

new

JANUARY 30, 1934

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Pitfalls for Prophets

by Joshua Kunitz

DYNAMITE AND SCABS

a report on the Anthracite—BY MARY HEATON VORSE

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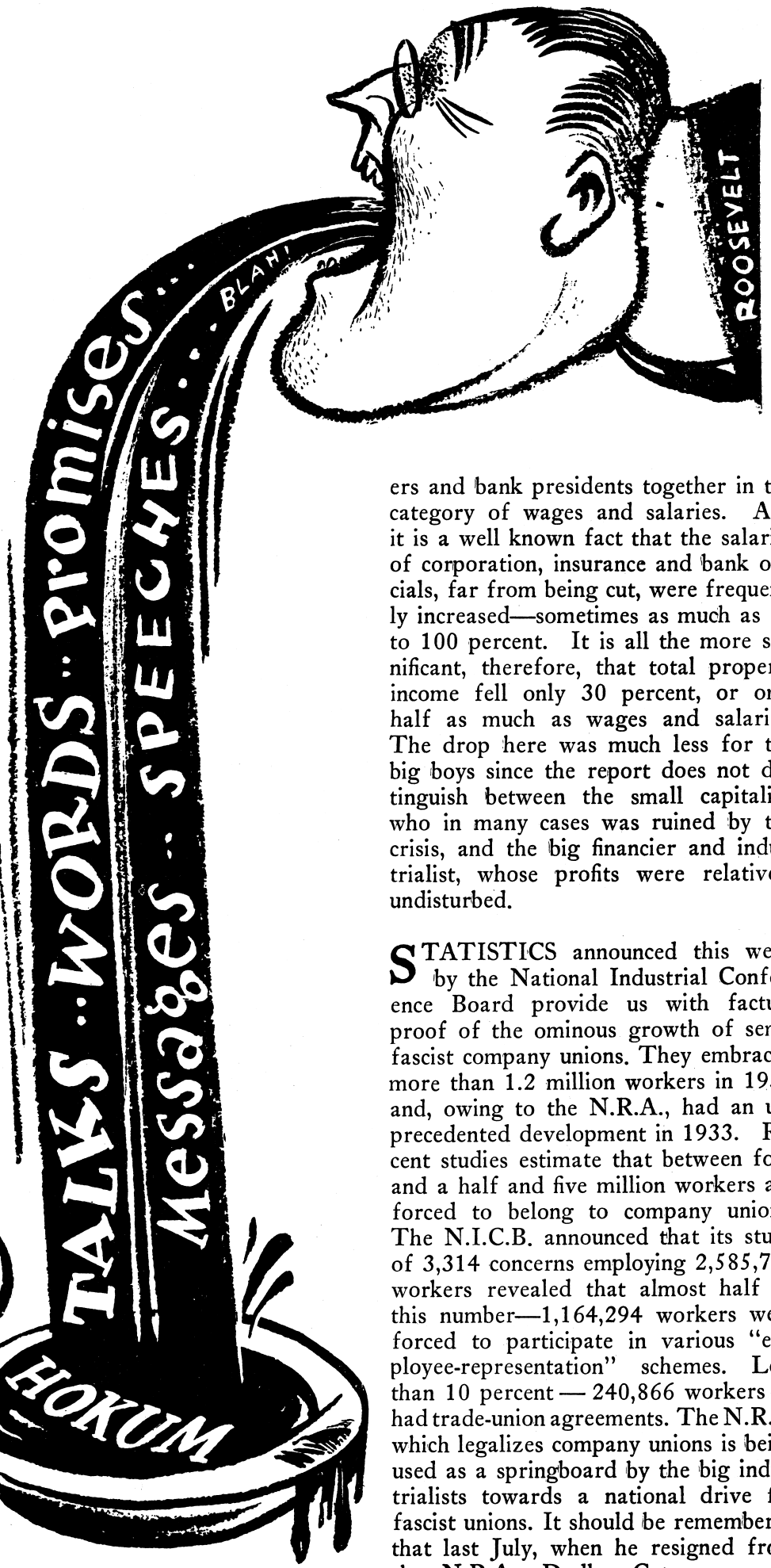
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new Masses

JANUARY 30, 1934

THE Department of Commerce has just issued a report on the national income of the United States during the period 1929-1932. The report discloses that total production income fell from 83 billion dollars in 1929 to 38.3 billion dollars in 1932—a decrease of 54 percent. Williard L. Thorp, under whose direction the report was prepared, declared that “wages suffered the most severely in the general decline since 1929 with a falling off of 60 percent.” The total income of workers and salaried employees fell 40 percent, from 52.9 billion in 1929 to 31.9 billion in 1932. However, the actual drop in income for industrial workers and the lower brackets of white-collar workers was actually much closer to 60 percent. The report is misleading on this point since it lumps unskilled work-



ers and bank presidents together in the category of wages and salaries. And it is a well known fact that the salaries of corporation, insurance and bank officials, far from being cut, were frequently increased—sometimes as much as 75 to 100 percent. It is all the more significant, therefore, that total property income fell only 30 percent, or only half as much as wages and salaries. The drop here was much less for the big boys since the report does not distinguish between the small capitalist, who in many cases was ruined by the crisis, and the big financier and industrialist, whose profits were relatively undisturbed.

STATISTICS announced this week by the National Industrial Conference Board provide us with factual proof of the ominous growth of semi-fascist company unions. They embraced more than 1.2 million workers in 1932 and, owing to the N.R.A., had an unprecedented development in 1933. Recent studies estimate that between four and a half and five million workers are forced to belong to company unions. The N.I.C.B. announced that its study of 3,314 concerns employing 2,585,740 workers revealed that almost half of this number—1,164,294 workers were forced to participate in various “employee-representation” schemes. Less than 10 percent—240,866 workers—had trade-union agreements. The N.R.A. which legalizes company unions is being used as a springboard by the big industrialists towards a national drive for fascist unions. It should be remembered that last July, when he resigned from the N.R.A., Dudley Cates proposed forcing all workers into one vertical government union. General Johnson

William Gropper.

agreed with him "in principle," but thought that the time was not yet ripe. Since then, Lewis L. Lorwin, the apologist of the A. F. of L. has come out for the "federalization" of all unions—a fascist proposal. Walter Teagle of the Standard Oil Company has also proposed the adoption of one big federal union. The plan is to "coordinate" all unions, that is, to destroy all genuine independent and revolutionary trade union bodies. American workers would find themselves in a situation similar to the one confronting the German workers today. The big employers would openly fix wages, hours and working conditions. The right to strike and the right to fight for wage-agreements would be abolished. Efforts to crush the present wave of strikes, gaining momentum every week, may hasten the drive for such "coördination." Every class-conscious worker must try to develop strikes for immediate economic demands into political struggles for the right to strike, and the right to form independent and revolutionary trade unions. Otherwise Germany's *gleichhaltung* will be forced upon the American people.

NO section of the middle class has been harder hit by the crisis than the technical intelligentsia. They have lost their savings, their homes and their jobs. A Columbia University survey reported that 98 percent of architects, 85 percent of engineers, and 65 percent of chemists were unemployed! A large engineering school in the East has not been able to place even one engineer from the 4 classes of 1930-33. These technical workers, if they were fortunate enough to obtain relief jobs, work as stenographers, laborers, and porters—in fact at almost any job except those jobs for which they are qualified by years of training and experience. Despite such conditions, the technicians have, until recently, failed to organize, failed to fight. The result was evident in the code hearings held in Washington. The lack of organization among the technicians led the employers to propose \$14 a week for qualified chemists; 50 cents an hour for architects; and 40 cents an hour for engineers. No opposition was offered by the employer-controlled professional societies. They sit and wait for prosperity to return. In the meantime they conjure up all kinds of self-help rackets which enable technicians to buy newspapers for their park-bench bedrooms. Typical is



the stunt of the Architects' Emergency Committee of New York: "Manhattan Land Cruises." For a dollar per person per half day (to use their charming lingo) you can have a personally conducted tour of New York. Under the guidance of a "cultured architect" you can "view fascinating memorable phases of New York" which are closed to hoi-polloi. The official in charge will tell you of the wonders of Radio City, the Empire State Building, of Madison Square Garden—all of which you can see under the guidance of men who designed and built these structures. There is no nook, he assures you, of which you cannot get an inside professional view, in this "never-to-be-forgotten adventure." His parting words are that not only will you associate with men of "breeding and culture," but you will give bread and butter to "gentlemen" who will be "eternally grateful." Will architects remain content with being glorified Coney Island barkers, earning a couple of dollars once in a while? The militant Federation of Architects, Engineers, Chemists, and Technicians, the independent organization of all technical employees which in a few months has enrolled more than 5,000 members is the reply.

JOSEPH BRODSKY, International Labor Defense attorney, is scheduled to argue motions this week demanding a new trial for Haywood Patterson and Clarence Norris, the two Scottsboro boys sentenced to die. Last year a similar motion was taken before Judge Horton, who conducted the first Decatur trial. Having consistently refused to grant motions for dismissal, Horton finally yielded to tremendous mass pres-

sure and reversed himself in his decision, admitting that "the evidence greatly preponderates in favor of the defendant." In so far as Horton yielded—though very reluctantly—he was not the perfect expression of Southern ruling class tenacity. For his defection he is likely to find himself on the political scrap heap of Alabama. The "honor of a white woman," be she liar, prostitute, or what not, must be upheld. The supremacy of the white ruling class must not be challenged. A new conviction of the innocent Negro youngsters must be obtained. Judge Horton, a notorious Negro-baiter, was cast for the hangman's role. The manner in which he played his part—excluding pertinent defense evidence, refusing to consider expert analysis of jury-rolls forgery, consistently overruling all objections by defense counsel, and openly coaching state witnesses—forms the legal basis on which the I.L.D. is demanding reversal. Preparations for a world-wide movement of protest in case reversal is denied are now being made. The NEW MASSES urges its readers to join the I.L.D. in an organized protest which will not only free the Scottsboro boys but mark an historic victory in the united struggle of white workers and Negroes for the national liberation of the Negro people.

WE have long known what makes a great educator in America but seldom has one stated his achievements so frankly as did Dr. O'Shea in his pious reflections upon his retirement. He "served" the New York public for 47 years. As Superintendent of Schools, he had always worked, diligently and quietly, in the interests of patriotism. During the war his service rose to real heights. It was then that Dr. O'Shea apparently fully discovered the intimate connection between the public schools and the capitalist state. He organized the "Wake-up, America" parade in which he got 30,000 school children to march. Not content with parading and flag waving, he directed the sale of Liberty Bonds in the New York public schools, having the children sell nearly \$200,000,000 worth of bonds for the supply of munitions to our government and the Allies. For these patriotic services he received the decoration of the Legion of Honor of France and was made a Knight of the Order of Leopold of Belgium. His war activities he now regards as his outstanding work. Why shouldn't he? They are the only "achievements" he can boast.

PROF.
WALL STREET
VENTRILOQUIST



BUT not satisfied with his patriotic services as Superintendent of Schools, Dr. O'Shea leaves behind him on retiring an appeal to his successors to keep the children of our schools uncontaminated. The schools are erected by the government, he says, "as a bulwark of protection for its social, economic and political life, to maintain and perpetuate the ideals of American democracy against every other form of government." Larger number of teachers are going radical every year. Indeed O'Shea paints a most encouraging picture of our educational institutions. Not only are all kinds of subversive doctrines being taught to the school children but the teachers—he is thinking of the demonstration at a meeting of the Board of Education last summer—are losing "the professional spirit, the respect for authority, that have characterized many generations of American teachers." O'Shea has a remarkable nose for smelling out heresy. He insists that "no teacher who ardently holds an extreme view can avoid injecting it into his teaching." It comes out in a sneer, an intonation, an imperceptible gesture. On supervisors rests the responsibility for reporting those who teach subversive doctrine. Putting these two ideas together, it looks as if special courses will have to

be set up whereby supervisors might learn to detect the sneers and "imperceptible" gestures of radical teachers.

A YEAR ago Detroit teachers saw \$480,000 of their hard earned pay go to the bankers. "It would be taking a chance on default to use the \$480,000 for salaries," the controller said. The city did not take "the chance," but the teachers took scrip. They are still peddling it. Today, New York City teachers are facing a second wage-cut. The city administration will not take a chance on default to the big banks which have just concluded a pawnshop arrangement. Every cent of revenue goes to the bankers for the next four years. The banks loan the city money, of course, at a high rate of interest which, unlike teachers' salaries, must be paid regularly, but—all future taxes must not touch their huge real estate holdings! Hence, the move for wage-cuts. Little Napoleon LaGuardia who fooled the teachers into voting for him by a promise of no wage-cuts, has lost no time in announcing nobly that he is prepared to "perform a major operation" in order to save the city's credit. This means, simply, slashing wages to maintain regular interest and principle payments to the bankers. His pose is exactly the same

as that of Roosevelt who cut the pay of Federal employees to ensure interest payments to government bondholders—again the big banks! LaGuardia has already had to make explanations to teachers' delegations. This valiant fighter against graft and corruption will present the teachers with his own hand-made dilemma: either they take a cut in pay, or take a payless pay day. The teachers don't have to accept either horn of his dilemma; they can force upon him a dilemma of their own make: Either the bankers take a moratorium or else they take a slash in interest rate, and pay additional taxes on their incomes and holdings.

IN the recent past a respectable Intelligence Quotient was as necessary as a reputation for good character. Psychologists (whose Intelligence Quotients are doubtless above reproach) had no sooner discovered this elusive quality than they began to invest it with the most imposing powers. It turned out, as every good bourgeois always knew, that there was a positive correlation between intelligence and wealth. To him who hath shall be given! was the verdict of this new gospel. To be sure, one minor point remained to be settled: do people become wealthy because they are intelligent, or are they intelligent because they are wealthy? This was speedily answered in a way to gratify the tender susceptibilities of the wealthy. But the ubiquitous Intelligence Quotient was found to possess even more potent qualities. It was correlated with morality! Delinquency was the effect of a deficient dose of native intelligence. And the psychologists suited action to their conclusions so patriotically that, when the United States entered the World War, they immediately placed themselves at the disposal of the War Department in a body and proceeded to measure scientifically the Intelligence Quotient (morality) of soldiers—for better and more "scientific" slaughter.

WITH mingled emotions, therefore, we read of the Presidential address of Professor Thurstone of the University of Chicago, to the American Psychological Association. Professor Thurstone announces the results of a careful investigation, indicating that the more intelligent college students are inclined to sympathize with communism, to be unpatriotic, atheistic, and to favor free divorce. The less intelligent stu-

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dents, on the other hand, incline more to conservatism, patriotism, etc. What a fall was there! The psychological pillar of capitalist society is crumbling; the Intelligence Quotient is going radical. It would be only fair to call these results to the attention of Presidents Nicholas Murray Butler, Frederick B. Robinson, etc. It may shed some light on their troubles with radical students. If these gentlemen can show proof of a negative correlation between the Intelligence Quotient and docility and social grace, perhaps they will succeed in having Intelligence abolished from the universities.

HOW the clergy presented arms during the last war is now an old story. But the way it is already lining up for the next one is startling. In Brooklyn there is an organization of ministers known as the Alpha Kappa Club. These ministers invited Brigadier General Holbrook down from Fort Hamilton to speak to them. The General outlined the essentials of military preparedness. One of the ministers took exception to the General's talk as well as to the reception of it on the part of his fellow clergymen. In his Christmas sermon he criticized some of his associates as "nominal, hyphenated Christians," and asserted that "Guns and the brotherhood of man do not go together." The other members of the club were incensed and, when the Rev. Greenway refused to apologize, expelled him from the club. His standing by his convictions is admirable, but the way of a minister is hard. His love for some of his fellowmen nullifies his love for the rest. The Rev. Greenway said, after the verdict, that he had no quarrel with anyone. That is just the trouble. He believes in peace, he sees the meaning of bigger armaments, he finds ministers supporting war preparations, and yet "has no quarrel with anyone." If Rev. Greenway were personally in danger of having his head shot off, he would discover cogent reasons for a quarrel.

HEARST'S yellow San Francisco Chronicle recently devoted a large part of its magazine section to educating its readers in Communism. The "information" it provides indicates what may be the latest strategy in the war on Reds. The Chronicle readers are soothed by the statement that Communism in Russia is, after all, Russia's own affair; that the French Commu-

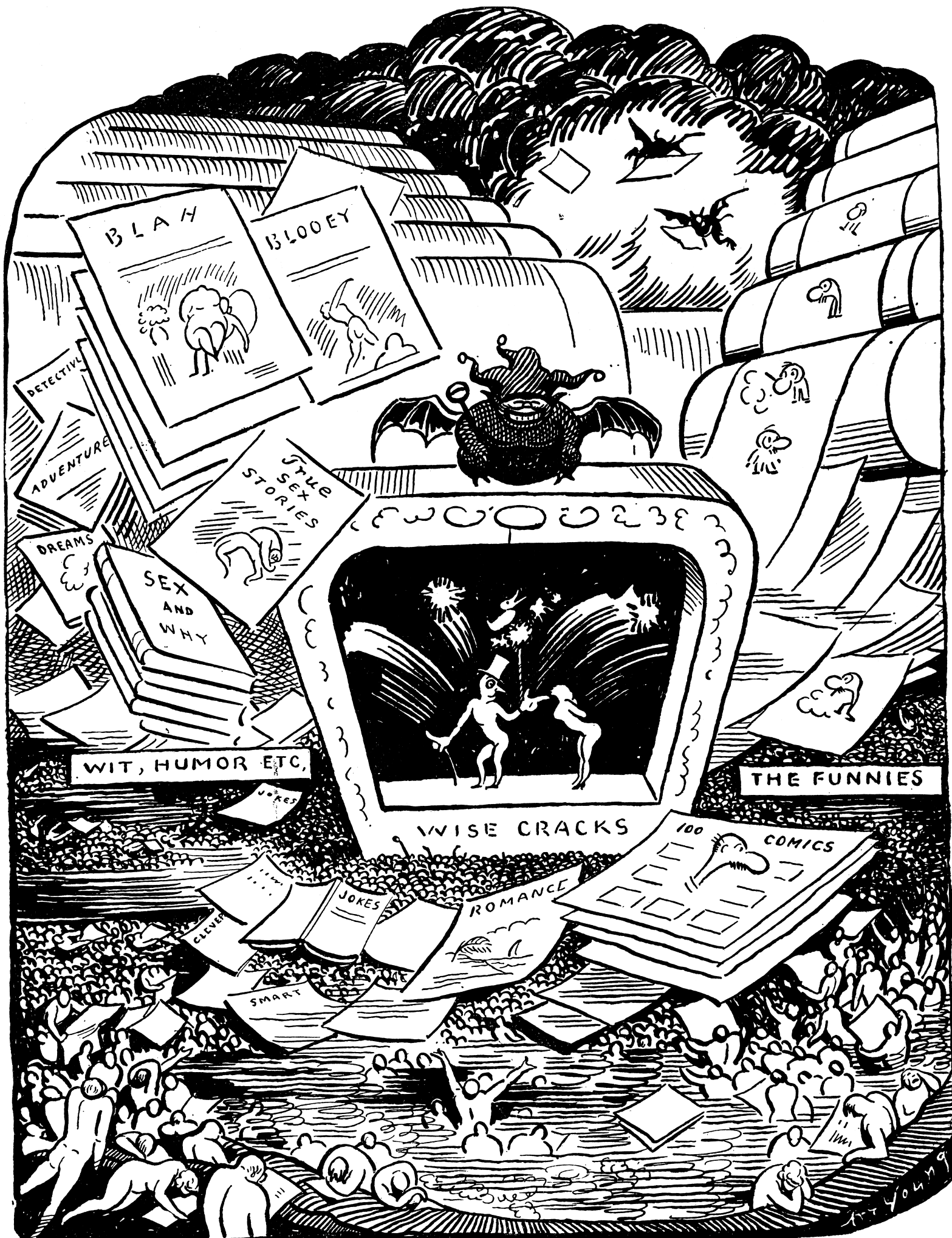
nists are smug little shopkeepers who will do nothing alarming; that the British Communists are at heart solid conservatives who will join other John Bulls in heaving a brick at a foreigner; that the American Communists are foreigners who march and demonstrate through American masses contemptuously indifferent to them. To the general falsity of these statements is added the crowning lie. Léon Blum, the French Socialist party leader is made out to be a "typical Communist". . . No wonder the Chronicle's sage could assure his readers that Communists could be counted on to do nothing alarming!

