

American Writers Congress—Mecca Temple—Friday Night

new
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APRIL 30, 1935

10c

Masses

Dreiser Replies:

**I Am Not
Anti-Semitic**

Earl Browder: A Profile

By JOSEPH NORTH

Other Contributors:

MATTHEW JOSEPHSON VICTOR YAKHONTOFF
ART YOUNG JACOB BURCK ROBERT FORSYTHE
CORLISS LAMONT LIMBACH WILLIAM GROPPER

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APRIL 30, 1935

Lang Joins Up

EVIDENTLY unsatisfied with the energetic work of his Brisbanes, his Issac Don Levines and his Ripleys in the violent campaign he is directing against the Soviet Union, William Randolph Hearst has enlisted a new recruit to join his well-paid army of slanderers. This latest rookie who is serving under the Hearst colors is Harry Lang, a member of the editorial staff of the Jewish language Daily Forward, the mouthpiece of the most conservative elements of the Socialist Party. Lang's vituperations against the Soviet Union are being featured on the first pages of every Hearst newspaper throughout the country. His articles, five of which have already been published, appear under such heads as "Soviet Guns Drive Mothers to Work, Peasants Revolt" and attempt to prove that a reign of terror exists in Soviet Russia, that starvation is rampant and that workers and peasants under the knout and bayonet of the Red Guard are living a life of desperation far more terrible than that prevailing in Czarist days. In fact so vehement are Lang's attacks upon the Soviets that at any moment one expects to hear him shouting for the restoration of the Romanoffs.



SECURITY FOR WHOM?

Russell T. Limbach

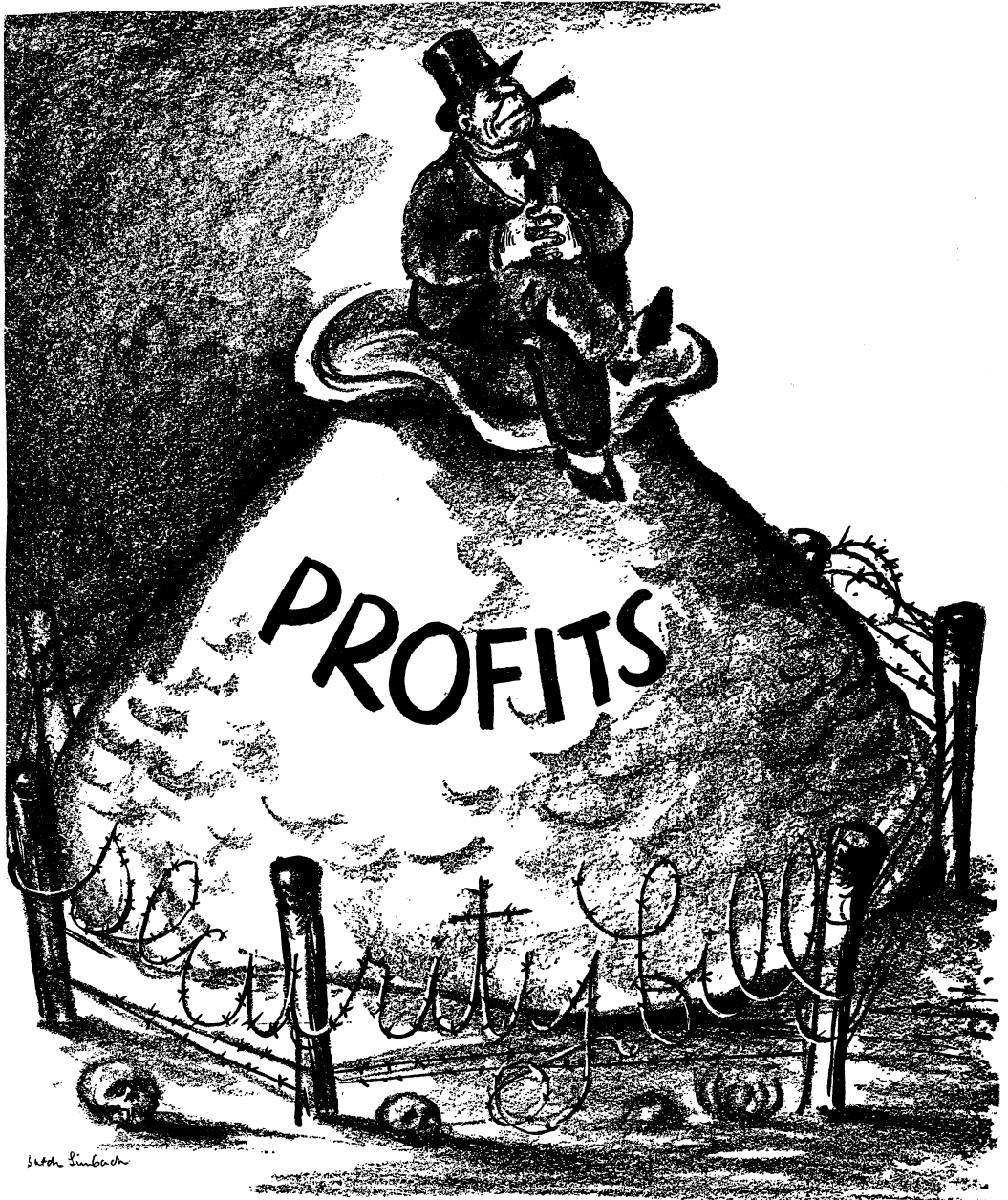
IT SEEMS hardly necessary to consider his accusations. The moral integrity of any Socialist leader who can so blithely sell himself out to Hearst immediately must fall under the darkest suspicion and whatever he may write in behalf of Hearst's poisonous campaign against the Soviets can be discredited automatically. The point is the obvious present tendency of the right-wing Socialist leaders to miss no opportunity to slander and denigrate the Soviet Union. We have already seen Algernon Lee, one of the Old Guard leaders, denouncing the Soviets from the same platform with White Guards and Hearst's pro-fascist underlings. We have seen The New Leader, organ of the right-wing Socialists, attack the U. S. S. R. with a vehemence one would expect to see only in the thoroughly discredited pages of Hearst's newspapers.

THAT the anti-Sovietism of the right-wing Socialist leaders should eventually find its way into these newspapers is hardly to be wondered at. If lies must be told about the Soviets then the proper organ for them is naturally a string of newspapers which have made lying a journalistic policy. It is therefore somewhat disconcerting to see Lang attacked by various of his friends in the Old Guard, not of course for his vilification of the Soviets, but because his articles have been appearing in the Hearst newspapers. Some of his defenders have trotted out their lame excuses. Lang, says The Forward in an attempt to defend a member of its editorial staff, "wrote on his own responsibility," yet they do not admit that it was on the responsibility of the editors themselves that the articles against the Soviets first saw the light. But for all the prevarications and ex-

cuses of the right-wing leaders, the issue so far as it concerns the Socialist rank and file is a clear one. The rank and file know that the Soviet Union is the one hope of an industrial democracy. They know that the Workers' Republic is the only Socialist government existing in the world. And for this reason, when they see their Socialist leaders, the men like Algernon Lee and Harry Lang, betraying it, they cannot help but wonder whether, if such leaders will write for Hearst, the same men will not join his vigilantes and his fascist gunmen on the other side of the barricades.

Hitler's Star Pupil

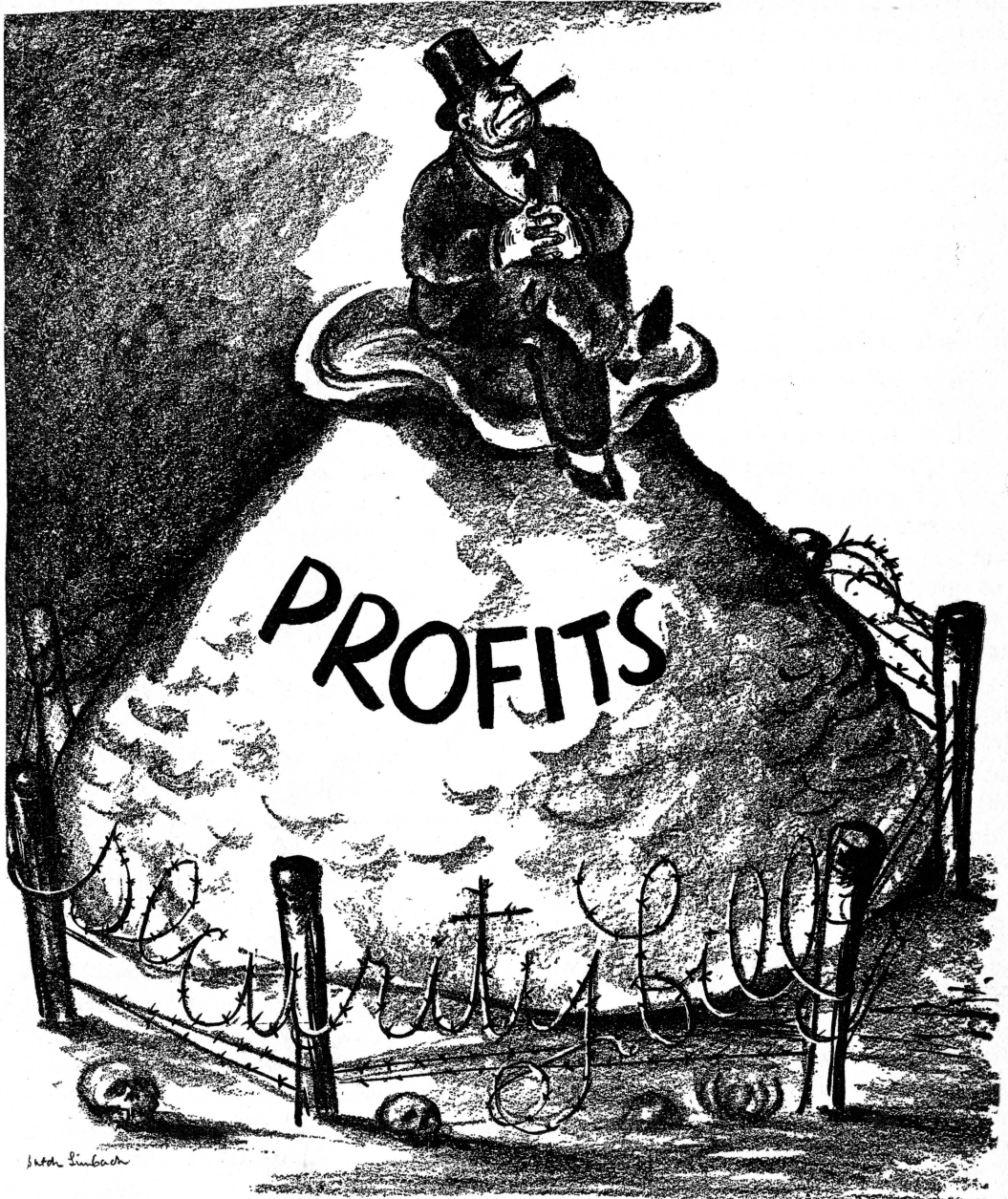
THE boycott against the Hearst newspapers is evidently beginning to be felt if we may judge by the advertising splurge the foremost exponent of yellow journalism indulged in early



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this week. In daily newspapers throughout the country he reprinted one of his prize editorials which on the same day the advertisements appeared was featured on the first page of all the Hearst newspapers. Beginning with the remark that "some un-American disturbers and malcontents, advocates of Communism or fascism or some other form of foreign despotism, are agitating for the boycott of the Hearst papers, because of their militant Americanism," Mr. Hearst then outlines what his ideas of Americanism really are. The ideas which he thereafter expresses are those most prevalent during these Dark Ages of capitalism when the poverty stricken are given full governmental sanction to starve and the capitalists are given every privilege possible to exploit them. The Hearst papers, writes Mr. Hearst from his million-dollar estate, "believe in the capitalist system, so-called, which is the only practical economic system of proven worth and with adequate reward for merit," and they are "advocates of rugged individualism." He calls for the deportation of aliens who attempt to exercise the rights of free speech in this country and he opposes race prejudice and class conflict. Meanwhile with all his shouting about free speech, about the sacred rights of American citizens, about the beauties of Jeffersonian democracy, Hearst, with all the power his wealth and his journalistic dominions can lend him, continues more and more openly to espouse the cause of fascism which, if we may judge by all the signs he has given us, will be the American counterpart of that instituted by his great hero in Berlin.

A Slap at Hitler

THAT the great mass of German labor is not marching shoulder to shoulder behind Hitler was made strikingly evident last week by the German Labor Front in its nation-wide shop-council elections. Though the Labor Front announced that 84.5 percent of the votes were cast for the official lists, reports coming from the predominantly industrial districts prove that the workers are far from supporting the Fuehrer with that unanimity which his high-powered propaganda agencies would lead us to expect. In Essen, where the Krupp works are located, for example, the percentage of affirmative votes was given as 81 percent of the total valid vote, or in figures, the number of "yes" votes was 176,193 and of the "no"

votes 41,989. However, in this district 11 percent of those entitled to vote refrained from doing so, a fact which leads one to believe that they chose this method of showing their opposition to the Labor Front candidates and the Hitler regime. Thus, using the total number of voters there as a basis of calculation, the percentage of "yes" votes would drop to 71 percent. In the Krupp mines at Helene in the same district there were 419 "no" votes against only 813 affirmative, while at the mine in Mulheim there were 518 "no" votes to 117 affirmative ones. Further details are still to be published, but the ones already published show that the workers in many of the districts are displaying greater and greater rebellion against Hitler's efforts to drive them deeper in wage slavery.

The Red Army Advances

WHILE the papers have carried Chiang Kai-shek's censored releases attempting to minimize the advances of the Red Army, two major movements of the Chinese Communist forces have been developing with decisive successes. The Kweichow divisions, striking sharp, continuous blows, have destroyed eight of the finest Kuomintang brigades, which were defending Kweiyang, capital of Kweichow. The great westward march is steadily penetrating southern Szechuan, in the direction of its capital, Cheng-tu. This army reached the Yangtse River on the Szechuan border April 15 and is already fifty miles from Cheng-tu. Meantime the northern Szechuan divisions of the Communists, commanded by Hsu Hsiang Chien, having smashed Generalissimo Chiang's model army corps, the great 29th Army of the Kuomintang, are marching also on Cheng-tu with the obvious strategy of combining forces to strike the final blow. The 'New York Times' A. P. dispatch of April 20, admits that the danger of Red victory is such that hundreds of foreign residents are on the run from Cheng-tu by any vehicle available, airplane, automobile, or Chinese river junk. Martial law has been declared in the capital. (This dispatch virtually concedes that the "news" of the previous week from China was pure invention. Pravda thus describes the victorious westward-moving army of Kiangsi-Kweichow: "What an army! Sixty thousand soldiers, accompanied by not less than forty thousand civilians, the aged, women and children, battled on,

marching over 1,000 miles, breaking the resistance of the militarist armies, overcoming the most difficult natural barriers, swamps, rivers, jungles and mountains." The great strategic move, which broke through an iron ring of 1,000,000 men flung around it last year, is reaching its climax. Decisive battles will take place in Szechuan. The Communist advance has not only won territory and populations, but has resulted in desertions from the Nanking army and large gains in arms and equipment. The control of the entire province is practically in the hands of the Red Armies.

Cuba "Libre"

DESPITE the rigid censorship established in Cuba as the military dictatorship of that terror-gripped island continues its ruthless suppression of the workers there, the United States is shortly to get a comprehensive, first-hand report on the reign of blood and iron of Mendieta and Batista. The Provisional Committee of Cuba announced a delegation would soon leave from here to investigate conditions in Cuba and report back their findings. The delegation was inspired by the ever-accumulating smuggled reports to the Committee telling of cold-blooded, daily killings of militants, liberals, professionals, of suppression of free speech, exemplified by the jailing of six editors of *Las Masas*, Cuban anti-imperialist magazine and the attempt now to re-try them before a secret tribunal because the "short" terms they received at their first trial do not satisfy the Batistas, of the danger of death or jail faced by professionals, students, intellectuals and workers who dare ask for more pay or any improvement in their desperate working conditions. This mounting terror is hidden behind the effective curtain of suppression of news hung up by Cuba's ruling dictatorship. Although Cuba is only eighty miles from Florida, most people in the United States probably hear less of what is going on there than of what is happening in Europe. A report of the proposed delegation should also have great influence in bringing pressure to bear in America against the intended deportation of Cuban refugees in the United States, who obviously would be in imminent danger of death if they returned to the tyranny of present-day Cuba. The Provisional Committee on Cuba at present is carrying on activities from Room 651, 246

Fifth Avenue, New York City, and is asking wide American support for the delegation of investigation.

