits would be paid. But the tax for which this bill provides will be imposed for the first time not before "the taxable year commencing January 1, 1936," that is, in 1937, and payment of benefits would begin only *"two years after* contributions are *first made"*—in other words, not until 1938! And this in the face of five years of a most disastrous economic crisis.

The proponents of the Lundeen Bill, on the other hand, say that the accumulation of reserves by a tax on payrolls is vicious on its own account, and forces the postponement of the unemployment benefits, in addition. The Lundeen Bill provides for the *immediate* establishment of a system of payments of unemployment benefits, from funds raised from the accumulated wealth and from the current income of those most able to pay. The proponents of this bill know that funds raised from a tax on payrolls are funds taken out of the empty pockets of the workers themselves. They know that the employer will either directly deduct that tax from his total wage bill, or pass it on to the workers as consumers indirectly by passing it on to the masses in the form of increased prices.

Again, most state bills have either residence requirements or previous service in the state as tests of eligibility to unemployment insurance benefits. These provisions mean that those now unemployed must first get jobs before they would be eligible for unemployment benefits in the case of future unemployment. Also, all the state bills limit the amount of benefits to a fraction of the prevailing wage, and that only to a limited number of weeks within any one year. And all the state bills exclude a number of categories of workers from the benefits of the system. In this the Wagner-Lewis-Doughton Bill sets the example. It would exclude all farm labor, domestic workers, all employes of federal, state and municipal agencies, that is teachers, hospital workers, chemists, etc., and all those working in establishments that employ fewer than four workers, and that means most of the technicians, engineers, architects, etc., accountants and similar specialists. The Lundeen Bill, on the other hand, would extend unemployment benefits at full "average local wages" for the full duration of unemployment to "all workers and farmers—unemployed through no fault of their own." An unemployed architect, it is held, might not enjoy starvation any more than a bricklayer or a machinist. Incidentally, it will not be amiss to record here the fact that the unemployment insurance program advanced by the A. F. of L. also excludes professional workers along with domestic workers and farm laborers and government employes. Its statement reads:

> Coverage should be as wide as possible, including all industrial and manufacturing establishments hiring three or more persons. The coverage should include mines, wholesale and retail trade, all transportation, communication, forestry, fisheries, and should exclude domestic workers, laborers engaged in agriculture, professional persons, government employes.

The Wagner-Lewis-Doughton Bill would further "encourage" the states, by a government grant, to inaugurate systems of old-age pensions and other phases of social insurance. The provisions of its old-age pensions program characterize fully the essential inadequacy and downright niggardliness of the provisions for all phases of the program. As Dorothy Douglas brilliantly summed it up: "A worker employed without interruption at code minimum wages of $13 a week throughout his life from twenty to sixty-five (and paying contributions all that time) would be entitled at the age of sixty-five to an annuity of less than $5 a week!"

The Lundeen Bill provides that "all workers and farmers who are unable to work because of sickness, old age, maternity, industrial injury, or any other disability," shall be compensated in the same manner and to the same extent as those who have lost their earnings through unemployment, that is, at full average wages.

In short, the federal "Workers' Unemployment and Social Insurance Act," H. R. 2827, avoids all the deficiencies of these other bills, and it alone meets the three essential requirements of an unemployment insurance program, namely:

First, it provides for the legitimate relief of all workers unemployed through no fault of their own, at full average wages for the entire period of unemployment.

Second, it provides for the only form of administration which would preclude any policies inimical to the interest of the unemployed, namely, by workers and farmers themselves, acting under the rules prescribed by the Secretary of Labor.

Third, it makes possible immediate provision for funds which would make insurance operative for present as well as future emergencies, while the other bills have to depend upon the accumulation of reserves from the next period of prosperity which, to say the least, is nowhere around the corner.

Finally, there can be no doubt either of the urgency or the feasibility of the Lundeen Bill. But in no way should this be taken to imply that the enactment of this bill would solve the crisis, and do away with unemployment. The stage in which capitalism finds itself at present is the stage in which the economic crisis is chronic, and in which unemployment becomes a permanent feature. As I said earlier, millions of workers now unemployed will never again have a permanent job. And to these, other millions will be added as the crisis continues. But the Lundeen Bill is the only social insurance bill which provides, indirectly to be sure, for a modicum of that redistribution of wealth without which the crisis must become progressively aggravated.

JAIL BREAK

TOM JOHNSON

ONE large room occupied the entire second story of the County Jail. Its brick walls were sheathed with upright four-by-four timbers, once whitewashed, now a dirty grey mottled with tobacco juice. One barred and glassless window looked out to the North, another to the South and two more faced the tobacco fields East of town. When it stormed, rude wooden shutters were propped in place to keep out the worst of the wind and rain. Two vermin-infested bunks in the corner, a pot-bellied coal stove and a couple of benches completed the furniture.

In the exact center of the room was set an iron cage measuring perhaps ten by twelve feet. Three boys, short-timers, and old Dad Harrison had the run of the room outside the cage. In the cage itself lived nine men, awaiting trial. We had no cots, no bunks. We slept spoon-fashion with only our overcoats between us and the cold, iron deck. At one end of the cage the white bowl of an open toilet reared its head. Beside it a two-foot length of pipe shot up from the floor to terminate in a faucet which supplied our water. Under it a battered and leaky washtub provided us variously with a place to wash our feeding pans, a washtub for our clothes, a bathtub for such sketchy bathing as we cared to indulge in and a means of flushing that unspeakable toilet.

There was nothing else in the cage. There was room for nothing else. We nine overflowed the place. We stumbled over one another's legs when we tried to walk; we ate, slept and swapped lies rubbing shoulders with each other. We slept largely in the day time. At night we lay awake fighting off the bugs and huge rats which overran the place. But their boldness and their numbers were amazing. It is impossible to say that rats, roaches and assorted vermin shared our quarters in the cage; rather we lived among them, barely tolerated interlopers in their own domain.

The three boys and Dad Harrison were our connection with the world outside our narrow cage. They were our hands, our ears, our eyes. Twice a day they passed in to us the greasy mess of beans and cabbage on which we fed. They kept up the fire in the stove that warmed us. They sat by the bars of the windows and relayed to us such news of the world as they could garner.

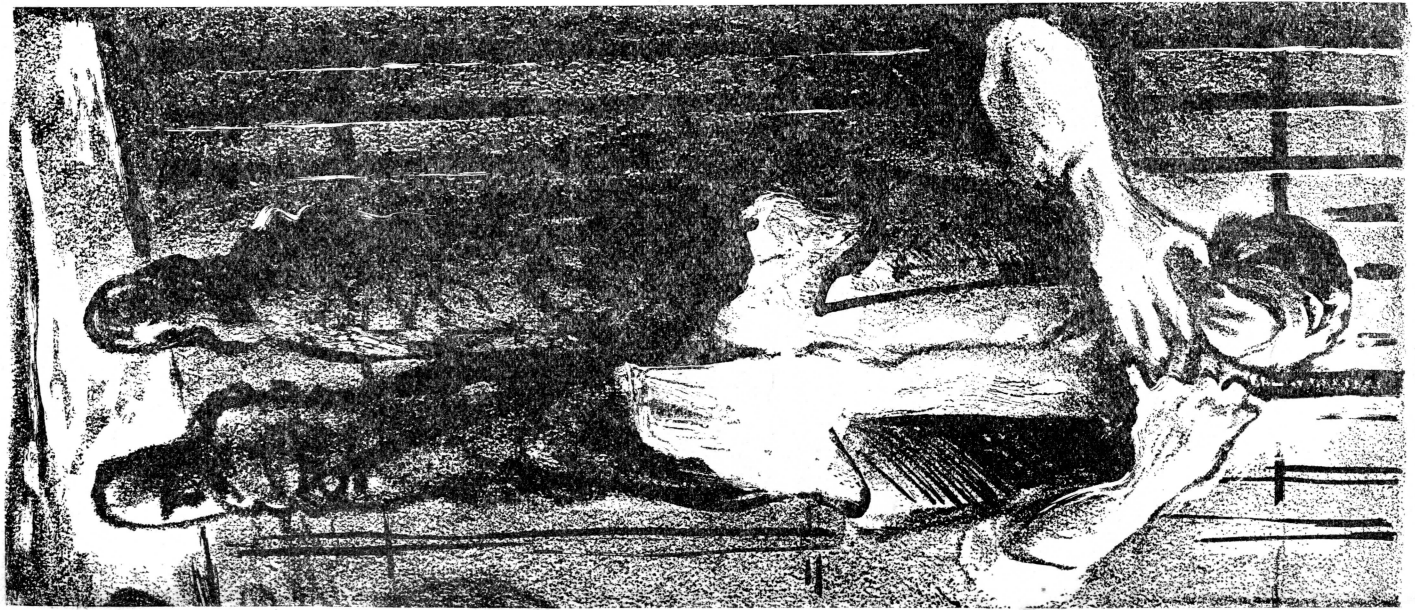
Slim and I had already weathered a month in the cage since that unlucky night the local sheriff spotted a northern license on our car, as we sped through Tracy on our way to a strike committee meeting. Orders had gone out to arrest on sight and hold for investigation all "foreigners" found in the Kentucky strike fields, and we were overtaken before we had left the town a mile behind. One look at Slim and the sheriff pulled his gun and ordered us out of the car. They had been looking for him, the chief "outside agitator" in the mine strike zone, for weeks and now they had him. I was an unknown newcomer, but I was with Slim and that was enough. We were hauled to the county seat in triumph and promptly thrown in jail, charged with "sedition." Bond was set at $5,000 and after a month of futile efforts to raise it there seemed little likelihood of our leaving the cage before our trial in the September term of court. There was nothing for it but to curse our luck and settle down to the weary life of our fellow canaries, as the cage birds were called.

Two of them were youngsters just turned nineteen. They were incredibly dirty and cheerful and easily adapted themselves to life in the cage. They had been caught red-handed in some petty thievery or other and looked forward with considerable equanimity to three years in the pen and a real education in more profitable forms of crime. Two were mountain liquor men, charged with the robbery of a farmer's wife during her husband's absence, and the casual rape of her daughter in the process. They protested their innocence to all who would listen, but the case looked strong against them and with rape carrying a possible life sentence they were badly scared and held frequent conferences with their lawyers at the bars of the cage. Various of their kinsmen visited them at intervals to report their progress, or lack of it, in combing the country for reliable alibi witnesses.

Bert Tolliver, long and lank, with an eternal quid of tobacco in his jaw, as the oldest inhabitant, had welcomed us to the cage. He was the victim of one of those age-old mountain feuds which smoulder for years and then suddenly, from the most trivial causes, break out in destroying flame. As Bert told the story, he was preparing for bed one night in his lonesome cabin up Skinned Head Hollow when he was shot, through the open window. The heavy 30-30 bullet took him in the shoulder and knocked him down. He had sense enough to reach up and put out the lamp on the table, then he rolled under the bed and lay there in the dark with his Smith and Wesson in his good hand. He did not have long to wait. The door opened and three men stepped in, lighting up the cabin with a flashlight. Bert opened fire and killed all three, taking another bullet in his thigh in the course of the fight. He bound up his wounds as best he could and lay there with his dead around him until daylight, when he hobbled down the branch to his nearest neighbor whom he ordered to town for a doctor and the sheriff.

It was court week when the killing took place and as Bert was still in the hospital he was bound over to the next term. He had become something of a local celebrity as a result of this exploit and looked forward confidently to an acquittal on a plea of self defense. (I learned long afterward that he got it—and left the courtroom in a burst of applause from his admirers).

Bert was a quiet giant, gentle and friendly. It was difficult to imagine him in the role of a killer until one Saturday night when we got a taste of his temper. A couple of drunks who had been thrown into the space outside the cage got obstreperous and began heaving chunks of coal at us through the bars. We were unable to get at them and our efforts to



calm them down met with small success. Bert took no hand in the affair. During all the commotion he sat silently on his rolled-up blanket at the rear of the cage. When the drunks at last tired of the sport and the excitement subsided, he got up and started talking to them in friendly fashion. He finally managed to inveigle one of them to the side of the cage with the offer of a smoke. As the man reached for the cigarette Bert made a sudden lunge with both hands through the bars. He caught the unfortunate drunk by the throat and his great fingers tightened. The man clawed frantically at those fingers but it was no use; they were slowly squeezing out his life. His face turned red, then purple, his hands fell to his sides and his body sagged against the bars. It looked like another killing. Slim and I jumped for the old man and finally broke his grip. The drunk fell in a heap on the floor, unconscious. Bert was trembling, his face twitching and dead white. "Why didn't you let me kill the bastard?" he mumbled again and again. It was half an hour before he had calmed down sufficiently to talk coherently.

They threw in the unconscious body of Roy Turner late one night during our first week in the cage. He was too drunk to move a finger. "Killed his cousin over to Mercer this afternoon," the jailor told us when they dragged him in. "Drunk as a coot then and he's been a-hittin' it ever since, I guess. They say he put three slugs in his cousin because the kid didn't like his singin' an' told him to shut up. He'll burn fer it, likely."

Roy must have shaken off his stupor during the night and remembered. We were aroused by the rattle of his boots against the bars. He hung from the top cross-bar of the cage, his belt around his neck and his body still twitching. We cut him down and brought him around. He said not a word but, "thanks fellers. You needn't be afeered of me tryin' it again." He was silent after this. He had been a miner and we tried to cheer him up with news of the strike and to draw him into our discussions on the union and the working-class struggle, but it was of little use. He sat all day with a tattered Bible on his knees and a vacant stare in his eyes, or stood at the bars of the cage looking out to the mountains where he had been born, had lived and had killed his friend. He lost weight day by day and began to complain of pains in his chest. One morning he spat blood on the floor. The cage was slowly killing him.

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No two or three deputies brought old Nate to the jail; he was escorted by a howling mob of most of the male inhabitants of the town, bent on a lynching. He was a Negro. He was guilty of the most heinous of all crimes in the eyes of the southern white: he had dared to marry a white woman.

We heard the savage blood yells of the mob long before it reached the jail, and Slim and I were more than a little worried. There had been much talk in the town of "takin' them Red-neck bastards outa jail with a rope around their necks." The strike lines were beginning to crack and the idea of a spectacular lynching of strike leaders as a means to turn the slow, bitter retreat of strikers starved out by hunger, into a headlong rout from which the union would recover slowly, if at all, is not unknown in American labor history. When first those terrible high-pitched yells, merging as they neared us into a wavering roar punctuated by the shrill shrieks of women and half-grown boys, beat upon our ears, our eyes sought each other and we stood silent, suspended from all other thought or feeling, our whole beings concentrated on that sound. "They're coming!" Slim whispered. And then, slowly, with a tight-lipped smile, "I thought they would."

There was little we could do and not much time to do that little in. We spoke swiftly in terse whispers to our cell mates. We knew they would be with us if it came to fighting; long hours of discussion on "the union" had seen to that. The boys outside handed us the poker from the stove and a two-by-four wrenched from the side of a bunk, and we sat down to wait, our muscles tense and our mouths dry and sticky.

Underneath that wave of sound from the mob you could hear a pin drop in the jail, but as the shouts grew clearer we knew they weren't meant for us—at least not this time. Moreover it was all noise. As Mark Twain said long ago, "The pitifulest thing out is a mob—but a mob of cowards without a *man* at the head of it is beneath pitifulness." This mob lacked a man.