AS THIS issue goes to press Monsignor J. J. Curran of Wilkes-Barre is in Washington presenting a petition to President Roosevelt allegedly signed by 100,000 miners and residents of the hard-coal producing region of Pennsylvania. A thousand or so miles away John L. Lewis is laying down the law at the biennial convention of the United Mine Workers of America while his strong-arm men keep a watchful eye on the rank-and-file dissident groups scattered throughout Tomelson Hall, in Indianapolis. Which of these friends of the miners—Father Curran or John L. Lewis—is preparing worse pitfalls for the coal-diggers is an academic question. The priest—how these holy men come forward in every major industrial conflict nowadays—bears a petition which declares dissatisfaction with the conciliatory tribunal set up by the Federal Labor Board. It urges the appointment of a board of "competent, honest and disinterested investigators" and that the said board be empowered to recognize the new anthracite miners union of Pennsylvania. The 100,000 names are not only those of miners: business men and owners of the small "dog-hole" mines, knowing the U.M.W. can't hold the miners down any longer and having faith in the strong-arm methods of the new union's leadership, have signed up. Their request to exchange Lewis and Boylan, of the U.M.W.A. for Cappellini and Maloney of the U.A.M. reminds one that fair exchange is no robbery. But in this case it is certain the rank and file will be robbed either way.

THE Indianapolis convention will uncover a substratum of revolt. The rank and file opposition groups from all districts will struggle for unity to fight for the policy adopted by numer-

ous locals nationally. They demand the six-hour day, five-day week, \$6 a day, unemployment and social insurance and other economic advantages. In addition they call for the withdrawal of all U.M.W.A. officials from N.R.A. labor boards, the right to strike, and oppose arbitration over payment of dead-work. Resolutions will be presented calling for struggle against Fascism, for protection of the foreign-born, for the Scottsboro boys and against the constitutional clause prohibiting membership in the Communist Party.

THE last word in economic nationalism has just appeared from Paris. Modern capitalist states, arising on the platform of free trade, progressing to tariff for revenue, then tariff for protection, and now finally to prohibitive quotas and the like, find that these methods must be extended to the fields of art and literature. French literary circles have recently demanded protection for literature. The competition of foreign importations of novels, plays, and criticism, has now apparently become so acute that French writers must run to their government to ask a ban on such things. And, reasonably enough, they base their argument on the methods used against the undesired manufactured goods of other countries. Why not? Isn't literature something bought and sold in the open market? Is it not manufactured to order, in accordance with prescribed formulae, formulae designed by publishers, producers and editors to ensure the commercial success of their ventures? André Billy writes that "our publishers in the future will perhaps be authorized to issue translations of Sinclair Lewis, Thomas Mann . . ., but only on condition these translations are limited to a relatively small number of copies." Why allow these *foreign* works, produced under forced labor perhaps, to compete with our own native literary talent? Of course this would have to be extended to music, poetry, painting, sculpture, and even to works of science. It will now be possible for the scientists of one country or another, finding their work lagging behind that of their *rivals* abroad, to demand of their government a ban on the importation of scientific works. This is one of the best examples of the nationalist *reductio ad absurdum* of capitalism. Maybe for many intellectuals it will be the straw that broke the camel's back.



AMERICAN BALLYHOO

From Art Young's INFERNO—Delphic Studio

War by Spring?

IN DREAD of the Communist virus which may prove of especial potency in an atmosphere of ruthless exploitation and poverty, Japan's secret police have arrested over 8,000 Communists in a single month. A counterpart of these anti-Communist activities at home is the anti-Soviet military aggression abroad. The cumulative evidence that Japan's militarists plot war is overwhelming. Araki's bland denials are the usual diplomatic lies—but what about Japan's refusal to sign a non-aggression pact with the Soviet Union? And what about Japan's virtual seizure of the Chinese Eastern Railway? And what about the new Manchukuo Railway drawn to the very border of the Soviet Union? And the advance of Japan's army through Chahar to Inner Mongolia and thus to the Soviet border from another direction? And the building of a strategic railway close to the Amur River? And the recent naval mobilization in Kyoto? Isn't this evidence enough? But the most damning proof of the anti-Soviet machinations by Japanese imperialists is the recent mysterious visit of Major Akio Doi, of the Japanese army, and of his military staff to Finland and then to Poland. What did they want? What plots did they concoct? Even the most politically naïve must see that Japan is trying to encircle the Soviet Union in an iron ring; that Tokio is preparing for war.

For this end Japan has already gone far toward enlisting German fascism and British imperialism. And Japan now suggests that she and America temporarily forget their conflicting economic interests and join in a profitable imperialist attack on the U.S.S.R. Foreign Minister Hirota is "confident that the United States will not fail to appraise correctly Japan's position in Eastern Asia." Indeed, the United States government did make a very competent appraisal quite some time ago, as evidenced by its open war preparations. Japan, of course, knew this all along. She did not need to be told by Assistant Secretary of War Woodring that the New Deal was war mobilization. Nor could she have been surprised to read that Roosevelt simultaneously vetoed continuation of C.W.A. funds while approving vast new sums for "public works"—and we all know the meaning of "public works."

Japanese militarists see the expediency of getting the United States, Japan's chief imperialist rival, to join with them against the workers' government. And American imperialists, though fully sympathetic to these anti-Soviet intentions, are apprehensive of Japan's ultimate aims in the Pacific.

The intrigues of the Japanese militarists may result in war—and very soon. The papers are full of war: "War by Spring," "War in the Far East," "Japan

Threatens the Soviets." The world is being prepared psychologically. But war can be averted and will be averted if the spirit of international proletarian solidarity triumphs. The exploited masses of the world—workers, farmers, peasants, intellectuals—must refuse to bear arms against their class brothers in the U.S.S.R., must rise to the defense of the Soviet Union: their fatherland! Specifically, their urgent task is to mobilize against war immediately—before war begins. Mobilize on the broadest united front!—now—in the unions, in the basic industries, in the schools and universities, everywhere!

Firing Four Million

SEVEN WEEKS after the brain trust gave birth to the C.W.A., Harry L. Hopkins, Federal relief administrator announced on Jan. 19 that this latest alphabet arrangement was to die quickly and painfully. For once Roosevelt outdid himself. He proposed to throw four million unemployed workers on the street—to meet the demands of bankers that relief expenditures be cut down in order to ensure the value of their investments in government bonds at this particular time when the administration is trying to borrow 10.6 billion dollars. He likewise heeded the demands of manufacturers and Southern planters for cheap Negro and white labor—although at best a few hundred thousand could be reemployed.

The announcement that the C.W.A. would be scrapped was terse and un-

compromising. Hopkins gave it out, and Roosevelt backed him up. Clever demagogue though he is, Roosevelt for once completely miscalculated the reaction. Other politicians, closer to the scenes of starvation and misery under the New Deal, quickly enlightened him. They knew of the fight of workers in relief unions and Unemployed Councils for jobs or cash relief; they could easily picture the situation Feb. 15, when the first half-million are slated for dismissal. Inside of twenty-four hours a tremendous wave of resentment and protest was sweeping the country. Governors, Mayors, Senators, told Roosevelt he was giving the signal for great mass uprisings by his autocratic plan of dooming four million semi-starved workers to complete and unrelieved hunger. Roosevelt, an adept at the art of backing water, executed the customary manoeuvre, and now it seems that Congress will be asked for another \$350,000,000 to continue the C.W.A. in full force until May 1, when it will be discontinued and for another half-billion dollars for "relief expenditures" after that.

Despite all their promises to raise wages, the administration is drastically cutting all C.W.A. pay scales. Workers who had averaged \$12 to \$14 a week are being cut to \$9.60 and \$7.20; in rural communities they will only get \$4.50. Engineers, architects, teachers, and other professional workers are being cut to an average weekly salary of about \$15. In addition to these cuts, made in the face of the rising cost of living, the administration will not hire any more workers, despite the fact that



hundreds of thousands of registered applicants have waited for two months to be given jobs. Mr. Hopkins has already, as a matter of fact, ordered the immediate discharge of 275,000 workers on the ground that fourteen states had already exceeded their employment quotas.

The wage cuts have been put through, and hundreds of thousands of men are being fired, although only half of the original 400 million dollar C.W.A. grant has been spent. If the administration is not lying, there were four million men and women on the C.W.A. These workers, therefore, received on the average \$50 *apiece* for seven to eight weeks work. Now even this paltry sum is to be taken away. Men are being discharged, although the suffering among the unemployed has never been so acute. In New York City alone, 110,000 families are dependent upon relief, 100,000 families upon the C.W.A., and 15,000 families upon private agencies. More than a million New Yorkers are thus dependent for their very lives on either relief or the C.W.A.

Roosevelt's contention that he could not continue to help the unemployed, because it would unbalance his big budget, was, to put it simply, a falsehood. On the very day the end of the C.W.A. was proposed the R.F.C. was given another \$850 million to carry it through 1935, although this was not in the budget estimates. A few days later \$300 million was appropriated to continue the military C.C.C. camps, which Assistant Secretary of War Woodring has described as the first triumphant test of the army's war mobilization plans, until 1935. Roosevelt has also agreed to unbalance the budget to the tune of another \$4 billion in order to guarantee worthless bonds. But C.W.A. funds, (assuming that another \$350 million will be appropriated after Feb. 15) the estimated amount is but 7 percent of the estimated budget, will ruin the new deal!

One of the important reasons that the C.W.A. will be discontinued is that Roosevelt has agreed to the demands of the employers for cheap labor. This was revealed by Robert Allen, Washington correspondent of the New York Evening Post, and has not been denied. It is a sardonic commentary on the N.R.A. codes that employers complained that the C.W.A. was taking workers away from regular industry by offering them \$9 to \$13 a week, an "outrageous sum" that the bosses "could not afford." Four million workers are to be fired so that

planters, turpentine camps, lumber mills, textile plants, etc., can have the very cheapest labor. The process has already started and is to reach a rate of discharge of 500,000 *a week* after Feb. 15.

One of the most despicable aspects of the whole business is the attempt of the

administration to lay the blame for the mass lay-offs on graft in the C.W.A. Four million people are to be fired because it is rumored that \$100,000 has been mishandled. Shades of Senator Fall, Charles Forbes and Warren G. Harding.

Red Cards for Yellow

AN EXODUS of workers from the Socialist Party of California has occurred in the past few weeks. Several hundred members have resigned, at least 3 important locals, East Oakland, Berkeley and Long Beach, have repudiated the action of the state officials, and large numbers of rank and file Socialists have joined either the Communist Party or mass organizations in which the Party has influence.

The Los Angeles correspondent of the New Leader, official organ of the Socialist Party, admitted that "quite a number of branches have been more or less divided, some verging on destruction." This revolt took place after the Socialist Party State Executives rejected the Communist united front proposals which comprised the following five points:

1. Support, by means of defense funds, relief and every possible measure, of strikers—and aiding their fight against the N.R.A. program.
2. Support of the struggles for Federal and State Unemployment Insurance at the expense of the employers and the government.
3. Concerted action to force the repeal of the criminal syndicalist laws, all anti-labor legislation, and the release of all class-war prisoners.
4. Opposition to all fascist activity and to all imperialist war preparations; and for defense of the U.S.S.R.
5. Participation in the struggle to prevent foreclosures, reduce power rates and otherwise improve conditions of the workers and poor farmers.

"We are fully aware of the great programmatic difference that exists between the Socialist Party and the Communist Party," the Communists wrote to the Socialist officials in the letter which accompanied the united front proposals, "but irrespective of these differences there can be no doubt that the five points outlined will really, at least temporarily, improve the conditions of the working class and

poor farmers." By a vote of three to one, the Socialist Party Executive rejected these proposals, justifying its action by the now familiar formula of the Communists—"lack of good faith."

The plight of the Socialist Party is pitiful. Various excuses are offered by the leaders for this distressing situation. The most disingenuous one is made by the Los Angeles correspondent of the New Leader. "Old-time comrades," he writes, "who have watched this development have come to the conclusion that the party has been too careless in admitting people to membership who know little or nothing of Socialist principles. . . ."

It turns out then that workers who support the struggle for unemployment insurance and for better conditions are ignorant of Socialist principles. Otherwise they might go the road of the long extolled Socialist ideologue, Upton Sinclair. He has recently announced himself as candidate for governor of California on the Democratic ticket!

Our Candidate

THE New Republic is offering a \$25-prize for the best poem on the Reichstag fire trial, and we can't help approving the idea. We hail this project as a distinct, however short and hesitating, Step Forward. That the New Republic should recognize a "political subject" as a suitable theme for a poem in dictates — well, something. The NEW MASSES itself is fully aware of the suitability of the subject. In our last week's issue, in fact, we published a poem by Alfred Hayes, *Van der Lubbe's Head*, on just this theme. Believing that the New Republic is interested solely in printing the best poem available on the subject, regardless of all other considerations, we hereby offer *Van der Lubbe's Head* as The NEW MASSES entry in the contest. We await the verdict of the judges with confidence.

The Threat to Railroad Labor

MARTHA ANDREWS

ON Jan. 20, Joseph B. Eastman, Federal Coördinator of Transportation, presented a report to Congress on the tentative plan for public ownership and operation of the railroad systems of the United States. He says in his opening statement, that when an industry becomes as public in character as the railroads "in strict logic it would seem that it should cease to masquerade as a private industry and the government should assume complete responsibility, financial and otherwise." Further on, however, he puts the date of the practicability of such a nationalization at the time when "private enterprise capital will not be able to carry on successfully."

After such an introduction, one might expect a frank exposition of the financial and economic situation of the railroads to follow. This situation, as Milton Harrison, president of the Security Owners' Association, said in a recent speech, "looks black." The *New York Times* of Jan. 21, commenting on Mr. Eastman's report, mentions that the mileage of railroads in bankruptcy doubled in 1932, reaching a total of more than 44,000 miles. About seventy companies are in difficulties. According to Mr. Harrison's figures, in 1932, of seventy-three roads accounting for 91 percent of Class I mileage, only nineteen, operating one-quarter of the mileage, could be classed as sound. The Interstate Commerce Commission's Forty-seventh Annual Report to Congress on Jan. 4 indicates that on the same average the ratio of debt to capital was 56 percent. The average dividend declared on all stock outstanding was 1.5 percent "although not earned in the aggregate." The index of freight revenues as issued by the Interstate Commerce Commission, with seasonal variations eliminated, indicates the following: Jan., 1930, 95.4 percent; Dec., 1932, 54.1 percent; July, 1933, 61.6 percent; Sept., 1933, 54.9 percent. The difference is due to change in tonnage, rates having remained almost constant.

With the present and past low prices and the high and rigid railway rates, the trucking companies have been doing a booming business. The railroad com-

panies file briefs with the N.R.A. against the trucking interests. Mr. Eastman even threatens them with nationalization of the entire transportation system. Meanwhile the trucking companies petition Congress to curtail the privileges which the railroads enjoy, such as loans, exemption from codes, long hours for labor, exemption from workmen's compensation, etc.

Mr. Eastman, however, carefully avoids mentioning these facts. On the contrary, he thinks that the Emergency Transportation Act has unduly "created the impression of a decaying industry. . . . The fact is that what the railroads chiefly need is a new lease on life, a reinvigoration." He even goes so far as to assure us that the "railroad industry is now in a stage of accelerated evolution."

The attempts at reinvigoration began some time ago, by means of R.F.C. loans and the special provisions of Section 205 of the National Bankruptcy Act. According to the Interstate Commerce Commission report, from Feb. to Oct., 1933, 145 carriers applied for R.F.C. loans. To eighty-one roads loans amounting to \$436,405,523 were approved. Some carriers received more than one loan. The National Bankruptcy Act of March 3, 1933 delicately effaces even the label of "bankrupt" from an insolvent railroad. It is now a "debtor." The court officials in charge of the administration of the bankrupt railroads are called "trustees" under the title of the Act, not receivers. It is not necessary, however, that a judge appoint such a trustee. He may leave the operation of the railroad entirely in the hands of its actual management. This is perhaps, in compliance with the wishes of the Coördinator as expressed in his report, "The emphasis should be on the initiative of the private managements, at least until it is shown that this cannot be relied upon."

What further proof can the Coördinator need to convince him that the public cannot rely upon managements which are responsible for the present railway chaos? Nevertheless, these same managements are given a lease on life, R.F.C. loans and fat receivership profits

for the continuation or discontinuation of their bankrupt lines. How large these receivership profits can be is illustrated by the complaint coming from Wall Street that under the new Bankruptcy Act the direct fees of trustees are limited to the pitiable sum of \$25,000 per year. The cost of the receivership administration of the Chicago-Milwaukee-St. Paul Railroad was a cool \$5,000,000.

With much reluctance Mr. Eastman admits that Wall Street is not willing to risk its money by extending credit to the railroads. Hence the R.F.C. loans are a highly satisfactory solution from the standpoint of the bankers. For the banks, in their capacity of railroad stock owners, cash in heavily on an investment which, but for constant transfusion of government funds, would be a dead loss. This recalls the pre-war Russian railroads which constantly operated their lines with losses as high as 1,000 roubles per kilometer and were not willing to change the situation because the government subsidies assured a greater profit to the controlling interests than a commercial operation of the roads could possibly have yielded.

The continuation of this financial policy which pours loans into the bottomless pockets of the corrupt and bankrupt big railroad men is the first aim of the Coördinator's plan. The second is to annul the anti-trust statutes, both Federal and State, and through this make consolidation of the railroads possible. Mr. Eastman's verbal opposition to consolidation is intended to reassure the public that nothing will be done to impair the interest of the small business man and, at the same time, to facilitate consolidation. For by giving the Coördinator the widest powers without commitment to a formal plan, he is free to enforce consolidations or prohibit them as he deems advisable in the "public interest." In order to carry out this duty the assessments for funds to support the Coördinator's office, the report says, "could be somewhat increased to advantage."

According to the estimate of the Railway Brotherhoods, there are 800,000 men displaced at the present time. The

decline in employment on the railroads began in 1923 and was 10.6 percent below the level of that year in 1929, despite the fact that revenue traffic in 1929 was the greatest in railroad history. In May, 1933, the number on payroll was 926,222, or approximately one-half of the annual average for 1923. There was a slight and short-lived rise in employment early in Sept., 1933. There was no simultaneous increase in carloads and passenger traffic, but short lived maintenance projects were carried out under the pressure of the ballyhoo campaign for recovery.

Much more reliable estimates than those of the Brotherhoods are in Mr. Eastman's office. They are kept secret, but a member of his commission has assured us that the number of those laid off "is considerably higher than labor dreams." The estimates of the necessary lay-off in connection with the coördination plan range from 200,000 to 500,000; the former being the railway brotherhood's dream, the latter the Security Owners' Association's stern reality. Professor Douglass Brown, who is research advisor to Mr. Eastman, in his recent speech before the American Economic Association in Philadelphia, maintained that 70 to 90 percent of the economies which will have to be effected are in the form of economies in labor—fewer workers to do more work.

The interpretation which Mr. Eastman gave to the famous Section 7-b of the Emergency Railroad Transportation Act, as early as July 22, has already made it clear to everybody that he intends to push through these labor economies now that the temporary nature of the N.R.A. and C.W.A. reemployment booms are obvious to every newspaper reader, Mr. Eastman no longer hides behind sugar-coated words. He states that "the restriction upon reduction in railroad labor employment now contained in Section 7 of the Emergency Transportation Act should be changed. They go beyond what is reasonable and stand in the way of improvements in operation and service which in the long run will be of advantage to railroad labor. The employees cannot with wisdom oppose progress which will stimulate the growth and development of the industry."

The wisdom demanded of labor is not to stand in the way of fat receivership spoils and loan gifts, but to consent to being thrown on the street for the sake of more secure profits for corrupt con-

trolling interests. In the name of "reason" Mr. Eastman calls on labor to have faith. "If general business conditions improve" then "the labor situation should be much less difficult than it is now." Until that time one and one-half million railway workers are to starve with wisdom.

Mr. Eastman mysteriously speaks of a special report which will later be submitted on this matter. This special report is the work of a committee of minor brain-trustees under Otto Bayer, who spent \$300,000 of the C.W.A. funds on a study in connection with the possibility of dismissal compensations and old-age pensions for railroad employees. When the writer of this article asked the President of the Security Owners' Association "what will you do with those whom you lay off?" he answered with a smile "Promise." Now Mr. Eastman promises that: "where changes in methods of operation or administration are made not because of lack of business but for the primary purpose of performing work more efficiently, salvage of the employees should be a charge upon the savings effected, within reasonable limits." That is meager enough even for a promise. The railroads which will be discontinued because of bankruptcy and where the same management will be entrusted with further administration will dismiss workers by thousands without even a promise of compensation. Where savings will be effected by reorganization, under the present economic crisis, it will be easy to dismiss workers "because of lack of business," and if there are any railroads where this clause could not be applied, where are the savings upon which the salvage of dismissed employees depends?

