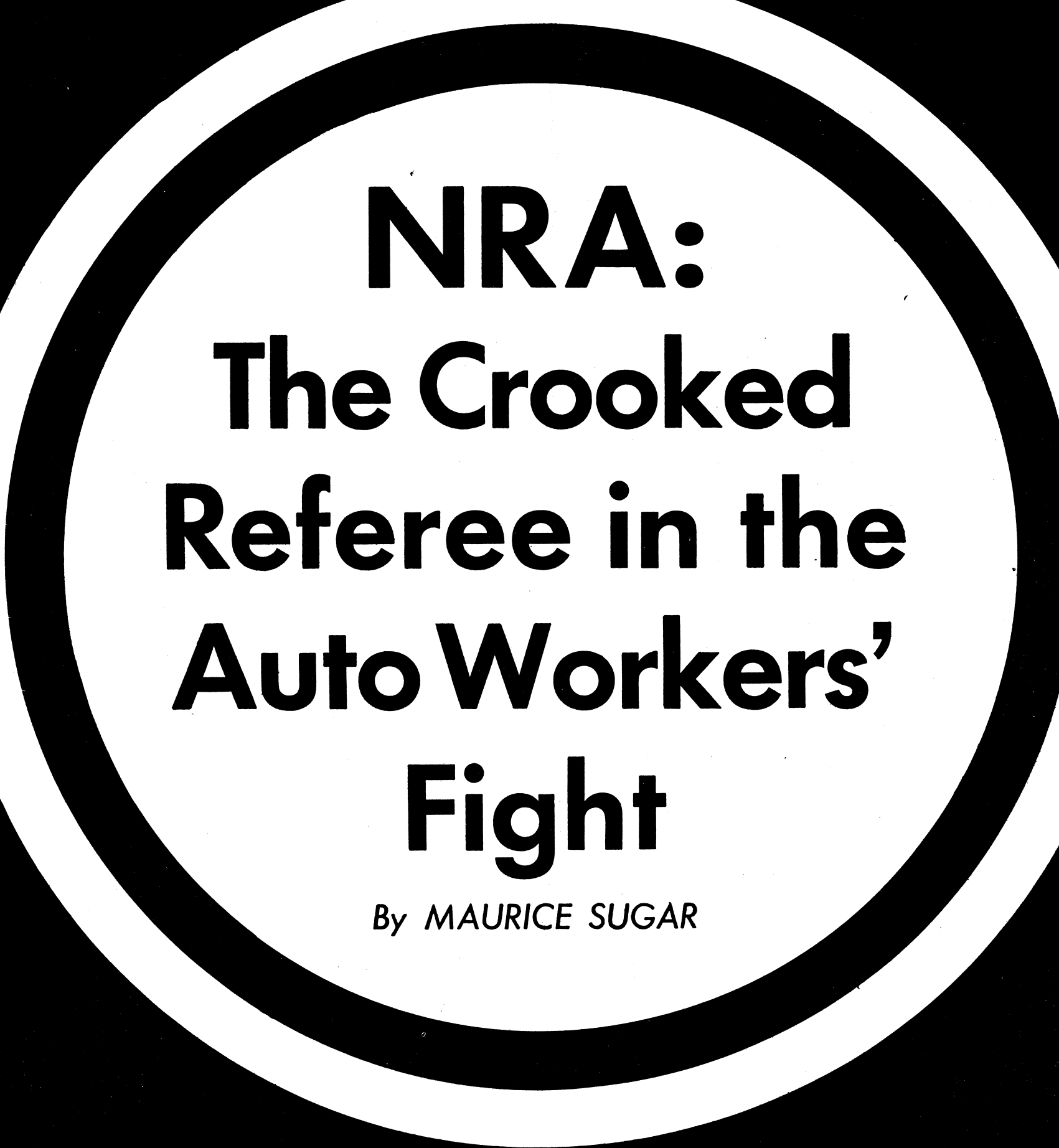


**new**

MARCH 27, 1934

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# **Masses**



**NRA:  
The Crooked  
Referee in the  
Auto Workers'  
Fight**

By MAURICE SUGAR

*With our subscription list growing by leaps and bounds*

## WE HAVE REASON TO CELEBRATE

*It's more fun  
when you come  
in costume!*



*It's a semi-annual  
event guaranteed  
to cast off gloom!*



DANCING UNTIL 3 A.M.

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If Webster Hall is too large for you, we have Webster Manor equally beautiful, all under the roof of Webster Hall.

119 EAST 11th STREET

NEW YORK CITY



**DANCING UNTIL 3 A.M.**

# new Masses

MARCH 27, 1934

C. W. A. workers are determined not to allow the government to dissolve the Civil Works Program. They are bitterly protesting all over the country. Strikes and demonstrations have been held by 12,000 in northern New York, 2,000 in Pittsburgh, 1,400 in Kentucky, 1,000 in Shamokin, Pa., 600 in Gallup, New Mexico, etc. 3,000 C.W.A. workers in York, Pa., demanded a 50-cent hourly wage, union recognition, non-discrimination—and won. 7,300 in Syracuse struck for a 10 cent hourly wage increase, and won. Campaigning now to concentrate these scattered interests into a centralized mass pressure on Washington, the New York Conference for United Action on C.W.A. and Unemployment on March 18 voted to organize with all members of the American Federation of Labor, Trade Union Unity League, and independent unions in a nation-wide strike, March 29, at 3 p.m. The demands are for (1) continuation and extension of civil works jobs, (2) employment for all who are now unemployed, and (3) passage of the Workers' Unemployment and Social Insurance bill (HR-7598) now before Congress.

THIS bill has been endorsed by more than seventy A.F. of L. locals during the past month, including important central bodies in Philadelphia, St. Louis, Spokane and Salt Lake City. But the leaders in both the A.F. of L. and the Socialist Party are strongly opposed to the bill. They have endorsed Senator Wagner's bill, which gives even more powers to the National Labor Board and provides employers with even better strike-breaking facilities. Gen. Johnson explained that the interests of the A.F. of L. bureaucracy are the interests of the companies. And now ex-Judge Panken, speaking for the Socialist Party, openly endorses the A.F. of L. Things equal to the same thing are equal to each other. Against this united front of Employers - A. F. of L. - Socialist Party bureaucracies, thousands of rank and file workers in all unions are demand-

ing the passage of this bill which, as Mary van Kleeck irrefutably demonstrated to a Senate committee, is the only bill that can alleviate the present conditions of unemployment, starvation, and misery.

WHILE it is true that "no ruling class ever abdicates," budding capitalists should learn the dialectic principle which *ordains* abdication for Grade B capitalists who muscle in on the territory of Grade A capitalists. They should, for instance, take to heart the fact that Sam Insull's troubles became inevitable from the day he began to trespass upon J. P. Morgan's New England utility preserves. It is true that there were contributing factors—the 1929 stock market débâcle, and the blind Insull disbelief in the catastrophic nature of the crisis; but muscling into New England was his decisive error. Now, shorn of his vast stable of mayors, governors, senators, and legislators, and his bevy of houris from the Chicago Grand Opera Company, the always irascible Insull fumes more apoplectically than ever as he deploys about the Mediterranean aboard the Greek tramp steamer Maiotis—a harried super-remittance man, in his



TRYING

pockets "a list of thirty countries with which the United States has no extradition treaties."

FUTURE Soviet historians of Greece, England, and America may amuse themselves by piecing out from the archives the detailed story of Insull's immunity, bought and paid for, it is reported, through the help of his friend and colleague, Sir Basil Zaharov, munitions king and war promoter extraordinary. It's an open question whether the Roosevelt administration will return Insull to make a demagogic sacrifice of him. Insull himself seems to anticipate that he will not be returned. Reporters who have seen him say what he fears most is "that American authorities might charter a ship to *exterminate* him in a simulated collision." Workers who remember Insull's famous declaration that "the best insurance I've found against labor troubles is a long line of unemployed at our plant gate" might consider this a happy ending—too happy, however, to really hope for.

SOUTH AMERICA is at war again. Bolivia is rallying to defend Balivian, her Verdun, from the onrush





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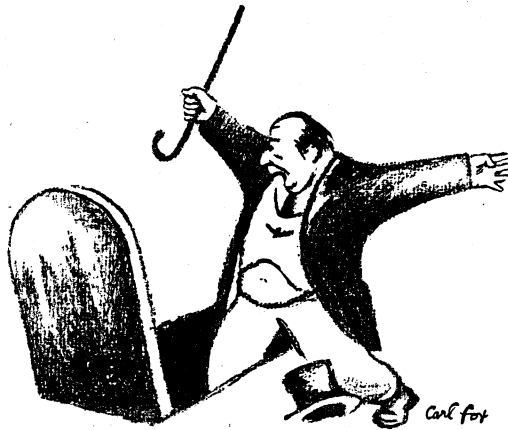


TRYING

of Paraguayan forces. Or to put it more precisely, British capitalists controlling Paraguay are making a fierce attempt to gain a foothold in the Bolivian oil-fields controlled by the United States. Ever since 1918 American mining and petroleum interests (Rockefeller, Guggenheim, etc.) have been steadily gaining on their English rivals whose annual South American bounty before 1914 amounted to \$5 billion as against America's paltry \$2 billion. But in the last fifteen years United States capitalists have acquired the tricks of the trade. In an effort to counteract her rival's rising power and influence, England sent over some of her most popular royal salesmen, such as the Prince of Wales. But to no avail—the United States has finally equaled England's annual \$5 billion mark.

**A**MERICAN capitalism uses the typical imperialist efficiency methods in this bitter competition with England. Industrial workers and peasants are forced to labor for starvation wages under appalling conditions; it is not unusual for Bolivian miners to work thirty-six hours at a stretch. By a neat disenfranchising "illiteracy clause," American interests have so arranged matters that only 26,000 out of a 3,000,000 population vote. The government is then given over to native whites directly responsible to the interests who placed them in office. In Paraguay British capitalism carries on a similar corruption and exploitation plus a system of compulsory labor. But the present battle at Bolivian will settle nothing, regardless of who wins, for the whole of South America has been split into two blocs: United States-Mexico-Colombia-Cuba versus England-Argentine-Brazil-Chile-Peru. Arbitration has failed because the aims of British and American imperialists are of course irreconcilable. War seems the only alternative. And war will continue until the workers of Paraguay and Bolivia finally refuse to continue sacrificing their blood for the greater profits of British or American imperialism.

**T**HE growing militancy of the Negro masses is evoking new manifestations of anti-Negro terror. Last week seven Negroes were legally lynched in a single day: two each in North Carolina and Georgia, and three in Mississippi, where the father of the alleged rape victim was given the privilege of witnessing the hanging. (One Orville



ONE TO GO

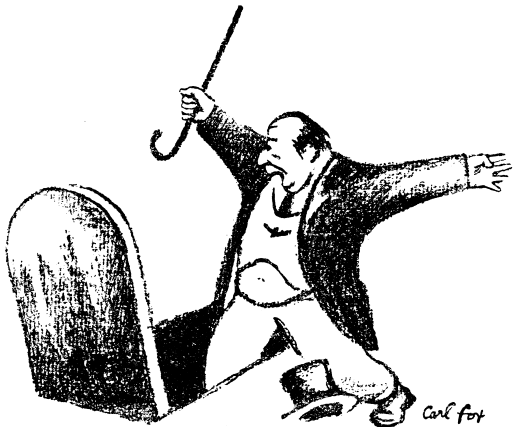
Fanning of Alabama, in a letter protesting the New York Times review of *They Shall Not Die*, explains that the death penalty for rape is "the only means of holding the Negro in check.") On Saturday a group of Negro students from Howard University, demonstrating against Jim Crowism in Senate and House dining rooms, were rushed out of the building by Capitol police and Senate guards. And the same day 5,000 Negro and white workers, meeting in Harlem with Mrs. Ada Wright in behalf of the Scottsboro boys, were attacked by police who suffered several casualties during the two-hour battle that ensued. The whole neighborhood rushed out in defense of the rights of free speech and free assemblage, Negro and white workers fighting side by side. Mayor LaGuardia, who promised that no demonstrations would be attacked by his police, has been forced to conduct an inquiry.

**M**EANWHILE, news comes from Atlanta that Angelo Herndon, young Negro organizer of unemployed, framed "for distributing insurrectionary literature," is about to have another torment inflicted on him. In addition to the constant torture and unbearable conditions in the Fulton Tower death-house, sexual pervers are to be introduced into his cell. Every sympathizer is now urged by the International Labor Defense to flood Gov. Talmadge, Atlanta, Ga., with protests demanding that Herndon be given the rights of a political prisoner, and that he receive at once the medical attention he so urgently needs. Mass protests of this kind are proving more and more effective every day. For example, Bernard Ades, I.L.D. attorney, on trial in Baltimore, was found "guilty of conduct unbecoming an officer." Mass pressure having been focussed on the case, he was merely reprimanded.

A year ago he would have been unhesitatingly disbarred.

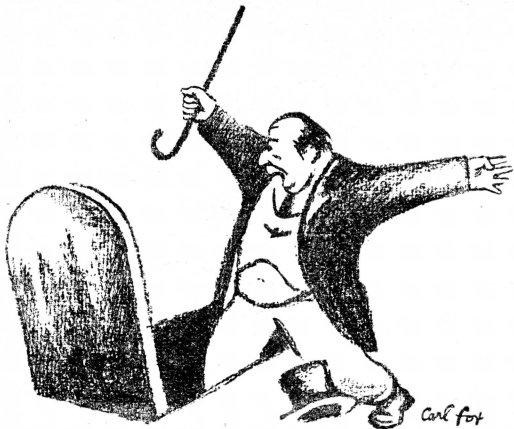
**M**R. O. E. BAKER of the U. S. Department of Agriculture, foresees that in 20 or 25 years births and deaths in the U. S. A. will balance, and the population will then begin to decline from its peak point in 1950. A curious note creeps into the conclusion of the expert's report. He says that we shall become an "oldish" people. "Children will be born with few exceptions only to the parents who want them." This decline in population alarms our specialist. To check the decline he urges "part-time" farming for economic and family reasons. It is the urban "social code" (whatever that may be) that is "unquestionably promoting depopulation." The expert, therefore, urged the purchase of a farm at a price of \$8,000 to \$10,000 in order to raise more children as well as crops and thus preserve the family. In short, manufacture bigger families at lower production costs. In New York City, another expert figured that it costs more than \$10,000 (including interest) to raise a child to 18 years. By following Mr. Baker's scheme, a man and wife could raise at least 4 children for the price of one. With application of scientific management the production of low-cost children could probably be pushed to the point of creating a profitable industry. Capitalism could then have surplus cannon fodder—and subsistence farms for workers to grow children.

**T**HE capitalist world follows the principle that more and more goods must be produced at less and less cost. Accidents and occupational diseases take a heavy toll among workers who are caught between the jaws of this vise. The situation in the production of human flesh is the same. What this means in terms of death and human suffering can be learned from the report of the Committee on Public Health Relations of the New York Academy of Medicine. It is a strong indictment of the unnecessarily high rate of maternal mortality in New York City. "It was estimated that two-thirds of all deaths studied could have been prevented if the case of the woman had been treated properly in all respects." The report adds significantly that this was especially true of patients from "the lower economic groups." Working class women were subjected to treatment by attendants whose incapacity "either in



ONE TO GO

*Carl Fox*  
Carl Fox



ONE TO GO

*Carl Fox*  
*Carl Fox*

judgment or skill contributed to a large number of avoidable deaths." Inadequate hospital standards and equipment added to the lists of avoidable deaths. The committee caught in the web of a vicious system came to the usual futile conclusions. The remedy was "education" for doctor and public. But the hazards of childbirth are inextricably bound up with the hazards of living in a society where the worker is constantly pursued by hunger and death.

### The Week's Papers

**WEDNESDAY** — Three die in tenement-house fire. . . . The Waldorf reports a 60-percent increase in guests. . . . The C.W.A. to drop 11,000 in New York immediately. . . . N.R.A. is thinking hard about the Weirton case. . . . Henry Ford and the National Automobile Chamber of Commerce promise a thirty-six-hour week for 230,000 workers, without a pay cut.

**THURSDAY** — Independent artists decide not to hold their show in Rockefeller City, fearing censorship after destruction of Rivera mural. . . . House votes the bonus, with one eye on the Fall elections, the other oscillating between the hostile Senate and Roosevelt's

veto promise. . . . Company unions are assailed and defended at Wagner bill hearing. Defenders don't know who wrote their by-laws, haven't any dues, treasury or meetings, but think a company union's good for school spirit. . . . N.R.A. is trying to avert a strike of taxi drivers.

**FRIDAY** — General Motors spokesman tells N.R.A. they won't recognize union. . . . New York tenement house owners back drive to end slums. Vincent Astor offers to sell his tenements to city cheap—omits to mention he couldn't give 'em away to anybody else. . . . R.F.C. asks for permission to hand over public money directly to employers, without formality of sifting it through banks. . . . C.W.A. head announces that all in "actual need" will keep jobs. Doesn't explain who the others are. . . . N.R.A. thinking hard about Weirton company union problem. . . .

**SATURDAY**—New York City finds it owns worst firetrap tenements of all. . . . Gerard Swope, head of Business Advisory and Planning section of N.R.A. takes heavy crack at Stock Exchange regulation bill. Sees ruin staring us in face. . . . N.R.A. wondering what the hell to do about Weirton. . . . Railway men taking strike vote after strike vote.

**SUNDAY**—Negro students of Howard University try to eat in House of Representatives lunch room. . . . Rushed out by police. . . . Mrs. Ada Wright, mother of two Scottsboro boys, comes to Harlem from Alabama. . . . Police attack demonstration, 5,000 battle cops, tear gas bombs, horses and clubs two hours. . . . Rail workers demand end of pay cut. Strike definitely nearer. . . . William H. Woodin, of (remember?) Morgan's preferred list and the Treasury Dept., elected head of the Lotos Club.

**MONDAY**—N.R.A., here, there and everywhere, trying to avert, delay, circumvent or break strikes. . . . No progress. . . . Workers at Budd shops in Philadelphia boo Johnson's name, refuse to vote in phony election until 800 blacklisted strikers get jobs back. . . . New York Police investigating themselves on their Harlem brutality. Trying to find out who threw first gas bomb. . . . Labor's dividends: Worker fixing bakery oven, caught inside, bakes in 350 degree heat forty-five minutes; nearly dead when pulled out.

**TUESDAY** — Automobile barons report "progress" (in getting N.R.A. to hamstring threatened strike before it starts). . . . Railroads renew threat of additional 5 percent wage cut, to make it 15 in all. . . . Steel bosses denounce unions for having "paid leaders"—instead of the casual, altruistic volunteers known as corporation lawyers who serve *them*. . . . "Labor trouble growing in Ohio." . . . N.R.A. tries to avert strikes. . . . New York taxi fleet owners ignore N.R.A. . . . Yale professors produce chimpanzee who under their tutelage shows considerable promise as banker and merchant.

**WEDNESDAY**—N.R.A. works hard to delay auto strike. . . . Roosevelt jumps in personally. . . . Bill Green jumps in too, helps to get strike delayed. . . . Roosevelt also moves "to end rail pay crisis." . . . Organized labor boycotts N.R.A. election in Budd shops. . . . Wide inquiry into Nazi propaganda voted by House. . . . "Yeah," says Hamilton Fish, "and Communism too." . . . N.R.A. stops thinking about Weirton situation—goes to court for an injunction. . . . Frank Moffer, Fascist indicted for first-degree murder, is allowed to plead guilty of—manslaughter. . . . And seven more are burned to death in New York tenement fire traps.

# new Masses

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JACOB BURCK, STANLEY BURNSHAW, MICHAEL GOLD, GRANVILLE HICKS, JOSHUA KUNITZ, HERMAN MICHELSON, JOSEPH NORTH, ASHLEY PETTIS.

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# “Unintelligent Fanaticism”

THE characteristic political trait of most literary intellectuals in capitalist society is vacillation. This is the direct outgrowth of their class position. They have no economic base. They always fluctuate between the upper bourgeoisie and the proletariat; between Fascism and revolution, flirting with this or that class purpose which they are never sure is their own. Their perceptions are not clear for their class basis is not clear. Hence their oscillations from extreme nihilism, individual anarchism, Bohemianism, skirting sometimes the edges of Communism, through Trotskyism, Lovestoneism, social-democracy to N.R.A. and thence onward to Fascism.

Take for instance the vacillations of an Upton Sinclair, or a Dreiser, or a Sherwood Anderson. The day before yesterday they were bemoaning the jungles of America, the tragedy of America, the blight of American capitalist industrialism. Yesterday with considerable fanfare they were journeying to the class wars. And it was but yesterday our own Granville Hicks regarded them as “having taken their stand with the party of revolution.” Ah—but that was yesterday. Today—two have fallen in with “Comrade” Astor, “Comrade” Roosevelt, “Comrade” General Johnson; and Upton Sinclair vacillates from socialism to Wilsonism to socialism to Rooseveltism, and does it so rapidly that he dizzies not only himself but the observer.