Nate was a worn old man, his face and head bloody from the pistol butts of the deputies and the mob snapping at his heels, but he walked into that jail with his head up and no fear in his eyes. He had nerve. I know the let-down had me trembling when they led him in. The mob milled around in front of the jail awhile, yelling fresh threats, but finally its members dribbled away. The sheriff

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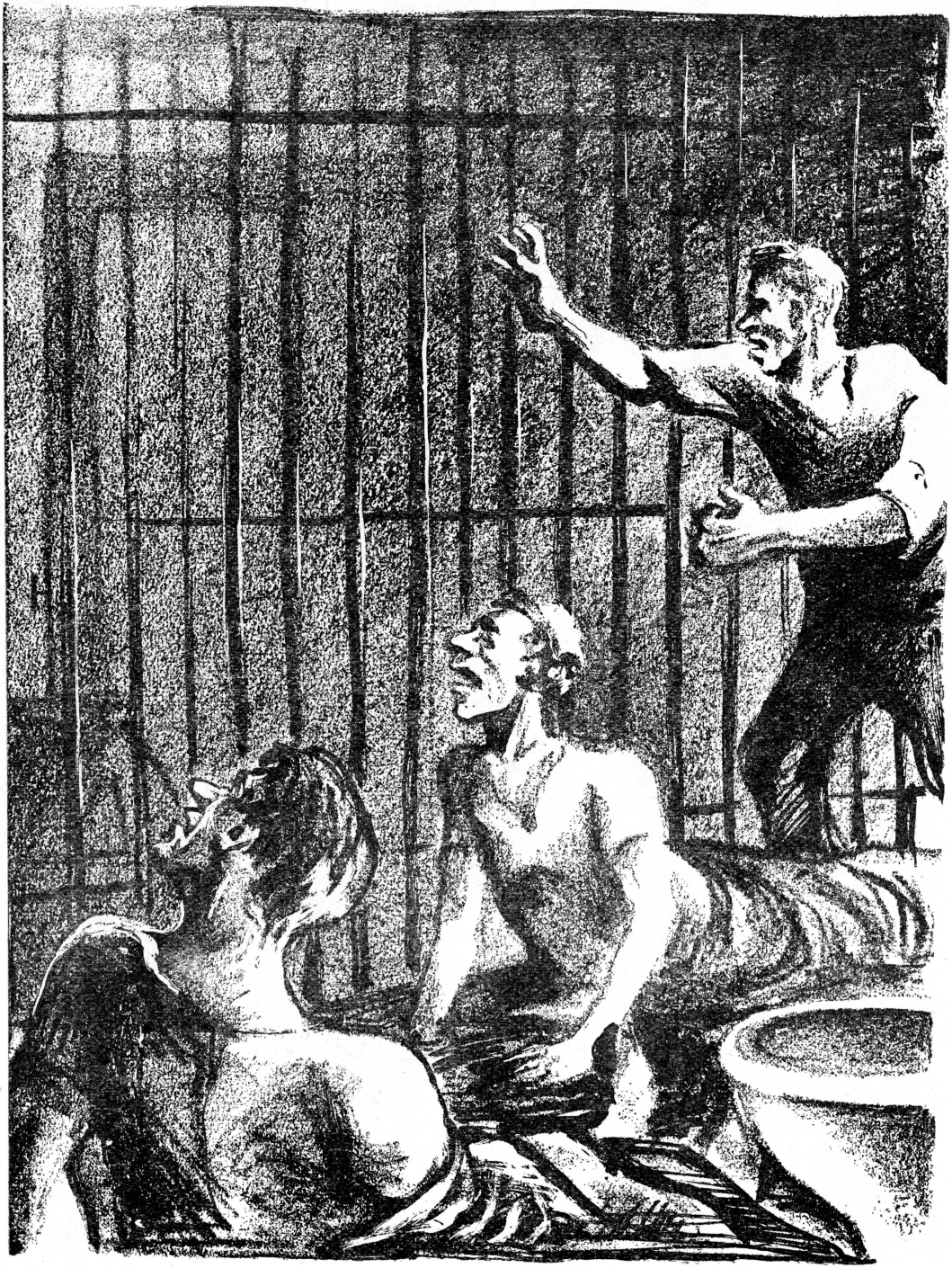

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actually apologized for inflicting the company of a Negro on us proud representatives of the superior white race—even including the Reds.

"I'll be fair with yuh, boys," he said, "I hate like hell to shove this no-'count nigger in on yuh, but I hain't got another place safe enough fer the black ape. If he gets under foot take and larrup him good. If there ever was a nigger needed takin' down, its him."

The deputies stood around cursing and threatening the old man until finally Slim broke out: "For Christ's sake leave the poor devil alone! Haven't you beaten him up bad enough as it is?"

"This pistol-whoppin' I give that nigger is nothin' to the one you'll git if yuh open that ugly trap of yours jes' once more, yuh Yankee nigger lover," one of the deputies replied, fingering the pearl-handled pistol at his belt.

Slim stood up with fire in his eyes, and I looked for trouble sure, but old Bert Tolliver, as usual, was equal to the emergency. "I don't keer how many niggers you pistol-whop, Shoots Robinson," he drawled, "but I do wish to hell you wouldn't use *my* pistol when yore a-doin' it. You'll bend hit outa plumb or knock the sight off, sure."

Robinson had Bert's pistol on his belt—supposedly held as part of the evidence against him—and the old man had recognized it. The other deputies laughed, Shoots grinned at Bert and the flare-up was over.

The days drifted slowly by. The deadly monotony of jail life lay on us like a blanket. We grew irritable and snapped at each other. I trained myself to sleep fourteen hours a day. Any diversion was welcome.

Old Bash Hinchley, the jailer, who slept on the landing just outside the door of the big room, contributed to our occasional amusement. He drank steadily, day after day. Never did I see him completely sober. Sometimes at night, when he was a bit tighter than usual, he would come in to spend a half-hour or so with us, leaning against the bars of the cage and yarning with the boys, some of whom he had known all their lives.

We almost lost Bash one time. One Sunday a couple of broken-down prostitutes from over the state line blew into town in an old Ford. They had a gallon jug of white mountain liquor with them and proceeded to tear up and down the one street of the village laughing and shrieking and in general doing their level best to escape for a time from the drab poverty of their lives. The sheriff finally ran them in and lodged them in the room below us in the first story of the jail.

That night after dark, Bash took one of them out and brought her up to his cubby-hole on the landing outside our door. They went to work on Bash's jug out there and if one were to judge by the noise, they must have made considerable inroads on it. At any rate Bash was so drunk he forgot to lock the girl up and the sheriff's wife found them both snoring in Bash's cot next morning when she came over from her house with our breakfast. She called her husband, and as Bash said afterward, "She raised bodacious hell itself fer a

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spell," demanding that he be immediately fired. The sheriff finally calmed her down, and Bash stayed. We decided he must have something on the sheriff and the latter was afraid to fire him.

The week the girls spent with us broke the monotony in more ways than one. One of the youngsters discovered a rusted-out rivet in the floor of the cage which, when removed, allowed us to listen to the rather highly spiced conversation of the girls in the room below. This was followed by the further discovery of a crack in the ceiling of the girls' room. Unfortunately the rivet hole in our floor and the crack in the ceiling of their room were a few inches out of line and so afforded no glimpse of what went on below. It remained for Bert to solve this last difficulty. He rigged up a hollow tube from a rolled-up newspaper which, when inserted through the rivet hole and then through the crack in the ceiling, gave a pretty fair view of the room below. Pinochle games now took on added interest; the boys gambled for the right to use the tube at night when the damsels below were preparing for bed.

The girls soon discovered our peeping and one of them threatened to tell the sheriff. The other, older and perhaps wiser, told her, "What the hell, honey, let 'em look. It don't do us no harm and the good Lord knows them poor boys have little enough fun." From then on our relations with the room below were of the friendliest.

The girls were released and life in the cage slipped back into its accustomed rut of boredom. Then suddenly all was changed. The wife of one of the liquor men slipped him a half dozen hack-saw blades concealed in a clean pair of jeans. Bash passed them in unsuspectingly enough.

We were told of it the next night. It was impossible to work without the other prisoners detecting it. It was necessary to bring all nine of us in the cage and the three boys and Dad Harrison, outside, into the attempted break. The liquor man evidently felt sure of everyone in the cage. Almost all were facing long terms and as for us "foreigners," we were fighting the coal operators and the "law"—that was enough. Moreover, we all realized that should one of our number turn stool pigeon, he would find it difficult to speak to the jailer without the knowledge of the rest, and before the cage door could be opened he would be beaten to a bloody pulp. None of us felt so sure of the three short-timers but it had to be chanced with them too. They declined to have anything to do with the break but willingly swore themselves to secrecy. Dad Harrison took to the idea at once. He had spent three years in the state coal mines and had no wish to repeat a hitch in that bloody hell. He was a simple and completely unmoral old man, charged with stealing a neighbor's rowboat and probably guilty.

Slim and I decided on an attitude of benevolent neutrality, but as events turned out, our instinctive feeling of sympathy for these warped and crippled victims of a cruel society finally drew us into a more active role in the break.

The boys worked only in the daytime. At night even the most careful use of a well greased blade carried far. Bash Hinchley slept outside the door and although he usually went to bed drunk, we were taking no chances. Dad was put to work on one of the East windows. He would lean on the windowsill with his blade concealed in a rag and work like fury when the coast was clear. Indeed we had a hard job to keep him from working when the coast *wasn't* clear, so eager was he to be out. The rest took turn about on the cage bars. Roy devised a little tray from an old shoe box, cut so as to hook on the bar beneath the one being cut. The tray caught the steel filings which were then washed down the toilet. Close to the man working was set a tobacco tin filled with a paste made from powdered rust and soap and identical in color with the bars. When filled with this mixture it was impossible to distinguish the cut.

The work went slowly since it was possible to be at it only during Bash's absence from the jail. The short-timers cooperated to the extent of watching for his return from town and warning us when to cover up. We lived those days at high tension and had more than one close call. Bash and the sheriff suspected nothing, but the usual periodical inspections of the jail and particularly the cage, were made. One Sunday when the job was nearly finished, the sheriff came in for a look around. He passed over the outer windows at a glance but for the first time he unlocked the cage door and came inside. We joked with him to cover up our nervousness. We must have looked guilty as hell. He was too wise to look for cuts; he went about the cage methodically tapping each bar with his pistol butt and listening critically to its ring. As he approached the rear of the cage we held our breaths, but Slim started pacing up and down and, picking up Bert's blanket roll, tossed it casually out of his way. It landed in the rear corner where he intended it should. The sheriff tapped most of the bars but he didn't bother to disturb the blanket to examine those behind it, close to the floor. The boys were working there. Of course they weren't foolish enough to cut any bar way through until all were ready, but even a partly cut bar might not ring true.

"Well fellers, that settles it!" said one of the liquor men when the sheriff was gone. "I come a-mighty near dyin' right here when that ole fox started fer the back of the cage. He don't suspect anything yet and I fer one don't aim to give him time to find out anything. We'll work like hell today—Bash has gone visitin' to his kinfolks on Crooked Creek and he won't be back 'til late evenin'—and tonight we'll jes' naturally blow!"

We set to work feverishly and by supper time the job was done—a square of bars in the cage and one in an outer window, each hanging by a shred of steel that could be severed by ten minutes of blade work. Bash came in looking mighty bleary and smelling worse; by ten o'clock he would be fit to sleep through an earthquake. Lights were out at nine and at twelve we went to work on the final preparations. One of the boys rapidly finished the last cut while the rest of us busied ourselves in the darkness ripping up blankets and coats to fashion a rope. At last all was ready. We shook hands all around. Someone quietly removed the square of sawed bars at the back of the cage, and with infinite care six men slipped through. Bert, Slim and I elected to remain behind. Bert felt sure of an acquittal and as for us—well, sedition wasn't a charge we were running out on.

We three lay there in the darkness and watched in strained silence as the shadows of our cell-mates drifted one by one across the little square of light between us and the wall, crouched, poised, for a moment in the window, their bodies outlined against the sky, and then, with a final wave of the hand, slid down the rope and out of sight.

"Damn their lucky hides, they're making it!" Slim whispered to me, "Do you hear boy, they're *free!*"

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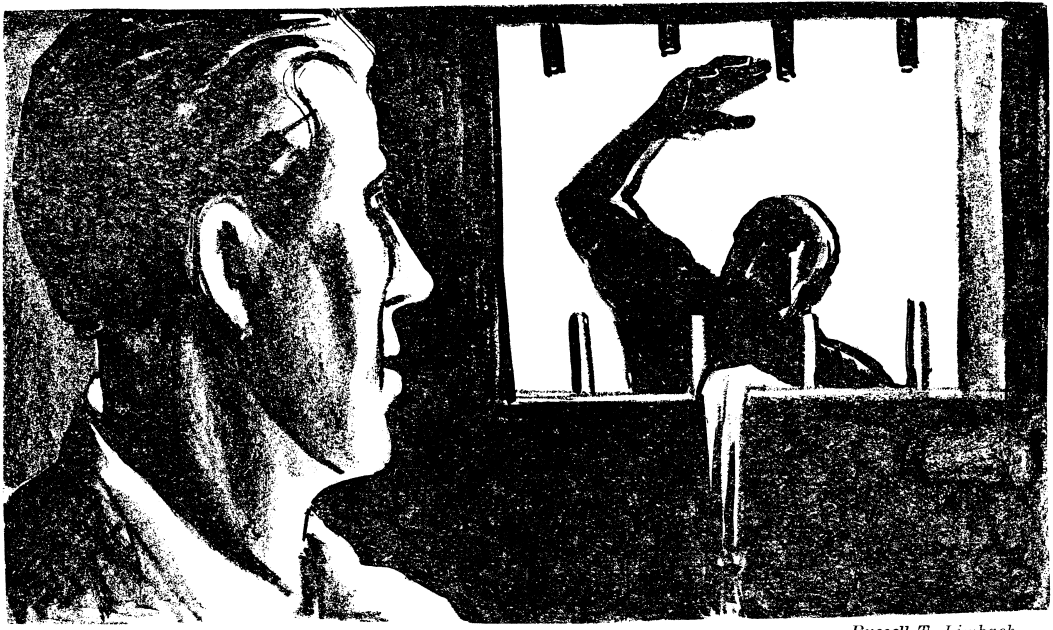
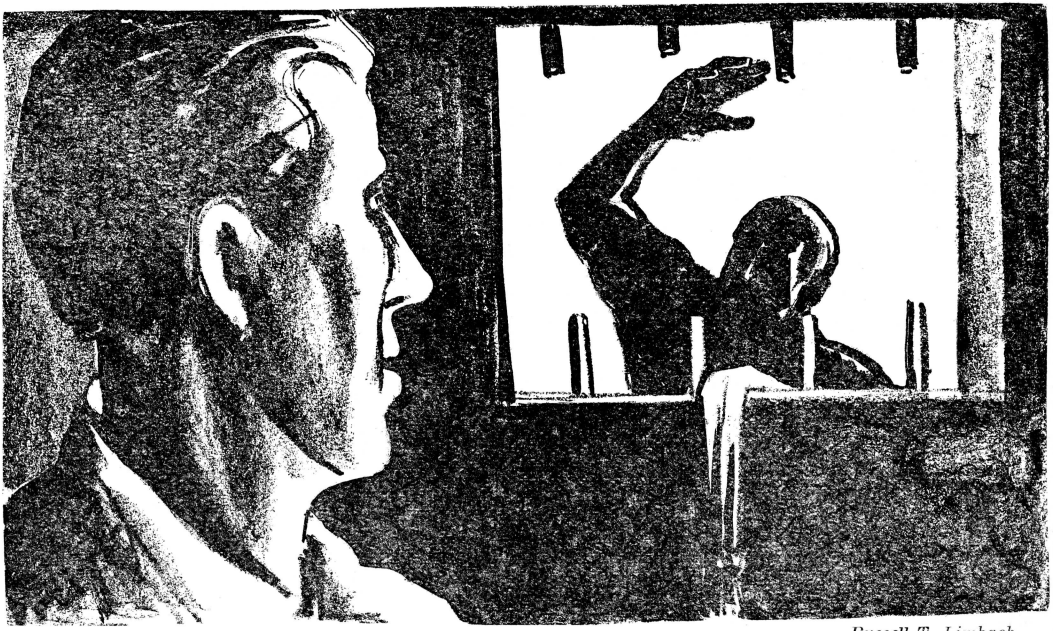


Russell T. Limbach



Russell T. Limbach

The Red Stick Brigades

JOSHUA KUNITZ

(At the end of the Civil War in Central Asia thousands of kulaks with their families and cattle crossed the Pianj River into Afghanistan. Since then raids into Soviet territory were periodical. In 1931, the kulaks under the leadership of Ibrahim Bek, one of the most gifted representatives of counter-revolution in Central Asia, invaded Soviet territory from Afghanistan with the purpose of disturbing the collectivization campaign and of serving as a nucleus for a possible counter-revolution. The Soviet peasants, organized in volunteer brigades, and armed with clubs, scoured the hills in pursuit of the invaders. It was generally felt that that invasion was engineered by the English.

This chapter from Dawn Over Samarkand, *Joshua Kunitz's forthcoming book on Central Asia, describes the capture of Ibrahim Bek.* —THE EDITORS.)

Should you want to return to our land again—
Every stone in the road will arise to restrain you
Every tree on the way stick its twigs in your eyes,
Every vine will become an entangling knot,
The mountains will shrug their shoulders and throw
Mighty avalanches down, the rivers will rise,
And the women will show their rage . . .
Do not come back to Badakshan,
Know hatred here awaits your bloody band!
From a Tadjik Folk Song.

IN KOKTASH (Green Rock), the center of the Lokai District, we chanced upon a grand celebration. From all over the valley Red Stick detachments, Tadjiks and Uzbeks and Kirghiz, men and women and children, on horseback and on foot, came here in throngs for the festivities.

For years Lokai had been the stronghold of the Basmach movement in Tadjikistan. The local population, mainly nomad Uzbek tribes, had long been renowned for its bold and warlike character. Lokai was the home of the most formidable bands, and the birthplace of Ibrahim Bek himself, the most prominent Basmach leader in Central Asia.

When in the spring Ibrahim Bek came back from Afghanistan, the first thing he did, say the Lokai peasants, was to make his way to Koktash, to his own people, his own tribe. There he had hoped to find his staunchest followers. At a secret meeting of all his tribal kin, he delivered himself of an impassioned plea for support. He boasted of his strength and international backing, of huge armies, with plenty of cannon and machine-guns and ammunition, of a huge air fleet across the border. He made little of the Red Army and the Soviet government. "Five years ago," he is reported to have exclaimed, "I abandoned Eastern Bokhara to let you feel for yourselves what Bolshevism meant. Now you have learnt your lesson. Now you have had a taste of Bolshevism. Now you know which flag to follow. I have come back certain of your choice. Join me in a holy war against the infidels, the Reds, for our lands, our property, our women, our faith!"