Where changes are made, for the "primary purpose of performing work more efficiently" the economies will mainly result from reduced labor costs. The "savings effected" will be entailed for an indefinite time by reorganization costs. It is fairly evident that the "reasonable limits" within which labor can hope for dismissal compensation are extremely narrow.

It is not surprising that Mr. Eastman's plan, according to the New York Times, caused little repercussion in Wall Street, and it is no more astonishing that George M. Harrison, Grand President of the Railway Labor Executives' Association, at the Chicago conference last month, spoke in the same tone as Mr. Eastman. He assures us that he is "sug-

gesting nothing more than what the Government has virtually been doing for the past three years." While he pays lip service to the stock demands of labor his deepest concern is for the individual bondholders. His cure is to advocate R.F.C. loans and he hopes for "immediate improvement" in the position of the bondholder when government credit will be legalized.

Instead of fighting against the "unconscionably long hours" on the railroads, as a petition of the trucking interests calls it, and against the dodging of responsibility for the discharge of one and a half million railway workers, the Grand President appeals, in heartbroken tones: "If the railroads would cease their hostility to the legitimate aspirations of their employees, there could be made available to the railroads an abundance of coöperation to assist in solving our common problems." Mr. Harrison and his associates are quite serious in their pledge of coöperation. They serve the railroad bankers and presidents faithfully and do their best to educate the workers in the tenets of Mr. Eastman's "wisdom."

The chief aim of the Coördinator's plan is to protect the money interest. The railroads will therefore be left in private hands as long as there are spoils to be had, whatever their form—through subsidies, receiverships or labor economies.

In the course of the debauch hundreds of thousands of railroad workers will be sacrificed to "progress." Their blood will be upon the heads of private ownership which will save the face of the Roosevelt government. When, at long last, there is nothing left to pillage the government will pay the wreckers a high price for their worthless property. The government will make a bad bargain and Mr. Eastman knows it. This is seen in his uneasy remarks on the necessity of nationalizing the entire transportation industry.

Even if the economic strength of the country could stand the wholesale spoilation incident to nationalization of the entire transportation system, the problems would only be transferred to a different plane. It still would mean planning first and foremost for the preservation of profits, the domination of the moneyed interests, either with the aid of or directly through the state apparatus, and growing unemployment and misery for the masses. This is the travesty of planning under capitalism.

Mansions in the Sky

DAVID RAMSEY

ONE of the latest aspects of the Roosevelt scheme to solve the crisis and unemployment scheme is housing. Under the supervision of the Division of Housing of the Public Works Administration low-cost housing and slum clearance are to serve the double purpose of reviving the defunct building industry and launching a new business boomlet.

The housing problem has grown very acute during the crisis. A recent survey in Philadelphia indicated that while there were approximately 25,000 vacancies, 29,000 families had been forced to double up because of reduction in income. The Bureau of Labor Statistics has found that the number of new dwelling units provided for each 10,000 of population was 121.8 in 1925, averaged 92.5 from 1921-1930, but was 21.4 in 1931 and 5.9 in 1932. In New York 75 percent of all multiple dwellings in Manhattan were slum tenements built before 1900.

It is such conditions that the Roosevelt regime proposes to eradicate. A tremendous wave of ballyhoo has been set into motion, especially in New York. Fat, dumpy social workers who are just "thrilled" at the beauty of the plans, Pathe News, speakers' bureaus, and landlords have been mobilized into what Langdon W. Post, Tenement House Commissioner of New York calls "a fighting force for better housing." As is typical of all parts of the recovery program, a fight has developed between the bankers and the landlords who will profit from slum clearance, and other capitalists who would like the money to be diverted to other capital goods industries. On January 8, the United Press printed a story that the "use of Federal funds for slum clearance and housing projects in general has been abandoned as a major part of the Roosevelt recovery program." Although the U.P. claimed to be "authoritatively informed," Secretary of Interior Ickes denied this in the New York Sun of the same day. To date there has been no confirmation of the U.P. story, and it appears that housing will continue to be pushed.

Behind the housing ballyhoo is the recent trend of direct subsidies and loans by the government to railroads and in-

dustry. Neither decent housing for slum dwellers nor jobs for the 2 million unemployed building workers will be achieved. Technological advance and the purpose of the proposed plans eliminate the possibility that any except a small portion of the unemployed will get jobs. Events of the past few months also disprove Administrator Ickes' promise that the government would not depend "upon private enterprises or limited dividends corporations" to initiate the housing program. All projects to date are of just this nature, that is, are profit-making ventures. A casual survey of the projects shows that they are really designed to give subsidies to building contractors and to raise the realty values of slum areas, and not to furnish low-rental housing.

New York City is a good example of the fact that the rentals of the new housing developments will be prohibitive for workers even if they are employed. The Hillside Housing Corporation is to build 5,740 rooms in the Bronx at a cost of \$6,084,000 with a PWA loan of \$5,184,000. The rent per room will be \$11 a month. In Queens the Dick-Meyers Corporation is planning to build 5,644 rooms at a cost of \$4,168,940 with a government loan of \$3,210,000. The rent here will also be \$11 per room. The big Fred F. French Company which obtained \$8,000,000 from the RFC for its Knickerbocker Village project is planning a monthly rental of \$12.50 a room. Thus the rental of a 4 room apartment for the average family of five or six will amount to \$45 or \$50.

Such a rent figure is astronomical for working class families. A report issued recently by the Lavanburg Foundation illustrates this point clearly. They made an investigation of the 386 families who had been dispossessed by the Fred F. French Company from its Knickerbocker Village property. This slum area is the famous "lung block" which had been regarded as the "worst" in the city. The neighborhood was typical of the slum districts of New York. It is such slum areas that Lawrence Veiller, Secretary of the National Housing Association had in mind when he said that "the United States has probably the worst slums in the world."

The Lavanburg Foundation discovered:

(1) That 79 percent of the 386 families had been able to pay less than \$6 a month per room, and could only pay that sum by doubling up.

(2) That only 97 out of the 386 families had hot water.

(3) That only 119 families had private toilets in their flats.

(4) That only 25 families had bathing facilities.

(5) That not 1 family had steam heat or the equivalent.

The evicted families (86 percent) moved to adjoining blocks, and 319 families were forced to live in Old Law Tenements *declared to be unfit for human habitation by the Tenement House Commissioner in 1900*. Though all except 7 of the families expressed a desire to move into Knickerbocker Village, they were driven to their present rookeries because *only 3 families* were in a position to pay the high rentals of the model housing project.

For what group then does the administrator plan "model housing" which Ickes claims will be put "outside of competition with existing decent housing," but will "unquestionably meet the needs of an income group never before accommodated." Where in New York are there working class families that can spend \$45 to \$50 a month for rent? For that matter, how many working class families outside of New York will be able to pay the \$25 monthly rental that is being planned in Detroit and other places. In 1932, it should be remembered, the Alexander Hamilton Institute estimated that the average annual wage of the employed worker was \$640—about \$12.50 per week. The NRA codes have seen to it that in 1933 and 1934 annual wages will be even lower. The rising cost of living will diminish real wages still further so that in 1934 the average worker will hardly be able to pay \$10 a month for rent.

The present housing program, therefore, cannot benefit either the workers or large sections of the impoverished white-collar groups. The history of capitalism proves that workers could never afford to live decently. All slum clearance schemes, including the present

one, never help the inhabitants of the slums—but the landlords and bankers. The workers are always forced to move to more intolerable rookeries. At the present time the unemployed, no doubt, will be forced to live in hovel-settlements and Hooverilles. During the middle of the nineteenth century there were tens of thousands of German and Irish immigrants in New York who lived in shanty-towns along the Hudson and East Rivers. A similar barbaric fate is being prepared for the unemployed worker today.

The simple truth is that capitalism cannot provide decent housing for workers—employed or unemployed—and make a profit on it. The workers should demand, therefore, that the government stop handing out enormous subsidies to bankers and mortgage holders. They should demand that decent housing become part and parcel of an adequate re-

lief system, and eventually of a national scheme of social insurance. Half of present day relief funds are spent for rent checks, which perpetuate slums that are hygienic and social sores. The government must condemn these tenements as a social evil, and appropriate money for workers' apartments. The slums must be cleared without any deference to special privilege. Modern apartments, as part of a comprehensive building plan must be erected with space for parks, recreational centers, etc. The workers, through their unemployed organizations and trade unions, would participate in the planning, construction and maintenance of the buildings. Unemployed workers would get relief housing as part of general relief, or as part of unemployment insurance. Workers with jobs would pay only a nominal sum—5 or 10 percent of their wages.

This is the only way in which workers

can obtain decent housing under capitalism—as a relief or social insurance right. Relief and municipal housing need not be “self-liquidating.” Its purpose would be not to roll up profits on rat-holes, but to provide adequate living quarters for unemployed and low paid workers. This workers' control of new housing is the first step forward towards the eventual nationalization of all housing for the benefit of the workers, underpaid white collar groups, and poor farmers.

(The National Convention Against Unemployment which will be held in Washington Feb. 3 will have on its agenda, a discussion of relief housing and the utilization of housing projects to provide decent homes and jobs for the unemployed. This problem has become even more important with the impending dismissal of millions of Civil Works Administration workers.—THE EDITORS.)

Pitfalls for Prophets

JOSHUA KUNTZ

THE staggering details and figures of the Second Five Year Plan are once more riveting the world's attention on the victories of Soviet industry and agriculture. But industry and agriculture are of course not the only phases of Soviet life in which momentous and kaleidoscopic changes are taking place. The revolution is unfolding; change is all-pervading. Everything in the U.S.S.R. is in flux. An awakened people is reaching out in all directions, experimenting, making mistakes, achieving, failing, adopting new attitudes one day, other attitudes the next, and still others the day after that. It is well-nigh impossible to record all these changes, to reveal their inner logic, their inevitable sequence. There is always the danger, especially for an outsider, of ascribing permanence to things that are transitory, of interpreting Bolshevik self-criticism too literally, of mistaking temporary vehemences for final judgments. Even trained reporters like Louis Fischer, Maurice Hindus and Walter Duranty, bourgeois observers not accustomed to discern dialectical relations, do not always avoid these pitfalls.

Thus in a recent article in the Nation, Mr. Fischer announces with much satis-

faction that the Soviets are “sloughing off many of their early freakish notions which represented a queer mixture of misplaced radicalism and immaturity.” As illustrations he cites the following: A collar and tie are no longer bourgeois; a gramophone has ceased to be decadent; anathema has been lifted from jazz and fairy tales; teachers and parents are regaining some of their lost authority; marks and examinations are being reintroduced in the schools; the time a student may devote to political activities is now strictly limited; discrimination is being lifted from children of formerly bourgeois parents. In a similar vein Mr. Fischer described the dissolution of the Russian Association of Proletarian Writers in an article in the Nov. 27, 1932, issue of the Herald Tribune. After recounting all the “horrors” of the RAPP past, he exclaimed: “Now RAPP is no more! . . . Stalin and his highest collaborators have stricken it from the list of the living, and none will miss it. . . . Why did it come so suddenly? Why the liberal move which substituted a non-partisan writers' league for the Party's literary dog-in-the-manger? . . . I think the new policy was due directly to the disgust in

highest quarters with the crude persecutions of the fellow-travelers by RAPP and with the ugly personal concomitants of such tactics. . . .”

In almost every interpretation of a major event, Mr. Fischer is consistent in his cataclysmic, catastrophic conception of history. For fifteen or ten or five years everybody is “silly,” “freakish,” “childishly leftist”; then somebody, generally someone on top, say Stalin, sees the light. He pushes a mysterious button and presto—everything is changed! The Soviets, says Mr. Fischer, have been abandoning their various “modernistic-communistic schemes . . . because the latter failed to produce results, or because they produced harmful results, or because they were too silly to live on forever.”

Let us examine some of the illustrations given by Mr. Fischer. Take the simplest: the collar and tie. In saying what he says about collars and ties, Mr. Fischer is accurately reflecting a contemporary Soviet attitude. It is certainly true that at the present time the average Soviet citizen would dismiss his earlier objections to such innocent adornments as utterly “silly.” But Mr. Fischer is not reporting what the average Russian

is saying, he is reporting a cultural change, the disappearance of a widespread prejudice in the realm of fashion. Had he viewed this change in historic perspective, he would have realized that in the early years of the Revolution the average Soviet worker's aversion for collars and ties was not quite so silly as he now thinks it was.

Even in the U.S.A. where we are still relatively remote from the proletarian revolution, silk hats, spats, canes, diamonds and similar upper class trappings are not quite to the taste of class-conscious workers on the picket line or unemployed workers on the breadline. In Czarist Russia the gulf between the upper and lower classes was much wider. To the Russian workers and peasants, collars and ties were impossible luxuries, insignia of aristocrats, exploiters, "bourgeois," of "elements" who from the very beginning were inimical to the workers' revolution and its aims. It was normal that in a period of intense class strife, anything suggestive of the dislodged, but still menacing bourgeoisie, whether it was a tie, a gramophone, or jazz, would be anathema to the emerging social strata. In their first revolutionary efforts at self-definition and self-assertion it was not only psychologically inevitable, but also politically desirable that the worker and peasant masses tend toward, and be encouraged in, crystallizing their detestation of the old in every possible manner. Contempt for such class symbols as collars and ties was in the early stages of mass awakening a welcome, even if minor, manifestation of proletarian and peasant self-assertiveness, a useful, even if exaggerated, expression of popular repulsion from bourgeois standards. Rather than being "silly" and "freakish," it was normal, wholesome, and in perfect accord with the larger purposes of the revolution.

These sentiments persisted throughout the N.E.P. period. Expensive European clothes, jazz, phonographs, etc., were now associated with nepmen, speculators, merchants, foreign concessionaires, counter-revolutionary specialists, gamblers, embezzlers, saboteurs and degenerated revolutionists. It was only with the triumphant advance of the First Five-Year Plan that things commenced perceptibly to change. Universal employment, collectivization, the virtual disappearance of nepmen, speculators, and kulaks put the workers and the poor and middle peasants in a secure position of economic and social dominance. The crest of the bourgeoisie was

definitely broken; its prestige irreparably undermined. The enthusiasm released by the Plan infected large sections of the old intelligentsia, the vast majority of whom began loyally to cooperate in the business of socialist construction. A new and numerically large Soviet intelligentsia grew up—young teachers, engineers, physicians, librarians, writers, artists, painters, musicians. These virile scions of the proletariat and the peasantry practically dissolved and absorbed the thinned ranks of the old pre-revolutionary intelligentsia. Though the class struggle still continued, the need for excessive proletarian and peasant self-assertiveness began to subside.

With the gradual diminution of class distinctions on the economic plane, there has been a corresponding diminution of class distinctions on other planes. Intellectuals have begun to look more and more like workers and workers more and more like intellectuals. Contact with thousands of well-dressed American and European workers, with delegations of communists and labor union representatives from other lands, with foreign moving pictures have tended to convert the Russian workers to the view that European clothes were concomitants of superior culture and higher standards of living. Universal employment made adornments more or less accessible to any worker or peasant who cared to obtain them. The once despised collars and ties and hats, one gramophone or other small luxuries—stigmata of the bourgeoisie—were beginning to regain a modicum of respectability. Indeed, they were becoming symbols of "civilization," "culture." This is what the Marxists call the negation of the negation. What was normal and wholesome in one set of circumstances has come to be regarded as "silly" and "freakish" in another set. Even jazz, with the disappearance of its bourgeois exponents, is considered permissible, though it has not become very popular. Such is the dialectic of history.

Let us take another example—education. Before the revolution the relatively few Russian schools were bourgeois-aristocrat in character. Children of the exploited classes had scarcely the opportunity to obtain an education, 70 per cent of the total population was illiterate. Within the school prevailed a deadening, semi-military discipline. Subjects were traditional; pedagogy was antiquated; teacher authority, absolute. The revolution naturally brought sweeping changes. The first flushes of proletarian

self-definition were accompanied by a sharp negation of almost everything associated with the old school. If the czar's school aimed at preparing the sons and daughters of the landed gentry and the richer merchants for careers of idle individualism and heedless exploitation, the purpose of the new school, on the contrary, was to train generations of worker and peasant children into industrious builders of a collectivist society. A change in the social composition of the student body was ineluctable. Since there were not enough schools to accommodate all children in the Soviet Union, those of the formerly oppressed classes were offered every preference. Magnanimity to the class enemy was out of the question.

The situation was aggravated by the circumstance that there were no textbooks embodying the proletarian point of view and that the teachers were petty bourgeois, psychologically and ideologically inimical to the revolution. Official encouragement of the Dalton plan, the emphasis on the project and complex method of education were no doubt the expression of a general revulsion against the obtuse authoritarianism which reigned in the old school and of a distrust which the vanguard of the revolution felt for the old teachers and the old books. Accordingly, instead of concentrating on books, the children were urged to learn through participation in the economic and political struggles, through activity in pioneer and young Communist organizations, through collective work and play, through experimentation and student self-government. Formal education suffered, to be sure. School discipline pretty nearly collapsed. "Children," Mr. Fischer tells us, "learned to be self-reliant young anarchists." Of course, "anarchists" is an absurdly incorrect word to use (there was discipline in the pioneer and comsomol organizations), but it certainly is true that the Soviet children were developing a revolutionary self-reliance which precluded any possibility of their falling easy prey to anti-Soviet influences. While a new generation was being trained, the youngsters in the schools were on guard, exposing, assailing and driving out teachers who were too ostentatious in their bourgeois sympathies.

In the home, too, the children's newly acquired self-reliance, though disturbing to some parents, was an indubitable gain for the revolution. The more the parents stressed traditional attitudes and obsolete ideologies, the more did the inde-

pendent attitude of the children serve as as corrective. Parenthood in itself was insufficient reason for authority. Filial loyalty did not imply unchallenged acceptance of everything urged by the elders. Everything was subjected to the acid test of the revolution. In the home, as in school, youth was on guard.

The revolution is now in its seventeenth year. What was once inevitable and desirable has gradually become obsolete. There are about fifty million young people in the Soviet Union who have known only the Soviet regime. A new generation of teachers and parents has grown up. The gulf between fathers and children, between teachers and pupils has vanished. Millions of young people, who only yesterday were themselves pioneers, members of the Young

Communist League, of the Red Army, of collective farms, of shock brigades, are now parents and teachers. They are in possession of a fund of revolutionary experience which they are eager to transmit to their children, and thus lay the basis for a socialist culture.

Under such conditions, the rapprochement between parents and teachers on the one hand and children and pupils on the other is to be expected. A pioneer will naturally be ready to accept the guidance of an older person who has the prestige of Party membership or at least of enthusiastic Soviet citizenship. Some mild form of school and home discipline is not an undesirable thing. A collectivist society must be a disciplined society. And with the contradictions between home and school and the general

life of the country more or less removed, such discipline is not likely to degenerate into a rigid, semi-military, deadening kind of superimposed pressure which is always the result of an arbitrary attempt to overcome irreconcilable contradictions. It is bound to be human, elastic, not devastating to the character of those who exercise authority and not in any way irksome to the children. It is bound to have less of the nature of what is commonly understood by *discipline* and increasingly more of the nature of *co-operation*, coöperation among teachers and parents and children in the common task of building a socialist society.

(Joshua Kunitz's next article will deal with recent changes in other phases of Soviet culture, mainly the Arts.)

Toward an American Anthology

M. SHULIMSON

Ethel Miller

How goes the movement comrades?
Is Mooney free, are the Scottsboro boys out?
When the doctor told me that I had thyroid trouble,
That I'd have to quit the movement, rest and lay in bed
For months and then perhaps have an operation
And rest again for months,
I said, "Comrade Doctor, the hell with that rest stuff.
I've got work to do, meetings, speeches, organization.
Wait till after the revolution and I'll rest on some
Millionaire's estate in a workers' sanatorium."
"You don't understand," he said, "You're burning yourself
out—
You can't last if you keep this up:
You keep up the pace, get beat up again,
Possibly spend another term in jail
And you'll be gone, burned out."