These are major figures: they best typify the tortuousness of the path taken by the hosts of lesser figures of their class. In their wanderings they occasionally cross the borderline into the revolutionary camp. While they are there, they are camp followers. Not very reliable at best—peevish, capricious, prima donna-ish—at worst they become definitely detrimental. The revolutionary movement, in its eagerness for allies from all disaffected sections of society, has often been insufficiently discriminating. In the main these people are precarious allies although history provides examples of men who have accepted the discipline and rigor of the revolutionary aims of the proletariat. Because of this the movement often errs in too great a readiness to acclaim even the faltering steps in its

direction of a Dreiser, or an Anderson, or a Panait Istrati, or an O’Flaherty.

The same natural laws apply whether you examine planets or atoms. On a microscopic scale we see the same class laws operating in the case of some of the signers of the Open Letter to the Communist Party protesting the Madison Square Garden events. We refer to the Gruens, the Grudins, the Gerschecks, and particularly to the erstwhile Menorah Journal group—these loop-the-loopers from Zionism to “internationalism”: the Brenners, the Cohens, the Bergs, the Novacks, the Trillings, the Morrows, the Rubins.

In the correspondence section of this issue a letter from Isidor Schneider indicates the extent of aid these individuals gave to the revolutionary movement. These clamorers for “unity” revealed themselves during the few months that they teetered on the remotest fringes of the movement. In the National Committee for the Defense of Political Prisoners they began their backbiting careers. Of course they proved impotent and walked out of the Committee in a huff.

They now imagine themselves to be Trotzkyites, hence the declared enemies of the Communist Party use them for what they are worth. (It is rather significant that individuals like Sidney Hook and Herbert Solow, their intimates, who have already declared themselves Trotzkyites or Nationalist “Communists,” desisted from signing the letter.)

It is not hard to see just why such intellectuals veer toward pseudo-revolutionary groupings. They are unhappy under capitalism in the throes of a crisis. From a distance the revolutionary movement lures them. They yearn for its strength. Clinging vines! However, they soon learn that the revolution requires consecration, honesty, devotion, selflessness, discipline. Yes—and sacrifice. And this only the best are able to give. The rest can only indulge in twitting capitalism—and that from a safe distance. Most of their energy is wasted in attacking the Communist Party—a safe, and to the capitalist and liberal press, a sane revolutionism. Thus by bandying revolutionary phrases they retain the illusion of being real “Reds”—and, by attacking the Communist Party, natur-

ally win capitalist recognition as the true exponents of the real, the genuine Marxism. Some of them have come to the revolutionary movement in order to attain positions of leadership they could not otherwise acquire in the capitalist society with its surplus of “leaders.” But the revolutionary masses bestow leadership only upon the most fit; those tested and tried in the crucible of class conflict. This takes time; and these gentlemen are petty-bourgeois in a hurry. And so they retire once more to their literary haunts—and begin to spin revolutionary politics of their own brand—that which emanates from their bookish schemes and not from the objective conditions of society and the crisis. In order to put their revolutionary policies into practice it would be necessary as a preliminary step to prepare in a laboratory the kind of proletariat and, in fact, all other social classes, that would fit the programs they conjure up in their isolation. Since this cannot be done, they content themselves by disagreeing with the policies of an irksomely realistic revolutionary proletarian movement represented by the Communist Party.

A typical example of vacillation is provided in the following letter from John Dos Passos:

My reason for signing the letter you printed in your issue for March 6 was the growing conviction that only a drastic change of policy and of mentality can save the radical movement in this country from the disastrous defeats suffered in Italy, Germany, Austria and Spain. By radical movement I mean the whole trend, in politics, social organization and in men’s minds, in the direction of a workers’ and producers’ commonwealth, of which the Communist Party in this country is politically the most advanced outpost. I do not, as you know, pretend to be either a political economist or an industrial worker; as a writer I think it is my business to let my work speak for itself and keep my mouth shut the rest of the time. What happened in Madison Square Garden was shocking to me because it indicated the growth of unintelligent fanaticism that, in my opinion, can only end in the division of the conscious elements of the exploited classes into impotent brawling sects, and in the ruin for our time of the effort towards a sanely organized society. It seemed only common honesty to join in this protest, particularly as the men and women who sign-



*Boris Gorelick*

NEWS OF THE WEEK

*Boris Gorelick*





*Boris Gorelick*

NEWS OF THE WEEK

*Boris Gorelick*

ed the letter (which I had understood was to be sent to the Daily Worker) represented much the same group with which I put my name to a campaign endorsement of the Communist candidates for the last presidential election.

We said in our editorial addressed to Dos Passos in the March 6 issue that we believed that he watched with sympathy the struggles of militant labor and aided such struggles: that we had often turned to him for "sympathetic cooperation and support"; that his "books had helped mold a challenging attitude toward capitalism and its concomitant evils"; and that writers in and "close to the revolutionary movement" had, "in many instances regarded him as a literary guide and inspiration."

We have no reason to revise these remarks. As his letter reveals, Dos Passos holds that in the radical movement the Communist Party "is politically the most advanced outpost." He expresses now, as formerly, allegiance to the ideal "of a workers' and producers' commonwealth." However, he was shocked at what happened in Madison Square Garden, fearing it "indicated the growth of unintelligent fanaticism" in the United States.

Unintelligent fanaticism? How reminiscent of Maxim Gorky in the first year of the Bolshevik revolution. Gorky, too, was no "political economist or industrial worker." Politics irked Gorky too. *Novaya Zhizn*, the paper Gorky edited in the October days, took a tone of sharp opposition to the Bolsheviks. The Bolshevik government was always referred to in quotation marks. Gorky's editorials against the Communists can be gauged by their ominous titles, such as "Demagogy of Impotence," "On the Verge of a Precipice," "Madness," etc. The parallel with Dos Passos is remarkably close. In Gorky's paper too, we find the constant clamor for a "united revolutionary front." And with whom? Also with the Mensheviks (the analogues of our American Socialists); also with the yielding, class-collaborationist parties and groups. Even Gorky, during a period of revolutionary upheaval, wavered, permitting vestiges of liberal humanitarianism to obscure the harsh inevitability of class warfare. "Madness," said Gorky. "Unintelligent fanaticism," says Dos Passos.

As the revolution swept on, constructing, creating, eradicating the lower depths from Russian life and replacing them with a society such as he dreamed

of, Gorky, an honest intellectual, returned, and is today revered by the revolutionary proletariat, "the unintelligent fanatics" who have fought and are fighting the world over for a "cooperative commonwealth," a Communist society.

In the Soviet Union, one hundred and fifty nationalities occupying an area from the Baltic to the Pacific, set the example of international proletarian creativeness. Even the *New York Times* of Sunday, March 18, says, "The most interesting thing about the New Russia is that it is fairly blazing with energy. To use a metaphor appropriate to this grim and cold country, it is as if the revolution had burst an ice dam and released waters that are now sweeping all before them. It is like the pioneer spirit of early America but a hundredfold intensified by a much greater population and the fact of the previous repression of the people . . . the word 'impossible' does not exist in the Soviet dictionary."

In China, despite the combined efforts of the greatest imperialist powers, one-fourth of that vast land—more than 700,000 square kilometers—is Soviet! Communist China, with seventy million population, is bigger than any capitalist country in Europe: the last year saw an increase of 120,000 membership in the Communist Party; the total exceeds 416,000. The Red Army, admittedly the best in China, has 350,000 fighters in regular detachments—about 600,000 in the armed guerilla brigades. "Unintelligent fanatics!"

In Germany the underground Communist Party now has a steeled army of 100,000 members, and the total mounts daily. Despite the Brown Shirts, Communist-led unions have conducted successful strikes in the Lower Rhine, in Haagen, in Duesseldorf, in Wuppertal, in Solingen and in other places. The Communist Party—three members of whose Central Committee have been killed—whose every leading worker is a condemned man, more than 10,000 of whose members were arrested in a single week last November, has not discontinued its work for a single minute. Since Junker Hindenburg and Social-Democratic Severing handed power to Hitler, the Communist Party has broadcast widely many million pieces of literature. Its illegal central organ, the *Rote Fahne*, although appearing irregularly, is read by far greater masses than at the time when it was published legally. "Unintelligent fanatics!"

The Communist International, the Comintern, today numbers in its ranks

outside Soviet Russia itself an army of 860,000; "unintelligent fanatics" prepared to face any peril—to stare death in the face. Figures do not tell the whole story: every Communist armed with class-consciousness, knowing exactly what he wants, and knowing how to achieve it, becomes the focal point toward which his co-workers naturally gravitate especially in times of struggle. The figure therefore of 860,000 membership implies an incalculably greater force: so much greater that world capitalism is now trying to devise all possible means of counter-action: Fascism, N.R.A., Coalition governments, demagoguery of all brands and of all shades from black to leftest pink. It amounts to either open or covert war. During the first eight months of 1933, 238,000 Communist fighters were arrested; 46,000 were killed, and 160,000 wounded and maimed. In Poland alone out of a membership of 30,000, ten thousand are in jail; in Germany 2,000 were killed and 60,000 incarcerated. Any Communist apprehended in Chiang Kai-Chek's China is beheaded without formality of trial. In Japan 8,000 were imprisoned the first nine months of 1933. "Unintelligent fanatics!" Evidently there were not enough such unintelligent fanatics in the four countries cited by Dos Passos.

In America, where the class struggle is now shifting from concealed to open warfare, the Communist Party is growing at an unprecedented rate: 1,500 new "unintelligent fanatics" sign the red cards of Communism monthly. It is difficult to overestimate the importance of this fact: these are 1,500 men and women voluntarily joining the ranks of the vanguard fighting for a new society. They become part of the leadership the Communist Party represents today; they lead the masses in the heightened class struggle against the ultra-demagoguery of N.R.A. and Roosevelt, the strikes against the constantly decreasing wage standards and increasingly burdensome conditions of labor; the war against the hunger of mass unemployment. In the light of this the teapot tempest started by the few literary intellectuals and pretenders seems ludicrous, and pathetically inept. They try to roar, but succeed in squeaking. Along with the radio announcer and the *New York* prostitute press, they hold up their hands in horror at the barbarian invasion by the Communists. The Huns are at the gate! The geese cackle alarm! Save Rome!

# NRA: The Crooked Referee

## Round By Round Story of the Auto Workers' Fight

MAURICE SUGAR

DETROIT.

**T**HE automobile workers are beginning to move again. So is the National Run-Around. Just how is it done? There can be no better illustration than that provided by the strike of the tool and diemakers in the same industry last fall—the strike of the Mechanics Educational Society of America.

The M. E. S. A. is an independent organization of tool makers, diemakers and allied craftsmen. It was organized in March, 1933, as an educational group. Charter members state that they had no intention of creating a labor union. They even recall that they were disposed to be rather snooty; they contemplated admitting only "the better class fellows."

The organization started in Detroit with 12 members. Its growth was astonishing. Hundreds began joining. At the time of the strike in September, but six months after its origin, its membership was 11,000! Within a week after the strike was called, its membership was 17,000. The membership was in 3 cities: Detroit, 14,000; Flint, 2,000, and Pontiac 1,000.

All this without a single organizer or "business agent." The significance is startling. A spontaneous reaction to objective conditions.

What were these objective conditions? From 1923 to 1929, tool and diemakers in the automobile industry occupied a relatively advantageous position. The industry was growing on a tremendous scale. Skilled men were in demand. They were drawn from other industries and were trained to do the type of work peculiar to the production of automobile tools and dies. In "good times" they were employed only 8 months out of the year. But for the 7 years prior to 1929 they had worked on 12 hour shifts and 7 days or nights a week. In addition there was much overtime. Notwithstanding the intensity of their exploitation, their income compared very favorably with that of other workers in the automobile industry and in other industries. Their standard of living was higher. They ap-

peared to be a relatively favored class of workers.

Depression. Wage cuts. Shorter work period in the year. Not so good. But still better than other workers in the industry. Still getting, when working, about \$50 a week.

The N.R.A. Hours were cut. "The N.R.A.," says Alfred P. Sloan, President of the General Motors Corporation, "is a scientific sharing of work." Since the hours were cut and since the men were paid by the hour, the effect of this application of science is obvious. A worker who had been getting \$50 a week was now getting \$30—a drop of 40 percent. At the same time, the cost of living in this area rose over 20 percent. So these workers suffered a sudden drop of 60 percent in their real wages. Add to this the factor that the work season had dropped to about 4 months out of the year and you get the economic position of the workers. The drop in the standard of living was precipitous. The effect upon the men was striking. We said *striking*.

General Motors' profits for the first 9 months in 1932 had been \$10,500,000. For the first 9 months in 1933 (covering the period of the application of science, the N.R.A., up until the strike in September) the profits had been \$81,500,000; increase, 800 percent.

The tool and diemakers wanted more money. They asked for it first at the Chevrolet Plant in Flint. They had negotiations with William S. Knudsen, Executive Vice-President of General Motors. Some progress was apparently being made. The men were cutting their demands. At the conclusion of a session on a particular day, the parties were only apart a cent or so an hour. The men believe that Knudsen got his orders from headquarters that night. The next day he abruptly broke off negotiations. Asked why, he said that if the demands were granted in Flint, the same scale would have to be applied in Detroit and Pontiac.

The men struck. Taking their cue from Knudsen, they decided to strike in Detroit and Pontiac as well. In both of these cities the workers were at that

very time preparing demands to be presented to the employers. They struck first, and then sent their demands to the employers.

The strike involved 12 major plants and 107 jobbers. These jobbers were engaged almost entirely on contract work for the automobile plants. Of the 17,000 men who went on strike, 13,000 were employed in the automobile plants and 4,000 in the job shops.

While there were elements in the organization who were more or less politically and economically educated, most of the men had never before belonged to any labor union or engaged in any labor struggle. They had confidence in the N.R.A. They quickly laid their case before the Detroit Compliance Board, asking that a conference be arranged with the employers.

Then started the National Run-Around.

*Round One.* Mr. Abner Larned, Chairman of the Board (the "impartial" chairman, representing the "public") was very, very nice. He would see the employers, of course, and arrange a conference. He saw the employers. The employers refused to meet with the representatives chosen by the men. Mr. Larned was very, very sorry. It was unfortunate. The men called attention to Clause 7a, which was to be found both in the National Industrial Recovery Act, and in the Code of the Automotive Industry. Why, they said, this clause guarantees the *right* of the men to bargain collectively. So it does—so it does. But they won't meet with you anyway. Well, *do something about it*. Of course, of course, we will do everything we can. What was done? Nothing. *Employers' Round*.

*Round Two.* The men asked Washington to intervene. The National Labor Board dispatched a conciliator to Detroit. Now we will get action! Mr. John Carmody was very nice. He interviewed the men. They stated their case to him, and asked him to arrange a conference with the employers. Mr. Carmody would certainly do it. He

hied himself to the employers. They refused to meet, and Mr. Carmody so reported to the men. But, Mr. Carmody, Clause 7a—Oh, I understand that perfectly. Well, why don't you do something about it? Very true, very true—but let's wait awhile. The men waited awhile. Then Mr. Carmody tells the *Detroit News* (Oct. 7, 1933):

"I am watching the situation, but all I know about it is what I get from the newspapers. For the time being I am not active in the negotiations. The situation needs just a little more time to ferment." What did he do? Nothing. *Employers' Round.*

*Round Three.* The men asked the National Labor Board to take direct jurisdiction over the controversy. Hadn't President Roosevelt said in his radio speech on July 27, 1933:

The workers of this country have rights under this law which cannot be taken from them, and nobody will be permitted to whittle them away.

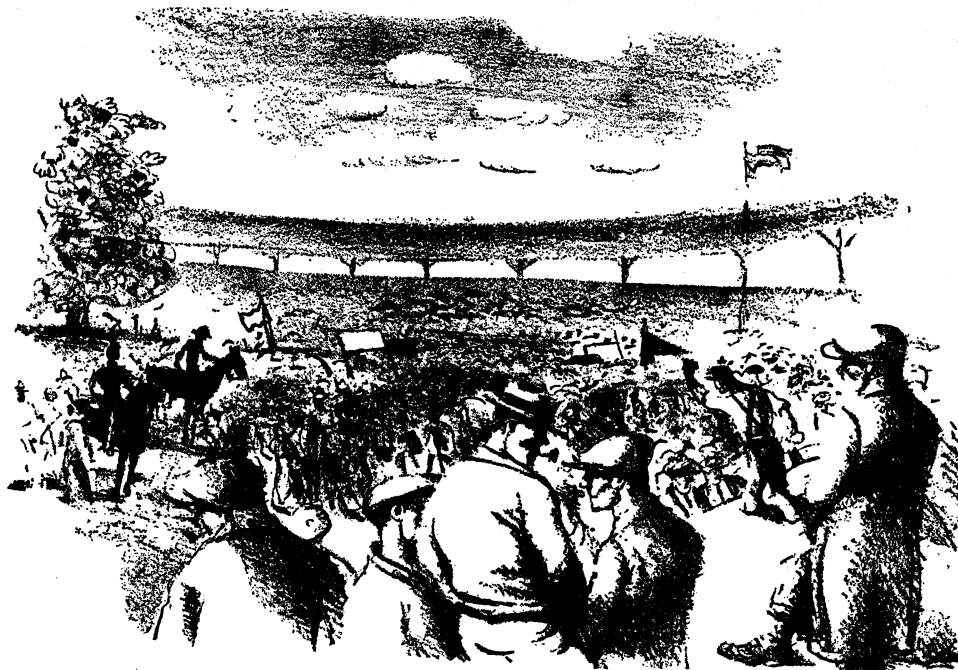
The National Labor Board took jurisdiction. It sent invitations to the following to come to Washington to appear before it: Mr. Alvin Macauley, Chairman of the National Automobile Chamber of Commerce and President of the Packard Motor Car Co. (which was on strike); Mr. William S. Knudsen, of Chevrolet and General Motors; Mr. Richard of the Jobbers Association; and a delegation selected by the union. The union selected three representatives, who, together with the writer, attorney for the union, appeared at the hearing.

Senator Robert F. Wagner, Chairman of the Board, opened the session. He asked the men to state their case.

We had been looking around the room. We did not see Mr. Macauley, so we inquired about him, very politely. Senator Wagner explained that Mr. Macauley would not be present. We demurred to proceeding without him. Then—we quote the record:

Chairman Wagner: May I read this telegram from Mr. Macauley, because there has been so much talk about him. It is addressed to the Labor Board, and is as follows:

Some members of the National Automobile Chamber of Commerce have disturbances, others have not. I have to advise that members are not agreeable to my appearing before you as representing the



STRIKERS' MEETING

N. Cikovsky

industry or any member of it. Under such circumstances I cannot accept your invitation.

Attention was called to the fact that Macauley was also President of the Packard Motor Car Company, which was one of the struck plants. We still thought we ought not to proceed without him. Senator Wagner thought we ought to proceed anyway. What was done about Macauley's "defiance"? Nothing. *Employers' Round.*

*Round Four.* But we didn't see Mr. Knudsen there, either. So we very solicitously inquired about him. Senator Wagner said that Knudsen had also telegraphed his regrets. He didn't read this telegram. Mr. Carmody, the fermenting conciliator, was present. We were touched by the keenness of his disappointment over Mr. Knudsen's absence. He said—we quote the record:

I thought Mr. Knudsen was acquainted with the whole situation and represented the large manufacturers, and I thought he would be here and be helpful. I had great confidence in Mr. Knudsen and I still have, and I believe he is a fair man, and I am terribly sorry he is not here.

Everybody was sorry. We thought that we ought not to proceed without Mr. Knudsen. Senator Wagner thought we ought to proceed anyway. What was done about Knudsen's "defiance"? Nothing. *Employers' Round.*

*Round Five.* We did see Mr. Richard there. He represented the job-

bers. We inquired about his authority. During the discussion, Board Member Gerard Swope, of General Electric, questioned Mr. Richard. We quote:

Mr. Swope: Why are you down here?  
Mr. Richard: As a matter of courtesy.

Mr. Matthew Smith, Union representative, pressed the matter a little. We quote from the record:

Mr. Smith: Do I understand Mr. Richard is here representing Mr. Richard and not the association?

Mr. Richard: I am here to represent the association in reply to an invitation this Board sent me.

Mr. Swope: But not to make any agreement, only to advise your members?

Mr. Richard: That is correct.

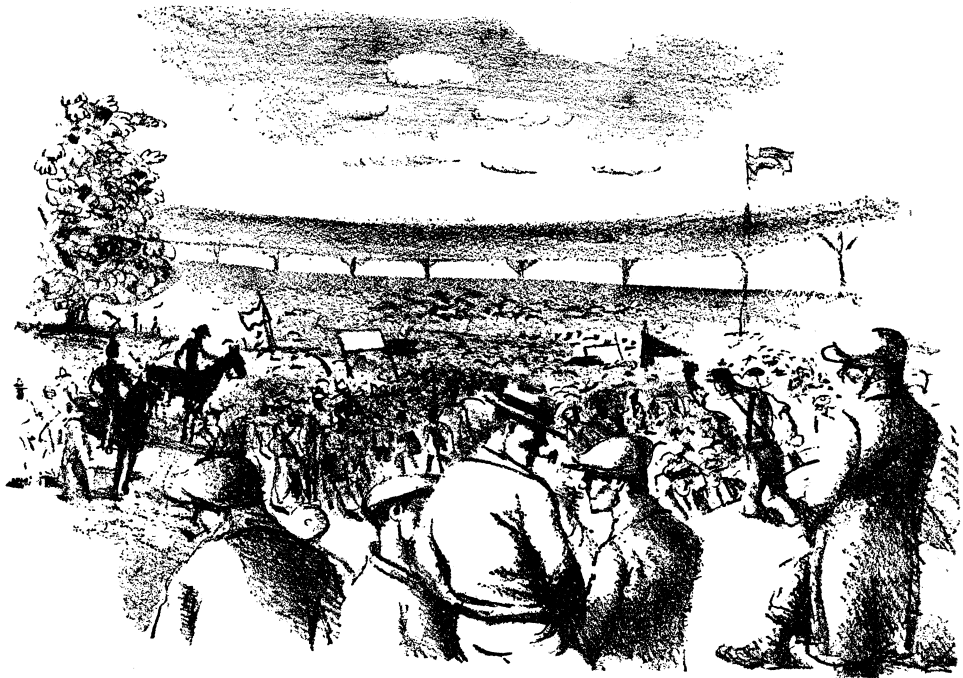
Mr. Sugar: Not to negotiate at all with the men? Only to sit here in this meeting?

