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MAY 8, 1934

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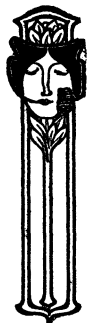
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# new Masses

MAY 8, 1934

ONE of the most stirring events of recent weeks, and an event of profound revolutionary significance, was the arrival in Moscow on April 25th of three hundred and eight members of the Austrian Shutzbund, the Socialist defense corps. Having fought valiantly, but against too great odds, on the barricades and in the workers' apartments of Vienna, they are now enthusiastically greeted by the workers of Moscow and will take their place in the Soviet Union as builders of socialism. Unlike the heroic Dimitroff whom they follow to the workers' Fatherland, these Austrian fighters had been disciples of Otto Bauer, members of the timid and vacillating Second International. But now, having been driven from their homes, having been interned in Czechoslovakia, they enter Moscow by special train garlanded with red banners bearing the words, "Greetings to the Revolutionary Workers of Austria." And again the Soviet Union becomes the refuge of fighters against Fascism. Members of a party that sought the parliamentary road to socialism, members of a party that especially vilified the Soviet Union, these workers fought on the barricades and now give the "Red Front" salute to their brothers in the U.S.S.R. Through most bitter experiences of betrayal and a baptism of fire they were taught what their spokesman told the Soviet workers who greeted them: "We have learned that the proletariat can win only through the leadership of a revolutionary party which is determined on victory. The only way to socialism is the way of the Communist International, the way of the proletarian revolution." Truly these are historic words; words of working class fighters as courageous as those of the Paris Commune and the Bolsheviks of St. Petersburg. When these words become the common knowledge of the proletariat of the world, capitalism will be no more. And then all the fighters for the classless society can say what the leader of the Floridsdorf fighting said, "We only did our duty to the working class."

**C**URRENT business developments sharply prove the futility of attempts by the Roosevelt Administration

to prop up the collapsed alphabetical "recovery" program, which has failed to increase the purchasing power and consumption of the workers through higher wages and increased jobs, though it did enable 500 corporations to make three times as great profits in the first quarter of this year compared with the corresponding period of 1933. The rulers of the durable goods industry at the United States Chamber of Commerce meeting in Washington, served open notice that wages could not be raised and working hours of their employees lowered because that would cut down their profits. The probability of a more than seasonal slump in general industry after May is no longer being denied by "insiders" — the only question is how sharp and long-continued it will be. In his latter-day pronouncements, Roosevelt no longer has been insistent that the 1926 commodity price levels must be

achieved practically at once — perhaps the fact that wheat has crashed again to below 80 cents a bushel recently, despite efforts to limit acreage and destroy this and other crops to boost prices for the wealthier farmers, made this advisable. If wheat and other crops continue to decline, how long will it be before Roosevelt administers a "shot in the arm" through inflation? Though Roosevelt is apparently against direct currency inflation just now, "inflation by the credit route" seems to be in the cards. This means the Government would vote more money to the capitalist class in the form of industrial loans, home mortgages (to help the mortgage holders) and further aid to rich farmers.

**S**T. LOUIS—Birmingham—Toledo—Philadelphia—the list stretches to continental proportions — cities in which at least one or more major strikes



Del



are in progress. Today sold out by the A.F. of L., tomorrow they are on the picket line again. Today Roosevelt proclaims his "no strike agreement," tomorrow the plant is encircled by marching pickets. This week the white feather sticking in the A.F. of L. cap is their sellout of the Fisher Body strike in Cleveland. The strikers demanded thirty percent increase in wages; they got—no increase. They demanded union recognition; they got—the open shop. They demanded bread and got promises, demagoguery, patriotic twaddle, everything except "what fills the belly." Mr. Richard L. Byrd, of the National Auto Labor Board advised the Cleveland men to return; Mr. McSweeney, A.F. of L. organizer, advised the men to return; Mr. Dillon said "Go back." The majority of the 1,000 men in the hall (there were 8,400 on strike) voted to return. Inexperienced, they heeded the argument that the company would deal with the men "when you return." They heeded Byrd's: "Leave the wages to the Board." The men went back, but the very same day 1,500 more Fisher Body-Chevrolet men at Leeds, Mo., walked out and picketed, 1,000 working-class women on the march with them. The 3,500 strikers of this company are still out at St. Louis: they still march at Tarrytown. This sellout of the 8,500 in Cleveland is the latest step in the desperate and concerted attempts of the A.F. of L. officials, the General Motors Co., and Roosevelt—a united front if ever there was one—to stave off a general strike in the auto industry.

**I**N the meanwhile the Pratt & Whitney aircraft strikers at Hartford are still picketing; the 3,000 toy makers at Sheboygan, Wis., have abandoned the dolls and go-carts to skirmish with police before the plant. The shooting of another striker by deputies has not prevented the Alabama miners from carrying on. In Gloversville, N. Y., the 3,000 strikers, and in Camden, N. J., 2,000 Campbell Soup makers still defy police and strike-breakers. The movement toward unification of the struggles of the jobless and the employed continues rapidly; three members of the Unemployed Council, for instance, in the Toledo strike of the Bingham Stamping Company, were arrested for helping the strikers picket. In Cleveland, Ohio, the jobless aided the relief committee and scoured the city, raising food for the strikers. The strike wave speeds across the land and ex-



"I'M A TOUGH GUY!"

Limbach

tends even into the Atlantic Ocean. Five ships' crews rebelled last week at Baltimore. In Norfolk longshoremen were momentarily expected to walk off the docks. The strike-breaking actions of the Automobile Labor Board are the model for arbitration in other industries; the Roosevelt government patently aims to apply its "no-strike" edicts to steel, to coal, to all the industries. On May Day the government, too, has slogans: "Smash the unions"—"Ban all strikes." The rank and file, by energetically pursuing a class-struggle policy can call a halt to the sell-out machinations of the A.F. of L.-Roosevelt-Employers United Front.

**T**HAT greatest of capitalist newspapers, the New York Times, goes out of its way every so often to slander and lie about the Soviet Union. Since its Soviet correspondents, first Duranty and now Denny, write relatively honest and sympathetic reports from the Soviet Union, all that is left for the editors is to place lying headlines above their cor-

respondents' stories. Many of these have been recognized and scored off in the past, but the latest is the crudest, most blatant misrepresentation seen in many months. The Times of April 15, carried on its first page the headline: "Russia and Italy Slash Payrolls in Economy Wave." And what are the stories that follow? From Moscow Denny writes that the Soviet government is making systematic efforts to eliminate the great overhead in all bureaus and industries for administrative forces. For years everyone has recognized the evils of bureaucracy in the Soviet Union. Now a program is being inaugurated which will eliminate, in Stalin's words, "the incorrigible bureaucrats and office rats" who infest the management departments. This program, Denny points out, saves 753 million rubles, releases that amount for actual construction, increases efficiency in management by elimination of red-tape, and finally releases thousands of people for productive work. This last is of tremendous importance in a country like the Soviet Union where, as the article points out, the shortage of labor is one of the most vexatious problems. Now turn to Italy. Cortesi writes from Rome that Mussolini is cutting salaries of state employees, industries are to cut wages likewise, and bachelor taxes are to be increased 50 percent. And why? Because Italy must compete with the other capitalist countries in the world markets and has not been recovering from the depression as fast as England and America have. The Times, therefore, lumps together socialist Russia and fascist Italy with the headline: "Russia and Italy Slash Payrolls in Economy Wave."

**T**HOSE who still have some faith left in the capitalist press and courts would do well to examine the case of Harry Raymond, Daily Worker staff writer who has been held for the grand jury on charges of criminal libel. The charges were brought by one George Williams, long an employee of the Sherwood Detective Bureau, 1457 Broadway, New York City—an organization notorious for its strike breaking activities as well as for its connection with the forged documents produced in 1924 about another one of the interminable "red plots," this time in Mexico. Raymond's crime consisted of writing for the Daily Worker a series of articles about strike breaking detective agencies. The one about Sherwood and Williams appeared on March 21. By that time several strike breaking agencies had



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threatened the Daily and Raymond. But the sensational exposes did not cease. Hence the suit. Sherwood himself did not dare press the case. His labor spying and strike breaking activities were too well-known. He therefore decided to use Williams, not realizing that the latter's black record was also on The Daily Worker's file. And Edward Kuntz, I.L.D. attorney, forced Williams to admit on the stand that he had been a labor spy and a strike breaker for twenty-four years. Since the truth is not a libel, the defense demanded that the charge against Raymond be dismissed. To this Judge Landau in the magistrates court blandly retorted: "But it's no crime to break strikes." And with this profound observation he ordered Raymond bound over to the Grand Jury. This decision has all the earmarks of a legal classic. Characteristically enough, the commercial press has not a comment about the whole affair. Freedom of the press? Nonsense. In cases like this the capitalist papers defend one another. But when it concerns a workers' paper, the grand ideal of a free press does not apply. It is up to the workers themselves to rise to the defense of their press and their writers. The commercial papers and the capitalist courts won't do it.

## The Week's Papers

**W**EDNESDAY—Roosevelt to ask for a billion more for Navy . . . Newspaper publishers in convention urge continued fight for "free press." McCormick of Chicago Tribune says interfering with profits means muzzling "free press." . . . Press is silent as hearing continues in criminal libel prosecution of Harry Raymond of Daily Worker by notorious strike breaking agency. . . . Machado "hunted" on murder warrant. So is Dillinger. . . . Both elude authorities, for different reasons.

**T**hursday—Machado, tipped off, fled in taxi a little before U. S. agents arrived. . . . Weirton, defying N.R.A. on unionization, to get \$47,400 P.W.A. government steel contract. . . . Republic Steel, union-hating Alabama corporation where miners are on strike, to get \$42,556 contracts. . . . National Distillers reports net profit of \$3,832,000 for first quarter. . . . Schwab, back from the Riviera, is sad over destruction of Hooverville opposite his Riverside Drive Mansion. "We shall miss them," he says.

**F**riday — Art Smith, head of Khaki Shirts, gets 3 to 6 years for perjury in murder. . . . Newspaper publishers fight

against check on patent medicine advertising. Also urge coinage of 3-cent piece to facilitate purchase of 3-cent papers. . . . Machado still missing. Friends say he's waiting until bail is arranged. . . . Hoover named at inquiry into utility corporations as having aided company by rushing government printing job.

**S**aturday — Woman aide of Father Coughlin revealed as silver speculator. . . . Senators approve direct loans of government funds — to employers. . . . Harry Raymond held for grand jury on criminal libel charge for exposing labor spy and scab herder. "Strike breaking no crime," says judge. . . . Steuben Society asks ban on anti-Hitler film. . . . Second striker shot in Alabama. . . . Greatest May Day in history expected, with "armies of world ready," as one paper puts it.

**S**unday — Former Secretary of State Stimson, Republican, forms united front with Roosevelt for tariff flexibility to speed up fight for foreign markets. . . . Durable goods industries committee warns N.R.A. against any "more" wage increases or shorter hours. . . . Guaranty Trust hails end of Civil Works. Proclaims that the essence of recovery is greater profits for capital.

**M**onday — Washington tells Japan it won't give up any rights to exploit China. . . . Cuba gets \$4,000,000 loan from Export-Import Bank. . . . N.R.A. suit for injunction against Weirton company opens. Affidavit how 17 girl employees were taken to country club by superintendent, lavishly entertained, then told they'd lose their jobs if they didn't vote for company union. Farthest north in bad lyrics is the cheer the girls were asked to join in: "Ice cream soda, ginger and pop — the company union goes over the top." . . . Fifteen hundred police to "guard New York May Day. Police Commissioner O'Ryan issues inflammatory orders against something he calls "anarchistic literature."

**T**uesday—Roosevelt vetoes minimum wage bill for postal employees—not on economy grounds, but on broad sweeping principles. . . . Stock Exchange firms made \$833,000,000 profit from January, 1928 to September, 1933, in spite of the crisis. . . . Bishop Cannon, although acquitted of election fund skulduggery charge, is retired prematurely by Methodist Episcopal Church South. . . . Of 20,870 ministers answering questionnaires, 13,997 take stand against supporting government in any war.

# new Masses

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# The Silver-Tongued Orator

THOSE who are at all familiar with the financial machinations of the Catholic Church will not be surprised at the news that Father Coughlin, through his Radio League of the Little Flower, owns on speculative margin 500,000 ounces of silver or about \$250,000 worth. Skeptics will now begin to understand why the radio priest has been ranting for the government to buy silver at higher prices and why he has been running with the pack of fascist wolves and speculators in the Committee for the Nation, the midwife for many of the politico-economic abortions brought out of the womb of the present Washington Administration.

Coughlin had plenty of company from the Committee for the Nation among the silver holders. The Washington lists showed Abigail Le Blanc as a heavy holder. She is the wife of George Le Blanc, banker who advises Coughlin and Senator Thomas on silver propaganda. There was also Robert Harriss and his wife, of the brokerage firm of Harriss and Vose. Harriss is a close friend of Coughlin's. There was also F. B. Keelon, prominent New Catholic layman, and any number of business men associated with the righteous Committee for Fascism, as it should really be called. The partners of Munds, Winslow and Potter, some of whom belong both to the Committee for the Nation and the Crusaders, were present, of course.

The Chase National Bank, the Bank of Manhattan (bank of the Warburgs!) and others were right in line with Coughlin and other similar "foes" of the international bankers.

Catching Coughlin red-handed in the Wall Street speculative whirlpool, however, is valuable as it gives a peek behind the smoke screen of demagogy to liberals who profess to believe that the Communists go to extremes in characterizing those of the Coughlin ilk as knaves and swindlers. But if catching Coughlin with his hand in the Wall Street jackpot, for all his denunciations of speculators, were not enough, the statement he gave out in extenuation of his operations in the market for the greater glory of God should rip the scales from the eyes of all intelligent Americans.

Like the good Fascist he is Coughlin

in his statement of extenuation tried to blame it all on the Jews. He did this in a very left-handed, crawling fashion, not daring to come out directly in an attack on the historical scapegoat for vicious princes of the Church and maladroitness politicians.

"Mr. Henry Morgenthau, Jr., the Secretary of the Treasury," said the noble Father over the radio, "has completed his clumsy effort to protect the gold advocates, the Federal Reserve Bankers and the international bankers of ill repute. . . . This silver investigation . . . definitely places Mr. Morgenthau on the side of the international gold bankers to whom the word silver is anathema. It was expected that Mr. Morgenthau would prevent any silver legislation for the ultimate benefit of the one billion Orientals who from time immemorial have identified their trade and commerce with *gentile* (sic!) silver and especially for the benefit of the American people who today are in bondage to the gold controllers."

He went on to identify gold as directly connected with the international bankers and the international bankers as being the European Warburgs and Rothschilds. In short, what Coughlin meant, was that international bankers and capitalists are Jews, that capitalism is a Jewish yoke on the necks of 100 percent Americans. Not a word in his speech about J. P. Morgan, John D. Rockefeller and Henry Ford, who are capi-

talists on a much bigger scale than any Jew ever dreamt of being. Was this because Ivy Lee, Rockefeller publicity man and publicity man for Hitler also, gives Coughlin advice? Was it because Coughlin receives donations from Ford and from Fred Fisher, the latter a Morgan agent in the automobile business?

Silver is a "gentile" metal, Coughlin said, inferring that gold is Jewish and as such bad. Coughlin and his anti-Jewish, pro-Hitler, anti-social Committee for the Nation are really disappointed that Roosevelt will not go further than he has in attacking the working class by devaluing the currency further. Roosevelt, far cleverer in demagogy than this tatterdemalion crew, knows that to go further with devaluation would bring the already combative masses into open warfare with the capitalist system. By calling a halt to the government silver buying program advocated by Coughlin and the Committee for the Nation, Roosevelt incidentally prevented them from piling up additional huge profits, knowing that to buy more silver and inflate still further would invite the erection of working-class barricades in every part of the nation. Coughlin and his Committee, on the other hand, would like nothing better, for then this group could recruit the fascist hordes from the economically broken middle classes.

In the person of Coughlin the largest corporation in the world has representation with the Committee for the Nation. This corporation is the Catholic Church, whose wealth in the United States is estimated at around 20 billion dollars, or five times that of the American Telephone and Telegraph Company. This wealth is largely real estate, church, school, hotel and rent-paying residential property, all tax free, but the church through priests and trusted laymen also holds large bank balances, securities on margin and speculative commodities, as well as huge tracts of tax-free land which it operates as suburban cemeteries until real estate values have multiplied.

The deflation which took place in terms of the gold currency hit the Catholic Church very hard, and the Church is therefore a rabid inflationist even though this inflation tears the vitals out of its working-class communicants whose



Scheel



minds are drugged by religion. The way the Church holds capital is well exemplified in the Coughlin case, where Miss Amy Collins, Coughlin's secretary, was the nominal holder of this speculative marginal account. It was not really held in Coughlin's name or in the Church's name at all. Twenty centuries of skull-duggery have taught the Church a few tricks.

The financial power of the Church is really so great in the United States, what with the intimate connections with local political machines in the big cities, that it is a wonder its Protestant competitors have not brought about an official investigation to determine just how extensive it is, just how much money is sent out of the country annually to Rome through the Banca Commerciale Italiana and other agencies.

In deciding to hold the dollar, temporarily at least, at a valuation of 59

cents against the recommendations of Coughlin, Roosevelt has inadvertently frightened the Catholic Church hierarchy half out of its wits. Many of its properties are mortgaged and the mortgages must be paid or prominent Catholic laymen holding them through banks and insurance companies will go to the wall. The Church cannot come out openly and beg assistance from the R. F. C.

It may seem incongruous to some unsophisticated readers that in the Committee for the Nation one finds mixed big Catholics, Ku Kluxers, capitalist Jews like Lessing Rosenwald, small-time speculators, big-time bankers, merchants, wealthy farmers, et al. But this is precisely the composition of the group around Hitler. All these groups have one thing fundamentally in common: Reaction. Around this slogan rally all vested interests, whether they be Cath-

olic, Jew, Protestant, Ku Klux, New Thought, or Holy Roller. Support is rallied from the Protestant and Catholic majority of the nation by kicking at the Jews with the active approval of rich Jews. It is significant that the New York Times, owned by a wealthy Jew, did not print Coughlin's anti-Jewish statement although the New York Herald Tribune, owned by a gentile, printed it.

The policies of these forces of Reaction, which include other Fascist groups like the Crusaders, the Silver Shirts, the D. A. R., the U. S. Chamber of Commerce, and the American Legion, are aimed right at the heart of the working-class. The same with all their friends, be they inflationists or deflationists, "friends" of silver or of gold, pro-Roosevelt or anti-Roosevelt. Their only difference is how the knife should be wielded on the working-class.

## What the Teachers Can Do

**N**EW YORK CITY teachers have at last been jammed into the national scheme of the bankers. The recent payless furlough pushed through the State legislature by the Morgan and Rockefeller banks which control the finances of New York City is the second wage-cut. Now they face a payless payday in the Fall. Gov. Lehman saw to that when he expressed the wishes of the financial interests of the State for lower educational costs and carved out of the State budget about \$13,000,000 for education. Eight million of this was to have gone to the already undermined budget of the city schools.

The children of New York will be made to contribute toward the deficit in terms of threats to their health and to their education. They will be crowded together more than ever. Their curriculum will be shaved down to the bare necessities—no recreation centers after school, no swimming, less art and music; poorer instruction, more behavior problems and increased delinquency—all this will be the price of the banker "economy" that the children will pay. As for the teachers, they will suffer the increased burdens which come from overcrowded classes; they will work after school without pay unless they fight very hard. They will also

pay in cold cash to make up this deficit of \$8,000,000—about one month's pay.

LaGuardia, who fought so ably for the bankers' Economy Bill which ordered the payless furloughs, is continuing to defend them. He is now considering exempting the insurance companies from the business tax which he is levying in order to spare the real estate interests who of course are the banks again. Nor is it an accident that the Governor is trying his hardest to save money for the same interests by having a bill passed which will spare the mortgage holders the pain of foreclosures, but will help them to collect interest. It is the national scheme: give to the banks and make the children and teachers pay.

What can the teachers do about it? This is a question heard everywhere throughout the country. One supposes that 36,000 teachers in New York City should be able to do something for themselves as well as for the children.

First they must get rid of their present leaders who led them to defeat in 1932 when they were handed their first wage-cut, and led them to defeat this time, and who will continue to lead them to defeat. Their Joint Committee of Teachers' Organizations is completely in the hands of supervisors who by the very fact that they are bosses will always discourage them from any mass struggle.

They did this brazenly in the last two struggles. Not once did they call for a mass meeting even when whole schools asked for one. And as for mass delegations of teachers, they used all their influence to break one up, during the 1932 wage fight. And that doughty champion of teachers' rights, the legislative representative of the A.F. of L. teachers local in New York, who denounces "the hypocrisy and insincerity of the most substantial elements in our community," deliberately squashes a motion for a mass delegation which a membership meeting had voted.

The teachers will go down to defeat every time, unless they dispose of such leaders and get honest leaders from their own ranks. Bosses have always fought against the workers. Teachers who trust their supervisors and make them their leaders are simply making it easier for the bosses. The situation for teachers and children is growing steadily worse under the systematic attacks of the moneyed interests which have at their command the legislatures and which are also helped by the "leaders" of the teachers. Under these conditions it is hard to understand why the teachers haven't organized in every school under their own leaders and why they haven't set up one unified organization with the parents.

# The Big May Day

JOSEPH NORTH—Sketches by DEL

**T**HE greatest May Day in history was predicted for 1934: the prediction proved true. No complete estimate of the numbers who marched is available—certain it is there were millions. In one city alone—Moscow—between one and a half and two millions demonstrated. In thousands of nameless towns and villages unknown even to the newspaper correspondents workingmen marched.