Vigilante Law

THE murder trial of forty-eight workers has begun in Sante Fe, New Mexico. The International Labor Defense, with the cooperation of the American Civil Liberties Union, is conducting the defense. Already A. L. Wirin, defense attorney, has produced copies of hospital records showing that two workers were shot in the back by deputies, and that none of the accused could possibly have killed Sheriff Carmichael, who died as a result of a bullet, during a demonstration of unemployed miners in Gallup. The authorities ransacked the records to find a law that could be used to terrorize the miners. They dug up a statute which has grown moldy since New Mexico entered the Union, but which furnished an excuse for charging thirty-eight men, nine women and a fourteen-year-old girl with the crime of murder. In the vigilante terror that followed the shooting, legionnaires rounded up another six hundred. They were released when protests flooded the state. But the forty-eight on trial are in grave danger. The cases might be legally insupportable. Witnesses for the state frankly confess to open prejudice against workers' organizations which would throw their

testimony into utter disrepute, but the press whips up a lynch spirit, and the powerful interests (backed by Rockefeller from whose property the miners were evicted) are demanding convictions. That workers can be sent to the penitentiary despite evidence of their innocence is too well known to be repeated. The latest instance is the sentencing of eight working-class leaders in California to fourteen years in San Quentin on the nebulous grounds of "conspiracy to conspire." The way to fight this case is to send vigorous protests to Governor Clyde Tingley of New Mexico, Judge M. A. Otero of Sante Fe, and Sheriff Roberts.

Gunplay in Illinois

BUT Gallup does not end the contemporary record of coal operators' bloodshed: Springfield, capital of the great state of Illinois was the scene of further official violence this past week. In what was characterized as "a deliberate and premeditated slaughter," gunmen of the United Mine Workers' Union shot down and killed an organizer of the Progressive Miners' Union and wounded eight others. It appears an indisputable fact that the gunmen are leaders of the United Mine Workers, one of them an appointee of John L. Lewis. Southern Illinois has always been the scene of the bitterest struggle between coal miners, the ope-

rators, and the operator's men in the unions. The monument at Virden, Illinois, commemorates the heroic stand of the Illinois miners of several decades back, against employers' onslaughts. Conflict after conflict brought the highest wage scale in the country to miners of that state. But the treachery of John (Weepin' Johnnie) Walker, and more recently of John L. Lewis whittled away at the wage-scale, at the strength of the union in that state, until conditions in Southern Illinois began to resemble those in Kentucky and further South.

WHILE miners face unemployment and hazardous conditions of work, while companies exploit the rank and file, officials of the two unions resort to terrorism over a jurisdictional fight. The quarreling, the gangster methods of official bureaucrats prevent members of the unions from uniting and presenting a solid front-against the mine owners. On June 16th, the truce between the workers and the companies expires. A strike situation is imminent. Instead of joining for their common interest, the rank and file are drawn into the disputes between two sets of thieves over the division of the booty. The workers are not considered. The most valuable allies of the company owners prove to be union officials who split the ranks of their membership and prevent the real fight against exploitation from going ahead.

White Collar Pickets

IN FRONT of the New York Curb Exchange down on Wall Street, twenty-eight employes of the Trading Floor have been picketing for over five weeks. They were discharged for union activity — their agitation caused the elimination of the "Scotch Week" (an arrangement whereby clerks were forced to take a "vacation" every eighth week without pay). The clerks on the picket line have been treated to the same intimidation, the same wholesale arrests that face factory workers on strike. Small owners in the neighborhood have been urged by brokers to protest the picketing as an interference to their business. They have steadfastly refused to do so. Meanwhile, employes of the National Biscuit Company have thrown mass picket lines before the company's plant and have openly defied an anti-picketing injunction. They have experienced the usual police brutality, arrests, beatings, inti-

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midation, but the strikers are determined to win reinstatement of all discharged unionists without discrimination before they consider arbitration of wage and hour disputes. Their strike has been supported by small merchants and consumers throughout the country. The spontaneous boycott has drastically reduced the company's sales. Housewives and small merchants refuse to buy scab goods.

PICKETS march before the Silver Rod Stores, a chain system operating forty drug stores in New York City. Fifteen clerks were discharged for activity in the Pharmacists' Union. Small owners began to grasp the fact that they have the same class enemy as the workers—the manufacturing interests who, by loans and special trade arrangements, force the independent merchants out of the field. By refusing to deal with the Progressive Drug Company, where wholesale workers are striking, by active support of the Silver Rod chain-store clerks, by cooperating with the newly organized Pharmacists' Union, the independent store owner is allying himself to the worker in the struggle against the common enemy—the chain store and monopoly capitalists. **THE NEW MASSES** has always supported the struggle of neighborhood owners against the encroachment and ruthless competition of the chain store, just as we have fought the hypocritical N.R.A. codes. The chain store has fallaciously been called a "step toward Socialism." Actually it is a typical manifestation of finance capital. The growing monopoly of ownership, the attempt to eliminate the small storekeeper, the gathering of profits in the hands of a small group of large industrialists and bankers at the expense of the neighborhood distributor, have converted the independent into a selling agent devoid of real independence. The owner of a small drug store or grocery shop, meat market or ice-cream parlor faces pauperization and bankruptcy to the same extent as the farmer and industrial worker.

MORE and more white-collar workers realize their place in the class struggle—side by side with the industrial laborer and small farmer. The neighborhood store owner understands that he can only resist annihilation by the forces from above if he joins with the working class in the struggle against a rapidly falling standard of living.

The identification of interests between the independent owner, his clerk, the industrial worker who buys at his store, and the farmer who grows the food product, is closer day by day. These are all natural allies, whose interests are basically the same. Together, this alliance can resist the intensified drive towards fascism, which means their enslavement, the enslavement of the majority, by a steadily diminishing number of the elect.

The Big Stores Organize

NOT to be outdone by the clerks and sales-people in their stores who have recently been organizing and striking against the almost invisible wages they are being paid, the big merchants last week launched a movement to form an American Retail Federation. The federation, according to the announcement of Louis E. Kirstein of Filene's of Boston, expects to have a membership of more than a million and will serve as "the unified voice of the entire field of distribution on national legislation and economic problems." Already, as Mr. Kirstein points out, the various branches of industry—oil, steel, railroads, automobile manufacturers—have been organized for years and though Mr. Kirstein does not say so, have been able to jam legislation through Congress, smash unions and do everything necessary to maintain their ascendancy over labor. Though bait has been put out to attract the smaller merchants, it is quite evident from the general set-up and the personnel of the executive committee of ten named to direct the federation—among them is the president of the Penney stores, the president of the Kress chain, and the president of the Liggett Drug Company—that the interests of the small merchant will not be uppermost in the minds of the executive committee. Neither will the rights of labor be entertained with any great sympathy by the federation, if it follows the example of those other organizations it is using as a model. Its evident purpose is two-fold—swallow the small merchant and smash every effort of the workers to better their working conditions and raise their wages.

More Hunger

BEHIND the noisy "investigation" of New York City relief administration, behind Lloyd Stryker's charges

of "sabotage" against Park Commissioner Moses and Tenement House Commissioner Post, is the quiet resolve to cut relief to an even lower basis than it was before. The newly-appointed Relief Director, Oswald W. Knauth, has announced that while relief disbursements were lower in April than in March, they will be pushed down still farther in May. Knauth blames this reduction on the federal government which has cut its contribution to city relief. As the city makes no provision for making up the difference, the unemployed suffer. One child out of every five suffers from malnutrition, and present relief is below the government standard supposed to "maintain either health or a self-respecting community status." All these facts and more were made perfectly clear by the report of the special committee on unemployment before the "relief czar" took office. These facts aroused widespread indignation and clearly called for loosening the purse strings. Yet we have further slashing of relief along with growing unemployment and applications for aid. The new standard intensifies the slow starvation policy of the city, state and federal governments.

Red Leaves of Red Books

Turn

Red leaves of red books

Turn

In white palms and black palms

Turn

Slowly in the mute hours of the night

Turn

In the fingers of women and the fingers of men

In the fingers of the old and the fingers of the young

Turn

Under the nervous flickerings of candles

Under yellow gas splutterings

Under dim incandescent globes

Turn

In the North and in the South

In the East and in the West

Turn

Ceaselessly and reveal your printed hope

Turn

Until your crispness leaves you

Until you are dog-eared

Until the calloused hands that grip you

Are hardened to the steel of unretractable purpose!

RICHARD WRIGHT.



BURCK

Jacob Burck



Jacob Burck

The "Security" Bill

THE administration's Social "Security" Bill having passed the House of Representatives last week, now goes to the Senate where it probably will be further emasculated. In its present form the Security Bill provides nothing in the immediate future for the unemployed, the aged, and the otherwise economically handicapped. It answers none of the pressing needs. Where specific provisions are made in the Bill, the costs are to be borne by those least able to bear them, that is, by the workers themselves. And lest some of THE NEW MASSES' readers still labor under the illusion that this bill is a social-insurance bill, may we point out that far from being one, it is definitely a tax bill to induce the several individual states to enact social-insurance laws having certain minimum nominal standards.

The bill as it was passed by the House proposes to impose a federal levy on the payrolls of all private employers employing ten persons or more, 90 percent of which would be returned to the states enacting social-insurance laws. This tax of one percent will be first imposed on the payrolls of the taxable year 1936, and collected in 1937. The tax would be increased to two percent for the calendar year of 1937 and to a maximum of three percent for the year 1938.

The plan provides that the first unemployment benefits are to be paid out in 1938 to limited categories of workers, who will have worked a certain number of weeks prior to their becoming unemployed (the millions who have been out of work right along are just out of luck), who will have resided in the state a certain length of time, and who directly or indirectly will have contributed certain portions of the total amount of this tax.

Payments will be made for only a portion of the time lost through unemployment at the rate of perhaps not more than half the worker's regular earnings. Particulars will vary as between the states, each state being granted complete discretion as to the kind of law it should enact, the only standard requirement being the rate of the tax and the time it is to be imposed.

But in every instance, according to

the provisions of this bill, the unemployment benefits and old age pensions will be denied to domestic servants, farm laborers, civil service employes, including teachers; workers in endowed and charitable institutions, that is, college professors, and nurses; all those working in establishments employing fewer than ten persons, that is, most of the professional workers—engineers, architects, chemists, laboratory technicians, actors, artists, etc.

According to the estimates of the Ways and Means Committee, the unemployment funds thus collected will amount to \$228 million in 1937, and will gradually increase to \$906 million by 1951. During the first five years of the crisis the workers of this country have lost \$80 billion in wages.

For the "needy" persons over sixty-five years old the federal government will contribute up to \$15 a month on a matching basis with the states, and in no case would it contribute more. That is, at best the total benefits may not be expected to exceed \$30 a month.

And we must not forget the "nearly \$50 million allocated for grants to states for care of the indigent aged over sixty-five" and the "nearly \$100 million federal grants in aid to states for old-age relief, material and child care, vocational rehabilitation of incapacitated workers and public health," to quote The New York Times' summary of the bill. The Times failed to remind us in that connection that these magnificent sums are not more than the monthly average of governmental expenditures on war preparations in the United States today.

Perhaps it will not be amiss at this juncture to contrast the provisions thus made for social insurance by the "richest country in the world," with those made for the same purposes by the Soviet Union which started socialist construction from scratch a bare twelve years ago—after that country had been devastated by seven years of war, counter-revolution, invasion and famine.

In the U. S. S. R. the budget for social insurance for the year 1934 called for an expenditure of over five billion rubles. In that country, according to a report published in The Economic Review of the Soviet Union of May, 1934:

Full wages are paid in all cases of tem-

porary disability to workers employed in industrial plants, on construction jobs, in transportation and communication services, on state farms or machine-tractor stations, provided they have been wage-earners for three years and for no less than two years in the given enterprise. Other classes of insured receive smaller benefits. And temporary disability benefits cover sickness, accidents, care of ill members of the family and maternity. Women workers receive a vacation of sixteen weeks for factory employes and twelve weeks for office workers for the period before and after childbirth, free hospital care and a lump sum for the layette.

Pensions are provided for those permanently disabled by disease or accident, for the aged, for members of families who have lost their main source of support, and for long record of work, the rate ranging from 40 percent to 100 percent of the former wage.

Old-age pensions are paid to all workers attaining the age of sixty (fifty-five for women, and fifty for those engaged in unhealthy or underground work) regardless of whether or not they have lost their ability to work, the rates ranging from 50 to 60 percent of the former wage.

Every worker in the U.S.S.R. is entitled to free medical care. Having abolished unemployment, no provision is necessary in the Soviet Union for unemployment benefits.

Such allocations as were provided for unemployment were turned to other social uses; they were expended for child care, old age pensions, maternity pensions, hospitals, clinics, and establishments for recreation.

Something approaching the Soviet Union system of social insurance has been formulated for this country in the Workers' Unemployment and Social Insurance Bill H.R. 2827, the Lundeen Bill. This bill the bosses and the heads of American labor, however, would not permit to see the light of day.

Finance capital, the various powerful organizations protecting the interests of Wall Street and the big industrialists have exerted all the power they could muster to prevent the Lundeen Bill from seeing the light of day. They attempted to scuttle it in the committee and they finally succeeded in having it killed on the floor of the house. The principals behind it, however, still exist but they can only be written on the statute books by a renewed action on the part of all workers and professionals who believe in real social insurance.

Our First Congress of Writers

AS THIS ISSUE of THE NEW MASSES appears on the newsstands, writers from all over the United States are gathering in New York City to participate in the first Congress of American creative writers ever held. In the sessions at the New School for Social Research, poets, novelists, playwrights and critics will discuss the problems which face the writer in a swiftly changing world, a time when new subject matter makes urgent demands upon the writer to exert himself, to acquire greater technical power and broader social understanding. In his or her own way each writer attending the Congress is sharply aware of this necessity. But it will not only be an event of great literary significance. The American Writers' Congress is really a beginning toward the immense task of rescuing culture itself from the destruction of fascism. Out of this congress will emerge the League of American Writers, with the following program, which some 200 delegates have already pledged themselves, in their professional capacity, to support: "fight against imperialist war and fascism; defend the Soviet Union against capitalist aggression; for the development and strengthening of the revolutionary labor movement; against white chauvinism (against all forms of Negro discrimination or persecution) and against the persecution of minority groups and of the foreign-born; solidarity with colonial people in their struggles for freedom; against bourgeois distortions in American literature, and for the freedom of imprisoned writers and artists, and all other class-war prisoners throughout the world."

The political, as well as the literary significance of this congress, therefore, cannot be exaggerated. The masses of workers will see in it, for the first time, an organized forward march of culture in step with the working class. They will heartily welcome the writers who, many of them at great personal inconvenience, are coming together to declare that they refuse to help recruit the forces of slaughter, of pogroms, of persecutions.

Although the sessions of the Congress itself will be limited to the invited delegates and guests, the Friday evening meeting at Mecca Temple will be open to the public (April 26, 55th Street between Sixth and Seventh Ave-

nues). THE NEW MASSES strongly urges every reader to make it his business to be present. There for the first time in the United States nine representative cultural leaders will make clear to readers and writers alike the necessity for firmly united action.

The exact titles of the discussions are as yet unannounced, but it is possible for us to state with certainty the content of the Friday evening program:

Waldo Frank: The revolutionary writer and his values;

Malcolm Cowley: What the working-class movement can give to the writer;

Josephine Herbst: Industrial and agrarian struggles and the novel;

Langston Hughes: Negro poetry;

Friedrich Wolf: Writers under fascism;

Moishe Nadir: The foreign-born

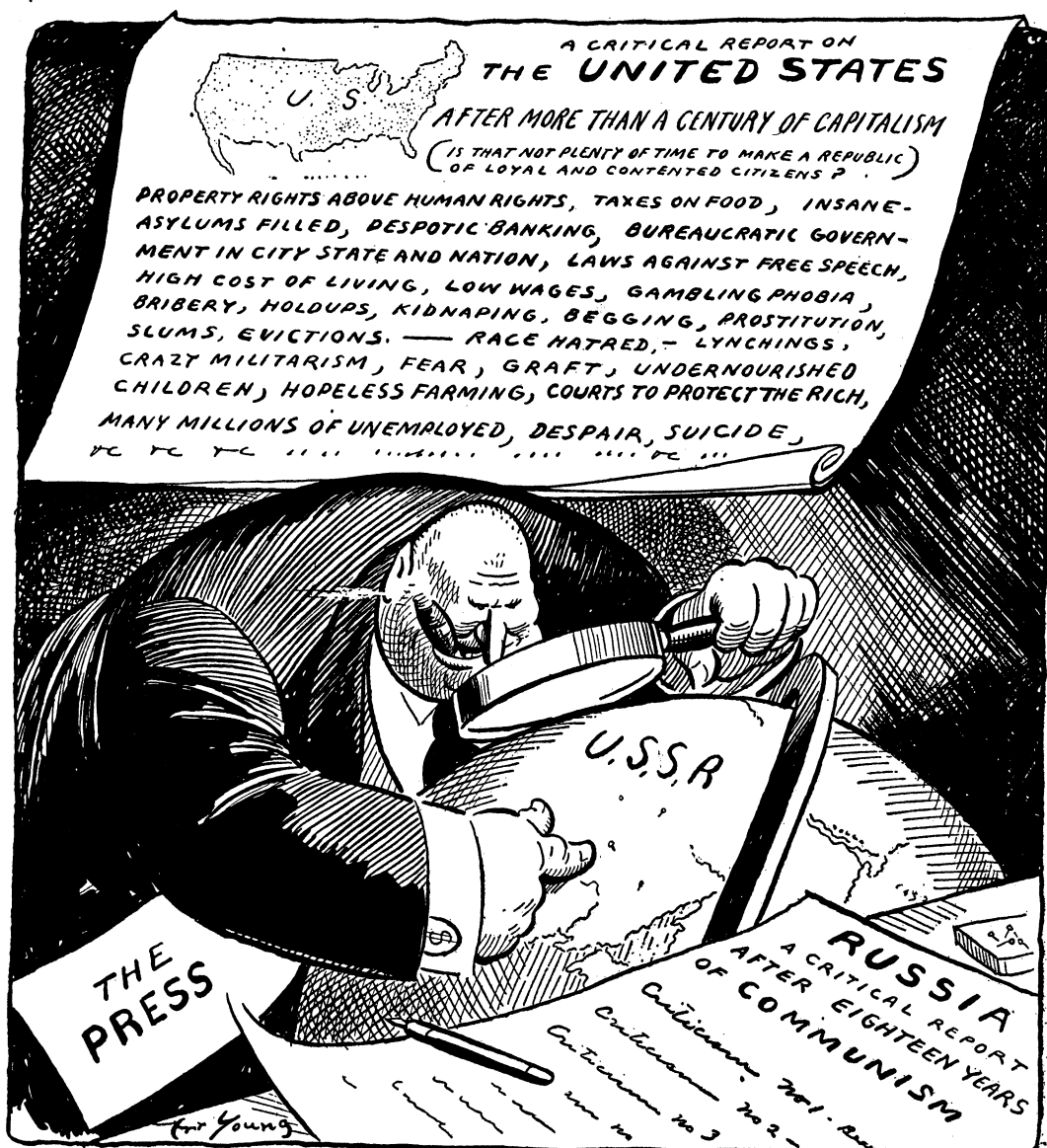
writer and his relation to the working-class movement;

Michael Gold: Workers and writers;

Earl Browder: The political position of writers today;

Granville Hicks: The Congress and the formation of the League of American Writers.

