Shall Britain Remain Hitler's Broker? — JOHN STRACHEY

MARCH 31, 1936 15c

new Masses

Pittsburgh's Flood: No Act of God

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McSwain, Hearst Disciple — *An Editorial*

In this Issue: Rockwell Kent, Robert Forsythe, Nathan Asch

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new Masses

MARCH 31, 1936

Minnesota Speaks

THE country will watch with considerable interest the state Farmer-Labor Party convention which will meet in Minneapolis March 27. Everywhere sentiment for a nationwide Farmer-Labor Party is crystallizing. Everywhere men and women in factories, farms, offices and schools, progressive-minded people organized in trade unions, farm groups and professional organizations are waiting for some authoritative body to issue the call for a nationwide Farmer-Labor Party.

Will the delegates who meet this Friday in Minneapolis seize the great opportunity which confronts them? Some hopeful indication that they may do so came last week from Senator Elmer Benson, Farmer-Laborite of Minnesota. Broadcasting over the Columbia network, he referred to various movements now in progress toward a national third party and added:

> The Farmer-Labor Party awaits only the opportunity to sow that ground with the seeds of a true democracy. . . . The Farmer-Labor movement offers to you a path of action and a program.

This sounds very much as if the Farmer-Labor Party of Minnesota is ready to take the initiative in the formation of a nationwide party. Senator Benson addressed himself to the people of America, to those who "sit by your firesides on the farm," to the "toilers in shop and factory and mill and mine, or that large army of unemployed and relief workers," to "the white-collar man and woman." He may rest assured that if the Minneapolis convention will give the signal, millions will respond to the call for a nationwide Farmer-Labor Party for 1936.

Italy's Road to War

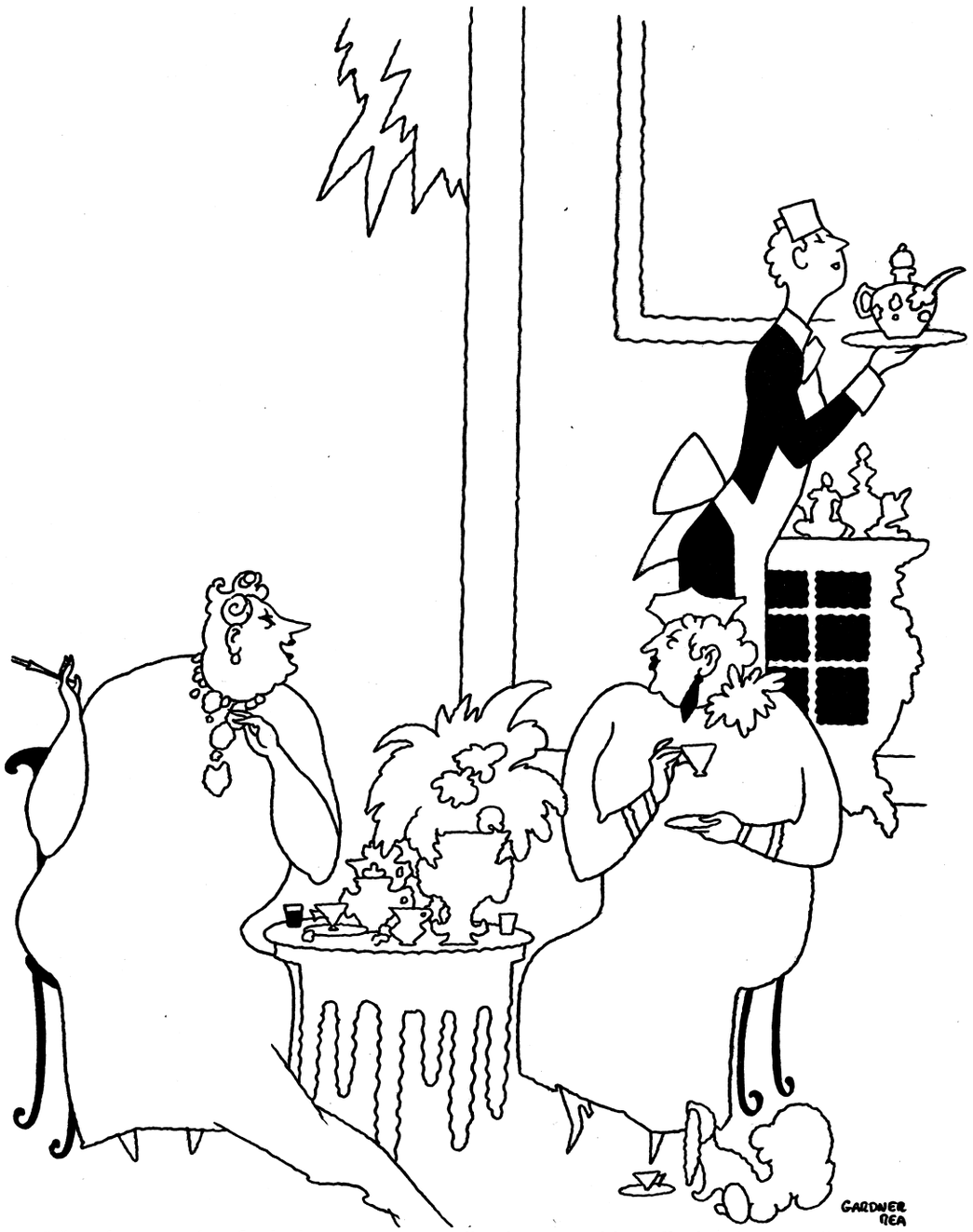
MUSSOLINI has inaugurated another "revolution." He has suppressed the chamber of deputies, thereby killing the last pretense of popular representation, and replaced it with the Fascist Assembly of Corporations. He has nationalized key industries essential for war, without abolishing private profit or the capitalist base of Italian economy. And he has initiated a regime of "higher social justice" which strengthens still further labor's obligation to "collaborate" with capital.