In New York City the police themselves admitted the greatest outpouring in history; admitted even that the demonstration of the Communists outnumbered that of the Socialists 2 to 1! May 1st, born when an emergent class caught the first glimmerings of a future belonging to it, burst this year upon a world in which millions of workingmen considered the Communist slogan—"Toward Soviet Power." History has moved with accelerated pace since the first May Day proclaimed in 1886 in these United States. At that time the workers insisted upon a relatively minor demand: the eight hour day. This May Day they demanded a world.

The capitals of the earth held armies in readiness. The trigger finger of international gendarmerie was jittery. Yet the turnout of workers from slum and suburb—from the world's East Sides and St. Denises—an unprecedented outpouring—compelled the police and armies of all nations to take it easy—to withhold their provocations. As one New York paper—the Mirror—admitted on the morning of May 2, "The workers of the world celebrated May Day yesterday in a tremendous series of demonstrations of their strength conducted with orderliness in almost every instance under the watchful eyes of probably the largest mobilization of police and military ever called to duty in peace times." Wherever "disorder" occurred the responsibility was not with the workers. In Havana, for instance, "one man killed and at least ten wounded . . . as snipers fired from housetops into ranks of marching Communists." And also, in Paris, "Ten Communists injured in battle with police who prevented 1,500 Reds from entering city."

Yet May Day found the organized sections of the working-class divided. The vanguard is under the Third International. The leadership of the Second International has proved inimical to the interests of the masses: the leadership of the Third International has the progress of Soviet Russia, of Soviet China, to show, and growing legions of fearless, steeled revolutionaries. Daily they gain new forces, win new victories. May Day 1934 in New York was an example.

Twice as many marched in the United Front May Day demonstration that coalesced around the Communist Party program as in

the Socialist procession. The Socialist leaders had forbidden their followers to join the United Front. So it was the world over.

Truly May Day 1934 was an augury and a warning. Those in the seats of the mighty may well ask themselves a pertinent question. Not "Will it happen?" but "When?"

At dawn the unemployed on the benches of Madison Square began to stir. The chimes clanged every quarter hour and the pigeons came to life. The jobless were reading yesterday's papers. I noticed many scanning the stories under the headlines: "U. S. Rejects Japs Claims to Asia Rule." I sat down next



to a ragged husky, his face newly shaved and reddish, after I noticed him reading the Daily Worker.

"What do you think of the paper? Good paper?"

He turned on me, poker-faced, and I sensed the wariness of the American worker, learned in the shops where the expression of your political opinion—if contrary to that of the employer—means dismissal. "Well, I don't know," he said, "I won't say yes and I won't say no." I tried a few more questions: hopeless. He sat mute, folded the paper, stuffed it in the pocket of his old O. D. army coat. I got up finally and walked away. Across the street the guard in light blue uniform, holstered pistol prominent, guarded the Chase National Bank branch. Isolated workingmen weren't talking to strangers readily.

The army of jobless jutted up from nowhere. I noticed a great many with the Daily Worker, tracing the diagrammed line of march with forefingers.

A Negro, also in army overcoat, his toes

sticking through the gaping shoes, had served in the Navy from 1908 until "nineteen and seventeen." He knew about May Day all right. The Socialists were going to hold their meeting here. "The Communists are going to march down to Union Square." We talked awhile, sparring in words, testing each other out. But he was a different worker, twelve years in the Navy and internationally experienced; he was ready to talk. "I was on the supply ship Brutus in 1912, in the Mediterranean. The cruisers North Carolina and Tennessee were there, too. I was in Beirut, Port Said, Marseilles, Salonika, and Constantinople now called Istanbul."

A small wiry man in frayed blue serge popped up at our side. "Mediterranean," he repeated, "I come from Maltese." Maltese and Negro warmed up to each other: the three of us headed down to the May Day United Front demonstration.

May Day is the partial fulfilment of the class-conscious workingman's dream—on this day he decks out in his Sunday clothes, pins a red posy or ribbon to his lapel, dresses his kids up in their best and steps out. I saw dozens of workingmen in the demonstrations with their kids on their shoulders: a gala family affair and a token of the future. To the militant, class conscious worker, it is a day of struggle for a new era, a classless society, when all men will be brothers and exploitation as dead as behemoth.

The United Front May Day parade was the embodiment of that dream: in it the workers were alive, glowing with vitality and fight. To them it was a day of struggle against Fascism and Imperialist War. Their demonstration was a glory in red: the banners brilliant in the sun. They were gay with the joyousness derived from the possession of a credo, a belief for which they were ready to fight to the death if necessary.

We marched with the Latin-American contingent which directly preceded the Chinese Unemployed Alliance—several dozen Chinese workers who bore a banner proclaiming international solidarity to the Chinese Soviets who "today rule one-fourth of China."

The marchers had military bearing; the sense of discipline imposes it upon one. They marched in step, eight abreast, head high, proclaiming their slogans—the shorthand of revolutionary ideology. Proletarian Eighth Avenue opened wide for us; the windows were crowded with workers, wives, and children. From many windows they hailed us, waving red slippers, red sweaters, anything they could lay hands on, anything with the proletarian color. At Nineteenth Street and Eighth Avenue a worker hauled out a suit of old-fashioned red flannel underwear and waved it joy-



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ously. The marchers called: "Join us, fellow worker, join us." They lifted their right fists in salute. Answering salutes came from the crowd.

Latin Americans, Danish Workers Club from Brooklyn, the Williamsburg Club, W. I. R. Band, Ex-Servicemen in uniform, some wearing their trench helmets, carrying canteens; nurses in white with red and blue capes; Negro, white, Chinese, Latin American swarthinness, ruddy faces of the Irish Workers Club, the "Gold Dust Lodge" of the Unemployed Councils, rooting for H. R. 7598, the Relief Workers League, and so on into the scores of thousands.

A Negro worker with Caribbean accent shouted: "Black and white—" and the reply from all ranks: "Unite and Fight." The chant went on for blocks. Then, "The Scottsboro boys—" and the rejoinder, "Shall not die." What mattered the mounted police picking their way ominously on the crowd's outskirts; what mattered the armored motorcycle cars of the police scurrying down the avenue? This was May Day, OUR May Day. The student contingent, Brooklyn College Chapter, the girls of Hunter College; C. N. Y. Queens; Columbia University Social Problems Club; the students of New York University, with their anti-war slogan—"We Pledge Not to Support the Government of the United States in any War it May Conduct"—tokened all that was alive, abundant with life, in the middle class. Then the more proletarian types from the high schools—Morris Evening High

School, Erasmus, Washington Irving, Stuyvesant, calling for "Scholarships—not Battleships."

At almost every street corner the same surprise awaited us: another contingent of the May Day demonstration—the Trade Union Unity Council, the Communist Party, the Food Workers Industrial Union, the International Labor Defense . . . floats, banners, placards, the inevitable demand for human conditions, the inevitable demand for war upon Fascism and War; articulated in cartoons, simple yet tremendously effective, striking their idea home to the millions on the sidelines.

At Madison Square, August Claessens, Socialist, was invoking the wrath of the Goddesses of Justice and Wisdom upon Dollfuss and Hitler, who, as the May Day manifesto in the New Leader declared, "had precipitated the civil war in Austria." Using the words of the manifesto he continued, "Superior armed force, and not law and justice, decided the struggle." The echoes returned from the skyscrapers: ". . . superior armed force . . . decided the struggle." And already these apologists for an outworn political philosophy, proven a million times wrong in life—(wrong for the proletariat but overwhelmingly useful for their enemies) again espoused municipal housing schemes to lull the workers to acceptance of capitalism—again the policy of the crumb to forego the loaf—again demagogy, deceit, betrayal.

I watched the Socialists and their supporters march into the Square. A difference, visible, tangible, almost shouted: these sedate marchers carried natty little canes, dowdy little placards, and a host of posters advertising owners of shops. There was little shouting or singing, the color was drained, the impression of a vast outpouring of life was missing.

Here many more bands, many of them paid for by the employers, we understand, played than in the United Front procession: but what did they play? I heard time and again Sousa's *Stars and Stripes Forever*—I heard *Happy Days Are Here Again*, which carried the unpleasant connotations of the Democratic Party and the fact that it was the tune sung during the lynching of a Negro boy in Texas a year or so ago.

They marched, but without the abandon, without the vitality, without the gaiety of the Communists and their allies. The Communists seemed convinced of victory, foresaw the day of proletarian success. The Socialists seemed muted, reserved, an army marching in hesitancy and uncertainty. The military precision of the Communists was largely lacking in the Socialist parade. So were the singing, the shouting, the gesturing, the calling to workers on the sidelines to join, the sudden upraised fist during the chorus of the *Internationale*, all those factors which gave one the sense of Communist power, confidence, will to win.

About the Socialists there hovered something of the restraint of the Episcopal bish-





del  
8th Ave.  
25th St.





opry: the throng seemed as gray-headed as Norman Thomas, as polite and reserved in bearing as their leader. Yet there were thousands of workers in their ranks, workers, however, chained to a credo of submission and collaboration with the enemy, whose program committed them to delay and temporizing; and the attitude born of such a political policy showed in the quality of their demonstration, which drew from the capitalist press encomiums on the Socialists' respectability.

I knew that in some of the A. F. of L. locals the leaders—like Zaussner of the Brotherhood of Painters, Decorators and Paper-hangers—had threatened the membership with penalties unless they appeared at the Socialist meeting. "Whatever your personal views or affiliations may be you will not be excused from answering the call of the Union." Those not attending would either be fined, or their jobs endangered. No wonder many of the workers looked like captive paraders!

At the Socialists' speakers stand were several Y.P.S.L. guards of honor. Each bore a flag: the American flag alternated with the Red Flag. I knew that at Bridgeport when a worker that very morning had secretly hauled up the Red Flag on the municipal flag-pole, the Socialist administration, loudly proclaiming its "embarrassment" in the press, had hauled it down, replaced it with the Stars and Stripes of capitalism. I knew this, and that the red flags at the Socialist meeting were a mockery.

I went to the top of a skyscraper from where I could see the criss-cross of streets far below. A window cleaner perched precariously on a window-sill a few feet below me but many stories above ground. And from the heights, looking over the window-cleaner's shoulder, one might say, I saw what the bourgeoisie had accomplished here:

Two demonstrations. Workingmen in each, but each following different leaders and paths. They marched in a rough circle about Manhattan: the Socialists in an inner circle, the Communists in the outer circle. Their paths parallel, but never touching. Capitalism had done this, shrewdly planting its emissaries, either individuals or ideologies, in the ranks of the working-class, dividing them, cleaving them in two, forcing them to march in concentric circles, parallel but never touching.

But there was a difference. The larger circle, the militants' line of march, was vibrant, brilliant with life, appealing to greater portions of the proletariat. And up there on the skyscraper, watching both parades, I wondered how soon the masses comprising the two circles would become one—an irresistible force no bourgeois state could divide. I thought of the episode that morning when we, the Maltese, the Negro and myself, had halted to speak to some Socialist workers at Seventeenth Street and Fifth Avenue, before the demonstration had begun.

The Socialists were lining up for their parade. Needle-traders, mostly Jewish, they

grouped on the corners, red florettes in lapels, the Y.P.S.L.'s scurrying around selling New Leaders. We approached a stocky tailor holding the banner of the Shirt Pressers Union, Local 243, A.C.W.A.

"Why don't you come with us?" I asked. "With the United Front."

"I don't know," the bannerman said, "Ask the leaders."

"What's the matter?" the Maltese asked, "Don't the rank and file have anything to say?"

The tailor lifted his banner. "I don't want to say nothing. Now ain't the time to talk. Talk at the meeting."

"Now ain't the time to talk?" the Maltese countered. "That's what they said in Germany and Austria. What's there now? Dollfuss, Hitler."

"I know—I know. Talk to the leader."

We started on another Socialist—a member of the Amalgamated Ladies Garment Cutters Association. The banner said Local No. 10-I.L.G.W. He was the stuff the Viennese Schutzbund is made of. He went into the conversational fray with elbows flying.

"It hurts me too," he said, "to see this. One demonstration of workers, Communist, on Eighth Avenue; another demonstration of workers, Socialist—on Seventh Avenue. What happens? What happens?" He punched his

chest, his face deadly earnest. "Unless we get together, Communist workers and Socialist workers, Hitler will come here. To America."

"What do you think about Soviet Russia?" I asked.

"What I think about Soviet Russia?" the tailor replied with a question. "What I think about Soviet Russia? I come from Russia. I'm with them. I hope with my heart and my soul they succeed."

"Why do your leaders attack them?"

"They attack but I don't think that's right. Although I believe in democracy—and Russia is a dictatorship—"

"Of the proletariat," my comrade said, "Against the capitalist."

"All right," the Socialist said, "Of the proletariat against the capitalist. Anyway I'm with them heart and soul." Another Socialist came forward. "Listen," he said. He was wizened and gray-headed. "In this country how did the workers get freedom? The middle class gave it to them. Who gave you the right of free speech? Jefferson, Tom Paine, middle class men. The middle class gave you everything you got."

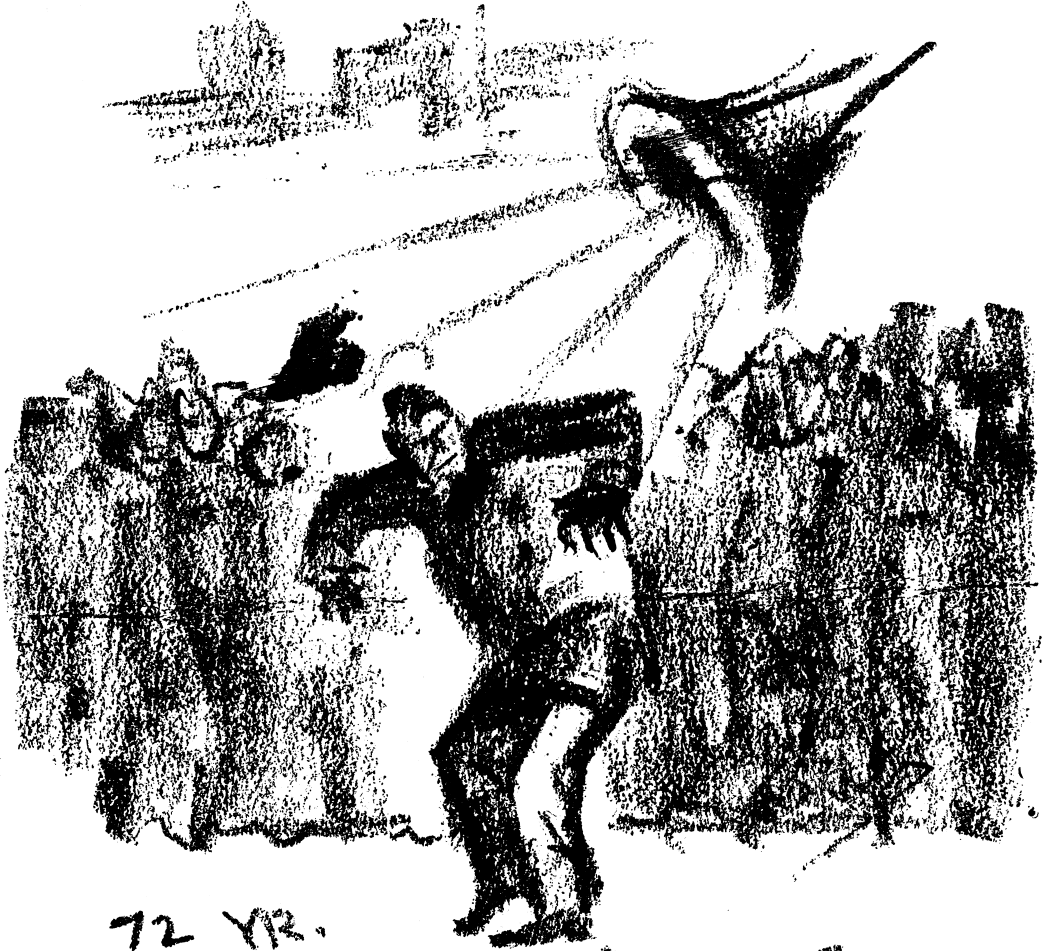
My comrade was disgusted. "Anything the working-class got it fought for. It was our class—"

The Socialist bands began and the first



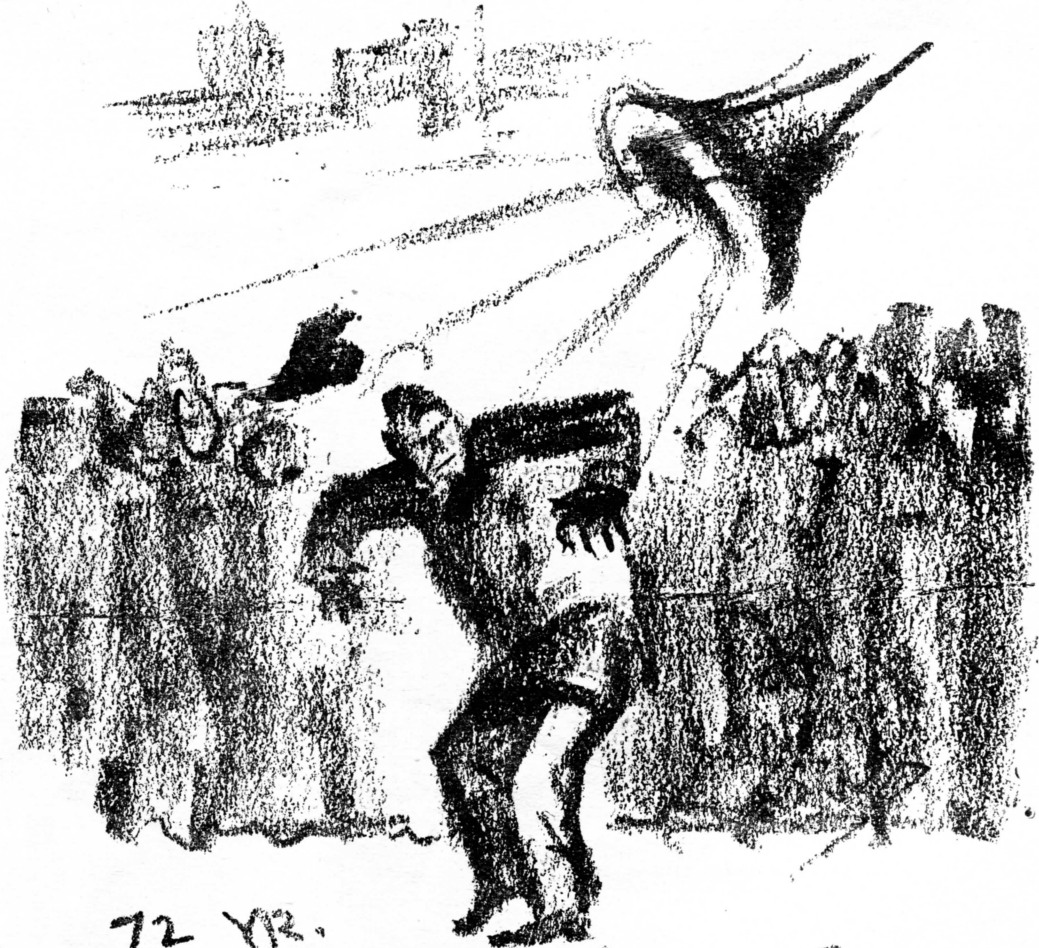
72 YR.  
OLD MOTHER BLOOR'S VOICE  
FRIGHTENS A COP?

UNION  
L.S.P.



72 YR.  
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FRIGHTENS A COP?

UNION  
L.S.P.



72 YR.  
OLD MOTHER BLOOR'S VOICE  
FRIGHTENS A COP?

UNION  
L.S.P.

ranks started to march. We shook hands all around. "United front against Hitler . . ." the Socialist said moving off . . . "United front from below . . . the rank and file . . ." my comrade said. The Socialist stepped off into the procession, waving at us.

I felt then the inevitable surge toward United Front—the fundamental friendliness of the proletarian rank and file despite all political categories. Here they were, rank and file Communist, Socialist, trying to figure this thing out: to reach a common fighting ground on which to defeat the thing both hated—Fascism. I saw here the clear-cut, uncompromising political line of the Communist worker. I saw here, too, the wavering unclear ideology of the Socialist workers. They were shot through with middle-class ideas, political obscurantism, undue faith in a leadership politically decayed, leading them by class-collaboration tactics to acceptance of Fascism. How strong this urge for United Front! Surely with patient, persistent work they could be won to us.

At Union Square the police lined the pavement opposite the platform; the cops in gold chevrons, lists in hand, called the roll, making a show of great force and efficiency. (By the way, when the Socialists applied for a parade permit they asked for police protection; the Communists did not. They never do. They know they can take care of themselves.) The mounted police stood patting their horses, facing the hosts of workers pouring into the Square. Capitalism was prepared. The headlines blazoned it.

Riot squads in police trucks lurked in the side streets near Irving Plaza: machine gun, riot gun, gas gun, packed neatly away, ready for use at a minute's notice. But the workers knew: they would not permit "police provocation" to smash their demonstration. The Daily Worker had warned them:

"Maintain revolutionary order and proletarian discipline. Enthuse the masses of workers in the Parade Demonstration with your seriousness and self-discipline. Maintain perfect order at all points . . . Let the New York working population know what the workers are demonstrating for . . . Do not allow yourselves to be provoked under any circumstances. Remember—the eyes of the whole working-class will be upon our demonstration and parade!"

They marched into the Square like soldiers: soldiers of revolution. At their head came the auto bearing the Scottsboro mothers and Ruby Bates, the little mill girl who first betrayed the boys, then realized what she had done, recanted and is now fighting to save these Negro lads. In firm unbroken ranks—the color Red shouting to the skies, their songs echoing through the canyon streets of New York, the *Internationale* thundering on every highway they marched . . . past armory and riot squad, confident they were the harbingers of a new day. Rank after rank, red banners massed, placards bobbing by the thousand down



Fourth Avenue as far as you could see, they entered the Square, peopling it multitudinously, a riot of color, song, cheers, a profusion of life such as capitalism could not envisage in this fifth year of the crisis. Two hundred thousand workers, pledging solidarity, proclaiming unity with the workers of all nations. Fifty thousand on the Square awaited the marchers. Hour after hour, the parade kept pouring its life into the Square: four hours were required to pass the reviewing stand.