THE NEW MASSES extends the hand of fraternity to the delegates and guests of the Congress. It furthermore wishes to make clear that this event is of no less concern to readers of American literature than to the writers. For this reason the American Writers' Congress is in reality a Congress of Writers for Readers. Readers can contribute their support to the Congress by attending, on Friday evening, a program which promises to be a signal event in the history of American literature.



ART YOUNG says: "Look homeward, Mister. A picture dedicated to the Hearst-Lorimer-Macfadden gang of patriots."



A CRITICAL REPORT ON THE UNITED STATES

AFTER MORE THAN A CENTURY OF CAPITALISM

(IS THAT NOT PLENTY OF TIME TO MAKE A REPUBLIC OF LOYAL AND CONTENTED CITIZENS?)

PROPERTY RIGHTS ABOVE HUMAN RIGHTS, TAXES ON FOOD, INSANE-ASYLUMS FILLED, DESPOTIC BANKING, BUREAUCRATIC GOVERNMENT IN CITY STATE AND NATION, LAWS AGAINST FREE SPEECH, HIGH COST OF LIVING, LOW WAGES, GAMBLING PHOBIA, BRIBERY, HOLDUPS, KIDNAPING, BEGGING, PROSTITUTION, SLUMS, EVICTIONS. — RACE HATRED, — LYNCHINGS, CRAZY MILITARISM, FEAR, GRAFT, UNDERNOURISHED CHILDREN, HOPELESS FARMING, COURTS TO PROTECT THE RICH, MANY MILLIONS OF UNEMPLOYED, DESPAIR, SUICIDE,



THE PRESS

U.S.S.R

RUSSIA
A CRITICAL REPORT
AFTER EIGHTEEN YEARS
OF COMMUNISM

Art Young

ART YOUNG says: "Look homeward, Mister. A picture dedicated to the Hearst-Lorimer-Macfadden gang of patriots."

Dreiser Denies He Is Anti-Semitic

IN THE call to the American Writers' Congress, the signers, among whom was Theodore Dreiser, pledged themselves to "fight against imperialist war and fascism . . . against white chauvinism (. . . all forms of Negro discrimination and persecution) and against persecution of the minority groups and of the foreign born."

In a letter to Hutchins Hapgood printed in *The Nation* of April 17, and already referred to in these columns, Theodore Dreiser stated: "If you listen to Jews discuss Jews you will find that they are money-minded, very pagan, very sharp in practice. . . . Left to sheer liberalism as you interpret it, they could possess America by sheer numbers, their cohesion, and their race tastes, and, as in the case of the Negro in South Africa, really overrun the land."

THE NEW MASSES felt emphatically that an explanation of these contradictions was due to our readers, to the hundreds of writers who will convene for the Congress in New York this week, and to all those who have looked upon Theodore Dreiser as a friend of the working class and a fighter against fascist tendencies. Two representatives of the magazine were sent to interview Mr. Dreiser immediately on publication of the letters. A week later he held a discussion with several persons present, among them Corliss Lamont, James W. Ford, Communist candidate for Vice President in 1932, John Howard Lawson, Edwin Seaver, Mike Gold, Joshua Kunitz, Henry Hart and Orrick Johns.

We questioned Mr. Dreiser, hoping that he would stand by his long record, that he would withdraw the anti-semitic opinions expressed in his letters, that he would dispell the fog of confusion and bewilderment caused by his unexpected outburst of racial prejudice.

We came away from the first interview discouraged and dissatisfied. Mr. Dreiser clarified nothing; he withdrew nothing, in fact, simply added further to the confusion.

He did indeed, as the interview proceeded, attempt to tone down his expressions. He maintained that he felt only "good intentions" toward the Jews, that he had written only to "help" them solve their problems. But

Dreiser's Statement

New York, April 22, 1935

Of course I make a distinction between the classes. I draw a distinction between the Jewish worker and the Jewish exploiter. Everybody knows that I am an anti-capitalist. I identify the interests of the Jewish worker with the interests of all the other workers. What you have just read by Lenin on the Jewish question [quoted in the article herewith] meets with my full approval. And if my letters are used by the Nazis as propaganda, I repudiate such use. I have no hatred for the Jew and nothing to do with Hitler or fascism.

My interest in Communism is that it will equitably solve the relations of man, and I emphatically repudiate any inference in my writing that will be interpreted as counter to this.

(signed)

DREISER

anti-semitism is not something that can be temporized with or toned down. Furthermore, Mr. Dreiser's whole approach to the subject continued to show that he saw no class distinctions in the question, that he lumped the Jewish workers and the Jewish bankers and capitalists together, and pretended that they had common "nationalist" aims.

There is a very famous passage from one of Lenin's speeches. It was delivered at a time when counter-revolutionists, during the Civil War in 1919, were attempting to stir up the pogrom spirit in the army of the Bolsheviks. So important was this speech regarded that it was made into a phonograph record and sent throughout the ranks of the army. In it, Lenin said:

It is not the Jews who are the enemies of the toiler. The enemies of the workers are the capitalists of all lands. Among the Jews there are workers, toilers; they are in the majority. They are our brothers, comrades in the struggle for Socialism because they are oppressed by capitalism. Among the Jews there are kulaks, exploiters, capitalists, just as there are among the Russians and every other nation.

The capitalists are tireless in their endeavors to stir up enmity between the workers of different faiths, different nations and different races. The rich Jews, just like the rich Russians and the rich of all countries, are united in trampling upon, oppressing and dividing the workers.¹

¹ Lenin On The Jewish Question. International Publishers, N. Y.

This class basis for Jewish pogroms, for all prejudice against national minorities had not the slightest recognition in Mr. Dreiser's letters, nor did it appear in the first interview.

At the second meeting with the larger group, Dreiser obviously reflected experiences he had had with Jewish lawyers and other Jewish business men. He said that in his dealings with them he had met with sharp practice, and this without doubt accounted for his discriminating views in the letters, such as that we have quoted at the head of this article, which seems to ascribe these financial practices only to Jews. It was clearly behind his feeling that the Jews as an able minority aroused antagonism, behind his reference to the fact that certain Pennsylvania lawyers had started a movement to limit the number of Jews in the practice of law. It was behind his 'absurd claim that Jews "are not the day laborers of the world."

It was pointed out to Mr. Dreiser that these things which he said were almost identical with the propaganda issued by Hitler and his followers to promote Nazism. The Nazis also spoke of the Jews as though rich and poor alike were all one. In spite of the fact that millions of Jews are exploited urban workers and many thousands more of them are poor farmers, the Nazis also declared the Jew was not a worker. A popular manual of the

Storm Troopers, for example, describes the Jews as follows: "Shrewd, calculating, with an aptitude for trading in the most diverse commodities, and at the same time an aversion for all work truly productive." These vicious attacks helped put Hitler in power.

It was only with the greatest hesitation, with continual shifting of his position, with the use of analogies which have their roots in hoary fable and race-hatred, with repeated confusion of the interests of the Jewish masses with those of the Jewish masters, that Mr. Dreiser came around to see a few of the contradictions involved in his stand, and eventually acknowledged that with fascist gangsters on every hand encouraging the same ideas, his words had a widespread and dangerous effect. It was clear that the position taken up in

these letters was contrary to his whole career as a defender of the workers and oppressed. The conversation served to throw light, not on the logic of Theodore Dreiser so much as on his psychology, the psychology expressed by his remark, "I am an individual. I have a right to say what I please."

THE NEW MASSES is glad to present this summary of our conversations with Mr. Dreiser, though we are far from satisfied as to the adequacy of his final statement, published in a box with this article. It is inadequate, both to the stature of the subject, a great novelist who has fought for the toilers, and as a satisfactory conclusion to an event which can only be described as tragic in its sweeping effects. We could not cancel the effects, even if Mr. Dreiser had met the issue with the ringing re-

putation which all had a right to expect of him. We can, however, still hope to clarify Mr. Dreiser himself. The signed statement published herewith, to which we have referred, is proof that he has come at least several steps away from where he stood a year ago, and even a week ago. And a still further effort will be made to go over these questions with him, to put an end to all such confusion as remains. We must regard Mr. Dreiser's recent opinions, in contrast to his past actions and sympathies, as definitely harmful to the working masses in their fight for the liberation of oppressed nationalities and in the general world-wide fight against fascism. We decline to believe that it will be impossible for Theodore Dreiser to regain his traditional place as a fighter for human liberty.

Trying to Lock Up a Union

WALTER S. PICKARD

EVERYTHING I'm about to put down here is the good truth. I wouldn't say it any different if it were the Judgment Day.

Six mill hands in our town of Burlington, North Carolina, were rounded up by the sheriff, framed by the mill-owners and their detectives and stool-pigeons, and sentenced to serve long years in the pen—all for a dynamiting they knew no more about than you! But it wasn't just six mill hands they were putting away in jail. It was our union they were aiming to lock up. It started this way:

They'd been docking us high and mighty in the mills, and we said among ourselves: "Couldn't we get the union started here?" So we had a secret meeting in the scrub pine, just outside town. We signed up there, cotton and rayon hands both, and took the union oath, pledging each to the other.

Then we heard the strike was on, up the country. The 4th of September, of 1934, the workers on the night shift looked out of the window, and there were a power of men and women in the streets. The flying squad from the union had come. They went over the mill fences like rabbits. So we knew the textile strike had rushed over Burlington at last. We stopped the looms and shut off the power, and came out into the streets.

The flying squad was tooting auto horns, to arouse the people. The cops began shoving us around, and said: "This ain't no time to be making noise, waking people up. This is a time to be home and asleep."

But we said to the cops: "What if Paul Revere had worried about waking people up

nights, when our country wanted its freedom? This ain't no time for man or woman to be in bed, but a time to be fighting for our rights."

It was dark and raining. We didn't care; we stepped out. From the street lights the people could read our signs, that said: "Stick together." "Down with the Stretch-Out." "Win the Strike." "Together We Stand, Divided We Fall." Back at the looms that night, not a shuttle was moving, and not a thread was spun.

People say the working folks in the South won't stick together, but those days of the strike we fought one fight, thinking one another's thoughts and doing for each other. It's the mill-owners that have torn us apart, mountain folk against folk in the lowlands, white against black, keeping some of us always lower than the rest. For the mill-owners know that where one foot is chained to the ground, the other can't travel far.

A few of the hands said: "Half a biscuit's better than none," and went back into the mills, where the boss-men worked them under gun and guard.

Not the scabs, not the sheriff and his tear-gas, not the National Guard with their bayonets, could break that strike. So the mill-owners thought up another way. They'd break our strike, they'd smash our union, with just the kind of frame-up the bosses used in San Francisco to put Tom Mooney away, because he organized the working-people. And that was how the Burlington dynamite frame-up began.

So that you'll understand better how it

all happened, you'll need to know something about our town.

Burlington is a little town, only about 9,000 people. Almost all our folks are rayon and cotton mill hands, and just about all of us are poor. I know the preachers and the teachers say that if you work hard, you'll get by all right; that people get rich when they work and save. I don't see it as true in Burlington. The poorest ones are the mill hands, who've known nothing but shuttle and loom, dye-vat and warper and harness, all their days, while the rich folks in town, the Holts and Loves and Smiths—never put in an hour's work in those mills in their lives.

Yet it's just these folks who own all the mills and every cut of cloth that comes out of our looms. Take the Holt brothers. They've got a whole square set aside for their big fine houses, they've powerful cars, and private schools for their kids, and servants to do for them every day that God sends.

But the rest of us—well, we've got a little rhyme, and it goes:

I've been a mill-hand all my life,
I ain't got nothing but a pocket-knife.

The mill-owners tried to make it look like we came out on strike September last, because some "agitators" told us to. But what really happened was this: we came out on strike because we were mighty tired of working for just cornbread and bulldog gravy. And by our strike, the first big one

in Burlington, we let the mill-owners know we were standing guard over our rights.

So, with the hope of smashing our ranks once and for all, the mill-owners pushed ahead their cowardly, underhanded dynamite plot.

At three o'clock on the morning of September 14, there was an explosion in the yard of the E. M. Holt Plaid Mill. Next day the sheriff found some dynamite there, and found some more in the Stevens cotton plant, which we call Needmore, because work's so bad there that no matter how short of jobs people are, that mill's always needing more hands. It was an old part of the mill where the explosion happened.

They took up six hands and carried them to the jail, and charged them with putting that dynamite in the Holt and Needmore plants. They got John Anderson, the president of our Piedmont Textile Council; J. P. Hoggard, J. F. Haraway, Tom Canipe, Howard Overman, and Florence Blaylock. Every one of them born and bred in the South, three of them union men.

Together with our six honest workingmen, they arrested three rats. These men are no-accounts; they could get hardly a soul to come forward for them in the trial and say they bore good names. They swore our men were into the dynamiting. The mill-owners and their detectives kept these rats in the Alamance Hotel, finest in Burlington. They fed and cared for them and drilled them in their dirty work. These stool-pigeons on the witness stand, would lie like a yellow dog, and the others would swear to it.

The mill-owners brought in four low-down detectives from Pennsylvania, that had been with the mining companies there. These dicks settled down in our county, and between drinking parties and worse, they framed the "dynamiting" case.

The trial started November 28, and it parted our town in two, like a plow making a straight furrow across a field. The mill hands and the jobless and the farmers from round about packed that court, and whenever the six men would make a good point, they'd get to clapping and cheering.

From start to finish, it was a plain case against our union. Not a single union man got on that jury. The whole aim of the trial was to show union men as dynamiters and gangsters, and the union hall as their meeting place.

There wasn't a bit of evidence produced but what we tore it down at the trial. An honest court couldn't have found those men guilty. But it wasn't an honest court—it was a mill-owners' court. And it gave our men these terrible sentences:

John Anderson: 8 to 10 years at hard labor.

J. P. Hoggard: 4 to 6 years at hard labor.

Florence Blaylock: 5 to 6 years at hard labor.

H. Overman: 5 to 6 years at hard labor.

Tom Canipe: 2 years at hard labor.