Mr. Swope: Mr. Richard will then go to his association to see if he can get authority to himself, or to a committee, to further negotiate.

Mr. Swope was real nice.

But we had noticed two familiar faces. We recognized Chester M. Culver of the Detroit Employers Association and John L. Lovett of the Michigan Manufacturers Association. All of the automobile employers are represented in these associations. So we brought up the question of their presence. It was all explained to the satisfaction of Board Member William Green, President of the American Federation of Labor. We quote from the record:

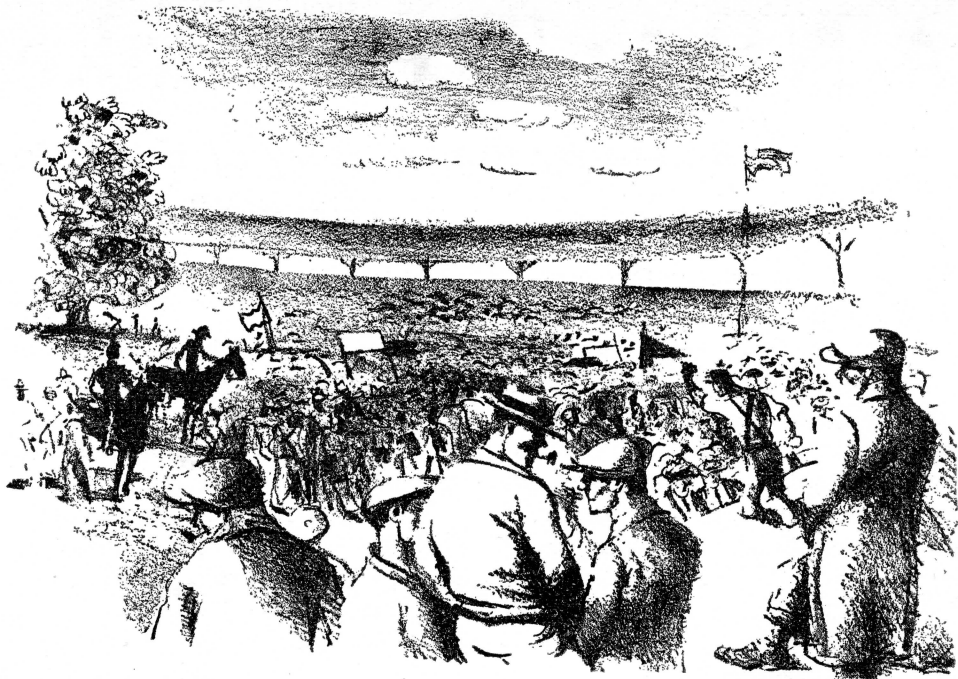
# NEW MASSES



STRIKERS' MEETING

*N. Cikovsky*

# NEW MASSES



STRIKERS' MEETING

*N. Cikovsky*



Mr. Sugar: There are gentlemen here presumably appearing for the other side whose connection with this controversy is not clear. They are not employers themselves, and we want to know whom they are representing; for example, Mr. Culver and Mr. Lovett.

Mr. Richard: Mr. Lovett and Mr. Culver are acting in an advisory capacity to Mr. Richard, myself, and they are here for that purpose.

Mr. Green: They are not representing any manufacturing plant where workers are on strike? They are here in a purely advisory capacity?

Mr. Richard: In a sense, they represent quite a large number of the employers who are members of the Automotive Tool & Die Manufacturers' Association that I represent.

Mr. Green: That is the same thing, again—you represent them and they are advising you.

Mr. Richard: That is right.

Mr. Green: Now we understand it.

It was all very clear. At this hearing (to which only the parties involved are admitted) no one was present to represent the automobile employers. Mr. Richard, who was without power, but who seemed to have some connection with the jobbers, was present purely "as a matter of courtesy." And Mr. Culver and Mr. Lovett were there to advise Mr. Richard in the technique of the courtesy he was to employ.

Senator Wagner was strongly of the view that the men should proceed anyway. Mr. Smith demurred. We quote from the record:

Chairman Wagner: My suggestion is that we go on and hear what the controversy is, from your side, and then we will decide the next step to take. We will either adjust it, if we can, or render a decision in the matter, one or the other.

Mr. Smith: Do I understand a decision will be binding on the other two parties in this dispute representing the employers?

Chairman Wagner: If we decide to make a decision, yes, *but why indulge in so many technicalities?*

What did the Board do about this farcical set-up? Nothing. *Employers' Round.*

*Round Six.* A hurried decision was made by the workers. We would proceed to state our case.

In order to understand the stenographic record which follows, the following incidents should be borne in mind:

(1) At Flint, the workers had specifically asked for a conference with Mr. Knudsen—and there were negotiations.

(2) In Detroit and Pontiac, the workers first struck; then they mailed typewritten demands to the employers (but enclosed no letter specifically asking for a conference). No replies were received.

(3) At the request of the Union, Mr. John Carmody, National Labor Board representative, asked the employers to meet with the workers in conference. They refused.

After the presentation of the facts to the Board at some length, the Board recessed. Upon reconvening, we were addressed by Board Member Major George Berry, President of the International Printing Pressmen and Assistants Union (A. F. of L.) We quote from the record:

Major Berry: Mr. Swope has indicated to you, and I think he is exactly right, because it is the unanimous conclusion of the Board, that you gentlemen should, in your own factories, certainly, as a matter of record, approach these employers against whom you called a strike, either by registered letter or otherwise, requesting a meeting.

Mr. Swope: That is right.

Mr. Smith: Does Mr. Swope understand that statements of our demands have already been sent these employers. That was tantamount to asking for a conference to discuss these demands. Nobody has replied to our communications containing our demands.

Mr. Swope: I think you should take it up with them.

Mr. Smith: May I ask that if such demands were made by any representative to you, as an employer, would you not consider that, under the N.R.A., to be an application for a discussion of such demands?

Mr. Swope: Any demand from our employees is considered.

Mr. Smith: You would consider that a meeting would have to be arranged?

Mr. Swope: Did they deny your request?

Mr. Smith: They just did nothing. They ignored us altogether. Mr. Carmody, of course, went and met them and appealed to them to meet the strikers.

Mr. Swope: That was not the question. The question was, did you do that, and you said, "No."

Mr. Smith: We sent a copy of our demands to all these employers individually, and we did not have one single reply.

Major Berry: You mean you did this before the strike?

Mr. Smith: Since the strike. Now, why

should we go back to Detroit and do the same thing again?

Major Berry: Where is the record of that?

Mr. Smith: It will not be denied by the employers.

Major Berry: You certainly must have a record of having sent a notice to them.

Mr. Smith: Oh yes; we have copies of that.

Mr. Swope: I think that ought to be done before a strike and not after.

Mr. Sugar: But it has been done since the strike. Do you want us to do it again?

Mr. Swope: Yes.

Mr. Sugar: Why not ask the employers who have received our request, now, at this belated period, to meet with us.

Mr. Swope: We will ask the employers to act in accordance with 7a, which they have to do under the law, and any request from employees for a meeting to discuss collective bargaining, I am sure they will accede to.

Mr. Sugar: But they have it already.

Mr. Swope: You will have to do it again so far as this Board is concerned.

Mr. Sugar: We have obeyed the law, because we have approached every employer. And we have been ignored. And you are asking us, not them, to reconsider their ignoring of us.

Mr. Swope: No; because you did that after the strike.

Mr. Sugar: But we would be doing it now after the strike. If we have done it once after the strike, why should we do it twice?

Major Berry: We are not going to fail to give consideration to the problem of suggesting to these employers that they meet with you. We would not ask you to make this approach unless we likewise asked the manufacturers to receive you.

Mr. Smith: You understand that if they—

Major Berry: I understand all about it. There is no record that has been produced here that shows that you approached these employers before the strike, and you acknowledge that you did not. There is no record that has been produced here that shows that you approached them since the strike occurred.

Mr. Sugar: There is the record of our statements. That is a matter of record, and it is not denied.

Major Berry: You have not attempted to show it.

Mr. Sugar: It is not denied by the employers' representative here.

Mr. Frank McCracken (union representative): Do you need a sworn document when you can have the sworn testimony of a witness who is here right now? I will make the declaration right here that I took a delegation to Fisher, for one job—

Major Berry: All right; I think that is an exception to the rule.

Mr. Sugar: And they sent communications to the others.

Major Berry: Where are copies of the communications you sent?

Mr. Smith: We have sent a statement of our demands to each individual employer, and they understand that that is equivalent to asking for a conference.

Mr. Swope: Do not make it "equivalent," just as Major Berry has said—

Mr. Smith: It seems to me the Labor Board is trying to get rid of a shabby problem, so they are throwing us back to Detroit.

Major Berry: Let me tell you this, Mr. Smith, the difficulty with the Labor Board is that your records are not very straight, and the difficulty is, also, that you precipitated this situation in a most extraordinary fashion—to call a strike without first meeting with the employer is a matter that is rather unprecedented, it seems to me. Now, we are trying to help you and you elect to set up a structure and say that the Labor Board is trying to shove off a very bad situation on yourself. If it is a bad situation, I think you have made it. Here is evidently the letter that you sent to them, because it is on your letterhead, and is headed, "Demands." In this document there is no request for a conference. There is not a scintilla of evidence, direct or indirect, that you asked for a conference with anybody, is there?

Mr. Smith: I don't see that if Mr. Carmody, a mediary representing this Board, cannot arrange a conference, why we should hope to be able to arrange one if we should try it. I still think the Board is trying to shift out of this problem. It can't think itself out of it, therefore it just moves out.

Major Berry: We are in hopes there will be a basis on which we can act, but today there is no basis. That is a fact, and you can take it as you like it.

Let us see. Oh yes, it was Senator Wagner who had said to us, earlier in the hearing: "Why indulge in so many technicalities?"

The Union representatives returned to Detroit, madder but wiser men. The Board has done nothing. *Employers' Round.*

*Round Seven.* The Union determined to do exactly as the Board directed—send requests for conferences to all employers. During the hearing at Washington, one of the workers' representatives, Harry Harrison, had asked if the Union would be obliged to treat with each of the General Motors

units separately, (Fisher, Chevrolet, Buick, Ternstedt, etc.) or if General Motors, being one corporation, would be obliged to act as a unit in bargaining collectively with the men. The Board decided that General Motors should negotiate as a unit for all its subsidiaries. The Union immediately requested General Motors to do so. It refused. The Union telegraphed a protest to the National Labor Board. The Board did not even reply to the telegram. What *did* it do? Nothing. *Employers' Round.*

*Round Eight.* The Union had filed a complaint with the N.R.A. against all the automobile employers. It charged each of the employers with 6 distinct violations of the N.R.A. and the Code, including the denial of the right of collective bargaining, the discharge of employees for membership in the Union, and the violation of the maximum hours' provisions of the code.

The complaint was filed with the Detroit Compliance Board on Oct. 13, 1933. To this date (March 19) the Board has not even acknowledged receipt of the complaint. What has it done about the matter? Nothing. *Employers' Round.*

*Round Nine.* Some conferences are held. Let us illustrate. In the morning a conference with Fisher Body (General Motors). Mr. Edward A. Fisher presides. At his right hand sits Mr. Archer of Ternstedt's (General Motors). Mr. Fisher takes the sheet containing the demands. There are four. He reads the first: increased wages. "Gentlemen, the answer to that is No." He reads the second: no change in hours without negotiations. "The answer to that is No." He reads the third: no victimization. He hesitates. "I don't know just what that means—but—the answer to that is No." He reads the last: recognition of the Union. "The answer to that is No."

When a union representative suggests that General Motors could absorb the entire increase in wages demanded by adding two and a half cents to the selling price of each car, Mr. Fisher snarls: "Nobody is going to tell us what price we shall charge for our cars."

In the afternoon a conference with Ternstedt's (General Motors). Same building, same room, same table, same Mr. Fisher, same Mr. Archer. Mr.

Archer of Ternstedt presides. Same procedure. Same result. The conference is over.

Mr. Abner Larned (an employer of labor) the "impartial" chairman of the Regional Labor Board, had participated in this "collective bargaining" by rubbing his hands and injecting comment about "the paramount consideration is the welfare of the community at large." After the "conference" he approached the Union representative, beaming: "Gentlemen, do you realize that never before has General Motors agreed to talk to its employees. Gentlemen, they have talked to you! Gentlemen, you have won a victory!"

The tool and diemakers took the count. They were unable to hold out any longer. They went back to work—those who were not blacklisted.

The Run-Around was over. It had functioned well.

The Wall St. Journal, speaking of the auto workers, said shortly after the strike:

Students of labor say that the *delusion* still persists among workers that they need only to organize, make demands and lean on the N.R.A. for support.

But the workers are learning. There are thousands of tool and diemakers who can now understand why, only a few weeks after the strike, Mr. Knudsen stated publicly:

General Motors is solidly with the N.R.A. . . . General Motors Corporation, with the rest of the industry, supports our President's recovery program to the fullest extent . . . This is final, official, and without reservations of any sort.

And there are thousands of automobile workers who are wondering why William Green, President of the American Federation of Labor, said to them in Detroit only a few weeks after the strike:

I say to you that every thinking American . . . might well thank Almighty God that Congress passed the National Recovery Act.

And there are thousands of automobile workers who have learned that in their fights with the employers, the referee is "fixed." When labor really understands this fully, it will go into the ring and start socking not only the employer, but the referee as well. And it will be able to lick both.



# Who Leads the Veterans?

H. E. BRIGGS

**D**EVELOPMENTS have been rapid in the veteran movement since Roosevelt's New Deal. Going back to the Wall Street crash, veterans then receiving compensation, pensions and hospitalization (though small enough) at least weathered the storm. From this assumed vantage point, the veterans, like other workers, not yet class-conscious, failed to see that they were not a "privileged class." But conditions became worse, more and more workers lost their jobs. Hunger marchers besieged Washington and needy veterans were forced to demand their bonus.

With the advent of Roosevelt, Wall Street (to regain its losses) set up a greater howl for "economy" at the expense of the workers and veterans. The ex-servicemen being the weakest section of the working class, from the point of organization, became the shock troops of the depression. They were in the front line when the "economy" offensive, the dirtiest blow in the history of veteran legislation, was launched. The old line veteran organizations, pretending to oppose the government policy of "economy," in action supported it. As a result—needy veterans did not get their bonus, the disabled were deprived of hospitalization and 600,000 were entirely cut off from compensation.

In this situation, the actual line-up of the main veterans' organizations, with their programs, appears as follows:

## Veterans of Foreign Wars

This is the oldest of the active veteran organizations and at present, most dangerous. Founded in 1899 at Columbus, O., as an offshoot of the United Spanish War Veterans, it started as an exclusively foreign service organization. It claims to be "non-partisan, non-sectarian," believes in "One Flag, One Country and One Language." The membership is stated to be 75,000—20,000 of them in New York—yet this membership was powerless before the attack of the National Economy League. Let us see why.

At its recent convention in Milwaukee, James E. Van Zandt, hailed as a worker from Pennsylvania, was elected as National Commander. He replaced the tight-fisted reactionary Admiral Coontz. This move of the V.F.W. was a bid for the dissatisfied Legionnaires and a sop to their own rank and file. Heeding the general discontent in the Legion and the loss of members there, the V.F.W. is doing its utmost with radical phrases, to keep veterans from joining the one organization both it and the Legion fear, the Workers Ex-Servicemen's League.

And so we find the Milwaukee program is a combination of militancy, demagogy and

"Left" phrases. The first point—immediate cash payment of adjusted service certificates (bonus) sounds good but trails off into foggy reasons for joining the V.F.W. Some of these are: "Elimination of married women employees holding government jobs." "Preservation of existing benefits with consistent opposition to all reductions and eliminations advocated by the National Economy League and other anti-veteran groups." Now, if we preserve "the existing benefits" we preserve the cuts already existing in compensation, especially for the very men they pretend to help, namely the Spanish War Veterans who have been slashed to \$9 a month under the "Economy Act." Here is a classic example of the brand of demagogy the V.F.W. deals in. Not a word about repealing the Economy Act. No wonder 75,000 men had to "take it on the chin."

Before the first historic Bonus March the V.F.W. gathered a million signatures for the bonus. A few officials went to Washington and deposited them on the Capitol steps. After having their pictures taken to show the boys back home they were "working for their interests," they departed; the signatures were thrown away and the whole "bonus problem" was forgotten. But not for long. 25,000

veterans stormed Washington. They forced the government to drop the two-year clause prohibiting them from borrowing (bad word) the first half of their back pay. It was the militant Workers Ex-Servicemen's League that really won this point; though all other veteran organizations claim the victory. The Bonus March as we all know was defeated by Waters, government agents and sabotaging officials of the American Legion, V.F.W. and Disabled American Veterans. They were unanimous in condemning the march as a "red plot." It was this march that forced the V.F.W. to demand immediate payment of the bonus. However, the officials refused to back up this demand with any mass action and today the bonus remains unpaid.

The balance of the V.F.W. program is concerned with "a larger army and navy, deportation of aliens, restriction of immigration, deportation of Soviet spies (!), compulsory military training and a demand for endorsement and recognition of the principles of organized Labor" (whatever that is). With this buncombe the V.F.W. is trying to lead the veterans away from a mass struggle for their just demands.

## Disabled American Veterans

This organization can be dismissed in a few lines. It never fully represented the disabled veterans. Certainly not through the quiet plea as presented by the newly elected National Commander, J. W. McQueen. This charlatan recently called on Roosevelt for a "pleasant chat" about the disabled veterans. He said that Roosevelt was very interested and sympathetic, but could do nothing at present. This—after Roosevelt at the Legion convention promised that everything would be done for the disabled. A few figures will show just what has been done for the disabled and destitute veterans.

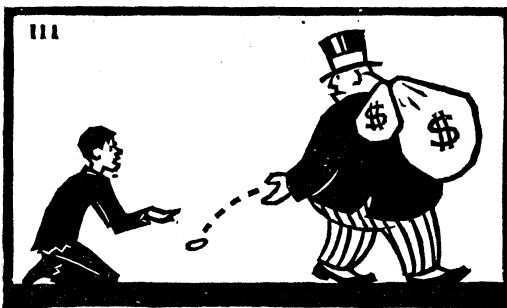
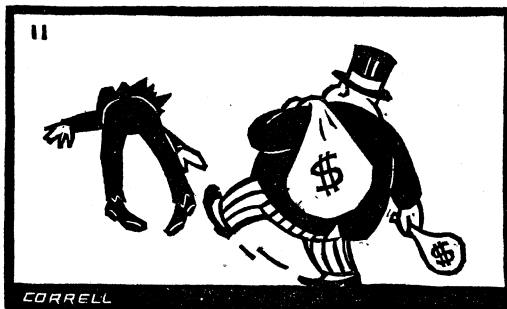
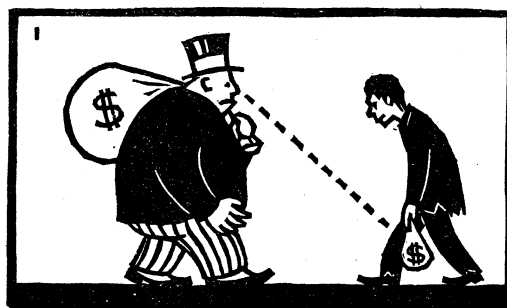
On March 31, 1933, pensioned veterans were 1,016,561.

On November 30, 1933, they were reduced to 514,784.

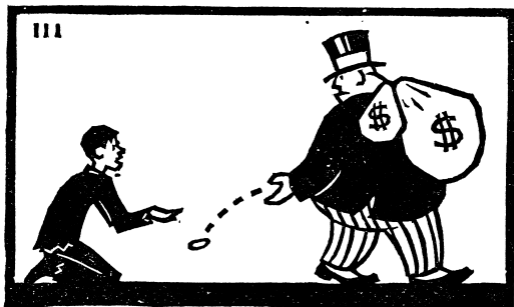
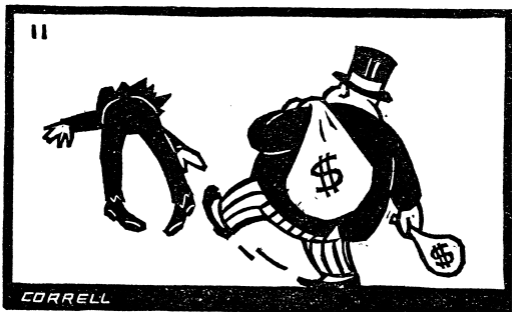
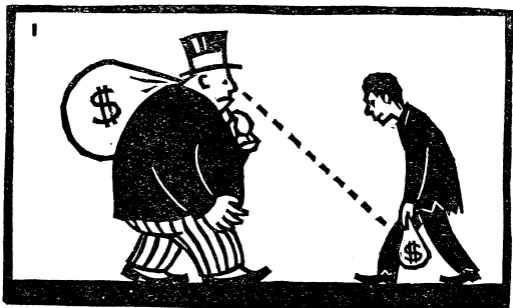
Pensions for dependents of deceased veterans decreased from 279,926 to 265,528.