The most poignant impression made upon the demonstrators at Union Square occurred when Eulah Gray, seventeen-year-old niece of Ralph Gray, murdered sharecropper, appeared before the microphones and sang the song of the Sharecroppers Union:

Lenin is our leader, we shall not be moved!  
Lenin is our leader, we shall not be moved!  
Just like a tree that's standing by the water  
We shall not be moved!

The song rang out over the Square as the marchers continued pouring in; in addition to the workers, the boisterous, yet disciplined children of the Pioneers, the 3,000 high school and college students, the cultural and professional organizations, one group of whom carried a streamer depicting a microscope, a set of draughtsmen's instruments, and a chemist's retort, under which the slogan read: "In Soviet America these will not be idle."

From Union Square, 15,000 workers jammed the subways bound for Madison Square Garden, where the evening rally was to be held.

After the indoor demonstration the 15,000 workers poured out of Madison Square Garden, homeward to all sections of the city.

Newspapers everywhere admitted the greatest May Day in history of this country. At Madison Square Garden this united front was an example to the Socialist workers still befuddled by their press and leadership as to the Madison Square Garden event of February. Negroes from the South—the Scottsboro mothers—the Mother Bloor—Jack Stachel, acting national secretary of the Trade Union Unity League—all representative of the strength, the irresistible pull, of the militant, the revolutionary movement.

I picked up several morning papers on the way home. "Moscow, Russia—Hundreds of thousands of soldiers joined in the greatest military display in Soviet history. Red army marched through Moscow, with 500 planes and 800 tanks with American ambassador Bullitt watching." The report also mentions that one and a half to two million Soviet working men demonstrated through Moscow's streets. I knew that in thousands of towns and villages unmentioned in newspaper reports, workingmen marched.

I felt the time would soon be over when the working-class would march as in Manhattan, in parallel armies. Already in New York the true United Front outnumbered the misled workers by two to one. America's Hitler is on the horizon somewhere and we have to move toward unity fast.



ONE OF THE  
MARCHERS

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# The Teachers' Battle

MARTHA ANDREWS

**T**HE Teacher's Union has long been known among the spinster progressives as a radical union. Nor are the stock utterances of Dr. Abraham Lefkowitz, legislative representative and head of the Union in all but name, likely to undecieve them. For Dr. Lefkowitz, when the occasion requires, can denounce the "small financial oligarchy" as lustily as any Father Coughlin. He has gone so far as to call on teachers to popularize the principle of the nationalization of banking and credit. He has summoned the voters of America to war on the "worshippers of Mammon." Dr. Lefkowitz, however, has always reserved his choice invective for the left-wing teachers' groups, both inside and outside the union.

Two years ago the rank and file movement began to take shape. It raised the hitherto unheard of demands of equal rights with smaller membership fees for substitute and lower paid teachers, and further called for the organizing of the unemployed. With the mounting effects of the financial crisis on the teachers the strength of the rank and file movement gradually increased. Indeed at some membership meetings more than half the attendance was in sympathy with their platform.

Seeing their control threatened, Dr. Lefkowitz and his associates promptly changed the election rules and scrapped the membership meetings. Hereafter all decisive power was to be vested in the executive committee together with a body of delegates. By this move Lefkowitz hoped to scatter and dissipate the rank and file movement.

The latter, however, retained vitality and increased its activities. Since the union officially refused to do anything about the fifteen thousand unemployed teachers, the rank and file gave its fullest support to the Unemployed Teachers Association from the moment of its inception. The Association has steadily grown in membership and has made a name for itself as the foremost fighter for the rights of the unemployed teachers. Lefkowitz and aides, alarmed by this development, have since given their unstinted support to a variety of paper organizations, headed by Lovestoneites and progressives of various shades, in an effort to weaken the rank and file movement and the U.T.A.

While thus pursuing the time-honored policy of A. F. of L. officialdom within the union, Lefkowitz has also kept up the pretense of attacking "the moneyed interests" from time to time.

In the fall of 1933, however, Dr. Lefkowitz's oft repeated threats against the Wall Street barons took on new meaning, for he was busy campaigning for LaGuardia, citing "his splendid labor record" as ample proof that here indeed was the long sought people's

champion. In October he went before the Board of Estimate to protest the adoption of a budget which "was based upon economy and hysteria rather than upon educational vision, economic understanding and political courage." He went on to denounce the capitulation of the Tammany administration to the bankers, whom he tersely described as financial pirates bent on destroying the cultural life of the community in order to evade the taking of their real estate holdings.

The day before Lefkowitz's brave words to the Board of Estimate, his idol, LaGuardia, announced that "after a long and careful study of city finances I can state unequivocally and emphatically that there will be no reduction under a Fusion administration in the salaries of classified Civil Service employees, including classroom teachers, uniformed police, firemen and members of the Sanitation Department." And hundreds of teachers and employees, urged on by the Lefkowitzes, took this promise seriously.

The rank and file, however, plainly stated that unless the bankers' Four-Year Plan was rescinded there would be salary cuts regardless of which of the major parties won the election.

As if in anticipation of better days ahead, on January second the Board of Education surprised everyone by announcing its outspoken opposition to "further curtailments in educational appropriations." This move was widely hailed as evidence of a new deal in education, calculated to warm the hearts of the teachers returning from their Christmas vacation. Actually it proved to be a purely irresponsible utterance, inspired by departing Tammany officials who were seeking to embarrass the new administration and to clothe their own unsavory record in fond memories.

The illusion barely survived the first two days of the new year. On January third it became publicly known that the Mayor was proposing a payless furlough for city teachers, equivalent to an 8-1/3 percent salary cut, and that he endorsed the Graves Plan, the substance of which is to abolish the Board of Associate Superintendents, vest the Superintendent with the powers of a virtual czar, place the teachers more completely than ever at the mercy of the municipal spoils system, and give the city complete powers over teachers' salaries and pension funds.

This sudden move utterly stunned those teachers who had placed their faith in LaGuardia. Lefkowitz and his associates announced that there must be some mistake. The report must be due to an error, which the Mayor would soon rectify. Meanwhile, on the initiative of the Unemployed Teachers' Association, the Rank and File Movement and the Classroom Teachers' Groups, a campaign of

protest began to get under way. Dr. Lefkowitz and his associates, not to be outdone by the militant groups, announced "we shall fight the Mayor's plan in every possible way. It's a salary cut, no matter how disguised it may be." At the same time an open letter was addressed to the Mayor, expressing "amazement and incredulity" and accusing the Mayor of a breach of faith. They further urged the teachers of the city to protest to the Mayor and to every member of the Board of Estimate "on the contemplated violation of their pre-election pledges and to demand an explanation." These utterances marked the highwater mark of Lefkowitz's verbal opposition to LaGuardia's economy program.

After the first of a series of conferences with the Mayor behind closed doors, Lefkowitz appeared at a mass-meeting of the Teachers' Union on January 12 with a personal message from the Mayor. Refusing to discuss what had happened between him and LaGuardia at the private conference, he proceeded to expound the Mayor's "honest desire" to restore city credit and balance the budget. He further expressed his admiration of the Mayor's courage. "The Mayor believes," he added, "that when his plan is put in operation history will justify him."

On the 16th a demonstration against the Mayor's economy program was staged by teachers before City Hall. A delegation consisting of Lefkowitz and two of his subordinates went in to see the Mayor. Representatives of the Classroom Teachers' Groups, who also had an appointment with the Mayor, were excluded at Lefkowitz's request. After an hour and a quarter the delegation emerged and announced to the chilled audience that the Mayor had received them most cordially and that he had listened to their suggestions most carefully. With an air of triumph Lefkowitz told the teachers that the Mayor had recognized the right of teachers to fight for their interests as they saw fit. He explained that the Mayor had his hands tied, and was faced with the problem of balancing the budget within a specified time. "He has promised that if there is any way he can avoid it there will be no cuts. If, however, after all efforts have been made, the city is still in need of funds the teachers may have to take a one or two weeks' cut. Otherwise they may face the possibility of no checks at all."

As the tenor of Dr. Lefkowitz's argument unfolded, considerable heckling developed from the crowd. Lefkowitz therefore veered to an attack on the left-wing groups, whom he accused of seeking to disrupt the fight. He announced, however, that he would go to Albany "despite the left-wingers," there to carry on the fight. This he did the following day. Before leaving, however, he had another secret

conference with the Mayor. Meanwhile, in a flood of letters to the press, Lefkowitz and his lieutenants tried to discredit the left-wing groups by blaming them for "the riot" at City Hall. "These few irresponsible persons," wrote Lefkowitz, "will continue to hurt the cause of public education by their conduct, unless the teachers discipline them." On the following day as if in answer to Lefkowitz's request, Dr. O'Shea, retiring superintendent of schools, came forward with a plea for the dismissal of all radical teachers. The next day the cry was taken up by Campbell, O'Shea's successor, who announced that he would tolerate no propaganda in the classroom.

While thus uniting with the open reactionaries against the left-wing, in true A. F. of L. fashion, in Albany, Mr. Lefkowitz clinched his sell-out of the teachers, in the orthodox manner of a loyal henchman of Green and Woll.

An idea of events in Albany can best be gained from the report to a meeting of the Kindergarten-6B Association, of Mrs. Johanna Lindlof, a lady whose unwitting candor makes her a rather dangerous ally for Mr. Lefkowitz. "I feel very sorry for the Mayor," were

Mrs. Lindlof's opening words, "I believe he intends to do the right thing. When I interviewed him I felt broken-hearted to see the man, because he could not bear to hear me say he had broken his word." This statement was greeted with considerable commotion and cries of "applesauce." Resigning herself to the inevitability of a pay-cut, Mrs. Lindlof declared that anyway she was tired of hearing teachers denounced as self-seeking and of caring only for their salaries.

The one note of exultation in her otherwise lugubrious recital was her glowing description of Lefkowitz's conduct. "His speeches," she said, "were splendid and were even applauded by advocates of the bill." Lefkowitz deserved to be rewarded, she declared, with a place on the Board of Superintendents.

With the last remark Mrs. Lindlof has perhaps let the cat out of the bag. One thing is certain: Mr. Lefkowitz should indeed receive some such fitting recognition of his services from Mayor LaGuardia.

The story of the teachers' pay cut offers a striking example of how a liberal administration in practice plays a reactionary role. Once it takes office it carries out the very program

which it had previously denounced, and proves itself fully as subservient to the bankers as was its Tammany predecessor. True, a slightly different terminology is employed. LaGuardia complains that his hands are tied and loudly sympathizes with his victims. The end achieved, however, is the same.

In doing the dirty work of Wall Street, in aiding tax evasion by the big real estate owners, the Mayor is directly aided by such union leaders as Lefkowitz. He at first professes to oppose the salary cut. By this policy he keeps under control an opposition which might otherwise become effective. Next, by temporizing, he seeks, bit by bit, to reconcile his followers to the Mayor's position, with copious expressions of sympathy for all concerned. He tries to show that he and the Mayor and everyone else are simply the victims of circumstances.

It seems unlikely, however, that Lefkowitz's act will go over so easily. Thousands of teachers having witnessed similar betrayals in the past are growing weather-wise and are turning towards the Rank and File Movement which is leading the militant fight against the pay cut.

## Killing in a Hurry

JOHN L. SPIVAK

SOUTH OMAHA.

"SMART people, this company!" said the killer at the Swift & Company packing plant in South Omaha.

"How do you mean?"

"Papers say cows sell \$3 a hundred pounds. Used to sell \$10 a hundred. Wages cut because we got depression. Do just as much work with short hours as before and get less money. Papers says company sell more beef than ever before in history and only make half a cent profit a pound. Son om mom beetch, this company smart people!"

"What's smart about it?"

He laughed. "Look! Cows, they cheaper. Wages, they smaller. My wife, she buy meat and pay more this year than last year and company say make only half a cent profit a pound. God damn! That's smart people, eh?"

You get to the abattoir where the killer works through a labyrinth of corridors where broad-faced and broad-shouldered men in linen dusters walk about in a ghostly silence, their steps muffled by a thick layer of sawdust under their feet. Some of the dusters have splotches of blood on them and you know they have been in the abattoir where cows are being slaughtered and dismembered at the rate of 500 an hour. Sides of beef dangling from hooks are everywhere in the passage through the corridors and the ice box rooms.

A thick heavy door opens and you are in

the brilliantly lighted vast abattoir and with the opening of the door you are almost sickened by the hot smell of flesh and blood, the terrified lowing of cattle which seem to sense they are about to die and the sound of blood pouring from slashed throats. Cows with and without hides, dangling from hooks, move slowly around the room on an endless chain while men in white linen dusters with long sharp knives or meat choppers in their hands stand on the red brick floor, slippery and slimy with blood, cutting and chopping, swiftly, efficiently.

A cow with blood still dripping from its slashed throat swings past to the ceaseless creak of the chain. A stolid faced man starts cutting the hide. The moment he is through another cuts deeply into the belly.

Everywhere men work swiftly, cutting, chopping, ripping. They scarcely stir, standing there up to their heels in blood as the cows swing before them. There is no expression on their faces. They are too intent. They must work fast, for a few seconds delay means falling out of step.

Once they used to kill and dismember 350 cows an hour, but since the N.R.A. shortened the working day Swift & Company speeded up the work to make up for lost time. Now they do 500 an hour and they dare not fall behind lest some of those thousands and thousands out of work here are given the jobs available.

They have no time to think or rest—not if they still want their jobs in this steaming room where the clothes stick to their bodies and blood gushes to the floor and winches creak and cows low their unforgettable cries of helpless terror.

The killer stands with a heavy hammer at the passageway through which the cattle enter the abattoir. The sleeves of his white linen duster are rolled to his elbows. A cow sticks its frightened head in the opening and the hammer falls on its forehead. The killer's powerful muscles bunch under the duster as he raises the hammer. He has been killing steadily since early morning and he is tired and the room is hot and the sweat runs down his nose in a little rivulet.

He looks so much like a picture of Gorky, a broad, kindly face, high cheek bones, sunken cheeks and a flowing mustache. His eyes twinkle good naturedly when he looks at you. Beside him is his partner, serious faced, stolid. He has a long electric rod in his hand. They need this rod for often a terrified cow, sensing the death that faces it, instinctively raises or lowers its head so the killer cannot reach the vital spot for the blow. It is then that the electric rod touches the animal and in that moment of fear from this new danger the head is flung about until it is in the right position for the killer to strike.

Sometimes, they say, a terrified cow will



crash through the passageway before the door can be closed and maddened by the smell of flesh and blood dash onto the floor in a frenzied effort to escape. Then the creaking winches stop and the cows hang motionless while the men wave their arms and shout and yell. The cow dashes about madly until it slips on the floor wet with fresh blood. Then the electric rod prods it while it struggles to raise itself, prods it until the head is in the position the killer needs for the death blow.

We stand there talking while his hammer rises and falls and with every thud a cow is swiftly hoisted by its hind hoofs, a sharp knife passes across its throat and a torrent of blood spurts upon the red brick floor, splattering the men near-by. This cow whose throat has just been slashed—its eyes are still open. They are not glazed in death; they are soft and the terror that was in them a few moments before still shows.

Over the creaking winches, the gushing blood and the terrified lowing of cattle the are terrified at losing their jobs. They know killer talks about his work, his home, his wife and children. He especially likes to talk of his two sons at home, and the baby who cried half the night because it was cutting its first tooth.

"That's a good boy," he says affectionately while the spurting blood from a cow half drowns his words. "Maybe be beeg man some time. Maybe Prasadent, ha?"

The killer is one of the 8,000 workers in the South Omaha packing plants, a Russian in a field dominated by foreign born workers; and with the number of hungry and destitute persons increased from 4,000 before the depression to 18,000 in 1933, and with charity organizations estimating that 1934 will have close to 40,000 begging for food in one of the country's greatest food centers, these workers that the charities are allowing less and less food to each family because there is so little money available for all the demands on them; they have learned that the government has figured out to the penny how much food is necessary to keep alive a man and a woman and children of different ages, and this precise amount is all the hungry are being given.

A lowing cow sticks its head in the opening and the hammer cuts short its cry of fear.

"You like this?" I ask.

He looks a little puzzled and shrugs his shoulders.

"Oh, this is good job."

"You like to kill?"

"This is job," he says stolidly. "Somebody got to kill 'em. I got to work. Got family to support. Everybody do the same."

For a moment his eyes lose their twinkle and a serious note flashes across them. He motions with his head to the others in this brilliantly lighted slaughter room.

"Everybody do the same." He kills so that he and his may live. The whole world kills in one way or another so it may live.

"How many hours do you work now?"

"Maybe 32; maybe 40."

"How many did you work in 1929?"

"Seventy-two."

"Then the N.R.A. has been good for you?"

"Good. Yes. N.R.A. good, Less hours, But got to work faster. Got to kill more, quicker."

"How much did you make in 1929?"

"Make good wages. Maybe \$35 a week. Maybe \$40."

"What do you make now?"

"Maybe \$17; maybe \$19 a week."

It was at this point that he laughed and commented admiringly upon the company being "smart people." The company had put something over. He could not understand how, with cows cheaper and wages cut about half and meat selling at a higher price than last year, the company could earn only half a cent on a pound; but he had acquired enough of the American appreciation of putting something over to laugh at the statement and admire the packing house for getting away with it.

Few packing plant employees were thrown out of work during the years of depression. People must eat and so vital an industry as meat did not suffer so much. The depression's chief effect on the workers was in the reduction of wages and the development since the N.R.A., of the speed-up system to make up for the shortened work day. But not everyone was so fortunate as the killer. His brother had had no work for two years and long ago had moved his family into the killer's four room flat. There were hundreds of families like that in Omaha who had "doubled up" to save on rent or to live with relatives or friends because they were thrown out of their homes. Yet, he and his brother and so many others accepted everything with a stolid air. He was so much like a peasant in war time. A machine, a vast machine known as the government starts grinding to take him off the land or out of the factory and send him to a far away place to have his belly blown open even like this cow's belly is open, and he goes stolidly. It is war and a machine has taken charge of him. He knows of nothing else to do but accept. So it is when there is a depression.

"Couldn't you better your condition if you were organized?"

He shot a glance of suspicion at the men about him and shrugged his shoulders.

"No like to talk about union. Lots stool pigeons."

"Company stool pigeons or just workers who want to get in good with the boss?"

Again he shrugged his shoulders.

"Don't know. But plenty stool pigeons."

"Would you like to join a union?"

"Sure."

"Is the American Federation of Labor trying to organize here?"

"They try but everybody afraid. Lots join though."

"You join?"

He shook his head vigorously.

"No. Why I join? To get fired? I need job. I take care of my family. When make strong union I join."

"Do you like cuts in wages and the speed up?"

"No. No like. But everywhere the same. Bad times."

"Maybe times get better," he says finally.

Besides the fear of getting fired he does not want to join the A. F. of L. union. He had heard stories of walking delegates who take the worker's dues, do nothing for them and when a strike comes, tells them to do what the boss says.

"Would you join a Communist union?" I ask.

"No," he says emphatically. "Communist good people. For working man. But join Communist union and you get fired sure. Don't want to get fired. When make strong union I join."

A man with a long sharp knife suddenly shook his left hand. He had cut himself and immediately he stopped work and left for the first aid station.

"What happens if you get hurt?"

"Go to doctor or nurse."

"You get compensation?"

"Company take ten cents for insurance. If I get hurt I get compensation. I get nothing from insurance. If I get hurt outside I get insurance."

"Do you like this scheme?"

"Got nothing to say," he smiled good naturedly. "Money taken from wages. If you get hurt working they say you want compensation or insurance and say who told you to cut like that so get hurt. They make trouble if you get hurt; if you get hurt bad maybe you get fired."

He laughed and shook his head again, this time with a slightly puzzled expression.

"They smart people. They give bonus, too, if make hundred percent."

"What's that?"

"Don't know. Nobody know," he grinned broadly. "That's what foreman-boss wants. Hundred percent. Work harder, faster all the time. I try sure make hundred percent but when week ends foreman-boss say only ninety percent so no get bonus."

"How much work do you have to do to make hundred percent?"

"Don't know," he grinned shrewdly. "Nobody knows. Foreman-boss knows—maybe."

No one knows what hundred percent means; all they know is that the company is whipping them up constantly to work faster, and fearful of losing their jobs they dare not organize to oppose this killing speed-up. And yet under all a hope is evident. Things may get better and the N.R.A. may end so they will not have to work so fast. The papers say things will get better.

# He's Got Rhythm

HENRY HART

HE WAS round and lively, full of smiles and bounce, with a little pie face and brown eyes that were always lighting up with professional laughter. He was like a little jack in the box, with the delegation enclosing him on three sides and with the reporters behind him, for a lid. He would pop up when the lid smiled, and subside when the press was unimpressed. He was the deputy commissioner of the Department of Correction of the City of New York; he was David Marcus, a Republican, a Jew, an ex-West Pointer, former 145-pound intercollegiate boxing champ, an office holder since birth. He had been, under the Republicans, an assistant U. S. district attorney in charge of prohibition cases.

"Sit down, sit down," he said with a wave of his pudgy little hand and with his face full of smiles. But there were not any chairs. "I'm sorry," he said in his Broadway accent, "I'm sorry. There *aren't* any chairs." It was like *Alice in Wonderland*.

Al Hirsch introduced everybody by name and Mr. Marcus eagerly looked into each face. The scandals of Welfare Island were now several weeks behind him. Could he reach page one again via the delegation now before him? As he looked into each face it was easy to see his mind calculating the chances of perhaps page three.

"A public school teacher?" Mr. Marcus suddenly exclaimed, his politician's nose scenting news. "Which one? Where do you teach?"

Al Hirsch went on introducing and Mr. Marcus seemed to forget the school teacher.