J. F. Haraway: 2 years at hard labor.

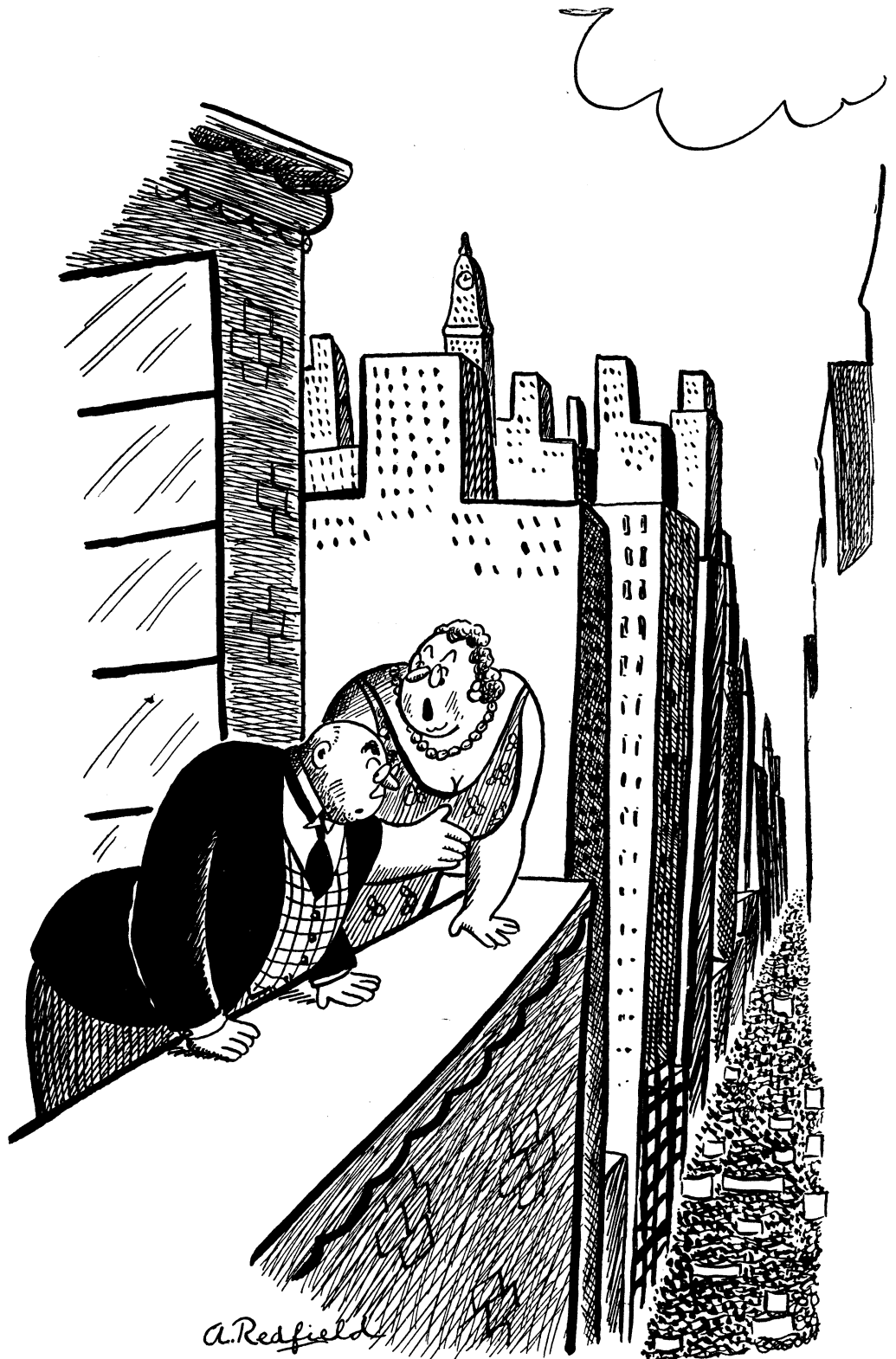
What were we to do now? It looked like they'd struck our union a crushing blow. But we'd stood together all those days of the strike, getting up by lamplight to go on the picket line, come rain come cold, with our insides hungry, and the guards pushing and gassing us, and the preachers damning our souls.

We started a Workers' Defense Committee, and got the men out on bond. Then some of the mill hands thought of the International Labor Defense. We wrote to the I.L.D. and it didn't fail us. Now we're taking these cases to the North Carolina Supreme Court.

Union men and union women, help us to get our framed men free! Send your protests to the North Carolina Supreme Court at Raleigh. Help our fight by sending funds to our defense committee at Box 427, Graham, N. C.

The mill-owners think they've broken our union, but we're building it up again, step by step. They think they've put our men in jail for years, but we're going to get them out, and we're going to show up this whole rotten frame-up for what it is.

The mill-owners think they've got us down and crushed us—but I can tell you right now, we're not humbling to them!



"BUT, DARLING, WE CAN'T DEPORT ALL OF THEM!"

Redfield



"BUT, DARLING, WE CAN'T DEPORT ALL OF THEM!"

Redfield

Earl Browder: A Profile

JOSEPH NORTH

This biographical sketch is presented as an introduction to a series of articles "What Is Communism?" by Earl Browder, General Secretary of the Communist Party. The first article of the series will appear in next week's issue. This outline indicates the political background of Earl Browder's life up to the time he was elected General Secretary of the Communist Party in 1930, and will give our readers a picture of the factors which go toward molding a revolutionary leader.—THE EDITORS.

SHOULD the authorities decide to send Earl Browder, General Secretary of the Communist Party "back where he came from," the train with the barred windows would speed westward—back over the Appalachians and across the Ohio flatlands—in the same direction the pioneers took in their covered wagons. The authorities would have to carry Browder to Kansas, to John Brown's country, and put him off at Wichita, somewhere near the exact geographical center of the United States.

The location of the birthplace of one of America's leading revolutionaries is an apt commentary on the charge that Communism is an importation—an un-American idea disseminated by furtive Slavs and Semites who pop up in our industrial centers distributing fiery handbills calling for uprising before midnight.

Wichita is not far from the region where John Brown led the guerilla warfare in the fight to win Kansas to the Free State side. The Abolitionist was much more than a memory in that region when Earl was born May 20, 1891. His father William, a school-teacher at the time, wrote the name Earl Russell into the family album below a long list of Christian names of settlers who peopled America since the seventeenth century. The Browder family, one of the first to travel to the new world, was carried by the westward migratory tide to Kentucky, to Illinois, and finally, via covered wagon, to Kansas.

Earl Browder's grandfather, born in 1790, fought the British invaders in the War of 1812, and then followed his profession as a Methodist "circuit rider" minister. Typical pioneer breed, the Browners carried many years on their shoulders before they surrendered the burden. Earl's father William was the youngest of eighteen children. Earl was one of ten brothers and sisters.

Browder's father was a school teacher for twenty-four years in southeastern Kansas, and the region's "infidel." He had run across some Unitarian sermons and became a disbeliever in any formal religion. After a quar-

ter century as schoolmaster he broke down physically in 1902. Upon his recovery, he worked as a day laborer in the harvest fields and packing houses for the remainder of his life. But he would return home from a day in the fields and then turn sternly to the books—to algebra and to Shakespeare.

One of Earl's boyhood recollections is the study of geometry by lamplight. The father diligently taught his children the three R's and beyond. The mother contributed a militant anti-clericalism based on Tom Paine's *Age of Reason*.

Earl Browder left public school at the age of nine after two years in the grades. His father and mother proved a demanding faculty afterward. Earl continued to study after he went to work; the sciences, mathematics and all of belles-lettres "from Frank Merriwell up" a lad of Kansas could lay hands on.

In 1901 his father took his sons to a Socialist meeting. From that time on Earl's schooling took a different turn.

At nine: errand boy in a local department store; at fourteen: a Western Union messenger boy; at fifteen: a member of the Socialist Party.

All this time, study at nights. "Mathematics I liked, and chemistry, astronomy and general reading books." The West already swirled with the class struggle in those days: the Heywood-Moyer-Pettibone case; The Appeal to Reason. Not far to the South, the Mexicans marched to battle back and forth across their country in the throes of agrarian revolution.

"I had considered myself a Socialist when I was ten years old." He became an active member of the party at the age of fifteen.

He continued his work as he gave increasingly more time to the working-class movement. At seventeen, in a wholesale drug-house in Wichita, he learned bookkeeping. At twenty he had become the office manager. The duties of this position, however, quickly disclosed their incompatibility with the temperament of a hot young Socialist. He packed his satchel and went to Kansas City in 1912 and remained there, busy at a job and revolution, until the war.

There in 1912 he left the Socialist Party in the famous fight over Article 2, Sec. 6, which ended in the removal of Bill Haywood from leadership in the Socialist Party. He became a member of the syndicalist group in the American Federation of Labor, led by William Z. Foster, and published the monthly syndicalist magazine *The Toiler* until 1915. He became a leader in the Kansas City labor movement, active in strikes and organizational work. Part of his time was

taken in teaching a class of foreign-born packing-house workers, English—and the class struggle. For two years until the War, he worked in the farmers cooperative movement near Kansas City—relics of the old Grange movement—as office executive and later as manager. He was also a member of the Council of the Cooperative League of America; at the same time he led the Kansas City trade-union group.

The World War found the American native revolutionaries busy at work, foreseeing that the conflict would not halt at the shores of the Atlantic. In 1917 Browder helped form what was called the League for Democratic Control (in imitation of an Eastern organization that afterward turned pacifist). This small group of conscious revolutionaries engaged themselves in organizing a popular campaign against America's entrance into the war—and afterwards against conscription.

Before the draft became a law, he was arrested. He was then sentenced to a year in prison on the technical grounds of refusal to register; later to two more years in Leavenworth, on the charge of "conspiracy to defeat the draft law."

Prison has ever been a proving ground for revolutionaries: a place for preparation. There in the tiny cell in the Platte County jail, Missouri, he pored over volumes as a student might in the halls of a university. Marx's *Capital* must be mastered—all three volumes and there were Engels works to study (Lenin had not yet been translated into English).

Days came in the summer when the thermometer hit 118 and the bars sizzled, too hot to touch. Days in the winter when the mercury tumbled to fifteen below. The revolutionaries piled wood in the pot-belly stove and went on studying.

A short period when Earl was out on bail pending appeal: a period when the flag waved furiously over America. Lawyers in Kansas proved a patriotic lot; not a one would plead the case for the "damned draft-dodger." Browder had studied law "by correspondence." He utilized the rudiments of legal training to appear before the Court of Appeals to argue the brief and to get it accepted without printing it—printing a brief was utterly out of the question because of prohibitive costs.

But no day may be wasted when a revolutionary is "at liberty." The swift months between October, 1918, when Browder walked out of the Platte County Jail, to July, 1919, when he returned to prison at Leavenworth to serve a two-year sentence, were taken with incessant revolutionary ac-

tivity. Reentering the Socialist Party he founded a weekly paper, *The Workers World*, a left-wing Socialist journal. He passed through Kansas, Missouri, Nebraska, arguing, explaining, the knowledge gained in prison coming in handy innumerable times, and finally succeeded in bringing the majority of the Socialist Party organizations of these states into the left wing which soon became the Communist Party.

The gates of Leavenworth clanged shut behind him July 13, 1919. Two years in Leavenworth: Prisoner 14314. Again study, again a period of steeling one's self for the many coming struggles. This post-graduate course brought Browder in contact with Bill Haywood. There were discussions and arguments on policy and tactics; never a day lost. Other prisoners crowded about and listened carefully, and chewed the words over in their cells.

So his university days were spent. He was finally graduated in November, 1920. Within twenty-four hours he was sitting at a conference table in a working-class neighborhood in Kansas City talking over problems of the revolutionary party. The Communist Party had been born while he was in Leavenworth. The attitude toward the war had split the Socialist Party: the left wingers never acquiesced in the war, characterizing it as imperialist in nature, capitalism's device to enrich the overlords and to divide the world's markets. These intransigent revolutionaries formed the Communist Party. Earl Browder, the revolutionary, was now a Communist.

The ablest revolutionaries have been men of great experience and intensive study; they have synthesized the idea of revolution with practical deed, the tactic. There is no dichotomy, as under capitalism, between the "scholar" and the "man of action."

These years were crowded with action and study. I have recounted the man's activities; a great deal of his study centered about the "colonial" question—the problem of the colonies and their relation to the revolution—a central question in this imperialistic age.

How this interest came into existence is worth the telling: as a youth in Wichita, Browder used to walk down the railroad tracks for several miles to his place of work. One blustery day in the fall of 1911, a hand-car full of Mexican laborers passed him and a paper fluttered from the tracks. The wind wrapped it around Browder's foot and as he leaned over to toss it off, he noticed type in both Spanish and English. The paper proved to be "Regeneration," a Mexican revolutionary organ. Browder subscribed and learned about the movement below the Rio Grande. His imagination fired by the brave fight of the peons, he became the agent of their revolutionary newspaper in Kansas City. In 1912 he distributed the newspapers and pamphlets on behalf of the Mexican masses in their fight against Diaz and Madero. This first contact with revolutionary problems of a colonial or semi-colonial country



EARL BROWDER

led him afterward to become "a practical worker" in some far-reaching movements.

The Party assigned him to organize a delegation of trade unionists to the first congress of the Red International of Labor Unions in 1921. He went with the delegation, representing the militant group of Kansas coal miners and several local unions in various parts of the United States. While in Moscow he attended the Third Congress of the Communist International. He was elected to the international executive of the Red International of Labor Unions. Upon his return he became an assistant editor of *The Labor Herald*, the organ of the Trade Union Educational League, of which William Z. Foster was founder and secretary. He was elected to the executive committee of the Workers' Party of America (the name

adopted by the Communist Party to help emerge from the illegality that followed the notorious Palmer "Red Raids" of 1920) at its first convention in December, 1921. From 1921 to 1926 he was assistant to William Z. Foster in the great movement for amalgamation and a Labor Party led by the T.U.E.L. within the American Federation of Labor. He was sent by his fellow workers to Moscow to work for a year in the Red International of Labor Unions. There he attended the sixth and seventh plenary sessions of the Communist International as one of the representatives of the American party.

All this time he continued his interest in colonial questions. He went to China as a member of the International Workers' Delegation in 1927. The next two and a half years were taken with coordinating the trade



EARL BROWDER

union organization of the Pacific countries.

China in 1927: The folkways of thousands of years clashed with the new; the industrial age, capitalism, was emerging, the nationalist revolution was in full progress. "It was my good fortune," Browder writes in his pamphlet *Civil War in Nationalist China*, "to spend several months in China during the most critical days of 1927 under such circumstances as to bring me into contact with the leaders of all sections of the nationalist movement of China. In both local and national developments there were times when the International Workers Delegation, of which I was a member, became one of the determining factors in events. . . ."

The experiences of the American working-class leader in China proved invaluable: he saw history in the making—saw and studied the lessons of a class struggle in which the lives and destinies of 400,000,000 persons were involved.

"I have seen in Canton," he says, "great heavy carts loaded high with cans bearing the Socony label, being pulled through the streets by gangs of men, women and children, evidently families, staring, looking gaunt and exhausted . . . and earning an average of fifteen cents each for twelve hours labor for the greater profit of Standard Oil." Imperialism became not merely an economic concept; here it quickened into life, was translated in muscle and misery. "It made me understand more clearly why Rockefeller prizes his Chinese business."

Browder worked in China from 1927 until 1929, as a secretary of the Pan Pacific Trade Union Secretariat which organized a Far East trade union center connecting seven countries; which published a monthly journal that was distributed throughout the world despite its prohibition by the Chinese authorities—as well as by the authorities in Japan, Australia, and the various colonial administrations.

In 1928 Browder attended the Sixth World Congress of the Communist International at Moscow. What lessons were learned at this Congress! It was preparation for the impending crisis that broke in 1929. Workingmen of all races and from all lands gathered to pool their experiences and derive common conclusions—to map a plan of action based upon their experiences in every land.

From China, Browder returned to the United States early in 1929 and participated in the sixth national convention of the Communist Party here. One more journey to Asia where he delivered the report to the Second Pan Pacific trade union Congress held in Vladivostok, in the month of August, 1929.

He returned to the United States just before the October crash in 1929. At the seventh convention of the C.P.U.S.A. in 1930 he was chosen general secretary of the Communist Party and has functioned at that post ever since.

The Lecture

JOSE MANCISIDOR

THAT night, warm and perfumed like a night in spring, my son and I, attracted by the fine posters, went to the lecture.

The place was packed. Beautiful women in luxurious gowns had deep cuts in their brilliant costumes where, shining and provocative, the soft mounds of their breasts arose. Mouths, like capricious hearts, with marvelous rows of teeth shining like pearls on a string. Fans that fluttered tirelessly like playful birds in the bright splendor of the lights.

The audience bustled, unable to contain themselves. The people could not hold back their desire to hear that man, so full of wisdom, whose name rides triumphantly on the Pegasus of fame.

The most outstanding of the local intellectuals were patrons of this cultural spectacle, supported enthusiastically by the industrial associations and the Chamber of Commerce of our city.

The best people—as the papers of the town called those who were most well off—had been given places on the platform where, sitting at ease, they were a step above the audience.

Me and my son, poorly dressed, were the moles on the nose of the gathering. Prouder than I am, he seemed to feel this as, evading the impolite stares of those who paused to examine us, he asked in an undertone, "What's so interesting for you here, that we've got to stay?"

I understood the reason back of his question but, disregarding its real meaning, I tried to convince him of the needs of man to develop his intellectual facilities.

As I said this, I felt proud of myself, and I swelled with vanity like a peacock. In reality, in spite of my worn and shameful suit, I was vain about rubbing shoulders with that select society filling the air with their sensualness.

My son, on the other hand, was repelled by their odors. He felt disgusted and did not try to hide it, not even after I gave him various reasons for doing so, attempting to make him understand the lack of justice in his unwillingness. But I was happy. And when I chanced to see some one's eyes looking at me, I imagined that their owner must be thinking that in spite of my poverty, I too had the same great desire for learning that he had. Thus I satisfied my vanity. And I held myself on the same level as those rich fellows against whose cloudlike shirts fluttered the small black butterflies of their ties.

A wave of applause greeted the speaker, who, bowing and smiling, had stopped in the middle of the platform. Light, little feminine coughs jumped from place to place like restless humming-birds as the lecturer, with studied mien, offered the wisdom of his talk.

"Ladies and gentlemen. . . ."

I stretched forward in my seat and became all ears—but my son exasperated me because, with no respect for the place in which we found ourselves, he let a strange expression of scorn and malice creep over his face.