Then the elder of the tribe arose. He was an old man, the revered upholder of tribal tradition. Everybody grew silent. The old man was under the strain of conflicting loyalties. Say what you will, Ibrahim was a member of his tribe, his clan. He had legitimate claims on his Lokai kinsmen. Yet there were other claims and other loyalties too. The old man was fumbling for words to express the tangle of his feelings. After carefully examining the handful of green tobacco powder he had shaken out of the little gourd, he deliberately stuffed it in his cheek and, staring with his austere eyes above the heads of his assembled kinsfolk, began to tell of the great things that were taking place in the land. It was a paean of praise to the new life. Then he stopped, spat out his tobacco, and slowly shaking his head, half in sorrow, half in reproach, concluded:

"Ibrahim, Ibrahim, you say you have come to defend us against the Reds, that you have a great army and powerful friends. But why, Ibrahim, do you come to us in the black hours of the night, stealthily, like a thief? Why, Ibrahim, do you keep to the hills like a goat? Our tribe has fought long enough, Ibrahim. Now we have begun to work. Soon the cotton fields will be blooming in Lokai. We do not want you, Ibrahim. Leave us in peace, Ibrahim."

A tumult started. Virtually all of the tribesmen took the side of the elder. Only a few kulaks clung to the Basmach leader. Seeing that his mission in Lokai was a failure, Ibrahim leaped on his black steed and like a wind sped away into the mountains.

This was not the end of Ibrahim. Furious at having been spurned, he vented his whole anger on the population. Like hawks his Basmachi would swoop down from the Babatagu Mountain upon the peaceful Lokai settlements, seizing food, clothes, horses, setting fire to dwellings, slaying those who resisted. Spontaneously, the Lokai population rallied around the Red forces, formed Red Stick brigades, ferreting out the Basmachi, giving no quarter to the enemy. Within a few weeks the valley was rid of the invaders. And now they were celebrating victory.

In retrospect the entire celebration—the setting, the costumes, the games, and the speeches, and especially the things that took place the night following the festivities—seems an Oriental fantasy.

A vast, brilliantly green field encircled by chains of snow-hooded mountains spreads out in an amphitheatre to the jagged edge of the horizon. In the middle of the field six large concentric circles. Shades of red and yellow and orange and blue and white mutinous in the breeze. Turbans, embroidered skull caps, cloaks of silks and calicoes, and rifles, and sticks and flags, and sabers. The outermost circle is formed by the equestrian detachment. Laughter, clapping of hands, neighing and champing of horses. A little to the side, a row of huge copper kettles enveloped in smoke and flame—pilaf and tea for the celebration. Overhead the ceaseless screeching of the puzzled eagles.

Many young fellows with moving picture cameras snoop about us. (The Tadjik-Kino on the job!) Khodzhibaiev, the Chairman of the Peoples' Commissars of the Tadjik Republic, dressed in semi-military uniform, his white linen tunic luminously starched, rises to greet us, placing his hand on his breast as is the custom, and bowing with a great show of ceremonious cordiality. The warriors, on discovering who we are, greet us with loud acclaim.

After the hubbub created by our arrival subsides, the peasants resume their games. In the inner circle a number of wrestling-matches are soon in progress. The group of peasants by my side, all of them Uzbeks from the same village apparently, keep on goading one bearded fellow in their midst to go out and display his prowess. . . . But he pretends to be reluctant. . . . They urge him and pull him and finally succeed in pushing him into the ring. At first he walks around languidly along the inner edge of the circle staring challengingly at the squatting audience. Each village seems to have its own champion. But the bearded chap looks formidable and it takes time to find anyone who would care to match strength with him. Finally, a patriarchal Tadjik emerges. An elaborate ceremony follows: genuflexions, bows, etc. Then both rise and begin to walk around each other in circles. First quietly, nonchalantly, almost lazily. Cries of encouragement and derision burst from the crowd. The temperature rises. The contestants begin to whirl around each other faster and faster, each aiming to seize hold of the colored belt or the shirt collar of his opponent. Finally the real struggle is on. The Tadjik patriarch throws out his leg with inconceivable swiftness, trips his opponent (this is allowed by the rules of the game), and within a fraction of a second has him pinned to the ground on his back. A storm of approval from the audience. The victor rises and grinning in his gray beard begins to leap on one leg along the edge of the ring, until he reaches the spot where the prizes are be-

ing handed out, where he stops, bows and swiftly strokes his beard. The sight of a patriarch wrestling and then prancing around on one leg seems a little incongruous at first, but when one enters into the spirit of the game the thing seems quite natural. The prize is a strip of calico sufficient for a cloak. The wrestling keeps up for a couple of hours. All the contestants perform all the movements demanded by tradition, kneeling and bowing and leaping on one leg and stroking of real or imaginary beards while receiving their prizes. When all the prizes are distributed, the circles of spectators are broken up. Large wooden bowls of pilaf are distributed through the crowd. Each bowl becomes the center of a small group of peasants squatting around it and diligently fishing out handfuls of rice, as they discuss excitedly the outcome of the various matches.

I eat from the same bowl with Issay Buri, a poor Lokai peasant who had been persuaded by his mullah to join the Basmach movement. However, the behavior of the Basmachi soon disgusted him and he went over to the Reds. To prove his good faith, he slew his chieftain, cut off his head, salted it, and brought it in a bag as a trophy to the Koktash Soviet. The story is told with an air of matter-of-factness quite startling to one who has been used to spilling only ink and waging battles only with his pen.

After the repast, an amusing and rather characteristic incident occurs. A few of the Red Sticks approach Khodzhibaiev with a suggestion that they have a game of goat-tearing. Khodzhibaiev is categorical: "No." The Red Sticks persist, pressing all kinds of arguments: After all, this is an extraordinary occasion; nothing would please the warriors more; furthermore, it would be great entertainment for the foreign guests. Khodzhibaiev looks very sternly at them. "What's the use of asking the impossible. We have a law forbidding goat-tearing. It is an uncivilized game—brutal, savage. We are trying to be better than we have been in the past. We are trying to be cultured."

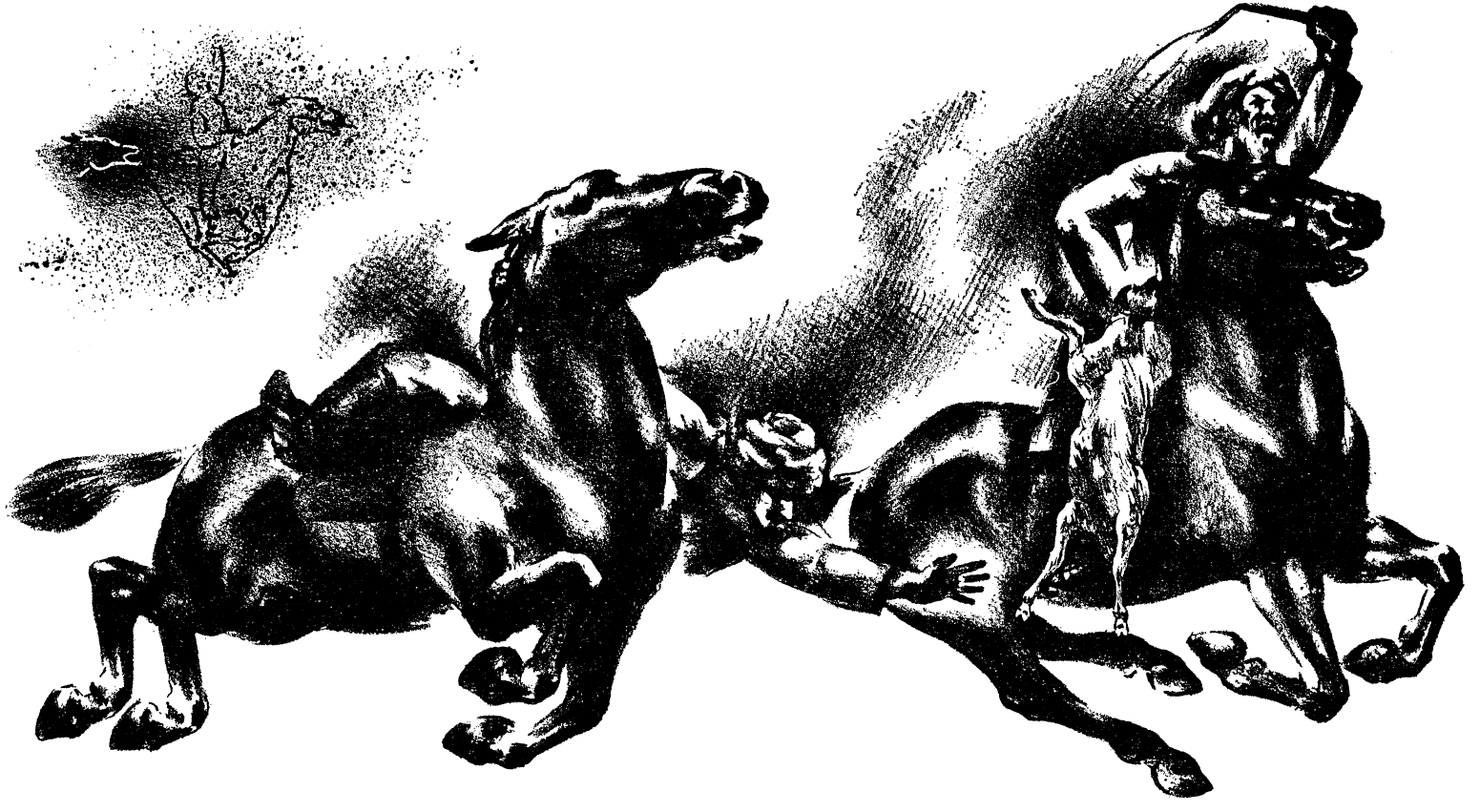
As a compromise with the demands of "culture," the Red Sticks offer to kill the goat before starting the game. (In the past only a live goat was used). Again Khodzhibaiev delivers an eloquent exhortation about culture. Though he speaks very persuasively, I detect in his voice a tremulous longing to see the game himself. The Red Sticks are no fools. They detect it too. So they keep on pressing: "Just this once!" Khodzhibaiev becomes angry: "I say, no, you understand? And now you can do what you please." We all know that Khodzhibaiev really means "Yes."

It does not take more than a minute before a goat mysteriously appears on the scene. In three minutes the slain goat is flung into the midst of the hundreds of horsemen who are milling on one spot. Immediately there is pandemonium. With wild shouts and whistles the riders begin to beat their horses, pushing simultaneously to the spot where the goat has fallen. The peasant who first manages to bend down from his saddle far enough to get hold of the goat's leg is pressed by the horsemen from all sides, everybody striving to snatch the goat away from him while he tries to break through the besiegers. Suddenly a young horseman, issuing a piercing yell, yanks his horse's bridle so ferociously that the enraged animal rears way up in the air and hurls itself in the direction of the possessor of the goat. While the horse is still in the air the young fellow slips out of his saddle, though one of his feet remains in the stirrup, and like a vulture, with claws outstretched, falls swiftly on his prey. For a moment the group gives way. He snatches the goat, and with a face contorted with exertion and triumph, swings back into the saddle and makes a dash for the mountain. But immediately he is surrounded by the horsemen again and another fierce struggle begins. This lasts for about a half-hour. Finally, one fellow who seems to have been conserving his strength by always being just at the outskirts of the real fight, makes one plunge for the goat and before anyone realizes what has happened, flies like a bullet toward the mountain. The pursuit is hot, but of no avail. He reaches the goal. The goat is his. Tomorrow his village will feast on goat meat.

THE games over, the whole crowd in hilarious procession marches to the village. We pass through a wooden triumphal arch, painted red, and halt in front of a huge rostrum on which the speakers are already assembled. This is the formal part of the celebration not much different from other formal celebrations in the Soviet Union—speeches,

GOAT-TEARING

Louis Lozowick



GOAT-TEARING

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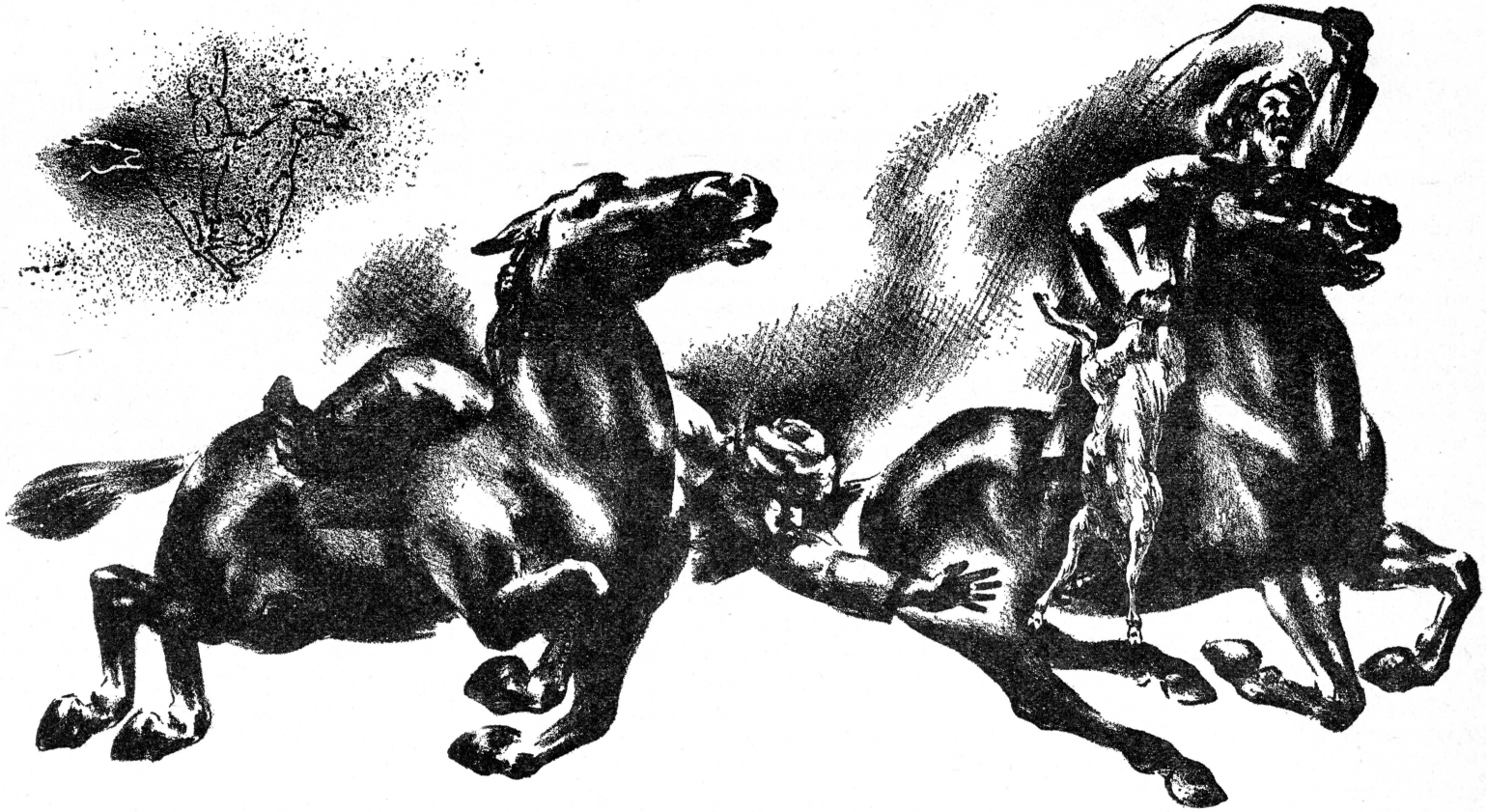

GOAT-TEARING

Louis Lozowick

slogans, proud reciting of achievements, etc. The most colorful part of the program is the handing out of rewards—watches, sabers and rifles—to the best Red Stick fighters.

The rewards most cherished are the rifles, and those who receive them are the happiest and proudest people in Lokai. Among the best Red Stick fighters is Bibitshan Manuir, a plump middle-aged woman. She approaches the rostrum unveiled, with a baby at her breast. Though she has the important post of Chairman of the District Soviet, she is still quite shy. Being the object of so much attention and admiration, upsets her. She pulls at her kerchief nervously and giggles. She is handed a watch on which the gratitude of the workers' government is engraved in bold indelible letters. Taking the watch and glancing at it furtively, she tries to hide in the crowd. Her confusion creates much merriment. The crowd insists on her remaining in the front.

A young Tadjik Communist, a student from Stalinabad, recites a poem entitled "From an Undistinguished and Modest Tadjik of the Soviet Mountains to Thee, O English Empire." Roughly translated, the "modest Tadjik's" address to the English Empire is this:

I know you Great Britain.
The suffering of our blood brothers—
is the work of your hands;
The trace of your fat fingers—
is still on your victims' throats
Murder, rapine, hunger—
are the work of your hands,
O British Empire.
You made the fools amongst us
fight among themselves.
You dashed their heads together—
You made them fight your wars.
Chains, shackles, graveyards
are the work of your hands,
And the yellow flame of treason
is the work of your hands. . . .
Everywhere from Gasn to Kushka
From Shore to Chuchka-Guzar
Through the rocky mountains
you have aimed your blow at us,
O British Empire.
But soon the London docker and the farm hand
from Jalalabad
Will smash your crown, O Britain,
Your victims will walk out of your prisons,
Their fire will sweep through your night;
They will charge their guns with fresh bullets,
And direct their bayonets into thee,
O British Empire!

Among the speeches, that of Rahim Khodzhibaiev is the best and the most warmly received. It is a typical expression of the Central Asian's revolutionary credo:

"Warriors, Red Sticks, comrades, in celebrating our triumph over the Basmachi, it is well briefly to survey our past. Our country is the youngest brother in the socialist family of nations forming the Soviet Union: it is only eight years since our laboring Tadjik masses have thrown off the heavy yoke of capitalism and feudalism. . . .