Al Hirsch succinctly stated three specific things against which the delegation, organized by the National Committee for the Defense of Political Prisoners, had come to protest: the exclusion of the *Daily Worker* from the prisoners in New York City jails who wanted it; the barring of Grace Lumpkin's novel, *To Make My Bread*; and the segregation of Negro prisoners from white. These protests are part of the committee's vigorous campaign to make political prisoners be recognized as such, and not as criminals.

The telephone rang and Mr. Marcus raised his index finger in the hi-there-buddy gesture, saying, "Excuse me." He poured a little coconut oil into the mouthpiece of the telephone and then said, "No more calls. Hold up all calls. Cheerio. Cheerio."

Maxwell Hyde, on behalf of the delegation, explained, in a thorough and gentlemanly way, how stupid and illegal it is to keep the *Daily Worker* from comrades in prison who want to receive it. Mr. Marcus smiled and became animated for the sake of the press. Be urbane with these reds, his manner said, let them talk themselves red in the face. Let it all become

hot air. "Now you can see," he said with smiles and unctious, "that we can't let these prisoners get all sorts of French postcards—"

"We're not talking about French postcards," said Mr. Hyde.

It developed that Mr. Marcus had never read the *Daily Worker* and wouldn't think of excluding it because it is a radical paper. "Let me read it," he said. "Let me read it and I'll let you know." He was reminded that the *Daily Worker* had been mailed to Commissioner MacCormick, at the Commissioner's request, for two months. Hadn't he or the Commissioner read it yet? "Look here," said Mr. Marcus. "We're not depriving it of them because we're not ration." Grammatically, that means, "We're not depriving them of it because we're irrational."

"Moreover," he said, "this is a dynamic administration. We've got a lot to do."

He said he had the right, legal and moral, to keep anything from any prisoner. He said he wasn't sure, but he thought prisoners didn't have any Constitutional rights. He said he wasn't sure whether the *Daily Worker* would incite prisoners or not. He was ready to find out. "Just to let me read it and I'll tell you," he said, smiling. "I'll tell you one week from today whether the *Daily Worker* can be admitted."

Grace Lumpkin explained how a copy of her book had been sent to William Mackeroff by the publishers (one of the stipulations of all prisons) and had been returned by the prison with the explanation that prisoners could not receive packages through the mails.

"Now that isn't whim and fancy," said Mr. Marcus, turning on his quick and eager smile (a photographer was taking his picture). "I know about that because I was an assistant D. A. Do you know what they do? They get their friends to cut the inside out of a book and they put in dope and razors. They soak the pages with heroin. I know all about it. That's why we have to be careful."

He then said that no prisoner in a city jail can get a book except from the prison library. This was so obviously untrue that he corrected himself and said he thought they couldn't, but that he'd find out and let us know about that in exactly one week.

Occasionally some of the comrades, unable to endure the round little man's ignorance of everything but ward politics and his sucking in with the reporters, would burst out with some honest remark. Each time this happened Mr. Marcus was surprised, offended, hurt. "Now there you are!" he would explain. "Distorting what I mean. That's the trouble with you people. You don't have to tell me anything about the injustices of society. Why, maybe all crime *is* against property. But

madame, you and me can't compromise with truth and principle."

Whatever he meant by that last phrase wasn't clear. He was suddenly laughing because the reporters were laughing at the pathetic honesties bravely but *gauchely* uttered by the comrades. Here was David Marcus, party hack, ignorant of the reality as well as the historic meaning of the class struggle, stifling one of the little efforts by which a classless world will become a reality. And laughing, and joking and being *so* liberal!

Richard B. Moore, of the League of Struggle for Negro Rights, then made a passionate, heart-breaking protest against the segregation of Negroes from white prisoners. There is a messianic fire in him. For a moment that office on the twenty-fourth floor of the Municipal Building became filled with Moore's verbal pictures of the crimes and follies of the social system under which we try to live, and also slightly alight with an intimation of a future that will not be so cruel, so gross, so dead.

The reporters laughed as Moore shouted: "The prejudice against the Negro is deliberately kept alive. It is an inherent part of the Fascism which splits the workers, which gets them fighting against each other. It is the same thing as Hitler rousing the German people against the Jews, it is one of the means by which the capitalists seek to perpetuate slavery."

Hearing the reporters' laughter behind him, Mr. Marcus chuckled, waved his pudgy little hand, palm outward. "That's just silly," he shouted. "We all take our prejudices with us wherever we go. Don't talk about prejudices to me. I know something about it. I get some of it. This whole problem of segregation is too big to settle just like that. Penologists have been studying for years—"

"Oh my god," said one of the comrades.

"I don't know about whether segregation's good or not," Mr. Marcus went on blithely, the smiles back upon his face. "I don't say yes, I don't say no. I don't know. I'm willing to study it. You all do me a favor. Send me all the literchoor you've got. I'll study up on it. But don't talk about capitalists making race prejudice. That's silly. We all take our prejudices with us. I don't know what you mean by Fascism but it's nothing like Hitler and the Jews at all. Now in Berlin the Jews owned 60 percent of all property. I even own property in Berlin myself."

It was impossible to know what he meant exactly. Did he mean that Hitler had some just reason for killing, robbing, exiling, imprisoning Jews because he, David Marcus, and other Jews, owned sixty percent of Berlin real estate?

"Now look here," Mr. Marcus said serious-

ly. "I've even made a little experiment about this segregation business. You know, I've discovered the Negro can crack jokes and sing songs and dance. He's got rhythm, the Negroes have rhythm, why—"

He had gotten up on his feet. His pudgy little fingers began to tap on his desk, his eyes became filled with recollections of moaning trombones and high yellow girls, their hips swaying, their lips apart, their pelvises moving. The memory apparently was intoxicating to him.

"I thought it would be a good thing to put a couple of Negroes in with the whites," he said in a husky voice, "so they could cheer things up, you know, sing songs and do a dance. Because they've got rhythm, you know what I mean?"

It was too much. Nobody could have stood it.

"Oh stop it!" one of the comrades cried. "Dragging up that hoary lie that the Negroes like to clown, that he's naturally happy, that he's a song and dance man. Stop it! Is that all you can see in the Negro's destiny? Can't you see it isn't true? Can't you see the white man made it up and the Negro plays up to it to get a crumb now and then? Can't you see how the white man debauches the Negro?"

Mr. Marcus' face clouded. "There you are!" he said viciously. "Misunderstanding everything I say. Deliberately. Yes, deliberately. I try an experiment, and this is the thanks I get for it. All I said was the Negro has rhythm."

Unconsciously the little fingers began to slide and sidle over the top of his desk like feet upon a Harlem cabaret floor. The sensation seemed to restore Mr. Marcus. He smiled, waved his hand. "Cheerio," he cried,

with what seemed to him to be forgiveness and good humor. "Cheerio!"

He turned to the reporters, who patted his shoulder, and the delegation filed slowly out of the office, trying hard to believe the seed dropped into the amazing mind of David Marcus would not perish.

P. S.—The National Committee for the Defense of Political Prisoners has since been informed by Deputy Commissioner Marcus that as a result of the delegation the Daily Worker, THE NEW MASSES and other radical periodicals are now admitted into the New York City jails. John Strachey's *The Coming Struggle for Power* and Grace Lumpkin's *To Make My Bread* are also admitted. The Daily Worker has received a special delivery letter from William Mackeroff, expressing the prisoner's delight at getting the Daily.

# Alabama Miners Smash Color Line

MYRA PAGE

"THIS ain't the end." The heavy-shouldered pickman shifts his battered knob boots, speaking slowly, half to himself. His fists rest on his blue overalls, above his knees. Eyes sharpened by long days of midnight below ground gaze up the valley, beyond stubby hills turning green and blue with early spring and spattered with hundreds of company shacks. He is measuring the mine and smouldering tipple.

For three weeks, not a load of coal came up. But Monday, they'll be back down the hole. Cheated, tricked. Heart-heavy, he weighs his words.

"Miners, take 'em where you will, are a stubborn lot. Once they get an idea, seems like all hell and high water can't shake it out. That's how it is, with us. Us Alabama miners, white and colored, got one fixed idea. Maybe we been a bit slow getting it, but there it is. We're set on Union, and all that means. And nobody, be it Morgan or government or whatsoever—nobody's gonna shake it out."

These words of the pickman, Tom Larson, words as brittle and gleaming as the black diamonds he mines, have proven themselves, in record time. Less than a month ago, Tom spoke them, sitting on the rotting porch of his company shack. Their strike against company unionism and for real unionism had just ended, in what Mitch, super-imposed president of District No. 17, United Mine Workers of America, called "a tremendous victory." Tom and many of the miners termed it "a downright mess." On the face of it, they'd won plenty. In reality, they knew the companies had put one over. Evidently the bossmen had more tricks in the bag than the miners had counted on.

They were tricked—into a no-strike, no wage-raise agreement, with a check-off system



of union dues that would turn into a blacklist in the hands of the company. But they were not licked. Not by a long shot. Only, it took time to study it over, gather their forces, decide what to do.

Events have helped them to a quick decision. Today, Alabama miners are out again. This time, all are out. The big mines of the T.C.I. (Tennessee Coal and Iron Company, a U. S. Steel subsidiary, Morgan interests) and the Republic (Mellon interests) that Mitch openly counseled against calling out, in the last strike, are shut tight. Moreover, the strike has spread to other southern coal fields, until fifty thousand miners are out, picketing, demanding full union recognition and an end to the lower wage rates (known as "differentials" in the N.R.A. codes, which discriminate against southern labor). A bituminous coal miner in Illinois or Pennsylvania, under the Coal Code draws \$5.00 a day, but if he works coal in Alabama, he draws \$3.40. This is for skilled labor, other categories getting even less.

"Why ain't a ton of coal mined in the south worth as much as one mined north?" the Alabama miners ask bitterly. And they think, at last, they have the answer. Poorer organization, and labor divided within itself. At the end of the March strike, the Washington administration felt it necessary to make overtures to the rebellious miners, trying to regain some of the N.R.A.'s lost prestige among them. So, on April first General Johnson with great gusto announced new code rates, bringing the southern miners' schedule up to \$4.60. Immediately the southern operators went into action, sending a protest delegation to Washington, and securing an injunction against the enforcement of the code.

At this, the miners walked out. And the sixteen thousand steel workers in the T.C.I., Republic and other big plants, having been secretly organizing and resisting company union schemes for some time, are now taking strike votes and preparing to join the striking miners. Also the T.C.I. ore miners are going out again.

If Roosevelt and other demagogues don't succeed in stalling them off, what a major battle this will prove. Rarely has the country seen such a lineup—miners and steel workers against the big trusts, with all the forces of state aiding the latter.

Such a strike is an epoch-maker for the South. It is southern labor's Samson, pulling with both hands at the very pillars of the whole system of exploitation and Jim Crow which Morgan and American capitalist-imperialism have reared. The only thing which can compare with it, in impact and far-reaching effects, is the magnificent campaign waged for the freeing of the Scottsboro boys. This case, together with the organization of the militant sharecroppers' union, numbering

# MYRA PAGE



six thousand members, heralded the rousing of the Negro nation of nine millions enslaved in the Black Belt, and the welding of an unbreakable solidarity of the revolutionary workers with them, led by the Communist Party. Gastonia was the first unforgettable breaking the way to new paths in the South. Now, this general strike of Alabama miners, which comes at a time and against such forces that Washington, the nation's press and Wall Street find it worthwhile to follow it closely—and interfere.

What gives this strike such significance? Foremost is the splendid unity of the miners' ranks, white and Negro. This is something new in the South, until the last strike. In 1920, the companies set black against white, brought in raw farmhands and croppers, mostly colored, to break the strike. Today, three-fourths of Alabama's miners are Negro. And white miners are unanimous in their opinion, "The colored diggers are strong union men. Good strikers, too. Not a scab gets by 'em. Just let one of their race try it. Why, their women folks handle *him!*" And with appreciative chuckles, they relate incidents they've witnessed.

Yes, in this strike, southern labor is using both its hands, all its strength, white and Negro.

This solidarity has not been easy to achieve. Life-long teachings in the controlled schools church and press, and the whole system of life in Dixie conspire against it. The officials of the United Mine Workers, to which the miners belong, openly compromise with the vicious Jim Crow practices, actually helping perpetuate the miners' enslavement. Negro miners, although they are three-fourths of the membership in this district, are relegated to a second place in the union. None is ever elected president or secretary of a local union, not to mention district positions. The rather meaningless post of Vice-president is reserved for them, as well as one out of three places on any committees. This is deliberately devised, as one Mitch hanger-on explained to me, "to keep the niggers satisfied and in their place." Negroes are not permitted to work at some of the best jobs in the mines, such as machine operators.

Yet it was not the U.M.W.A. leaders who raised the question of full equal rights for the majority of the union membership, the colored miners, both in the pits and in the Union. The Communists and the militant U.M.W.A. Rank and File Committee were the ones to raise the issue, as well as other demands such as rank and file control in the union, real pit committees on the job, higher wages, and an end to cheating at the scales.

The miners know this. All the red scares which the corporations, union officials and some preachers raise up will not drive this out of the minds of the Negro coal-diggers. Scottsboro has shown them they can trust the Reds. (The I.L.D. is a mass power in the Black Belt. I've seen its initials carved in the asphalt of a T.C.I. company town.) Also, among the white miners, Jim Crow and anti-

red propaganda is not meeting with the response the companies hoped. Not that there aren't more prejudices and confusion here. Nevertheless, as far as solidarity in the union and against the boss goes, they are as one.

As one white miner, a non-Party man, expresses it, while others nod their agreement: "When we first begun to organize, the companies sent their low-bellies around, saying, 'What! forgetting yourself, white men joining up in same union with niggers! Lowering yourself, calling a coon 'brother'. . . . We didn't pay 'em much mind. First place, how you gonna have a real union, with more than half the miners left out? That ain't sense. Another thing, when you're down there, risking your neck, digging coal, you're so gol dern smeared with company soot, who can tell who's white or black?"

"Anyways, when the company hires you on, it don't care a damn what's your color. All it worries over, how much coal can you load. All we diggers gotta worry ever, is sticking together, winning a laboring man's rights."

Already, there are a number of Communist Party members among the Alabama miners, both Negro and white, as well as among their wives. In the steel mills are more communists, helping the issue the T.C.I. shop paper *The Blast* and working to unite with the miners in their strike. These are the front ranks, the Communist vanguard of the Southern proletariat, rooted in the vitals of heavy industry.

This militant solidarity of the miners and the growth of Communist influence among them is not only giving Alabama Bourbons the jitters, but Wall Street and Washington as well.

There are other good reasons for their concern, equally revolutionary in their potent. Both Alabama coal strikes, coming as the climax of a chain of events, are heavy blows at the prestige of Roosevelt and the N.R.A. in the South. Illusions about the New Deal have been stronger among Southern labor than elsewhere. But, as Lenin once observed, in the course of struggle, workers often learn in a brief period what otherwise would require months, or longer. The miners found the N.R.A. regional Labor Board handing down a ruling which virtually denied them the right of collective bargaining. They found Roosevelt and the whole machinery upholding the low wage scale imposed on the South. The Board threatened them not to strike. They struck, anyway. General J. C. Persons, at Governor Miller's orders, sent National Guardsmen against them—and at the same time, this same General also a big bank official, became the "impartial chairman" of the negotiating committee set up by the authorities, composed of mine operators and U.M.W.A. officials. This was too raw. And Washington complimented "the handling of the strike."

The miners were militant, bitter. They picketed, against their President Mitch's explicit orders, they marched on other mines. But, confused by union official and govern-

ment demagoguery, they failed to spread the strike to the big captive mines, and let themselves be sent back under a no-strike wash-out agreement. They knew it. I attended their District Convention (until Mitch ordered executive session, to get rid of any "unreliables.") The delegates and local unions had not been informed of the terms of agreement. "You know as much as we do," they said. But they were not in the pits two weeks before the call issued on the 5,000 Red leaflets distributed throughout the coal field had become fact: "Miners, Organize, Prepare for a Bigger Strike."

This time, militant picketing is far more general. General Persons' troopers protecting scabs are met with defiance. The shooting to death of a Negro miner-picket, Ed England and the dangerous wounding of a fellow picket, a white miner, Gordon Bice, by deputy guns thugs and police has roused indignation throughout the struck fields.

Today's papers, as I write this, carry headline news that "Pay Compromise Ordered by F. D. R. in Mine Strike: 50,000 Urged Return to Job at Once." And the subhead states significantly, "Coal Operators Pleased." Why not? The White House has openly championed their cause, as against the miners.

And President Mitch announces that "the miners will go along with the government."

Will they? Whatever the outcome of the next few days, one thing is certain. As the pickman Tom Larson observed, "This ain't the end."

For Southern miners are hungry, living below the minimum, with many employed diggers having to receive the relief's "pity slips"—if they can get them. Their children get no milk, no fruit. They lack decent clothes and shoes. Most of them have to draw their wages ahead for groceries, in company scrip, known as "clacker," and "Jugulu." They sell the clacker for three bucks to the dollar, for with the cash they can get more at a chain store in town than with the full clacker dollars at the company commissary. From pay day to pay day, a miner barely sees six dollars in cash. The rest the company holds back for rent, groceries, and mining supplies. And the forty cents a day increase over the old schedule won't make any real difference. The companies will continue raising prices, and the neatly itemized accounts the miner receives twice a month will total out the same. The miners will still be working an eight-hour day that stretches out to ten and eleven, because of the long distances underground to the face. Water will still be in the pits, with not enough loading cars, and weights that run "short" 700 pounds to a ton.

Above all, if Alabama miners return now, they go without union recognition. Somehow the President seems to have overlooked this item. But not the miners.

Tom Larson's words still hang there in the spring air, by Red Mountain: "We're set on Union and all that means. Nobody, be it Morgan or government, or whatsoever—nobody's gonna shake it out."

# The Swastika Sterilizes

## *Eugenics as a Class Weapon*

PAUL AMBERSON

**E**UGENICS has been hugged to the Nazi bosom with a vengeance. Between one and two hundred thousand men, women, and children are to undergo compulsory sterilization in Germany, and the process has already begun. This may seem paradoxical to those who have unsuspectingly swallowed the pernicious eugenics propaganda so widely preached in our schools and colleges under the guise of "Science and Racial Betterment." Why should the Nazis, who have brought German science to a new low, thus vigorously adopt this "advanced," "progressive," "scientific" doctrine?

It is not at all strange. Eugenics never has in fact rested on an adequate scientific basis. On the contrary, its use as a class weapon, ideologically and in practice, extends back for more than half a century to the days of its founder, Sir Francis Galton. Like the Nordic Myth, that cardinal principle of Nazi science, it has long been associated with race- and class-prejudice, snobbery, and anti-semitism. It has been used to oppose the minimum wage, old-age pensions, workers' unions, and the granting of free scholarships to working-class children.

In the standard American textbook on the subject, the *Applied Eugenics* of Popenoe and Johnson (1927), reactionary dogma is given forth as science in the cool, objective manner of a Times editorial. In concluding an analysis showing that longevity and low infant mortality are correlated and tend to run in the same families, the authors state: "If the interpretation which we have given is correct, the conclusion is inevitable that child mortality is primarily a problem of eugenics, and that all other factors are secondary. There is found to be no warrant for the statement so often repeated in one form or another, that 'the fundamental cause of the excessive rate of infant mortality in industrial communities is poverty, inadequate incomes, and low standards of living' (Hibbs). [i.e., poverty, poverty, and poverty—P. A.] Royalty and its princely relatives are not characterized by a low standard of living, and yet the child mortality among them is very high—somewhere around 400 per 1,000, in cases where a parent died young. If poverty is responsible in the one case, it must be in the other—which is absurd. Or else the logical absurdity is involved of inventing one cause to explain an effect today and a wholly different cause to explain the same effect tomorrow." One does not have to be a physician to know that death may have a number of different causes in different cases. And one does not have to be a logician to recognize the above as perverted logic and prostituted science. If space per-

mitted, an indefinite number of such examples could be given.

While the fundamental fallacies of reasoning are not always so close to the surface, such an attitude toward social problems is characteristic not only of the book from which the above passage is taken, but of practically all of the output of the eugenists. True, they are often against war, against unemployment, against poverty, just as they are against insanity and high infant mortality—though some have glorified these evils as a means of weeding out the unfit. Yet, just as truly, they are working, consciously or unconsciously, for the perpetuation of these very conditions. The gravest danger of eugenics lies precisely in this—its misplaced emphasis upon the biological rather than the economic causation of our social miseries. As a cause of war, the eugenist stresses "over-population," not the clashing of imperialist interests, not the rapacity of bankers and munitions-makers. Unemployment and poverty?—hereditary feeble-mindedness! Prostitution, drunkenness, insanity, disease?—inherited tendencies! "You are unfair!" cry the eugenists, quick to detect injustice, "we are not pretending to deal with any but the biological aspects of these problems—we are biologists, not economists!"

Then, gentlemen, you should be careful to make clear to your readers the relatively insignificant role played by biological factors in these matters, instead of giving the impression that they are all-important. Indeed, if you were to give some attention to the problem, you might even find that biological thought may be strongly influenced by economic factors. Besides, is it more biological to fret about the money spent in caring for the feeble-minded, than about the vastly greater sums lavished upon unproductive royal and wealthy bourgeois families? We are expected to tremble at the spectre of the swamping of "our best blood" by the "rabble," due to the increasing difference between the birth-rates of the two groups. The more or less implicit assumption is invariably made by eugenists that economic superiority is equivalent to genetic superiority, despite the absence of scientific evidence for it. In fact, the best data pertaining to the subject offer no support to such an assumption, so far as they go.