The orator had begun to unwind his theories with an ease of word and manner that was captivating. He made a song to the glories of labor which the audience took in with religious acceptance.

"Work glorifies everything," the speaker affirmed with great positiveness amid a burst of lyrical oratory. "Through work the powerful magnates of industry climbed to their high places in our world." Here followed rapidly a long list of names which escaped me because they seemed to be all tangled up. I was able to keep in mind only that of Ford, because in the last shop where I worked the "Fords" were on familiar terms with the operators who took part in assembling the cars.

By now my son did not pretend to hide his disgust. He muttered aloud, and gave the impression of conducting a dialogue with the lecturer. When the audience, becoming aware of his rude attitude, applauded the speaker in order to show their displeasure, I watched with horror the long silhouette of my son disentangle itself from his seat, and I heard him say with an almost eloquent impertinence, "Certainly, I agree with you, sir, as to the virtues of work, but can you tell me, with your same fervor, *where we can find it?*"

As he threw his question violently toward the platform, it seemed to me that his big body grew even bigger. His eyes gleamed provocatively and his voice commanded even the respect of those who hissed and yelled that we be put out.

But I was really terrified. I didn't know where to look. I wanted the floor to open up and swallow me so that I might escape from that place where I felt as if I were a sacrificial victim.

My son, instead, grew and shouted. His voice was a roar of fury as it came out of his mouth filled with imprecations—inasmuch as the police, brought by I don't know whom, were now pushing us toward the door and beating us with their blackjacks.

In the street, under a blue night sky such as poets love, I heard the powerful voice of my son crying, "These rascals! Talking about work when they're the very ones who fool us and keep us in misery. . . ."

A blow on my head, harder than the others, knocked me out. But when I came to myself I had the feeling that a thick veil had fallen off my eyes forever, and that the horizon of my life had widened gloriously.

May Day Song

Words by ROBERT GESSNER

Music by L. E. SWIFT

mf

1. Come out, to- day's the first of May! We
 2. All lock 'who work with hand or brain step
 3. Let's lock our arms and march with song A-

mf

work- off ers, hun- gry and un- fed,
 gainst the the curb and own- ers jam of the street. world, Un-

Won't stand in line to work this day; This
 Come feel the call of ers pick- ets us slain; Their
 til all work- ers to us through-

morn- ing's dawn is red! To-
 blood With red flags our un- feet! To-
 furl-ed! furl-ed! To-

day we strike, to-day we're free; Close

mf *cresc.*

mf *non legato* *cresc.*

e-very shop and fac-to-ry. Let

no boss stand a-bove our head; we'll

show who bakes his dai-ly bread! To-dai-ly bread!

ff *mf*



THERE'S FAMINE ON THE OLD STEPPES TO-NITE

EASLEY

WALKER

EMMA GOLDMAN

RIPLEY

HARRY LANG

FISH

WOLL

HEARST

MUSIC BY HITLER

Gropper

"HEARST'S HILL-BILLY CROONERS"

William Gropper

THERE'S FAMINE ON THE OLD STEPPES TO-NITE



Gropper

"HEARST'S HILL-BILLY CROONERS"

William Gropper

“Middle-Ground” Writers

STANLEY BURNSHAW

AT THIS moment in our history, when fascism gains ground with every hour, the duty of the Marxist critic becomes deepened in seriousness and responsibility. Indulgence in picturesque or extreme gestures—forgivable possibly in a groping period—is no longer tolerable now. We need every ally who can be enlisted. And we can afford to drive away no one who can be turned into a friend of the revolutionary movement. Theoretically, of course, we all know that many such potential allies can be found within the ranks of the waverers—confused writers who believe themselves to be standing in a supposed middle ground between capitalism and revolution. Because of their confusion, their writings often carry implications which may be identified as the beginnings of a counter-revolutionary direction—which compel us to call them by the harsh though accurate term—incipient fascist. But despite our theoretical realization of their position, we have sometimes, in practice, dealt with them otherwise.

Although there is always something picturesque and satisfyingly noble about knocking an enemy into a cocked hat, Marxists are far more interested in the wisdom beneath the gesture. Our criticism as a whole has been evolving toward a fundamental, reasoned approach to middle-ground writers, but this has been the result of a parallel development of two opposed critical attitudes: (1) a sympathetic attempt to guide by critical analysis, (2) a preoccupation with and an attack upon the anti-working-class elements in the work under consideration. This latter type of criticism has been written chiefly by writers new to problems of Marxist analysis as well as those practised revolutionary writers whose abilities have been primarily creative rather than critical. If it were not that this type of criticism still appears from time to time and is frequently mistaken for Marxist analysis, there would be no need to discuss it—to point out that in its consideration of only a few of all the relevant factors in a case, it proceeds in a basically undialectical manner. Some critics of this type, while aware that writers today are a complex of political and artistic elements, have approached suspects on political grounds almost exclusively: talking only to half of the man, forgetting considerations without which a complete understanding of and prescription against incipient literary fascism are impossible.

No writer can arrive at such a stage without having realized for some time the immediacy of a world-collapse. Unlike the bulk of writers who may be more or less aware of social instability, he feels that something is vastly wrong and is driven to find some solution. Out of the chaos of facts and illusions that throng the air, he seizes handfuls of things

he feels sure of—small, isolated truths that loom doubly precious in this day when so much that he considered noble has proved false. Thus, ravished by the notion that all has not been lost, he falls desperately in love with the fragments he has saved from the splintering wreckage of human values—the wreckage of capitalist values, let us add, for it is an abiding faith in capitalism's capacity somehow to maintain itself that underlies his searching. And he begins to magnify into supreme importance such so-called “principles” as heroism in battle, love of country, noble episodes in history, unnamed self-sacrificing martyrs, etc. And he is wholly unconcerned that these things acquire changed significance when torn out of context. Jealously he guards his isolated truths, quite deaf to their implications. And he is so relieved to have found some values to cling to that he does not recognize in some of his protestations arguments for a social savagery. The fact that a handful out of a score of million soldiers may have “heroically accepted” death “in the name of democracy” is inflated to the magnitude of a sociological generalization and left to propound an absolute human value. A normal affection for one's native land is suddenly swollen to the proportions of a principle for international behavior condoning a vicious mockery of fellow-citizens with foreign accents and the concomitant: race-hatred. Following—deliberately or not—Blake's dictum that “anything that can be believed is an image of truth,” the confused writer abandons all sense of proportion and tries to reconstruct meaning out of his world deprived of relative values. And if he is confronted suddenly by a world-philosophy which indicts his bewilderment and presumes to order his chaos, he is naturally skeptical. If someone tries to bludgeon him into this world-philosophy, he fights back with febrile scorn of “a system which arranges existence into simple pigeonholes”; and though he may have always advocated a rational view of life, he may suddenly turn to mysticism for temporary immediate safety.

To lump such a writer together with the fascists—to accuse such a writer of conscious fascism—is to misunderstand the source of his offensive statements and to attribute to his desperately confused reaction to the crisis a deliberate, organized philosophy. Actually so long as he continues in his disorganized condition he can be regarded not only as an enemy in development but as a potential ally of the working class as well, provided, of course, that whatever statements he may have made issued from a sincere desire to understand the collapse of a social order and to work toward its successor. To criticize by the skull-cracking method at this point in the writer's development may have an unfortunate result—it may

deprive the working class of a potential ally.

Such a simplified example as I have given may serve to illuminate actual cases of incipient fascism, which of course involve complicating elements. For instance, no such writer could remain long unaware that Communism and fascism each claim to offer a solution. He may even investigate their individual programs and sincerely believe that he understands them. But his failure to have grasped the essential meaning of either Communism or fascism is proved by the fact that he continues to believe in the possibility of other alternatives—and it is just this faith in another possible solution that impels him to continue in what he may believe to be the middle ground. Once he realizes that wavering is historically untenable—by a group as well as by an individual—he becomes conscious of the alternatives and turns in the direction of the Left or the Right. But it is possible for decision to take a long time. Bludgeoning criticism may accelerate his action; drive him to the Right or pull him to the Left. But he will not be a genuine part of either the revolutionary or the counter-revolutionary forces until he has entirely understood his position and adopted it through choice.

A well-known poet-novelist furnishes an interesting example. After the war, Isidor Schneider became interested in politics and joined the Left group in the Socialist Party. At a time when few writers were concerned with the social order he was an exception; but his books showed nothing of his position in the class struggle except by an inverse reaction. Their metaphysical, anti-realist direction were the writer's escape from the crystallizing social conflict which the political man was helping to bring on. Not until 1932 did Schneider-the-writer and Schneider-the-political-man fuse. Not until the last few years has the pressure of the capitalist collapse driven many middle-ground writers into clear-cut stations on the Right and on the Left. Not until the present period has it been both possible and necessary to recognize in such established writers as T. S. Eliot, John Gould Fletcher, J. Donald Adams, Seward Collins, active supporters of reaction; in John Howard Lawson, Edward Dahlberg, Orrick Johns, Edwin Seaver, active supporters of revolution. And it is only recently that such arrived authors, as for example, Archibald MacLeish and Edna Millay, had entered the ranks of writers whose works often imply an anti-proletarian bias.

II

Although they differ in details, the cases of these two poets illustrate why criticism by the bludgeoning method would be funda-

mentally irrelevant. Both MacLeish and Millay have made clear their realization of the necessity for social change. Both have published records of striving toward some satisfying solution. Characteristically, their poems reveal their inability to gauge the limitations of those mutilated fragments of fact which, as they stand in their poems, take on the force of philosophic generalizations. We find Millay lamenting the doom of mankind in an elegy that actually indicts "greed." Publicly she avows her hatred of capitalism and in the same breath utters a blast against Communism. She has fought in her writings and in person on the side of the working-class martyrs, Sacco and Vanzetti, against a justice whose class character she either does not recognize or believe in. And her recent book sharply exhibits her chaos of emotional anguish and mental striving. Mr. MacLeish, in his prose and verse, during the last five years has been publicly struggling toward some tenable position—with much more concreteness than Millay. As a consequence he has come dangerously close to apologizing for war; he has even written a caricature and an attack on militant workers—by mimicking their accents and by sneering at revolutionaries in four indelible lines in his "Frescoes for Mr. Rockefeller's Radio City." Yet the magazine which he helps to edit published an exposure of the international munitions racket. Fortune's article cannot be regarded as a great "move" toward world peace, but there is every reason to believe that MacLeish considered himself party to an important attack on war. His poem on the Union Pacific may be interpreted as a sympathetic elegy on foreign-born workers. Furthermore, he has recently acted on the side of the workers against the exploiters in the Ohrbach Department Store strike, acted in behalf of some workers of the very militant type which his verse despised.

To such writers, whose blatantly contradictory actions display their confusion, it is irrelevant merely to tell them to go Left. Actually they cannot become interested in being told *what* to do unless it is made possible for them to understand *why*; wherefore some of our most eloquent "commands," once heard, have been promptly ignored. But if, by chance, the "command" were followed, could these "neutralized" writers have been regarded as genuine revolutionaries in their condition of ideological befuddlement? Without making any compromise with firmness, the Marxist critic can give the true form to his "command" — namely politico-aesthetic leadership—by critically analyzing rather than excoriating the dangerous philosophic chaos of incipient fascism, the so-called middle ground.

It is not meant by this that we are not to hold up a mirror to the writer and to show him to himself as negating his very objective. To omit such direct criticism in our analysis would be to fall into the danger on the Right, against which we must guard. For, to revise Plato's notion that a poet is a mad-

man uttering truths the meaning of which he does not understand—a confused poet today often utters statements the danger of which he does not understand. Supplementary exposition by Marxist criticism proves essential when one has examined the creative condition of such writers. Unequipped with a world philosophy which illuminates the whole of history no less than a fragment, they are borne along on the stream of their successive utterances; and the better they see where they are going the more eager they are to reverse their course: the more they realize the implications of their statements, the more desperate their minds. In a fundamental sense the incipient literary fascist is in a condition of creative crisis; and the sharper his realization of his actual position, the nearer his approach to creative impasse. We may believe, therefore, that a writer's tenure of the non-revolutionary position stands in inverse ratio to his potential creative greatness. The Marxist can make clear this relationship by analyzing the alternatives facing the writer in his integrated capacity of artist and revolutionary force.

III

His future in this sense involves not only the social transition from collapsing capitalism to the dictatorship of the proletariat, but his specific action during this change. It is needless to point out here the process whereby an incipient fascist writer helps to prolong the very system responsible for his anxiety. Nor need we prove that a confused writer who believes himself anti-capitalist may, without realizing it, help to entrench capitalism. It is essential, however, that the double responsibility of Marxist criticism be established in our recognition of two facts: first, that the incipient fascist may be honestly struggling to find a way out of the crisis and, secondly, that his very confusion amounts objectively to quiescence to the process of fascization now going on. Recognition of either of these facts alone cannot be tolerated. For we cannot begin to destroy the objective enemy in such a writer unless we make him overwhelmingly, piercingly aware that he must, as an ideological force, choose sides; that there is no middle ground. For only when he is equipped with this realization can he presume to weigh the alternatives facing him as an artist.

He can write in support of fascism or revolution—theoretically, at least, he can be a revolutionary writer or a fascist writer. But the relationship of literature to fascism is so fundamental that it annihilates choice.

But let us, for a moment, try to see the problem as the confused writer sees it. Let us look with him through the lenses of his own eyes as he strives to reach a position which will promise him the various "absolute" human values prerequisite to his tranquility. If he examines literature he finds a number of concepts underlying the creative product throughout history. These can be regarded by him as essential to all great liter-

ature. As each period gave way to its successor, they acquired new variations—often so marked as to appear qualitatively different. But beneath all historical modifications the essential cores stand unchanged: writers have erected on these foundations the literary structure of their times.

We, as class-conscious readers and writers, cannot of course consider these concepts as possible of attainment in any real sense within the framework of private property. Convinced that they shall be realized for the first time in history in a classless society, we strive for them quite consciously through our revolutionary cultural participation in the class struggle. Nevertheless, we can say to the confused writer: Even on your own terms, even according to your admittedly "middle-ground" standards, fascism is an unthinkable alternative. For, these very concepts—which are prerequisites in your decision—fascism either disallows their existence or so perverts them that they are changed into very opposites. For example, your concept of the so-called "peace among nations" under fascism dies in a spiritual and practical adulation of war. Human fraternalism, an implication common in all great literature, is flayed by fascist theory and practice as a weakness introduced by poisonous foreign races and supplanted by its opposite: scientifically developed race-hatred. The common literary hope of a vague golden future age expires within the deliberately retrogressive framework of totalitarianism. And the exultation in the beauty of human life—the very emotional blood of art—cannot possibly exist in a world where desire is choked by terror, a world controlled by mass murder, a life that cripples life.

Is it necessary to show that fascism and declining capitalism are basically identical in their strangulation of life and art? Is it necessary to prove that capitalism achieves in a suave and disguised way what fascism achieves by naked terror? We hardly need demonstrate in the pages of *THE NEW MASSES* that social values which fascism openly destroys are slowly but nonetheless surely perverted by capitalism. If fascism is a giddy executioner of art, declining capitalism as a whole is its slow murderer.

Fascism's literary creations testify to its anti-cultural savagery: its productions are mutilations of literature. Such a statement as the line of verse "Forward the blackshirt speeds with bombs in his hands" becomes the ultimate fascist poetic truth inspired by spring. And "When Jewish blood flows on the knife then all goes twice as well" nicely typifies the fascist perversion of human fraternalism. Where are their Gorkis? Where are their Sholokhovs? There are no fascist equivalents. Fundamentally fascism stands in a qualitatively different relation to culture from what has existed in previous periods, for fascism is a forcible attempt to arrest and drive backward the tide of history. To achieve this it is compelled to pull the intellect backward by a noose of anti-reason that

strangles creative science and art. It must install a so-called "reasoning by blood" as its "intellectual" rationalization of a chauvinist racialism and the cult of war. The whole socio-economic retrogression of fascism is reflected in its forcible retrogression of culture.

Fascism and literature, therefore, are contradictions in terms. The life of one is the death of the other. Since it denies conditions required by creative writers in their capacity as writers, fascism means death as art.

The confused writer—the so-called "middle-ground" writer—today, when he is sincerely striving toward ideological clarification, acts in a manner incompatible with fascism. It is for this reason that he must be regarded as a potential ally against fascism since fascism denies his right to function as

an artist today. So long as he is true to himself as a writer he is *potentially anti-fascist to the degree to which he is a maker of literature*—and to the degree to which he is enabled to see this fact . . . to see that today it is only the writer of the revolution who advances with symbols of the future.

IV

The critic can afford to be quite as broad as the creative writer in his understanding of art as a revolutionary weapon. We must admit that so far there has been a difference. In literature as well as painting, drama, the dance—our most successful art (and therefore our most effective propaganda)—is that which does far more than make explicit commands: it proves the validity of the com-

mand. It does not *tell* the reader such and such is the case; it *proves* it. It presents an objectified, incontrovertible argument which, if the reader is to escape, he must first be able to destroy. It does not concentrate on emitting a shout which the listener can readily ignore. Creative and critical writing differ only in their general use of their perceptions of truth: the creator builds a new object out of perceived affinities, the critic examines the created object in order to draw distinctions. But distinctions involve affinities, affinities involve distinctions; creative writing cannot be done without the critical faculty, and criticism is impossible without the creative power. What makes creative literature effective as propaganda can make criticism effective as well.