These changes solidify the "corporate state," capitalism's last violent method of retaining its dominant position. The term "nationalization" is in this connection highly misleading. It has nothing to do with a socialist economy. The banks, lands, industries and transportation continue to be in the hands of private capital. Government control, as in the case of American railway and shipping during the war, involves no more than efficient military organization. As long as basic private ownership and profit remains, capitalism remains.

The real purpose of the new measures has been revealed by Il Duce himself when he said:

> This plan (the plan of Italian economy) is dominated by one premise—the inevitability of the nation's being called on to face another war. . . .

As in Germany, so in Italy the role of fascism is to establish the "higher social justice" whereby capital can more ruthlessly exploit labor, and to prepare and launch aggressive wars.



"How fortunate that flood always seems to strike the poor. After all, they have so little to lose."

S. S. California

A RECENT radio March of Time "enacted" a long-distance telephone conversation between Secretary of Labor Perkins in Washington and the strike leaders of the S. S. California in San Pedro. The impression was

conveyed that the strikers made the phone call on their own initiative, that they crawled and begged before the Secretary of Labor. In this particular fable, the March of Time was supported by the entire reactionary press.

Last week THE NEW MASSES interviewed Joe Curran, strike leader of the California's crew, after the ship had docked in New York. Joe Curran said:

> The March of Time had it all bawled up. I didn't call Madame Perkins. I've never pleaded or begged in my life. It's not for nothing that I've been going to sea for the past fifteen years. It was Madame Perkins who asked Mr. Fitzgerald of the Department of Labor to call us to the phone. Our strike committee was taken to Long Beach, eight miles from the ship. Madame Perkins was on the phone in a chandler's shop. She said she wanted to talk to me. I took the receiver.
>
> "I know about you," Madame Perkins said. "I know your record. You're a man of intelligence. You ought to be able to keep order. I want you to take the ship back to New York. This is a personal request."
>
> "What about these mutiny charges?" I said. "Do you guarantee us that there will be no discrimination and no logging?"
>
> "I give you my personal guarantee and that of my Department," Madame Perkins said, "that if you bring the ship back to New York we will use all the resources of the Department to see to it that you get a square deal. We will see to it that you and representatives of your crew are on the negotiations committee. There will be no discrimination."