Recent studies by Newman and Burks deal with the intelligence of many pairs of identical twins, brought up separately, in different environments, and that of non-identical twins brought up together. (Identical twins, the kind that "can't be told apart," develop from separated halves of a single fertilized egg, and in general resemble each other genetically no more than any two children of the same

parents.) The identical twins, although raised in not widely different social strata, showed on the average just as great differences between the I.Q.'s of the members of a pair, as did the non-identical twins. This means that intelligence, as judged by the standard tests, is determined in these cases just as much by environment as by heredity. At the same time, there is reason to believe—though here again good evidence is meagre—that differences in the structure and function of the brain may to some extent be inherited. If this is so, sincere eugenists should make their primary aim the abolition of a system which perpetuates vast inequalities of opportunity having no scientific relation to the social value of the individual. On the impossibility of the development of truly eugenic practice under capitalism, see the outspoken article by H. J. Muller in the *Scientific Monthly* for July, 1933.

It is worthy of note that Paul Popenoe, the author of the passage quoted above, is the high priest of the sterilization movement in the United States. And it is no accident that of the 27 states in which sterilization of the feeble-minded, insane, and criminal is legal, California is responsible for over 7,500 operations, or 63 percent of the 12,000 performed up to 1933 in this country. California—the state of William Randolph Hearst, Hiram Johnson, "Sunny Jim" Rolph, open-shop Los Angeles—and of Tom Mooney and Imperial Valley!

But turning from the record of the social misuses of eugenics to the question of its more strictly scientific foundations, let us examine the scientific justification for the sterilization in Germany of individuals suffering from feeble-mindedness, insanity, epilepsy, St. Vitus' dance, hereditary blindness and deafness, severe physical deformity, and hereditary alcoholism. (See N. Y. Times for Dec. 21 last.) To what extent can any of these conditions be objectively identified in a given individual, and how sure are we that each of these defects is hereditary and that we can tell the hereditary from the non-hereditary?

Merely to raise the question of identification of these defects is enough to strike doubt into the mind of anyone even slightly familiar with these fields. The arbitrariness of the dividing line between the normal and the moron is universally admitted. It is only by convention that the highest mental age for the feeble-minded is commonly set at twelve. The slope of the distribution curve at this point is such that a slight change of the intelligence test will have the effect of adding to or subtracting from the group of morons relatively large numbers of individuals. In the case of insanity the difficulty is even greater, because of

the complexity of the phenomena and the lack of sufficiently standard tests. The opening chapter of any textbook of psychiatry makes clear enough the impossibility of coming to a definite decision in the multitudes of borderline cases. One need not go to the law courts to see experts in sharp disagreement. Even in the clinics, where economic considerations may be considered minimal, the psychiatrist is continually under the necessity of arbitrarily deciding whether a patient is to be called psychopathic or merely eccentric, catatonic or just stubborn, manic or only very talkative. He throws up his hands if you ask him when a fit of the blues becomes insane depression, when suspicion becomes delusion, when cocksureness becomes paranoia, when lapse of memory becomes senile dementia. And surely it is reasonable to ask which criteria will be used to distinguish poor vision from blindness, and hardness of hearing from deafness; and to determine when physical deformity is "severe," or when a heavy drinker becomes an alcoholic?

It is when one considers what is known of the inheritance of these defects that the havoc wrought by the eugenists in the field of human biology (and with human lives!) becomes appallingly clear. It is understood, of course, that geneticists have rather reliable knowledge of the mode of inheritance of such normal human characteristics as blood groups and some eye-colors; and of some defects such as hemophilia (bleeding), albinism, certain kinds of color-blindness, some hand defects, a particular form of club-foot, and a few more. Scientific analysis has been relatively successful in the case of these defects, in spite of their rarity of occurrence, because (1) the defects are rather readily and sharply distinguishable from the normal, (2) the environment plays a relatively small part in their appearance, (3) economic, social, and moral considerations are not involved.

Merely to list these reasons is to make it plain why the study of the defects to be weeded out by the Nazis has not given results approaching the satisfactory. To show that feeble-mindedness, insanity, drunkenness and the rest tend to run in families is not enough. For many decades it was commonly held among physicians that tuberculosis, syphilis, pellagra, goitre, gout, and many other diseases whose real causes are now known, are inheritable. "Extensive family pedigrees of rickets have been placed on record, and reproduced in more than one textbook of human genetics. To superficial examination in print they bear an impressive appearance. Actually we know that deficiencies of diet accompany poverty. Poverty is inherited in the legal but not in the biological sense, and family pedigrees are records both of legal and of biological inheritance." (Hogben, *Genetic Principles in Medicine and Social Science*.) As bacteria, vitamins, and the need for dietary balance were discovered, "hereditary disease" was changed to "hereditary tendency." Anything but the admission that good food, clothing, and shelter, sunshine and fresh air are necessary for health! Of what significance is an

"inherited tendency" to tuberculosis (a question-begging assumption in the first place), if by taking certain simple precautions, we can positively prevent it? We might just as correctly speak of an inherited tendency to starvation—that runs in families, too.

The fact is that with the advance of medical science, there has been an increasing recognition of the importance of environmental as against hereditary factors in the causation of the various forms of mental deficiency and disease and physical deformity. For example, "As causes of 'the epilepsies' we recognize organic conditions, such as neurosyphilis, brain tumor, arterial disease of the brain, multiple sclerosis, etc., toxic conditions such as alcoholism, plumbism, and the toxic states of pregnancy, 'reflex' causes such as gastro-intestinal stasis, bad diet, ear and nose conditions, and finally there remains a large group of cases in which we find no known cause and thereupon beg the question by calling such cases idiopathic, implying that it is constitutional and innate." (Myerson, *Inheritance of Mental Diseases*, 1925.)

Just the other week the following note appeared in "Science": "Convincing proof that many cases diagnosed as true epilepsy are actually cases of infestation with tapeworm larvae was presented to the Royal Society of Tropical Medicine in London by Col. W. P. MacArthur, Professor of Tropical Medicine . . . Cases of cysticercosis [tapeworm larvae] had been wrongly diagnosed as acute mania, melancholia, delusional insanity, dementia, brain tumors, and the nervous disease, disseminated sclerosis. Col. MacArthur believes that in England many persons in civil life who have been stigmatized as hereditarily insane are suffering from cysticercosis." In Hart's little classic of psychiatry, "The Psychology of Insanity," the concluding sentence reads: "It is possible that insanity, or a part of insanity, will prove to be less dependent upon intrinsic defects of the individual than on the conditions in which he has to live, and the future may determine that it is not the individual that must be eliminated, but the conditions which must be modified." Or, finally, we may say with Hogben: "With regard to insanity and dementia, we can thus conclude that the study of environmental agencies, including prenatal nutrition, difficulty of labor, lactation, toxemias of pregnancy, maternal diet and the social environment as determined by the size of family, make a first claim upon investigation directed to the elucidation, the control, and the elimination of such conditions."

So much for the role of the environment in complicating the picture. What are we to say of the part played by the economic, social and moral views of investigators? This is all the more insidious if these research workers themselves are sometimes not fully aware of it. Almost every student of biology in America for the last twenty years has had impressed upon him the baleful story of the "Kallikaks." From textbook to textbook, the tale has been handed down of "Martin Kallikak," soldier of the Revolutionary War, who founded a line

of worthless descendants through an illicit affair with a "nameless feeble-minded girl," then married a respectable girl and established a family distinguished by its respectability for five generations. Of the 480 progeny following from the first mating, 143 are "known" to have been feeble-minded, only 46 are "known" to have been normal, the rest being unknown or doubtful. "36 have been illegitimate; 33, sexually immoral, mostly prostitutes; 24, alcoholic; 3, epileptic; 82 died in infancy, 3 were criminal, and 8 kept houses of ill fame." Of the 496 legitimate descendants, on the other hand, only two were alcoholic, and only one sexually immoral. A remarkable family, indeed! The summary as it stands looks suspicious enough, but only a reading of the original book by Goddard ("The Kallikak Family") can give the full flavor of the crusading spirit which inspired this work. Scientific caution is cast aside as feeble-mindedness, alcoholism and syphilis are diagnosed on meagre hearsay evidence concerning unfortunates dead for half a century and more. Shiftlessness, vagrancy, pauperism are repeatedly taken as equivalent to feeble-mindedness. In short, the results are genetically worthless, and the same must be said of the histories of the "Jukes," the "Tribe of Ishmael," and other stock examples of eugenics. Their claims to scientific validity have been completely exploded by such writers as Hogben, David Heron, Myerson, and Hoffmann.

But even if we knew how to distinguish sharply between the feeble-minded, insane, etc., and the normal, and even if we could tell which, if any, cases are hereditary, and which are not, how well could we trust the Nazis for an impartial application of such knowledge? Are we to believe that these avowed exterminators of Marxians, pacifists, and Jews will be dispassionate, objective judges of who is to breed and who is not? It is significant that the 280,000 inmates of institutions are not to undergo sterilization, according to a recent change of plan, and only the 120,000 or so unconfined defectives—in other words, mostly borderline cases—will be so treated. The inclusion in the tests for feeble-mindedness of questions involving moral and political views is reported by the New York Times. Finally, consider well the recommendations of Dr. H. Finke, warden of Waldheim prison, writing in *Blätter für Gefängniskunde*, 1933, Vol. 64, on "Castration of Sex-criminals":

"I. Limitation of social-educational efforts to those cases, where there is sufficient evidence that the lapse into criminality was caused by extraneous factors.

"II. Imposition of a strict imprisonment . . . not requiring special effort or expense, on such lawbreakers as show neither a positive nor a negative conscious attitude toward the State.

"III. Severe, special measures against a small group of criminals, where community welfare demands such, even if in the process the otherwise protected rights of individuals are harmed. The most important measures of this kind are protective arrest, sterilization, and castration."

# Correspondence

## Matthew Josephson Differs

TO THE NEW MASSES:

I beg to differ with certain statements in Mr. Louis Hacker's review of my book, *The Robber Barons*, in *THE NEW MASSES* of April 3, 1934; I would also remark that his method of criticism leaves something to be desired. It consists generally in announcing his own more or less unsupported opinions, and noting several points of disagreement as "mistakes" on my part.

To begin with Mr. Hacker reproaches me for not having written the complete and definitive history of monopoly capitalism. He reproaches me thus not only in *THE NEW MASSES* but also in another review appearing in the *Nation*, March 7, 1934. I don't know where else he has been reviewing me, having been absent from America the last five months. Now I nowhere pretended to be writing the history of monopoly capitalism or any other "ism": I declared only that I was relating the history of a "small group of men" who suddenly swept into power in the United States after the Civil War. I tried to tell their story simply (although their activities were indeed complex) so that all sorts of people not familiar with "high finance" might read it, especially workers and farmers to whom I thought the story might be of great import at this time.

Then, in rather prosaic fashion, the reviewer seems to object to my particularizing "single incidents" or individual figures, which I do as a means of illustrating certain economic phenomena. He forgets that even the most highly theoretical treatises on economics, as those of Marx, are often full of a brilliant imagery. Not to have used such literary devices would have brought forth such a droning manual or text as I would rather leave others to write. In like manner, the reviewer complains of my using Hobson's metaphor of the seizure of the economic "narrows" by men of capital. The meaning of this metaphor is that wherever possible the capitalist inevitably seeks those "crushing advantages" which yield monopoly in a given field of industry. Thus in the case of Standard Oil, the seizure of the economic "narrows" did occur, as I stated, in the early 'seventies, and gave us the pattern of what was to follow upon an expanding scale during the next twenty years, as the same group of capitalists proceeded to capture all the other strategic positions and processes in their industry.

I do not, however, stop at this point, as the reviewer so misleadingly intimates:

"Monopoly in oil," he writes, "was not achieved until the Rockefellers and their associates controlled their own transportation and distribution facilities; and it was not until the late 'eighties, years after the independent refiners had been bought out, that Standard Oil got to this point, largely by owning its own pipe lines."

The readers of the review would think that my account stopped in 1873. In reality what Mr. Hacker relates as *his* view of the case is a faithful transcription of my own subsequent account of later events in the history of the Standard Oil. Large sections of two later chapters, Chapters XIII, Pages 265-281, and Chapter XVI, Pages 394-403, are given over wholly to the successive conquests by the Rockefeller group of "transportation and distribution facilities," of pipe lines and marketing agencies, by which the empire of Standard Oil was completed. Mr. Hacker would appear to have given a very misleading impression of a large portion of my book; and to have replied to his own questions by refreshing his memory from my book.

I am mystified by the reviewer's assertion that the Carnegie Steel Company was "institutionalized" as far back as 1886, only eleven years after it opened for business. It was at that time a cor-

poration "closely held" by a small group of partners, and by no means in command of its market until its victory over labor at Homestead in 1892, and the absorption of the Minnesota ore lands in the same year through alliance with Rockefeller. But here Mr. Hacker forgetfully contradicts his own statement in the earlier review (*The Nation*, March 7) in which he says that Carnegie's arrival at monopoly was a long slow process that took "almost thirty years to consummate"—that is to say lasting up to about 1905, several years after the Carnegie Company had disappeared into the U. S. Steel Trust.

My stopping at the year 1901 Mr. Hacker seems not to understand. Reviewing me in duplicate he might have taken time to read, or at least to scan more carefully Chapter XVIII, Pages 439-453, wherein I give my reasons: the truce and entente between the two greatest financial powers in the country; the completion of the system of "finance capitalism," that is, banker's control; the "institutionalizing" of industry and finance after a definite pattern.

For the rest I am astonished that a work of revolutionary interpretation, which on Mr. Hacker's authority (*The Nation*, March 7) moreover is "dialectically sound," should be received with so many pedantic and academic admonitions in the pages of *THE NEW MASSES*. In this connection I am forced to call your attention to the article of Comrade Earl Browder, in the very same issue of *THE NEW MASSES*. Writing of Hugo Gellert's book—I have not seen it yet, but his plight seems parallel to mine—Comrade Browder remarks:

"It is too bad to have to admit that in the camp of avowed enemies there has been more generous recognition . . . than in the revolutionary press. This is a scandalous situation."

Yours for the revolution,

Paris.

MATTHEW JOSEPHSON.

## Harvard's Baby Riot

TO THE NEW MASSES:

The enclosed letter to the Harvard Crimson, university daily, may be of interest to your readers. In connection with this letter it is necessary to state:

1. The baby riot in which several thousand students broke up Harvard's anti-war meeting was not a spontaneous bust of undergraduate katzenjammer. It was engineered by a small group of reactionary students among whom at least five were identified as candidates for the Crimson.

2. The shameful affair took place almost directly under the windows of the office of Dr. Conant, President of the university, likewise the Dean's office, yet no attempt was made to protect the meeting.

3. The letter, dated April 13, has not yet been published (April 19).

EDWIN SEAVER.

To the Editor of the Harvard Crimson,  
Sir:

Friday, the thirteenth of April, ought to be an historic day in the annals of Harvard. On that day the Harvard student body, asked to join the students of the nation in a one-hour strike against war, demonstrated its urge toward ignorance and hooliganism and, by planned obstructionist tactics that would have done credit to any storm troop gang, its desire for Fascism and war. Inasmuch as no member of the faculty saw fit to interfere in the name of free speech and common decency—although in other universities teachers joined with students in the demonstration for peace—Harvard's faculty may be said to have shared the honors of the occasion with its students, and this goes all the way from Dr. Conant, ex-war chemist, down the line.

As a Harvard graduate who witnessed the disgusting and despicable performance on the steps of Widener Library and scanned the thousand or more empty grinning faces taking in the show,

I could not help feeling humiliated and ashamed of my alma mater. Regardless of my personal reaction, however, it seems to me that the occasion brought certain facts to the surface that are indisputable. These facts are:

1. That the Harvard student body is far more ignorant than any body of workers which has been deprived of all the privileges that these dog-nappers and clowns consider their natural inheritance.

2. That politically and economically the awareness of the Harvard student body is on a par with that of the *lumpenproletariat*.

3. That the Harvard student body represents the class that makes wars and profits by wars.

4. That the Harvard student body is no longer prepared to defend even the elementary democratic principles of free speech and free assemblage.

5. That the Harvard student body is ripe for Fascism and will give its support to any fascist movement that emerges to salvage the wreck of capitalism.

6. That the Harvard faculty must in large measure be held responsible for the above mentioned facts and that therefore all its talk of higher scholarship and intellectual distinction is a sham.

7. That Harvard in its present set-up must be revolutionized if it is truly to be a servant of civilization.

EDWIN SEAVER.

## On Bringing Up Children

TO THE NEW MASSES:

I enclose a letter just received from the head of the New York School system. As an unemployed father of a family of five, existing on \$12 a week, I found it extremely pungent reading. I refrain from any comment—or rather, I will not trust myself to put down what I think, in such words as would apply. You couldn't print them.

JOHN B. ANDERSON.

BOARD OF EDUCATION  
THE CITY OF NEW YORK

April 27, 1934.

Dear Parents:

The President of the United States has set aside the first of May as Child Health Day. The purpose of this annual celebration is to awaken the interest of all people in the health, safety and happiness of children.

Do you really know if your children are as healthy as they should be? Take them to a physician and dentist on May Day, or as soon thereafter as possible, for a complete health and dental examination, and for the correction of defects that they may find. If you follow this advice, especially with children who will come to school for the first time next September, you will give them the good start they deserve.

See that every child drinks from one pint to a quart of milk, eats fresh fruits, vegetables and an egg every day. Cod liver oil, or some other form of Vitamin D is also of special value. These are the "protective foods" which help to maintain good nutrition. Children should also be taught to rest after school, to play in the sunshine, and to get at least ten hours of sleep every night in a well-ventilated room. Also be sure that the children are protected against diphtheria.

May I count upon you to help us make every school child and those of pre-school age, 100 percent fit—well nourished, keen of sight and hearing, free from dental defects, sound in heart, lungs and limb, and mentally and emotionally adjusted to life.

Very truly,

HAROLD G. CAMPBELL,  
Superintendent of Schools.

## Translators Needed

TO THE NEW MASSES:

The national office of the John Reed Clubs needs assistance in translating numerous critical articles on Marxism and literature and art from the Russian, German, etc. Translators who are willing to contribute their services should communicate with me at 430 Sixth Avenue, New York City. Texts, including volumes of criticism and files of magazines such as *Linkcurve* and *Literary Gazette*, are also needed.

ALAN CALMER,  
Acting National Secretary,  
John Reed Clubs,



# Present Arms!

HAROLD WARD

WHEN governments talk Peace, workers are being prepared for War—against other workers, naturally. Sole exception made of the Soviet Union, peace-talk is to the nations of the world what the vibrating rattle is to a rattlesnake at bay: an ominous warning that the fangs are tensed and ready to strike. "Liberals," however, will never learn this—or perhaps their long experience in the handling and dispensing of poisons has made them immune to the venoms of official apologetics and international duplicities. They seem, at any rate, to survive.

Especially at Geneva. As in this series of articles we will be concerned chiefly with facts—in this instance relating to armaments and war preparations, we may begin with a curious document entitled, *The International Armaments Industry and the World Trade in Implements of War, 1913 to 1933*. It was published in Voelkerbund, the journal of the German Association for League of Nations Questions. Designed to excite sympathy for Germany's helplessness (1934 military budget of the Third Reich: Rm 1,090,000,000—357,000,000 more than in 1933!), it tells, if not everything, enough to chew on.

We read, for instance:

World production of the armaments industry of the high-level year 1929 may be estimated at a quarter to a third higher than in 1913. In the midst of declining international trade the armaments industry has on the whole proved to be proof against the depression; in any case the constantly increasing expenditure on armaments entails a constantly growing burden on the economic structure.

Further facts: Before the last War German armament firms sold as high as 80 percent of their production abroad; the loss in this juicy market due to international sanctions is estimated at about 100 million marks per year. Thanks, however, to Hitler's clamoring for peace the House of Krupp has increased its payrolls to over 43,410 workers and its production of crude steel (in 1933) to 837,000 tons. But this larger number of workers received for their patriotic labors Rm 2,140,000 less than was paid out as wages in 1931-32, thus enabling Krupp to bring his net "loss" for the year down to Rm 3,069,000, from the previous figure of Rm 15,230,000.

How many people are engaged in armament activities throughout the world? A full answer to this question may never be known, but here are a few indications (figures are for 1930-31, unless otherwise stated):

Great Britain, 46,800, and each worker produced about one and one-half times as much per day as before the War. The number employed in the aircraft industry alone has increased more than twenty times since

1913; in 1933 Vickers-Armstrongs Ltd. were credited with 28,000 employees.

France: Schneider-Creusot carried 20,000 workers in 1933 and paid dividends of 100 francs a share; the Compagnie des Forges et Aciéries another 20,000; the latter states, in its 1932-33 report, that "the execution of orders for war material" was a decisive factor in assuring satisfactory profits. It is known also that about 85 percent of all employees in the French air-craft industry are on military work: with 6,000 planes the 1934 objective and three billion francs as the price of air invincibility this percentage is not too large.

Belgium: the armament firm of John Cockerrill employed, in 1932 (a "crisis year") 13,300 workmen—15 percent more than the last high-level of 1929. Compare this with an employment decline, as measured by production in Belgian industry as a whole in the same period, of at least 30 percent.

Czechoslovakia: Skoda, by the middle of 1933, employed 17,000 and held unexecuted orders totaling nearly two billion krone (about \$500,000,000 at par); a huge chemical plant, the Aussiger-Verein, has erected a ten-story building as part of a campaign to make the country independent of Germany's chemical colossus, I.-G. Farbenindustrie. And the Brno Arms Works recently took on an extra 1,000 workers to help fill orders from three countries.

Poland: before the War totally lacking an armaments industry, today this political powder-magazine of Europe is reported to have 65,000 workmen laboring for the merchants of death. Military preparations are estimated to cost a cool 800,000,000 zloty (over \$80,000,000 at par), or 40 percent of the total budget. Ironically enough the principal foreign work on munitions is for the Soviet account.

Japan: the number employed in the war industries is not accurately known. It is certain that the State has 7,000 working on arms alone, and Tokyo has 30 aircraft factories primed for intensive production. Of these the 59-acre plant of the Mitsubishi interests can employ 3,000 on a peace-time basis alone. Since 1913 Japan's expenditure for armaments has increased by 142 percent: it has been stated, on reliable authority, that "almost all Japan's industrial gains have been caused by depreciation of the yen and by abnormal expenditures for armaments."