Correspondence

No More Stein!

TO THE NEW MASSES:

I wish to endorse heartily the letter from Albert B. Morris which was printed in the April 9th issue. I likewise deplore the predominance of literary and artistic matter. If other readers feel like myself, this situation is a positive menace to the magazine's existence; for I have debated about whether to renew my subscription or to get some other magazine which would—in spite of warped editorial interpretations—give me more information and less superficial discussion. You should not waste one precious inch on Gertrude Stein, *et al!* Discussions of Soviet culture and literature are more interesting, but they are too long for their relative importance, and should give way to the more pressing matters of economics and politics.

Ashville, N. C.

WM. BUTTRICK.

Amnesty for the Cuban Intellectuals

TO THE NEW MASSES:

Dr. Juan Marinello, professor of literature at Havana University and an outstanding intellectual in Cuba; Regino Pedrozo, famous Cuban proletarian poet; Jose Manuel Valdes Rodriguez, delegate to the Soviet Writers Congress, and other editors of the anti-imperialist magazine, *Masas*, have been invited to address the American Writers' Congress, to be held in New York City the last week-end in April. Demands for an amnesty for these intellectual leaders, who have been imprisoned by the Mendieta government, have been issued by the organization committee of the Congress.

A similar demand has been made in the case of Jacques Roumain, who has been jailed in Haiti for his work in behalf of the Scottsboro boys.

New York City.

A. CALMER.

Steel Workers Fighting Back

TO THE NEW MASSES:

When the Steel Trust attempts to smash a union it is hardly "news." Even when the reactionary leaders of a union destroy its effectiveness through shortsighted and docile policies it is not an innovation in official A. F. of L. trade-union tactics. But when the vast majority of the rank-and-file members of the union confront these obstacles and formulate a program of action to organize the entire industry, it is definitely a movement worthy of public interest and support.

Such a development has occurred in the Amalgamated Association of Iron, Steel and Tin Workers (A. F. of L.). The determination of the rank and file to improve their unbelievably miserable condi-

tions has expressed itself in the formation of a broad committee to organize the entire industry for a militant struggle against the oppression to which they have been subjected for many years.

Several of the rank-and-file leaders, including Clarence Irwin, President of District 6 in Youngstown, and William Speng, President of District 1 in Pittsburgh, have already pointed out in public statements that their struggle is being waged not merely in their own behalf but in the interests of the entire labor movement. If they fail to fight back the rapid development of company unions in the steel industry every employer will be encouraged to follow the leadership of the Steel corporations in crushing trade unions.

It is significant that the higher officials of the Amalgamated Association have not only refused to support this movement but on the contrary have resorted to wholesale expulsions of entire locals to stifle it. The rank and file regards this attitude on the part of the officials as virtual desertion and they are answering it with increased activity in building a mass A. F. of L. steel union.

Recognizing the profound importance of this development, a committee of trade unionists, professional and white-collar workers of this city has been organized to lend moral and financial support to the steel workers. The committee includes Heywood Broun, Mary Van Kleck, and Roy Wilkins of the N. A. A. C. P., as well as many prominent trade unionists.

The pitiful income of the steel workers makes financial assistance from sympathetic groups absolutely imperative.

A contribution from the thousands who know the importance of this work will be our emphatic denunciation of those who are seeking to make feudal serfs of a half million steel workers. Contributions should be forwarded to the Steel Workers' Aid Committee, One Union Sq., Room 810, New York City.

ROBERT W. DUNN,

Vice Chairman, Steel Workers' Aid Committee.

Training Our Children

TO THE NEW MASSES:

May I answer briefly some of the questions raised by Margaret Wright Mather in THE NEW MASSES of April 2?

"What shall we tell small children who are too young for doctrine and dialectics," she asks, "when they want to know 'Who are poor children?' or 'Why can't you buy me this?'"

Of course, there are two classes of children involved here, those who ask the first question and those who ask the second. But in either case, why

not tell them the truth? It's much simpler than circumlocutions which cannot satisfy them or jibe with their experiences and observations. And the truth can be told without using the word "dialectics" or the language of Bukharin.

Miss Mather refers to the "conflict between what we believe . . . and the world in which the child lives, plays, and begins to work." For workers this conflict cannot exist. There is a conflict between what we think *should* exist and what does exist, true. But what we believe is *based upon the world as it exists*, the world in which children live!

There probably is, in the case of the middle-class child, a problem of conflict between the world as we know it to be and the particular sector of it in which the child lives, plays, and begins to work. But this child's life must at some points touch upon the lives of other children, less fortunate; it cannot be long limited to his own little world. Here, also, as in the case of the working-class child, we believe a class-conscious person should tell the child the truth. We believe that this will not make the child abnormal or unhappy. On the contrary, it should make his life a more integrated and normal one.

The Federation of Children's Organizations, representing some 15,000 boys and girls organized into Junior Branches of various working-class and sympathetic organizations, believes that there is only one way of resolving the conflict between the child and his environment; that is, by teaching the child to understand the world, recognize his place therein, and play his part in helping change it. We consider this the only sensible solution; and evasions and circumlocutions we believe to be abnormal.

We have a certain amount of educational material for children. The best known is, of course, *The New Pioneer*, a monthly magazine for children from eight to fifteen. There is now also the *New Pioneer Story Book*, *Twelve Plays for Boys and Girls*, *The Pioneer Song Book*, *Games for Workers' Children*, etc. We are eager for cooperation in improving the quality of our literature and in getting out more of it.

For parents we have not too much. You can get what there is by writing to Box 28, Station D, New York. We should like parents who read THE NEW MASSES to give us criticism and concrete help in getting out more and better stuff on the technique of handling children, etc. For we agree wholeheartedly with Miss Mather that there is no more important problem than the preparation of the future generation for the tasks before it.

MARTHA CAMPION,

New York City.

Editor, New Pioneer.

REVIEW AND COMMENT

For a Literary United Front

AT THE proposed Congress of American Writers I should like above all to see established the basis for a literary united front. I believe that the political duties of writers in view of the present world crisis can be set forth in a series of minimal demands, broad enough to embrace people of various persuasions, as in the case of other organizations which have arisen recently to defend human rights and combat barbarism. As to the literary duties of writers I believe that here, too, a clear understanding should be reached where there has been much dissension and controversy.

The dissension to which I allude and which I have noticed in the radical press for a year or two, it must be emphasized, has not been over great human and historical principles, but rather on technical literary grounds. It has centered itself not upon the question of whether we should engage in making a revolutionary literature and furthering the aims of the working class, but upon *how* we should do so. In this department there has been, in my opinion, a good deal of "left literary infantilism," which has helped the masses of the people in no conceivable way. In the light of certain formulas, left-wing writers have devoted a surprising amount of time to laboring the supposed technical shortcomings of their colleagues and fellow-travelers. They have policed and "corrected" each other; they have indulged in a farrago of what I consider false Marxian literary criticism. And though such tendencies may well be the encouraging signs of "growing pains," consequences of a commendable if ill-controlled enthusiasm, I think it is time for some of us to try to discourage excesses, to introduce into this situation a little more order and good sense.

Here are some excesses: Recently a young playwright, who merits all possible encouragement, produced a work of humor and satire which was a picture of the frustration of a lower-middle-class family, a picture which pointed clearly to social revolution as the only solvent of this frustration. At once a left-wing critic of the most dogmatic stripe reproached the playwright for his sense of humor, for "wisecracking," for allowing his "flair for language and humor to run out of hand," etc. Perhaps I am overemphasizing what he did. But he certainly left the suggestion that proletarians might never laugh again if he had *his* way; he forgot that humor and mockery is probably the most powerful agent in forming opinion; that the revolutionary movement can scarcely have enough of it. I was glad, therefore, to see this critic well rebuked in the pages of THE NEW

MASSSES; for his own good, an example should be made of him.

Under the head of excesses I would also place certain criticisms of our younger novelists, John Dos Passos, Erskine Caldwell, Edward Dahlberg, and others avowedly sympathetic to the major aims of the working class. Dos Passos, it seems, "has not sufficiently emphasized the strength of the working class"; Caldwell "very inadequately suggests the latent power of the Southern proletariat. . . ." and Dahlberg's work, it is said, "might even be cited as demonstrating the helplessness of the American proletariat." I think that such judgments (which are typical of the narrow criticism I object to) do not take into account our stage of social development in America, the need for infinitely patient, destructive labor on the part of such writers as Dos Passos and Caldwell, the need for understanding the actual folk-customs and *moeurs* of our people. Moreover, they are contradicted by the great appreciation shown by the revolutionary Russian audience for the work of a man like Dos Passos.

Another case: A contemporary writer, whose interests lately have been chiefly critical and philosophical, came one day to the pass where he felt himself converted to faith in Communism. He wrote of his convictions in his own way. Immediately upon publication of this moving profession of faith, another young man who was but a slightly less recent convert set to work, night and day, to prove by the most elaborate rationalizations that my friend was actually an "unconscious" fascist! A real bloodhound, a perfect detective, this critic. (There are a few Sherlocks like him, and I think it would be better for the proletariat if they were persuaded to spend two hours raising funds for the Scottsboro boys for every one hour given to hunting down their fellow-travelers.)

A critic should be careful before he decides to punish a writer for errors or crimes which are "unconscious"; that is, which have neither declared themselves nor have been committed as yet. A critic possesses a certain official power to create prejudice in the mind of his public, only a small part of which may have occasion to seek out the evidence in the case. No court or jury anywhere would condemn people for their "unconscious"; it is not Marxian and it is not even truly Freudian. Yet it is done a little too freely by certain critics who act at once as detectives, prosecuting attorneys and judges. Honest men may be outraged at finding themselves branded as "enemies" and "fascists"; and those who are not magnani-

mous enough may be driven to silence and indifference.

Almost as dangerous, it seems to me, is the temptation of Marxian critics, as John Strachey has pointed out, to ignore style and quality. The revolutionary movement will need all the quality and craftsmanship possible in its writers. A novel, arranged according to a formula pre-established, such as certain dogmatic Marxian left-wing critics have offered, may fail completely to enlist the interest of its readers. And Lenin, we must remember, said very simply: "Our workers and peasants have the right to true, great art."

The experience of Soviet Russia offers us lessons of tremendous importance which we must translate into terms of American conditions and possibilities. But I am not at all inclined to accord the same importance to some contemporary Russian belletrist's laborious glossary of Shakespeare's Hamlet that I would to Lenin's political action in 1917-1924, or that of Stalin in the decade of strenuous reconstruction and social change that followed.

In Russia the question of a proletarian literature and a proletarian aesthetics seems to me by no means resolved. Certain definite limits have been marked out. Lenin, for instance, indicated that he would not tolerate a literature which opposed the revolutionary program. Under the circumstances existing then and now in Russia, his position is entirely logical. But such exclusions did not justify the excesses of the R.A.P.P.'s (Proletarian Writers' organization) program of several years ago. These arose from a sincere and very enthusiastic desire on the part of many writers to be among those who "also serve," though only on the literary front. They wished perhaps to be as heroic as the Red Guards in the Civil War. But the Battle of Books is scarcely the same thing! By 1932 the R.A.P.P. must needs dissolve.

When I was in Russia, early last year, it was explained to me that the rigorousness of the proletarian writers' group coincided with the difficult and exciting days of the launching of the first Five Year Plan for heavy industry, a moment of self-sacrifice and danger. But with the passing of the more urgent period, much more liberal criteria of literature and art were introduced.

The philosophy of Marx and Engels has enormously clarified the history of art and culture as well as of economic life. It has exposed completely those "massive interests moving obscurely in the background" of books and paintings, as well as national policy. To Marx, the individual genius of a Raphael was not understandable save as

part of his social-economic background. But neither Marx nor Engels suggested any fixed pattern of what proletarian literature should be. There are ideas in the correspondence of Engels from which subsequent scholars have drawn interesting deductions; deductions which are apparently still in the process of evolution. Special attention has been given to the notable passage of Engels' letter to an English woman writer of the '80s, in which he asks her to show not only the sufferings of the poor, as she has done, but also how their united action foreshadows a victorious outcome of their struggle. Yet, at the same time, Engels says with admirable restraint:

I am far from finding fault with your not having written a purely socialistic novel, a *Tendenzroman*, as we Germans call it, to glorify the social and political views of the author. That is not at all what I mean. The realism I allude to may creep out even in spite of the author's views. Let me refer to an example. Balzac. . . .

To Engels as to Marx, the realism of Balzac was the best medium thus far developed for conveying social truths in literature. Marx further pays tribute to Balzac's amazing powers of observation and his clairvoyance, though the author of *La Comedie Humaine* was a Catholic-royalist. Lenin expresses a similar divided admiration for the magnificent but contradictory Tolstoy. All this is extremely pertinent to us today; but we presume too much when we imagine that upon some theoretical formula based on Balzac and Tolstoy, or some other technical pattern, we can evoke profound observation, clairvoyance, dramatic power, almost automatically. Tolstoy and Balzac do not appear at command.

The last post-revolutionary decade in Russia has been a period of immense and varied literary activity; many of its works and personalities hold a remarkable interest for us. There has been a promising ferment out of which great literature will come in time. But there has been too little time and perspective, too little repose from the continuous revolutionizing tempo; men have been too close to world-shaking events. In this connection it is significant that the heroic Communist leader, George Dimitrov, at a conference of Soviet Writers, remarked frankly (NEW MASSES, April 16, 1935):

I must admit . . . that I have not always the patience to read our revolutionary literature. I cannot read it and I do not understand it; I am not a specialist. But in so far as I know the masses, the workers and their psychology, I must say: no, this will not meet with much approval from the workers. The worker looks at these books and sees that they contain no figures, no examples to emulate. A revolutionary writer is not one who merely repeats: Long live the Revolution!

Dimitrov is somewhat unjust to numerous excellent works, but his warning is most timely.

The philosophy of Marx dominates literature in a profound, rather than in a super-

ficial or ceremonial sense. In a striking way it now works to stimulate a new generation of writers, not only in America, but in England and France. I hope, however, that we American writers, while admiring the social achievements of Soviet Russia and seeking as far as possible to defend the peaceful building of socialism from the aggression of fascist powers, should not feel it necessary to adopt the more transient theories or restrictions of Russia's literateurs.

On the other hand, while I may not say to the playwright, novelist, poet, how and what he should write, I would point out to the American writer that he has his duty as a man, as a citizen. It is inconceivable that he should not take sides with the masses of the people in this day of social crisis. And taking sides in the day-to-day struggle must inevitably change the man in the writer so that the revolutionary knowledge and purpose becomes a true part of his understanding and his emotions. The action of the man and citizen, as I have written elsewhere two years ago, takes deep effect upon the creative part of him. It is a long and delicate process, compounded of disciplined observation and clairvoyance whose proportions we can-

not estimate or prescribe in advance, out of which, not ready-made slogans and words-of-order, but veritable poetry and high drama is produced.

The relation of the creative man to political ideas has been expressed very well in a recently published essay by the young English poet, C. Day Lewis, *A Hope for Poetry*. The coming proletarian revolution offers the one hope for poetry; indeed, for civilization itself, he maintains. However, the "poetic function" of the man, he says, should not be directly shaped by political ideas, but it is his "humanity" which should be concerned with such ideas,

in which case they will inevitably come into communication with his poetical function and . . . affect his poetry. . . . If a poet is going to be receptive of political ideas, it is essential for him as a man to feel strongly about them. . . . The man must pass the idea through the medium of his emotion before the poet can get to work on it.

Here the young Oxford poet, who has already taken his stand with Marx and Lenin, is saying in another way what Dimitrov felt and said more simply and bluntly.

MATTHEW JOSEPHSON.

There Are Adventures and Adventures

DESTINATION UNKNOWN, by Fred Walker. Phila.: J. B. Lippincott. 285 pp. \$2.50.

PERSONAL HISTORY, by Vincent Sheean. N. Y.: Doubleday Doran. 403 pp. \$3.

BOOKS about personal adventure are pretty dull reading, usually. These people who spend all their lives running around coaxing an adventure to happen to them never, apparently, have the time to get it through their skulls that the mere fact of a thing's having happened is not enough. Any action has a shape, so to speak, and it also has a meaning; and the awful thing about these adventurers in general is that they not only fail to recreate the shape of a thing even as they saw it, but as for any possible meaning, they muffed it so completely that it is painful to watch them stumbling around, half blind and wholly dumb, in a great stew of place names, dates, distances and what they imagine to be the literary style. They were in a small ravine, or *pfug*, as the natives laughingly call it, and they awoke on the morning of May 25 or nearly that to observe a tribe of Bakawakas dancing around them in the form of a trapezoid, climbing fiercely up and down ropes which they threw in the air with fierce cries. It was an exciting experience. Later in that February they trekked with what difficulty the reader can well imagine down the River of Snakes in a 20-horsepower dugout and discovered to their extreme astonishment that the monkeys of those parts wore no pants. This was a very exciting discovery. Returning to Insallah on

the 17th they narrowly escaped, etcetera.