Those receiving hospitalization on March 31, were 42,823. Of these 27,892 were so-called "non-service" cases. On Nov. 30, the number was reduced to 34,738. Of these 22,182 were listed disabilities, "no service connection."

Those receiving domiciliary or institutional care on March 31, 1933, were 20,544; On Nov. 30, this number was reduced to 11,339; making a total of 848,571 sick, crippled and destitute veterans thrown into the lap of local charity "to maintain the credit of the government." The whole battle of "economy" cen-



Correll



Correll

ters around these "non-service connected cases." Through negligence and red tape on the part of the Veterans Bureau these men cannot show that they received their disabilities in action. Disabilities received from shell shock, gas, "flu," and trench diseases which developed years later and therefore are unrecorded on their discharge papers. These cases are mostly mental and tubercular. They are scorned by the pseudo-ex-servicemen's organizations of which the D.A.V. is one.

### American Legion

Today, the American Legion, that "staunch upholder of the veteran's rights" is in a bad way. Despite the huge publicity it receives it no longer has the same influence with the veterans. However, we should not underestimate the Legion. Its leadership has direct links with the biggest capitalists, bankers and bosses in the country. The present Commander, Edward A. Hayes, is a skillful demagogue, a lawyer and one of the founders. Ever since its beginning it has been strictly an officer-controlled organization, ultra-conservative in policy. It was founded in 1919 at a secret caucus held in Paris. A definite policy was outlined to forestall any discontent of the returning soldiers who were sick of the war and, believe it or not, ripe for revolt. Archibald Roosevelt, also a founder, was in on the secret meetings with the officer clique, discussing ways and means of turning rebellious doughboys into patriotic citizens. Maurice K. Gordon of Texas, after much debate, suggested the name—American Legion. It was adopted unanimously. The ordinary privates, some of them still in Germany, knew nothing about the American Legion until they landed in America. Here they were greeted as heroes and told, "nothing is too good for the veterans."

The membership, estimated at 900,000, is at open warfare with the leadership. The membership figure is far from accurate. At its height the Legion only had a little more than a million members. Since the depression many have been dropped for non-payment of dues. Last year in New York alone 15,000 dropped out. The McShane Post, one of the largest in Chicago, with over 700, was expelled for passing an anti-war resolution. Many Negro veterans, segregated in Jim-Crow Posts, have also withdrawn. Other Legion men, disgusted with the leadership and refusing, as in Barre, Vt., to act as strike breakers, have quit! On the other hand the National Commanders and their henchmen are never dropped. They automatically retire to the National Executive Board.

At every convention the ruling bureaucracy has prevented the rank and file from having their way. At the Detroit convention the officials dragged in Hoover to spike the demand for the bonus with a demand for beer. Nevertheless the rank and file forced a vote on the bonus. But the skillful misleaders forgot it after the convention. The last con-

vention in Chicago was dominated by the "Brass Hats." A group estimated as representing about 10,000 ran the show. Fascist generals imported from Italy and France kept the boys occupied with fairy tales while behind the scenes the officials were oiling the steam roller. Telling the veterans how much Fascism had done for the workers in Italy failed to turn the Legionnaires into Fascists overnight. General Berry, head of the Pressmen's Union and strike-breaker par excellence, represented the A.F. of L. officialdom. He told the boys what fine fellows they were and pleaded with them not to be too hard on Uncle Sam. The veterans choked on this. Berry is expecting some strikes in the near future and hoped to use the Legionnaires to "maintain order." The trump card of the convention was Roosevelt. Brought on by Past Commander Louis A. Johnson, Roosevelt told the veterans it was up to the states to take care of them. On top of this, he asked them to have faith, that no deserving veteran would go uncared for. The rank and file were wild, and despite their defeat put up enough of a fight to have the police called in. Finally the vote for the bonus was killed in the sub-committees—and that old "friend" of the veterans, Representative Patman, let it die without a fight. The officials tried to hide this betrayal by denouncing recognition of Russia and some vague hot air about a "sound dollar." Once more a hand-picked convention triumphed. The rehabilitation (nice word) program follows:

Point 1—That no war veterans disabled in line of duty suffer any reductions of those benefits granted such veterans in the World War Veterans Act, as in effect prior to March 20, 1918.

Point 2—That hospitalization under Federal Government auspices be afforded all veterans not dishonorably discharged who require hospital treatment and who are not able reasonably to pay for their own treatment.

Point 3—That perpetuation of service connection for all veterans properly granted such service connection under laws in existence prior to March 20, 1933, be recommended as an item of Legion policy.

Point 4—That the benefits provided for dependents of veterans as established in World War Veterans Act be resumed and maintained as the government policy and that in no event shall widows and/or dependent children of deceased World War Veterans be without government protection.

This program means nothing to the Legionnaires and less to the unattached veterans. Yet the new Commander, Edward A. Hayes, is delighted and expects the Legionnaires to be thankful.

Point 1 merely pleads that "veterans disabled in line of duty suffer no reductions." This—after the disabled have been cut to the bone. Again Point 1 scorns the "presumptive cases" as not worthy of attention. In this the Legion is one with the V.F.W. and D.A.V.

Point 2 not only evades fighting for the thousands already thrown out of the hospitals, but insults them and the remaining patients

by asking them to prove that they cannot "reasonably pay for their own treatment." It does not fight discrimination against Negro vets, especially in the Legion's own ranks, and single veterans, who are among the hardest hit, receive no relief or jobs, and if "non-service" no compensation. To ask these men if they can "reasonably pay for their own treatment" is adding insult to injury.

Point 3 passes the buck back to Congress in asking that "perpetuation of service connection be recommended."

Point 4 pleads for "government protection" (whatever that is) instead of demanding adequate pensions for all dependents.

In a few words this program is a brazen betrayal of the rank and file. Three demands would solve the veterans' problems. They are:

1. Immediate cash payment of the bonus.
2. Repeal of the Economy Act.
3. Passage of Workers' Unemployment Insurance Bill. (*H. R. 5798*)

These are militant, adequate and reasonable. They are the demands of the rank and file as formulated at their convention in Washington. No wonder the Legion, V.F.W. and D.A.V. condemned the convention.

### Workers Ex-Servicemen's League

The only hope of the rank and file today is this small but militant organization, the W.E.S.L. Founded in 1930 by a group of World War veterans from the ranks, its approximate membership of 15,000 is steadily increasing. A lusty youngster who fights for what it wants and gets it. It initiated the first Bonus March, and already has two gold stars on its banner for those two heroic rank and filers, Hushka and Carlson, who were killed resisting eviction by the Washington police. As mentioned before, the W.E.S.L. won the reduction in the two-year Bonus clause. Two important points in its platform are: "Unity with the workers in their struggle against the bosses." "No discrimination against Negroes and single veterans." "Any honorably discharged soldier of any war or peacetime service is eligible for membership, regardless of race, color, creed or political affiliation. In the forefront of the struggle for the disabled veterans, it does not neglect the victims of the tricky "presumptive clause."

With two representatives on the Veterans National Liaison Committee it helped to call the first rank and file veteran convention in Washington. This was attended by 4500 veterans, Negro and white, from the W.E.S.L., Spanish War Veterans, American Legion, V.F.W., D.A.V. and Khaki Shirts. And sections of the country were represented including Canada, Puerto Rico and Mexico. There were farmers, miners, disabled men on crutches, jobless mechanics, ex-salesmen, clerks and professionals.

Several times the convention was almost sabotaged by stool pigeons and Fascist-minded elements such as Mike Thomas, who tried to



"IF GOD WOULD ONLY GIVE EVERY ONE A LIVING WAGE YOU WOULDN'T HAVE TO USE YOUR CLUBS."

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set up on the very convention grounds an organization called the Spirit of '76. The rank and file triumphed, however, marking another historic event and put forth *their own* 3-Point Program mentioned before.

Following the bidding of the convention, the W.E.S.L. pledged itself to fight for these three points. At the famous Anti-War Congress in New York last fall, in which it participated, the National Secretary, Harold Hickerson, pledged the full support of the W.E.S.L. to the fight against Fascism and another imperialist war.

Realizing that without local struggles you cannot gain any national results, the W.E.S.L. fights for *Cash Relief* and *jobs for all ex-servicemen*. The W.E.S.L. recently won recognition and restoration of compensation for disabled veterans before Review Board No. 6 in New York. Since the disbanding of these local Review Boards, a representative, Emanuel Levin, who is National Chairman of the League, has been established in Washington. He will see that veterans with cases coming before the Final Board of Appeals get a fair hearing. This is something no other veteran organization has done; at any rate *not openly*.

The future of the W.E.S.L. is bright but hazardous. Its enemies are powerful and will stop at nothing to remove this champion of the rank and file. The W.E.S.L. is in a strategic position in relation to Fascist and semi-Fascist groups. It is a bulwark against such betrayers of the veterans as Art Smith and his cohorts. All groups and organizations look with covetous eyes on the veteran today. His voting strength is estimated at 30 millions. The veteran is in the prime of life today, his average age is 38, which means he is in a position to influence many, especially his children, against being used as future cannon fodder. There were four and a half million men in the war, and including the peace-time ex-servicemen they amount to approximately eight million. An underestimation of this

mighty force would be criminal. If we neglect the veterans' cause now, we shall pay dearly in the future.

### The Fidac and the I.A.C.

These two organizations represent the veterans internationally, but their purposes are different. The Fidac—a name derived from the initials—*Federation Interalliée des Anciens Combattants* claims to represent veterans' societies in ten of the allied countries of the World War. The American Legion is, as far as I know, the only American member. The Fidac was founded in Paris in 1920.

The purposes of the organization show us the kind of veterans it represents. Among the aims are the maintenance and development of that spirit of comradeship manifested on the battlefields of the World War. It proposes to use that comradeship in the cause of peace. An example of how the American Legion uses this "comradeship" was given at the Chicago Convention when the leadership called for a larger army and navy. The Fidac, like the Legion here, claims to stand aloof from all political parties or sectarian denominations. One of its objects is to review "impartially" the great problems to be "solved," especially by the countries affiliated with it. It maintains sumptuous quarters at 15 Rue de Presles, Paris, where a monthly magazine is published voicing its reactionary opinions and misleading policies. Charles Hann, Jr., was elected president for America at the Congress in Portugal. It is a sure bet that Charles Hann, Jr., is not one of the Legionnaires who needs his bonus: General Roman Górecki, a friend of the Polish Dictator, Pilsudski, is head of the Fidac.

On a different plane is the *International des Anciens Combattants*. This is the International Association of War Veterans and War Victims. The W.E.S.L. is the affiliated member in the U.S. The I.A.C. was founded in 1920 in Geneva on the initiative of the

French Ex-Servicemen's organization — the A.R.A.C.—*Association Républicaine des Anciens Combattants* and the International Confederation of War and Industrial Victims. Forced out of Germany by Hitler, the I.A.C. has set up headquarters in Paris. However, it does not conduct a travel bureau for retired generals or sell souvenirs to rubber-neck tourists. It is too busy fighting for the veterans' rights to be interested in racketeering. A monthly "Press Service" magazine keeps the veterans of the world informed about the doings of their enemies. The I.A.C. called the World Congress Against War in Amsterdam and supported the Bonus March of the American Ex-Servicemen. Guy Jerram is the General Secretary for France and that beloved fighter against War and Fascism, Henri Barbusse, is president. Hugo Graef, General Secretary for Germany, was reported recently to have been killed in a Fascist dungeon. The recent convention of the I.A.C., held in the disputed Saar territory, laid down a militant program for the veterans' rights in all countries. The rank and file veterans will not be misled by following the I.A.C.

The two organizations which instigated the "economy" drive against the veterans here were the National Economy League and the American Veterans' Association.

In a recent issue of the N. Y. Times, the A.V.A. attempted to show by the following misleading and false figures that the "Economy Act" is not working a hardship on the veterans and that the generosity of the U.S. was greater per capita than other countries'. The figures are for 1932:

	Veteran Relief Bill	Per Capita Based on Men Mobilized
United States....	\$860,635,000*	\$180.91
Germany .....	298,690,000	22.98
France .....	286,782,000	34.09
Great Britain ....	174,802,060	26.49

\* Includes \$312,000,000 for Bonus pay.

There is no compilation made by the A.V.A. from the standpoint of national wealth and national income. Therefore, we are presenting the figures on this basis. I am indebted for the following data to John Davis, National Chairman of the Legislature Department, W.E.S.L.

Expenditures on World War veterans, from standpoint of national wealth:

- Germany spends \$1 out of every \$130.
  - France spends \$1 out of every \$170.
  - England spends \$1 out of every \$700.
  - United States spends \$1 out of every \$800.
- Expenditures from standpoint of National income:
- France spends \$1 out of every \$26.
  - Germany spends \$1 out of every \$40.
  - England spends \$1 out of every \$110.
  - United States spends \$1 out of every \$125.

Furthermore, in this country, we do not have any Federal dole system, whereas in each of the other nations, *unemployment* and *old age insurance* is in effect, from which tens of thousands of veterans also receive benefits.

March 27, 1934



"IF GOD WOULD ONLY GIVE EVERY ONE A LIVING WAGE YOU WOULDN'T HAVE TO USE YOUR CLUBS."

*Jack Kabat*

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*Jack Kabat*

# The Intelligentsia Under Fire

JOSHUA KUNITZ

**D**URING the 1917 Revolution, the Symbolist poet Alexander Blok published *The Twelve*, containing these vivid lines:

A bourgeois, a lonely mourner,  
His nose tucked in his ragged fur,  
Stands lost and idle on the corner,  
Tagged by a cringing, mangy cur.

The bourgeois like a hungry mongrel,—  
A silent question—stands and begs.  
The old world like a kinless mongrel  
Stands there, its tail between its legs.

In the poem we see the Revolution unfolding. On the crest of the wind, hurled by the blizzard, to the tune of the raging elements, flaunting a red flag, twelve red soldiers tread a savage march through the frozen streets and the mounting snow drifts of Russia's capital. "Crack-crack-crack . . ." at Holy Russia, at "fat-rumped" Russia, at the "old world" that stands "like a kinless mongrel" with "its tail between its legs." Drunken, licentious, brutal, mighty, dynamic, inspired, the Revolution marches onward. But the bourgeois stands "a silent question . . . lost and idle," a "lonely mourner" with "nose tucked in his ragged fur." He and the old world, two mongrels, hungry, kinless. . . . And near-by, the "black and bulky" angry priest, the two "ladies" who "cry and cry," and the "gently-bred pen-pushing blade" who "tosses his long hair and mutters: 'Renegades! Russia is dead. . . .'"

The contempt of the poet Blok for the long-haired middle-class intellectual, the devastating epithets he employs, are echoed also in one of Briusov's poems. The latter scoffs at the "fantasts" and "aesthetes" who had loved originality only in books and poetic reveries, but who fled in disgust and fright when their erstwhile dreams were being incarnated "in smoke and noise." A similar attitude is revealed in most of Soviet literature—everywhere the intellectual's doubts, vacillation, lack of resolution are jeered and scorned. To the self-adulating, Narcissus-like intelligentsia such treatment sounded blasphemous. Had not the great Russian literature of the past extolled them as the "conscience of the Russian people, the flower of Russian culture, the dreamers, the poets, the prophets of the Revolution"? Had they not sacrificed? Had they not suffered? Are they to be derided and condemned now for spurning the vulgarities and atrocities perpetrated in the name of the Revolution? . . .

The attitude most characteristic of the intellectual during the years of revolutionary heedlessness and cruelty was that expressed in Maximillian Voloshin's lines:

But I stand alone between them,  
In the roaring smoke and flame—  
Both sides are dear, I pray for both. . . .

This was the typical Hamlet attitude, most inopportune in times of revolution, when differences are sharp and unbridgeable.

Even those of the intelligentsia who had accepted the Revolution were, from a revolutionist's point of view, not wholly satisfactory. Instead of declaring themselves Communists, most of them had slipped off at a tangent, busying themselves with various fine-spun theories, embracing the Revolution as mystics, or nationalists, or Slavophiles, or Eurasians, or what not. In contrast to the unswerving Bolsheviks, they seemed a pitiable lot. And it is as such that we see them portrayed in Soviet literature. Weak-kneed Hamlets whose "native air of resolution" had been "sicklied o'er by the pale cast of thought," superfluous people, ludicrous creatures, nonplussed mourners with their noses timorously tucked in their ragged furs. . . .

The difference in attitude between the passive, liberal, bourgeois Hamlet and the active but practical Communist is excellently brought out in Veresaiev's novel *Deadlock*, in the scene where the old revolutionist, Professor Ivan Illyich Sartanov, has a verbal tilt with his Bolshevik visitor, Leonid.

Throwing occasional inimical glances at Leonid, Ivan Illyich inquires:

"Well, well, how are affairs with you? The same old way, eh? Arresting? Shooting?"

Leonid smiles.

"Whomever it is necessary, we arrest and we shoot."

"And are there many necessities?"

"Yes, many. The counter-revolution hisses, and lurks, and is ready to sting at any time."

"Many, many? Yes, everyone who isn't a Bolshevik. It means the entire Russian people. You have a lot of work before you."

"We don't touch working people: them we try to convince, for we know that sooner or later they are bound to come over to our side. But we are quite unceremonious with the bourgeoisie. They won't ever join us anyhow; all discussion is superfluous; we may as well annihilate them."

"Annihilate? I don't quite understand that. You don't mean physical annihilation?"

"Indeed, even physical. If we do not get rid of them, they will join Denikin or Kolchak and fight against us."

Katia, the Professor's Menshevik daughter, is shocked.

"What are you saying, Leonid? Marxism means the removal of conditions that make the bourgeoisie possible, it does not mean the physical annihilation of the bourgeoisie. Lord, how awful!"

Leonid looked at her deprecatingly.

"W-e-l-l, my dear, you can't make revolutions with clean little hands. Above all,

Marxism is dialectic; it evolves its own mode of action for each historic moment."

Leonid does not convince Illyich and Katia. They recall that the Bolsheviks violently attacked capital punishment when it was reintroduced by Kerensky.

"Queer," Leonid shrugs his shoulders, "we seem to speak two different languages. Then, don't you see, it was a question of executing soldiers who manfully refused to participate in a criminal, imperialistic war; now it is a question of traitors who are plunging a knife into the backs of the Revolution."

Biting his lips, Illyich exclaims:

"It's you, you who have betrayed the Revolution, betrayed it hopelessly and irrevocably!"

Despite their humane talk, their sacrifices, and their acknowledged and sincere love for the "people," both Ivan Illyich and Katia in the end accept Wrangel and his horde. Their hesitation resolves itself into passive counter-revolution. They are fine, lovable, and generous characters. The trouble is that they pout and sulk because revolutions are not made in a gentlemanly fashion. . . .

Dirt is dirt, and cruelty is cruelty, and nothing can justify dirt and cruelty. This, too, seems to be the attitude of Litovtsev, the hero in Seifullina's novel *Travellers*. Litovtsev is a typical old-fashioned intellectual, addicted to beautiful abstractions and high-sounding words. He revolts against the October Revolution with all its blood and misery. "But listen, my dear," expostulates the Communist Stepan, "your glorious principles obstruct from you the living reality! But we—we live this reality, and are not frightened by shouts of dirt and treason." And another Communist adds: "Listen here, you intellectual, you were for a long time the telephone operator for the people. You transmitted to them wonderful ideas, sacred thoughts. But can't you see that the wires have been broken and that there is no way left of reaching the people by telephone? One must go, one must throw oneself straight into their midst. . . . The trouble is, you don't hear their living voices."

In Fadeev's *Nineteen*, the student Mechik, is afflicted with all the ailments of the typical intellectual. Mechik is the direct opposite of the strong, earthy, determined, partisan fighters—Morozka, Dubov, Baklanov. Mechik is a soft, unstable, good-for-nothing intellectual, a petty and superfluous personality. Self-conscious, analytical, morbidly sensitive, egotistical, weak, he does not dare even to take the woman he craves and who repeatedly offers herself to him. He cannot make friends among the men. Though he has joined the detachment voluntarily and has been seriously wounded in battle, he remains an utter stranger in an alien world. Toward the end of the novel, when the fate of the whole de-





John Groth

tachment depends on his steadfastness and loyalty, he turns coward. Mechik's behavior when he comes to realize what he has done is interesting. He falls into terrible despair, in a frenzy he tears his hair: "O-o-o—what have I done, how could I ever do such a thing, I who am so good, so honest, I who never wished ill to anyone, how did I ever do such a thing!" And the more his detestable behavior stares him in the face, the better, the purer, the nobler his former self seems to him. He is tormented "not by the realization that dozens of people who had entrusted their lives to him had perished, but by the thought that this indelible blotch on his conscience was contradicting everything good and pure he imagined in himself. . . ."