"That is past. The years of slavery, poverty, hunger have scrawled a bloody picture over the pages of history. Our villages, devastated during the years of struggle, are only now putting out the flames of the terrible conflagration. The Civil War has left deep scars on the economic body of our young, mountainous Soviet Republic.

"The October Revolution liberated the Tadjik people from colonial oppression. It cleared the way for national emancipation, created the conditions for our political and economic development, and said, 'Now build!'

"Our liberated land of green spaces and snow-covered peaks has been engaged in monumental construction for eight years. Ibrahim Bek has tried to disrupt our work, but the toiling masses of our land, our Red Stick heroes, have given him the answer. His bands are destroyed. Our cotton campaign goes on. And tomorrow or the day after we will have him safely behind bars.

"Yes, comrades, the worst is over. Yet it would be a grave error to think that we have already overcome all difficulties. The road before our masses of workers and peasants still calls for tremendous exertion of will. The will toward socialist construction, toward a final attack on the old life of cultural backwardness and ignorance, toward the elimination of the last vestiges of feudalism and landlordism, toward unflagging labor in raising our political and economic power—this is the glorious road our young Socialist Republic must follow. . . .

"We are building a model Soviet Socialist Republic at the gates of Hindustan.

"The guarantee of our success is the Communist Party, the party of the vanguard of the proletariat, the party which has led the workers and peasants of the Soviet Union to their great victory.

"Our successes offer the best possible example for revolutionizing the enslaved East —India, Persia, Afghanistan, and others.

"Our existence and the experience of the Soviet toilers will plant in the consciousness of the oppressed masses of the East faith in their liberation and triumph and will unite them in the common task of overthrowing the rule of the imperialists, the landlords, the rajahs and instituting their own rule—the rule of the working masses."

THE glaciers are aglow in the flame of the rapidly sinking sun. The last reward is given. The last speech made. Slowly the crowd melts away in all directions to be soon swallowed by the thick southern night and be lost in the near and far settlements in the Lokai valley.

After a brief visit to the ruined home of Ibrahim Bek on the banks of the Kafirnigan, we gather in front of the cooperative store, by the side of the dusty road. Rugs are spread, *kok-choi* served, and the ineluctable *pilaf* and *uriuk*.

It grows darker.

A detachment of armed Red Sticks gallops by, raising a thick cloud of dust, and vanishes in the direction of the mountain.

Above, a lonely plane rumbles a while and then, becoming fainter and fainter, is finally dissolved in the stillness of the night.

'It'll soon be in Stalinabad," says Khodzhibaiev meditatively as he scrapes the soot off the wick of a small kerosene lamp.

Everything is quiet. Then a match is struck and Khodzhibaiev's face swims out of the darkness as he lights the lamp and gingerly adjusts the glass chimney. The spell of silence is broken.

"He's somewhere not far from here," Khodzhibaiev speaks up, without giving any indication whom he has in mind. But we all know, for we have all been thinking of him too. "His bands have completely frittered away," Khodzhibaiev continues. "The peasants from Khodji, Bul Bulani and Ishkhabad who were at the celebration told me that they were hot on his tracks; they promised to deliver him to us in Stalinabad within a couple of days. They had left enough Red Sticks behind to keep close watch over his movements. The volunteers of Mukum Sultan reported the same thing."

Poor Ibrahim! He certainly had not expected such treatment in his Lokai valley.

One of the natives tells an amusing episode: Ibrahim visited a small mountain village near Kuliab. Out of the fifteen peasant households in the village, eleven sent out secret messengers to notify the authorities in Kuliab. Since there was only one narrow path to the town, the messengers naturally bumped into one another. And each told the next one some fortunate tale to account for his inordinate haste. They had a good laugh when they all met in the Regional Committee headquarters!

Peasants in groups and singly come over to chat with Khodzhibaiev. And he, squatting on a rug, his huge Kirghiz hood of white and black felt in his lap, listens to their stories, complaints and requests. He has been on the go most of the day, and his feet ache, so he pulls off his grey, canvas boots and while conversing with the peasants picks at his toes. Neither he nor his interlocutors are conscious of any incongruity. An outsider would find it difficult indeed to tell who in this group is one of the most distinguished officials in the Republic and who an obscure peasant. Several of the peasants submit written petitions, which Khodzhibaiev, after quickly perusing in the feeble light of the lamp, carefully deposits in his capacious hood. Some cases he decides forthwith, others he promises to consider when back in Stalinabad.

One peasant hands in a long scroll of paper—a document written in the Persian alphabet and decorated with numerous smudges of black ink. The village is petitioning for artificial fertilizer. And the smudges are the impressions of peasants' thumbs dipped in black ink—the signatures of the illiterates.

It is growing late. We are worn out with the excitement of the day. Thick felt mats are spread out on the floor of the cooperative and all of us stretch out, using our clothes and boots for cushions. But the only one who gets off into beatific slumber immediately is Khodzhibaiev, his head resting

on the threshold of the open door. On the other side of the door, under the stars, sleep our two guards. We soft westerners, however, are tortured by insomnia. The fleas in the place are maddening . . . but in the struggle between Morpheus and the insects over the tired travellers, Morpheus finally wins.

Suddenly we are startled by the scraping of heavy boots and the sound of raucous voices outside. No one moves. I hear the thumping of my neighbor's heart, as I try to peer through the darkness. Then a light appears at the door. In the flicker of a smoking lantern held by a giant hand I recognize our two guards. They are followed by a heavily armed stranger, obviously an Uzbek Red Stick. One of my companions jumps up clutching at his revolver. The last to be stirred by the sudden commotion is Khodzhibaiev.

"What's up? What's the trouble?"

"Good news," replies the Red Stick, handing a slip of paper to Khodzhibaiev.

The guard brings the lantern closer to the Chief. One glance at the missive and Khodzhibaiev is wide awake. "They got him! They have caught Ibrahim! Hurrah!"

Happy ejaculations resound through the room. The Red Stick smiles importantly in his imposing black moustaches. Khodzhibaiev reads the message aloud:

> June 23. Midnight.—We have taken Ibrahim Bek, Sahib Commander, and one Basmach from the ranks. Place:—Between the villages of Ishkhabad, Khodzha-Bul-Bulan, and Ak-Turpak. Ibrahim Bek and his companions were on foot. Weapons:—2 rifles, 1 Mauser, 1 Browning. We were assisted by the G.P.U. Also the Basmach Issanbey Babajan has surrendered. I took his Mauser. For the present the Basmach leaders are in Comrade Valeshev's charge. Ibrahim Bek's pistol is still in my possession.
>
> MUKKUM SULTANOV,
> Commander of Volunteer Detachment.

"Well, that's that," says Khodzhibaiev, dismissing the messenger. "Now we can sleep again, and peacefully. There are no more Basmachi in Tadjikistan!"

And he never gave a thought to the fleas. . . .

For days after, the press of Tadjikistan was full of stories about Ibrahim Bek and his capture. His portrait appeared everywhere under the caption "Bitterest Enemy of the Soviet Power." Messages of congratulation from all over the country, especially from the Central Asian Bureau at Tashkent and from Moscow were published.

On July 5, the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Tadjikistan, the Central Executive Committee of the Soviets, and the Soviet of People's Commissars of Tadjikistan issued the following proclamation "To All Workers, Collective Farmers, Poor and Middle Peasants, Red Army Men, Commanding Staff, Communist Volunteer Detachments, Red Sticks":

> Owing to the united struggle of the workers, collective farmers, and poor and middle peasants organized in Volunteer Peasant Detachments and Red Stick Detachments against the Basmachi, owing also to the crushing blows showered upon the enemy by our glorious Red Army and its Uzbek and Tadjik sections, as well as by the forces of the OGPU, the Basmach movement has been finally and completely eradicated.
>
> On June 23, 1931, the Basmach chieftains Ishan-Isakhon, Ali-Mardan-Datkho, Tashmat Bek, Gaib Bek, and others were taken captive. Above all, Ibrahim Bek, the leader of the Basmachi, and the pitiful remnants of his bands have been captured by the collective farmers of the Khodzhi-Bul-Bulan and Ishkhabad villages in collaboration with the Volunteer Detachment commanded by Mukum Sultanov.
>
> This concludes the struggle against the Basmachi, the struggle against the enemy who has invaded our lands from across the border in an effort to disrupt our socialist construction, overthrow the Soviet Power, and restore the rule of the Bokhara Emir, his officials, his beys and his ishans.
>
> Our overwhelming victory proves once and for all that the toiling masses of Tadjikistan are ready to fight to the bitter end for the gains of the October Revolution, for the Bolshevik Party, and for the Soviet Government.
>
> The Communist Party and the Soviet Government of Tadjikistan call upon you to draw your ranks even closer around the general Bolshevik line of the Party and to proceed at an even greater rate of speed with our socialist construction, building collective and state farms, striving for the cotton independence of the Soviet Union, for the liquidation of illiteracy, intensifying the ruthless struggle of the poor and middle peasantry against the enemies of the working class—against the beys and ishans and other anti-Soviet elements, against all domestic and foreign enemies of Socialist construction.
>
> Long live the workers, collective farmers, and the poor and middle peasants of Tadjikistan, organized under the leadership of the Bolshevik Party into Volunteer and Red Army and its Tadjik and Uzbek sections!
>
> Long live the Leninist Communist Party of the Bolsheviks and its leader Comrade Stalin!

RED STICK VOLUNTEERS *Louis Lozowick*

RED STICK VOLUNTEERS

Louis Lozowick

RED STICK VOLUNTEERS

Louis Lozowick

The Origin of Music

SERGEI TCHEMODANOV

THERE are many theories of the origin of music. In long past epochs all the arts were thought of as divine gifts. In ancient Greece there were even special goddesses of art, the Muses, from whose name the word "music" is derived. Also in the Christian period as well, music was held to be a gift from heaven. Only in modern times (and to some extent previously) do we encounter a series of attempts to approach the problem scientifically. Most of these attempts have been made, not by historians of art, but by naturalists—scholars who sought the sources of music in man's natural environment (*e. g.,* the singing of birds or the howling of the wind) and also "inside" the man; and they ascribed to him an innate instinct for beauty, which incited him to artistic creation.

Attempts at sociological approach to the origin of music are rarely encountered in bourgeois science, but the most valuable and consistent work in this direction is *Labor and Rhythm* by the German scientist, Karl Beucher. It contains a great number of facts and musical notations. Buecher, however, includes a whole series of errors which have been thoroughly exposed by Plekhanov in his article on "Art and Primitive Peoples." Indeed, these articles are practically the first sign of a Marxist approach to the history of art.

After firmly establishing that the "art of any people" stands in the closest causal relationship to its economy, Plekhanov starts out with an outline of primitive economics, of which the principle feature was the social striving after food. The primitive form of economic activity was the gathering of the existing gifts of nature, mainly by fishing and hunting. The next historical stage was production, and its main form agriculture. The fields were for the most part tilled by the collective effort of the clan. Thus the social forms of labor were widely applied at the earliest stages of man's economic activity; and primitive art was rooted in the social labor process. Buecher and Plekhanov called the simplest forms of this primitive art, "play."

From this point on the opinions of the two critics diverge: for Plekhanov, "play" is an effect of work, for Buecher, "play" is older than work, that is, *art is older than the production of useful objects.* Let us examine more closely the essence of "play." According to Spencer (to whom Plekhanov refers), its distinctive feature is "the fact that it does not pursue a definite utilitarian aim, though by its nature it may be useful," for instance, by exercising those organs it involves. Why or when does a man or an animal play? When the organism has accumulated a surplus of energy which has not been absorbed by utilitarian activity and requires an outlet. According to Plekhanov, "play is born of the desire to relive the pleasure caused by the application of strength"; the greater the store of energy, the greater is the tendency to play. The play of wild animals often consists in an imitation of hunting or fighting; in their case, the content of play being determined by the activity necessary to their very existence.

We observe the same phenomenon in the case of savages. In their dances they reproduce the movements of the animals they hunt, or else war scenes or the motions of the worker. One of the Brazilian tribes, for example, performs a dance which represents the death of a wounded warrior. Among the Philippine *Bajabos,* the males, at the time of rice sowing, execute a dance in which they stick iron pikes into the ground. A primitive Australian women's dance represents the pulling from the ground of edible roots. The same motives are present in primitive painting and dramatic expression. The *Chukchi* reproduce hunting scenes in their drawings. The Bushmen draw peacocks, elephants, hippopotami and ostriches, because these animals play an important role in their existence as hunters. With depressing monotony the Brazilian Indians draw their artistic motifs from animal life. Likewise the dramatic expression of savages, which chiefly depicts hunting, war, domestic life, animals and work. Therefore Plekhanov concludes that "labor precedes art." Man first regards objects and phenomena from a utilitarian viewpoint, and only later assumes an aesthetic attitude toward them" (*Art, A Symposium*).

In what does this aesthetic attitude consist? Is it an impulsion toward so-called "pure art" or the satisfaction of an "innate" instinct for beauty? It is not. Here, just as in labor, utility is the primary determinant. The only difference is that when he enjoys beauty "the social man is almost never consciously aware of the utility which is associated with the representation of these objects in his mind. In the majority of cases this utility could be discovered only by scientific analysis, for a most distinctive feature of aesthetic enjoyment is its immediacy. But there is utility nevertheless, and utility is at the basis of aesthetic enjoyment" (ibid). Lacking this utility the object could not be accepted as beautiful. And here the analogy between art and morality is complete: only the useful acquires a moral meaning for man.

Fritche (in his *Essay on Art*) also holds that the so-called "aesthetic" sentiment is related to production, having grown out of the struggle for existence as an aid in this struggle. Thus, for instance, when a savage adorns himself, he does so either to please the female or to frighten his enemy. In the first instance, art serves the utilitarian end of propagating the species, while in the other it serves to preserve the tribe. "The dance serves the same purposes: the preservation and propagation of the tribe." Among the Australians, for instance, the popular "Koroboro" dance was performed only before and after a military expedition or a hunt. The males danced while the women played musical instruments. Exercising the strength and dexterity of the male, the Koroboro made him a better warrior and hunter and also a better father of new generations. After the war the two tribes danced together, uniting the former enemies in the utilitarian interests of peace.

Representations of bisons, found in the caves of savages, "served as a means to command success in the hunt, to subjugate those animals used for food by the cave-dwellers, and at the same time possibly furnished a means of educating the young in the necessities and habits of hunting" (writes Fritche). At higher stages of civilization where there is already an organization of physical labor, art is born from the very labor process as a means of organizing this socially necessary labor. Thus we may conclude from what has been said above that man has no specific and independent aesthetic sentiment. At its basis, as in the case of the moral instinct, there is always a conscious or unconscious concept of utility.

Can this thesis be applied to music? Indeed it can, for there is no essential difference between the various arts; they differ only in their means of communication. The character of man's collective activity in his struggle for existence (hunting, war, labor) determined the character of primitive music in its two fundamental elements: melody and rhythm. By melody we understand a certain sequence of sounds combined in a general design; by rhythm, the organization of these sounds in time, the introduction of regularity and a determined measure into their flow. Although these two elements are found separately in nature, they assume an organized form in the hands of man in the course of his struggle for existence.

The melodies of war and labor songs had as their primary source those involuntary and sometimes voluntary cries emitted by the social man in the course of his war or labor activity. These cries were nothing but "an imitation, first with the voice and later with the help of a musical instrument, of the sounds issuing from the worker's throat or produced by one or another of his tools." The primitive tunes, derived from the social man's desire to keep up his courage in a difficult task, served at the same time as signals for collective activities and helped to organize them. In time the tunes assumed a determined rhythmical form, dictated by the rhythm of the war and labor. Insofar as they arise from these activities and increase their efficiency, the primitive songs ultimately correspond to the utilitarian criterion mentioned above. "The working songs originating in sounds uttered at work" observes Fritche, "had the obvious aim of facilitating the work, of organizing the worker's motions so as to make his labor as productive as possible."

Often man reproduced these songs in his hours of leisure, as if to rehearse them and to prepare himself for their further application. These exercises gave him a certain pleasure, which again derived from his deep awareness of the songs' utility. The same conscious or unconscious idea of utility lay at the base of other forms of primitive songs. Thus the religious songs, which formed an organic part of the ritual of all peoples, served "to appease the anger of the gods" and to compel them to serve man. Songs with an erotico-lyrical content derived from the sexual instinct, from man's desire to preserve and perpetuate his species. Thus at the beginnings of man's history, music constantly accompanied his struggle for existence. Music was the faithful sentinel of his life.

In the opinion of almost all historians, music at the earliest stage of human culture was an organic unity with the other arts, one aspect of a single process. Music, poetry and the dance were, in ancient art, fused into one. They were actively rooted in labor and struggle, and had in their turn an organizing effect. More than that, music was often the principle element in this trinity. From the work song poetry was gradually born: its technical character, the alternation of long and short, accented and unaccented, high and low syllables, was nothing else but "the legacy of the working song that rhythmically [that is, in regular alternation] reproduced the motions performed by the hand or the whole body during work." Simultaneously with the work song, the work dance was born. To the sound of their song the workers reproduced, in the form of a dance, the movements of their labor. This work dance was a sort of drill to prepare them for the best possible performance of labor.