Fred Walker's book is no exception to this tedious crew, but you've got to hand it to him that however inarticulate he is about it, he has spent some extremely active years up and down the two American continents, living among the people, making his own way in the West and the Alaska of the early century, as a cowman, barkeep, sheep man, as construction foreman (mostly in foreign enterprises in South America) sailor, guide for missionaries, soldier in both rebel and federal forces. He has been shot at and shot up and drugged and dumped into the jug more times than he can remember; he rode with Pancho Villa and was in at such widely varied episodes as the San Francisco fire, the Machado revolution, the World War. Thirty years of being all things in all places, and he can tell you little more of what it all was like or might have meant than any intelligent saddle horse.

Vincent Sheean's book can only be mentioned in the same breath with such dull print for uses of healthy contrast; it is what any good book—about adventure or anything else—has to be: a fine piece of work in its own right. Sheean got out of the University of Chicago soon after the War, when there were a great many things in the air. He wanted to find out about them but had a great restlessness that wouldn't stop at reading things up in the prints. I don't think he knew exactly what he wanted, but he realized that the only way he could satisfy himself was to get around where things were happening. Not just to be there when the band started playing—though excitement was

frankly a part of his program—but to find out who was throwing the party, and what might be done about it.

He very quickly developed a flair for being on the spot, starting with Paris in the early 20's, getting sent to the Rhineland, later to Italy on the eve of the fascist march on Rome, still later to Spain. He was in the Riff with Abd el Krim while that supreme man was potting away with his rifle and watching his tribes go under before the forces from Europe. When he was in Persia and Moscow nothing much was happening, but when he went up the Yangtze River to Hankow, there were Borodin and Sun Yat Sen's widow, directing their end of the world revolution with the world dropping out from under them in a haze of blood and betrayal. The later riots in Palestine served to crystallize his final stand, but it was there, in the hot flat town in the Yangtze Valley, that Sheean's mind first came solidly up against the driving force of Moscow.

I don't know quite how to report this book in its proper perspective. It has all this stir of going into places and barely coming out with your skin, and all these scraps of exciting stuff about little people and big people (never forget that Vincent Sheean has a fine hand for color and lively writing); and then in the center of everything else there is this progress of a man who came out of the fraternity rushes and snap courses of an American university, along a route that is circuitous and sometimes faltering but always exciting in the tough honesty of its topography, by hesitations and doubts and the pull of intimate personal influences, into a soundly revolutionary frame of mind.

It wasn't that he failed to make a splash in more crowded fish-ponds and paddled over into a radical position: he was able to go just about where and as he wanted; he got on. It wasn't that he fell out of a belief in God, or dada, or T. S. Eliot, into Red Square; he was no lost enthusiast or perennial disciple. He simply kept feeling all the time that there was something he needed to get straight with himself; and what this was he had to learn from actual experience, from getting the feel of events, and of the men directing them—such living figures as Abd el Krim, Borodin. He learned to tell a political situation as soon as he was able to see the way the air and the sun and the people moved in the streets. He learned—particularly from the polite gentlemen at Geneva—how to tell when a road was leading to a dead end. He got to know what history looked like, you might say, from kicking around with it. He learned slowly, but he learned for keeps; and once he had got the things straight, seeing that a life is useless unless you can give it some relation to all the other lives, and that in order to change a world you have to change a world—then it was only a question of finding how he could adjust himself to the necessary patterns of action.

And this was not easy. In the first place, he liked his pleasure; in the second he had a girlish abhorrence of violence. As a revolutionary instrument he was a rubber cutlass. But he had acquired what Borodin above all men had impressed on him as "the long view," seeing history as it was being made, with all its causes and possible outcomes in their proper position. What he could specifically do was to make use of this, pass on to others the inevitable logic with which things fall into their places, once one has learned to see properly. He would write about it and that would be all. And no apologies: if a man is honest, he cannot be what he is not.

Well, taking *Personal History* as a measure of his value, I should say there is no question of apologies at all. In its own way, the book is as good as a machine-gun, covering all the avenues of escape and not getting away from it. I don't mean that it is

explosive in the usual sense. As writing, it is clear and powerful, concerned always with actual issues as opposed to vague rubber-stampings. As to content, it boils down to this: that here was a man, prepared by training and temperament to take the easier course, who tried pretty hard for a long time to kid himself that there was some subtle means of taking it and yet remaining a decent person. His answer is "no," and the level unmistakable tones with which he comes out with it ought to carry farther and stay longer with the sort of people who read books, than fervid exhortation enough to stretch from here to there.

I started this notice by mentioning adventure books, and I did not do so in a fit of absent-mindedness, because if this sort of "personal history" doesn't represent the highest sort of adventure, then I am the Arabian Nights in person.

OTIS FERGUSON.

Soviet Penology

SOVIET RUSSIA FIGHTS CRIME. A study of the Soviet Prison System, which must come as a revelation to American eyes. By Lenka von Koerber. Dutton. 1935. \$3.

THIS most interesting book is the result of the six-months study "on the spot" of Soviet Russia's penal system by a German expert, who was given free access to every prison she wished to see. It gives a vivid idea of how the New Russia deals with her socially-maladjusted elements, and makes interesting reading.

The author does not pretend to speak "for the silent," neither does she report on the political offenders; her study was limited by her own interest to criminal prisoners only. The purpose was to present to the world outside of the U.S.S.R. the facts observed by her well-trained eyes, and not only as an interesting phenomenon, but as an example of improvements that can be adapted elsewhere.

These facts tell the story of a thorough application in Soviet Russia of the idea long recognized by progressive criminologists that crime, being the result of defectiveness or maladjustment, requires corrective measures rather than punishment and reprisal. In the U.S.S.R. punishment is entirely subordinated to the task of correcting errors and defects.

Isolation of the socially dangerous people, study of causes of crime, creation of a healthy environment, offering wholesome outlets for the excess of energy, sublimating certain emotions, giving opportunity for developing peculiar abilities and satisfying inclinations, those are the principles on which the penal system of the U.S.S.R. is based.

Being a community of workers, the U.S.S.R. considers as offenses acts which have no such meaning in bourgeois countries. That is why the number of prisoners is still rather high in the U.S.S.R. (though lower than before, and lower than in many other countries.)

Crimes against the working population (and that actually means the whole country), such as theft of state property, squandering of union funds, slackness in public office, sabotage, etc., are severely punished. Anything which threatens the safety and health of workers, speculation, chain-trading, usury, exploitation, defrauding the public, offenses against workers' discipline belong, above all, to the class-crimes which are punishable by long-term sentences, the maximum prison term being ten years. In the rural districts, concealing crops to be sold at exorbitant prices for private profit, or squandering supplies of seed corn are severely dealt with.

Anything done purposely to hinder constructive work is punishable, as are also suppression of criticism, impeding creative activity by failing to provide workers with facilities for research, etc.

In 1932 there remained in U.S.S.R. 123 prisons out of 468 in use under the Tsars, but a considerable number of open colonies were founded instead, as they are considered preferable to walled prisons.

Some statistical data given by the author are very interesting; they reveal that the number of murders is greatly reduced (even in the Caucasus, where murder for revenge used to be frequent). Cases of theft are steadily decreasing along with improvement of economic conditions.

Whenever possible, imprisonment is replaced by other sentences (65 percent of the total sentences consist of measures other than imprisonment). Such are fines, admonition or compulsory labor (for not longer than one year and with pay not less than 75 percent of normal wages), and disbarment from public office for periods up to five years.

The aim of the Soviet penal system is to educate every prisoner to be a useful worker, and therefore great stress is laid on collective and productive work in the prisons. There is

no unpaid labor in the prisons of the U.S.S.R. The prisoner gets 20 to 50 percent of the wages of a free worker, and usually two-thirds are paid to him and one-third is credited to him to be paid on his release.

Solitary confinement, as a rule, does not exist in Soviet Russia. The prisoner is nearly always with his comrades. Their life is so arranged as to avoid monotony and dullness.

Even in the closed prisons, permission to walk in the courtyard is quite unrestricted, many of them allow leave-of-absence, and have no unduly strict rules for visitors, *i.e.*, even the closed institutions try to minimize the strain of abnormality created by isolation. In the open colonies this seems to be no longer a problem. There is a more or less free intercourse with the outside world. Even family-life is encouraged. In many instances prisoners work at their jobs side by side with the free workers.

Only a few special women prisons remain in U.S.S.R. Men and women work together in the closed prisons and in the open colonies. This, in the opinion of the author, has a most beneficent effect on the inmates.

An illuminating chapter on "Young Vagabonds" confirms the fact that the U.S.S.R. succeeded in practically ending this problem. The "Community of Bolshevo," described in another chapter, gives one of the numerous examples how these tramp and juvenile delinquents of yesterday were transformed into useful workers and good citizens, though Miss von Koerber's picture probably is pale compared with the unforgettable Soviet film, "Road to Life."

A chapter on "Red Army Men in Prison" reveals that those who have responsible positions receive stiffer sentences, and illustrates the Soviet attitude which is entirely free from sentimentality. Today a man has an impor-

tant position of the highest responsibility; tomorrow, if he has neglected his duties, he may be sitting in prison.

A chapter called "A Prison They Did Not Wish Me to See" is a good answer to those who claim that while in Soviet Russia one sees only what the authorities want him to see. The prison, not recommended, was visited by the author, and happened to be quite interesting and not such as to be ashamed of, to say the least.

Naturally the Soviet authorities are confronted with numerous difficulties and still have a long road to travel; their "incorrigibles and backsliders" constitute one of such problems, for which they have not discovered any better methods than those offered by the insane asylums and other institutions designed to take care of the pathological.

Of course, there are numerous shortcomings in the existing penal organizations of the U.S.S.R., but they are openly criticised and improvements are eagerly sought. Prisoners themselves have ample opportunity for seeing that their life is arranged in the best possible way. They have self-government and are encouraged to offer criticism through the wall-papers, which are found everywhere. These wall-papers serve to illustrate what are the grievances and complaints of the prisoners, what are their suggestions and aspirations.

A great number of extracts from such wall-papers are given in the closing chapter and they constitute a valuable documentary addition. An enemy of the U.S.S.R. can easily misuse them in order to construe a dark picture of prison life in Soviet Russia, but such people hardly would change their minds even after having carefully read this very human and highly authoritative book by one who is obviously well qualified to judge.

VICTOR A. YAKHONTOFF.

Masterpieces

LUDWIG FEUERBACH, by Frederick Engels. International Publishers. 75c.

ANTI-DÜHRING, by Frederick Engels. International Publishers. \$1.90.

THESE admirable editions of two famous works by Frederick Engels are further tribute to the first-class job which International Publishers is doing in making available to American readers the classics of Marxism. While *Feuerbach* and parts of *Anti-Dühring* have appeared in English before, the present translations, both in accuracy and fluency, are immensely superior to the previous ones. Both books cogently illustrate the fundamental principle that if one really wants to find out about Marxism, one should go first of all to the original sources. Both give an understanding of Marxist philosophy especially, which cannot be obtained anywhere else; and both show the far-reaching scope and penetration of Engels' thought, as well as the high quality and manifest readability of his literary style.

There are few portions of Marxist literature that repay careful reading more fully than the 100 pages of *Feuerbach*. In his criticism of Feuerbach's materialism, in which there were certain lamentable idealist traces, Engels includes a brilliant account of Hegel's philosophy, of the basic principles of dialectical materialism, and of the Marxist attitude toward religion. This volume also contains, in the Appendix, Marx's extremely important *Theses on Feuerbach* and his summary of *The History of French Materialism*. It is in the *Theses* that Marx, in a few brief paragraphs, exposes the undialectical nature of Feuerbach's theory of knowledge and concludes with that unsurpassed gem of a summarizing sentence: "The philosophers have only interpreted the world in various ways; the point is to change it."

While acknowledging his own and Marx's debt to Feuerbach and placing him high above the "cobweb-spinning eclectic flea-crackers" who held the chairs of philosophy in Germany, Engels brings out clearly that

Feuerbach repeats the mechanistic fallacy of French materialism and does not sufficiently comprehend "the universe as a process." It is the dialectic, become Marxian instead of Hegelian by being turned right side up from its former idealist base, that brings the proper corrective to Feuerbach and his predecessors in traditional materialism. It is also significant to note, in view of certain current tendencies, that Engels severely takes Feuerbach to task for calling his philosophy a "religion" and thus making an illegitimate redefinition of the latter term. "Such etymological tricks," says Engels, "are the last resource of idealist philosophy" indulged in "merely in order that the word religion, which is so dear to idealistic memories, may not disappear from the language."

Anti-Dühring is a much larger volume. Certain portions of it have appeared in English under the title of *Landmarks of Scientific Socialism and Socialism, Utopian and Scientific*. (But Engels' noteworthy introduction to the latter is not included in *Anti-Dühring*.) In the 1870's Dr. Eugen Dühring issued a huge three-volume work which, while both belittling and misrepresenting Marx, purported to establish a new and better system of socialist economics, politics and philosophy. Engels undertook a comprehensive answer, read the entire manuscript to Marx before publication, and included a chapter on the history of economic theory, written by Marx himself.

The unique and invaluable result is a systematic exposition of the principles of Marxism within the covers of a single volume. As Engels himself tells us: "It was necessary to follow Herr Dühring into that vast territory in which he dealt with all things under the sun and then a few more. I had to treat of all and every possible subject, from the concepts of time and space to bi-metalism; from the eternity of matter and motion to the perishable nature of moral ideas; from Darwin's natural selection to the education of youth in a future society." So, we see the Marxian dialectic operating in the very development of the basic Marxist literature, with the grandiose fallacies of Dühring stimulating Marx and Engels to a compelling synthesis of their own system.

In reading through *Feuerbach* and *Anti-Dühring* I was struck especially by two things which seem to have particular pertinence for our present situation. First, there is the willingness and ability of Engels to learn from other thinkers, both past and contemporary, even though he may for the most part disagree with them. For instance, he repeatedly displays the most marked apprecia-

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tion of and admiration for Hegel, in spite of the fact that the latter's system of idealism is diametrically opposed to dialectical materialism. Thus Marxist theory, like the Marxist society, far from attempting to cut itself off from either the past or the present, consciously uses the available materials of culture to build and constantly develop a new synthesis superior to anything that has existed previously. Second, we find Engels continually insisting on the unfinished nature of the truth in contrast with the supreme effrontery of Hegel, who, in violation of his own dialectical

method, believed that his system embodied the final and absolute truth. Lenin perfectly expressed Engels' attitude when he said: "We do not by any means look upon the theory of Marx as something final and inviolable; on the contrary, we are convinced that it only laid the cornerstones of the science which socialists *must* advance in all directions, if they do not want to lag behind events." (*Marx, Engels, Marxism*, International Publishers, 1935), Engels and Marx neither had the time nor energy to work out for every field the full implications of their

fundamental concepts. And just because the world is, as Engels put it, an ever-changing dialectical *process*, every new day in the long upward struggle of the working class and every different situation in the vast international arena of its action necessarily gives rise to concrete difficulties which demand thinking through afresh, and specific application of Marxist principles. The unceasing, intelligent work that this requires, in problems both large and small, is the duty and at the same time the privilege of present-day Marxists.
CORLISS LAMONT.

COMMUNISM—*Some of the Lies Told About It:*

WILLIAM RANDOLPH HEARST:

THE TRUTH is that government by the proletariat, government by the least capable and the least conscientious element of the community—government by the mob, government by ignorance and avarice, government by tyranny and terrorism, despotism "limited by nothing, by no kind of law and by absolutely no rule"—is the fearful failure that it needs must be and definitely deserves to be.

FATHER COUGHLIN:

COMMUNISM was imported into Russia by Kaiser Wilhelm who in desperation brought a man from the Bronx, Trotzky, and another from Lausanne, Lenin—altogether 42 individuals, all of one race, of one mind—put them in sealed cars and transported them to Russia. That started the revolution. Marx was financed by Engels, a rich textile manufacturer in England, and Lenin and Trotzky were financed by the Kaiser.

RALPH EASLEY:

THE COMMUNIST PARTY trained in the tactics of sabotage and rioting and under directions from the Communist Third International to foment strikes, social dissensions and "industrial unrest" . . . it is not surprising that we have the present strike wave aimed at the destruction of our basic industries and our social order.

*And Now—***EARL BROWDER** *Explains* *What Communism Really Is!*

FOR THE FIRST TIME in any American magazine, THE NEW MASSES will publish, beginning next week, a new, popular series of articles on Communism by Earl Browder, General Secretary of the Communist Party. In question and answer form, this series will answer simply, authentically and forcefully the many questions asked by thoughtful men and women everywhere today about Communism. Browder makes clear the position of the middle class, shows its situation in concrete terms and points out why the middle class must be the ally of the proletariat. Accompanying the articles after the first one will be a special department of questions and answers on Communism for NEW MASSES readers. Begin reading this series of articles,

What is Communism ?

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The Theatre

When Lefty Came to Boston

WALT WHITMAN vowed to make a song "full of weapons with menacing points, and behind the weapons countless dissatisfied faces." And that is the kind of song Clifford Odets has voiced for them throughout his taxi-strike play, *Waiting for Lefty*. But down East in two New England cities there are certain other voices. The voice of Palmer & Company, manufacturers: "*Waiting for Lefty* is full of ideas against the best interests of New England life." The voice of Judge Frankland Miles of Roxbury, Massachusetts: "Plays like this bring the mentality of the educated people down to the level of bums. What kind of an audience did you have anyway? They were illiterate and uneducated Negroes, foreigners, workers."