Sammy Collins

After Dominick, Steve Larkin, Joe Moss and I squawked
about the food
The captain had us arrested;
And Judge Ford, sitting up high, looking down on us
With his skinny face and bald head
Said, "You bums don't appreciate what is being done for you.
Stay away from the lodge and the Army
And don't panhandle on the streets or I'll send you up for
ninety days."
"Case dismissed," he said.
We came out and Steve said, "Well, we can stay here and
starve,
We can stay here and try to get sent up to the coop
Or we can grab a freight and go somewhere else."
They decided to hop a freight but I was scared of trains
And tried to bum lifts out instead.

It wasn't bad, I got a few rides and a farmer gave me a meal
But toward night I was miles from a town.
Nobody would pick me up; it started to get dark;
Dogs barked at me from behind barns and cars would whiz
by so fast
There'd be a glow of light as they came up a hill—
And the blinding lights in my eyes as they went by.
I, walking and running, scared as hell of the dark in the country
And the cars and trucks speeding up as they saw me.
Until suddenly one came along with lights so bright
I couldn't see where I was running
Until the sudden crash—
And my head bust open.
And I saw my hand filled with blood and gravel
Before the dark came down again and forever.

Joe Moss

I used to think, If I could only get up and talk,
If I could rise someway, float suspended in the air
And speak to the millions who would gather beneath me—
Say to them the few simple words and yet have them hear
—And understand.
Say to them, "Brothers, comrades, here is the land; here are the
factories;
Here is enough for all of us, work and joy and good rich life
Ours for the taking.
Brothers, comrades, seize on life, it is good—
It is yours."
And if they would only understand;
The wretched and the poor, workers, farmers, men and women
and children,
That here in their very hands is a new life,
A good life.
I thought of that again
In that instant of falling between two freight cars
And waiting for the wheels to cut me in half.

Dynamite and Scabs

MARY HEATON VORSE

WILKES-BARRE.

AT MIDNIGHT, on Jan. 21, a bomb went off in Chester Czwalina's frozen back yard, which is at 50 Delaware Street in Plains Township, just outside of Wilkes-Barre. The bomb didn't surprise him much. It was put off in the yard because he is financial secretary of the new union, the United Anthracite Miners, formed as a protest against the corrupt methods of the United Mine Workers' officials.

Thirty people were shocked by the bomb. It shattered fifty windows in five houses. It threw Czwalina's sick boy out of bed, jarring his next door neighbor, who had a baby three days old, and ripped open the back part of his house.

"If I had stopped to get a drink of water, it would have got me," he told me. "I thought I heard something out in back. I was going out to see what it was. I switched on my light to get a drink of water, and the bomb went off. It didn't surprise me. I thought they would try and get me, but I thought they would try to get the secretary of the Union first. I was sure they would go after Frank first, but they tried to get me first."

"They" means the thugs in the Lewis organization, although Czwalina didn't say so. Dynamite "pineapples" have been one of the most popular methods used to terrorize members of the new unions formed by the rank and file as a protest against the corruption in the old, formerly militant union of the United Mine Workers of America.

All day long on the steep hillside, Delaware Street, in Plains Township, groups of miners came to see the wreckage. They gathered in groups around the two story house while they talked.

Czwalina's story was the story of why there have been revolts throughout the mining regions against Lewis' organizations. "Why shouldn't we form a new union?" he said. "The old union wasn't a union; it was a graft. There hasn't been a union meeting for eighteen months. There are 800 union members in our local. Their \$1.00 a month was taken by the check-off.

"The check-off, formerly one of the things for which the United Mine Workers fought, is a system by which the coal operators deduct \$1.00 a month from all miners' pay for union dues. These dues are paid in directly to the union officials. The union officials of this local received the \$800 a month, and that is exactly all they did to promote the welfare of the miners.

"If you ask for a union meeting, if you talk union, out you went," said Czwalina. "I've been thrown out for asking for a union meet-

ing when 800 of us paid our \$1.00 a month." The check-off which was, of course, originally designed to make a closed shop, proved to the corrupt leadership only a means for fattening the purses of the union officials.

"We formed a union of our own to get away from this. We don't want no more check-off. The United Mine Workers went down after they had the check-off. They didn't care any more about us rank and file miners. They didn't care if union agreements were broken. They didn't care any more whether there was compensation or not. They didn't care whether we were only getting one dollar a day, or sometimes nothing, for the work we did."

Compensation is the money received by miners for dead-work. Dead-work means the time the miner takes to get to his job. If he works very far underground, it may take him a half hour to get to the place where he works. Dead-work means shoring up with timbers so the coal and rocks won't fall on his head. Dead-work includes anything a miner may do beyond actual cutting of coal. Under union agreement, a miner was paid for this time he spent preparatory to cutting his coal.

Plains Township is only one of the many mining communities surrounding Wilkes-Barre. It includes big mines that employ thousands of miners; it includes small mines, only fifty miners or less are employed. Some of these mines are called "dog-hole mines," so poor that there are practically no safety devices; holes in the ground where there is no head room where a miner may be cutting coal at an impossible angle.

The country around Wilkes-Barre is cataclysmic, violent country. Swift hills alternate with valleys. All along river bottoms are the great pyramids of the culm piles of the mines. Coal breakers lead from the mine tipples. Tucked around the mines are the mining towns, shabby, sad, towns, but better than the mining towns in unorganized territories. Miners in organized country could own their homes. During the years of the depression, thousands of miners' homes have been on sale. Five thousand were advertised for sale one day last summer.

The miners who knew how to fight evictions formed a new union. On Jan. 14 the United Anthracite Miners went on strike in District 1, whose center is Wilkes-Barre, one of the many new unions which have been formed during the last three years as a protest against the Lewis machine.

Twenty-five thousand miners went on strike. They tied up some of the greatest mines in this country. Anthracite Districts 1, 7 and 9,

had been organized longer than any other in the coal districts. There is no miner in this district who has not a working knowledge of the class struggle. Before the United Mine Workers organized in 1902, organization had gone on in the mines. The Molly Maguires had operated in this country. The Knights of Labor came after them. When they organized into the United Mine Workers of America, the miners boasted that no charter had been won without blood.

The miners, in this part of the country, in former days, knew a certain modicum of security. There had been a time, long ago, when the union protected them; when the union built up a wage-scale, before the days when the United Mine Workers did more than pocket the check-off. The new union, the United Anthracite Miners, was only a part of the general revolt against John L. Lewis. This revolt led to the forming of the Progressive Miners in District 12 in Illinois. It led to the forming of independent unions in Ohio and Pennsylvania. The National Mine Workers had unions around the Pittsburgh district, and in Tennessee and Kentucky.

Unfortunately, the leadership of the Progressive Miners, and that of the United Anthracite Miners, has been weak where the United Mine Workers machine has been vicious. Thomas Maloney and Rinaldo Cappallini lacked Lewis' strength, and had all the vices of self-seeking leadership.

Maloney has been soft-pedaling any effort to spread the strike, pending Father J. J. Curran's petition to the President. This petition reads:

We, the undersigned, residing within the confines of District No. One, of the anthracite coal regions of Pennsylvania, feeling dissatisfied with the conciliatory tribunal set up by the Federal Labor Board recently, earnestly and respectfully request that in lieu of said tribunal, you appoint a board of competent, honest and disinterested arbitrators to investigate, adjudicate and conciliate the abuses and grievances prevailing in the coal mines for many years in the past; and that said board be authorized to recognize the new Anthracite Miners' Union of Penna., providing its membership should exceed in numbers that of the United Mine Workers' Union of America.

Upon assurance of a favorable reply to this request, we promise fullest coöperation in the settlement of the present strike, which threatens the downfall of the anthracite coal industry of the State, and a paralysis of the business life of the entire region. Trusting to hear from you promptly and favorably, we remain,

Most respectfully and humbly yours,
Reverend Father J. J. Curran.

The first arbitration board consisted of three representatives of the mine operators, and three district heads of the United Mine Workers. A new arbitration board, if there is one, will obviously be but little better. It

will not include representatives of the actual workers in the mines.

Meanwhile, District No. 9, the Shamokin district sent a letter to Maloney indicating that this district might come out on strike, and join the United Anthracite Miners in a concerted move against Lewis, which would inevitably draw in District No. 7. The whole anthracite district in its train would then have revolted against Lewis.

All up and down the valley, the rank and filers, the miners on the job, could tell you that there would be a convention Sunday in Shamokin. This was denied by Maloney's office. District No. 9, evidently ready for a move, did nothing. Maloney was obviously waiting for news from Washington.

Meantime, 120 state troopers were stationed in barracks ready to take Lewis' scabs, under guard, to work. The papers of the district clamored that the strike was over. On Saturday, on Sunday, meetings were held in union halls. The rank and file miners refused to go back to work. The rank and file miners decided to fight the injunction.

On the fourteenth story of the Savings Bank and Provident Loan Building is the headquarters of the new union. It is remote and inaccessible to the rank and file who are scattered in mine-scarred towns for 30 miles.

Here you can read the causes behind the strike—in the pay slips gathered for the union.

"The papers say we're only striking for union recognition," one miner protested. "That is not so. We're striking for a resumption of a union wage-scale. Here, look at this." He took out from a large package a wage slip. Here were the miner's credits, \$99.00 for two weeks work—on the other side were the deductions. Deductions for explosives, for the blacksmith shop, for all manner of things, they amounted to \$98.99. The pay envelope for

two weeks' work amounted to one cent. There it was in its envelope, an eloquent testimony to why miners strike.

"And look at this," said the miner. On another pay check, on the deduction side was the item "one hog, \$5.00." "That mine owner has a pig farm and he makes the miners buy his hogs," the miner explained. "And see here, 'one mule \$5.00.' Miners aren't supposed to furnish the mules—that's a new one." One pay check followed another, men getting a dollar for a day's work; a dollar and a few cents, and even that work not steady. Men working long hours shoring up walls to prevent rock falls, for no pay at all. A dollar a month from each man flowing into the pockets of union officials, who are paid further by the mine operators to do nothing about it.

Now they have struck. There is a great stir all through anthracite, which doesn't stop in District 1. In small mean towns dominated by the huge pyramid of a culm pile, miners met all Saturday and Sunday, in small halls. Saturday evening a union meeting of delegates from the district was held in Wilkes-Barre.

"Stay out," everyone voted. "Fight the injunctions."

"Will we fight it?" one miner said to me. "Sure. If we paid attention to all the injunctions we've had we'd better never strike at all. Sure we'll go on the picket line. Let them Lewis' scabs go to work nursed by state troopers. We'll be there!"

The petition has gone to Washington signed by 100,000 miners and by business men. Among the miners exists unfortunately a belief that a "fair" arbitration board will help them. They will be told to go back to work pending an investigation.

"Good boy—go back to work and keep quiet." How many times have workers heard that and listened.

Maloney talked over the radio Sunday at the hour when rank and file miners drove over to Shamokin to wait there in vain for a convention.

"Your strike has been won," he said. "I desire to do everything within my power to bring the strike to an early end, satisfactory to all. There will be action in a right direction within a few days."

Not all miners believe in the efficacy of the Curran petition. One colliery, at least, adopted resolutions demanding that union officials stop dealing through Father Curran. "We don't like meetings behind closed doors where miners are not represented," they protested.

The miners have formed the new union to make it a powerful weapon wherewith to improve their conditions. They are strong two-fisted men with a long fighting record.

The Rank and File opposition has adopted the following resolutions:

To reject arbitration schemes, and that the following demands be placed before the Coal Operators:

(1) That the miners be given the right to belong to a union of their own choosing.

(2) Where two unions exist in one mine, that the operators recognize a joint committee from both unions.

(3) For the Colliery rate sheet-rate, operators to pay rate sheet-rates before any settlement.

(4) Guarantee that there be no discrimination against any miner.

Meantime the cards are stacked against these fighting miners. The leadership is conciliatory. The state troopers are there. There have been three injunctions. All the forces of press, judiciary, and armed force of the state are massed against the miners. And leading the strike-breaking activities are the United Mine Workers, strike-breaking openly by day, and by night planting bombs in the back yards of members of the new union.

Nightgown Riders of America

EDWARD DAHLBERG

(Although the comic opera insurrectionists behind the various revamped Ku Klux Klan shirts are inconsequential in themselves, they are significant as political trends. Even the smallest, doggerel Napoleon, like a Hitler, can rise to leadership. And in rapidly reviewing the fatuities and illiterate inanities of a Pelley or an Art Smith, there is no attempt to belittle the seriousness of these sporadic, mushroom movements. The role of the social democrats, and the silly beer putsch staged by the slapstick insurgent, Adolf Hitler, in Munich, 1923, have been too instructive.)

WILLIAM DUDLEY PELLEY, seer of the Silver Shirts, and a kind of outhouse, picaresque Rabindranath Tagore, has had a career worthy of a column in the Americana of the Mercury.

Erstwhile treasurer of a toilet paper company in Springfield, Mass., 1909-1912 (see Who's Who), and at one time a secretary with the International Y. M. C. A. (during American intervention in Siberia, 1918-1919), then a scenario writer in Hollywood, he is today one of the venal harbingers of reaction and Fascism in America. Founder of Galahad College (for Aryans only) which was created for the purpose of training American storm troopers in graduate courses in anti-semitism, Fascism and red-baiting, he is also an editor and a soothsayer. Pelley has had astral communion with the disincarnated shade of Adolf Hitler from whom he received instructions and subsidies of a much less other worldly sort.

The Silver Shirts of America, started less than a year ago, has a culture and a philosophy behind it. An admixture of fake cosmology

and postcard evolution, after the manner of, "If I were a tadpole, and you were a fish, in the Paleozoic times," it served Pelley first as spiritualist and then as functionary for Nazi agents. Pelley lives in Asheville, North Carolina, a pleasant, resortish town whose bland climate attracts tuberculars and the leisure-class—arable ground for theosophical speculation.

Incidentally when Pelley goes to his office, he removes his good clothes and puts on an old pair of trousers and shoes in order to give the appearance of austerity and frugality. Pelley has received money from wealthy widows who wished to communicate with their dead husbands. The Seer almost succeeded in marrying off his nephew to a relative of Senator Reynolds, a widow, who wanted to make clairvoyant cable connections with her dead

husband. Pelley promised to put through this message provided she would become the wife of his nephew; but she declined.

However, as spiritualism did not prove lucrative enough, and as a Nazi official was looking about for an alert American propagandist, William Dudley Pelley shifted his interests to anti-semitism and organized the Silver Shirts. He showed no intention of burying his mystagogical gifts which he immediately brought to this new movement; but proceeded to develop a philosophy for the Silver Shirts based on the knowledge of Sanskrit, pituitary glands and God. Briefly, his thesis reads as follows: the nordic's evolutionary metamorphosis is traced from the lizard. The most highly developed nordics, who come from lizards, have pituitary glands at the end of which is the Radio Eye, which can see into the Realms of Higher Frequency, that is, the Styxian regions of the dead. William Dudley is a highly developed nordic and has at the nethermost end of his pituitary gland such a Radio Eye.

Pelley, an apostle of Nazi Gleichschaltung, has coordinated bookkeeping, spiritualism and Hitlerism in the following way: In May, he had collecting agents at work in California, Ohio, Pennsylvania, Maryland, Utah, Nebraska and the South. These agents were employed on a commission basis and received half of each ten dollar membership fee, and twenty-five percent on all money paid for dues, tax, literature and general contributions. Silver Shirt subsidiaries for raising funds were established: The League for the Liberation, The Foundation for Christian Economics, The Galahad Press, and The Galahad Fellowship Extension. It goes without saying, that like the Galahad College, which actually does not exist except on papers, these Silver Shirted auxiliaries are theosophical fictions somewhere at the end of Pelley's pituitary gland.

A few excerpts from Pelley's sleazy sheet, *Liberation*, indicating their similarity in tone, temper and contents to the Nazi organs, are in place here. In short, only a few weeks ago, there appeared in *Das Neue Deutschland* a verbatim transcript of Pelley's article in *Liberation*. Simultaneously, Grissible, acting Nazi leader, announced that the Friends of the New Germany and the Silver Shirts are on the most amicable terms and "welcome wholeheartedly the wonderful understanding which the Silver Shirts have for the Nazis."

Liberation says that Dawes, Young, the Van Sweringen brothers of Cleveland and Lenin are Jews. Further: "In America there are hundreds of men who saw nothing extraordinary that Senator Morrow 'happened' to be stricken fatally the day after his attendance at a Jewish banquet." And elsewhere (July 15, 1933, Vol. IV, No. 13): "speaking of applause (reference to President Roosevelt's yachting costume alias Rosenfeld), have you noticed how thin and spasmodic it is of late, when the sport shirt, the ice cream pants and the old hat are paraded for our aforesaid weekly edification." Also: "Mutilated bodies of women hostages, and S. Ivanovna, owner

of a drapery business, and Mme. Khlopova, a property owner, had their breasts slit open and emptied. It is all but impossible to enumerate the forms of savagery which the Jewish Chekka employed. A volume would not contain them." (*Liberation*, Vol. 5, No. 1, August 26, 1933).

This same pseudo-proletarian appeal to the masses is also found in Goebbels' early writings. Note the descriptive cartoonist's epithets and the orientation to workers in the Nazi *Sozi*, a pamphlet by Goebbels: "There can surely be nothing more hypocritical than a fat, well-fed capitalist who protests against the proletarian idea of class struggle."

The aforementioned quote is typical of the disingenuous and fake proletarian political vocabulary adopted by the National Socialists who have bilked and betrayed the workers more shamelessly than any party in the history of Europe,—the Nazis who have abolished collective bargaining, dissolved all organizations of "Marxist class warfare," and decreed in their stead that the wages of employees shall rest upon the "social honor" of employers. That is, upon Fritz Thyssen, the coal and steel king of the Ruhr, one of the principal instigators of the World War, and today an archetype "labor trustee" of the Third Reich.

Among other mushroom Fascist organizations that have sprung up in North America are the Blue Shirts in Quebec, the Crusader White Shirts in Chattanooga, Tennessee, and "General" Art Smith's Khaki Shirts in Philadelphia. A brief case history of Art Smith should be recorded: At the age of eight he was committed to the County House for stealing a horse, a pistol and for attempting to shoot the sheriff. Later, but still a minor, he was about to be indicted for the murder of a drunken lumberjack whom he had "rolled," taking his watch and ninety cents, and then burying him underneath a dunghheap; but the man recovered.

Approximately illiterate, he had no difficulty in enlisting in his ranks the Philadelphia police. His men carried clubs, "loaded" riding crops and guns, and like all the Vigilantes in the history of America, who have murdered and brutally beaten workers, they were abetted and aided by the forces of reaction. The papier mache "general" rode about in swanky automobile with two armed guards standing on the running board.

Smith had a large store of Lee-Enfield rifles, which can only be obtained by order of the U. S. War Department, and he challenged the government to find them, but the Department of Justice, dealing with a useful strike-breaker and a thug, did nothing.

The Khaki Shirts have since fallen into obscurity; but white-haired boys like Seward Collins and Lawrence Dennis have come to take their place. The *American Review*, the literary trade journal of Fascism in the United States, has become a fustian *Liberation*, on a slightly higher level.

Collins, like Lawrence Dennis, editor of *The Awakener*, has joined ranks with Pelley,

buffoon meglomaniac; Art Smith, pathological criminal type; Rosenberg, sadist; Goering, dangerous paranoiac and morphine addict, who was committed to an asylum in Stockholm in 1925; and Captain Roehm, notorious pervert who created a scandal in Berlin a few years ago—a delectable coterie to whom the masses of unemployed and starving should turn as their political leaders.

In the meantime, Adolf Hitler is enjoying the claue of the American press in the novel and unpredictable role of good Samaritan and connoisseur of music. Hitler is shown in a photograph on the front page suavely bowing in dinner jacket to Gigli, Italian opera singer, which makes him a lover of the fine arts. Through the Radio Eye and the pituitary gland of Ivy Lee, Hitler is so emotionally affected by the plight of a hitch-hiker crossing the American Continent, that he sends him money. Unsuspecting readers who may not know that Hitler is doing nothing to feed German workers who have been reduced to a pellagra diet of potatoes, and that every first-rate composer, writer and artist has been compelled to fly for his life from the terroristic storm troopers in Germany, are offered this mendacious fare by American newspapers.

Each week at Turner Hall some agent provocateur from Germany speaks to large audiences of German-Americans. Last Tuesday there was a lecture announced on "Children's Institutions and Homes in the Ruhr," but not a word was mentioned on this topic, the platform agent confining himself to—"Awaken German!" Parents are asked to enroll their children in private Nazi schools. Under the heading, University of the State of New York, State Education Department, they are offered, *Freie Kurse Fur Erwachsene*.