Unfortunately, we possess very little data relating to the forms of primitive music. The notation of sounds is comparatively recent, dating only from the third millennium before our era. Our opinions regarding the music of primitive peoples are usually based on analogies with the music of present-day savages. Those examples of which we possess notations show, firstly, that these songs are homophonic, secondly, the great poverty of their melodies and rhythms. Thus, for instance, the Caraibs (the natives of the West Indies) sing for hours at a time a melody composed of two adjacent sounds. In another song, wherein a young Esquimo pours out his nostalgia for his homeland, there are only three sounds. A very interesting example of a work song is the song of the Egyptian water-drawers, which, according to authorities, contains motifs of ancient Egyptian origin. The song has four episodes: A. A brief, beautiful melody. B. A pause of the same length. C. Another melody. D. Pause.

Villoteau, the French specialist in Egyptian music, offers the following explanation of this song, confirming its labor character: "A. During this part of the song the workers lift and empty the vessel for drawing water. This is a basket of palm branches and leaves, lined with sheepskin. It is attached to the end of a long rope, and the rope is tied to a pole balanced on a sort of scaffolding or a forked tree. B. During this phase they lower the basket and draw the water. C. They again lift the basket. D. They lower the basket. Thus while the work process is at its point of maximum activity and the muscles are exerted, the workers sing; and during the interruption of the process, when this exertion is absent, the song ceases as no longer useful. Similarly the songs of Egyptian oarsmen are suited to their work. "It is well known," says Fetis, another French historian, "that from the very earliest times the navigation of the Nile has been as indispensable as the drawing of water, —in this rainless land where the floods fertilize only a part of the soil. In antiquity, as today, these labors required the accompaniment of rhythmical songs in order to diminish the fatigue." There is no reason to suppose that the Egyptian nation has forgotten these songs which were transmitted from generation to generation of the working classes.

Stuffed Bird

ISIDOR SCHNEIDER

(With grateful acknowledgment to the proletarian poet, Aaron Kurtz, who supplied the theme.)

It was fashionable, then, to have stuffed birds on the mantel
(Now they have vanished in parlors, even in pawnshops, extinct.)
As a child I remember, on visits, comparing the host's with ours,
a chesty pheasant with a carnival colored tail
which, seen in the spinning sunlight,
doubled itself with irridescent flourishes.

Once I pulled out a feather and was startled to find it
not artificial, and looked back dreading the bird would cry out,
open its angry beak, open its rapid wings, and pounce.
The feather was real like the cock feathers mother allowed us
when, plucking the Sabbath fowl, she let us pull quills
warm from the still warm flesh.

Is the bourgeois delight in the stuffed, gone with the stuffed birds?
Or left discontented? No. There are stuffed birds still.
Ventriloqual, they utter the social silence,
oracles of nothing, posed in public parlors. We, the poets, know.
We are the stuffed birds. We are stood on the mantels,
dumb and dusty, in the little poets' corners in the journals—
the daily, the weekly, the monthly stuffed poets.

In the bookshelves of the best homes we have little niches
and regularly, by more careful maids, are picked up and dusted.
Who stuffed these birds? A miracle! They stuffed themselves.
They ate a sawdust known as Unconcern-with-Politics,
and drank embalming fluid labelled pure-hundred-poetry,
and shuddered, choked, and had convulsions;
but gentle critics, running to their aid, were pecked.

The stuffed bird lovers claimed the stuffed birds sang
but were unheard, for too few listened, and the listeners
had stuffed ears; and of the others some applauded and some wept
to see how lifelike looked the birds with open beaks.

Praise be to healthy palates, strong stomachs, clean tongues,
a few ate sparingly of the sawdust, a few spilled
more than they drank of the spasmy fluid, a few
strong-stomached, somehow digested it.
The few begin to sing—to you workers! Listen!
hand worker, brain worker, hunt them out and hear
the love song, to strengthen you one toward the other,
the hate song to strengthen you all against owners,
the love song, the hate song, marches, orations,
songs to arouse whose notes heave up your voices,
and songs to the panting to still them to rest,
songs of the clasping of hands and linking with comrades,
songs of the picket lines, songs of the midnight committees,
interlacing their brain coil, preparing and planning.

Birds of the happiest season, become many, flock high,
cheerers of birth and of building, birds of the spring of Time.

REVIEW AND COMMENT

Toward Marxist Criticism

THE first ten pages of this little essay[1] contain a general statement of great importance. They deal with the relation of dialectical materialism to human culture. In forceful, lucid language, Strachey points out that the Marxist doctrine in its relation to previous cultural achievement is not merely revaluation, but is its only logical continuation. Any attempt to escape its revolutionary content must lead to a mystical blind alley and finally to the fascist destruction of all culture. Since the bourgeoisie became the sole political power, two trends are apparent in human thought. One of them, restricted by bourgeois limitations, tends backward, toward decay; the other, representing the proletariat, progresses to newer and wider-spreading conquests.

This means that dialectical materialism is not only an economic doctrine; it is a valid approach to all domains of thought, including art and literature. But its application to literature involves fresh problems. Engels has often warned against the mechanical interpretation of Marxism, stressing the necessity of a specific study in each field. It is true that the development of art is largely determined by economic and political factors, but this does not obviate the necessity of carefully investigating the specific forms assumed by this development in each particular art. The neglect of this study is at the root of the ready-made pseudo-Marxist criticism which consists of a mere repetition of clichés and often leads to serious mistakes.

One of Strachey's aims in this essay is to correct these mistakes. He particularly denounces those Marxist critics who give no credit to the writer as a writer, but are satisfied with separating out the political aspects of his work. By way of illustration, he analyzes Archibald MacLeish's *Frescoes for Mr. Rockefeller's City*. In order to convey that it is possible to appreciate the aesthetic value of a work of art, without losing sight of its political tendencies, he declares that the poem in question is of "considerable beauty," but is nevertheless fascist in content.

Strachey's example seems unfortunate, for the artistic value of MacLeish's poem is very questionable. The entire poem is based on a neo-classical figure, comparing America to a reclining woman—a figure that must have seemed somewhat threadbare even to the ancient Athenians. To justify his ill-placed aesthetic enthusiasm, Strachey says that "the poem expresses what [its] author meant to express." This is a dangerous criterion. There are many instances of mediocre performances that express exactly what their author meant to express; while on the other hand, the royalist Balzac and the religious mystic, Dostoievsky, are significant largely because they expressed what they did not mean to express.

There is, moreover, a still more questionable element in Strachey's analysis. This is his very method of approach. To be sure, a Marxist critic must take into consideration the aesthetic values of a poem; but the problem is far from solved by a mere juxtaposition of the political and aesthetic analyses. The originality of Marxism lies precisely in the integration of these two seemingly distinct aspects: the form and the content. I wonder whether Strachey may not have been misled by a legitimate reaction against the narrowness of some Marxist critics.

Of course, form and content vary in their relationship and may come into contradiction. The incongruity of form and content is even a certain sign of immaturity or decadence. It is surely possible, as Strachey puts it, to be a "bad Marxist" and not a "bad poet." But even this "self-evident" proposition is not to be taken too absolutely. It is true that the decadent bourgeoisie has produced works of great artistic value; but it is equally true that since the advent of fascism in Italy, no work of even second-rate importance has come from that country. Strachey himself acknowledges that this is no mere accident that the there is a deep connection between this form of counter-revolution and sterility of mind.

He would have been more consistent if he had attempted to show that the mediocrity of MacLeish's poem is due in great part to its fascist content, conscious or unconscious, and that in our time essentially reactionary ideas only thwart poetic imagination.

However, it would be unfair to expect, from a short essay, a deep discussion of the complex problems of Marxist criticism. Strachey's book is significant (aside from its brilliant polemics against certain misrepresentations of the Marxist position) as an attempt at necessary self-criticism. The neglect of aesthetic values is only one instance of the narrowness of certain Marxists. As other instances we may mention the frequent condemnation of genuine revolutionary novels on the sole ground that they do not portray a true Communist, or inversely, the praises bestowed on a book because its author is of proletarian origin or has portrayed true Communists. All these errors are not due to Marxism but to its abstract, two-dimensional application, and to the sterile limitation of "Marxist" criticism to purely political considerations. This narrow approach is even more frequent in bourgeois criticism; for instance, when a book or a play is dismissed on the pretext that it is "propaganda." The Marxist approach should not be a mere reversal of this stupid attitude. True dialectical criticism, by ensuring an objectivity and precision which the bourgeois aesthetic method cannot achieve, should be defined not as a mere complement or opposition to bourgeois criticism but as the highest form of criticism. No one will deny that a vast amount of work is still to be done before this goal is attained.

NORBERT GUTERMAN.

[1] *Literature and Dialectical Materialism*, by John Strachey. New York. Civici-Friede. Publishers. $1.

Heavenly Visitation

JOURNEYMAN, by Erskine Caldwell, New York, the Viking Press, 204 pages, published in a limited edition of 1,475 copies. $4.50.

ERSKINE CALDWELL can best be described as a natural-born story teller. Looking over the period of his last five books, it seems quite apparent that he writes neither as a self-conscious craftsman nor as one driving towards the increase of an understanding of human relationships and social processes. Rather, he seems to catch his material on the wing and to pour it out in a hit-or-miss manner, with the result that he seems to miss more often than he hits, and his work, taken as a body, includes a great deal of repetition and an unmistakable unevenness in accomplishment.

To date, he has indicated that he can rise to his best within the space of a limited canvas, more readily in the short story than in the novel. His most impressive work is of two types: stories of adolescent love and of the first vague stirrings of amorous and sexual emotions in the lives of his blushing Hamlets and Evangelines of the backward rural areas; and tales in which there is a surface of burlesque that covers grim and grotesque tragedy, and reveals people who are implacably bent on their own self-destruction because of ignorance, and because of social conditions and pressures which they cannot understand. In the most satisfying of these stories, it is noticeable that he deals with a single impression, or with a small number of closely knit impressions.

When he seeks to deal with a narrative which requires lengthier development on the one hand, or the delineation of characters either in a process of growth or of genuine emotional crisis on the other, he seems un-

equipped to handle his material. The result is often bathos, sentimentality, even banality. A study of his work reveals that he is more at home in his treatment of a rural environment than when he seeks either to write of characters with an urban background or in a modern industrial setting. Thus, his stories of poverty in the city, such as *Masses of Men,* and *Rachel* are among his poorest, and thus his failure in the strike scene of *God's Little Acre.*

With his rural characters and environment he shows a precision in observation of details of speech and habits, in almost glaring contrast to the generalized treatment he affords in his strike scene of *God's Little Acre,* or the dependence on stereotyped detail in his tales of urban poverty and degradation. In such sections of his writings there is melodrama—improperly motivated and developed emotions—rather than the genuine aliveness, gusto, passion and ecstasy which we can feel in the most effective of his Georgia tales.

His recently published novel, *Journeyman,* is a miss rather than a hit. When one thinks of *Tobacco Road,* or even of *God's Little Acre, Journeyman* reads like a parody written on Caldwell himself. It is the story of an itinerant preacher, Semon Dye, who travels through Georgia spouting the word of God on his own authority. Lusty, hypocritical and crooked, he happens into a backward Georgia community and immediately begins to feather his own nest. He seduces one of the Negro girls working for his host and shoots her man for protesting; drinks liquor wholesale, wins his host's automobile, watch, and even his wife, in a suspicious crap game, and sells back part of his winnings for a hundred dollars of borrowed money; seduces the wife, blackmails his host for sexual relationship with a former wife, and concludes with a revival meeting in which he leads the whole community into an insane orgy of jerks and twists and rollings until he himself froths at the mouth. When he leaves, the community regrets his departure.

If this story be taken simply as a fantastic burlesque, it is passably humorous and diverting. However, if it is to be considered as a serious novel, purporting to reveal an understanding of a section of the American scene and intending to give us an awareness and a sense of the people in this milieu, an estimation of the novel becomes a different question. It is difficult to note any underlying theme. Rather, *Journeyman* seems to be just another story hastily rolled off Caldwell's typewriter. The characters are repetitions of the Tye Tyes, the Jeeters, and the Darling Jills already created. Here they are given with less understanding, and there is almost nothing in the book to suggest that Caldwell has gone back into this material either to perfect his previous statements of it, or to expand and deepen his awareness of it. We find the same facility of dialogue, the same tricks and mannerisms, the same ease and fluency in writing, the same presentation of those amusing and unintelligible quirks of habit and character which lead to such tragic and grim consequences. He has simply reproduced the same article, but with a lessened impact.

One chapter alone stands out as a contrast and an exception to this thin repetitiveness. Here, three of the male characters, including Semon Dye, sit in a barn drinking liquor and gazing through a crack in the wall at a field which they could vision more fully merely by stepping outside the barn. This act becomes for them an emotional release, a kind of poetic experience, acquiring a meaning in their personal experience totally disproportionate to its apparent value and usefulness. And Caldwell here manages to convey this impression through their dialogue in a manner which is genuinely poetic. It is the one passage in the book which carries a weight of feeling.

The social implications of *Journeyman* are familiar, or else negligible. It is again merely a picture of the life of primitive and undeveloped American folk. Since it does not end in tragedy, it does not contain the same agitation, the same sense of life, that we find in *Tobacco Road.* Since it is so much of a repetition, it does not increase our consciousness of this life and these people as a few of his stories and the first half of *God's Little Acre* did. It is Erskine Caldwell—not at his best. JAMES T. FARRELL.

Greenwood's Second Novel

THE TIME IS RIPE, by Walter Greenwood. Doubleday, Doran and Co. $2.50.

IN MOST forms, but particularly in the novel, the proletarian literature of Great Britain has lagged far behind that of the United States. It is therefore both surprising and gratifying to find in one season two excellent revolutionary novels by English authors. One of these, Ralph Bates' *Lean Men,* Edwin Seaver has already reviewed in THE NEW MASSES—and very justly praised. The other is Walter Greenwood's *The Time Is Ripe.*

This is Greenwood's second novel. His first, *Love on the Dole,* might legitimately be regarded as the best novel of the depression that has appeared in any country. It is not the most harrowing, and it is one of the least militant, but it is uncommonly rich and full and many-sided. It shows how the depression affects the entire lives of its victims, how it degrades and stultifies and tortures them. And, if it fails to do more than hint that only through organized fight can workers, employed and unemployed alike, put an end to this horror, it permits no other conclusion.

The Time Is Ripe is also a novel of the depression, and especially of the latest device English capitalism has employed to protect its profits, the means test. In its depiction of Joe Shuttleworth, jobless coal miner, of Mrs. Shuttleworth, of their son Jack and his wife Meg, of the neighbors, Mrs. Evans, Mrs. Nattle, Mrs. Dorbell, and the others, it is as unmistakably genuine and as richly alive as its predecessor. Shuttleworth, summoned before the board that administers the means test, is brow-beaten and robbed of the pitiful dole that has kept him and his family alive. It is no wonder that he loses his reason and waits daily before the abandoned coal-pits to be the first in line when they open up. It is no wonder that he is taken to the insane ward of the workhouse hospital to die. But a younger generation is left to find a way to life instead of death.

What lies behind all this? In *Love on the Dole,* Greenwood did not try to say, contenting himself with showing the effects of the depression. In *The Time Is Ripe,* however, he has dealt with causes as well. The novel tells two stories, Edgar Hargraves' as well as Joe Shuttleworth's. Hargraves is merely a haberdasher with social and political ambitions until his aunt's considerable fortune falls into his hands. Then he becomes, in rapid succession and with a discreet outlay of cash, president of the social service center, councillor, and mayor, with a title not far distant. He helps administer the means test, in the interests of the taxpayers and the landlords. Incidentally, he also robs the taxpayers, to line his own purse. The petty shopkeeper who once harassed his domestic help has become a great man with the privilege of torturing the poor. If Joe Shuttleworth is not class-conscious, Edgar Hargraves is, and he uses his power with unfailing consistency on behalf of his class and his pocketbook.

By placing these two stories together and showing at a hundred points how intimately the fortunes of the Hargraveses and the Shuttleworths are related, Greenwood completes his picture of depression-ridden England. His picture of the working class is never idealized or romantic; he does not forget the Mrs. Nattles, the poor who scrape along by robbing their companions in poverty. But he makes the reader conscious on every page, of the enormous latent capacities of the proletariat, that capitalism stifles and seeks to destroy. And, on the other hand, he depicts, with much restraint and remarkably little bitterness, the insatiable greed and the appalling narrowness and emptiness of the shopkeeping and industrial bourgeoisie.

Mr. Greenwood is now, we are told, a city councillor in Salford, the scene of his two novels. He is, I presume, a member of the British Labor Party. One wonders what will become of him. Obviously his political and literary careers are not unrelated. He cannot sell out the workers in the Salford city council and serve them in his books. It is encouraging to note that he can refer to Com-

munism without apology, shudder, or denunciation, but more significant is the quality of experience that has made his books distinguished. It is hard to believe that a person who has seen so clearly and felt so deeply the exploitation of the workers could betray them, either in politics or in literature. And if Greenwood does not go backward, he must go forward. He has the ability to go a long way. GRANVILLE HICKS.

Our Greatest Mural Art

THE OROZCO FRESCOES AT DARTMOUTH, Dartmouth College Publications, Hanover, New Hampshire. $1 postpaid.