In striking contrast with many West-European and American war novels, where the conflict between the intellectual and the mass is described from the intellectual's point of view, the Soviet novel usually adopts the viewpoint of the worker and peasant soldier. But Fadeev is too scrupulous an artist not to suggest some justification for the student's delinquencies. To make Mechik's portrait authentic, to account for the apparently incredible change from an idealistic youth to a pusillanimous creature and traitor, he indicates that fault is not wholly with the intellectual. From his very first appearance among the men, Mechik is looked at askance, persecuted, jeered. His gentility, his white hands, his

carrying about of his girl's portrait, his inability to take care of his horse, his blushing and his futility irritate the rough-hewn men; this in turn starts in him a train of psychological reactions which culminate in cowardice and treason. Softness, gentility, sensitiveness are the bane of the intellectual's existence; it is this that renders him utterly useless in the exigencies of a hard-boiled epoch.

How unforgettably Isaac Babel illustrates this in his little masterpiece *The Death of Dolgushev*. The story is told by an educated bespectacled fellow, a typically irresolute intellectual, attached to the famous Budienny Cavalry Regiment on the Polish front:

The man who sat on the roadside was Dolgushev, the telephone operator. His legs spread wide apart, he stared straight at us.

"Listen here," said Dolgushev when we came closer to him, "I'm going to die. Understand?"

"I understand," answered Grishchuk, halting his horse.

"You must waste a bullet on me," said Dolgushev severely.

He sat leaning against a tree. His boots sprawled out in opposite directions. Without shifting his eyes from me, he cautiously turned up his shirt. His belly was ripped open, the intestines were creeping down to his knees; one could see his heart beat.

"The Polaks will come and make sport. Here are my papers . . . you'll write to my mother, what and how. . . ."

"No," I rumbled in a choked voice, and dug the spurs into my horse.

Dolgushev stretched his blue palms on the

ground and examined them incredulously.

"You're running away," he muttered, his body drooping, "run, you reptile. . . ."

A sweat broke out all over my body. The machine guns were crackling with increasing rapidity, with hysterical persistence. Circled by the halo of the setting sun, Afonka Bida was galloping in our direction.

"We're lickin' 'em bit by bit," he shouted gayly. "What's going on here?"

I pointed to Dolgushev and rode off.

Their conversation was brief. I did not hear the words. Dolgushev handed the corporal his documents. Afonka shoved them in his boot top, then fired into Dolgushev's mouth.

"Afonka," said I smiling pitifully as I rode over to the Cossack, "You see, I couldn't. . . ."

"B-beat it," he said, growing pale, "I'll kill you! You bespectacled devils, you pity us fellows as cats pity mice. . . ."

He raised the trigger. I rode off quietly, without turning, feeling cold and death in my back.

"Stop that," shouted Grishchuk, as he grabbed Afonka's arm. "Stop that nonsense."

"The poor fish," shouted Afonka, "I'll get him yet."

The scene is in a sense symbolic.

"No," said the finicky intellectual, unable to sacrifice the "purity" of his soul. "Reptile," "poor fish," hurled back the enraged masses. Thus has the revolution dethroned the once glorious Hamlets. Instead we have "reptiles," "poor fish," pusillanimous creatures, hungry mongrels, useless flotsam and jetsam caught in the whirlpool of a mighty revolution. . . .

—From *Voices of October*, by Joseph Freeman, Joshua Kunitz and Louis Lozowick.





JOHN GROTH



JOHN GROTH

# The Crossing

JOSEPH FREEMAN

—the orphic strings,  
Sidereal phalanxes, leap and converge:  
—One Song, one Bridge of Fire!  
—HART CRANE.

1.

FROM MY WINDOW I see the snow falling,  
White invariant of the variable world.

How reassuring to remember that for years  
Uncalculated through the ages men have seen  
The falling snow—and, watching the cold flakes  
Flutter in serene order from reserved skies,  
Have also felt the obscure mist of nostalgia.

Our elders have for generations written:  
From my window I see the snow falling—  
Frequent entry in the diary of those  
Who loved not man less but nature more.

This was the common bond, the exaltation  
Of knowing identical indifferent stars  
Glitter in various skies above the heads  
Of Geoffrey Chaucer and Charlie Chaplin.

2.

BUT O THE antithesis, the ubiquitous reverse!  
*O that deep romantic chasm which slanted  
Down the green hills athwart a cedarn cavern!  
The rainbow came and went, and lovely was the rose;  
The moon, with delight, looked round her  
When the heavens were bare;  
Waters on a starry night were beautiful and fair;  
The sunshine was a glorious birth;  
And yet we knew, wherever we went,  
That there had passed away a glory from the earth.*

3.

NOW AND THEN we walked in Union Square,  
Observed the roofs grow light with sun or snow,  
Read the President's sermons at Versailles,  
And memorized our tutors' verses,  
Disturbed and grateful when they taught  
*Life is older than liberty, greater than revolution,  
Burning brightly in both camps,  
To be loved for all men and women, but first for ourselves.*

God of our fathers Jesus, Nietzsche, Dewey,  
May life come to the multitudes, but first  
May life in its abundance come to me.

4.

THE MYSTERY was solved; the tightrope  
Held us by the miracle of accident.  
We chanted lines from Whitman, Poe, The Congo;  
Saw policemen shatter demonstrations in the Square;  
Pondered over Lenin and The Wasteland; heard  
Far-off with awe our guides and teachers echoing

Their own pious remembered orisons  
Glorifying seriatim the American Girl,  
Cautiously hallowed symbol of our Life.

5.

GENTLEMEN, WE SCORN ingratitude: accept our thanks  
For bursting gates nailed tight by saints and friars.

Following your unsteady index fingers  
Pointing north and south, we saw  
The dawn of the immediate glories;  
And your eyes, gazing uncertainly above them,  
Fixed high on the October  
Flaming toward our shores from eastern skies.

You read the portents; our young illiterate ears  
Heard your translation of the fiery signs,  
Your repetition to our own platoon  
Of marching orders loud into the future.

We listened, turned our backs on you forever,  
Advanced groping without you every step in pain  
Along the dark initial roads.

You may perhaps have heard on distant beaches,  
At literary teas, reports of our travail.

Nor did we forget the earlier invocation:  
*Truth was more precious to us  
Than the eyes of happy love; it burned  
Hotter in our throats than passion.  
—More sweet than freedom, more desired than joy,  
More sacred than the pleasing of a friend,  
It led us like a grim commander  
Over our broken idols; over our dead selves;  
Across sibilant marshes of disbelief  
Toward battles that transform the world.*

*We heard the march of rebellion sweeping  
Over the heads of the proud; heard  
The countless redoubtable legions of toil;  
Learned to say: we—all, we—in all,  
We—hot flames that regenerate,  
Announcing the birth of the world October.*

6.

THE CALAMITY of good living undistributed:  
America lolled for a decade on warm cushions,  
Drank Capone rich, squinted through puffed eyes  
In precisely advertised adoration  
Of kind men, silent men, engineers.

Jurgen and Rudy Vallee drowned our voices;  
Few heard us say: *O the sky  
Shall crack with laughter now that snow is falling;  
The city is a chaos, the spawn of anarchic capitalism;  
Look, there is Karl Marx, this is your spring:  
We rise dauntless in all lands  
To impregnate the earth with newer life.*

7.

WE ARE NOT writing history today;  
We know your tragedy, but ask  
Where were you, gentlemen, those tumultuous years  
That you invent biographies for us.

Now when new voices join our own, they  
Having gathered strength, having compared  
Two worlds in final conflict, knowing  
Where life destroys, where it leaps forward—  
You have returned to abandoned paper barricades,  
Trailing stolen banners, whispering  
Your frenzied libels into enemy ears  
Hostile and eager for the defamation.

8.

LET US BRIEFLY be compassionate,  
Regretting the rages of decay  
Which slanders us because it cannot reason.

Let us regret that friends who were untrue  
Cannot, loving themselves, be noble foes.

Let us have pity for the lips that once  
Sang paens to truth, now mumble hollow lies.

Let us forgive the senile little men  
Who seek a false renewal of their youth  
By scribbling dirty words across our wall.

9.

OLD VOICES, resurrecting imagined tales  
From half-forgotten nightmares long ago,  
Grow faint. Come, let us hear the new  
Voices of clean hearts which know  
*That to welcome multitudes—the miracle of deeds  
Performed in unison—the mind must first renounce  
The fiction of the self and its vainglory.*

We do not fear the dusk between two dawns;  
*The ocean has its ebb and flood;  
Battles are lost, the war is being won.*

The drums will beat again, the drums will beat  
Loud above the mongrels baying faint  
Behind the trail of stern battalions:

Across the granite cities and the hills,  
The drums will roll again, the marching feet  
Advance again through darkness toward the sun.

—New York, February, 1934.

# The French Press and the Riots

NORBERT GUTERMAN

WHILE the bourgeois press of the world still represents the recent change in the French government as a result chiefly of a "moral" upheaval, the real aspect of the events and their Fascist implications become more and more apparent. It is not without significance that February Sixth, the day of the rioting which caused, according to official estimates, eighteen deaths and more than two thousand injuries, is referred to as the "Day of the Dupes." The tragedy had been premeditated and organized, the Paris press having played a conspicuous part in the insurrection. Indeed, it is impossible to understand exactly what happened in France without at least a rapid analysis of the rôle played by the Paris newspapers and the groups that control them.

*Who Owns the Paris Press?*—It is commonly supposed that the daily newspapers (there are more than twenty) are either organs of the various political parties, or belong to the "all-the-news-that's-fit-to-print" type. Thus, we have traditionally conservative papers, like *Le Temps*, *Le Journal des Débats*, *l'Echo de Paris*, etc. There is the so-called "Left" press which includes papers like *l'Oeuvre*, *Le Quotidien*, and many others. Then there are the presumably "non partisan" newspapers, like *Le Journal*, *Le Petit Parisien*.

These dailies have a world-wide and well

deserved reputation for venality. The secret diplomatic documents published by the Bolsheviks have for example established irrefutably that all these "independent" organs have heavily cashed in on the Tsarist Embassy which paid them for supporting the Russian loans.

"Financial publicity" (i.e., paid advertising published as objective articles "advising" the public to buy bonds and utilities) is one of the most essential sources of income of the Paris papers. But lately, their dependence on financial and industrial interests has deepened considerably. A process of centralization and concentration has taken place. The "conservative" papers are now controlled by the French Steel Trust (*Le Comité des Forges*); the "Left" press is a tool of Horace Finaly, director of the *Banque de Paris et des Pays Bas*, and the most important figure in French finance. The "non-partisan" press depends almost entirely on the *Agence Havas* which distributes nearly all the news-releases and publicity in France; but as it is more or less connected with the interests represented by Finaly, only two principal groups control French public opinion. We must add, of course, the third group: the Communist Party and its *L'Humanité*, which has never accepted any financial publicity.

Who are these two principal groups? *Le Comité des Forges*, which owns munition factories all over Europe and had contributed

financially to the Hitler movement in Germany in order to perpetuate the profitable war scare, is the stronghold of imperialism in its most brutal, reactionary form; the interests grouped under Finaly have (or rather had, until last year) a more international character. For instance, they advocated an understanding with Germany. For a long time the two groups were fighting each other, like the Rockefeller and Morgan interests in America, this fight reflecting itself in the press. However, during the spring of 1933, the two rival groups concluded an agreement, or at least, temporary truce—a significant move in view of the consolidation a year later of the two parliamentary wings of the bourgeoisie into the "National Union."\* Hitler's rise in Germany, the growing resistance of the French masses to the capitalist offensive, the radicalization of the civil servants' unions had probably necessitated this agreement. At any rate, since last spring there has been a marked change in the attitude of the Left and "non-partisan" press controlled by Finaly. Instead of defending the government of the "popular majority," that is the cartel of the Left, most of the organs more or less insidiously began to stress its difficulties, to point out the danger

\* This fact as well as Finaly's role in determining the attitude of the Left and non-partisan press has been revealed by Valois, the leader of a Left Fascist organization, in the *Chantiers Cooperatifs* (Feb. 10).

of the *patrie* being ruled by "parties," and to demand, more or less openly, a Coalition Cabinet and a "strong man." At the same time, Tardieu's plans to change the Constitution and deprive the Chamber of Deputies of some of its powers were widely advertised by the Left as well as the Right press with enthusiastic or deeply reverent editorial comment. Of course, the public was kept quite ignorant of the "understanding" between the bankers and industrialists which could alone explain this new nationalist orientation of the Left press.

*Who Organized the Riots?*—The February "insurrection" was not an isolated outburst, but the climax to a series of public demonstrations begun early in January following revelations of the Stavisky scandal. The reactionary forces launched at first a royalist vanguard: the so-called "King's Henchmen," a comparatively small group led by Léon Daudet whose "anti-republican" newspaper (*L'Action Française*) is financially controlled by both Finaly and Le Comité des Forges! From the very start the riots were suspiciously successful. Paris police seemed to have completely lost its boasted capacity for keeping order in the streets. Its chief, Chiappe, famous inventor of the preventive arrest system (always applied against the Communists and consisting in incarcerating thousands of workers on the eve of every announced demonstration) this time instructed his troops not to molest the young Fascists who were tearing up benches, building barricades and shouting wildly in the streets. And the press did its part. Under enormous headlines the newspapers stressed the impunity of the manifestants and encouraged the public to attend these "interesting" riots. The tactics succeeded. One day (January 27th) 20,000 spectators saw a few hundred royalists fight off vastly outnumbering police forces. But the cordial relationship between police and Fascists was most strikingly illustrated when the Royalist leader Pujos was allowed, after very polite and peaceful negotiations with Chiappe, to withdraw his grotesque band of well dressed hoodlums, in order "to save the policemen from being soaked by the rain!"

As a consequence of these riots the Chauvins Cabinet, badly compromised by the Stavisky exposé, was forced to resign.

Meanwhile the various Fascist and semi-Fascist organizations, controlled by the Right parties, were preparing their coup. One week before the bloody riots, February 1, one read in the *Cahier des Charges*: "We know from reliable sources that certain fractions of veterans are preparing to strangle the Republic; Rightist leaders have already had secret meetings and have agreed on the distribution of ministry portfolios in the next Cabinet. They plan to mobilize a few thousand veterans, preceded by war-cripples, women and children, who will storm the Chamber of Deputies."

Ordered to form a cabinet upon Chauvins' resignation, Daladier first tried a Coal-

ition dominated by the Radical-Socialists. But the Rights did not want *that* sort of a coalition. He tried a "concentration Cabinet" comprising the most moderate elements of the Right and Left. But again the opposition of the Right stood in his way. Only then did Daladier decide to form a Left Cabinet, that is, to rule according to the "popular will." And only then did Daladier, under the pressure of the Socialists (who had to give some proof of their "revolutionary activity" to their public) agree not to dismiss Chiappe, but to remove him from Paris by naming him Governor of Morocco!

A few days before, Chiappe could have been dismissed and even imprisoned for his connections with Stavisky to whom he had furnished a foreign passport. But the Radical-Socialists were too pusillanimous to take even this legal step. And for a very good reason: they knew that Chiappe knew too much about them. But now, Chiappe's sudden promotion to a position of honor clearly indicated Daladier's weakness. Friend of the brothel-keeper Zografos and the swindler Stavisky, Chiappe had suddenly become a persecuted saint for whose sake Parisians were willing to shed their blood! He was displaced Feb. 3. Two days later the Paris press launched a series of violent attacks on the Left Cabinet, while extensively advertising the projected manifestations, quoting Fascist programs, over-estimating their strength, and encouraging the public to attend the spectacle.

Thus it happened that on Feb. 6, in an atmosphere of great excitement, the Fascists marched through the crowded streets convinced that the whole country was supporting them. It is probable that a few provocateurs carefully planted by Chiappe among the manifestants started the shooting. The Republican Guard fired back and there were dead and wounded: the Fascists at last had martyrs. But the Left Cabinet was equally responsible for the bloodshed. Its extraordinary failure in attempting to quell the riots cannot be explained by incompetence. The huge Place de la Concorde was left free to the manifestants, no demonstrations were forbidden, police were inadequately equipped, etc. The Daladier Cabinet obviously wished to show up the Right Fascist groups and make them appear more dangerous than they really were. Thus the bloodshed must be regarded as the result of a double provocation, for which both bourgeois parties, the Right and Left, were responsible.

After the demonstrations, writes deputy Bergery (former Radical-Socialist, now independent) "the government had two methods of resistance; the first was to appeal to the workers to stand by the Cabinet in order to defend republican liberties; the second, to put more powerful weapons into action: tanks and machine guns. The latter method . . . would be justified if applied by a government with a 'pure conscience', ready to sacrifice its life for a great ideal and supported by the masses . . . The Government did not want to use

the first method, because it would have meant the fall of the capitalist system."

The following day Daladier resigned and Doumergue was called to form the Coalition Cabinet. As soon as this was achieved the Paris press again changed its tone. With perfect harmony all bourgeois organs quit the indignant *allegro furioso* of the previous days, and lapsing into a peaceful *andante* called on the people to maintain a "quiet dignity," and to be confident in the magic virtues of Doumergue.

*The Workers' Counter Attack.*—So far as the Left wing bourgeoisie was concerned the political operation of the Right had succeeded. But with the formation of the Coalition Cabinet a clear class line was drawn: the bourgeoisie—the *Right and Left* who just had quarreled over the Stavisky scandal—was now reconciled at the expense of the proletariat. French workers now understood the true significance of this united front of the bourgeoisie: it was an important stage in the evolution towards Fascism.

Immediately after Daladier's capitulation the Communist Party and Communist Trade Unions called the masses to demonstrate. Feb. 9, Paris workers held a powerful meeting in the streets and fought heroically against the police who this time charged with utmost brutality. Hundreds of workers were injured and four killed. The same day similar manifestations were reported from many other cities. Finally, under the terrific pressure of its own rank and file, the Socialist Party and the General Confederation of Labor agreed to call a general strike for Monday, Feb. 12.

This general strike has international significance. For the first time on the Continent the working class of an entire nation rose consciously against the Fascists. In spite of the Socialists' soft-pedaling efforts — Jouhaux, chief of the Socialist Trade Unions, after having negotiated with Doumergue, appealed to the workers to behave with "dignity" and sabotaged the railroad strike—the success of the strike was overwhelming. At last 75 percent of all French workers were involved. Paris had no means of communication, not a single newspaper was issued that day, and many small shopkeepers closed for the day, showing their solidarity with the workers. A united front of all toilers against Fascism was realized as a result of the pressure exerted by the rank and file upon the Socialist Party leaders. In Paris 150,000 workers of all political shades gathered in the Place de la Nation, acclaiming the Communist slogans and cheering for the Soviets. Similar demonstrations took place in eighty cities throughout the nation.

Fascism is not inevitable. What is inevitable is the bourgeois attempt to adopt a Fascist policy against the working class and as John Strachey puts it, the French capitalists have "got the idea." However, it is very possible that in its effort to break the workers' organizations, the French bourgeoisie will break its own neck.



# Hex Woman

JOSEPH NORTH

LANSDALE, PA.

THE Fenstermacher's barn was broad and red and stood on the top of the big hill thirty-two miles out of Lansdale, and upon its forehead which faced the road, the old Post Road with the white-washed milestones, the hex sign had been painted more than half a century ago. The sign, six-pointed, was a bright yellow, standing out against the background of deep red and its purpose was to ward off possible evil influences ranting invisibly through the Pennsylvania Dutch countryside. Nobody would say for sure that the Teutonic goblins swished no longer through the air in their black pointed hats, the evil eye glaring down on some hapless farmer whose hex sign was not strong enough to frighten the fury away.

"Ach no." Mother Fenstermacher shook her head, carefully adjusting the spectacles on her low-German nose, "Of course we don't believe in hexerei." But if you pressed her for the reason why the six-cornered star decorated the barn, she answered, "Well, but it doesn't hurt to have it."

Anybody traveling through the lovely undulating valley of Berks and Bucks counties sees these signs on the barns which rise staidly, surely, like a stout German peasant above the tall corn, the rye and wheat waving in the fertile fields here.

When 1930 and 1931 rolled along and the prices of corn and rye and oats, wheat, cucumbers and cream, dropped away down, Mama Fenstermacher would walk into the barn muttering and considering what kind of anti-hex could ward off the evils of depression. People talked a lot about Washington and Hoover, and others wagged their heads about Wall Street and bankers, and there was a lot of feeling around of the inevitability of hard times; the evil spirits were riding through the farmside and nothing could be done about it, not? Mama Fenstermacher recalled the old days: the silent, slow-moving days before the Ford, the reaper and the radio, the era when the canal to Mauch Chunk was still in use and mules trudged along bearing coal to the cities: in those days a dead toad buried at midnight with a few wisps of human hair—with the full moon shining down—might conjure away evil—particularly if you sprinkled a few drops of blood from your right hand. Yes, she had heard about it—was it not her grandmother who had told her, shortly after the Civil War, and she recalled one season of drought when the charm had worked: the hex was beaten.