Such facts as these, taken from the document mentioned and from various other sources certainly help to explain why—to quote the Manchester Guardian's Paris correspondent, "Britain is not yet in a mood to subscribe to a European security pact"—although, of course, she is passionately devoted to peace. Has not Ramsay MacDonald, in

rejecting indignantly the suggestion that English armament firms be publicly cross-examined, appealed for more "intensive thinking" on these high matters? The Premier, being Scotch, cannot bear to spend the Government's good money in obtaining knowledge, just ordinary knowledge, on questions that mean life or death for workers—just ordinary workers . . .

England, however, is not playing second fiddle in the Symphony of Munitions. We have heard Sir Robert Hadfield giving thanks to God for the new prosperity which, among other things, has enabled his benevolent firm to develop a 2,000-pound projectile capable of traveling eleven miles in *three-hundredths of a second*, piercing heavy armor plate: *and then being used again*. The Admiralty demands 25 new cruisers under increased 1934 naval appropriations of nearly three hundred million dollars, despite the fact that a fleet of the new Handley-Page bombers, costing a mere \$75,000 each, can reduce a navy to a heap of mangled scrap. Sixty-six naval vessels (out of a proposed total of 84) are now scheduled for construction in private yards: the cost for armor plate alone was increased from £396,000 to £579,000. The difference in cost of this one item is almost equal to the total "wage increases in the home drydocks" (£230,000) so loudly proclaimed by the government and the shipbuilders: among which latter is the notorious John Brown firm, holder of the contract for the new 73,000-ton Cunarder, in whose construction fewer than 4,000 direct workers will be required. Turn to chemicals: the giant Imperial Chemical Industries (affiliated with Du Pont de Nemours and General Motors) increased its 1933 profits by nearly 20 percent over 1932, and 64 percent over 1931. This resulted in dividends on ordinary capital of 7½ percent and enabled I.C.I. to salt away in the Reserve Fund some 5 millions of dollars—double the amount of the preceding year. And do not forget the intensive military preparations in Australia (9 new battleships; improved air forces, anti-aircraft guns, etc.), and Canada's 116 percent increase in sales of nickel, an absolute essential for war equipment of all kinds.

Clearly, there is no exaggeration in a statement published not so long ago by the French military and police authorities, and which must have stimulated the erection of some of those 25,000 "gas shelters" scattered through Paris:

In case of international armed conflict the whole nation will take part in war, the army depending intimately nowadays on the factory, and the factory on raw materials. The danger will be everywhere, the enemy having as much interest in destroying a factory, a stock of wheat, a mine, as a regiment.

# Revolution and the Novel

## 5. Selection and Emphasis

GRANVILLE HICKS

IN THE preceding article I made the not unreasonable assumption that the proletarian novelist would pay considerable attention to the economic functions of his characters. It is true that other novelists have not always done so. Occasionally, as in some of Henry James's novels, the characters have no visible means of support, and very often we catch only glimpses of the ways in which they earn their livings. The bourgeois novelist may defend himself by arguing that economic details are only of superficial importance, but the proletarian writer entertains no such illusions. He knows that not only the individual's role in society but also his character are to a large extent determined by his economic function. He insists on portraying those relationships that grow out of economic function and in showing their influence. It would be inconceivable to write a novel about an automobile worker without showing him inside the factory; to the proletarian novelist it is just as preposterous to try to present a millionaire without showing where his millions come from.

At the same time an intelligent recognition of the importance of a character's economic function need not lead to exclusive preoccupation therewith. Because, for example, novelists in the past have given a disproportionate amount of attention to sexual relationships, there is no reason for the proletarian writer to ignore them. It is clear that he will not adopt the romantic attitudes of popular fiction, nor will he share the mysticism of D. H. Lawrence or the obsessions of the pseudo-psychologists. He will trust, of course, to firsthand observation, and he will estimate as justly as he can the part that sexual relationships actually play in the lives of the kind of people he happens to be writing about. But, whether he sees that part to be large or small, he will refuse to limit himself to it. In an English novel of the depression, *Love on the Dole*, sexual interests and desires are made very important, but the author, Walter Greenwood, makes it perfectly clear, as the title implies, that love is not independent of economics. It is, indeed, his perception of the close relationship between the two dominant forces at work in his characters' lives that gives Greenwood's novel its power as well as its unity. Robert Cruden has tried to maintain the same sort of balance in *Conveyor*, and on the whole has succeeded remarkably well. In Conroy's *The Disinherited*, on the other hand, the episodes dealing with Larry's girls are not sufficiently integrated with the central theme.

Another major preoccupation of novelists

is philosophical development, the groping of the central character towards a satisfying *Weltanschauung*. This theme has become more and more important in the literature of the twentieth century. One thinks, for example, of such diverse novels as *The Way of All Flesh*, *The Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*, *The Remembrance of Things Past*, *Of Human Bondage*, *Victory*, *Sons and Lovers*, *The Magic Mountain*, and *Arrow-smith*. It is not my purpose here to criticize the particular philosophies set forth by these novels, but merely to call attention to the fact that, whatever other interests the authors may have had, the essential purpose of each of these books is to set forth the origins, growth, and usually the application of a certain conception of the nature and destiny of man. It may fairly be assumed that in all the novels I have mentioned the philosophy set forth by the hero is the philosophy of the author. It is possible, however, for a novelist to depict the origin, growth, and application of a philosophy of which he disapproves, and, in the course of his work, to justify his disapproval. In *Victory* Heyst begins with an outlook on life that Conrad condemns, but in the end he abandons it. Wells, however, lets Bulpington gather the sour fruit of his folly, and Lewis's Babbitt returns to his vomit.

For the proletarian novelist there is an obvious variation of the theme of intellectual development: the progress of a character, whether he be proletarian or intellectual, towards Communism. This has, indeed, been the theme of several novels and a number of short stories. (And there is no reason why the proletarian writer should not also utilize the reverse method and show the growth of some counter-revolutionary attitude—Fascism, for example.) The portrayal of intellectual growth is not, however, an easy matter, as we see if we examine some of the novels that have attempted it. The depiction of the creation of a Communist is easier, certainly, when the character is a proletarian, and when, as in *To Make My Bread* and *Conveyor*, class-consciousness develops in the course of daily struggle. Myra Page's novel, *Moscow Yankee*, which is to be published soon, gives a fine example of the depiction of a slow and natural growth towards Communism. When, however, the character is an intellectual or a proletarian with intellectual aspirations, the task is more difficult. In both *Jews Without Money* and *The Disinherited*, the hero's enlisting in the revolutionary cause comes without sufficient preparation. The author not only has to understand the psychological processes by which an attitude towards life comes

into being; he must be sure that each step is clear to the reader. The proletarian author is not likely to make the mistake, so common in bourgeois writers, of assuming that a philosophy develops in a vacuum, but he must be careful not to neglect the subtleties of temperament that helps to determine what the results of experience will be.

These two examples—the treatment of sexual relationships and the treatment of intellectual development—will serve to emphasize the point that nothing is alien to the proletarian novelist. His field is not narrower, but broader, than that of the bourgeois writer. The whole of life is his province. He has his own conception of what is important and representative, and in his selection and emphasis he must follow that conception. But elimination is no solution of his problems; they can be solved only by an understanding of true relationships and just proportions.

### The Point of View

It will do no harm if we turn now to a consideration of some of the technical difficulties that arise in the course of writing any novel and that the proletarian novelist must meet in his own way. Henry James insisted that, once the novelist had his story in mind, he must strenuously seek for the method "that most presents it, and presents most of it." One particular aspect of this problem of presentation—and an aspect that specially interested Henry James—concerns the method of narration. James's disciple, Percy Lubbock, attributes far too much significance to this question in his *The Craft of Fiction*, but he does help to define the various points of view that the author may adopt in telling his story. By point of view I mean, in this connection, the position the author takes for the unfolding of his story, not his general attitude.

In the first place, the story may be told from the point of view of the central character, who is made the narrator. This method is in general adapted to simple, direct, objective narrative of adventure, such as *Roderick Random*. It sharply limits the scope of the novel, and it is therefore a useful guide in the selection and ordering of materials, but its limitations may prevent the author from making a comprehensive revelation of his own perceptions. For that reason it would seem to be unsuited for the subtler type of psychological analysis, and yet it has been used with considerable success in the most ambitious psychological novel of our times, *The Remembrance of Things Past*. Here, however, the narrator, who is closely identified with the

author, is a person of unusual perceptivity. Mike Gold also uses the autobiographical method for the handling of autobiographical material in *Jews Without Money*, and again the success of the method may be attributed to the unusual sensitiveness of the narrator-author. When, on the other hand, the author is not identified with his central character, it is difficult, as Herrick's *Memoirs of an American Citizen* and Ornitz's *Haunch, Paunch, and Jowl* show, to avoid the suggestion of a split personality. Ernest Hemingway, though he is partly to be identified with the heroes and narrators of both *The Sun Also Rises* and *Farewell to Arms*, secures his effect because he eschews all analysis and permits his characters' states of mind to be inferred by the readers. This kind of indirect revelation, though immensely difficult to sustain, offers great rewards, for it adds to other satisfactions the joy of discovery.

Henry James came to believe that narrative in the first person greatly handicapped an author, and yet he appreciated the values of a clearly defined point of view. He therefore preferred to write as if he were looking over the shoulder of his character. That is, he limited himself rigorously to presenting only what the central character could see, but he substituted direct analysis of the character's states of mind for self-analysis. This method, which James followed so rigorously in *The Ambassadors*, for example, has been employed, in a much looser form, by a multitude of writers. Maugham in *Of Human Bondage* writes in the third person, but, except in three or four passages, in which the arbitrary change of method distresses the reader, he writes from Philip's point of view. Other novelists have been even less rigorous than Maugham, and at times the method collapses altogether. Cruden, Dahlberg, Colman, Fielding, Burke, and Grace Lumpkin have all approximated this method. In *The Big Short Trip* John Herrmann exhibits the advantage of a rigorous observance of the method for purposes of indirect revelation.

When the author writes part of the time from the point of view of his central character, standing behind him and looking over his shoulder, as James would say, and part of the time writes from a point of view entirely outside the scope of the story, he is assuming the natural privilege of the novelist, omniscience. Very frequently, however, the author does not consider what such an assumption involves. He merely writes from the point of view of his character until he finds it necessary to tell the reader something the character could not know, and then he shifts his point of view. It must be admitted that the results of this mixture of methods often justify it, but more often there is confusion and even irritation for the reader. The advantage of writing from the point of view of one of the characters, whether in his words or not, is that it provides a principle of selection, and when the author abandons that principle, he has to make up his mind what principle he is substituting for it. Certain

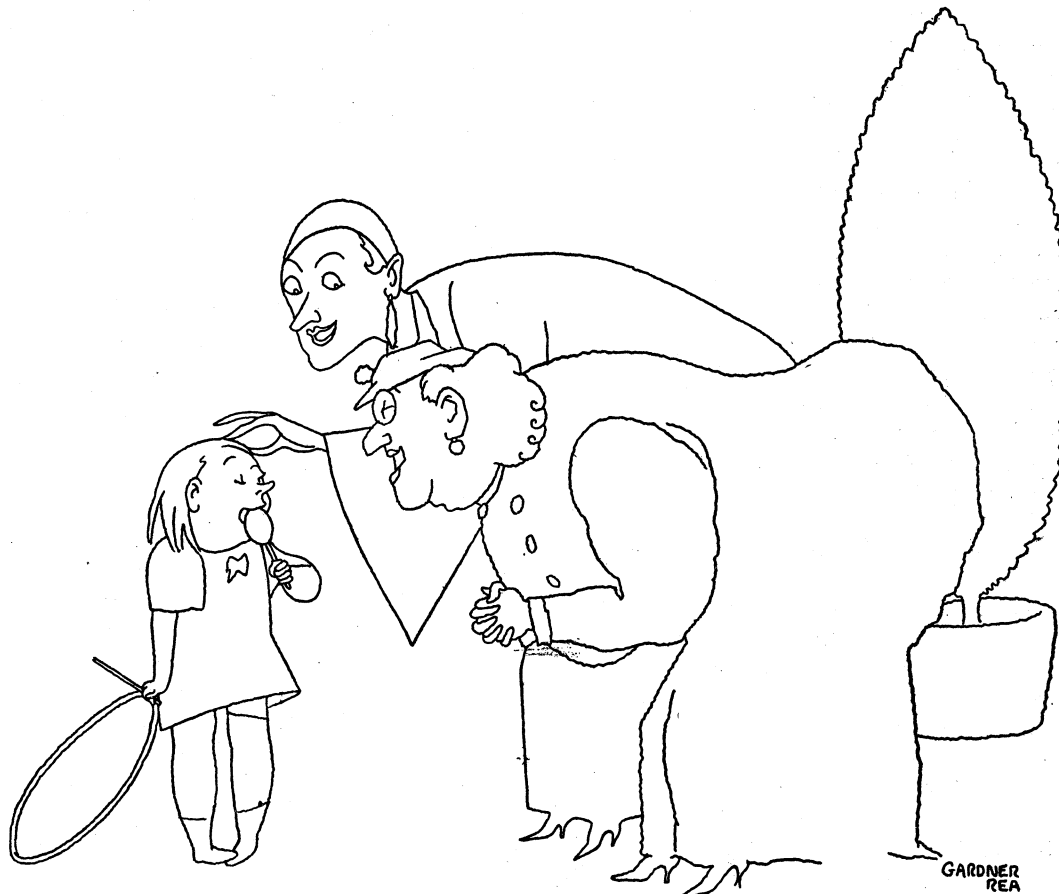
masters of the novel have taken full advantage of their omniscience, exploring the minds of one character after another, describing matters of which all characters are ignorant, even, some of them, appearing in their own persons and commenting directly on their own creations. Tolstoy, Fielding, Dickens, Thackeray, Hardy, and Dreiser are examples. Of these perhaps only Tolstoy and Hardy convince the reader that they have a clearly conceived principle of selection. The others introduce masses of apparently unassimilated material, and one feels that their success is a triumph of vitality over lack of method. That they do succeed ought to convince us that method is not of transcendent importance, but we must also remember the failures of countless other writers.

Authors choose a limited point of view as much because of the dangers of omniscience as because of the advantages of limitation. The author can, of course, limit himself to a point of view that is not that of the central character. There is, for example, the method of narration in the first person, with the narrator merely an observer. Examples indicate possible advantages. Butler chose this method for *The Way of All Flesh* because it permitted him to appear in two roles: as Ernest he relives the events of the story, and as Overton he comments, from the vantage point of age, on his own life. Willa Cather let Burden tell the story of *My Antonia* because he could legitimately adopt the faintly nostalgic tone that seemed to her suited to the story. Conrad, employing the method with some variations in *Lord Jim* and *Chance*, was appar-

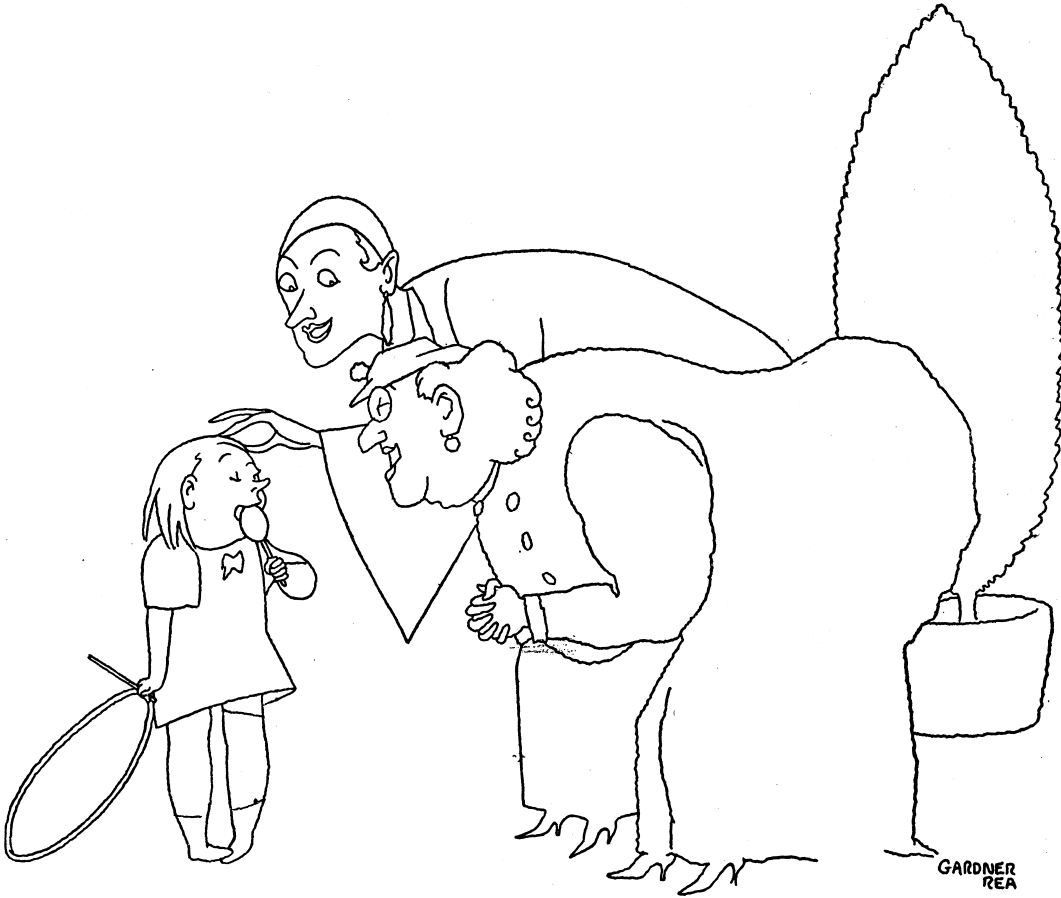
ently attracted by the possibilities of indirect revelation. As in the other type of first person narrative, there is always the problem of telling the reader what he needs to know, and in solving this problem novelists have sometimes defied the laws of probability. The narrator's style also presents a difficulty. At the same time, the method does localize the point of view and thus provide a principle of selection.

Another possibility is to tell the story in the third person, but to present events from the point of view of all or several of the characters. In its looser manifestations this method obviously approximates the method of omniscience, but it can be very closely and precisely followed, as James demonstrated in *The Awkward Age* and *The Golden Bowl*. It lends itself particularly well to the dramatic novel, but it can also be employed in the complex novel. It is essentially the method of *The 42nd Parallel* and *1919*, and Arnold Armstrong, who has unmistakably been influenced by Dos Passos, has used it, except in the first chapter, in *Parched Earth*. It is not always an easy method for the reader to follow, and that is why both Dos Passos and Armstrong label each section with the name of the character from whose point of view it is told. It does provide a principle of selection for each section, though the arrangement of section has to be governed by other considerations.

In general the straight biographical novel suggests the use of a narrator, who may be either the principal character or merely an observer, or the adoption of the point of view



"You see we don't want to bias her intellect so we just tell her there's a great big Blue Eagle up in heaven, watching over her."



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of one or the other, usually the former. The author may, however, if he sees clearly enough what he wants to do, take his stand outside the events of the story and avail himself of the privilege of omniscience. In the dramatic novel, if the narrator is one of the central characters, there must be, as in Ford Madox Ford's *The Good Soldier*, a *tour de force*. It is also unlikely that any uninvolved observer could readily present all the necessary events in their dramatic order. Omniscience or the shifting point of view is indicated. These are obviously the only possible methods for the complex novel, which by its very nature cannot be limited to one person, and they are probably the best methods for the collective novel, since it would be extremely difficult, if not impossible, to present the reality of a group through the mind of a single individual. The collective novel, indeed, insofar as its group is a psychological unit, seems to

require a new technique: narrative in the third person from a limited point of view, which is the point of view not of an individual but of a group.

The adoption of a limited point of view has two advantages. On the one hand, it materially assists the writer to solve the problem of selection, and, on the other hand, it encourages the reader's imaginative participation in the story.

Writers who employ this method have always maintained its superiority on the ground that it corresponds to human experience, for man's knowledge is always partial. But the assumption of omniscience is, if the author makes it really possible, a source of pleasure to the reader. Moreover, we must remind ourselves that no author actually believes he is omniscient, and the assumption is a matter of convenience. The author may well have a conception of events that cannot be rendered

except from the point of view of one who, so to speak, surveys those events from above. This need not mean that the author is or thinks he is "above the battle"; it is perfectly compatible with an attitude of forthright partisanship.

What I have said makes clear that I have no desire to urge upon authors one method as opposed to others. It is ridiculous to maintain, as Lubbock does, the inherent superiority of a particular method under all circumstances and for all purposes. All I want is to indicate the variety of methods in order that novelists may be more acutely conscious of the possibilities offered to them. Given a particular author with a particular story to tell and a particular conception of its significance, there is, I believe, a particular method that is uniquely right. But what it is may not appear at first glance, and he must make sure he has discovered it.

## A Note on Max Eastman

JOSHUA KUNITZ

MAX EASTMAN has thrown together such a heap of misinformation, half-truths, and deliberate falsifications that one would need to write a volume twice the size of Eastman's *Artists in Uniform: A Study of Literature and Bureaucratism*, Alfred A. Knopf, \$2.50.) to demonstrate to a reading public not quite familiar with the facts the utter speciousness of his arguments. Altogether, Max Eastman's journey through Soviet literature is amazingly reminiscent of Will Durant's thirty-day trip through the Soviet Union. There is the air of charlatanry about both of them: The same glibness in repeating palpable lies, the same unscrupulousness in passing judgments on the basis of hearsay and gossip, the same vulgar pandering to the philistinism of their audiences, and the same hypocritical references to their own revolutionism—remote, long-forgotten, and always dubious. Both Will Durant and Max Eastman profess to have the destinies of the revolution at heart, and both weep disconsolately over the betrayal of the proletariat by Stalin and his "henchmen."