JOSE CLEMENTE OROZCO'S frescoes in the Baker Memorial Library at Hanover—the largest in the United States—were completed a year ago. For a while the critical battle raged violently. Some partisans of Orozco fell into a coma of mystical veneration; some reactionaries rang the fire alarms for the Ku Klux Klan and the American Legion to destroy the murals. Now that the dust and heat of the conflict have died down, it is possible to estimate the work soberly. It is no exaggeration to say that these frescoes, in regard to color, composition, organic relation to architecture, and grandeur of concept, surpass by far any other frescoes in this country.

Dealing with the epic theme of Man and Culture on the American continent, these frescoes are a vast indictment of contemporary civilization. The indictment proceeds from a humanitarian semi-anarchist viewpoint and attacks with extraordinary force and sincerity the whole of bourgeois culture, including patriotism, religion, imperialism and their subservient academies.

The scene of Orozco's epic is the western hemisphere, the culture of the Americas. The images are taken from Mexican legend and the history of the United States. Formally, the fresco has two movements: the main figures are vertical, like architectural pillars, and sustain the entire composition, merging into the architectural surroundings; the backgrounds are diagonal, and carry the idea forward visually. With these planes and with the legends of Quetzalcoatl and Cortes, the artist formulates his ideas of good and evil in present civilization. Out of the shambles of the world—the sacrifice of human life for imperialist greed—rises the final panel in which the worker possesses the machine and with it leisure and learning.

It is unfortunate that most people cannot see the original frescoes; but the twenty-four page brochure just issued by Dartmouth College contains intaglio reproductions of all the panels, which make Orozco's work to that extent available to a larger audience. The black and white illustrations can give no idea of the coloring, intense and deep like medieval stained glass; nor can they convey the monumental size of the original panels, most of which are nine by nine feet. But the reproductions are clear and give us an idea of the details of the composition. It is a pity that the brochure devotes part of each page to a text "interpreting" the fresco in polite aesthetic terms; but this interpretation cannot weaken the power of the pictures themselves. Nevertheless, the text represents a social force which had its effect on the concept of the fresco. The panels are critical of bourgeois civilization; they move toward the final triptych in which the central figure is a worker stretched at ease before the gaunt skeleton of a skyscraper and peacefully reading a book. But there is nothing in the fresco to indicate the process by which the worker achieves control of the machine, leisure and learning. There is no indication of the struggle necessary for the worker to make the transition from the evil past and present to the desirable future.

Orozco is aware of that struggle. His earlier Mexican murals depict the struggle of the agrarian revolution with great emotion and with specific images. But in Mexico the artist's audience were peons, workers and militant intellectuals. In Dartmouth the audience consists chiefly of students from well-to-do homes, professors whose economic security comes from the ruling class, and tourists who can afford to visit frescoes in distant places. The murals speak in the language of their audience; the symbols are literary, legendary, oblique, static. In the cloistered buildings and transcendental atmosphere of New England, the class struggle does not intrude. The students are diverted from the needs and battles of the textile and shoe workers outside the academy to the cultural heritage of a dead Europe. Their ignorance and indifference, the frozen ivory tower in which they live and in which Orozco has painted his masterpiece have unconsciously influenced the frescoes, leaving them iconoclastic rather than revolutionary.

But Orozco's talent has been moulded by the Mexican revolution, in which he participated and which is part of his interior world. He is today once more back in his native country, once more under the influence of its revolutionary movement. Recent photographs of the new mural which he has just completed in the National Theatre of Mexico City indicate that he has advanced far beyond the Dartmouth frescoes, both formally and conceptually. His latest work is a single integrated composition in which the vast struggle raging over the earth's surface between the exploiters and the exploited is visualized with terrific intensity. The whole fresco is dynamic, full of movement and struggle—a struggle which culminates in the image of three workers' heads moving against a red flag, toward the future.

CHARMION VON WIEGAND.

The Big News

THE HISTORY OF THE TIMES: "THE THUNDERER" IN THE MAKING. The Macmillan Company. $5.

THE CUBAN CRISIS AS REFLECTED IN THE NEW YORK PRESS, 1895-1898, by Joseph E. Wisan. Columbia University Press. $4.50.

MOBILIZING FOR CHAOS: THE STORY OF THE NEW PROPAGANDA, by O. W. Riegel. Yale University Press. $2.50.

IN 1785, as in 1935, there was regimentation of news, state control of the press. Newspapers were appendages of the governmental machinery, and in England government meant as yet the landed interests. The London Times was just beginning (as The Daily Universal Register); the industrial revolution was well under way. As an emerging capitalist class came to closer grips with a landed aristocracy basing itself on the remains of feudalism, the struggle for political power revolved more and more around control of the press. An outworn social system was fighting for life and clinging desperately to the most powerful weapon at hand. The story of the struggle for freedom of the press in England occupies a good part of this first volume of the anonymous *History of The Times;* in Mr. Riegel's *Mobilizing for Chaos,* the control of the press and other means of communication today is the subject. Regimentation, censorship, state control, are with us again—but not, as Mr. Riegel seems to assume, for the first time. They are here on a world-wide scale; for again an outworn and broken-down system is engaged in a life and death struggle with its successor. The period of stability, when criticism could not damage a capitalism as yet virile and confident, lies in the past; the larger freedom that a triumphant collectivist society will bring is yet in the future.

The beginning of The London Times was modest enough. John Walter, marine insurance broker, ruined by the American Revolutionary War, established a little daily sheet to puff a typographical invention which he hoped would make him the King's Printer. The new paper was a puling infant and found a government subsidy of £300 a year highly convenient. Not until John Walter II appeared on the scene and turned out to be an energetic organizer, with a keen sense of the historical changes at work, did the paper give promise of survival or of even recognizing its future role as the mouthpiece of the middle class. The Napoleonic wars were on, and England craved news. Walter supplied the news, organizing his own corps of correspondents on the continent so effectively that he often beat the government's own couriers. The enterprise of The Times was not relished by the authorities; by heavy stamp duty, taxes and post office sabotage they tried to keep it down. Walter fought doggedly and the increasingly powerful capitalists who were vitally interested in early and accurate reports, supported him. In the end a working arrangement was achieved by which the government bought what papers it could and controlled others, but relinquished its presumed right to control all.

Not until Thomas Barnes became editor of The Times, in 1817, did the paper begin to come into its own. The writers of this history say:

> Barnes found the middle class nervous and irresolute; he taught, urged and thundered their duty to them in his daily articles until they recognized themselves as the largest and most coherent body in the State.

The great objective was reform, and the bourgeoisie ably represented by The Times, succeeded in persuading the workers, divorced from the land and oppressed by the most brutal exploitation the earth has seen, the early British factory system, that reform of the House of Commons was greatly to their interest. Reform was the New Deal of a century ago, and the reliance of the workers on this measure brought them a reward comparable to that which Roosevelt is giving them here to-day. The Times' historians are frank enough:

> After 1832 the working classes, having done a lion's share in the Reform struggle, discovered that the fruits of their labor were reserved for a new electorate of fewer than a million voters. They became "deaf with passion," to quote words which Barnes used privately to Henry de Ros when the Whigs were out of power in 1834. The artisan class, lacking the sense of responsibility to be developed later by compulsory education, were not yet entitled, as a class, to dominate by force of numbers. It was necessary to buttress the institutions of the Throne, the Church and the Legislature. . . . The dislike of The Times for universal suffrage is traceable to its recognition of the rights of property. Any science of politics was worthless which did not begin with respect for private accumulations earned by personal initiative.

The Times was "independent," that is to say, it chose its own methods of supporting and furthering capitalism, and independence paid. Before he died, in 1841, Barnes was described as "the most powerful man in England," and the net profits of The Times were rated as high as £20,000 a year. The present historians of The Times plan two more volumes, bringing the record up-to-date. They have produced a remarkably candid book, all in all, not omitting contemporary criticism of The Times. William Hazlitt's judgment, in 1824, may stand as a fair enough summary:

> It is the lungs of the Britisr metropolis, the mouthpiece, oracle and echo of the Stock Exchange; the representation of the mercantile interests. . . . It takes up no fallen cause, fights no up-hill battle; advocates no great principle . . . it is ever strong upon the strong side.

Dr. Wisan's study of the New York press from 1895 to 1898 is particularly valuable today, with preparations for war increasing on every side. Dr. Wisan looked at forty thousand newspaper items; he presents a respectable bibliography; and his entire examination into the reason for the Spanish-American war leads him to this conclusion:

> In the opinion of the writer, the Spanish-American War would not have occurred had not the appearance of Hearst in New York journalism precipitated a bitter fight for newspaper circulation.

Something to rub Hearst's nose in! The rest of the press, notably Pulitzer's World, come in for their full share of documented exposure, but Hearst, then as now, was the most lethal "active principle" in the poison that the printing presses poured out on America.

Mobilizing for Chaos ably summarizes recent developments in the control of news and means of communication throughout the world. Of the chaos whose advent he fears, a portion exists already in Mr. Riegel's mind, in a certain dislocation of ideas. Not until the end of the book—a fascinating story, by the way, with lucid arrangement of impressive material—does Mr. Riegel realize that he has put the cart before the horse. Contrast these two statements, the first being from his opening chapter, the second from his concluding one:

> The menace of our time is the insidious encroachment of the intolerance of nationalism upon all the channels of approach to the human mind.
>
> The villain in the drama of communications is the present condition of society itself, and especially the political and economic ideas which rule modern society. These political and economic ideas find their culminating expression in the doctrine of nationalism. . . .

By the end of his book, apparently, Mr. Riegel has discovered that it isn't an unaccountable nationalism that is threatening the return of a "new dark ages," but the political and economic ideas which rule modern society: in a word, capitalism.

Mr. Riegel sub-titles his book "The Story of the New Propaganda." He makes a calm and informative survey of the world situation in regard to cables, radio, censorship direct and indirect, and examines at some length the American newspaper publisher's boast of impartiality. American and British publishers' anxiety over the proposals made at the Madrid International Telecommunication Convention in 1932, which would have legalized immediately a greatly tightened censorship throughout the world, is explained simply and clearly:

> In the first place Great Britain and United States are both international bankers, with enormous investments abroad in the form of loans, commercial concessions and foreign trade operations. The security of these investments would be jeopardized if information as to financial and political conditions were distorted or suppressed. . . .
>
> In the second place. . . . If American correspondence were made as subservient to foreign interests as the correspondence of the foreign agencies, the American [news] agencies would lose one of their main selling points. The result would be a loss of clients . . . prestige and profits. . . .

Mr. Riegel mentions the "influence of a traditional abstraction generally referred to as the principle of freedom of speech and the press" as a further Anglo-American motivation, but later on he takes pains to knock the props from under this idealistic platform by indicating the extent to which newspapers, particularly in America, are controlled by their advertisers—not individual advertisers pounding on editorial desks at specific times, but the whole body of advertising revenue.

The result of this dependence on advertising revenue, Mr. Riegel says with cautious understatement, "has been a strong tendency in the American press to defend the status quo and to indulge in only those forms of sensationalism that will not shake the political and economic set-up of the country and thus endanger the financial security of the big newspaper properties, or of the great business interests which support them." He is somehow able to derive consolation from the fact that the United States has not, as yet, a Dr. Goebbels in complete charge, forgetting that in 1917-18 we had a George Creel. Mr. Riegel becomes as emphatic as he ever permits himself to be, in pointing out the speciousness of the "freedom of the press" yammering of the newspaper publishers, when what they mean is freedom to print patent medicine ads and to work 10-year-old newsboys.

Coming from the Director of Journalism at Washington and Lee University, this is dynamite:

> The primary loyalties of American publishers, like foreign publishers, are to their national and commercial interests and not to abstract ideals of internationalism, justice and truth. The publishers have undoubtedly been effective in stiffening the resistance of the American government and especially the state department, to measures disadvantageous to the American press. This is, however, a nationalistic activity which has helped to sharpen nationalistic conflict in the world field. No lasting progress can be made until American newspaper interests, as well as foreign newspaper interests, examine their own financial organizations in the light of a social altruism which embraces the world community. There is no likelihood that this will ever be done.

No, there isn't, is there?

HERMAN MICHELSON.

Feeble Verity and False Wonder

A WINTER DIARY AND OTHER POEMS, by Mark Van Doren. The Macmillan Company. $1.90.

GOLDEN FLEECE—A COLLECTION OF POEMS AND BALLADS OLD AND NEW, by William Rose Benét. Dodd, Mead and Company. $2.50.

THE latest volumes by these two overpublished versewrights contain three or four poems which some plain readers might care to memorize and impress upon others. It is even conceivable that working-class readers might enjoy some of Benét's few straight, non-fanciful pictures, as in "Dirigible" and "Sonnets to My Father"; and also that they would be grateful for an occasional realistic felicity as is present in Van Doren's plain song when he discovers how life may be authenticated in familiar objects and sights that people work with and in—not that such readers can't appreciate much subtler writing but that in these passages the poets themselves are honestly closer to their own real capabilities, and so do not talk guff. But just as being broke is not the same thing as being poor, being on occasion plain-minded isn't the same as being a proletarian.

Nor is wrecking and slum-clearance the same thing as revolution. In "To a Friend Hesitating Before Change" Van Doren counsels to "Shatter the moldy glass" since "The arm of time is ready." But before he has finished he has indicated dark, dangerous possible results, and is saying, "Anything, so it be change." The only kind of revolution the liberal can envisage, whether he fears or wishes it, is a rash one.

Van Doren's title-poem, "A Winter Diary," for all its blessed particles, the plausibility of its naturally and gradually rhymed couplets, and the beauty assumed to be slinking in its quietism, seems irksomely longer than the winter it describes. The thiry-four whispering sonnets, which follow, are like ill-lighted murals carefully drawn in feeble colors on the walls of a chessroom. (Blame the poet, blame the times!) In his threescore lyrics there are some spry notes and alert laconics; but most of them, like his one or two other longer poems, have a half-hearted melody, deepened somewhat by the philosophy and the drone of the elegiac mind. They have a vague literalness which forces each poem as a whole to become itself the suggestive image, and this probable image is oftener more surmised by the reader than actually contemplatable for him. It is sweet gruel but thin.

Benét, though, is a 57th Street junk shop of useless treasures. Antique images, quaint devices, church furnishings, vacant armor, lay figures, *genre* studies, and pastiches—all in a good state and gloss. They should afford pleasure to the taste which enjoys a skilful fake as much as a grimy original.

For he *is* skilful, determinedly so, beyond even the highest praise of his many friends in the reviewing business. He has that contriving proficiency which develops early in life in compensation for an almost complete lack of creative poetic power. There is hardly a poetizing trick he hasn't "picked up" somewhere and fitted in somewhere else. His lexical resources of rhyme lead the reader to watch the rhymes instead of the poem. His pirate-ship type of schoolboy imagination, plundering the ancients for poetical materials is enough to make the writing of poetry something on which to levy taxes.

In order to impart to his ingenious fabrications the glamor of that magic and wonder which properly belongs to poetry he either uses a variety of synonyms or symbols of these very terms, or he mentions Heaven. To make poetry out of P. T. Barnum, Jesse James and other solidified eggs as subjects, he simply raises them to a position up in the sky. His fancy runs to the apocalyptical repeatedly in desperate attempts to take on the glow of the genuinely imaginative. Only when he takes an apparently unpoetical subject, such as himself in a tiff with his beloved, or when he otherwise attempts characterization of those he has known with his own eyes or arms do we feel that he might have something of the genuine poet in him after all; and then we know what the wrong kind of education can do to a man. As he is now, in the ripeness of a "successful" career, it is well, perhaps, that he and many others do not attempt revolutionary writing, for without any genuine feeling for revolution they would only speak in false effects.

Life has come to them ready-to-wear and fits them without further alterations than those they can accomplish simply by wriggling a little or shrugging in an amiable gesture. And that's what some perfectly conscientious members of the bourgeoisie figure will happen to us all under a Communist order!

CLARENCE HILL.

Correspondence

Telegram from Mooney

NEW MASSES
NEW YORK

OUR DEFENSE IS PENNILESS. ABSOLUTELY NECESSARY WE RAISE IMMEDIATELY TEN THOUSAND MINIMUM TO PRESENT CASE TO CALIFORNIA COURTS. OUR FINANCIAL CONDITION IS DESPERATE OUR DISTINGUISHED COUNSEL VOLUNTEERING SERVICES WITHOUT FEE. WON'T NEW MASSES CONTRIBUTE SOMETHING NOW TOWARDS ACTUAL COURT EXPENSES. PROFOUND APPRECIATION FRATERNAL GREETINGS.

TOM MOONEY.

SAN QUENTIN, CALIF.

[New Masses readers are urged to help Mooney by sending funds to the Mooney Molders Defense Committee, P. O. Box 1475-X, San Francisco, Calif. —EDITORS.]

Office Workers' Union

TO THE NEW MASSES:

The drive for organization among white-collar workers is increasing in intensity. In many fields independent organization has occurred, and among the workers of business offices and newspapers who are not eligible for membership in the Newspaper Guild there is such a desire for organization that many of them entered the Literary Trades Section of the Office Workers' Union voluntarily. The extent of the interest of these workers can be gauged by the fact that they have organized a mass meeting at which Heywood Broun, among other speakers, will function to promote this organization.

It is therefore urged upon all newspaper and magazine workers to attend this meeting, which will probably be a meeting that will make labor history. Those who cannot attend this meeting, which will be held on Thursday, March 28, at 8:00 P. M., at the Manhattan Trades Industrial School, 22nd Street and Lexington Avenue, should communicate with the Office Workers' Union. 504 Sixth Avenue, New York City.