But that was drought: what about mortgages and notes due? That was something else yet. Could the hex work against man-made evils, as intricate and soulless as deeds

and clauses, percents and interest? She shrugged her creaking shoulders and went to milk the cows in the red barn. And she stopped in the dusk and looked up at the sign: bright yellow as the sun.

At the end of the summer of 1931, her son Maxie pattered around the Model T Ford, traded a few knicknacks for two spark-plugs, cranked the engine up, and rattled off to Lansdale on a foggy Monday morning. "I'm going to town, Ma, and hunt me up a job." There was the faintest *dch* sound to the *j*.

She was silent, peering through her spectacles at the patch-quilt in her hand which she had been sewing now for several weeks. She did not look up. "I'll be coming home of a Sunday, Mama." He halted at the doorway and looked at her.

"What kind of work will you be looking for?" she asked, still working the needle, her broad thumb holding down the edge of the patch, which was green against the red and yellow. "I don't know," he shrugged his shoulders, "They say there's work at the stocking plants down at Lansdale. Henry Heidt told me last week they took on seventy-five hands."

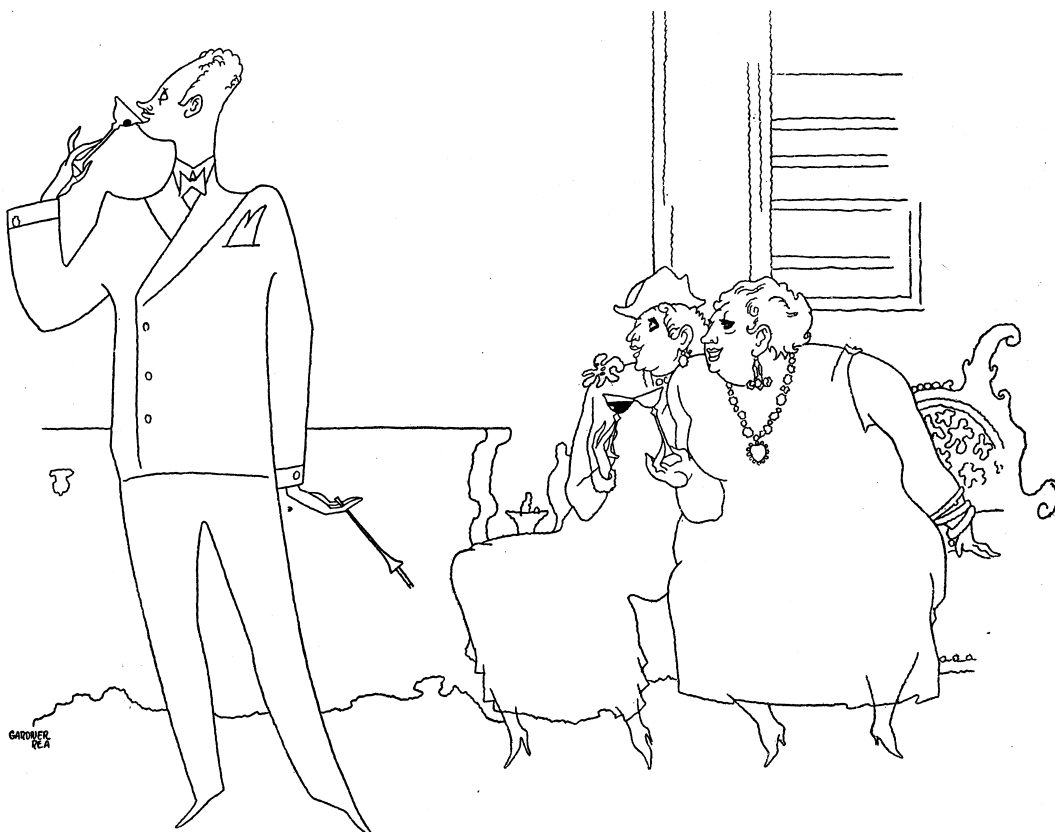
"Stockings?" she repeated, "Maxie—where they make the silk stockings, not?"

He was silent. She looked up, her forehead creased. He had the door wide open and his right leg was out on the threshold.

Now was not the time to talk about such things. It might bring bad luck to be talking of silk stockings while he stands on the threshold. Particularly when he is leaving to work in one of those diabolic factories where they stood all day long at machines doing the devil's work indeed—making silk stockings to decorate the legs of city women so that men would look and grow unresisting. Yes. It was devil's work. And she opened her mouth, but it was cloudy outside and the storm was hanging low over the hill, and she could see the red barn in the background, and there was the hex sign, and maybe she had better shut her mouth. There was no stopping Maxie anyway. He had a head of his own—his father's head—and he would use it.

And besides, the thoughts swung through her head like the wind among the cypresses, what of the payment on the mortgage and the two notes due at the Farmers National Bank, where the men seemed to be made of starch, in their high white collars and they talked in low precise tones and would not look up at you when they implied the payments were to be met.

"Good-bye, Maxie. Then next Sunday?" His nod and he was gone. She sat there while he cranked up the Ford, and she sat there when the first sputterings cracked through the silence. But when the chug-chug of the engine sounded and the car passed



"BERTRAM HAS WILLED HIS BRAIN TO SCIENCE."

Gardner Rea

the lane she felt herself rise despite herself and rush to the window. She did not wave for she knew he would not be looking back. Once he went out a door, he never looked back. She knew that. Since his father had died two years ago during spring sowing she had learned to rely on her son. Whenever he decided to sell a cow, or plow a new pasture, there was no changing his mind. She might have different ideas, yes, but that did not affect him in the least. "Mama I know better," he said quietly, his blue eyes serious, and his chin, with that cleft in it derived from his father, jutting out just the slightest.

She put down the quilt and went outside and walked around the front of the house; touching the roses and the gardenias and bending down to examine the zinnias. She went around the back and looked at the new calf, and through the pig-pen just to see that every little thing was in its place. And it was. Trust Maxie for that. He had arranged for Old Man Heidt's youngest boy to give her a hand while he was gone—he would fix it up with him. And she really had nothing to worry about. She knew Max would take full care of everything. If he went to town to find work, he would find work. And he would come home with the green dollar bills folded carefully in his wallet, stowed securely in his inside coat pocket. But then—silk stockings! She had seen them on the feet of women when she went sometimes to Allentown. They brought out the curve of the calf and there was a shine to the legs and how could a man keep his eyes away from a shine and a curve? Even in winter-time the hussies wore them: and what excuse could they offer then, she wondered. In summer time, yes, they could say their dainty feet were hot, and the silk cooled them off. But what could they say in the winter? Silk under the galoshes! Yes, she shrugged her shoulders, these were new times. New times, new ways. Everything was different since the nations had gone to war. And now—since 1929 milk and butter and cream and eggs which everybody needed suddenly became needless—the prices dropped to God-knows-how-low, and well—what was the reason for it? Some there were who said it was an evil eye on the world for having lived so high since the war; lived high after so many million men had been killed over there in Europe fighting for and against the Kaiser. Yes. That might be the reason. Who could answer these questions that had nothing to do with wind or rain or drought or seed? The devil might answer the question and like as not he was—considering the foreclosures she had heard about—and they made her tremble—that were occurring in the countryside around Berks and Bucks counties.

\* \* \* \* \*

When the Ford chugged into the lane about 8 o'clock that following Sunday morning, she was already in the garden hoeing, her ear cocked for the sound of every motor. She turned slowly and there he was. Broad, like

his father, with his low-German nose and his bright blue eyes, and well—look, he had a new hat: a city hat with a narrow brim and a gray hatband, but it looked good on him, even though it made him look different. Yes. It made him go further away from her, a little. She would have preferred the ageless straw hat with the jagged hole, and the overalls, but here he was, with that gray hat and he had on a new necktie. What colors: no God-fearing gray or black or white. Instead there was blue and green and red.

"Hallo Mama," he said. "Breakfast is ready? I'm starved." She put the hoe down gently and walked into the kitchen and he noted that everything was prepared beforehand, probably shortly before dawn, and it had been waiting him since that time. She asked few questions at the table: he volunteered most of the information. He was a helper and it paid \$14.50 a week. The factory was named Dexdale Knitting Company on High Street, in Lansdale, and the whistle blew at 7:45 in the morning and he had three quarters of an hour for lunch. "I get through at six," he said. "And the night I got to myself." She didn't want to ask how he spent the night "to himself," but the sight of the spangled movie entrance, lit up by the hundred of electric lights and the picture of a man and a woman in embrace, flashed through her mind. She had seen this in Allentown, once, on a billboard five feet high and seven feet wide, at least. She sighed. "And you make stockings?" she asked after a while. He nodded. "That's the only trade down there that's working folks," he said. "People got to wear stockings even though it's a panic."

"But not silk stockings!" she said with a snap of her lips. He smiled and looked down his spoon. "What is wrong with silk stockings, Mama?" He gobbled down the blackberries and cream, the pancakes and bacon, the milk and muffins. She rose and pumped a porcelain pitcher full of water. "They're the devil's work," she said. "Oh I don't know, Mama," he answered. "I don't believe they are the devil's work. I don't."

"You can't make me believe," she shook her head, "a woman has a right to wear silk on her legs. It's sinful and it draws men's eyes." He had difficulty controlling the corners of his mouth. "I don't know, Mama," he said, "I don't mind looking myself sometimes."

"There!" She was standing straight as a bean pole at his side. "See? That's it exactly. You don't mind to look. Snare of the devil and evil it brings too, for how can you resist when the legs shine and—"

He was at the door—"I'm going out to look at the corn," he said. He returned an hour afterward. "Old Man Heidt's boy gives you a good hand, not?" She moved her head, "So-so." But he was satisfied for the weed was not visible, the fence was up, and the live-stock looked healthy.

\* \* \*

She stood in the garden plot and looked down the road and the hoe began to feel

heavy in her hand. She counted the Sundays he had been home. Two years ago last week he had run his rattletrap Ford to town and he had not once missed Sunday home yet. And this Sunday he was not home. "I wonder," she thought, "I wonder if there can maybe be something. Maybe—"

But she waited until high noon and then she walked over to the Heidts. Old Man Heidt sat in the musty living room, his wife opposite him, and he was reading out of the Old Testament. When Mama Fenstermacher came in, he looked at his page, put his thumb in the corner and rose. She excused herself for disturbing him and then she asked if he had read in the papers if there was anything wrong in Lansdale. He adjusted his square-rimmed spectacles. His uncertainty justified her suspicions and her heart speeded up. She stepped a little closer. "So?" she asked, her fingers fluttering down the side of her dress. "The mills," he said, "where they make the stockings, they are striking."

She stood there stiff. "Striking?" He nodded his head, looking at his wife. "Ya. Striking. They are not satisfied with the pay they get for making silk stockings."

"And my Maxie?"

He shook his head. "Dass was all I read."

She thanked him and hastened back down the dusty road. Her head whirled. She put on her black bonnet and tied the straps under her chin. She polished up her high black shoes, the pair that her husband had bought her seven years ago in Easton. She laced the shoes up to the top and tied a careful bow. Then she went to the barn and pulled out the old buggy and she harnessed Blitzen, the gray mare, her fingers stiff, and she climbed up slowly, painfully. She had four dollars and seventy cents in her purse which was in a safe place near her bosom. When she rode past the Heidts, the family came out, Old Man Heidt still holding the Bible, and stood there by the gate, watching her. She called to them: "If anybody should call for me, I have to Lansdale gone. Tuesday I will come home." They nodded, the three heads in unison, watching her driving the buggy—on a Sunday too it was—but then, with such things as striking, and silk stocking factories, what else could you expect. You could expect anything, even Mama Fenstermacher driving to Lansdale alone—and on a Sunday.

Lansdale was bright and shiny and crowds on the street and her eyes widened as she saw the bright red brick factories and the many windows and the girls walking on the pavements in—did her eyes go bad on her altogether?—they were walking with pants and the backs were cut down low. She did not know the pajama vogue and her heart pounded away. Yes. This was the city and they were striking here. Striking meant defying and fighting authority: fighting the men who own the factories, the policemen and the government. Ya: she had heard of strikes before. There was the railroad strike in 1919, was it, when they blamed hard times on the

railroad workers who refused to haul their produce to town. And there was the steel strike in that year, too, she had heard her husband talk about it. And she remembered that in 1907 during the other panic, there had been many strikes and people said they heard that the city folks were talking about revolution. Revolution: that meant a war between the rich and the poor. And war was sinful. Yes: the World War was the most sinful of all and that was why people suffered today. And if the poor went to war against the rich, well, there was nothing you could bank on—no—there would be blood in the street and yes—her heart sprang up against her throat—her son would be in it. And who knows?

And now: her son was striking. She had reared him as best she could. Yes, nobody could deny that; nobody could expect more. Sunday school there had been and Bible reading. And he was a quiet, upright young man. But this stocking factory! That was evil too. It was devil's work. He had sowed the seed and now there he was—standing, horned, reaping the crop.

She took out a letter with the return address on it, and stopped at a corner to ask a policeman directions. He started and then explained, and he stood hands on hips eyeing her as she drove off.

When she saw Maxie, she took off her gloves and sat down. "I came," she said, "because they tell me there is striking here. You are a striker?" she asked in that rising inflection typical of the Pennsylvania Dutch.

He sat there looking at her. "You drove all the way here yourself!"

"Are you a striker?" she repeated. He rose and took her gloves and her hat and he brought her a glass of milk and a towel and he sat there looking at her.

She repeated the question. He started finally, and then replied, "Listen, Mama. You don't understand. You don't know what is a strike."

"I know," she said firmly. "The devil's work. Sinful."

He snorted. "Mama. I don't know what to say. You don't understand. They cut our wages you understand. Cut—" She grew impatient. "Tell me, what do you expect to do?"

He tried to mollify her: then explain. Finally he took her for a walk—after finding a livery stable in town and boarding the team there. He showed her the mill and he took her to the strike meeting in the night. It was at the Lyceum and she sat in the front row, her mouth closed tight, and she listened to the young men and women who came up and spoke: their eyes shining and excitement in the air. And yes: they talked like the sons and daughters of Pennsylvania Dutch farmers. Yes, they did. And she noticed they did not look so much different from her Maxie. And she noticed the policemen who crowded the entry up the stairs. Why, they

too, looked like Pennsylvania Dutch—only fatter, much fatter, than the strikers. She refused to tell her son what she thought, and that night she went to sleep late in his bed, while he strewed blankets and pillows on the floor for himself. He tiptoed out of the room at 5:30 for the picket line which started in front of the Dexdale factory at six. She closed her eyes, pretending sleep, but she had lain there all night long, wide-eyed, staring up at the ceiling, and sometimes listening to his breathing.

Maxie walked in the line, the banner labeled STRIKER on his chest, and he carried a placard which read "No More Slave Wages." He eyed the deputies standing crowded about the factory gate. On the roof he noticed the High Sheriff Felix Hochelderfer, with a shotgun, and his heart pounded between his ribs. The sheriff had sent warning: the marchers could tramp down High Street to the corner of the plant, but dared go no further. If they did—well, there were sixty deputies sworn in—all of them with bright shining badges on their shirts and some of them were on horseback. The sheriff had warned the neighbors who lived across the street to keep their windows closed. "Why?" one short man asked. "For what should I keep my windows closed?" And the sheriff had said, "Tear gas bumbs. We might have to use tear gas bumbs." And the short fat man, who had a nephew working in the mills, lifted his fist: "You can go to hell," he shouted, "Straight. I will keep up my windows and if tear gas should come through, I will sue you, you dirty murderer."

The sheriff had walked out without a word, his face red, because he did not want to arrest that man, who expressed the opinion of all the neighbors. The sheriff shrugged his shoulders. "I warned you," he said. "You can't say I didn't warn you." The sheriff was big and fat and his face was red and round as a moon and his eyes bulged and they were blue with bloodshot veins running around the pupils.

Pickersets do not stop at corners. They went straight on singing *The Star Spangled Banner* and *My Country 'Tis of Thee*. And as soon as they reached the first gate the boy with the American flag, he was about eighteen and his cheeks were still bright with the bloom of the Pennsylvania Dutch farmer, there was a puff and an arc of white smoke and then the flag dropped and the boy staggered back. Then there was a barrage of tear gas, and then some of the picketers laughed and pulled out wet handkerchiefs and camphor and fastened the handkerchiefs about their mouth and they kept picketing, half visible in the cloud of gas. They marched up and back, up and back, between the horses of the deputies and the shouts of the sheriff. Then from somewhere came a stone: it seemed to come from the crowd of relatives and friends across the street who stood jeering the deputies: "Swine! Tear gas bumbs you throw." High Sheriff Hochelderfer, standing on the roof,

yelled, "They're attacking us. Give it to them, boys. Hell give them." And the deputies rode into the picket line and the tear gas increased. It was a different gas this time. Sharper, more acrid than the other, and the crowd and picketers began to cough and cry, running, bent over, in all directions. Mama Fenstermacher—nobody knew where she came from—sat in her buggy on the next corner, holding the reins in her right hand, her left hand at her heart. She sat during the whole scene. Tear gas bumbs! And throngs of men and women ran weeping. What could an old woman think? True the picket line had girls in it—youngsters who wore pants and their backs were low-cut, but they had the fresh faces of the Pennsylvania Dutch. New times, new ways. And there was her boy Maxie, broad, short like her husband, carrying the sign. Slave wages! She thought that over: slave wages. And she thought about the mortgage payments he had been meeting and the notes due in the Farmers National Bank he had been paying the interest on.

The street was suddenly bare: like a graveyard after a funeral, she thought, and the clouds of smoke rolled like fumes in hell, over the pavements, curled about the stoops, up into the porches, and the deputies on horseback stamping around like legions of Lucifer's.

Mama Fenstermacher drove the buggy to her farm, back up the hill, and into the big red barn. Maxie had promised to come home next Sunday if the strike was won. He had shipped her home post-haste: how can you stay Mama for what would happen to the livestock, and don't you have to keep an eye on Old Man Heidt's boy? She rode back as if she were riding to her own funeral. When she got home, she untied her black bonnet, took off her shoes, and put them away in the closet, the left shoe by the right shoe, and she went out to see the cows and pigs and she walked around the farm twice to make sure. And each time she walked around she looked up at the hex star on the barn and she shook her head.

There was a full moon that night. And if one of the conical-hatted goblins of the Teutons had climbed down from her broomstick she might have seen, standing by the Fenstermacher well, an old, spare figure, with a dead toad in one hand, and a long bread knife in the other. The figure made a slit on its palm, sprinkled blood on the toad and mumbled. And if the goblin listened she could have heard:

The moon should never shine again  
The moon should never shine again  
On them who threw the bumbs with gas  
On them who threw the bumbs with gas.

If the goblin was not routed by this time she might see Old Mama Fenstermacher return to the house, exhausted, dragging her feet and, passing the barn, look up at the hex star, there in the moonlight, a bright yellow against the deep red.



# Correspondence

## Taxi Strikers' Appeal

TO THE NEW MASSES:

Twenty-seven thousand taxicab drivers, employed by Parmelee, Terminal, Radio, and other companies, are continuing their fight against the company union which the N.R.A. is trying to force on them. Funds are needed to carry on this fight, and we are appealing to your readers for help. Contributions should be sent to the undersigned.

TRADE UNION COMMITTEE FOR THE SUPPORT  
OF THE TAXI STRIKE  
323 West Thirty-eighth Street, New York.

## Who Buys Cars

TO THE NEW MASSES:

Hearing so much talk about automobile production being way up, and since I have seen only three or four new models on the streets of Chicago, I am prompted to inquire: What part of the country is getting all the new autos? Or is this just a salesman ballyhoo?

E. F. MARTIN.

## The Splitting Tactic

TO THE NEW MASSES:

I would like to make some observations based on my experiences with intellectuals who have turned left in the last few years and have since turned right, and further left and roundabout.

Intellectuals who come close to the revolutionary movement approach it, broadly speaking, from two opposed attitudes. One group feels that it has something to offer; the other that it has something to receive. The former group naturally feels that it should receive payment in honors, and influence for what it offers and the work it does; the latter group is ready to pay in work and devotion for what it receives.

An excellent illustration of the first attitude was to be seen in an episode in the history of the National Committee for the Defense of Political Prisoners last year. A considerable number of the signers of the letter to THE NEW MASSES of March 6 were then members of the Committee which had consistently acted in coöperation with the International Labor Defense; this group interpreted coöperation as the right to level constant criticism. Their criticism may in some instances have been correct, but at the time it was ill advised. The International Labor Defense, understaffed and carrying on with exhausted funds, needed all its energies and attention to forward the Scottsboro defense, then in its most crucial stage; and it had not the time or the energy to give to answering criticism or charges. Specifically the International Labor Defense was criticized for hiring Leibowitz as counsel, a move which helped enormously in securing publicity for the case, and in organizing mass demonstration; and for not repudiating Leibowitz, at a time when he was still vital to the defense, for having made some typical lawyers' statements. This criticism was almost identical with the Trotskyist criticisms then appearing in the Militant, and its effect was to introduce dissension and uncertainty into the work when unity and drive were of the utmost importance. On being charged with this at a membership meeting of the National Committee, this group as a countercharge demanded that they receive a vote of thanks for their work and for their criticism. When this vote of thanks was refused, and when it was clear that their position would in no way be sustained by the membership, this group resigned in a body and walked out.