Hitler's *Mein Kampf* is the bible for Deutschen Rings in America, German concert, dancing and singing groups. These are the new little innocent clubs behind which the political tactics of Hitlerism are masked. In an unbowdlerized edition of *Mein Kampf*, there appears the following, which might have been written in collaboration with Judge Callahan who has condemned the Scottsboro boys to die: "The black-haired Jewish youth lies for hours in ambush, a satanic joy in his face for the unsuspecting girl whom he pollutes with his blood . . . It was, and is, the Jew who brought Negroes to the Rhine, brought them with the same aim and with deliberate intent to destroy the white race. . . ."

In both Hitler's swastika regime and in the mouldering plantocratic and industrial south, it is the Jew and the Negro who are pilloried as the classical ravishers and rapists. The political observer, however, is compelled to look to the harrowing decline in the world markets, to starvation and unemployment, and not to race, color or creed for the real reasons.

The nightgown ghost riders are spreading Fascist terror in Mexico and South America. And in this country, it is the American Legion, the Patriotic Coalition Societies, A. F. of L. officials and Congressmen who are giving the illiterate Pelleys and Art Smiths their support.

Voices from Germany

Death to Stillness

THERE WERE four hundred prisoners in the concentration camp of P. in Braunschweig. Four hundred workers of the city of Braunschweig. It was only by accident that they learned that Clara Zetkin had died in Moscow more than a week before. Many of them had met her face to face and vividly remembered her last speech delivered in the Reichstag under the shadow of death. They also learned that she had been buried in the wall of the Kremlin near Lenin's tomb.

At once they all agreed to honor the memory of their dead comrade, but they did not know how to show their sorrow and loyalty. All day they were undecided. Then, they resolved not to utter a single word during the entire next day.

This decision was scrupulously observed, although the guards did their utmost to make their prisoners see reason, as they called it. The commandant of the camp was a retired naval captain, a former officer of the Baltic and Upper Silesian Volunteer Corps and the Black Reichswehr, and a leader of the S.A. Not even he, with his splendid record, was able to break the will of the prisoners. All he accomplished was that late in the afternoon twenty-five of them had to be carried to the infirmary barracks with serious hemorrhages.

Such was the effect of the silence of the four hundred that after supper—the first course of which, a watery soup, had been stricken from the menu in punishment, leaving only the second course, the Horst Wessel song—the commandant doubled the sentries and had the machine-guns on the watch towers prepared for action. He and his men spent a sleepless night with their boots on, haunted by a constant fear of an uncanny, imminent disaster.

Towards daybreak, the commandant, perhaps overcome by fear, perhaps in an effort to break the prisoners' spirit, ordered three men from their cots, an old metal worker who was known to have been a Spartacist even during the war, and two youngsters in whose lodgings communist leaflets had been found. And as they still kept silent before the rifles of the Detachment for Special Duty, they were shot while attempting to escape.

The Red Rag

ON November seventh, the anniversary of the great Russian Revolution, a red flag with hammer and sickle was waving from the smokestack of the idle oleomargarine factory in R. The male population of a near-by settlement, a reputed Communist nest, was arrested by the S.S. Because they did not want to confess, or had nothing to say, they were beaten until they lay on the ground, bleeding and unconscious. The women were

forced to watch. Then they were permitted to wash and hurriedly bandage their men, before the men were piled into trucks and driven away.

The next morning an S.S. detachment searched the colony for the few men who had been away the night before and had thus escaped arrest. The troopers found only women and children,—but again a red flag was waving from the stack.

The leader of the detachment ordered a boy to bring down the damned "red rag." While this was being done, he commanded the women and children to get in line and sing the Horst Wessel song before the trained rifles of his troupe.

When the boy brought the flag down, it appeared that it was not red at all. It was rust-colored blotched with dark red. It was not even a flag. It was a blood soaked cloth: one of the towels used by the women to wash their battered men.

The Rope

PRISONERS who were "difficult" (or just because the commandant ordered it) were put into cells, the so-called bunkers. For these the office of the concentration camp at Dachau issued not only "penal records" but also yellow service slips. Copies of the slips were sent to militia posts and to the office of the State's Attorney at Munich whenever anybody in the camp "committed suicide." The entries on these blanks were identical with the exception of personal data, the date of confinement and the date of death. They always read: "Hanged himself in cell" and "Motive unknown."

Not mentioned, however, was the fact that even the *corpus delicti* was always the same, the same reliable rope, whose noose was already smooth and dark from constant use. It was only upon the interruption of the almost regulated sequence of events, which had led to its use, that the rope one day appeared in the office records.

This is how it happened. After the Communist member of the Diet B—, a lumberjack from Upper Bavaria had been committed, he was greeted by the leader of the guards, also an Upper Bavarian, with: "Welcome to the graveyard!" And as was the custom with all prisoners for the bunkers, he was presented with a bible and the said rope. Upon his asking for the meaning of this "present," he was answered that it would be clear to him once he had received a visit from the Detachment for Special Duty. Besides, wouldn't he take into consideration the possibility of availing himself of the rope even before the appearance of the Detachment f.S.D. He would never leave the bunkers alive, anyway. And he might gather from the muffled blows and agonized cries from one of the neighboring cells, being paid such a visit, that hanging himself

in comparatively good health might prove more agreeable than dying with broken limbs and shattered testicles.

B— did not follow their suggestion and use the rope. Not after the first visit from the Detachment f.S.D., when he was bleeding from several wounds around the head. Not even after the second and third visits, when he was lying on the ground with one smashed kidney and his teeth knocked out. Then, one evening, the corpse of his friend D—, who had been committed to the camp at the same time as himself, was thrown into his cell. The commandant remarked that this was just a gentle reminder, a good example to be followed. Next morning the rope ought not to be unused. The prisoner followed this advice punctiliously, but in an unforeseen manner. At dawn, when the inspecting group leader entered the cell, there was, as expected, a man in bloody underwear hanging by the rope. But the hanged man was not B—. He was the S.S. man who had been on guard at the bunkers the night before. The prisoner had escaped in the S.S. man's uniform.

—From *Those Who Are Stronger*, by F. C. Weiskopf; translated by Andor Braun.

Gerhardt Hauptmann's Shame

(Not long ago Gerhardt Hauptmann wrote a new drama. To establish himself in the good graces of the Nazis, he added a prologue in which he hails the "awakened" Germany. He is known also to have received a group of storm troopers in his villa in Italy and to have greeted them with a Hitler salute. This latter incident so agitated Alfred Kerr, dramatic critic of the Berliner Tageblatt, now in exile, that he published the article below. As a consequence the Voelkischer Beobachter has demanded that the government confiscate Kerr's property.)—The Editors.

THE writer of these lines was a life-long friend of Hauptmann. Hauptmann is older than I, but we were both young when we first met. We trod together the path of life until today, no, until yesterday. I was the guardian of his prestige in Germany. I marched with him through sun and rain, yes, even through rain. I struck to the right and left if ever he was attacked. I myself lashed him when he weakened. I gave him courage when he was wrangling with his convictions.

I loved, behind all the drama-scribbling, the man, the reticent, rare, and hallowed friend.

From yesterday on we are strangers. I don't know this coward any more. May thorns grow in his footsteps, and may the realization of his disgrace strangle him. Gerhardt Hauptmann has lost his honor.

Berlin. A summer evening. Two years ago. We were in the garden of our friend, Pro-

fessor Johann Plesch, the heart specialist. Einstein was numbered among the guests, as was also the charming young painter, Slevagt, who created the beautiful frescoes in Plesch's veranda. Ten or twelve other men of intellect were there. I stood with Hauptmann on the lawn. I remarked to him how uncertain he had become in his political opinions.

"You will surely not become a ————. You are still the creator of the 'Weavers'."

Hauptmann wavered. It was difficult for him to express himself positively. He never finished a sentence, but rather, charmed his listeners by his Parsifalian remoteness from reality. He always agreed with me. We were like one.

Plesch is now in England because of the ugly situation in Germany. Slevagt is dead (his spirit guards the frescoes), and Hauptmann . . .

And Hauptmann cringes before the murderers. The man who all his life was the poet of human friendship, caters to mankind's deadly enemies. He found no word of protest to say against the most vicious barbarism. He doesn't want to endanger his income! Before his eyes the most inhuman bacchanalia took place. His nearest friends were the victims. He was silent. These private matters are not important. With the reputation he commands in the world, he could have struck a blow at the sadists, the liars, who before his own eyes swooped down on his weavers, and on people whose only sin is their birth.

He became friends with Germany's prison-wardens. He understood well their tactics of concealing every atrocity committed with the phrase, "Germany." With the last ounce of his ebbing courage he hung out the swastika rag on his house, prompted by fear, desire for further success, or foul weakness.

Hauptmann is worm-eaten to the bottom of his soul. He is far removed from such righteous men as Toscanini and Albert Einstein.

I know, Hauptmann, what you will tell me (with a troubled conscience). A tremendous national awakening, and so on! You lie! There are national movements which are decent, and besides, this is not at all a national movement. You above all know it. It is nothing but an usurpation of power by stupid bandits. A mélange of brutality and lies! The rebirth of lawlessness and mercilessness! You didn't have the courage to withstand their overtures, when they tempted you with the promise of staging one of your plays—in order to exalt their name, a name which is spat on by the entire world. You became their servant.

Shame! Shame! Shame!

The crown prince once said to Hauptmann's youngest son, Benvenuto, "Tell your father to be prepared, so that he shouldn't be under the wagon when we come to power!"

Hauptmann told it to us himself, with a smile. Although royalty did not come to power, Hauptmann kept himself in readiness.

Hauptmann's mode of living was the cause of all his perverse actions. For many years it has been impossible for him to be without two bottles of wine a day. He claims that without

it he suffers from fever. God gave him this excuse, and I was always indulgent.

No! With the same dose of Radisheimer or Macon one could visualize just the opposite reaction; honest decisions, a courageous step towards truth. Not the wine, the money influenced his actions. It is terrible to have to say this. Yet it isn't the first time that I have reproached him on this account. Hauptmann's great need of money brought him to a state where he threw on the market unfinished plays and novels in which his genius was barely visible under the heaps of balderdash. His three dwellings; Agnetendorf, in the mountains, Heidesee, at the sea, and Rapallo, in Switzerland cost him money. It cost money to support the son who at thirty is married to the third wife. It cost money to maintain the

snobbish luxury indulged in by the grandson of a weaver. The world-renowned writer of an anti-capitalistic drama was destroyed by money.

And what was gained by it all? The Nazi press ridiculed Hauptmann's visit to the Hitlerites. They wrote sarcastically that it was a sight for the gods when the socialistic poet stretched out his arm in a Hitler salute. This was at the celebration in honor of Horst Wessel, the procurer—a sight for the gods—But at the Gerhardt Hauptmann lyceum his name is extinguished. It is extinguished also in my heart. He died before his death. Despised even by those who are despised. May his gravestone be hidden under weeds, his picture buried in dust.

—(Translated by Arnon Ben-Ami.)

Correspondence

"We in the South"

TO THE NEW MASSES:

About my spat with John Gould Fletcher . . . the enclosed will have some meaning. Briefly, Fletcher sent me a script, but before I had a chance to look at it I had read his letter in the Nation. In consequence of that I wrote him as per the enclosed of December 26, to which he replied as of December 28. I sent all this stuff down to Erskine Caldwell, and you have his comment from Wrens, Georgia.

Jan. 10, 1934.

MAXIM LIEBER.

[The following are excerpts from John Gould Fletcher's letter to the Nation of Dec. 27, to which Maxim Lieber took exception:

We in the South do not legislate against the Negro as a class. Whether he is a rich man or a poor field laborer, his status is the same. Unlike Massachusetts, which did Sacco and Vanzetti to death not because they were guilty (they were not) but because they had agitated for better conditions of life among the industrial proletariat, we do no Negro to death because of his political affiliations. But we are determined, whether rightly or wrongly, to treat him as a race largely dependent upon us, and inferior to ours. Unquestionably certain Negro intellectuals, such as James Weldon Johnson, suffer from such discrimination. For them, we have of recent years encouraged the building of great schools and universities. We believe that under our system the great majority of the race are leading happy and contented lives. But our system, we admit, has one defect. If a white woman is prepared to swear that a Negro either raped or attempted to rape her, we see to it that the Negro is executed. . . .

Into the merits or demerits of the Scottboro case, I have no desire to enter. Whether the defendants have been given or could have been given, a fair trial under the circumstances I do not know. But the conduct of Mr. Leibowitz, the attorney brought down from the North for the defense, has, it seems to me, now definitely turned the scales of justice against the defendants. They will, it appears now, be convicted and executed. You are entitled to say, if you like, that this seems to you an act of injustice. But justice is in itself an abstract matter, and as every great lawyer knows, has always to yield to the morals, the usages, the customs and conveniences of a living and functioning community.

That the South is such a community was proved this very summer. With the Scottboro case still in doubt, the people of Tuscaloosa County turned out and lynched other Negroes. Three of them were quite probably innocent, and in the case of the fourth there is considerable doubt. But the

fact of the matter is that Mr. Leibowitz's conduct, as well as the taunts of the metropolitan press, have unstrung that section of the South which adjoins Scottboro. We will not suffer further dictation from the North as to what we are to do about the Negro. All that we built up again out of the ruins of Civil War and of Reconstruction is again at stake. Rather than permit our own peculiar conceptions of justice to be questioned, we will take the law into our own hands, by a resort to violence. . . .

I believe that the Scottboro defendants will now be executed. I believe that this decision, fair or unfair, has been forced on the people of Alabama by the way in which the defense in this case has been conducted. I believe that further trouble is to be expected down here between the blacks and the whites, unless the Northern States rapidly show more disposition to listen to the South's case, and to cease their interferences and interventions on behalf of the Negro. And I believe I am speaking on behalf not only of Alabama, but of the overwhelming majority of the Southern people today.]

Lieber to Fletcher

DEAR MR. FLETCHER:

Before reading your manuscript I chanced upon your letter which appeared in the December 27 issue of the Nation. Because of that I feel that I must return the script unread to you. There could be no working basis between us when our views are so diametrically opposed, and I could not recommend your book, feeling as I do about your attitude toward the Negro problem. I feel that this attitude, being a part of your thought processes and arising from a tradition of slaveocracy would inevitably permeate any work you might produce.

MAXIM LIEBER.

Fletcher to Lieber

DEAR MR. LIEBER:

I must confess that your letter announcing that you do not care to handle my manuscript because of my letter to the Nation about the Negro problem, startled and surprised me. In the first place, I merely stated in that letter what I believe to be the attitude of some millions of people (Jews as well as Gentiles) among whom I happen to have been born, and who I believe are alone capable of saying whether the Negro is being treated fairly under their system of life, or not. In the second place, the book you have refused to read does not deal with this question (about which two opinions are possible) but about England, where I lived for more than twenty years—and about the differences be-

tween England and America. If you, as a responsible person, are prepared to say that you are going to let your emotional prejudices outweigh your judgment in the case of an author who is not ashamed of being a Southerner, then you have no right to claim a position as a literary agent. You ought to be a political agitator instead.

JOHN GOULD FLETCHER.

Little Rock, Ark.

Caldwell to Lieber

DEAR MAX:

I have read Fletcher's letter to the Nation and I find it unusual only in so far as it is probably the first composed statement of the ruling class in this section of the country. The state of mind he makes articulate is common. It is the type that sits in power in a dozen state capitols, but its power gains whatever strength it has by being backed up by thousands of petty minds holding petty offices, including that humane marvel of all ages—the county chain-gang boss.

As for myself, I hasten to protest against the implications of this letter to the Nation. I myself am a Southerner, I was born here, I have lived here most of my life, and I shall probably die here. But if being a Southerner carries with it the implications of Fletcher's letter, then I will renounce whatever birthright and heritage I may have, and give my allegiance to some other country. However, I prefer to remain here, and I shall do so; and if anyone would like to coin a name for those of us who are opposed to what Fletcher stands for, then under that name I shall live. I have taken my stand, and I intend to keep it; but, to draw sharp this necessary dividing line, it is on the other side of the fence from Fletcher and his "millions of Southerners."

By his own words, Fletcher represents an obnoxious majority of people in power; he does not, however, represent a majority of the population. The Negro, the tenant farmer, and the mill worker have contributed, involuntarily, to the power of those holding the whip-hand; but the hand grows weak, the oppressed gain strength, and the outcome of the coming struggle cannot be in doubt. Fletcher and his "millions of Southerners" demanding injustice for the Negro will find that it is impossible to confine steam within a boiling kettle: sooner or later the lid is going to blow off.

ERSKINE CALDWELL.

Wrens, Georgia.

Political Prisoners

TO THE NEW MASSES:

Do the readers of THE NEW MASSES know the miserable conditions existing among political prisoners—those imprisoned for participating in struggles revolving around the rights of workers or because of race or nationality—?

Mrs. Mamie Patterson received this letter from her son, Haywood, while she was on a tour raising funds for the Scottsboro defense:

DEATH CELL

MY DEAR MOTHER:

I received a letter from home same time as I did yours and I haven't got a stamp to answer it. This is the last one I have. I want you to send me stamps and cigarettes. . . .

(Signed) HAYWOOD.

Kilby Prison, Alabama.

This case is not unusual. From the Indiana State Farm prison, a worker writes: "I would have written sooner, but, due to the discipline, I am only allowed to write one letter every two weeks. . . ."

Special restrictions for class war prisoners are enforced frequently. Nat Goodwin, Negro, arrested when he came to the defense of a white girl—Jane Speed—in Birmingham, Alabama, is now held incommunicado—he is not allowed to see anyone!

But the curb most keenly felt by these men is the rigid censorship of reading material. "Not even a daily newspaper is allowed to be read. The same old routine, day in and day out, work, sleep, stone walls, and iron bars—" writes Tom Scott from a New Jersey prison. And in the Allegheny County Workhouse, Blawnox, Pennsylvania, inmates are advised to feed "their souls on True Story Magazine and the red-blooded, he-man tales of the West. Working class literature is absolutely forbidden."

The National Committee for the Defense of Political prisoners has launched a campaign for the recognition of political prisoners as such in contrast to criminals. In connection with this campaign a delegation from the committee visited Samuel Weinstein in Sing Sing Prison recently. Snatched from the picket line by his employers, he is serving a two-year sentence and facing another possible term of 20 years to life. Labor literature sent him by his comrades is denied him. THE NEW MASSES, Labor Defender, and Labor Unity are marked taboo by the prison censor.

Another delegation formed by this committee will visit Leon Blum in Great Meadow Prison, Comstock, New York. Blum, as secretary of the Laundry Workers Union, led a laundry strike in the Bronx, New York. He was charged with "intimidating customers and employees at the Pretty Family Laundry," but the charges fell through so he was remanded to prison to serve the remainder of his parole on an old charge. His term will not expire for three years. The most severe and dangerous work on the prison ground is given to Leon Blum, along with the most hardened criminals in the jail.

All of these political prisoners are eager for contact with the world, outside the prison walls. As one who is vitally interested in the work of the National Committee, I would urge the readers of THE NEW MASSES to write these men, giving them news of labor activities. Send them newspaper clippings. Organize delegations to visit those held in prisons in your vicinity.

For further information about the visit to Leon Blum and other details of this campaign, write to THE National Committee for the Defense of Political Prisoners, Room 534, 156 Fifth Avenue, New York City.

MARY CURTIN.

"The Soup Song"

TO THE NEW MASSES:

You have heard "The Soup Song." It appeared anonymously in Detroit in March, 1931. Sometime after that the author saw it in THE NEW MASSES. Later he saw it in at least two workers' song-books. And now he has just seen it in an anthology of workers' songs. So he feels that the time has come for him to cast off his cloak of pretended modesty and get the credit—or take the blame.

I wrote it.

Fraternally,

MAURICE SUGAR.