Literary Trades Section,
OFFICE WORKERS' UNION.

Children Under Capitalism

TO THE NEW MASSES:

One of the most important aspects of modern child psychology is the attempt to resolve the conflicts of the child with his environment, and as a corollary, great efforts have been made to foster cooperation between school and home attitudes. Realistically then, here is an obvious conflict, even if we keep quiet and let the school form the child's standards. We cannot keep quiet, even if we want to, because the young child questions its parents more freely than its teachers or other adults, and further, it absorbs parental attitudes unconsciously. What can we tell small children who are too young for doctrine and dialectics? What helpful techniques can we be given?

The most revolutionary of your readers, as well as the less militant but leftward sympathizers (whose problem is perhaps greater since they are less sure of their own ground) need, as parents, a broad program defined for them. But they also need realistic answers to practical questions, based on different levels of age and understanding.

As early as four, if not sooner, the child becomes conscious of inequalities in the world around him. He may, if he is at a nursery school, be asked for his old toys, to give to "poor children." "What are 'poor children'" he asks. "Why is anybody poor?" He is taken to a store by his mother and sees a toy he wants. She cannot buy it for him. "Why—if someone else can buy it?" As he grows a little older, he knows that some mothers and fathers must work very hard, others less, or not at all; he is conscious of people's homes, of wide divergence in the way they live—he does not call it a standard of living but he does want to know why. Later, the whole question of government arises, and by this time the school is very busy setting up *its* standards. But at each point of which I have spoken, there is this conflict between what we believe (to various degrees and with varying convictions) and the world in which the child lives, plays and begins to work.

There can be no more fundamental question than this one concerning our children. I am sure that I am appealing for thousands of parents who would be grateful for help in answer to their needs. How else can they build for the future?

MARGARET WRIGHT MATHER.

New Masses Club of Omaha

TO THE NEW MASSES:

May we use your columns to send fraternal greetings to all New Masses and John Reed Clubs, and ask for an exchange of ideas on program planning, meeting activities, etc.? Ours is a newly organized club with many eager, capable members willing to make it a strong, vital force to help tie closer the common interests of the workers and middle-class elements in Omaha.

Our members have pledged themselves to sell and introduce The New Masses magazine to as many people as they can and to help make the anti-Hearst campaign a success. The sale of literature which is always prominently displayed has been very successful.

Any helpful suggestions from other clubs will be welcomed.

Omaha, Neb. EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE,
New Masses Club.

Fighting the Gag Laws

TO THE NEW MASSES:

In an effort to stem the rising tide of anti-Red legislation and the intensified campaign against the Reds, a mass meeting is to be held in Madison Square Garden, New York City on April 3. Among the speakers will be Bishop Francis J. McConnell of the New York Area of the Methodist Church, Francis J. Gorman of the United Textile Workers; Mary Van Kleeck of the Interprofessional Association for Social Insurance asd Professor George S. Counts of Teachers' College. The meeting will be held under the joint auspices of the American League Against War and Fascism and the American Civil Liberties Union.

IDA DAILES, Secretary,
American League Against War and Fascism.
New York City.

Unexcelled

TO THE NEW MASSES:

You inquire in the "Correspondence" page of The New Masses, what readers think about your partiality towards articles of "political" content in preference to those of "cultural." Really, now, this is a question of policy, and brings forward another question: for what precise purpose was The New Masses conceived, and what message is it expected to convey to its readers?

However, from my point of view, The New Masses is primarily a journal of political propaganda, conceived for the purpose of enlightening its readers by exposing, in its every phase, the contradictions of the "capitalist" system, its corruption, exploitation, etc., and replacing it with a "Communist" program, and this it has accomplished by presenting in a clear truthful manner all social, economic and political situations, through a "Marxist dialectic" interpretation of events. As a revolutionary journal, it is at present unexcelled in the United States.

Now, it becomes necessary for me to mention Rebecca Pitt's excellent article "Women and Communism." By far, the most impressive and convincing article on this subject, what with the admirable treatment given it by this most able writer, I have read and re-read it to numerous people. It is a valuable thesis and should be preserved in a brochure. We need more articles on this important subject.

Continue your revolutionary approach to problems, furnish your readers with the same high type of selected articles as heretofore, continue your two-page cartoons of recent developments, and you will be fulfilling an important rôle in the revolutionary movement.

My best wishes to you,

ROBERT HALL.

[A complete statement on the specific aims of The New Masses will appear in an early forthcoming issue.—EDITORS]

A Task for the Writers' Congress

ROBERT GESSNER

WHAT can an American writer, interested in the struggle for socialism, learn from his pen brother in the Soviet Union on how to perfect his writing as a weapon in the struggle of the classes? How can an American writer cooperate more closely with other native writers intent on the same purpose? In other words, what can the American Writers' Congress, to be held shortly in New York, learn from the recent Soviet Writers' Congress?

First, let's not approach the problem from any theoretical or positive angle. Let's look at the daily newspaper and be negative for the moment in our reasoning. When I left America in early July for an extended study abroad, this country was almost "pink." Almost everybody, writers or not, who were in any way honest with themselves were turning to the left. Some felt that it was the thing to do; others believed that if they shouted loud enough the revolution would walk around the corner.

After seven months, I have returned to rediscover America. The pinks and "lefts" and fence-sitters are scampering for cover. They have discovered that being a Red on a rising market is quite different from being one when it's no longer the fashion. It takes guts to be a Red today. The Frisco and textile strikes gave all property owners the jitters from which they won't recover until they have every Red in a cell and the key thrown in the river. Suppose, then, we read in the daily newspapers that the various leaders of the states are celebrating bonfire festivals in the public squares at which are being burned the books of their enemies. Do you think that only the books of Communists will be burned? Obviously not. We can be sure Archibald MacLeish will be thrown in, to lie beside Mike Gold. Heywood Broun and Joe Freeman will expire together, their sizzling words melting before a hotter flame into a blend of common ashes. The New Republic will disappear with THE NEW MASSES. And so on. And why not? Did Hitler's hoodlums throw only Communist authors into their bonfires? All the enemies of fascism went in; social democratic workers and intellectuals, trade unionists, pacifists, and even those who weren't enemies but merely dead poets, like Heine.

The official R.A.P.P. of the Soviet Union was officially dissolved April 23, 1932. The Association of Proletarian Writers had been a bureaucratic organization which had arbitrarily ruled out all fellow-travelers. It had considered them dead. The All-Union Writers' Congress was called to map out a new course for Soviet literature, to be followed not only by party members but by fellow-travelers as well. Nothing had been said for almost two and a half years. Every writer and visitor who entered the House of the Trade Unions in Moscow came with an intensity of intellectual interest I have never seen in any convention of any kind before. The first thing seen in the beautiful hall of white columns was an indicator of what we might expect to hear. On all four sides hung portraits of Homer, Shakespeare, Dante, Moliere, Balzac, Spencer, Heine, Goethe, Pushkin, Gogol and Chekhov.

Maxim Gorky opened the Congress with a review of the history of literature. He spoke also in favor of collective writing, pointing to the book, *The Camp of the Snub-Noses,* collectively written by Young Pioneers in Siberia.

Ilya Ehrenbourg disagreed sharply with Gorky. He strongly advocated individual writing as against collective work. No one was surprised at this disagreement. During the two-week sessions many literary heads were broken and mended. The critics who, under the R.A.P.P., had been slaying authors right and left were now being decimated left and right. But the healthiest criticism that marked the sessions came from the reproving voices of workers in their delegations who complained of authors not visiting them enough before writing about them. The authors complained that there were only twenty-four hours to the day and one-sixth of the earth's surface to cover. The youngsters born in the collective farm or factory town, who have been running the wall-paper-newspapers, are becoming the unprofessional but talented writers of the Soviet Union. Those who cannot wait for a professional writer to come from Moscow or Kiev to write them up are doing their own recording. *The Camp of the Snub-Noses* was one such example. These are the unknown literary giants of tomorrow. But the healthy self-criticism of the Congress was one of its chief characteristics, conducted with a vigor and freedom which would have been impossible under the R.A.P.P.

At this point, however, no spokesman with authority had outlined the character Soviet literature should adopt for the future. Karl Radek was to analyze international literature and the Hall of Columns was jammed. Radek admitted his difficulty in reading James Joyce and would not have finished him were it not that many younger Russian writers are being influenced by Joyce. Radek permitted himself to say that writers "should be advised not to learn from Joyce. His purpose as an artist is to photograph a pile of manure with the help of a film apparatus through a microscope . . . our creative method must consist not in chosing dainty morsels such as a picture of a heroic worker or a bad capitalist but in being able to depict the struggle of capitalism, the death of capitalism and the birth of socialism with all their basic contradictions. This realism we call socialist because it does not merely photograph life." In other words, Radek says why sit Buddha-wise and with an elaborate technical apparatus photograph one's navel while all about us the world is dying and a new one is in the throes of birth. Not, he said, realism that is only personal, but realism "based on an understanding of the direction in which the world is going. The world is heading toward the victory of socialism."

N. I. Bukharin analyzed socialist realism more minutely because he applied it specifically to poetry. Some poets still believe poetry to be in a special province free from the laws governing other literary forms, but Bukharin clearly defined the social function of poetry. "Poetic creation and its product, poetry," he said, "is a definite type of social activity and in its development, in spite of the specific nature of poetry, it obeys the laws of social development." This is true, Bukharin pointed out, because poetry reproduces definite group as well as individual psychologies.

The philosophical premise of socialist realism is dialectic materialism. Burkharin stated: "Socialist realism is a special method in art, corresponding to dialectical materialism; a transference of the latter into the field of

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art." Consequently, socialist realism differs from realism in general in the material chosen. In other words, the center of attention will inevitably be the portrayal of the death of capitalism and the construction of socialism, of the dying man and the growing man, and "all the multifarious complexity and implications of the great modern historical process." Bukharin added that there would be methodological differences as well as material, because style is "intimately bound up with the content of the material and aims of a moral character, dictated by the class position of the proletariat."

These truths are self-evident. It is in the application of them to the general classification of material that our inherited literary conceptions are shaken. One would summarize at the outset that there would exist an innate conflict between socialist realism and socialist romanticism. However, romanticism under the conditions of the class struggle is inherently bound with the heroic because it is not directed toward a metaphysical heaven but toward the struggles and victories on earth. Socialist realism could not possibly be solely concerned with the present; it is inevitably concerned with the development in the present toward the future. There is consequently no contrast between socialist realism and socialist romanticism because they are both intertwined within the age.

On the other hand realism in bourgeois literature has been largely anti-lyrical; also the old lyricism has been mainly anti-realistic. There is no basis for this conflict in the literature of the class struggle, because socialism creates new human qualities and enriches the spirituality in man. By eliminating the misery of humanity, the restrictions of classes and professions and localities, a new man is born with new emotions. Any poetic expression of the spiritual activities of this new socialist man would be a lyricism not anti-realistic. It would be, however, decidedly anti-individualistic. Socialist lyricism would undoubtedly portray the growth of individuality, because as we know, under socialism the personality is truly free to grow and even become self-conscious of its enrichment. This growth of individuality is the basis for the growth of collectivity. But individualism, which disunites people, is counterposed to the growth of individuality. Socialist realism is thus anti-individualistic.

What to do about it? Bukharin is specific: "Culture, culture, and once more culture! It is time to finish with cliques and bohemianism." The lyrical Pushkin "was a hard worker and erudite, and stood on the very summit of the culture of his time." Since "it is impossible to remain at the present level" all those who seek to create a "Magnitostroi of literature" must first "be masters of all the storehouses of world literature."

"No," Radek had said, "we do not suppress Shakespeares, we encourage them. We will create a literature greater than the Renaissance, for the Renaissance exhausted its images in slave-owning Greece and slave-owning Rome. . . . This literature which we and you will create will be a great literature of love to all oppressed, hate toward the exploiting class and decisive struggle with them to the death, love toward woman, whom we will make our comrade, love to those colored races which were the outcasts of humanity."

How can the stirring challenge and vision of socialist realism be applied to American revolutionary writers? The American Writers' Congress will, I hope, find the solution to this question.

The Theatre

Theatre Union's "Black Pit"

THE Theatre Union, in *Black Pit,* by Albert Maltz, has transported a slice of the coal country out of the West Virginia hills and recreated it on its stage with remarkable fidelity. Avella or any other company patch is here to a T — the plasterboard shack, the flaring oil lamp, the bed in the front room, all the threadbare externals of the proletarian home down to the last pair of cotton underwear. Much of the essence of the proletariat is here too; the camaraderie of the worker, the sharing of the little goods he owns, the quiet bravery in the daily conflict with the most treacherous of all the elements—coal, the unostentatious love of the proletarian for his kin and fellow worker, all of that is here. The overlords of the coal country, as piratical and heartless a crew as can be found anywhere under the profit system, live on the stage. The working class can indeed welcome Maltz as an extremely talented playwright, who has, within certain inevitable limits, absorbed the realities of life on our side of the tracks. And congratulations are in order for the stage settings, the acting, the direction, all of which sustains, and in some effects, improves upon the high technical level of the preceding Theatre Union plays. In a number of respects the play captures and holds you even more than the *Sailors of Cattaro,* or *Peace on Earth.* Yet certain fundamental flaws prevent this fine play from attaining an excellence that would have rendered it outstanding.

The play in detail: Maltz has taken a protagonist of the working class, a Croatian immigrant miner, Joe, and put him on the rack of our American industrial civilization. This fighting miner, Joe, is framed for his activities during a strike and sent up for three years. This happens before the play begins. Upon his release he discovers his brother-in-law, Tony, has been crippled by a rock-fall in the mine. Tony's "woman" and two children, and Joe's bride, live together in the patch, on relief and the few dollars workman's compensation Tony gets. Joe is blacklisted, there is no job on all of God's green earth, and his wife is soon to have a "little feller." When the hero gets a chance at a job finally—a job that carries with it the overtime pay of doing stool-pigeon work—he takes it on with great misgivings, and rending inner struggles, hoping to outwit the boss by imparting only meaningless information. His plan is to hold the job at least till the kid is born and get the benefit of the company doctor. Poor Joe had the best intentions. But the boss is more experienced in making stool-pigeons than Joe is in sidestepping such a career. The boss ties Joe up in a knot; there is a dictaphone, and a $10 gift, and a few other incidentals, which properly advertised, lead Joe to the belief that the stool-pigeon's lot has been inevitably forced upon him. He betrays—for a doctor's services to his wife, a keg of beer for the celebrations. He gives the name of the union organizer. He is lost. He has turned traitor.

Betrayal is a one-way street. The workingman who walks down it can never retrace his steps. Life has imposed a harsh but inevitably logical discipline upon the proletariat—there is no more heinous crime against the working class than that of treason.

Joe is cast off by the workingmen. He is the object of their infinite scorn. His own brother Tony who has loved him since he was a "little feller" shows him the door. Joe's own conscience makes him "feel like to die." He leaves his wife and new-born child but only after expressing the hope his child will atone for his father's crime by becoming "a good union man." He leaves as a picket line forms.

It seems to me the proletarian writer has the right to any theme so long as his treatment of it induces the audience to a clearer conception of social forces, to a hatred of capitalism, to a mode of action. Thus, proletarian literature wins consideration as a keen weapon in the armory of the working class. Maltz meets these considerations. But one may indeed ask if he would not have wielded a sharper weapon had he projected a different emphasis out of the coalfields. When the playwright sets out to tell his audience of workingmen that obloquy and limitless misery are the lot of the traitor, he tells a tale more than twice told. You may smile when you call a workingman a son-of-a-bitch and get away with it, but call him a stool-pigeon and you may grin from ear to ear, but it won't save you from a fancy lacing.

If, through indirection, the tragedy of the stool-pigeon would cast into bolder relief the heroism of the rank and file (for that is the great reality) then Maltz's emphasis could be understood. But unfortunately the impression remains that he has not succeeded in his device—he has not made the best of the fat notebook he brought back from the coalfields.

It seems to me the selection of this emphasis — the stool-pigeon story — undoubtedly derives from Maltz's relatively recent initiation into proletarian environment. Else, the spectacular, this unhealthy and atypical aspect of the labor movement, would not have caught his dramatist's eye. The splendor of the miner is his indomitableness—his first-class fighting qualities. Though this appears in the play, it is relegated to a secondary role. The words "organize and fight" pass up and down the hills wherever men dig coal. The first "Red villages" in America, in southern Illinois, are mining villages. It seems to me the emphasis on these factors would have brought *Black Pit* up to magnificent heights. But then, of course, it would have been another, a different play. Clearly, considerations of political content should occupy a higher place in this theatre; a place on a par with its technical level.

Having chosen the stool-pigeon as the hero of the play, Maltz runs into several other problems. Though he has piled up circumstance so shrewdly that the audience (particularly those who do not come from the proletariat) accept the fate of Joe as a logical development, the worker detects certain flaws. In the first place the hero is *not* a prole-

tarian Job. He has little more of his share of life's woes than the usual workingman. Every proletarian runs the same gauntlet from the crib to the grave. All suffer hunger, all rear families, all have dependents. Prison? Perhaps it "does something to a man." Granted: but run down the list of the imprisoned class-conscious proletarians—Joe was certainly that—and you will find that the workingmen who crack up after prison are few and far between. Mooney will tell you that. If they do, the weakness was in the man before he came up against temptation.

But Joe, as Maltz pictured him originally, was a picture of proletarian vigor. This man, I believe, could never have turned stool.