Since then, this group, most of whom had spent less than a year on the periphery of the organized revolutionary movement, and had every reason to consider themselves as in the novitiate period of their revolutionary career, have worked against the revolutionary movement. They organized the round-

robin protest against the Communists in the Madison Square Garden affair, though few, if any, were in the Garden, and their information came from the capitalist press. Their latest step is the attempt to organize in rivalry and opposition to the International Labor Defense, a so-called Non-Partisan Labor Defense which can only have a temporary splitting effect and, for the moment, halt and embarrass the work of a tried, experienced and valuable organization of revolutionary defense.

ISIDOR SCHNEIDER.

## A Teacher's Question

TO THE NEW MASSES:

I am an employee in New York City's educational system where I hold a supervisory position. The past four years of suffering around me have brought me eye to eye with you on the program for the cure for our economic and social ills. This conversion has not been the result of personal difficulties, since I have a good position, paying an ample salary, and with tenure as long as I behave "reasonably well." I am troubled because I am doing nothing about the great struggle going on about me. I call on you for help.

The first difficulty I run into is the bourgeois label which hangs on me. I have always lived in a comfortable home. My father, a wage earner, always had a fairly good job and managed to give me a good education. My life-long training has given me tastes and manners which my proletarian friends smile at. I have not been purged and purified by any struggle with my capitalist masters. A paragraph in your letter to Dos Passos in the March 6 issue hits me between the eyes. You say, "Only those (intellectuals) who pass through the fire, the turmoil, the endless grind of day to day organization . . . were able to merge with the advancing hosts of a new society." I am fully cognizant of my own inexperience and lack of political knowledge. I am humble before the unspeakable misery which my worker friends have gone through. I am with them heart and soul but they cannot believe in my sincerity.

The second difficulty is that I do not dare to jeopardize my school position. A large family is dependent on me. I am at present engaged in activities which at any moment may bring the deluge. I cannot go much beyond my present activity. The worker, with nothing to lose but his chains, cannot believe me to be sincere if I allow my fear for my job to check me. There is no teacher organization with a program which satisfies me. As a supervisor I would not get the support of classroom teachers if I tried to lead in forming one.

I am sure that my position is not unique. We must have hundreds, if not thousands of teachers whose positions are identical with mine. What are we to do? We need organization. We want the worker, whose comradeship we yearn for, to trust us. We want the fine boys and girls in our schools, active in N.S.L. and Y.C.L. groups to know who we are and to trust us. We want to identify ourselves with the new order and regain our badly shattered self-respect.

Can you offer us a way? We await the call.

A TEACHER IN DISTRESS.

## Tribute to Spivak

TO THE NEW MASSES:

The marvelous piece in the last NEW MASSES by John Spivak—"A Letter to President Roosevelt"—has moved me to do what I've never done before—write a letter of praise to the editors. If Journalism isn't Art, and this piece is Journalism, give me Journalism! More power to John Spivak!

HELEN SHERIDAN.

## Burke's Approach

TO THE NEW MASSES:

Regarding Kenneth Burke's essay in the issue of March 20, entitled, "My Approach to Communism," the NEW MASSES is to be congratulated on its publication.

Comrade Burke, however, stops short of one highly important fact that must not be ignored in the historical picture.

In his definition of his fourth category in the approach to Communism—the aesthetic approach—we are told: "Though aware that the word 'mediaevalism' is in disrepute at present, since it usually suggests to those bred on liberal histories only thoughts of serfdom and inequality, with side-glances at Hitlerite 'reversions,' I should suggest that Communism aims at a kind of 'industrial mediaevalism.' And I should hasten to define my meaning as follows: The mediaeval system, at its best, was a period of maximum cultural stasis, as distinguished from the highly unstable and transitory nature of living since the rise of bourgeois commercialism."

I think it is worth while to remember that those apologists for the capitalistic economy who are of the "Roman" faith are also at this time—1934—beginning to urge upon the strategists of capitalism a reconsideration of the "values" of mediaevalism. Comrade Burke refers to "side-glances at Hitlerite reversions," but he did not think it necessary to state, as a matter of simple reporting, that the principles of mediaevalism have been rediscovered by the Catholic faction of American capitalism and are at the present time being put forward as a suggested base for the solution of the problems which capitalism has created for itself in its imperialist phase. Moreover, these principles are being put forward with all the finesse, the propagandic subtlety, that "Rome" has learned so well how to practise in 1,600 years of political activity, both open and surreptitious.

There is one other point. Comrade Burke begins by saying, "This article is to concern itself with four approaches to Communism, which might be designated roughly as rational, ethical, historical and aesthetic." Some few evenings ago Earl Browder, in a remarkable address, at a remarkable meeting at Irving Plaza, said that the intellectuals in America were turning toward the revolutionary labor movement in increasing numbers at this time for the reason that the capitalist class had little or no further use for them and had "quit feeding them." This graphic statement of the case has a direct relation to Comrade Burke's statement to the effect that, "As the process of monopoly nears its completion . . . one is forced to a choice."

Since imperialist capitalism leads inevitably to war, however, the thought should be carried a step further.

We have come to the time when the issue is ultimately more than a question of eating or not eating. We are not only going to have to decide how we are going to eat. We are going to have to decide how we are going to fight. Artists and scientists might as well make up their minds at once that there is no escape from war. Sooner or later they are going to have to surrender their lives to war in behalf of capitalism or offer their lives and talents to war in behalf of Communism.

As Comrade Burke says, "One is forced to a choice." The foregoing consideration, however, extends the basis of the choice. To his catalogue of categories of approaches to Communism—rational, ethical, historical and aesthetic—Comrade Burke, all philosophy and political economy aside, might have added the category of the practical.

WILLIAM GARDENER.

# B o o k s

## The Aesthetics of Yesterday

*ART NOW*, By Herbert Read. Harcourt, Brace and Company. \$3.75.

**T**HIS is the type of book that might have caused a stir in Bohemia ten or fifteen years ago. Today it reads somewhat like a tract in defense of rugged individualism—it is indeed an aesthetic variant of that very persistent if somewhat dated pluralistic doctrine.

Every merit of the book from the standpoint of minds congenial with the author's and every defect from the Marxian standpoint flows from its doctrine of a socially undefiled æstheticism, which stresses the autonomy and self-sufficiency of art, wrenches art out of its social context, and denies to the artist his social function. However, despite the author's best intentions, social factors continually intrude, sometimes in ways of which he is apparently unaware. For example, having analysed the creative process, the author concludes: "But fundamental to all exact psychology of the creative process is the notion that art is the expression through the senses of states of intuition, perception or emotion, peculiar to the individual." But the analysis itself points beyond these psychological states: "Whilst he is in this state (of predisposing emotional mood) there comes to the artist the first premonition of a symbol, or thought to be expressed, not in words, but in visible and tangible material shape—perhaps 'this landscape,' 'this dish of fruit,' perhaps only an abstract adumbration of planes and masses."

Now the Dutch artist of the seventeenth century could and did think of landscape and fruit but never of any "abstract adumbrations"; the Byzantine artist of, say, the seventh century thought in terms still other than landscape, fruit, or abstract planes. The difference in the choice and attitude of the Byzantine, the Dutch, and the modernist artist can never be explained by psychology alone; nor yet by "empathy," "abstract symbolism," or even "cosmic movements." Though the physical structure of their senses and the physiological disturbances of their emotions were the same, there was a difference in the social-material environments in which the senses and emotions of these artists found stimuli and direction. And in precisely the same measure did the artists' "sensibility" differ. "Aesthetic values," which Mr. Read rigidly dissociates from "values in ethics, sociology, religion, philosophy," cannot be thus dissociated. Whatever general acceptance they may obtain resides in judgments socially determined. "Just artists" are non-existent outside of Mr. Read's book; concrete artists are known in society—in class society. And their reactions, views, conceptions of form and methods of realizing those conceptions, are

determined by that fact. A complete analysis of art undoubtedly involves psychological and formal factors, but it cannot be limited to them.

This unhistoric attitude colors and mars every major argument and point made by the author, not the least when he is dealing with history. "Never since the Baroque period," he remarks, "has art served any social or cultural purpose. All the art of the last 250 years is the production of individual artists." Let us see. Individual production presupposes an individual client and both are inseparable from money economy, the growth of cities, the development of trade and manufacture, the rise of new classes. Individual production in art as in other fields came with the Renaissance as a direct result of the commercial revolution. As a result of that revolution came every institution in and around the art of modern times: exhibitions, galleries, dealers, museums; easel painting; new media, processes, themes—yes, even the philosophy of pure aestheticism. On the other hand, individual production (far older, consequently, than 250 years) by no means excludes social and cultural ends. The art of Fragonard in the service of decadent French nobility was no less social and cultural than that of Raphael, who worked for the merchant princes; and the art of David, on the very threshold of the nineteenth century, was no less social than either. The specific social meaning of each artist would be revealed upon a careful

analysis of his cultural antecedents and the division of labor in the society and period in which he lived. But whenever the logic of the facts points to such an analysis, Mr. Read settles the problem by some such melancholy admonition as "Nothing is so fatal to life as historic determinism" or ". . . it is . . . a vulgar error to think that art can be economically determined."

The section of the book dealing with aesthetic doctrines is biased, superficial, and rich in omissions. Even his own subject proper—modern art—emerges as a rigid, static thing, split up into a welter of unrelated currents, conceptions, terms: subjective realism, subjective idealism, tough- and tender-minded cubism, symbolic form, intuitive form, intuitive symbolism, lyrical intuition (the author's major weaknesses seem to be intuition and symbolism), etc., etc. For obvious reasons the emergence of revolutionary art does not appear within the exclusive confines of *Art Now*. The Mexican contribution, the experience of Soviet Russia, the international movement represented in China, Japan, Belgium, Holland, Hungary do not rate as high as intuitive symbolism.

Scores of books have been written on modern art, many of them, of course, unreasonable; some, however, quite rich in factual material. We open *Art Now* in the hope of meeting an author who with the accumulated knowledge at his command will illumine for us the field chosen, at least in its formal aspect. We discover we have been listening to a minor Roger Fry, a decade behind time.

LOUIS LOZOWICK.

## Without an Answer

*CHILDREN OF RUTH*, by Marvin Sutton. Greenberg. \$2.50.

Here is a story of the contemporary English peasant, of the worker at the mercy of two masters: the tenant farmer or gaffer employing him, and the landlord (the absentee kind) leasing his estates to the farmer. Whenever hard times come, the landlord invariably maintains his standard of living at the gaffer's expense, and the latter in turn bears down on the laborer—ever the first and last resort. Mr. Sutton tells his story with remarkable onomatopoeia: the stark futility, the exasperating monotony, the pain and sweat of peasant life under capitalism are startlingly well reproduced.

Naturally the workers are dissatisfied. But the idea of revolt, much less the will for it, is still unformed. Their minds are still groping, asking questions rather than affirming facts and principles. Is God really the just and merciful Being the church proclaims Him? Why are the wealthy the cream of the earth; surely they do nothing to merit the distinction. The peasant, in brief, is still a grumbler, confused and harassed, rather than a class-conscious worker fired by the spirit of rebellion.

These observations lie implicit in Mr. Sut-







ton's novel. But because he has been content to rest here he leaves us dangling. For he has told a tale without an end, a tale lacking even in direction. It is not carping to argue that we already knew much of what he has presented; and even if we didn't we could still legitimately ask: what do you suggest? What do you, as a man aware of a condition so pregnant with the need for change, think? But Mr. Sutton vouchsafes no reply. He has given you the facts; draw your own conclusions. It is clear that he hopes for the best; but what that best is and how to secure it—here all is silence. Thus, despite Sutton's artistry, despite his obvious sympathy and unsparing realism, his tale is suddenly barren, stripped of genuine significance. Is it possible that Mr. Sutton is in the same plight as his peasants: questioning and grumbling, but still without an answer?

GILBERT DOUGLAS.

### Our Troubled Liberals

**NAZISM: AN ASSAULT ON CIVILIZATION.** Edited by Pierre van Paassen and James Waterman Wise. Harrison Smith and Robert Haas. \$2.50.

The liberals have looked upon Nazi Germany, found it not good, and, with characteristic spirit and poise, recorded their sentiments in this symposium. The book has been issued to afford documentary evidence of the barbaric nature of Nazism. Eighteen contributors, ranging from Miriam Beard to Alfred E. Smith, have managed to circumscribe the salient issues of the movement (with one notable exception). In Part I, "In the Third Reich," such topics are touched on as religious persecution, the debasement of the professions, the enslavement of women, cultural degradation, and the fate of the worker. Part II, "An International Menace," contains articles on the Nazi economic policy, propaganda activities abroad, the war upon world Jewry, and the danger to world peace. Part III, "The Challenge to America," contains the American attitude toward Hitlerism, American labor and Nazism, a list of deletions from *Mein Kampf*, and the South American reaction to Hitlerism.

Two comments should be made concerning the form of the book and the structure of the individual article. Under the circumstances, the symposium form is clinically symptomatic of the liberal mode of thought. Encompassing as it does all shades of political opinion from Musteism to New Dealism, it is organically impossible for liberalism to present a unified, integrated front to Fascism (such as *The Brown Book of the Hitler Terror*, for instance). What liberalism can do, however, is to display an imposing list of names from all walks of life under the flag of the general opposition camp, the implication being that if so many well-known leaders are opposed to Fascism, Fascism certainly must be a bad thing for mankind and we all ought to get together and do something about

it. The result, of course, is often repetitious, often conflicting, and always immiscible.

The form of the individual article is likewise closely associated with liberal thought. Indeed, a formula might almost be extracted. Nine-tenths of the article is devoted to a recording of the evil effects of Fascism; the other tenth is usually a lachrymose deploration and rarely a declarative assertion that something should be done. For it is enough, our liberal contends, that the truth be known.

For the reader who has been reading the newspaper headlines, a few Sunday features, and a pamphlet here and there, the book will prove boring. No fault can be found with the data. But the contributors are occupied only with the visible manifestations of Nazism; they prefer to leave untouched the causes of Nazism, and they offer no program of action to ward off Nazism. (This will explain, incidentally, why there is no article dealing with political conditions in Germany prior to Hitler's accession. To deal with this subject is tantamount to revealing the betrayer's role of the Social-Democratic Party. One cannot expect liberals to do this.)

The essential contradiction of their position is this: they are the most loyal devotees of a capitalist system which fosters the Fascist horrors against which they direct their auctorial fire. And here are some of their names: Dorothy Thompson, John Haynes Holmes, Emil Lengyel, Ludwig Lore, Stanley High, Stephen S. Wise, Ludwig Lewisohn, William Green, Bernard S. Deutsch. The figure of the liberals in the armor of Tweedledum and Tweedledee flailing against the iron heel and mailed fist of German Fascism comes easily to mind. But is there a fight going on?

F. D. COSLOB.

### High and Dry

**WEYMOUTH SANDS**, by John Cowper Powys. Simon and Schuster. \$3.00.

A book like *Weymouth Sands* is the despair of reviewers. It is easy enough to tell what Powys has tried to do; it is even simpler to describe the measure of success he

achieves. But the mere listing of plots and counterplots, of main characters and minor characters, of scenes and episodes, would take a week. Statistically speaking, however, there are nineteen main characters, and forty or more minor ones; there are a dozen main plots and as many minor ones; at some time or other the author takes us into every street and alley in Weymouth, the little fishing village and summer resort on the English coast; we visit its rooming houses, its pubs, its Esplanade, its beach, many private homes, including that of its wealthiest citizen and that of its famous actor, and even its madhouse. All of this should indicate that *Weymouth Sands* is an important, interesting, and colorful book, and the reputation of John Cowper Powys should be enough to insure it. But as a matter of sad fact, this novel is probably the dullest that the season has yet produced. Furthermore, it is precisely Mr. Powys' distinctive and well-publicized quality of sensuality that makes it so. The explanation is simple.

In a brief preface, Powys confesses that two of the main characters in the book, Magnus Muir, a tutor in Latin, and Sylvanus Cobbold, an oratorical nature mystic, are drawn from "the nature of the author himself." He might have gone further and made the same statement about most of the other characters. Sylvanus Cobbold is more or less a crazed worshipper of natural things but so are the rest—Zed, Larry, Gipsy May, Jerry Cobbold, Perdita Wane, George Pounce, Benny, and even Adam Skald, whose healthy intention of committing murder is a rock of sanity for the reader, eventually succumbs to the author's mania for working "the magic of human abstraction" on the sky, the air, and the earth. In *Wolf Solent* this habit of endowing every character in the book with the author's own introverted, pantheistic temperament gives it a certain amount of power. Here it merely makes for confusion and boredom. There can hardly be any conflict between characters equally pathological, neurotic, and pantheistic. Their actions are rooted, not in social or individual

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qualities, but merely in the temperament of Powys himself.

Powys' egotistic belief in himself as a superman of sensitivity (wherein he is not alone: witness Henry Williamson's *The Pathway*) gives us, inevitably, a false picture of Weymouth: Adam Skald, the truckman, never seems to worry about jobs; Marret, the Punch and Judy girl, is moved only by her devotion to Sylvanus Cobbold; Jerry never worries about the size of the audience that comes to see him; Magnus Muir spends all his time worrying about Curly; the economic functions of other characters are hardly ever mentioned. They are essentially nothing more than creatures of emotion and illogic, shadowy spirits moving in Powys' unsocial, hyper-sensitive, incredible universe. There is no longer a world of things; matter has become spirit, and spirit signifies Powys. At long intervals, the social-minded critic sees substance: it appears that Adam Skald's wrath at Coppistock, the wealthiest man in town, is the result of the latter's having defrauded his father of a stone quarry. But he relaxes again as he discovers that Skald is angry, not because of a healthy desire for vengeance, but because he feels that Coppistock has violated "the Stone." And is Coppistock's desire for wealth the natural desire of almost anyone under the present system? No, he only wants wealth because he is a miser, pathologically intent on "privacy." But at last, our social-minded critic discovers Powys' one emotion of definite social significance: Magnus Muir, one of Powys' forty incarnations, detests vivisection, "the worst sin of our age!" It is characteristic of Powys' introverted art that this loathing is shared, as a matter of course, by several other characters. Even Dr. Bush, who directs the laboratories where vivisection takes place, reflects, "I wonder if our sentimental devotees comprehend what we real scientists are like. Mad! . . . I am a madman with a vice for which I'd vivisect Jesus Christ." This may indicate that Powys is wise in not dealing with matters of more significance than Wet Sand and Dry Sand, but the critic should hesitate for another chapter before he throws the book out of the window. In this section Sylvanus, after kissing the handle of a garden fork, thinks that the dung heap in which it is imbedded might feel neglected. Thereupon he returns, pulls the fork out, and kisses the prongs.

SAMUEL LEVENSON.

### Penny Dreadful

*WITHOUT ARMOR*, by James Hilton.  
William Morrow and Company. \$2.50.

In the distance, the bulbous towers of the Kremlin. On a hillock jutting up in the foreground, the silhouettes of a man and woman, gazing back. As he raises an arm over his head, the hand suggests a fist. She leans shuddering against him, before they turn away from that land, forever. That is the

jacket cover of *Without Armor!* And there you have the story in all its cheapness, complete. To this author the great events of the civil war days in Russia are of concern only as a device for concocting a lurid background for a fantastic George Barr McCutcheon thriller for the credulous. Is it strange that the publisher appeared somewhat reluctant to send THE NEW MASSES a review copy of this bald farce? NEW MASSES editors and writers happen to know Soviet Russia. Even the publisher must have a sneaking suspicion that Mr. Hilton does not.

If Mr. Hilton has been in Russia since 1917, his book does not show it. Envisage, if you can, in the year of 1934, his childish plot. As hero, an English gallant conjured to a pattern beloved of middle-class romanticists, who does noble unexpected things with disarming detachment—until his "Great Moment" with the White countess. He is "without armor," pure as Galahad: we are asked to believe that Ainsley Jergwin Fothergill (that *would* be his name!) remained a virgin until thirty-seven. By a series of misadventures he arrives in prewar Russia where he learns to speak like a native, with no trace of accent (quite a feat for any Englishman or American, but let that pass). Wandering at midnight along the Neva, he chances upon a member of the British Consulate. In the course of half an hour's conversation, this diplomat offers his new acquaintance a job in the secret service, spying for the British on the Russian revolutionary movement. Our hero accepts. Forfeiting his British citizenship, he is given a forged Russian passport, and warned, if ever caught, that his government will give him neither recognition nor help.

He is caught, and sentenced to Siberia, as a supposed revolutionary. Here the story jumps to the events of 1917, which set him free. Fothergill, whose sympathies until this time have been supposedly with the underdog, lives through rambling chapters of "nightmare" and "senseless fighting." Finally he kills a commissar, steals his papers, and assumes his rôle before the trusting "rabble." The Red soldiers whom he is leading are called "blood-maddened," "blood-hungry," and so on; the Red leaders are pictured as self-centered, corrupt blackguards or fools. This spy-commissar reflects, "all was such confusion, incoherence, chaos—a game played in the dark with fate as blind umpire." This is as near as the author gets to mentioning the issues of the Russian revolution!