"Report with Laughter"

TO THE NEW MASSES:

We are winning. Capitalism is failing. There is work to be done, obstacles to jump, dangers to see and to avoid, but—our day is come. We can rejoice. The masses should ring with joy and triumph. You can report with laughter the nature of the capitalists' crisis: That capitalism has achieved so much machinery and good that only communism can distribute this terrible abundance. Soviet Russia wants as goods, the too much coffee, cotton, pigs, and labor, we have and deplore as evils. You can describe as comedy the desperate efforts of the capitalists to save their system: Fascism and Hitlerism, and N.R.A. code to persuade one another to forego the cash for a moment to get together and all do voluntarily what is obviously to their long-range interest. And their failure to do this at the call of their leader, President Roosevelt; and their need of Hitler

or Johnson to force it. You see what I mean? All the news, all the facts, all the failures, all the crimes, all the confusion of this transition period are pointing our way—all. This does not appear or prevail in the NEW MASSES. And it should. NEW MASSES should be the happiest, clearest, most hopeful periodical in existence. Everything printed in it should have this thought back of it. For, literally—it seems odd that an old Liberal instead of you Communist Youth should say this, but—in this period of universal confusion and despair, communism alone can see and show and lead us to the plain, proved (in Russia) way out: to accept and to use the blessed abundance man has at last achieved.

You don't have to say that all the time; too obvious; my plea to you is only that you all believe it all the time, believe it to a degree that it shall laugh through every paragraph you write and every picture you draw.

Now, you get it, don't you, this general criticism? It's based on almost everything you have in this number. The details of your job we talked about that day in your office. Yours comradely,

LINCOLN STEFFENS.

Later Report

TO THE NEW MASSES:

My comment on your first number was made impertinent by the second and third numbers of the NEW MASSES, but you may use it if you will say this somehow.

LINCOLN STEFFENS.

Our First Setback

TO THE NEW MASSES:

Tell Mr. Garlin to please do his caricature of me out of his own imagination. Probably that would be equally accurate, whether he ever saw me or not.

Sincerely yours,

PAUL BLANSHARD,

Commissioner of Accounts.

[The above is in response to a request for an interview. The "interview" will appear shortly.—THE EDITORS]

The CONTRIBUTORS

MARTHA ANDREWS is a teacher of economics, specializing on railroads.

MARY HEATON VORSE, novelist, short story writer and labor reporter, has covered many great strikes.

EDWARD DAHLBERG, author of *Bottom Dogs* and *From Flushing to Calvary*, is at work on a third novel.

ARTHUR PENSE is a clothing-worker whose fiction has appeared in THE NEW MASSES before.

DAVID RAMSEY teaches at the Workers School in New York.

VIRGIL GEDDES, dramatist and critic, directs the Brookfield Players.

CORLISS LAMONT is a member of the Columbia University Philosophy department.

WILLIAM GROPPER, staff artist of the Jewish Daily Freiheit, is working on a novel.

ART YOUNG after a short stay in New York in connection with his new book, *Art Young's Inferno*, is back in Connecticut where he will draw for THE NEW MASSES.

LOUIS LOZOWICK, one of the authors of *Voices of October*, is known equally well as artist and critic.

Delancey Street Bus

ARTHUR PENSE

THEY postponed their marriage until after the elections. Victor was then campaigning for his own candidacy for walking delegate of his local union. Time was very precious, marriage a luxury in comparison. Besides, his prospective office as walking delegate would enable them to live better than they could on his meager and irregular wages as lining maker.

Their plans were unexpectedly disturbed. Helen was laid off from her job in a dress making shop. It happened one month before the elections took place. She needed another job at once. Her father was unemployed and her only brother was in high school.

Victor talked this matter over with the members of the executive board of the union and with the boss, Sam Bender, and secured work for her as an arm-hole baster.

Victor was elated and hurt at the same time by Helen's coming into the factory. He was happy to see Helen so near him, to ride to work together on the Delancey Street bus from the Grand Street "L" station. Every one said that Victor made more lining per hour now that his girl was near him than he had ever made before. "Now, with your sweetheart about, you will become a first class operator," teased Shimen the lapel maker, who never removed his greasy black cap or his curved pipe.

But Victor was embarrassed to feel Helen's smiling eyes on him as he was bent over the machine. He only wanted to live in her mind as Victor Blumstein, the union leader. To be bent over the machine and to wriggle at the highest speed with his sleeves rolled up and his arms smeared with sooty oil, his dirty shirt unbuttoned at the neck, and the boss, Sam Bender, a round little figure with a small head, lording it over him, that Helen should see him in such a state was abominable to him.

Helen's white neck, curved as she bent over her bastings, was another source of torment. His face fell to see her rapid acquisition of skill with the needle and thimble.

"She will break down if she keeps at it much longer," he thought. "I must get her out of it at any price," he concluded.

Another reason made Helen's presence in the shop distasteful to him. It was Sam Bender's attention to the girl. Victor was not alarmed about it. Only he believed that Helen was too dignified for Sam's familiarities. Sam Bender was a bachelor in his forties. His round little figure and bald head supplied merry talk for the girls and the operators. Except for a frieze of sand colored hair on his nape, he was bald. But the perpetual round smile on his little face bespoke his genuine good nature.

His shop was of little account in the trade. His steady smile seemed to thrive rather on gambling. Lunch hours and evenings he gathered his kindred spirits among the operators and pressers; on pay day they would play poker far into the small hours of the night. Many of the workers returned home with their pay envelopes reduced or emptied, the money having travelled by way of poker back to the nimble boss and one or two of his fellow-players.

Victor's self-assurance precluded any suspicion of a possible affinity between Helen and Sam.

The election campaign was strenuous. Victor's faction was perpetually on guard against the machinations of the opponents. Victor spent most of his evenings in conferences with his comrades. But the mood of the membership was favorable. His election seemed assured.

Helen was a detached spectator during the campaign. She was very proud of Victor as he talked to the workers in the shop. But she could not shoulder any part of his activity. During these crowded days they were rarely together. Most of the time he was surrounded by his friends of the union. When he did meet her, she felt the tremendous change that was taking place in him. His eyes became feverish. He seemed to her a store of energy held together by a crust of steel.

He talked little to her those days. Mere words irritated him. "You frighten me, Victor," she complained. "Please talk to me. Victor, the union has swallowed you up. Well, tell me about your union troubles," she implored him.

"I can't tell you about 'my union trouble'." Victor was irritated. "You are not in it. Besides, if I were to recount to you the union affairs I'd feel as if I'd have to go through the whole work of the campaign over again."

The national office took up much of his thinking. His rise in the union was not to the liking of the national office of the organization. He was opposed to their policies. Victor rose on the support of the rank and file, that is the active membership of the union, young people mostly.

On the eve of the elections the national office "reorganized" the local. They combined the union with another local and postponed the election for a year. In this way the national office prevented the rank and file elements from coming immediately into power. Although the new conditions opened a wider field of action for the rank and file group, Victor's election was stopped.

The new task was tremendous. The workers in the reorganized local required a new

means of approach. The number of meetings and conferences multiplied without end. The flood of leaflets required money and hard work.

Victor became the most silent worker in the shop. Marriage was now out of the question. He believed that Helen would not fit into his scheme of life. It would be a great sacrifice on her part. She would have to be a rebel like himself, ready to undergo hardship, or she could not join in the fierce struggle. To watch Helen curled over the coat and losing hope was an added wound. He began to feel that he was inflicting misery on an innocent person.

Often he buried his thoughts in his work, in the rushing seams of the sewing machine, in the ring of his scissors as he cut in the breast pockets. He found relief in letting the scissors peck, peck at the thick satin lining and then with a twist of the fingers to bring the piping out on a straight line.

What a relief to listen to Nathan, the old sleeve setter, tell of his ways with his wife: "What a figure she had when we married fifteen years ago! Her bosom was so round and strong. M-m-m, m-m-m! No words for description. But now, oi, Victor!" he whispered into the young man's ear almost with a sob. "But now—who, what, when? Upon my honest word, like old calico!" Old Nathan looked over his eye glasses for the lining maker's commiseration, and rubbing his thumb against his index finger he expressed the deplorable condition of old calico. "Is it a small thing to give suck to five robust gluttons? They should only live and thrive, and no evil eye befall them."

While Victor was sunk in work, Helen became reticent, and very much aloof. On the other hand, Sam Bender's attentions grew more frequent and unrestrained. Finally it became revolting. Victor was preparing to bring this matter to a head.

One day, when Victor decided to talk with Helen on several urgent matters, he found to his great disappointment that Helen had not come to work. It had happened once before, when it was occasioned by a cold. But this time when he came home in the evening he found a printed invitation to the wedding of Mr. Sam Bender and Helen Bernfeld.

For days he felt as if the world had crashed about his head. If Helen had gone away to some other city and married to a man unknown to him, the insult would not have fallen so heavily on him. But to flaunt the betrayal into his face seemed to him deliberate cruelty.

He would have left the shop. But he could not do it. He was known in the trade as a rebel. But bosses prefer meek workers, even

though less efficient. This small insignificant shop was a foothold. The boss could not fire him. If he had, the whole shop would have risen in revolt. Besides, leaving the shop under such conditions would be a cowardly act, it would be interpreted as a flight from Sam Bender and acknowledgement of defeat.

Victor, aimlessly crossing back and forth a down town street, scarcely aware of what he was doing, was aroused by the sound of brisk music in the neighborhood. He walked in that direction aimlessly. He came upon a butcher shop where three musicians were squatted on soap boxes and stimulating business. The street was choked with vendors. The sidewalk was littered with merchandise. It looked as if the whole world was splintered into bits and then gathered into pushcarts and baskets again. In the midst of this chaos the clarinet was shedding springy spirals of gay melodies, the drum whacked away at even segments and the trombone bleated. Women goose-stepped, goose-stepped, under the dictates of the sharp rhythm and bought the meat and the tripe.

Victor smiled. "Life will go on forever," he thought. "Life can vanquish misery and filth!"

In the afternoon he went to see a movie show. The next morning he came back to the shop. But the market became Victor's hunting ground for diversion, until one day he met Helen in the shopping crowd.

Many months had passed. The injury began to wear off. Victor returned to activity in union. He felt a great sense of freedom from personal cares. He dressed smartly and acquired a brisk step.

There had been no change in the shop, except the constant decrease in work and pay envelopes. Sam Bender and his players played poker as usual, only now at greater leisure, albeit on ever thinning returns.

One hot afternoon at the end of the summer the boss, surrounded by his players, was deftly dealing out the pack. Victor slipped out of the shop and betook himself to the market. He shouldered up to a pushcart and was contemplating the watermelon on display—the large five-cent half-rounds. Another man was ahead of him. Victor began to watch the passing crowd. The men seemed to him like walking logs. "Dead timber!" he thought. "Evaporated things. They are only a drag on our wonderful womanhood."

Then in the stream of people flashed Helen's face.

His heart gave a heavy thump. He felt the blood leaving his face. Helen did not see him as her weary eyes gazed ahead in the flow of faces. How changed she was, Victor thought. All her youthfulness vanished. Her face was sallow and her gait was heavy and listless. She carried her heavy shopping bag which was topped with a bunch of scallions.

"They crush us, Helen!" he mumbled to himself. "They enslave the best of us. The best of us become manure for their bank ac-

counts. The Sam Benders reign supreme. We bend our knees for their games of poker,—we,—we—" he repeated. "Oh no! Only some of us bend meekly under the yoke. Not 'we'—'we' rebel!"

A while he looked after Helen. He bit his lips. "Sam Bender's dirty spawn!"—a thought came to him. He did not come to the market again for many months to avoid a chance meeting with Helen. He was beginning to feel the old hurt again.

The crowded bus was carrying him down Delancey Street to the factory near the East River. The passengers were pressing against him. His hands and feet were cramped together with other hands and feet. Only his head stood out above the other people. The rest of himself belonged to the substance of the crowd. Perfume and body odor were at grips. Some girls were flashily dressed. Their rouge enhanced their looks. Some faces were as alluring as the pictures in soap advertisements. The world is filled with Helens, he thought.

The bus stopped at the end of the street. As Victor stepped onto the sidewalk he looked up to the factory on the middle of the block. Sam Bender's operators were cooling themselves in the spring air in front of the factory building. He wondered mildly why the workers were in the street. True, there was only a little work in the shop. There were, he remembered, only two small lots of jackets, blue and brown serges. But it was a "rush job." Sam Bender had only "rush jobs" in his shop. First there would be days of complete idleness. Then out of the fog of depression would emerge a pitiful bundle or two, which Sam tried to squeeze into finished jackets in a few hours.

Then why shouldn't the operators be in the shop cleaning the machine hooks and oiling their machines, "preparing for the day's slavery"?

Shimen, the lapel maker, saw Victor coming. He took out the pipe from his mouth and whispered to the workers. Then he notched the pipe into his lips again. Some operators started out to meet Victor, but the lapel maker held them back.

When Victor greeted them, they stopped chatting and looked seriously at him. Shimen with his worn black cap on one side of his head, smiled when he noticed Victor's inquisitive eye.

"It's Sam Bender's funeral," he told Victor.

"Stop your wisecracks." Victor was skeptical.

"Honest!" The lapel maker tried to be matter of fact. "The boss's funeral. Died suddenly—heart trouble—"

Any attempt to get more information was resisted by the operators. They began to chatter again.

"Now Sam Bender will forget about the mixed up sleeves," the lapel maker remarked.

"Sure thing!" agreed the turner.

"How in hell did you mix up the sleeves, anyway?" Shimen tried to be at east. "Aren't they all labeled? But you went to work and matched up an ox to a mule."

"Why, my head was dizzy," Moe defended himself. "Sam Bender kept on pounding his tongue that the work must go out on Friday. The whole afternoon yesterday he was driving the guts out of me until my head began to swim."

"But you are not color blind, to stick a blue sleeve into a brown jacket, eh?" the lapel maker uttered his reproach between puffs.

The old sleeve setter had listened in. "Nu Moishele!" he looked at the turner. "But I saved your hide for you, Moishele," he slapped the turner on the back. "Suppose, let us say, I had set in the sleeves the way you delivered them to me, the whole shop would have to sit up nights and rip the sleeves out. And then, m-m-m, how many jackets would have been tattered in the ripping, and how many pay-envelopes would have to be turned inside out to pay for the torn coats. Even so I set in one blue sleeve into a brown coat. Suddenly, what do I see, something had gone wrong with my eyes, I thought. So what do I do? I turn me to the lapel maker: 'Shimen,' says I to him, 'tell me, Shimen, is this coat a brown coat, and is this sleeve a blue sleeve, or do my eyes deceive me?'"

"So Shimen gave his funny little chuckle and turned to me in this wise: 'Reb Nathan,' says he, 'you are right! This coat is a brown coat, and this sleeve is a blue sleeve, and what's more,' says he, 'your eyes deceived you!' Did you hear an answer from an apostate! It is a miracle that my sides were not split from laughter."

While the old sleeve setter was telling his story, the operators had started out towards Grand Street. Sam Bender lived in a renovated tenement house several blocks away. Victor followed reluctantly. At one time he stopped. He thought of breaking away from the group of workers. But they watched him with concern as if he were the chief mourner.

"Come along, Victor," they urged him and he submitted.

When they came near the house they found a little crowd clustering around the entrance. Victor wondered what Helen was doing at that moment. He imagined her lamenting for Sam Bender. "Those would be false tears," he thought. "How could she have loved a man like Sam? She would only bewail her own lot now."

There was no vengefulness in him. He was now eager to show Helen his sympathy. "I would be acting like a crook, if I didn't," he felt.

"Helen is free now!" he thought. He would do something for which she would be ever grateful to him. She was free now.

Soon his self-reproach was growing into self-glorification of his present generosity with Helen, when another thought came to him: "But the memories of Sam Bender hovering

around her bed, and his offspring in her arms a constant reminder.—“Impossible!”

He heard one woman remark to another: “—gave birth to a dead child—” He tried to capture some more information, but the workers were already trudging up the stairway, bumping into people who were coming down with tearful eyes, or sobbing.

The kitchen door was open on the public hall. An unbearable heat issued from the crowded place. One heard a woman's voice lamenting: “My daughter, my pretty young sapling, that you should come to such an end! My dove, my gentle flower.”

Victor recognized the voice of Helen's mother. He looked at the workers with suspicion. Everything seemed chaotic. He strained his ears to catch a sound, perhaps a low sob from Helen.

Shimen cut his way into the crowded kitchen. Soon he returned to the public hall with Sam Bender.

Victor shuddered. He leaned against the stair railing for support. Bender did not see him. For the first time, Victor's eyes were now measuring up the boss completely. Sam Bender's mechanically smiling little face was drenched in tears. A genuine smile; genuine tears. He met the old sleeve setter in the crowd. “What do you say to such a misfortune, Reb Nathan?” he began, then wiping his eyes he asked anxiously: “Did you straighten out the sleeves?”

Victor was roused from his delirium as if a bomb had exploded under him. He burst into the kitchen and thence into the parlor. The lapel maker followed at his heels.

Helen's brother was leaning against the window frame and sobbing silently. In the middle of the room stood a long table on which rested a rough pine board coffin, with the lid removed. The dead was dressed in white shrouds, a white veil covering the face. Beside this coffin was placed another one, a very small one, for an infant.

Helen's mother was leaning on the table, her head touching the large coffin. She was exhausted with weeping. From time to time she burst out in desperate cries.

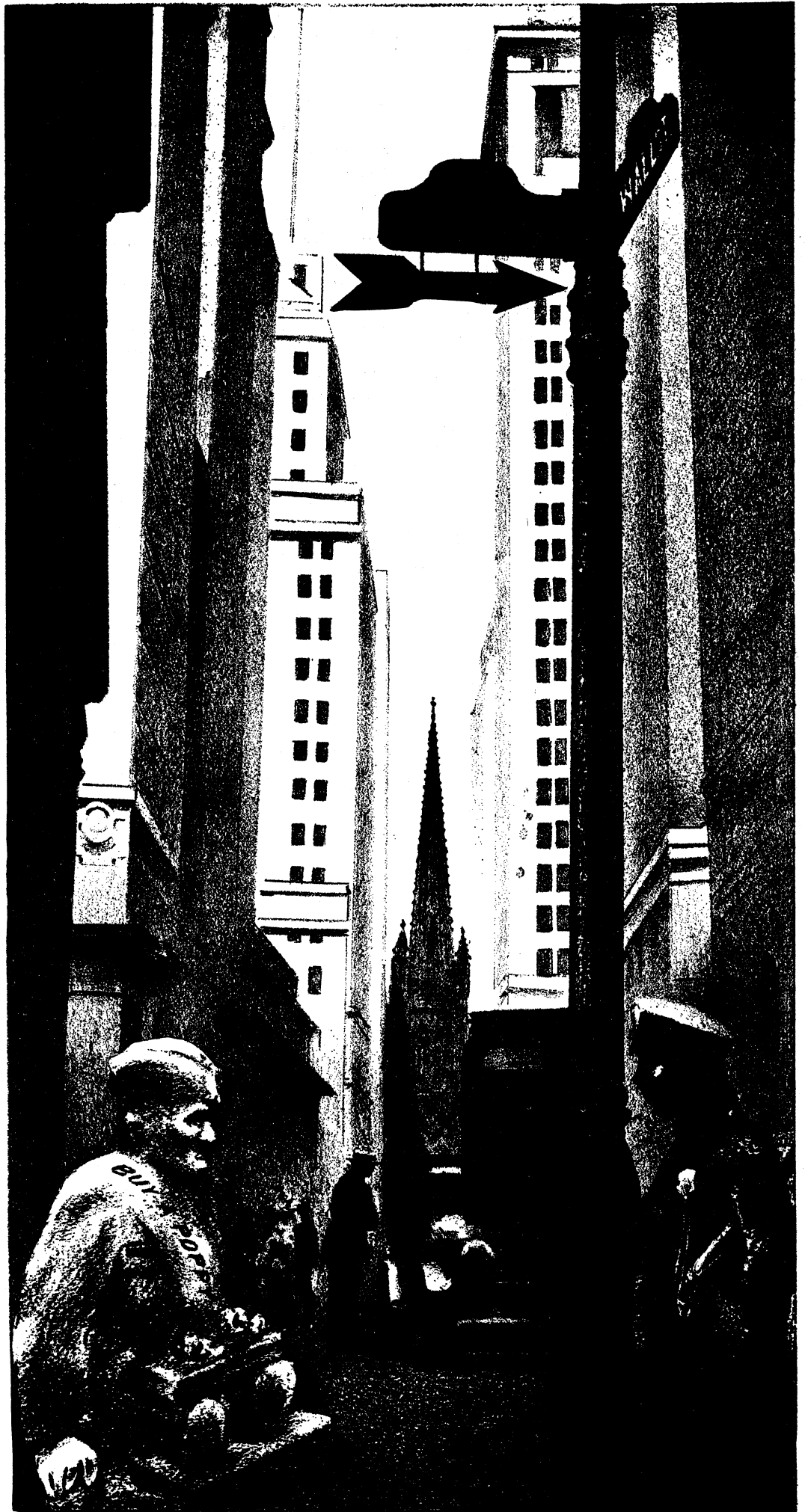
Helen's father stood near his wife, his face downcast, wringing his hands.