Joe's brother, the crippled Tony, is a splendid sample of proletarian courage. Here is the working-class hero; though paralyzed in an industrial accident, he is fearless; he would rather have the slag hill his bed, and coal his supper, than turn traitor. And that is typical. All the other people, except Joe's "woman," are excellent; the coal digger will recognize them as his buddies. Maltz, however, does not get the women of the coal fields down accurately: they are the most advanced of all proletarian women—true comrades of fighting men. Joe's wife, the poorest portraiture in the play, is anything but a miner's woman; she emerges as a sort of proletarian clinging vine — an evil and weakening influence upon Joe.

It is needless to single out any individual actor for honorable mention: all, it seemed to me, played their parts with sterling effectiveness. The settings brought the coal patch to you; the direction was excellent.

I cannot close without a mention of the superb scene in the boarding house: here the playwright got off the proletarian's life brilliantly. The game of cards, the bottle of beer, the swapping of yarns, the quick camaraderie—it's all there as real as a coal tipple. These are the miners: the strong men typical of the class destined for power.

No, America is not, as a contemporary novelist fears, breeding a race of stool-pigeons. The sons of Daniel Boone, John Brown and Denmark Vesey will not sell out to the Hearsts and the Mellons. The overlords can rant from day to night and empty their pockets to the spies, but it will do them no good. That great mother of men—the working-class—is forever breeding new heroes. "The strong men keep coming on," Sandburg sang when he was one of them. Bourgeois writers have given us enough and too much of Judas; our poets should sing to us of men. We are going into battle and heroes are all about us.

JOSEPH NORTH.

Archibald MacLeish's "Panic"

A speech delivered as part of The New Masses - New Theatre critical symposium which followed the final performance of Panic, *Imperial Theatre, New York City, March 16.*

LAST night I saw *Panic* at its premiere performance. As I sat in the audience, I heard hissing from the front rows. Tickets were 5.50: it will help you to appreciate who the majority of the first nighters were. I am not going to discuss the aesthetics of the hiss, although its aesthetics cannot altogether be separated from its politics. One thing I did feel, however: that the hiss of the bourgeoisie is the applause of the proletarian.

A previous speaker had asked: What has brought about this general displeasure of the critics? Is it because Mr. MacLeish has presented in his drama the conflict of class forces, or because he has called attention to the existence of such a thing as a depression or a crisis? No, I think it is by now pretty generally accepted in the realm of bourgeois letters that these facts can no longer be kept out of the works of literature. It is no longer a question of whether, but of how to deal with them. The very same issue of The Herald Tribune that contained an adverse review of Mr. MacLeish's play, featured stanzas of a poem recently written by Rudyard Kipling. He, too, deals with the crisis. Kipling writes in the last stanza of this new poem:

Veiled and secret Power,
Whose paths we search in vain,
Be with us in our hour
Of overthrow and pain;
That we—by which sure token
We know Thy ways are true—
In spite of being broken—
Because of being broken—
May rise and build anew,
Stand up and build anew.

Mr. Kipling speaks with the voice of Czarists and restorationists, the capitalist and landlord oppressors whose power was broken by the proletariat in Russia. He, the court singer of British imperialism, speaks to the British imperialists whose turn to be broken he perceives in the omen of time; he speaks to them solicitously, warning them—*lest we forget* . . . summoning them to gird their loins in struggle against "overthrow and pain."

Archibald MacLeish has not made this the thesis of his play. He has taken for his subject matter a certain moment in the economic crisis of American capitalism and has dealt with it in a manner that is new for him and something of a shock to those who have hitherto been his followers. We cannot presume to discuss the play we saw this evening, we cannot analyze or evaluate it justly, unless we do so in terms of its author, unless we see it as a milestone in the course of this writer's progress.

The play has as its theme the doom of capitalism, a doom that proceeds out of the very being of capitalism, organically, by an inexorable dictate. In this sense, *Panic* is, broadly speaking, an anti-capitalist play. In the decline of McGafferty, the country's leading industrialist and financier, in his destruction, though by his own hand, the author has undoubtedly sought to symbolize the inevitable fall of the present order. Not the voice of Griggs, the die-hard steel corporation lawyer, who calls on McGafferty to rally the forces of the old order—not his is

the voice of the author. We find Griggs saying to McGafferty:

Fifty years and
Where will you stand? Even kids will judge you!
Could have saved the show and wouldn't!

But the bare word, "Licked," muttered by the dejected McGafferty, rises as an overtone against which the urgings of Griggs sink into a feeble cry. It is as though MacLeish of *Panic* were answering MacLeish of the address to the young men of Wall Street.

I have said that *Panic* represents a significant transition in the career of Archibald MacLeish, as writer. Yet this very moment of transition is also the moment of his weakness. We have seen that the fatal finale is presented as arising from the organic deficiency of the body politic incarnated in McGafferty. But this finale, the fall of capitalism, is conceived by the author in terms of automatic collapse. Yes, capitalism disintegrates and collapses; but present in the capitalist system is a certain social force that is the historically necessary factor in bringing about that collapse—the class that engages in revolutionary overthrow: *that* is not yet present in the mind of the author. The advance, one may say, still keeps barred within itself the path not yet traversed.

The play was conceived as a tragedy. In this lies significance. For the protagonist is still McGafferty. He is the central, all-absorbing being, the man of destiny. Yes, he must fall, but his day goes down in grandeur. The political villain of the piece is seen advancing to his doom with the strides of a hero. His talk is charged with the poetry of high resolve: *There's one they'll never break to say they broke him!* He will not wait for overthrow. He will make his exit graciously, with the demise of a noble loser. But in reality that is not how McGafferty will fall! The stage in which capitalism enters its decline ushers in the epoch of its revolutionary overthrow. The one implies the other. Was it not Lenin who said: The bourgeoisie does not fall, the proletariat drops it—?

The political aspects of the play necessarily have their reflections in the dramaturgy. When we turn to the characterization, we see that against the representative of finance capital, who is a living force, a man with the fullness of stature and range, the leader of the unemployed is still half defined, in body as in spirit still vaguely limned. He is more the soothsayer than the challenger. *The will is made in your own mind to die,* he forebodes to McGafferty. *The will is made in our mind that you die,* are the words that the proletariat and their spokesmen speak out at this hour.

I was very much impressed, in reading the author's preface to the play, with the explanation of the verse pattern and the metrical scheme. Almost in the manner in which Wordsworth in England set out over a century ago, to capture the beauty of the common speech of men, Mr. MacLeish has woven into the texture of his lines the rhythms of current American speech. Taking neither the completely unmetrical cadences of free verse nor the syllabic measures of blank verse, he has adopted a prosody based on the stresses of American speech.

But in the author's adaptation of his verse pattern to characterization, we find something that corresponds, I believe, to the political aspects already presented: It is significant that while the bankers are endowed with lines of five accents, the proletarians receive only minced three-accented lines. I should say in justice to Mr. MacLeish that this differentiation was not intended in any way as belittlement of the workers; it is due, as the foreword in the book tells us, to the fact that the unemployed constitute the element of chorus, and as such, traditionally, I dare say, do not need full extension of speech. But the error lies precisely in the conception of the unemployed as chorus. True, their role in *Panic* advances beyond the limitations of the chorus in Greek tragedy. In one of the scenes—the invasion of McGafferty's offices—they penetrate into the action as antagonist. Yet, on the whole, it cannot be said that they become *dramatis personae.*

Let us take the question of the blindness of the unemployed leader. We can understand the symbol of that blindness: the idea that his is the penetrating vision—the inner, intellectual sight, the vision beyond the present into the future. The author felt that he would encumber his seer with the limited physical sight that would attach itself to things around him—a symbol made use of by various writers since antiquity.

But in this conception of vision we have the reason for the weakness of the spokesman of the unemployed. We have the reason in the implied contradiction between the vision of the future society and the sight of what goes on about us. In essence this contradiction represents a rift between theory and practice. The future society is still conceived by the author as being independent of our sight of present-day conditions. The struggle in the play, therefore, does not become a struggle through the present moment for immediate demands around living day-to-day issues developing to a climax, the overthrow of capitalism. On the contrary, the vision in the play remains purely platonic, the kind that is still in the realm of utopia, and therefore, cannot adequately serve the working class. Mr. MacLeish sees the decline of capitalism and its inevitable fall; but he sees the process still in terms of the fate of the bourgeoisie. Capitalism faces destruction; but it is necessary to declare who will do the destroying. Will it be the voluntary surrender of life, in the manner of McGafferty? It is well to remember the words of Jaurès: "La bourgeoisie ne se suicide pas." Its lot is to be overthrown. Not the proud withdrawal of the doomed financier, but the stormy assault of the proletariat. It is the self-destruction of the bourgeoisie in the play that robs the proletariat of its historic revolutionary role. Hence, its position of chorus; hence, the fatalism that pervades the play; hence the pallor and the shadowiness of the workers and their leader; and hence, too, the sparseness of the verses allotted to them.

Only through the idea of revolutionary overthrow can the weaknesses that have here been pointed out be overcome. When the playwright will fuse into his blood the red corpuscles of faith in the revolutionary power of the proletariat, will his unemployed workers be given flesh and blood and muscle; will his chorus-proletariat emerge from the background and assume the position of protagonist; will his specter-like spokesman of the workers be transfigured into a sound, living, leader; will his palm which ominously strokes the face of the financier gnarl itself for the death-dealing stroke. The blind seer will then open his eyes. The insight into the future will not be blocked by the sight of the present; the realization of the immediate path of struggle will open for him a vista into the world of tomorrow.

Archibald MacLeish has given evidence, I believe, of his sincere desire to proceed along that road. I think the play we have seen this evening justifies us in expecting to see him advance from his present point of transition; in expecting him, America's most splendid singer, to sing the epic of the proletariat advancing through day-to-day struggle to power, to be one of the poets that the American working class has drawn into its ranks; to work as poet, to sing the epic of the New Conquistador. V. J. JEROME.

Art

A. U. Sculpture Show

THE Artists Union has until very recently devoted practically all its energies, and rightly so, to fighting for the economic betterment of artists. But with the tremendous growth of the organization, adding new resources for a broader program, there has been greater attention to the specifically artistic activities, such as lectures, symposiums, exhibitions, etc. The Union's current exhibition of sculpture is not only its best effort to date but also one of the most interesting and important sculpture shows of the New York art season (60 West 15th Street).

Ranging from completely abstract forms to commonplace academic stuff, almost every tendency in the field of sculpture is represented, and while there are a number of mediocre things included, the quality of the show as a whole is very high, and contains some of the most exciting work to be seen anywhere. Particularly noticeable is the fact that more and more sculptors are turning to revolutionary subject matter (revolutionary either directly or by implication) and this exhibit is doubly important for its assembling of the largest number of such works in any exhibition to date. Noguchi's powerful "Lynching," in chrome-steel, has been previously noted; Ilse Niswonger's "War" is an effective handling of a difficult problem; Nat Werner has two fine achievements in his "Taxi Driver" and "Pickets," the latter, a small group in wood, remarkable for vigor of spirit and skilful composition; Adolf Wolff's "Working-Class Mother" is a powerfully moving and tragic work; Ahron Ben-Shmuel has in his monumental "Head of Lenin" created one of the finest things in the exhibition.. . . . I have seen many sculptors' interpretations of Lenin, both here and in Europe, but this seems to me the most successful, in its great dignity of spirit and superb simplicity of form; Sam Becker's "Lynched" and "Pickets," previously seen, are effective, although the latter lacks plastic strength when compared to Werner's treatment of the same subject; Gertrude Fleischman's "Litany" is a good little piece of satire; as is Morris Brown's "Mother's Day," excellent in conception but inadequate in technical treatment; Alonzo Hauser's portrait of Herndon, while good, is not notable as his small marble "Figure" with its ingenious design.

Also interesting for excellent sculptural qualities are C. W. Davis's "Lady in Oak"; Ernest Guteman's "Heads," carved in plaster; Jose DeCreeft's "Woman"; Minna Harkavy's "Russian Peasants"; Ben-Shmuel's "Torso"; G. R. Davis's "Figure"; Jean DeMarco's "Peasant Woman"; Mitchell Fields' "Figure"; and A. Cavallito's "Negress."

The Artists Union is certainly to be congratulated for mounting such a show.

STEPHEN ALEXANDER.

Between Ourselves

THE Summer School of Moscow State University is the outgrowth of an experiment conducted in 1933 by a group of American teachers and students. In 1934, the second year of the English-language summer school in Moscow, there was an enrollment of 212 Americans in thirteen courses dealing with education, art, literature, psychology, economics and other subjects surveying Soviet cultural achievements.

The forthcoming session of the Moscow Summer School will be the third under the auspices of the Commissariat of Education, VOKS, and INTOURIST in the Soviet Union; and sponsored by the Institute of International Education and a committee of outstanding educators in the United States.

In recognition of this factor, the National Student League, cooperating with World Tourist, Inc., is again organizing a group of students and teachers to attend the 1935 session in Moscow. In 1934, the N.S.L. and World Tourists, Inc., succeeded in sending to the school a large group of students.

In addition to the summer school tour arranged with the National Student League, Dr. L. Schwartz and Dr. Harry A. Shier are organizing a group of physicians, dentists, pharmacists and nurses to study the health service in the Soviet Union. A group of teachers will go under the personal guidance of Mr. Albert E. Lewis of the Evander Childs High School. Mr. Lewis has previously spent two years in study and travel in the Soviet Union.

This year, World Tourists, Inc. announces surprisingly low rates for the round trip. Registrations for the N.S.L. party are now being accepted. Interested persons may apply to either the N.S.L. or World Tourists, Inc.

The play-writing contest sponsored jointly by New Theatre and THE NEW MASSES closed last month. The prize-winning play in the thirty-minute class was *Waiting For Lefty,* by Clifford Odets, printed in the February issue of New Theatre. The prize-winning play in the fifteen-minute class was *The Great Philanthropist,* by Philip Barber, on the Klein-Ohrbach strike. Copies of these are available at the Repertory Department of New Theatre League.

"The American Writers Congress will undoubtedly open new perspectives to intellectuals, leading toward action," writes Henri Barbusse in a letter to an American author. "The question of the organization of this Congress interests me extremely. At the present time I am helping to lay the foundation of an international organization of left writers. I shall be glad to send a message to the Congress."

Prominent European as well as American writers will attend the sessions of the Congress, which will be held in New York City the last weekend in April. The Congress will open on Friday evening, April 26, with a large public meeting at the Mecca Temple Auditorium. Other sessions of the Congress will be held in the auditorium of the New School for Social Research on April 27 and 28, and will be open only to invited delegates and guests.

The Post Office Department advises us that under the present postal regulations THE NEW MASSES-The John Day Company Novel Contest cannot be postponed beyond April 1, 1935. Further information on this matter will be published in this column next week.

Special circumstances have forced us to postpone the publication of the article on Hearst originally announced for this issue. We felt that Torriente-Brau's vivid piece which arrived on press day, demanded immediate publication in behalf of the 800 imprisoned Cuban strikers, many of whom now face the firing squad. William Randorf's article on Hearst will appear in next week's issue.

New Masses Lectures

Ben Goldstein, member of the staff of THE NEW MASSES will speak as follows:

Friday, March 29: Debate with Rabbi Jacob Weinstein at Premier Palace, 505 Sutter Avenue, Brooklyn. Auspices: Hinsdale Workers' Club.

Wednesday, April 3: "Judaism's Way Out," at 12:15 noon, 383 Pearl Street, Brooklyn. Auspices: Menorah Society of Brooklyn College.

"Religion and the Social Crisis," at 8 P. M., Community Center, West 7th Street and Central Avenue, Plainfield, N. J. Auspices: Jack London Club of Plainfield.

Saturday, April 6: "Anti-Semitism in America," at Windsor Hotel, Montreal, Canada. Auspices: Saturday Night Club.

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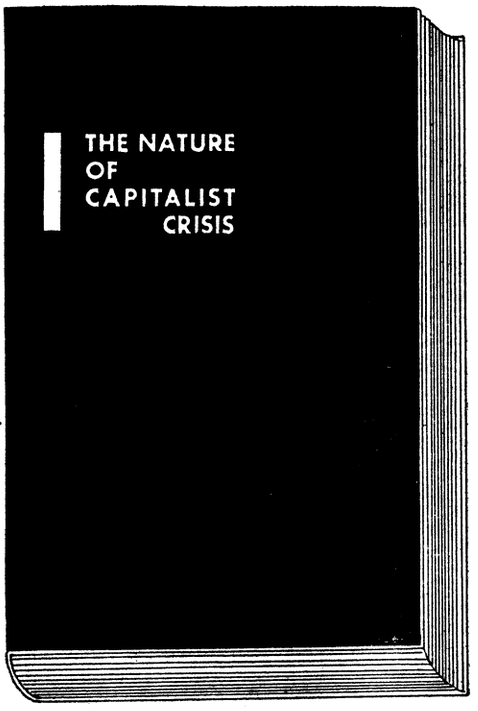

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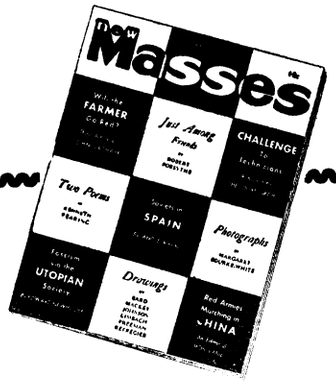

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