The beautiful heroine, a White countess, prisoner of war, is entrusted into Fothergill's hands to be delivered in Moscow. From this point on the book becomes a true penny-dreadful for all its flowery phrases and attempted grand manner. Murders, rapes, suicides are hinted at or actually described on every fifth page. Fothergill attempts escape with the Countess, they are captured, and a Red officer, rather than deliver them to the firing squad, commits suicide! The Countess dies, but Fothergill escapes, to become a rub-

ber king in the colonies and an ardent Catholic in dear old England.

Nothing less than an exacting conscience could have gotten this reviewer through the book. As it was, she forced herself on, page after page. And then went for a shower. Tawdry and obvious as it is, such a book as *Without Armor* cannot be merely shrugged aside. Not today, with war's tomtoms beating and Fascism on the march. The Saturday Review of Literature, joining the Herald Tribune in praising Mr. Hilton, declares that he is "a writer to read now and watch for in the future." To watch out for—yes. With a chalice and swastika, on the wrong side of the barricades.

MYRA PAGE.

### History for the Pious

*WILLIAM THE CONQUEROR*, by Hilaire Belloc. D. Appleton-Century Company, Inc. \$1.50.

Hilaire Belloc keeps his readers constantly on the buy. Only a few months ago it was *Charles I*, \$4. Awhile before that, *Napoleon*, \$4, *Cranmer*, \$5, *Wolsey*, \$5, *Richelieu*, \$5, *James II*, \$4, two volumes of his *History of England*, each \$4—and in between various other books: fiction, poetry, historical essays, etc. Altogether Belloc has written about seventy-five books. His next is already scheduled to appear.

It might be too vulgar an insinuation to ask why Belloc writes so fast. But it is hard to keep from marvelling: *how* does he do it? Especially if one has read the historical books and noted how Belloc has mastered his subject beyond all his predecessors, so much so that he can correct the most authoritative of them on matters of detail.

Belloc's secret is really simple. He writes

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a book the way a proposition in geometry is built up. He starts out with a few axioms and the rest practically follows. Extensive research would be superfluous.

The first axiom, it seems to me, is (in Belloc's own words): "the foundation and career of the Catholic Church is the chief event in the history of mankind". The second: those for the Catholic Church are on the side of all that is best in the world, those against are in league with the forces of evil. The third: those for the church not only do good, but are good. Their motives and acts are honorable and justifiable. Vice versa concerning those against the church.

Belloc's new book, *William the Conqueror*, like most of his historical work, is an application of these axioms.

When Edward, King of England, was dying there were two main rivals for his place. One of them, William of Normandy, was an ally of the pope. Hence he was an admirable man, even—and our author knows all about it—"in the strength of his youth, chaste." Not only William himself, but his family and associates also were fine people. His grandfather was "called Richard the Good for his piety (for all that house had become devoted to the church)." His father was called "Robert the Devil," but Belloc dismisses that with an easy, vague gesture: mere "violence of reputation had got him that nickname of 'the Devil'." He was really a good man for he "went as a pilgrim to the Holy Land and to the Sepulchre of the Lord." William's chief ecclesiastical associate, also in league with the papacy, was Lanfranc, a "great Italian," "of important birth," "well trained and learned," "a sort of pillar."

William's rival for the English throne, Harold, was at odds with the papacy. Hence he was a most wicked man, "steeped in English blood from his massacre . . . and his ravaging." Harold's family and associates were as bad as William's were good. His father, Godwin, is hardly mentioned but to be slurred. Acts of cruelty, treachery, greed, and cowardice are ascribed to him. Harold's brothers, along with himself, are accused of "piracy and rapine." His chief ecclesiastical associate, on bad terms with the pope, was "the unlearned, the unpopular, the base Stigand."

Needless to say, if one picks up an ordinary history he will not find Belloc's characters. For they are in most cases Belloc's creations, puppets derived from his axioms. Upon the death of Edward (who recommended Harold as his successor) Harold was chosen king by the Witan, political council of England. But Belloc pictures Harold as an outrageous usurper: he "had no right whatever." In picking up an ordinary history (E. A. Freeman's *William the Conqueror*), we read that "the accession of Harold was perfectly regular according to English law." William, both of whose parents were French, and who hardly set foot in England, is made to represent the true Eng-

lish line of kings; whereas Harold, whose father was English, who spent all his life in England, is made to appear a foreign usurper of the English throne.

With such arguments Belloc tries to more than justify William's conquest of England, his seizing the throne from Harold. In fact, to justify William's conquest is the central purpose of the book around which most of the facts are twisted. William himself, Belloc says, felt that his conquest was righteous. His object in invading England was not to win land, but "to enter peacefully upon the power which was rightly his—as he so sincerely thought; and which the judgment of God himself—as he also firmly believed—had given him."

But according to the evidence of the records he felt precisely the opposite. On his deathbed he disposed of Normandy to a successor, but he would not dispose of England. "To England," he felt (and records of his dying thoughts have come down to us), "he had no better right than what he derived from the sword; the succession therefor to that kingdom he would leave to the decision of God!"

This last confession of William's, quoted from Linguard's *History of England*, is never mentioned by Belloc.

DONALD MORROW.

### Notes on Pamphlets

#### LENIN ON THE JEWISH QUESTION.

*International Publishers.* 5c.

These brief extracts from Lenin's speeches and writings discuss the class basis of racial discrimination and persecution, the dangers of separatism on racial lines within the working-class movement, and the program of the Soviet Union for protecting racial minorities and stamping out pogroms. It is, of course, an indispensable document.

#### IN A RING OF FIRE, by Ivan Ovcharenko. *International Publishers.* 15c.

This exciting account of the struggles of the Red Partisans in Crimea in 1918 and 1919 reveals a side of the Russian revolution that is seldom touched upon. Ovcharenko's simple, direct story of unsurpassed heroism in the face of almost incredible cruelty is an epic of the revolution. The pamphlet contains 135 pages of vigorous and thrilling narrative.

### Brief Review

#### TWICE SEVEN, by H. C. Bainbridge. *E. P. Dutton & Co.* \$3.50.

We could forgive Mr. Bainbridge his eccentricities, his lack of order, his pompous manner, and his egotism, if he made us see clearly the three notable men with whom he came in contact during a rather eventful lifetime: Baron Corvo, the author of *Hadrian VII*; Ludwig Mont, chemist and industrial-

ist; and Carl Faberge, Court Jeweler of Russia. These men, however, with the possible exception of Faberge, remain obscured by the prancing idiosyncracies of Mr. Bainbridge. He does give us a few significant glimpses of the royal family of England and the mobility of pre-revolutionary Russia, but for the most part the book merely makes us regret that such unusual opportunities for observation should have been wasted.

### IN A MOVIE

Little boys, what do you do?

In the halfdusk of the movie

I hear you stamp your feet

Your little hands go pitterpatter one against the other

Little kitten-soft hands,

What do you do, little boys?

The shadows come and go on the screen

The awful bulk of battleships, guns  
bristling

Dreadful drone of fighting planes,

Silent sinister streak of torpedoes through  
water,

Why do you shout, little boys

Don't you see that these are death

That these kill—

They will kill you, little boys?

And this thin-lipped gentleman

Who talks about our navy

(Behind him waves THE FLAG in an  
artificial breeze)

He is glad that you applaud

That you like his ships

And his planes

And his torpedoes

When you are older you may ride in them

"Wouldn't you like to play with all these  
nice toys?" smiles the thin-lipped gentleman

But they kill

They will kill you—

What do you do

Little boys

What do you do?

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# The Stage No 'Critic' Knows

MICHAEL GOLD

ONCE in this country the workers' theatre was a curious hybrid of which traces may still be found in museums like the Rand School. Its history was usually this: a Shakespearian ham, temporarily or perhaps permanently unemployed, discovered Socialism and what he believed to be a meal ticket. Using his thespianism to good purpose, he always was able to impress leading "comrades" with the fact that he was a profound artist weary of commercialism and determined to give the cause of "the people" his all: his burning temperament, his correct elocution, his scientific mastery of the entrance and exit, and his collection of wigs. The "people" must be uplifted. All that he asked for himself was the immortality of the pioneer and a modest weekly wage.

Again and again, one found such persons at the helm of a workers' theatre; presented with a free locale, a group of idealistic young untrained actors, and a potential audience. What invariably resulted was a wretched amateur performance of Ibsen's *Enemy of the People*, or Galsworthy's *Justice*, the condescending ham strutting and ranting his way through the leading role. And the weary flock went unfed, and stopped buying tickets, and every one of these "workers' theatres" was a dreary flop, and the thespian returned to haunt the vaudeville booking offices. All of which proves you can't fool the workers all of the time.

The workers' theatre which has sprung up under the aegis of Communism in America is made of sterner, fresher and more vital stuff. It has quickly learned the elementary lesson that Ibsen and Galsworthy were sick-hearted bourgeois reformers, with almost nothing to say to the working class. Also it has learned that Broadway acting, all except the occasional accident, is a stale, soulless and boring technique of which artists in the bourgeois theatre despair.

The workers' theatre, starting from scratch, as pioneers must and should, is building its own technique, its own actors, directors, musicians, playwrights, audiences and historic mission. Three years ago there weren't more than a dozen such groups in America. Today there are over three hundred. They perform nightly under conditions that would crack the morale of a Broadway veteran; at strike meetings, in smoky dance halls, at picnics, in the streets. It is a hard school; but they learn something new and powerful in it. This theatre is on its way to something. It will not be so long before even the bourgeois critics may begin to understand that a new theatre art has grown up under their dull noses, and without benefit of their skeptical advice (fortunately).

This is not the place for a discussion of the workers' theatre; the intense self-criticism by

which it grows may be studied monthly in the pages of that splendid magazine, *New Theatre*. I want merely to submit a few impressions of a recent evening I enjoyed with the workers' theatre.

In mid-April there will be held in Chicago the second national theatre festival of the League of Workers' Theatres. Different sections of the country are now holding their regional competitions, to decide which groups will represent them at this national olympiad. Last week, in the Fifth Avenue Theatre, I attended the New York finals, in which eight groups competed.

The Ukrainian Workers' Drama Circle won the honors in the foreign-language contest; and the Workers' Laboratory Theatre in the English-speaking group; a popular and just award.

What was clear in the performance of both groups was that subtle realism and psychology have little place in the workers' theatre. Subtlety and psychology are the fruits of leisure; but the workers' theatre is on a perpetual barricade, and its art and its audience are formed by struggle: it must build with satire and heroism.

The Ukrainian group showed that they had grasped this aesthetic necessity. Their play was done in a broad poster style. The tempo was not as rapid as the new art demands, but sufficiently interesting to hold even a foreign audience. They pictured in broad outlines the exploitation of the Ukrainian worker in this country by all the debased nationalist elements: the priest, the journalist, the businessman and his wife, the double-crossing politician who sells the immigrant vote to both the old parties.

This theme is crude propaganda, I can hear Mr. Krutch, that voluble propagandist of flabby liberalism, declare. But the audience roared with laughter as the mean, comic exploiters whirled through their affected poses, danced, orated, hailed their ally Hitler, quarrelled with each other over the loot. The audience had a good time. And the audience felt deeply the wrongs of the gray, grim worker in the khaki shirt, bewildered by all these plausible lice, but crushing them heroically at last. Whatever Mr. Krutch or Mr. Gabriel may assure each other, thousands of people certainly as sensitive as the average garment buyer or Broadway racketeer enjoy such a play, and loathe the kind of thing Mr. Krutch and the garment buyers approve. For the time being, let this fact be enough.

*Newsboy*, the prize-winning sketch in the English-speaking group, is a dramatized poem, done swiftly, sharply, and effectively. The director has used some of the futurist technique, with added elements that belong in the workers' theatre. The newsboy yells of tabloid murders and divorces, but all around him the great social crimes go on, which his

bosses will not print. The irony of this is driven home in a series of powerful theatrical devices. What is lacking is some humor. The Jewish group had a great deal of that in their knockabout sketch showing a busy day in the Forward office, with Abe Cahan howling at his venal poets and editors, "Write, damn you, write!"

The New Experimental Theatre trotted out a Groucho Marx and his Brain Trust, who solve the country's problems by burning up all the wheat, steel, clothing and houses, then finally suggest that an American military man be sent to rape Queen Marie, thus bringing on a war, etc. Crude, but a good burlesque, and more to the point than the works of Mr. Seldes' Minsky.

And the Pioneers. About a hundred of these healthy kids went through several scenes of the operetta, *Strike Me Red*. The music was fresh and charming, and the kids acted and sang with wonderful gusto. They carried the house by storm, and the audience yelled, "More, more, more!" Do people do that at the Ziegfeld Follies? Or do they leave a play by Eugene O'Neill with courage in their hearts, and a feeling that the world can be taken away from the pimps, racketeers and war-makers of capitalism, and fashioned into something good? I doubt it; but the Workers' Theatre does these things: it heals; inspires; vivifies; it leads to the future; it believes in something, and teaches others to believe.

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# Class Conscious Hollywood

EDOUARD DE COURVA

HOLLYWOOD.

**E**ARLY last Spring the studios banded together and demanded that all employees take a fifty percent cut in salary which was supposed to enable studios to carry on production during the period of great financial drought. The claim was that they had no money to operate with and whatever could be saved by the cut could be used advantageously. Of course there was a great holler from all sides particularly from the actors who of course would be asked to give up most under such an arrangement. When things quieted down it was found that the actors for the most part had submitted to the cut but were taking steps to see that it should not happen again.

The first thing they did was to build up the Actors' Branch of the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences. All looked well for a time, and then came the problem of the Motion Picture Industry Code. The Academy sent members to Washington and held meetings and more meetings on the West Coast to determine just what the employee groups would accept as fair practice.

That is when the Academy blew up. The employees found producer pressure being brought into play everywhere to put the code into effect exactly as it was drawn up in Washington and everyone knew that it had been drawn up by producers. The producers were getting government sanction for all the nefarious practices that have dominated producer-employee relations, such as the black list, the anti-raiding clauses which prevented any producer from doing business with an employee until six months had elapsed after termination of contract, twelve hour rest periods between calls and other more technical points that violated the rights of employees.

While the Academy was seeking to retain its strength by publishing bulletin after bulletin listing its accomplishments there were outside the Academy ranks several intelligent high-minded men who had an idea that one day in the not so distant future the actors in the Academy would find out exactly where they stood and bolt the Academy.

They were right. That is exactly what happened. These men formed the nucleus of what is now the Screen Actors' Guild, with a membership of 2,000. The majority of the

so-called important and high-salaried actors quit the Academy in a body and joined up one memorable Sunday evening in the palatial home of one of the stars. That evening Eddie Cantor was elected President. He accepted office on one condition: that the purpose of the organization be the improvement of the lot of the little fellow, the man who can't fight his own battles because of economic pressure against him. The original intention of a few had been an organization of high-salaried players only, but it was decided to include everybody from extra at \$3 a day to star at \$30,000 a week.

The officers now are Eddie Cantor, president, Kenneth Thompson, executive secretary, Groucho Marx, treasurer, Frederic March, Ann Harding, Adolphe Menjou, vice-presidents. Board: Mary Astor, Robert Montgomery, Chester Morris, Ralph Morgan, Frank Morgan, Ivan Simpson, Claude King, Lucille Gleason, Thelma Todd, Ralph Bellamy, Morgan Wallace, James Cagney and several alternate members.

The present aims are minimum salary for extras as well as maximum hours, better working conditions such as limitation of a day's work to one set and no breaking up of the day's work to spread it out at the convenience of the casting offices. But players will benefit by the minimum wage arrangements; they will not be forced to bargain with casting directors and to accept whatever is offered. At the present writing Mr. Sol. H. Rosenblatt, Code Administrator, has just arrived in Hollywood. Nobody knows as yet whether the present code will be accepted as it stands or not. One guess is as good as another.

## BETWEEN OURSELVES

**C**OMMENT on the articles we have published by Rebecca Pitts (Something to Believe in) and Kenneth Burke (My Approach to Communism) has been copious, particularly in regard to Miss Pitts' contribution. A question is raised by some correspondents as to whether THE NEW MASSES intends to conduct a forum. Not at all; but the approach to Communism can be written about in many ways, by people of various class origins, and we believe these points of view can be discussed to some advantage.

An aside in passing to some contributors who may be impatient to learn of the disposition of their material: THE NEW MASSES is receiving now approximately ten times as many MSS. a day as it did last fall. We're a little snowed under, in fact; but spade work is in progress.

Illusions about the N.R.A.'s real role in relation to labor can hardly survive, we believe, a careful reading of Maurice Sugar's article in this issue. Mr. Sugar, who has represented labor organizations for many years, has been behind the scenes since the National Labor Board started functioning, and certainly is as well informed on this field as any man in the country.

H. E. BRIGGS has written extensively on veterans' activities, particularly those of the Workmen's Ex-Servicemen's League, in the Daily Worker and other publications.

NORBERT GUTERMAN, one of the editors of *Avant Poste*, is the translator of John Dos Passos' *42nd Parallel* into French.

EDOUARD DE COURVA is a screen star (under another name) of a magnitude that would surprise you.

S. D. MIRSKY contributes an important essay on Joyce and Irish Literature to next week's 48-page issue, which contains an extended literary supplement. Phil Bard has made a series of illustrations for the text of Samuel Ornitz's play, *In New Kentucky*, the first half of which we will present next week. Granville Hicks begins his series on *Revolution and the Novel*, and Joshua Kunitz surveys important recent developments in Soviet literature.

We expect, by the way, with the additional distribution arranged for in connection with next week's issue, to be within actual touching distance of our immediate objective, 20,000 paid circulation and a balanced budget.

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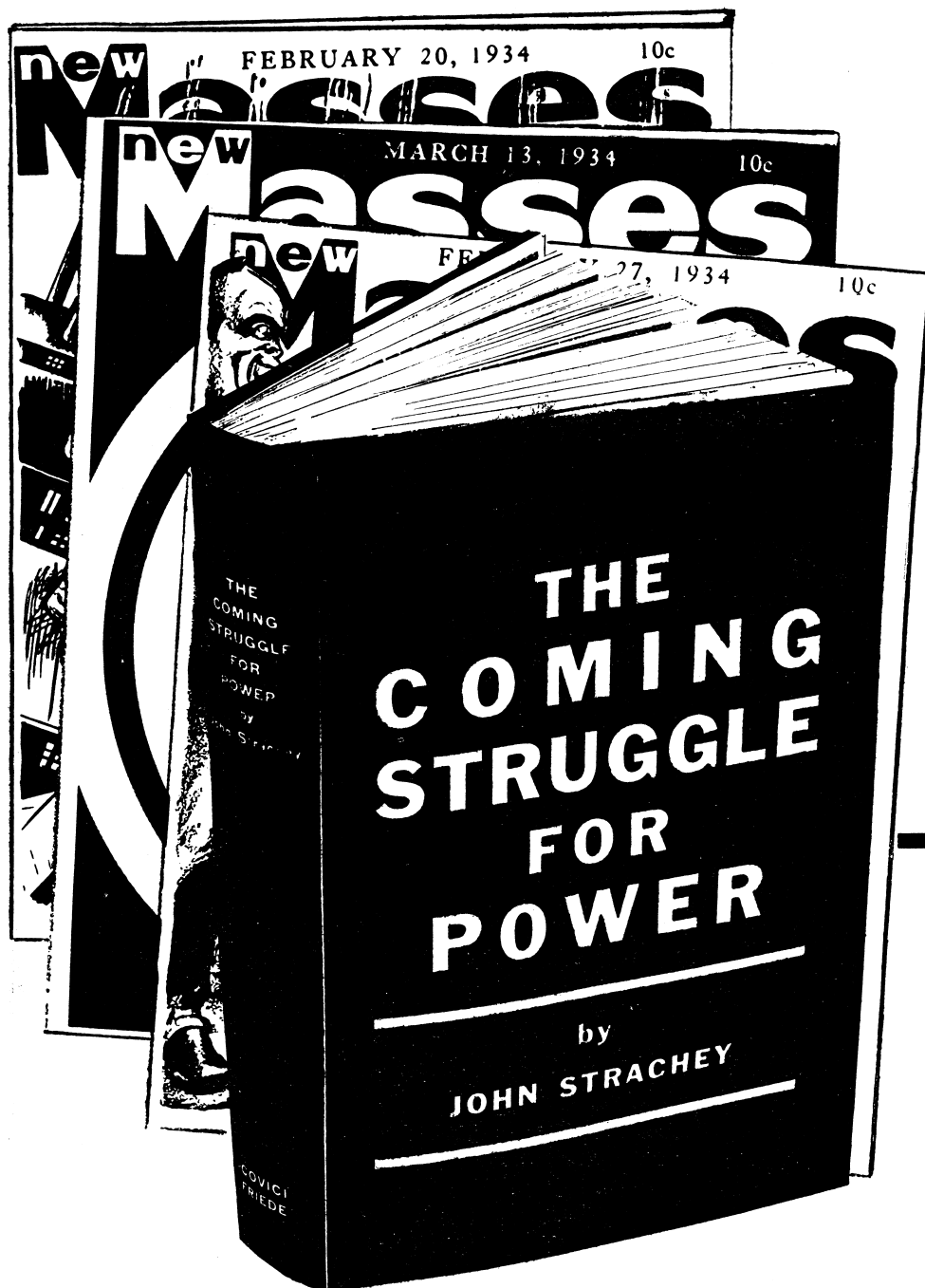
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