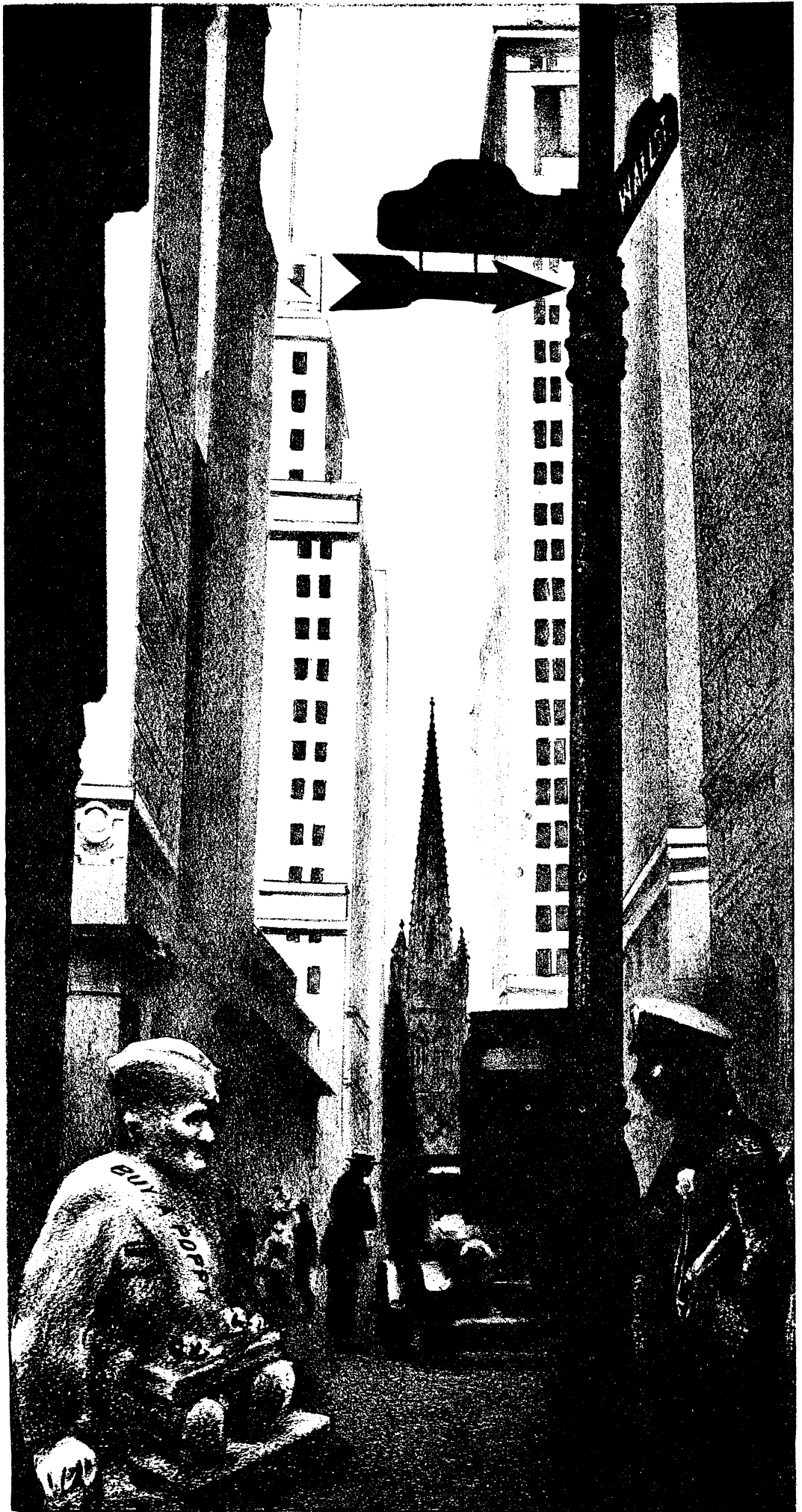
The lapel maker whispered to some women in the room and then took Victor by the hand and led him up to the open coffin.

An elderly woman approached and uncovered the face of the dead.

The face had been distorted with pain. The hollow cheeks destroyed most of the resemblance to the living person. The open lips revealed a pretty row of teeth, the skin was the color of very pale ivory, only the eyelids a little lighter and the lips a little darker.

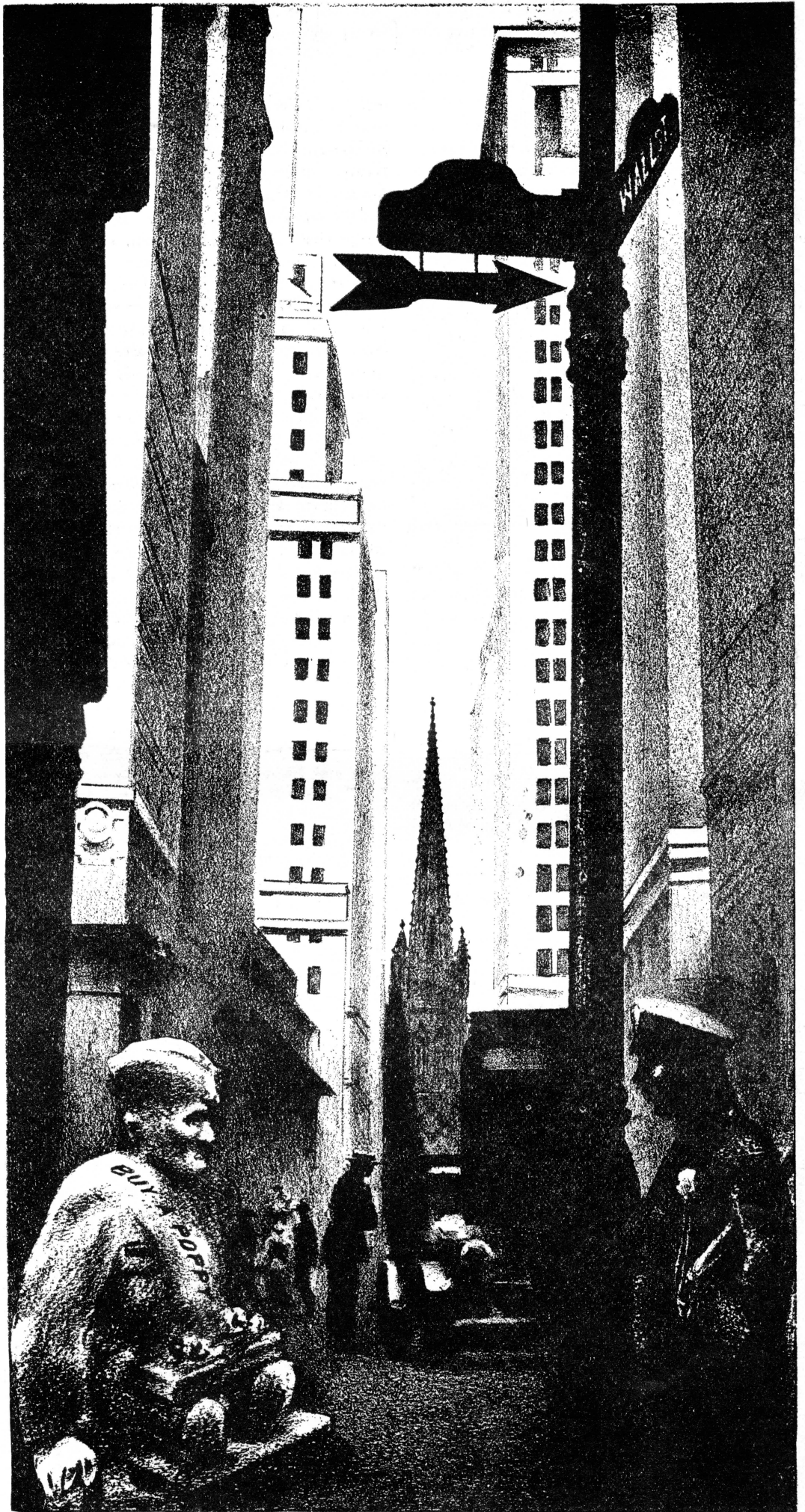
Victor looked at the face. A tremor passed him. He buried his face in his arms as if to ward off a blow. He staggered out into the kitchen and thence into the hallway and into the street, the lapel maker following close behind him.





TRADE

Louis Lozowick



B o o k s

The Artful Dodger

WORK OF ART, by Sinclair Lewis.
Doubleday, Doran and Company. \$2.50.

EVER since I read *Free Air* in the Saturday Evening Post I have been a Sinclair Lewis fan, and I have read each new book (even *Mantrap* and *Elmer Gantry*) with a lively pleasure. Whatever else he may be, Lewis is a grand reporter. Agreeing with William Dean Howells that every inch of this America is interesting, and not having seen so very many inches for myself, I get a good deal of enjoyment from Lewis's explorations. It is no wonder he is popular in Europe: he covers an enormous amount of the American scene, and he makes you think he is accurate even when he isn't.

This will explain why and in which way I enjoyed *Work of Art*. The novel tells of Myron Weagle, son of a hotel keeper in a little Connecticut town. Inspired by a desire to know all there is to be known about hotel management, Myron works as a bellboy in a roadhouse, as a cook in a small hotel, and then, successively, as cook, waiter, and clerk in the Connecticut Inn of New Haven. His subsequent career, as an employee of the great Mark Elphinstone, takes him to St. Louis, Florida, and finally to New York. He becomes a power in the Elphinstone chain, but intrigue ousts him after Mark's death, and he takes a position as general manager of the Pye-Charian hotels. All the time he has dreamed of the perfect hotel, and at last, with Pye-Charian backing, he creates the Black Thread Inn. Bad luck and his backer's insistence on profits ruin the experiment—and almost ruin Myron. But he starts again as owner and manager of the Commercial Hotel of Lemuel, Kansas, makes it the best hotel in the state, and establishes a position for himself in the community. When the novel ends, Myron, urged on by his son, is contemplating the building of that modern counterpart of the old English inn, an overnight camp for tourists.

Work of Art just about brings Lewis clear around the circle, and he is now approximately where he was when he wrote *Free Air*. *Free Air*, which was the immediate predecessor of *Main Street*, was, as I remember it, a lively account of a young garage hand who takes a trip across the continent in search of romance, and finds it. It was admirably adapted, both because of its enthusiasm for America and because of its romantic elements, to the Saturday Evening Post's purpose, and at the same time it contained a good deal of excellent reporting. *Work of Art*, though rather lacking in sex appeal, has all the other qualities that made *Free Air* good material for the Post. It is, in other words, quite free from the bitterness that appeared in *Main Street* and its im-

mediate successors. It also is considerably less important. *Main Street*, *Babbitt*, and *Arrowsmith*, are important books, not merely because they give a credible picture of the surface of American life, but also—and primarily—because they at least hint at the real forces that lie beneath the surface. And if they dealt more clearly and more convincingly with those forces, they would be better books. George F. Babbitt is not important because he is a realtor but because he is the type of business man that has been shaping American civilization. But Myron Weagle is just a hotel keeper.

If Lewis had any purpose other than the desire to show that an interesting novel could be written about hotels, it was to demonstrate that keeping a hotel can be a work of art. To drive home his moral, he made Myron's brother, Ora, a writer. Ora, who is full of talk about art and is very contemptuous of the materialistic Myron, actually is a hack-writer of the worst sort. He has no scruples, sponges on his brother, and in general lives a worthless life. Myron, on the other hand, takes his profession seriously, works hard, studies hard, has a good deal of integrity, and is far more idealistic and less mercenary than Ora. This is a rather obvious variation on a familiar theme, and it confirms the impression that Lewis is a victim of that very common disease among American men of letters, a sense of inferiority to men of action. What the novel proves, and all that it proves, is that a good hotel keeper is better than a bad novelist. Perhaps Mr. Lewis can find someone to debate that proposition with him, but I doubt it.

Many reviewers, I think, will agree with me that *Work of Art* is a superficial book, but there will be a division of opinion as to how that superficiality might have been avoided. One school, I suspect, will say that Lewis should have given us more insight into the soul of Myron Weagle. With that view I have no sympathy; we know all we need to know about Myron's soul. The other school will say that he should have given us more understanding of the world in which Myron functioned. That, of course, is my opinion. The worst of it is, one is driven to feel that Lewis deliberately dodged his responsibilities. There are just enough references to Myron's relations with his employees to show that Lewis is aware of the exploitation of the average hotel worker, but the incidents are carefully selected to permit him to ignore that exploitation. In the same way, he says just enough about hotel finance to explain some of Weagle's difficulties, but not enough to throw any light on the system of which these financial transactions are part. And finally Lewis makes three or four allusions, as if in a gesture of defiance to the class struggle, but the struggle itself never appears on his pages.

The ending of the book is the real give-

away. Myron, we are to suppose, has not only found happiness in the small town, but has completely escaped from the influence of greedy investors, cut-throat competitors, and rapacious monopolists. The Saturday Evening Post should have serialized *Work of Art!* The happy ending of this novel demonstrates, even more conclusively that Dodsworth's housing project or Ann Vickers' enthusiasm for home and hubby, that Sinclair Lewis is really a constructive critic, a red-blooded American, and a first-class Rotarian—and that he will not face the fundamental facts of American life. Where is the labor novel that, five years ago, we heard he was going to write? It has not been written, though he has found time for a novel on careers for women and a novel on art for hotel keepers. And I suspect it never will be written. For even Sinclair Lewis couldn't write a labor novel without revealing himself as a double-crossing apologist for the existing order.

GRANVILLE HICKS.

O'Casey as Mystic

WITHIN THE GATES, by Sean O'Casey.
The Macmillan Co. \$1.75

Within the Gates is a lusty, sometimes boisterous poem written in four scenes, much of it similar to the chanting rhythms of the second act of *The Silver Tassie*. The people are indicated as The Dreamer, The Bishop, The Atheist, The Young Man in the Bowler Hat, The Scarlet Woman, The Young Whore, etc., and as might be expected from this there is little sense of character, story or dramatic development. The effects are largely from the comments which the speeches in themselves makes on one another and O'Casey means these to be, I think, symbolical and universal in meaning. O'Casey's irony and his rugged, biting poetry are the merits of the piece. It is good to find him bringing this language into the theatre.

Within the Gates, however, is a side-step from the earlier plays of life in the Irish tenements. While in those pieces O'Casey fused the broad devices of burlesque comedy, humor and pathos with snatches of genuine poetry, he gave us also a warmer and deeper understanding than is apparent here. O'Casey is falling back into the Everyman period of character concepts: dividing his people into several parts. Also he relies too often on effects which are not completely expressed in the dialogue: kaleidoscopic movements in the background which have to be written in and explained as stage directions. Technically it is a musical comedy effect, not far removed from the *Of Thee I Sing* kind of stage piece. It expresses also a similar disillusion in everything, right, left and middle, and accordingly it is not thoroughly convincing.

Still another danger is felt after reading *Within the Gates*; that O'Casey may veer off into a realm of vague mysticism, as O'Neill lately has. In a note he acknowledges that "The above idea of a front curtain was derived from Eugene O'Neill's suggestion of a

front curtain for his great play, *Mourning Becomes Electra*." This at least shows an admiration for a kind of theatre that will not be helpful to O'Casey's future.

Sean O'Casey is capable of writing the song and dramatic life of full-blooded man and woman, as he proved in *The Plough and the Stars*. To bolster him he has a high sense of poetic language and spiritual toughness: very qualities which O'Neill lacks when he attempts ideas and grand subjects. Let us hope he does not get involved with chanting the ritual of half-lives and decadent, hopeless struggles. Life does go on and bitterness and darkness are only half. O'Casey can never be accused of being a box-office playwright, but it is possible for him to accept other mystical and defeated attitudes as this play shows. Here the rebel is not as sharp and active as before.

What he needs is a more important subject than he found *Within the Gates*. It is too late for bishops and atheists as central figures; too late, too, for O'Casey, who rose from the Dublin slums, to shake the mud from his shoes and cultivate floral dialogue and expect to remain in the mainstream of dramatic writing. The nearest he gets in this play to a subject which is universal is:

"First Platform Speaker. 'I'd just as soon sterve in Russia, because food is scarce, as sterve in a country ahtside Russia because food is plentiful.'"

VIRGIL GEDDES.

Journalist in Russia

FROM BROADWAY TO MOSCOW, by Marjorie E. Smith. Macaulay. \$2.

In swift-moving journalistic vernacular Miss Smith tells in this book the story of her nine months' visit to the Soviet Union with her husband, Ryan Walker, outstanding American and Communist cartoonist who died in Moscow in the summer of 1932. The narrative is sincere, amusing, and unpretentious. People like Will Durant go to Russia for three weeks and then write books purporting to consist of expert knowledge on everything that is going on in the entire U.S.S.R. People like Miss Smith go to Russia for almost a year, realize that even then they don't know too much about the country, and write unassuming books confined to what they actually saw, heard, and did. The two methods will illustrate the difference between being a racketeer and an honest author.

Miss Smith has a sharp eye for detail and literally nothing escapes her. It is this quality especially that gives to the reader the feeling that he is there on the spot with the author, being exasperated by the interminable delays and the lack of beds, being amused by the quaint English of the Russians and the quainter Russian of the tourists, and finally being deeply impressed by the energy, the devotion, and the far-reaching achievements of the Communists. Miss Smith is perfectly frank about how much she was irritated by

the minor and even major inconveniences that at first beset her in the Soviet Union. But unlike many other American travellers in Russia, she did not allow passing personal discomforts to blind her to the really big things going on in the U.S.S.R. And she left the country appreciating and sympathizing with the aims and accomplishments of the Soviet regime.

Into the day-to-day account of her various adventures Miss Smith packs a considerable amount of interesting and instructive information, ranging from her trip to the Amo automobile factory and the November 7th celebration in the Red Square to the Moscow technique of making a proposal. There is one unforgettable scene in which a small Russian boy of eight takes his stand against the old religious superstitions. "You can beat me all you want to, my little mother," he calmly says, "but I cannot pray again. There is no God." Miss Smith, who had a job in the Soviet motion picture corporation, Meshrabpom Film, also gives us the inside story of how the script for the Soviet movie, *Black and White*, so misrepresented the American Negro that it was finally discarded. The foreign press then claimed that the picture had been shelved out of deference to the feelings of the American government and the American business man. The book ends with the simple and moving story of the last illness and death of Ryan Walker, with whom Communism came first till the end.

It is a pity that Miss Smith, except for a few days in Leningrad, hardly once got outside the city of Moscow. For Moscow is not the Soviet Union any more than New York is America. It is also a pity that the book, describing the Russia of late 1931 and early 1932, could not have been published sooner.

CORLISS LAMONT.

Horse Feathers and Apple Sauce

HORSES AND APPLES, by Bassett Jones. John Day Co. \$1.

A technocrat is a man who makes momentous discoveries out of commonplaces. To use the technocratic manner of expression, the technocrats pass out a lot of *hooley* (in its "strict mathematical sense meaning not making sense") as the key to what they like to call "the dynamic nature of the economic system, and of the units for the measurement of the several component dynamic factors operating in the system."

Mr. Bassett Jones is apparently the high-brow of this tribe of engineer-thinkers. He uses words instead of charts, and does not even hesitate to quote from Lewis Carroll. In *Debt and Production*, to quote Sutart Chase, he made a "greater contribution than any single individual has made to economics for a long time." This greater contribution consisted of a pseudo-scientific distortion of the Marxian law that, with the advance of accumulation, the proportion of constant to variable capital changes, that is, the ratio of con-

stant to variable capital grows continually larger.

In the little volume under review, Mr. Jones has made another startling discovery. It seems that the methods used by many economists to determine statistics are pretty phony. Mr. Jones announces with some show of truculence that two apples plus two horses do not equal four readers of the Hound & Horn. To support this ponderous conclusion he has written for the average reader a special introduction that is far more unintelligible than the supposedly "technical" body of the book. If one boils down the contents of the volume, the residue is a number of stale quotations from "Alice" (which is apparently Mr. Jones' way of imitating the Cambridge mathematicians), a very painful "humorous touch," and a treatment of mathematics and economics that would make even a surrealist poet shudder.