Stalin, moans Eastman, has "ditched" the Revolution. Stalin's inquisition has stifled literature. In the whole book one finds not the slightest appreciation of the psychological factors involved in a period of revolution and intensified class war. As Eastman treats it, Soviet literature seems to be an autonomous realm existing in a void. The reverberation in literature of the all-pervading struggle of the working class for self-definition and self-assertion, the mighty social and psychological changes, not unaccompanied by pain and tragedy, involved in the vast campaigns of industrialization and collectivization are completely

ignored. The vast amount of nervous energy consumed in evolving a new attitude to work (socialist competition, shock brigades, proletarian discipline, mastery of technique, mastery of the old culture, etc.), is left out of the recital. He overlooks the crucial fact that the arts, like the collective farms, the cooperatives, the factories, the scientific institutes, the planning commissions were honeycombed with saboteurs, plotters, and hidden enemies of the working-class. In the arts camouflage was particularly prevalent, because particularly difficult of detection. One must visualize the inexpressibly tense atmosphere in which Soviet writers have been forced to function especially during the First Five-Year Plan. There was war on all fronts. Naturally, in the struggle some kulaks were shot or sent to the North, some wreckers were manhandled, some literary skeptics attacked and exposed. There is nothing especially divine about practitioners of the arts. The conception that every artist is a prophet or a saint is antiquated nonsense. One glance at himself and his confrères around the *Modern Monthly* should convince Eastman that there are artists who are neither sages nor prophets. A bit of introspection should convince him that there are writers who pose as friends of the working-class when it furthers their careers, but who betray the workers and their cause any time their platonic friendships call for serious sacrifice.

Of course in the struggle for a new society mistakes and abuses are not always avoided and innocent bystanders occasionally suffer as a consequence. But that does not mean as Eastman seems to suggest that everyone who in the mêlée had his corns stepped on is necessarily a martyr or a saint, and that everyone

who works, and sings, and builds socialism is either a dunce or a spineless tool of the tyrant Stalin.

Max Eastman has some very complimentary things to say about Rakovsky. But Rakovsky now too has become a tool of Stalin. Eastman has some very warm words about Sosnovsky. But now Sosnovsky too has become a tool of Stalin. So has Preobrazhensky, so has Kamenev, so has Zinoviev, so has Radek, so have a host of others. Spinelessness, cynicism, betrayal all around. And over this sad spectacle stands Eastman, brooding—the only honest, unflinching, uncompromising upholder of the purity of the proletarian escutcheon. Obviously this sort of pose goes at pink tea parties and literary soirées where Max Eastman is wont to strut about as an arch revolutionist arousing the interest of tittering old ladies, it won't go with the masses of workers and farmers and earnest intellectuals who are engaged in building in this country a revolutionary culture.

As an example of Max Eastman's generous understanding of what is going on in the Soviet Union let us take his supercilious remarks about slogans. I had something to say about that in a couple of articles which I had previously written for *THE NEW MASSES* when it was still a monthly. A more detailed expose of Eastman's prevarications will soon appear in a pamphlet to be published by the John Reed Club. Eastman is nauseated by Soviet slogans. He quotes approvingly, he even finds "true poetry" in E. E. Cummings' "penetrating" characterization of the Soviet Union as the "vicariously infantile Kingdom of Slogan." This is how Eastman sees it. In contrast to Max Eastman, Lenin, to whom

Eastman pays condescending obeisance, had the following to say on the same subject: "The awakening of new forces, their labor to create in Soviet Russia a new art and a new culture—that's good, very good. The stormy tempo of their development is understandable and useful. We must catch up with what has been neglected for centuries. Chaotic fermentation, feverish seeking after new slogans, slogans which today sing hosannas to certain trends in the arts and in the domain of thought and on the morrow scream—'crucify them'—all this is quite inevitable. The revolution releases all the forces held in check in the past and drives them from the depths to the surface of life."

Viewed in this light, even the vandalistic slogans of the futurists in the early years of the revolution, superseded by those of the constructivists, and the Lefs and the Refs and the Smithy group, and the On Guard group, and the R.A.P.P. (Russian Association of Proletarian Writers), the slogans about Proletarian Art, the Magnitostroy of Literature, the Living Man, Art Is a Weapon, Dialectical Materialist Art, Socialist Realism, Socialist Romanticism, etc., are not expressions of a Stalin pulling strings, but a manifestation of tumultuous forces released by the revolution and driven from the depths to the surface of life. They are understandable, inevitable, and useful. And Eastman's sneers (how he does manage to befoul everything he touches!) simply prove that in his artiness he is not at all attuned to the new forces and their riotous tempo. This too is understandable and inevitable.

Very characteristic again is Eastman's handling of Lenin. It turns out that in matters of art Lenin was a bourgeois liberal, something like Max Eastman himself, though of course not quite so profound. Lenin was "wise enough instinctively (sic!) to feel the depth of opposition between art and practical enterprise. . . . It was by thus relaxing or 'putting in its place' the dialectic metaphysic, that Lenin and Trotsky managed a wise attitude to artists and their problems." The truth is Lenin was preoccupied with other matters and he gave relatively little thought to problems of literary criticism. In the few cases where he did express himself on the subject, he was far from "relaxing," Max Eastman's and Polonsky's claims to the contrary notwithstanding. Thus after a vehement polemic against the whole conception of a free art in a bourgeois society, Lenin says: "And we socialists expose this hypocrisy, rip down the false signs—not in order to attain a classless literature and art (this will be possible only in a socialist classless society), but in order to counterpose to the hypocritically-free and in reality bourgeois-tied literature, a literature that is really free, a literature that is openly tied-up with the proletariat." In other words, in the present historical epoch only a literature which is tied up with the progressive, revolutionary class can be really free, can really dare to look at life objectively and depict it correctly.

Lenin did believe in the possibility of a proletarian literature, and in his evaluation of Gorky he actually called him a proletarian writer.

But why expect Eastman to know much about what is taking place in Soviet letters, when he displays such utter ignorance of what is going on in this country, under his very nose. Speaking of the writers and artists around the John Reed Clubs, *THE NEW MASSES*, and other organizations supporting the Communist Party, Max Eastman waxes sardonic: "The American masses are quite right not to trust them. . . . The cultural revolution represented by these uniformed neophytes of the drill-master priests of 'Marxism-Leninism-Stalinism' is a bloodless runt."

A bloodless runt! Kenneth Burke, Robert Cantwell, Jack Conroy, Edward Dahlberg, John Dos Passos, James Farrell, Kenneth Fearing, Joseph Freeman, Michael Gold, Horace Gregory, Josephine Herbst, John Hermann, Granville Hicks, Langston Hughes, Orrick Johns, Melvin P. Levy, Grace Lumpkin, Albert Maltz, Sam Ornitz, Paul Peters, Isidor Schneider, Alfred Kreymborg, Maxwell Bodenheim, George Sklar, the Siftons, Edwin Seaver, Mary Heaton Vorse, Charles R. Walker, John Wexley, Ella Winter, a host of younger, but not less talented men, such as Sol Funaroff, Alfred Hayes, Fred R. Miller, Edwin Rolfe, Alan Calmer. The same applies to the artists—they too are bloodless runts:

Phil Bard, Hugo Gellert, Mordecai Gorelick, William Gropper, B. Limbach, Louis Lozowick, Jacob Burck, Mitchell Siporin, Raphael Soyer, William Siegel, etc. Despite Eastman's smug sneers, the John Reed Clubs are growing at a remarkable rate. In 1929 there was only one John Reed Club. Now we have thirty. Some of the best books dealing with the life and struggles of the workers in this country have been written by authors close to the Communist Party. The best revolutionary plays in the history of American drama are being written and produced by members of the John Reed Clubs. The same applies to drawing and painting and dancing and music. The same applies to revolutionary journalism. The same applies to criticism. The only vital stream in American literary criticism in recent years has been introduced by our critics, the Marxist critics. Eastman thinks he disparages us by calling us Artists in Uniform. Yes, we are artists in uniform. We are Leninists, Communists, Bolsheviks. As to Eastman, his one-time pink uniform has faded. It is white now, whiter indeed than the uniforms of the White Russian generals.

Incidentally, I would like to ask one simple question: Why has Max Eastman written nothing for over ten years attacking capitalism and why does he use all his venom to attack the only country in the world where the masses are building socialism, are building a new life?

## B o o k s

### Surfaces and Realities

*THE LAST PIONEERS*, by Melvin Levy.

Alfred H. King. \$2.50.

*THE LAND OF PLENTY*, by Robert

Cantwell. Farrar and Rinehart. \$2.50.

**T**HESE novels have only two things in common: both are located in the Northwest, and both are written by men who strongly sympathize with the revolutionary movement.

*The Last Pioneers* covers forty years in the life of a city, called Puget in the novel, Queen City of the Pacific. The central character is Herman Merro, born Chaim Shemanski, a Polish Jew, in Paris a pimp and a thief, in Russia a soldier, in Siberia a prisoner and refugee, in Alaska a waiter and entertainer, in Puget proprietor of a hotel and bawdy house, operator in real estate, amateur of politics, leading citizen. Herman Merro, Paul Dexter, Harvard graduate and banker, and Mick Delea, Irish lawyer, dominate the city for many years. Delea, twice mayor of Puget, is finally broken by a jail sentence. The depression drives Dexter to suicide and ruins Merro.

More than half of *The Land of Plenty*

tells what happens in a single night in a factory, and the rest of the book covers only a few weeks. On this particular night the electric power gives out. First we see Carl, foreman of the night shift; then some of the workers, especially Hagen, the electrician, Carl's particular enemy; then MacMahon, the superintendent, interrupted in his perennial bickering with his wife by an appeal to come to the factory. There are arguments, quarrels, skirmishes between men and girls, and the rescue of an injured hoist-man. The class struggle emerges in its most elementary form, in the unceasing conflict, often merely personal in its manifestations but economic in its cause, between laborers and their foreman. We are prepared for the strike, ending in violence, that occupies the second part of the book.

To me, Cantwell's book is immeasurably superior to Levy's. This is not because Levy's is discursive, whereas Cantwell's is compact. It is certainly not because Levy deals with millionaires and Cantwell with workers. It is because Cantwell has seen his subject so clearly, recognizing its implications and selecting with almost unflinching accuracy the inci-

dents and the aspects of character that present his subject most truly and most completely. Levy, devoting much space to the personal eccentricities of his characters and to the sexual habits of Puget, gives a lively enough picture of the last frontier. But he seems constantly to be working on the margin of his subject, and the real drama of exploitation, which alone could have made the subject worth writing about, is only hinted at.

*The Land of Plenty* is far less personal, far less oblique, far less obscure than *Laugh and Lie Down*, Cantwell's earlier book. It is fully as sensitive and subtle as its predecessor, but it has much more meaning because it has much more purpose. There are remnants of old mannerisms, it is true, touches of the baffling harshness that belonged to the days of "the new barbarism." But the book gives the reader the mental atmosphere of a factory as no other novel does that I have read, and it shows in its essentials the unconquerable militancy of the workers. In the second part of the book, especially at the very end, Cantwell relies too much on obliqueness, and the heroism of the embattled workers is a little obscured. As a result *The Land of Plenty* fails to sweep the reader along, as William Rollins' *The Shadow Before* does, to high resolve and a sense of ultimate triumph. There remains, however, a feeling that one has been in contact with people and with forces that cannot be ignored.

GRANVILLE HICKS.

### A Dying Horse

*THE AMERICAN ADVENTURE*, by M. J. Bonn. Translated by Mabel Brailsford. John Day Co. \$2.50.

At a time when economic thought is getting daily more confused and, because it dare not face the implications of its reasoning, is seeking refuge in vaguer generalities and cloudier abstractions, this book pulls still more cotton wool over the eyes of those who either dare not or will not see. One might have hoped that even a bourgeois economist, of the standing of M. J. Bonn, would have talked about real political and social divisions; one might have hoped for a little calm and clear consideration of facts and ideas that are treated so much with hate, fury, or catchwords. Instead; Mr. Bonn, after setting forth the melting pot that is America, after showing the mixture of Indian and Negro, English and German, Mexican and Jew, Filipino and Japanese, that makes an as yet unassimilated mass of people, talks glibly on about "the American mind," "the American attitude," "the American heart." His platitudes become ever more pompous, and what is not platitudinous is for the most part not true. "The political character of the American people is at once conservative and radical," you read. "It might even be said that it is outwardly conservative because of its internal radicalism." "It might be said, that a cow is an animal," the mother informed her very small daughter. "Why?" said the daughter.

Mr. Bonn does admit that "capitalists . . . have . . . abused their power" by exploiting weaker foreign nations, but hastily adds, quick, before any one really reads it, that "imperialist ways of thought frequently include a thoroughly idealistic element. The idea of the equality of all men which governs American political thought (yes, really) makes them want to bring light to those far nations living in the twilight of political backwardness." Mr. Bonn does not suggest a cause for the curious fact that the warm-hearted American becomes idealistically interested in this sadly backward little nation when oil has been discovered there.

The professor should have called his book simply "If." If American "democracy" will give everyone the fulfillment of all their desires, then it will have succeeded, and so we should watch it sympathetically. And really, there are so many signs that it is succeeding, if you only don't look at the others.

He shares with many of our modern political philosophers the faculty of blithely putting a broken-down cart before a dying horse and calling it a 1934 model Rolls Royce, because both, after all, do move. Like many liberals who are turning Fascist so fast you can't follow their thought for the dust, the professor thinks that because someone formulated a theory and drew up a constitution, these are carried out and lived up to, or, tut-tut, with occasional lapses that are only "survivals," will be very shortly. Give us a little time! And so, warm-hearted, optimistic, missionary Americans spread idealism, faith, hope, and equality. I'd hate to take the good professor into a meeting of the lettuce-growers in Imperial Valley.

The word Fascism is not in the index.

ELLA WINTER.

### Smirt's Nertz

*SMIRT*, by Branch Cabell. Robert McBride. \$2.

What is so gruesome about the James Branch Cabell business is that critics once regarded him seriously. He was a rallying point in those dear insane days when it was felt that the real revolution consisted in putting Mr. Sumner in his place. Once he was defeated, the rest was easy. Freedom. Full expression. The flowering of culture. There is really no use reviewing *Smirt*. The decay set in long before this book. It is the work of a man who sits in his garden in Richmond fondly believing that somebody is excited about him. He pretends to be annoyed by the attention of his admirers (a full-length study of that group would be something for your collection), and reveals his annoyance by flaying his foolish followers in the same mock manner in which an octogenarian bellows at his grandchildren to show them that he loves them. The only difference is that he does it with his tiny scalpel. Delicate. Delicate. Urbane. Sweetly ironic. Not trivial—that would be going too far. We should say infinitesimal. *Smirt* has something to do with a

dream, one of those *Alice in Wonderland* things so dear to the upper classes of the Motherland. You wouldn't be able to read it if you tried. It wouldn't be that you didn't understand it. You would understand it all right but you would wonder what the hell.

As a conscientious reviewer we have gone back to look at *Jurgen*, the several books on Poictesme and even *The Rivet in Grandfather's Neck*. In comparison with the Gene Stratton Porters and the Harold Bell Wrights who preceded him, Cabell was undoubtedly a good influence. The Urbanity of Futility was certainly an advance over the Sterility of Stupidity, but beyond that there was very little. Cabell was the great American example of the theory so dear to F. P. A. and other second-rate minds that Walter Pater, for instance, is as perfect in his way as Tolstoy, and therefore as important. The small perfect thing is as great as the large perfect thing. It wouldn't be true even if Cabell had been the small perfect thing, which he was not. He was simply a minor talent bringing a breath of continental gentility to an American world suddenly conscious of its gaucherie. He represented culture and sophistication to the grandchildren of the Robber Barons who were enjoying the greatest splash of splendor any age has ever known. If he has any thanks coming, they can thank him.

ROBERT FORSYTHE.

### The Next War

*GERMANY PREPARES FOR WAR*, by Ewald Banse. Harcourt, Brace and Co. \$3.

*NAZI MEANS WAR*, by Leland Stowe. Whittlesey House. \$1.50.

For all its imposing generalizations and dogmatic enunciations, the work of Ewald Banse, Nazi professor of military science and geography, is a compound of misstatements, contradictions, half-truths, and blatant nonsense. However, as a sample of fascist preparations for a bloody harvest, the book is important and deserves study; but it would be time wasted to look in it for valid hints of the plans of Hitler's government.

When the book appeared, late in 1932, under the title *Raum und Volk im Weltkrieg*, Banse was still an academic nobody, a laughing stock in all save Nazi circles. But Fascism offers to such mediocre humbugs the opportunity of training the youth of Germany. Under Fascism the profession of teaching sinks to a servile debasement beyond sarcasm. Not merely do independent and progressive teachers go out; second raters, hypocrites, fools and cravens are sucked into the intellectual vacuum. Some of the lickspittle *Dozenten*, turn out racialistic and nationalistic nonsense—with a purpose. Others are sent across the ocean as exchange professors and traveling lecturers, to discourse before American youth and American wealth on the spiritual renaissance of the German national soul. Was it Frederick, known as the Great, or an elder Hohenzol-

lern, who observed, "You can always buy a prostitute or a professor"?

Meanwhile Germany's heavily trustified industries are turning out realistic armaments as fast as ever they can. What they can't turn out is kindly supplied by the armament works controlled by French and English capital. Behind all the fascist madness and delusions of grandeur, such as fill this book, is cold, calculating method. Monopoly capital is not blinded by the ideological dust its kept servitors throw into the eyes of the gullible. The dupes may be blinded, but in their bank offices, their directors' meetings, their Ruhr castles, the real rulers survey the scene with cold, fishy eyes. When they strike out, through the Nazi military machine, they will not follow the wild fantasies of Professor Banse, but the Bansees will have helped prepare the boys who are to scatter the poison gases on cities, throw the disease germ bombs, and carve out—preferably from the Soviet Union—new territory for German capitalism to exploit.

With such facts at our disposal, we can hardly be startled at Pulitzer Prizer Stowe's discovery that from the first the Hitler regime has been aimed, full speed ahead, twenty-four hours a day, for armed conflict and conquest. It is true that there are some rather vivid anecdotes in *Nazi Means War* to illustrate the monstrous, all-inclusive mobilization, psychological, economic, and military, which is fascist Germany, but readers of *THE NEW MASSES* will find little that is new in the facts that the author managed to whip together during his two months' visit to the Third Reich. The essential fact is that a million and a third Germans are in uniform, which means bearing arms most of the time, and another million and a half are on the way.

One point that Stowe makes is worth noting. He says that he did not meet "a single Anglo-Saxon journalist in Berlin whose sympathies for the German case had not been severely alienated, if not completely killed, by the methods and motives of the National Socialist movement." This should be remembered as one notices more clearly from day to day the easing of the attitude towards Hitlerism in the news and editorial columns of prominent American newspapers, the same papers that pay these Anglo-Saxon correspondents. Personal conviction, based on the most ample and intimate contact with Nazi men and methods, is not permitted to affect the kind of "impartiality" expected by capitalist publishers.

In general, Stowe's conception of the forces gathering for Armageddon is shallow and romantic, and this becomes particularly apparent at the end of his book, as he passes from reporting the present to estimating the future. He gravely outlines three possibilities of avoiding the imminent outbreak of war, and each of his ways out proves to be a straight route to the conflagration. What, for example, can be expected of "firm common action of the French, British, and Italian governments," and where could Franco-German negotiations—possible only in terms of an alliance of the

*Comité des Forges* and the Steel Trust—lead except to war against Russia? But possible way out number three is the choicest and may be proposed for another Pulitzer prize for the most imaginative reporting of the year. The Nazi Reich, Mr. Stowe suggests, "might suffer a terrific and unprecedented economic collapse" as a result of "the steady swing of National Socialist economic policies towards left-wing solutions." In other words, Mr. Stowe believes, first, that Hitlerism might lead to Socialism, and, second, that Socialism would be even more of a mess than Hitlerism. *Allons, Bosco, to the mad house!*

Such liberal best minds as Stowe's misunderstand what is under their noses, and when they look a few feet into the future they behold sea serpents and glimpse the shores of never-never land. When Mr. Stowe comes to visualize America's role in the next war, he proposes that we should maintain our neutrality by renouncing war loans and washing our hands of war profits altogether. But the "we" who make war loans and war profits are incapable of such sweet self-sacrifice. It is up to another and greater "we"—we who get slapped in peace, gassed, gangrened, and slaughtered in war. *We* will not fight against fellow workers of other nations but against the system whose unending fruits are joblessness, starvation, degradation, terror, fascism, and war. *We*, governors of our soviet socialist world! That is the answer and the meaning of the coming world conflict. Capitalism means Nazi. Nazi means war. War can be made to mean civil war and liberation.

ARTHUR HELLER.

### Mrs. Turner's San Quentin

*ONE WAY TICKET*, by Ethel Turner.  
Harrison Smith and Robert Haas. \$2.

This novel of prison life, "written from an entirely new angle," turns out on reading to be the Graustark formula revised to the taste of True Story addicts. As princess there is Veronica Bonrn, daughter of the Captain of the Guards. As commoner, there is the young convict who dares all, even escape, to win her love. Does he succeed? Answer: the author of the book is herself the daughter of an ex-employee at San Quentin, and for nineteen years lived on the reservation. Even in fiction, such conditioning will out.

*One Way Ticket* tries very hard to get sympathy for Veronica but, to this reviewer at least, she is not only the least interesting character, but also an insipid snob, an epitome of middle class prejudices. Tortured by sex, governed by credos she does not want to analyze, Veronica walks through three hundred pages. There is movement instead of action; thin suspense instead of drama. In sum, this is prison seen through opera glasses.

In one respect, however, the story is interesting. It depicts very well the attitude of the small ruling class, which governs the prison, toward convicts individually and in mass. Mrs. Turner is nothing if not class

conscious. To enter into the author's mood the reader must grant that convicts are not people. Without that assumption there is no story, for the book is built on it. Only those ready to believe that prisons are filled with recruits from a mysterious underworld will find *One Way Ticket* their viand. These are the same people who solve crime by lynching.