In Boston and New Haven the best interests are trying to prevent the members of the cast—seamen, chemistry students, soda-jerkers, playwrights, state employes, and department-store workers from bringing *Waiting for Lefty* to the eyes and ears of their fellow-workers. Under pressure of the United Fruit Company and of Palmer, the New Theatre Players were forced out of their wharf-loft over Boston harbor by the landlord corporation. This action of three weeks ago precluded a Red Squad drive against *Waiting for Lefty*.

The first public performance was scheduled for the Dudley Street Opera House, chief meeting place for Boston labor groups. The manager of the hall was suddenly told that if the play went on, he would lose his license for the whole season. (The same method was used against *Strange Interlude* and *Within the Gates*.) No official reason was given, but the evening papers appeared with news that the play was to be banned for profanity. The New Theatre Group did not receive notification. Nor had the news come from the Licensing Bureau. It was released by the Red Squad.

When the cast arrived, shortly after seven, they decided to delete the profanity. Without adequate warning or time for rehearsing the new version, they took on a task which, according to a protest letter from professional actors in New York, was impossible under conditions of excitement. They were to transform entire speeches of characters to whom profanity is an everyday matter. Moreover, they were handicapped during that single hour by twenty-five policemen and investigators, and as many newspapermen, who surged around backstage.

The Red Squad was busy looking for what it calls evidence. Inspector Benjamin Goodman, claiming to be a building examiner, strode up and down looking at pictures of Napoleon and other historical figures. He pointed to a dark, bearded face and demanded

who it was. It was Lincoln. Then he went up to Director Frank Asher, interrupting his work. This dialogue took place:

You all undress in this room?

No. There are no costumes in this play. Got women in the cast?

Yes, two.

They all get naked in here together?

No, there is no costuming in this play.

But you're all in the same room here?

Yes, but we all wear our street clothes on to the stage. (Pulling the Inspector's coat.) The same as you have on.

Oh.

The play went on before a gathering of six hundred. The policemen in the audience, alert to discover any infraction of ordinances, themselves lit cigars. The actor playing the part of Clancy (the taxi-man who rushes to the union platform despite the restraining hands of stool-pigeons), literally had to fight his way out of the hands of the police to reach the stage. Much of the profanity was left out, except for an occasional "goddamn."

The first four actors to leave the stage for their dressing-rooms were arrested by Sergeant Hickey and Inspector Goodman. Taken to court, they were bailed out by the International Labor Defense. On the basis of mass protest—largely organized by the New Theatre League—the defense lawyers were able to win a postponement of the trial. Thousands of postcards of protest, numerous telegrams and phone-calls, poured in from people who recognized the grave issue of censorship involved. A girl was arrested in Boston for distributing protest leaflets and given the maximum fine. Unable to pay it,

she was kept in jail until the Sunday night audience contributed funds for her release.

"The Red Squad hit upon profanity as one of any number of charges they use against radical organizations," License Bureau head McNary, the city censor, told a special interviewer, continuing:

Whatever action was taken against the New Theatre Players originated with the police commissioner, who was in turn influenced by parties interested. The press is distorting the facts as part of their Red-baiting campaign. As far as my office is concerned, the play can go on once the marked passages in the manuscript are deleted. But they will use any number of old Boston statutes if this fails—for instance, an eighteenth century statute prohibiting anyone in the audience from running on to the stage. This was passed to prevent gay rakes from dashing up and attacking actresses.

When the case came to trial last Wednesday its whole background was clearly exposed. One of the actors was charged with profanity in the part of Joe Mitchell. When it was proved that he had not even played this part, he had to be released. Another actor was proved not guilty of profanity. The case of the third was filed. The fourth, admitting he had used profanity, proceeded to throw light on the labor issue behind the censorship. He was fined and his case appealed.

More was revealed to the workers of Bos-

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ton, however, than the police and censorship issues. Sergeant Hickey, the prosecutor, never cross-examined any of the defense witnesses. Instead the judge violated juridical and constitutional procedure by doing it himself. Without even pretending impartiality, he insistently baited each witness.

Judge Miles terminated the trial with a long harangue. If Shakespeare and Balzac contained profanity, he said, he would oppose their publication. He announced himself in favor of banning any church painting that might corrupt the morals of his ten-year old son by depicting the Virgin Mary in a semi-nude state. But his keynote was: "Yes, we're in the depression, but we'll never get out of it except by having faith in our Maker, certainly not by blasphemy."

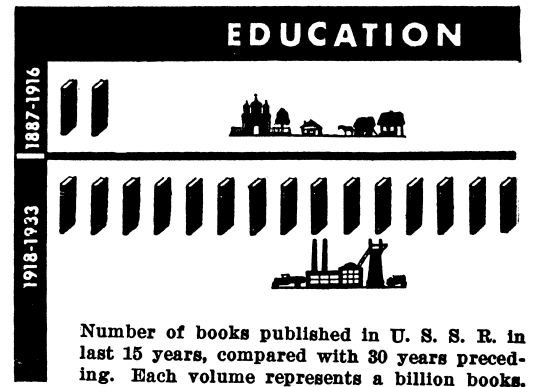
If the judge in Boston was not aware of it, the authorities in New Haven understood that Odets was offering a program far more concrete than blasphemy. The New Haven Unity Players were awarded first prize in the competition for the George Pierce Baker Cup for their production of *Waiting for Lefty*. Although it was highly praised by a veteran critic, Walter Prichard Eaton, and the Dean of Yale Law School, the Board of Education acted to bar it from a local high school auditorium. According

to the corporation counsel of New Haven: "It is all right to perform this play for an upper-class audience, but it's dangerous to put it on for the lower classes."

The Unity Players are fighting this ban with a counter-injunction. Meanwhile a New Theatre League company in Philadelphia is campaigning against the censorship of its production of *Too Late to Die*.

An outcome of the repression drive in Boston was the revocation of license of the Dudley Street Opera House's manager. Hence a blow has been struck, not only against creative elements in the American theatre, but also against the attempts of Boston labor to assemble in large meetings. Organized protest has done its salutary work, for the New Theatre Players are presenting their play, in a version free of profanity, at Lorimer Hall. The manager there has not been threatened. Nevertheless, it is clear that the threat to the American theatre has been intensified. In the face of mounting fascistization and of the Socialist New Leader, which scurrilously attacked Odets and his play in the notorious "Workers Stink" article, its defense is more than ever imperative.

CHARLES HATCHARD.



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"The Whites of Their Eyes"

ROBERT FORSYTHE

WASHINGTON hotels were filled last week with hardy pioneer women in low-necked dresses, lorgnettes and trains. The Daughters of the American Revolution were in session, descendants of the men who had thrown up the barricades at Lexington and defied the British King with his fanciful ideas of absolute rule and the rights of the mighty to crush the lowly commoner. Through the lobbies of the Hotel Mayflower, the Willard, the Washington, coursed the descendants of Samuel Adams and Paul Revere, George Washington and Patrick Henry, all committed to the theory that men are created equal and all burning with the spirit of revolt. Leading the procession was Countess Cantacuzene-Grant, granddaughter of General Grant and friend of the Little Father, Czar Nicholai.

The organization was faced with problems of surmounting importance. Not only must the invasion of Moscow be met and conquered but there must be a decision between Mrs. William A. Becker of New Jersey and Mrs. Flora Myers Gillentine of Tennessee. The campaigning forces on both sides found that putting King George in his place was infinitely easier than eliminating the ladies who considered Mrs. Becker impossible or vice-versa. Running on a conservative ticket which had to do with the elimination of all human beings who had failed to reach the American shores previous to 1776, Mrs. Becker practically ignored her platform of Life, Liberty and the Pursuit of Happiness in her scramble for votes. Mrs. Gillentine was being equally avid and the convention had resolved itself into a campaign which would eventually select a president-general who would save the nation and be received by Mrs. Roosevelt in the Blue Room.

Passions were high from the start but when Mrs. Becker managed to get herself photographed with Speaker of the House Joseph W. Byrns at a reception given in honor of Mrs. Gillentine, there were cries to the high heavens. Mrs. Becker had not been invited to the reception. Speaker Byrns was a friend of Mrs. Gillentine and yet there were the pictures in a Washington paper of Joe and Mrs. Becker smiling proudly upon one another. Mrs. Gillentine's friends charged that Mrs. Becker had "crashed the line" at the dinner given by the Tennessee delegates to the Continental Congress. Others declared that Mrs. Becker, emerging from the Chinese Room at the Mayflower at the conclusion of a reception in her honor managed to get within the range of cameras welcoming the guests for the Gillentine reception. The Becker adherents declared it was only a coincidence, blamable on the ubiquitous camera-

men. The incident reached such proportions that only the poor terrain of the Mayflower lobby prevented another Bunker Hill.

The turmoil was so great, the recriminations and charges and counter-charges flew about with such briskness that innocent bystanders could only compliment themselves on their lack of the revolutionary temperament. From the sight of the delegates haranguing one another, it was possible to reconstruct a picture of their bloodthirsty ancestors flouting the authority of the King. One may be permitted to suggest that revolution is not the best training for gentility. If the undignified spectacle presented in our nation's capital last week is any criterion, it may very well be that Edward Dean Martin is right about revolution. The Continental Army would have been much better off using the legal means afforded by his Majesty. If the petitions for relief had been couched in terms calculated to soothe the sensibilities of the British Court, there is every indication that the Boston Tea Party would have been unnecessary and John Hancock could have spared us his flourish. There were, however, rash and impetuous men among the colonists, stirred by foreign ideas and led astray by foreign agitators. It is this situation which the Daughters of the American Revolution seek to avoid in the future but their actions of last week make one realize that the germ of revolt can be transmitted as directly as the less virulent measles. After a hundred and fifty years, it has been found impossible to curb the hot impetuosity which characterized the founders of the country. One can easily understand the disgust of the Tory families of the American colonies who found themselves engulfed by the rabble and subjected to the indignity of obeying the orders of their inferiors. In every essential, it can be maintained that the American Revolution was an unfortunate incident, better left unheralded. The King and the leaders of the colonies could have sat down and worked the problem out with justice to all. It needed only the good intentions of the colonists. If they had been content to accept what the King handed them, all would have been well. There was much to be said on both sides. It is the recognition of this fact which brings members of the Daughters of the American Revolution to the crown room at Buckingham Palace to bow before their Majesties. It is a form of repentance for original sin.

With this in mind, it was possible for the Daughters of the American Revolution to put their minds to extraneous problems when Mrs. Becker had at last triumphed over Mrs. Gillentine. The fact that an error had once been made seemed the best reason

for refraining from a repetition. Because of that it was quite in keeping that Mrs. Becker and the Continental Congress should uphold war training and oaths of allegiance for teachers. It was also fitting that all future revolutionists should be prevented from working the field in which the Daughters have done so well. Not only can Communism be eliminated by taking the names of their candidates off the ballot but it will effectively check any prospective movement for the establishment of an organization to be known as the Sons and Daughters of the American Commune.

What this country needs is freedom for the Daughters of the American Revolution and it is time that foreigners who have come here seeking to win their way into the great brotherhood of democracy be sent back where they came from. America has no room for foreigners and the D. A. R. is said to be at work now on a project which calls for the repatriation of all descendants of the Mayflower and the return of the country to Sitting Bull.

Aside from the election furore, the only excitement of the sessions had to do with a ghostly figure which arose in the rear of the hall and cried: "Give me liberty or give me death!" He was thrown out in the alley as an alien influence.

Pie in the Sky

PIE in the Sky, the silent film presented by New Theatre and Nykino (the New School for Social Research, March 23), is a splendid beginning toward revolutionary comedy-pantomime. With the simplest materials, in fact "properties" and ideas that can be found on any city dump, it sustains for twenty minutes or so the right level of grim satire on misery. A roomful of destitute youngsters are listening to a mission preacher who promises banquets in the sky, but all he can produce for some twenty kids is one pie. It is cut into paper thin slices but still does not go round. The last two boys in the line don't get any. We see these two on a Brooklyn dump, looking over the run of the mine. One of them finds an old black dress form, which serves for a while as May West. An automobile body sunk to its floor, but with a springy seat, offers a reckless ride at high speed. Some other nondescript object of furniture gives one of the boys a surf-ride, and the picture ends with a religious ceremonial, equipped and costumed with material on the dump. Since the continuity begins with religious satire, the return to the same theme at the end somewhat weakens the film. This episode could be

cut shorter and followed by a more effective climax. The picture offered a live contrast to the labored "abstracts," "rhythmuscs," "symphonies," which were exciting the aesthetic minds in the 'Twenties. Besides selections of these, the famous *Turksib* was repeated, and there were test scenes from Soviet director Eck's new film in color.

ORRICK JOHNS.

OWING to the lack of space it will be impossible to present the detailed analysis this new Soviet film deserves. A complete review will appear in the next issue. In the meantime you cannot afford to miss *The Youth of Maxim*. I put it very mildly, that it is the most beautiful and stirring film since Pudovkin's *Mother*. It's emotional and intellectual impact is nothing short of terrific. The story of the development of Maxim, a young worker unconscious of the social and political events in Russia of 1907 into a mature, professional Bolshevik is told with sincere and honest artistry. I can only repeat: you must see *The Youth of Maxim*.

PETER ELLIS.

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Between Ourselves

AMONG the many papers that will be read at the closed sessions of the Writers' Congress are the following: Matthew Josephson, on the writer in the Soviet Union; Kenneth Burke, on revolutionary symbolism; Edward Dahlberg, on fascism and the writer; John Howard Lawson, on technique and the drama; Moissaye J. Olgin, on the Soviet Writers' Congress; Granville Hicks, on the development of Marxist critics; Joshua Kunitz, on fellow-travellers; Isidor Schneider, on proletarian poetry; Jack Conroy, on the worker as writer; Meridel LeSueur, on proletarian literature and the Midwest; James T. Farrell, on the revolutionary short story; Edwin Seaver, on the proletarian novel; Joseph North, on reportage; Joseph Freeman, on the tradition of labor literature in the United States; E. Clay, on the Negro in recent literature; Clarence Hathaway, on the American revolutionary press; Michael Blankfort, on the social theatre; Eugene Gordon, on the problems of the Negro writer; Alexander Trachtenberg, on ten years of revolutionary publishing in the United States; Henry Hart, on contemporary publishing and revolutionary books; Corliss Lamont, on writers and the defense of the Soviet Union; Dr. Harry F. Ward, on the writer's part in the struggle against war.

The following letter has just been received from Robert Herrick:

Finding myself in hearty accord with the objectives stated in your letter and accompanying call, I shall be glad to have my name enrolled in your list of members. I trust that your manifesto will not be too dogmatic or literal as to methods, permitting each individual to find his own way of advancing revolutionary aims.

The jury appointed for THE NEW MASSES' May Day song competition decided that due to the shortness of time given to the contestants, the verdict must be "No Award." The judges are Ammon Balber, Hanns Eisler and Ashley Pettis.

However, recognizing the need for a May Day song, the jury recommended publication of L. E. Swift's music for *May Day Song* by Robert Gessner. Furthermore, in view

of the urgent need of forging the United Front, the judges also urge, most earnestly, the widespread use, this May Day, of the excellent song *United Front* by J. Fairbanks, just published in the Workers' Song Book, Number 2, available at all Workers' Bookshops and at the Workers' Music League, 799 Broadway, New York.

New Masses Lectures

Thursday, April 25: Sender Garlin, "The Inside Story of Huey P. Long," 8:00 P.M., Park Manor Hall, 32nd and Montgomery Sts., Phila., Pa. Auspices: Philadelphia District, International Labor Defense.

Sunday, April 28: James Casey, "The Role of the Press," 2874 W. 27th St., Coney Island, 8:30 P.M. Auspices: Coney Island Workers Club.

Sunday, April 28: Sender Garlin, "Inside Story of Huey P. Long," 210 Fifth Avenue, 8:30 P.M. Auspices: American Union Against Reaction.

Thursday, May 2: Joshua Kunitz, "The Jew in the Soviet Union," 8 P.M., at 4035 W. Gerard Ave., Phila., Pa. Auspices: Philadelphia District, International Labor Defense.

Friday, May 3: Isidor Schneider, "Revolutionary Poetry," 8:30 P.M., at 359 Jay St., Brooklyn. Auspices: Brooklyn Chapter National Student League.

Harry Carlisle, author of *Darkness at Noon*, West Coast correspondent of the Daily Worker, and Director of the Los Angeles Workers School: "Terror in the West," on Sunday evening, May 5th, at 7:30 in the Sky Room of the Majestic Hotel, 29 West Quincy, at State Street, in Chicago. The Friends of New Masses are sponsoring the meeting, and tickets (35c) are obtainable at the New Masses Midwest Bureau, Room 703, 184 West Washington Street, Chicago. Telephone reservations: Dearborn 8664.

Announcement: A. B. Magil, feature writer for Daily Worker and The New Masses, will be available for lecture engagements after May 6th. Subject: "I Interview Father Coughlin." Write or call New Masses Lecture Bureau for additional information.

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