It finally dawned on the reviewer that Mr. Jones was really a mystic prose poet. In *Horses and Apples*, there are heard the rhythms of a new *Weltanschauung* in terms of slide-rule metrics. Once the gagaistic nature of Mr. Jones' poetry is grasped, it is easy to come to the heart of his main obsession. He believes that "economic problems are no more amenable to solution through political action based on political motives, than are the problems of physics." What is wrong with the world according to Mr. Jones' song, is the mathematical formulas of the economists. Mr. Jones sings of a magic formula yet to be found, a formula combining ergs, pansies, horses, apples, and noetics in one grand equation which will be the true expression and saviour of the world. Those people who have read Marx's *Value, Price and Profit* should not laugh. Gottfried Feder—the theoretician of German Fascism—was also an engineer.

DAVID RAMSEY.

No Social Credit

FOUNDATIONS FOR THE WORLD'S NEW AGE OF PLENTY, by Fred Henderson. \$1. John Day Co.

There is a vast population in Europe and America that is stranded by the disintegration of morality since the war; not family or sex morality, but the morality of social relationships. Holding aloof from socialism, these persons have eagerly embraced each proposed panacea until it has been ridiculed into oblivion. In America glorious hopes have been raised in the League of Nations, the new capitalism, technocracy, and the N.R.A.; and one by one these hopes have gone glimmering.

Henderson wants to teach such people a few fundamental principles of economics. He shows how the delusion has arisen, because every transfer of property is accompanied by the use of money, checks and credit, that these are also real goods; and how this delusion has given birth to innumerable schemes for the manipulation of currency and credit. All such schemes, he points out, try to distribute privately-owned property without changing the

basic property relations of capitalism. In particular he attacks the "social credit" proposals of Major Douglas. Henderson proves that a real cure for the collapse can come only after the present social order has been replaced by a new one which treats production and distribution as social functions.

Henderson disposes very neatly of the quacks, but his own work invites critical analysis. Throughout the book he uses terms of economic philosophy rather than those of functional economics. Such a phrase, for example, as "the community's right of user" explains nothing, whereas "private appropriation of property" is concrete and enlightening. Another shadow statement is that "the purpose implicit in the new producing powers is the release of the general human life into leisure and abundance." Does Mr. Henderson think that is the capitalists' purpose? Again, the economic premise attributed to the employer for payment of wages is a "claim upon future production."

One trouble with Mr. Henderson is that he is addressing business and professional men, who do not like to hear about basic class conflicts. He says nothing about the interplay of economics and politics, and, though he advocates a new social order, he ignores the role of the working class in bringing such an order into existence. He speaks of social credit proposals as the final illusion, as if he had never heard of Fascism. At first glance Henderson might seem to be a progressive moving forward, but unfortunately, as comparison of this book with his earlier work shows, he is just another Independent Laborite crawling backward.

CHARLES D. FLETCHER.

Song of Bitterness

WEDDING SONG, by David Burnham.
Viking Press. \$2.50.

David Burnham's first novel, *This Our Exile*, will be remembered by those who read it as a rather neat embodiment of a number of extraordinary effects. Burnham was not long, apparently, out of Princeton when he wrote it, and almost inevitably he followed that tradition of bitterness which was a sort of collegiate expropriation of the disillusioned tone that had been peculiar to war-novels, by which the spirit of Old Nassau, like the spirit of patriotism, was turned to gall. Burnham, however, showed unusual ingenuity in carrying several elements of the tradition to their logical conclusions. The terseness of his characters' speeches out-Hemingwayed Hemingway, and the untempered plentitude of his bitterness was practically brilliant.

In *Wedding Song* the process is continued. The tone is the same, but there is much more to be bitter about. In spite of a set of mannerisms that becomes trivial at times, the reader who is familiar with the first book has the effect of being conducted by the author into a broader world outside. And Burnham proves himself good enough to be accounted

one of those serious novelists who, far from being hack apologists for the *status quo*, have yet not the consciously critical point of view of Marxists, but who show in every line they write that they know something is wrong.

Venice is the scene; the characters are worldly Americans and weary Italian aristocrats whose intrigues are, it may be supposed, a little more intense than usual in the period covered by the book. The story is told by an American brother and sister: Narcissa has married the elder son of the Montefiores, and Kit just hangs around because he has nowhere else to go. It would be impracticable to try to go into the plottings that are strung out through the book, but a partial list of the characters will help. Not a single one of them is in any way admirable. Giorgio, Narcissa's husband, spends his time chasing the aristocratic belles of the neighborhood; "The Lady," his reluctantly ageing mother, varnishes her face and worries herself hysterical about the young gigolo she tries to keep under her eyes; Blunt, the one-armed Englishman who is to marry the seventeen-year-old daughter, has an imperturbable contempt for them all; Narcissa, despite her fine feelings, never quite knows what it is about. The men are all cynics and the women fools. Kit, the main character, has dedicated his life to a scheme of revenge against his wealthy father, who he imagines has been responsible for the death, years before, of his mother. He seeks to carry out his scheme through transatlantic stock manipulations that aim at the financial destruction of his father. Chance, though, sends him a revenge he has not dreamed of: in a Paris hotel he sleeps with a woman who later turns out to be his own stepmother. Clearly it is a rotten society. What is going to be Mr. Burnham's final attitude toward it?

CLIFTON CUTHBERT.

Notes on Pamphlets

A COLLOQUY ON LIFE INSURANCE,
by A. Leroy Lincoln. Metropolitan Life
Insurance Company.

This defense of life insurance management by the vice-president of the largest insurance company in the country illustrates how skillfully high-paid special pleaders can dodge fundamental issues. In the course of the pamphlet, which deals with the reserves and investments of the companies—with a few pages on the salaries of executives—the author never mentions the persons who are refused insurance because of ill health, the persons who are forced to give up their insurance, the persons who have only "industrial policies" that at best merely cover the expenses of death and burial. If the principle of insurance is sound, why not cover everyone? By equitable taxation an adequate amount could readily be made available to provide universal insurance. This would eliminate the problems of reserves and investments, with which Mr. Lincoln deals. It would also eliminate the kind of position Mr. Lincoln holds.

SCOTTSBORO: THE THIRD ACT, by
Sasha Small. International Labor Defense.
3c.

In an uncommonly vigorous and dramatic pamphlet the editor of the *Labor Defender* has brought the story of Scottsboro up to date. Briefly outlining the origins of the case, she spends most of her time in describing the recent trials. The various figures come to life on the pages of the pamphlet, and the reader watches with absorbed interest as the judge and the prosecuting attorney perform the roles for which they had been cast by the ruling class of the South. It is an admirable pamphlet for mass circulation, for it reveals the meaning of the Scottsboro case by dramatizing it in terms of the larger struggle of which it is part.

Brief Review

THE BOOK OF GOOD DEEDS, edited
by Bernard Diebold and translated by H.
Lehman-Haupt. Farrar and Rinehart. \$2.

This book is a collection of actual cases of fraternization and kindness performed by soldiers of opposing armies on the battlefields of the World War. Each incident is dramatically presented, and the book is extremely interesting. The hundreds of cases cited are cumulative proof that the internationalism and solidarity of working class soldiers—the civilian occupations of those involved are mentioned after each case—are stronger than the ruling class propaganda of hate and the orders of the general staffs. Though most of the stories involve German soldiers, the good deeds recorded were done not only by German but also by English, French, Russian, Italian, and American (including Negro) soldiers.

COLD CITY SQUARE

(winter idyl)

Inland from a December sea
windgale of freezing air
bites to the flesh of the ragged jobless,
chases them from the Square,

drives them to find some haven before
gathered wind-fury can pound
fists of icy wind on their backs—
they scurry underground

to flophouse-, basement-, subway-safety
where warm sickened air can keep
bodies already hunger-chilled
from freezing dead in sleep.

And smart-dressed well-fed wives wheeling
their babies in the Square
and fragile sweet young things who take
their doggies out for air

need look the opposite way no more
nor longer be annoyed
by silent caved-in faces
on the rows of unemployed.

STANLEY BURNSHAW.

The Theatre

PUBLICATION in the NEW MASSES of Erskine Caldwell's accounts of the wayside murdering of Negroes in Georgia is a reminder that *Tobacco Road*, based on Caldwell's story of that name, is still among the current Broadway dramas.

Tobacco Road is not a play about Negroes, nor are the white characters in this searching study of white "civilization" in the back-country of Georgia considered in relation to lynching. But the play and the NEW MASSES articles are by no means unrelated. The play and the articles deal from different sides with a particular back-wash of the Civil War.

All plays derived from novels suffer from dilution and *Tobacco Road* is no exception. Even on the stage *Tobacco Road* is rather more of a novel than a play in its style. But this work has the advantage of a sympathetic and understanding cast and an author's conviction. In this case the author's conviction shines through all the various weaknesses that seem bound to result from the transplantation of a serious work from one prose medium to another.

In spite of the vulgarity and ugliness of the material, both human and inanimate, and in spite of the startling honesty of the writing, Caldwell does not hate his characters or present them out of an attitude of superiority. Neither does he want his audience to despise them, while seeing them as they are. There is always an undercurrent of pathos. And there is a good deal of humor, which is so often the companion of pathos in the finest literature.

The cast, moreover, is not only sympathetic in its performance, in a production where there is every temptation toward burlesque for the sake of the gratuitous laughter that is so dear to Broadway. In the main it is a highly accomplished and ably directed company in the strict professional sense. Henry Hull, as the leading figure, gives the best performance of his career and one of the few richest performances of the present Broadway season to date.

Hull plays the part of the head of a large family that has been living by sufferance for many years on a corner of a large abandoned plantation. There has been no harvest for several summers, due partly to habitual inertia and partly to scarcity of seed. The family has been subsisting from day to day by petty thievery and the hunting of casual small game.

The one beautiful daughter has not actually been sold. There is a pretense at propriety to this extent. But we are informed that \$7 changed hands, between her father and the bridegroom, when she was taken away in marriage against her will. In contrast to the pretended delicacy of feeling among these people regarding the \$7, however, there is the utmost frankness regarding sex practises. And the director allows unusual latitude in the per-

formance. For example, there is the episode in which the hair-lipped, sex-starved youngest daughter begins "horsing" with a neighbor in the dust of the dooryard, to the great amusement of her father and brother. And there is the incident in which the itinerant woman evangelist seduces this same brother, also in the dooryard, while conducting an impromptu prayer meeting. With the enthusiasm of her embraces and the promise of an automobile, the evangelist induces the youth to go away with her to be her husband. In her right as unordained but very active worker in the vineyard of the Lord, she officiates at her own marriage ceremony, then and there.

The crisis of the drama is reached when the son of the late owner of the plantation arrives with a banker's representative to dispossess the family. A mortgage has been foreclosed. The paternalistic original owner no longer stands between this tenant family and its inevitable doom. Besides, even if he were alive there is little that the original owner could do. In its larger implied sense, it is a case of capitalism obliterating one more vestige of a semi-feudal paternalism that was the unofficial, haphazard successor to the slave system. In the bourgeoisie of the South today there is a disposition to look after the wants of Negro servants when their usefulness is outlived, somewhat as they would look after horses or cows. To this white tenant family even this degrading form of amelioration is denied.

It is this crisis which brings forth a full expression of the character of the father and makes him complete as one of the remarkable figures of contemporary American literature. From the core of his being he argues for his right to the occupancy of this poor piece of land, where his parents and grand-parents had lived before him. His inheritance of the right to occupancy is as real to him as the inheritance of legal title by the owner. In fact, it is the one ultimate reality. God is just somebody he has heard about. Having children is just something that happens; and by now he has forgotten the names of most of the children that have grown up and gone away. It is his sense of his right to the occupancy of this plot of land, his sense of belonging to it, that gives his life the only fundamental meaning it has. In a way, this sense almost amounts to a belief, so that his passionate, violent expression of it seems to come close to an amorphous pantheism.

In this passage the lecherous father of a rabble and husband of a hag becomes a very nearly heroic figure. Admirable and loveable human values are enkindled in his enraged defiance of the machinations of a predatory system whose agents have finally overtaken even him. The fact that the defiance is hopeless does not reduce the scale of the portrait.

Aside from the fascination of the play,

which at this writing is understood to be struggling for survival by means of the Leblang cut-rate counter, *Tobacco Road* does a real service in its definition of the life of an outlawed people. The disfranchised, disinherited and dispossessed whites of the little-understood interior of the South are faced with a choice between abject pauperism and banditry. Looking back a few generations we come to the causes and occasions of the Civil War that obliterated chattel slavery as an economic order in the western hemisphere. The play adds to an understanding of the effects of that struggle.

Regardless of the undisputed idealism of many of the northern propagandists of the time against slavery, or of the deserved personal reputation of Abraham Lincoln for great compassion, northern capitalism was interested only in vanquishing a competitive economic system. This is no longer denied outside the thinning ranks of the G. A. R., where a desire to hold fast to a hard-earned glory is understandable enough. It is less clearly appreciated, as a specific point of view, that in the waging of the Civil War the North was not concerned with raising the general living and cultural standards of American society as a whole, despite the contention of its spokesman that it was doing civilization a service. As far as southern standards of living were concerned, the aim of northern capitalism was to smash their basis and then to make sure of their continuous depression.

Millions of Negroes and whites were cast off in the process of so-called "reconstruction" and left to subsist in various phases of dereliction. In this there was no regard for personal or community well-being, nor for the reaction of such a condition on the main body of American society. In *Tobacco Road*, writing boldly and brilliantly, Caldwell demonstrates that the supposedly enlightened system of industrial capitalism definitely abandoned a portion of the southern population, white as well as Negro, to an almost incredible degradation

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that is directly related to its poverty. The "reconstruction period" which the North imposed on the South was less a period of reconstruction than of repression.

Though industrial capitalism was victorious in a war-to-the-finish against a system of slavery, and though its victory represented an advance historically over that system, it was not and is not a system of social competence and responsibility. The "reconstruction" in this case is in stark contrast with the reconstruction that is taking place in the agricultural areas of the Soviet Union. Caldwell, naturally, does not mention the Soviet Union. Yet it is in connection with this contrast that the highest significance of *Tobacco Road* lies.

A northerner, unfamiliar at first hand with the South, I naturally feel some hesitancy in commenting on a play like this. It is conceivable that the author may charge me with missing his main point and with ignoring the con-

siderations that interest him most. The South does seem to be more full of special symbols and fetiches than the North ever was. But I feel personally enlightened by this work. While obliging me with a dramatic, or at least literary, experience, Caldwell has Told me something, with a capital T, with an effect that could not have been made by the simpler means of editorial or essay.

I feel I have learned something about the South and about the human side of American history that I did not know before. Without wanting to pose as an expert on the South, or as someone qualified to verify the authenticity of *Tobacco Road* as a sectional study, I want to pass these observations along in the hope of inducing a few others to find the means of seeing the play for themselves before it closes here, or to look forward to it in some road city in case it goes on tour.

WILLIAM GARDENER.

The Screen

THE VULGAR conception of a motion picture cycle holds that once producers hit upon an idea that makes money, they will continue re-working the theme until the audience has been sated with this particular fare. The Marxist penetrates this Philistine conception. He appreciates the *zeitgeist* that makes both producer and audience sensitive to a particular theme and treatment at a given time. He observes the film carefully and sees reflected in it the nuances and variations in ideology from month to month, from season to season.

The uncertainty and instability in American life at the present time have been concretely reflected in the Hollywood product. The film of sophistication and the gangster story have been relegated to the background. Instead, the middle-class temper, with its desperate need for tranquility and security, has produced the back-to-the-farm film, the back-to-the-nineteenth-century story. But the solution in escape can only partially satisfy this middle-class audience. The desire and need to find social problems reflected in the films remain present. And Hollywood has been forced to respond to this desire. It has responded by working out a glib formula for the "social" film.

Harry Alan Potamkin indicated the domi-

nant elements in this formula when he explained the "surprising" honesty and documentation of *Cabin in the Cotton*. This film told the story of share croppers and how they suffered under the domination of "bad" landlords. The landlords represented were not a dominant group in American life. In fact, the landlords, themselves, were heavily mortgaged and in bad grace with the rentier gentlemen of the North. The locale treated was the Mississippi cotton plantations, a section that has few movie houses, so that there was no chance of antagonizing a large and profitable audience. And the hero of the film implored the tenants to be reasonable, to resort to legal

weapons, the courts, the laws. He urged them to disband and return in peace to their homes. He said there was nothing they could gain by organizing into a mass. Genuine issues were raised but the solution was always class collaboration rather than class struggle. And the formulation was always demagogic.

The formula cropped up again in *Heroes For Sale*, where, in addition, we found a deliberate and vicious slander of the Communists. *Wild Boys of the Road*, *Mayor of Hell*, *Gabriel Over the White House*—all drew heavily on the formula. The most recent expression is the First National film *Massacre* with Richard Barthelmess, which opened on Broadway last week.

This time the film relates the slow massacre of the red Indian by legal means. However, the "interests" who exploit the Indian are more powerful in American life than the Southern feudal landlords. The attack, therefore, has become much more generalized in this film and less convincing and moving than the concrete instances of *Cabin in the Cotton*. Instead, we are shown an earnest, honest, paternal government official who has the welfare of the Indian at heart, but who is powerless because of interests and bad individuals who interfere with his work. The documentation of Robert Gessner's book *Massacre*, on which this film is based, has been disregarded for the most part, and a generalized schematically-developed thesis, crossed with a typical wild west film, has been the result.

Here was the opportunity to create a magnificent epic with all the tragedy and pathos of these Indian nations who were destroyed by

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the expanding American bourgeoisie. Here was the opportunity to chronicle the history of the American Indian subjected and exploited by the American master class. Robert Gessner, in his book *Massacre*, depicted the plight of the Indian. He sensed the full meaning of the term "the vanishing American" and presented it realistically. However, today, the truth is revolutionary, and the bourgeois film dares not be honest.

The film *Massacre* avoided the authenticity of types and neglected the portrayal of the daily experiences of the Indian. Instead, the picture flirted with the pictorial and picturesque. Dialogue is usually a good gauge of the sincerity and integration of a theme. The dialogue in *Massacre* is never integrated. It is always schematic, a series of speeches to establish information and sentiment.

And here, too, as in the earlier films of the "social" cycle, when the Indians organize and mass to see justice done, the Indian hero urges them to disband and return peacefully to their homes; he assures them that the same legal

American machine, that robbed them of their lands and took away all their rights to move freely, will grant them justice.

It is worth noting, too, the formal graphic composition in which the director has designed his mob scenes, for even this technical structure reflects the ideology of the artist. The composition of masses and mobs in the Soviet film is always solid, structural; the group has a personality and in internal structure of design. I have yet to see a bourgeois film in which a crowd, mob, or mass is designed and composed. In *Massacre*, in *I Was a Spy*, in innumerable films I have seen, the crowd or mob exists always as a collection of individuals. Except for the bank-run scene in Gregory La Cava's *American Madness*, I can recall no other American film which represented a crowd as a personality unified by an internal designed structure of its own.

The story of the destroyed and oppressed Indian nations and their struggle for self-determination still remains to be told. It will be a great film and will most probably have to

wait for the studios of a Soviet America before it can be told honestly. Meanwhile, if you keep your tongue in your cheek while listening to the hokum about Washington's sincerity, you may kill a few hours painlessly by seeing this film. Barthelmess, Ann Dvorak and Dudley Digges turn in sincere and competent performances, and the film does offer a slight insight into the Indian problem.

There is a new pox descending on film theatres. The Grand Hotel-railroad train cycle has worked around to the transcontinental bus. Last week MGM released *Fugitive Lovers*; Universal follows this week with *Cross Country Cruise* and Columbia promises us *Night Bus*, in the near future. It is the old formula of strangers thrown together, and the tawdry Hollywood mind continues fashioning melodrama and muffs, consistently, every opportunity for honest dramatic development that exists potentially in the theme. Of the two released so far, both peddle the usual stuff. *Fugitive Lovers* does succeed in creating some suspense and it is less dull.

Gallant Lady, the new 20th Century film, in which Ann Harding and Clive Brook turn in good performances, is the old formula of the mother and child who are finally re-united after overcoming the usual obstacles. This time the story is told against a smart background, and about sophisticated people.

NATHAN ADLER.

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"Four million jobs!" they chorused
With a loud and rousing shout,
"Four million jobs!" they chorused
As they waved the flag about.

"A minimum for wages!"
(And they cut in every town.)
"The right to choose your unions!"
(And they shot the pickets down.)

"Fair Freedom's land!" they chortled.
(Yes, and Liberty lies dead.)
"No one shall suffer hunger!"
(And the starving fight for bread.)

AUDREY LINN.



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