A good part of the material is certainly autobiographical; Veronica and her creator jibe in their prejudices. Mrs. Turner refers to Negroes as niggers; she speaks of one as having been nigger-insolent. Her judgments on convicts are never shaken by an inner doubt: when a prisoner makes a gesture in the direction of a woman rubber-necking gazing down into the yard, the author brands him flatly a "flat-faced hoodlum." One notes, however, that the "hoodlums" and the "niggers" are very useful to the little ruling group. They may not be admitted to membership in the human family, but they cook, scrub, empty garbage, tend garden, and serve as nursemaids for the officials and their families.

From internal evidence, it would seem that the story is set in the past—how distantly, it is difficult to say. Certainly, recidivists are no longer committed to San Quentin but are sent to Folsom; and stripes, as punishment for bad behavior inside the walls, are not now worn. Even in Mrs. Turner's time, though, they were calling San Quentin "the most humane prison in the country." What prison official hasn't mouthed that public boast? Like most other institutions of its kind, San Quentin has improved gradually; it was once a hell-hole. Even today one cannot imagine "losers" looking back fondly on the place in which they first matriculated. Since it must accommodate many times more men than it was built to house, the prison is very much over-crowded. Negroes are jim-crowed in the mess-hall. Tainted beef served in stew has, not long since, jammed dozens of prisoners into makeshift hospital quarters where they recovered as best they could from dysentery. The hundreds of men who work in the jute mill at forced labor would certainly not call the place a cozy retreat from an inhumane world. Least of all the weavers, who must produce a hundred yards of cloth—good cloth—each day or suffer the penalty of going to the hole—a black dungeon into which bread and water is pushed. The product of the looms is sold by the State of California to ranchers who need burlap bags.

Convicts don't love society to start with; they leave San Quentin loving it less. Those with courage and long terms, like prisoners everywhere, consider escape. But the difference between what they plan to do as they make their lam, and what Mrs. Turner imagines they plan to do is really ludicrous. She says: "A break! . . . You tried to believe that it couldn't happen, and yet some day it just might happen, that was all. Thugs, murderers of every description, plunging through the gate to freedom, killing guards and officers,



pouring through the town, slaughtering, raping. . . .” Raping! Show me a con with a twenty year term behind him and liberty straight ahead who would pause for a bit of dalliance with the ladies. No, Mrs. Turner, it just doesn't make sense. There are passionate men in San Quentin, of course, and confinement breeds repressions, but my guess is that after a long stretch, the carnal ones would pick on their own sex. It's even possible that the Captain of the Guards might look better to such than all the Veronicas in the world. But they don't call that rape in San Quentin. **ARNOLD B. ARMSTRONG.**

### Novels Are Made by Novelists

*THE STORY OF A COUNTRY BOY*, by Dawn Powell. Farrar and Rinehart. \$2.50.  
*ONCE A WILDERNESS*, by Arthur Pound. Reynal and Hitchcock. \$2.50.  
*TRUMPETS WEST*, by Elmer T. Peterson. Sears Publishing Co. \$2.50.

There are so many qualities needed in the making of even a fairish novel that it might occasionally strike you to wonder how any are written. Of the three I have just looked over, for example, each has at least several of the essential factors: apparent conviction, sympathy, a proper concern with vigorous significant characters, and some inquisitiveness as to underlying causes. Yet two of them may be thrown out, and that quickly: *Once a Wilderness* because of its lumbering progress through irrelevant data, its scanty and artificial action; *Trumpets West* because of its labored pomp over the business of making an Epic of America out of sundry historical generalities.

Dawn Powell's *Story of a Country Boy*, however, is worth working through two or a dozen such to come at, for whatever it takes to make pretty-damn-fine fiction, Miss Powell has got. She is mature, she has a good measure of wit and perception and feeling; she neither rants nor dodges. Her story of the personal disintegration of a self-made farm chap is (and would have to be) sufficiently universal of meaning to walk by itself, to justify the telling. In her statement of what it takes to make a capitalist and how inevitably the process is effected, there is, moreover, a shrewdness of appraisal not to be found in many a more obvious study.

Fitted out with a sound distrust of all the trappings of capital and no desire but to get back to the good simplicity of life on the farm, Chris Bennett considered his speedy rise to industrial power and the position of biggest gun in the broadside as nothing but a joke, a scornful comment on all directorial goose-eggs, a rich hoax to share with the old man when he should be back working the north meadow with him and roasting the government again. That would be any day now, for his time in the city was never anything but a mildly hilarious interval to Chris, the essential local lad.

But any-day-now drew out into fifteen years before the common man's friend fully discov-

ered that he was straddling the two mounts of capital and labor—and only then by virtue of their final drawing apart under him. He was let fall on his face and left by both: he had become declassed. The ultimate realization was too much for him, naturally. He went to pieces, he had to clear out; and the return home that had been his dream became the measure of his defeat.

Whether all this is true and reasonable, or whether it is just so many words, depends of course upon the author's grasp of her subject, her skill in selecting incidents and working them into a pattern expressive of the forces at work, not only in Bennett the unwitting captain of industry, but in Bennett the family man, friend, clumsy lover, and so on. And in this vitalization of material, I find the book about all you could ask.

I do not wish to obscure the fact that Miss Powell is sometimes capable of overwriting, that she could do with more dramatization and less narrative, that she has a tendency to overstate, to push her people too hard. What I wish to say as clearly as possible is that while her book is not as big as the biggest, it is the work of that wise and comprehensive and many-sided person, a novelist come of age. Above the run of half-baked (tough or sloppy, either one) masterworks acclaimed in the course of any year, it stands out head and shoulders and part of a torso.

Though in many superficials *Once a Wilderness* resembles Miss Powell's book, it is in fact quite another kettle of Americana. For one thing, the story has to do, not with individuals but with a whole family—its strong root in the Michigan soil of Mark Section, the solidarity that makes it a refuge for such members as have been beaten in the outside world by Life and depressions and such. For another, it is not, so far as I am aware, a story at all, but an essentially inanimate reconstruction of a certain fortunate and restricted and rather previous phase of national life. The detailed description of the paternalistic state Captain Mark has brought out of the wilderness—his land and barns and thoroughbred children and stock—has a good smell of earth upon it. The pity is that Mr. Pound has broken the back of his survey by abortive attempts to make a novel out of it.

With less success and more fustian, *Trumpets West* attempts to fictionalize certain aspects of the westward expansion, taking a dynasty from Sweden to Iowa to Kansas to show how things go in cases like that. However gripping in themselves may be the facts Mr. Peterson has at his disposal, his manner of rehearsal overlies them, leaving both them and the reader quite cold. Here, for a sample, is one of the high spots:

Harry had never been told the secrets of life's reproduction before. . . . It was unreal to him. . . . The mother clutched at the bed clothing and moaned, and outside there was the crying of the wind.

In agony she screamed and the grim diapason in the symphony of the prairies blizzard rose in a shuddering crescendo accompaniment. . . . And after hours of this there was born a child.

The passage may serve to indicate that superimposition of "drama" on case studies which cripples two of the books in question. Taken side by side, the three books themselves are indication of the fact that regardless of who can make a poem and who can make a tree, it takes something more than willingness and an earnest fidelity to the Right Idea to make anything so quick with life as a thorough-going novel.

OTIS C. FERGUSON.

### Brief Review

*THE NEW DEAL IN EUROPE*, by Emil Lengyel. Funk & Wagnalls Co. \$2.

According to Lengyel, "New Deal countries mean here merely those that have left the crowded highways of past history, and are striking out for new goals." This typically liberal definition, which fails to take into account the fundamental differences between Fascism and Communism, correctly indicates the confusion of the author. The greater part of the book describes Germany, Italy, and the Soviet Union, but Sweden is given a chapter merely because it has a managed currency, and another chapter is devoted to other countries that have extended control over natural resources or subsidized collapsing monopolies and financial institutions. Every kind of error an author can make is committed in Lengyel's book. There are serious omissions, preposterous analogies, and mystical explanations. Yet Johannes Steel, in the Nation, speaks of the book as "a very instructive piece of political journalism"!

*THE MERRY COMMUNIST*, by Philip Freund. Pilgrim House. \$2.25.

The main character in this brief, smart novel is a "personal anarchist" and a "Nietzschean superman" who teaches philosophy at Fordham College. There are but two Communists apparent: a woman who lectures at girls' colleges, and a fellow who wears "a Russian blouse and booted Russian trousers." They must be Communists; the author says so. The whole thing is self-conscious tripe by someone trying to be witty and profound in alternate gasps. Mr. Freund's comprehension of Communism is on a par with that of Dr. Wirt, but Dr. Wirt is funnier.

*NITCHEY TILLEY*, by Roy Helton. Harper and Brothers. \$2.

An imaginative, sensitive, rather beautifully written story of a boy who, after living for twenty years in an isolated spot in the Kentucky backwoods, goes to New York and becomes a painter. His great discovery, however, is that living in the Here and Now, not mere observation, is the true reality. Five years ago this reviewer would have hailed *Nitchey Tilley* as a minor masterpiece; today he can only feel, with a certain regret, that no discovery that terminates with the individual is worth three hundred and fifty-two pages.

# Workers' Theatre Marches

MARK MARVIN

CHICAGO.

THE revolutionary theatres of the United States held their second National Theatre Festival and Convention in Chicago, April 13, 14, and 15. Delegates representing many of the four hundred-odd workers' theatres in this country assembled to discuss the problems of the revolutionary theatre and each others' work. Despite great handicaps, delegates came from both coasts and from important centers throughout this country and Canada. Many delegates had to hitch-hike through the cold spring weather from as far away as Los Angeles, and many had scarcely enough money for food. Despite a stage that dated back to the last century, and stage flats that were ridiculous in their obsolescence, performances of sterling and moving competence were presented. The thousand to fifteen hundred spectators who filled the theatre each of the three nights responded with encouraging enthusiasm to the productions presented.

The productions and conferences achieved by the League of Workers Theatres testify once again to the impressive vitality and strength of revolutionary culture. Today the workers' theatres have definitely become a part of the cultural life of vast masses of workers and farmers and intellectuals. They are the weapons with which workers strike back at wage cuts, at war preparations, and Fascism. Not only are they weapons in the class struggle, but also they are beginning to develop an art satisfying and educating to vast masses of Negroes and whites. The mobile Theatres of Action have definitely taken their place on the sidewalks, in the school halls, and in the union halls of America. The decisions and plans made at this Festival will enable them to develop soon into the best and most loved dramatic art in America. Even in New York and Chicago, the old stage is practically dead; but masses will turn and are turning to the workers' theatres in mining camps, in steel mill towns, in farming communities. In the "art" theatres of larger cities (long abandoned by bankrupt ivory-towerists) revolutionary drama, with its intellectual clear-headedness, its eagerness to use the most advanced technique, and its strong mass appeal has appeared.

The subjects of the plays produced at the Chicago Festival are indicative of the universal appeal of the workers' theatre, its ability to interpret and portray the social reality. It is many-tongued because of our large foreign-born population. It is widely diversified because of its size. It is artistically and technically advanced because it is guided by two

of the best sources of theatrical theory and criticism: the magazines, International Theatre, published in English in Moscow, and the New Theatre, published in New York City. The subjects chosen for presentation are those of immediate interest to thousands and thousands of workers and intellectuals aware that mankind has entered into "a new round of revolutions and wars." Exposure of the N.R.A., the social-Fascists, the A. F. of L., and portrayals of struggles based on actual occurrences, as well as intimate pictures of workers' lives in the home and in the factory, were some of the subjects of the plays produced in Chicago. That they were appreciated was acknowledged by the wild acclaim of the audiences.

In such a production as *In the Hog House*, produced by the Chicago Workers' Laboratory Theatre, which describes a strike action (many of the cast are stockyards workers) and in such a play as *Court Witness*, produced by the Gary Workers' Theatre (the play was based on an actual frame-up), we see clearly problems of present reality, and we are indicated the solution to the class problem portrayed. Emotions are readily aroused. These are the sufferings, trials, persecutions, and hates of the men and women with whom we work and walk the streets. It is our life that we see on the stage, and when a Marxist interpretation of events is presented, we leave the theatre filled with hope because we have been shown a path, we have seen examples of success or partial success on the part of our comrades in the struggle for a better world.

The winners of first and second place in the competition were *Newsboy* by the Workers' Laboratory Theatre of New York City, and *Oh Yeah!* by the Ukrainian Workers' Drama Circle of New York City. Both these plays

were described by Mike Gold in THE NEW MASSES several weeks ago. The Gary Workers' Dramatic Group and the Los Angeles Blue Blouses tied for third place, the former with *Court Scene*, mentioned above, the latter with an unusually good satire on the N.R.A. called *A-Shopping We Will Go*. Excellent performances were also given by other groups located in Chicago, Cleveland, Detroit, and Moline, Ill. An Unemployed Chorus of Negroes and whites sang revolutionary songs, and a Bulgarian Pioneer group presented charming dances.

Serious faults were apparent in the Festival. Most of these lie in the repertoire. As in the proletarian novel and short story in this country, there is still too much stylization, too much abstract speech, too little variation in themes, and a too quick development of character. These problems were taken up during the conference, and a concerted effort will be made to develop a new corps of dramatists whose political and artistic development will enable them to turn out plays that will satisfy the drama-hungry millions. Another fault of the Festival was the absence of a farmers' group. All Negro and children's dramatic groups were missing too.

The second Theatre Festival is an historic occasion in the American revolutionary movement. It consolidates and vitalizes the national organization of the workers' theatres.

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# An Anti-Semitic Film

ROBERT FORSYTHE

**I**F WE were the earnest gentlemen of Hollywood, we should regard with attention the lobby conversations of the small towns of the country after *The House of Rothschild* has been shown. After all it is hard to make a hero out of a billion dollars, even when that amount of money is being played by George Arliss, and there is some likelihood that Herr Hitler will come out of the conflict with converts. The picture will be interpreted by non-Jews as Jewish propaganda and it is within the realm of possibility that the picture will play directly into the hands of those who blame the Jews, and particularly the international bankers who are all popularly thought to be Jews, for everything that ails us. We happen to believe that international bankers are symptoms of the greater evils produced by capitalism itself and it is a source of some ironic satisfaction to us to find the rich gentry of Beverly Hills seeking to overcome anti-Semitism by setting the Rothschilds forth as examples of rectitude.

Hollywood has always been the subtlest of propaganda factories—so much so that the London Times would never think of going to press without a letter from Retired Colonel or Constant Reader protesting either against the murder of the English language by Jimmy Durante or against the vulgar American customs which are corrupting the sturdy British stock—but this is something more obvious. It is obviously propaganda but it does no more for the Jews than *Cavalcade* did for the British Empire and is just as accurate historically as any of the series starting with the *Private Life of Henry the Eighth*.

The incidents covered are a part of history; it is only the motives which are in doubt. So far as we know it is true that there was an original Mayer Rothschild of Frankfort who scattered his five sons over Europe to establish his banking house as an international institution. But after that you are asked to believe a series of peculiar things, to wit: (a) The Rothschilds were always for peace, (b) their financing of wars was always done for the sake of ending wars (Bethlehem Steel constantly makes larger guns out of the same humanitarian motive), and (c) whenever they bought on the Exchange, their purchases were made with no thought of personal gain but solely to sustain the credit of the nation.

Along with the ambition to reveal the Rothschilds as superior beings goes the determination to show that France may be France and England may be England but the Rothschilds are always a family unit. That may be held as an admirable trait but it may also be considered proof of the fact that it matters not what happens to the world so long as it doesn't happen to the Rothschilds. If it is propaganda it is terrible propaganda for the Jews Without Money who are made to suffer from the charge that the Jews can never be assimilated by their respective countries. Even as the film shows—the pogroms rage up and down Jew Street without touching the Rothschilds. The Storm Troops slaughter the fighting Jews of Germany while Hitler confers amicably with the great Jewish bankers.

George Arliss is as excellent as ever and there are good performances by Helen Westley as mother of all the Rothschilds and by C. Aubrey Smith as Wellington, but the picture otherwise is undistinguished. The direction is uninspired and the love scenes with Loretta Young and Robert Young are of such taffyish quality that they are embarrassing. With our usual American failing for anything which is solemn and high-falutin', we'll be hearing of *The House of Rothschild* as the great picture of the year just as we are hearing of the Guild play, *Mary of Scotland*, as the outstanding stage drama of the season. What it may turn out to be is the most dangerous picture of the decade, one which can do more harm to the Jews than anything that has come out of Hollywood. However, Hollywood will probably be able to bear up under it if the returns are commensurate.

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# Between Ourselves

**S**TANLEY BURNSHAW, one of the editors of THE NEW MASSES, will be in Indianapolis May 13, to lecture on "Recent Trends in American Literature," at the John Reed Club, 318-322 Columbia Securities Building, 143 East Ohio Street. Continuing his speaking trip, he will discuss "Culture and Fascism" in Cincinnati, May 16, under the auspices of the Pen and Hammer. This lecture will take place in the hall on the second floor of the Brotherhood of Railway Clerks Building, Court and Vine Streets.

Joshua Kunitz's *Note on Max Eastman* in this issue supplements his extended discussion of Eastman which appeared in the July and August issues of THE NEW MASSES monthly last year. A further analysis of Eastman's attacks was made by Joseph Freeman in a series of articles in the Daily Worker last November.

Harold Ward, who begins in this issue a series of bi-weekly reviews of industrial developments throughout the world, is a contributing editor of *The Living Age*.

Henry Hart's novel, *The Great One*, is being published this week by John Day.

Myra Page is the author of *Gathering Storm* and *Soviet Main Street*.

A story by Albert Halper, *A Morning with the Doc*, will appear in next week's issue. John Strachey's next article discusses the housing situation in England.

A notable feature of a forthcoming issue will be *Days With the Chinese Red Army*, by Agnes Smedley. The story, which is a chapter from a book by Miss Smedley shortly to be published, deals with the 1928 period, before the Chinese Soviets had successfully established themselves. A detail from a mural by Jacob Burck, depicting the Chinese Soviets in action, will be presented with Miss Smedley's story.

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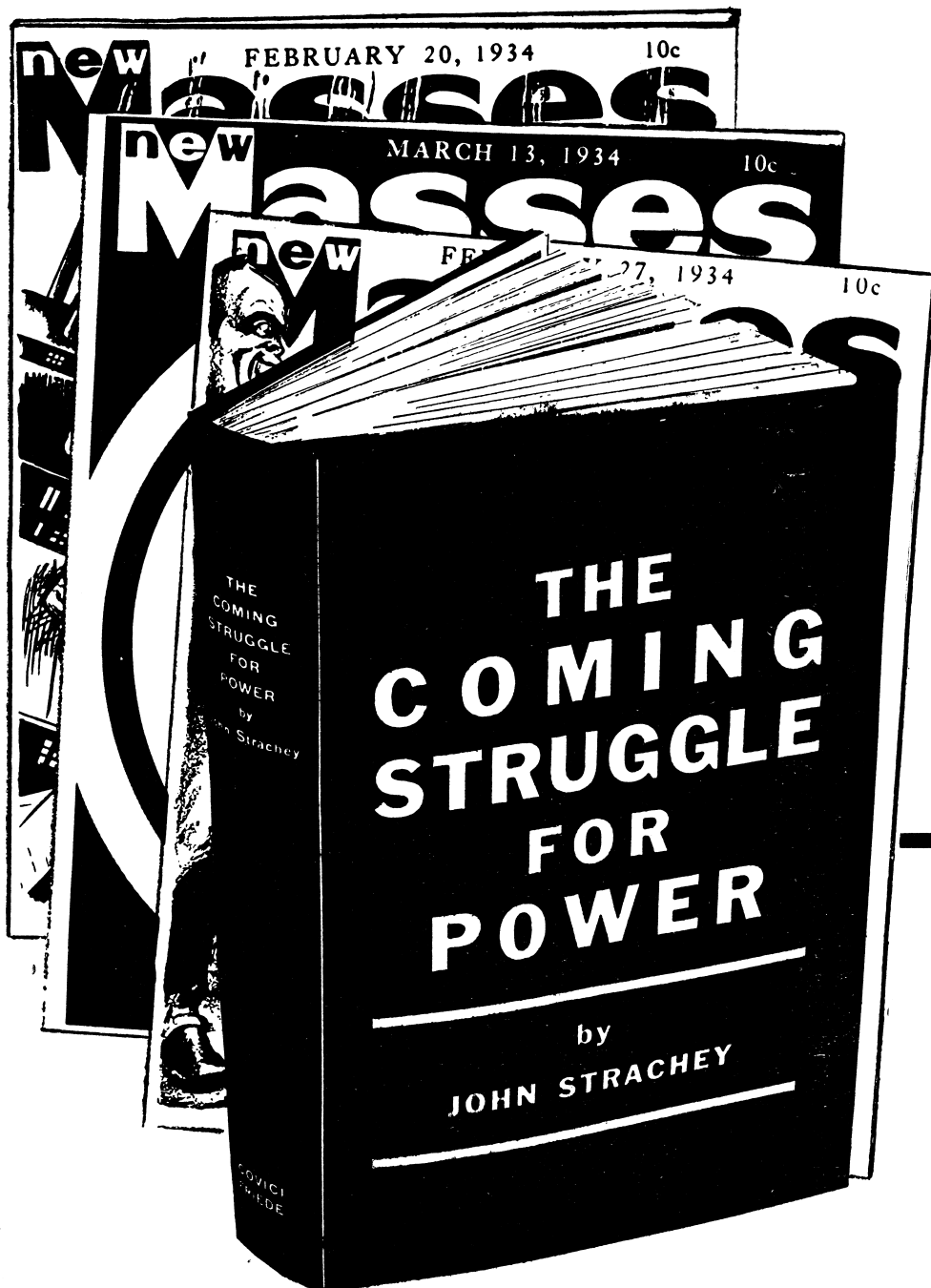
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