It was on the basis of Miss Perkins' guarantee that the crew took the S. S. California back to New York, where *sixty-four men were immediately logged and many of them blacklisted.*

The crew of the California, which now symbolizes for the whole country the fundamental right of the workers to strike, have been joined in their walkout by sailors of the American Trader, the S. S. Capello, the Manhattan, the American Legion and other ships.

The strikers are demanding a twenty-percent wage increase; an eight-hour day for the steward's department; 75 cents an hour for overtime; and shipping through union halls.

Cable from France

WITH the dissolution of the Chamber of Deputies and Senate, the election campaign is in full swing. The fascists and reactionaries leave no stone unturned to escape defeat at the polls which is staring them in the face. Their great hope up to last week was that the complicated foreign situation would confuse the voters by diverting their attention from national to international issues. They stopped at nothing, not even treason. Not only did the French pro-Hitler press raise a smoke screen which tended to mislead the London negotiators concerning French public opinion, but numerous fascists actually crossed the Channel or wrote letters "interpreting" the situation for British Members of Parliament.

One member of the House of Commons showed Foreign Minister Flandin a letter from Count Nadillac, deputy and cousin of de la Rocque, the leader of the fascist clique, which said, "Above all, hold firm. The best service you can render us is the outright rejection of the terms to Germany advocated by France."

The fascist maneuver having failed and the accord of the Locarno powers having temporarily calmed the air, the French Nationalists resumed their tactic of sowing dissension in the ranks of the Left. Suddenly, a story appeared throughout the Nationalist press which claimed that the Socialists threatened to bolt from the People's Front unless Radical Socialist candidates agreed beforehand to support the program of the People's Front. Both Daladier and Cachin immediately scotched this yarn. Moreover, to give the lie to the enemy and to keep the masses solid in their fight against the fascists and warmongers, the national committee of the People's Front declared:

> Determined to defend peace and certain of expressing the opinion of the majority of French people which it represents, the National Committee of the People's Front reasserts the solidarity of the French people with the German people whom it does not confuse with their oppressors. It reaffirms the principle that fascism is a constant menace of war and that the French fascists, seeking the destruction of democratic liberties, gave Hitler powerful support in the preparation for his recent treaty violation. Hence the National Committee proclaims that renewed struggle against fascism is inseparable from the struggle against war.

Hearst's Radio Battle

STILL smarting over the Earl Browder broadcast on the Columbia Broadcasting System, William Randolph Hearst last week opened war on Columbia and incidentally upon the National Broadcasting Company. He removed all of his New York radio editors from their jobs; he killed all radio news and skeletonized radio schedules, with the stations buried at the bottom and WINS, his own independent New York station, featured at the top. Hearst's sudden move has stunned officials of the two major networks. It has even stunned executives of Hearst's own chain. They profess not to know what it is all about.

There will be further development on April 1, when newspaper publishers meet with radio officials to negotiate the renewal of the Press-Radio Bureau agreement. Back of the Hearst move lurks the long-standing war between the press and radio over broadcasting news. This is one of the bitterest industrial wars in America today. It started when radio began to cut into newspaper advertising. Before that, newspapers had greeted the infant industry paternally and had listened with tolerant amusement when broadcasters lifted a few choice items from the late editions of the newspapers. But when newspaper advertising began to go to radio, the tolerant amusement disappeared. A virtual dictatorship was declared by newspapers over news. The Columbia Broadcasting System answered the challenge by organizing its own crack news-gathering service and since then Hearst hasn't liked Columbia even though the C.B.S. rebellion was shortlived.

One thing is certain: Hearst is adding one more powerful instrument to his arsenal for fascist propaganda.

Why the Nightsticks?

WHY does Victor F. Ridder, New York's reactionary W.P.A. administrator, want twenty-five nightsticks "with rawhide thongs"? Several times he has made threats against W.P.A. employes who stood up for their rights. Those threats conveyed the distinct impression that Mr. Ridder was not averse to using violence to enforce his fascist policies. That impression is now confirmed by a copy of a document which THE NEW MASSES obtained.

That document, addressed to the Regional Procurement Officer of the W.P.A. is Requisition No. 4049. It is dated March 20, comes "from Victor F. Ridder," is signed by the "issuing officer" John A. Murray and is approved by Percy Williams. The requisition asks, in part, for the ***immediate*** delivery of twenty-five "Night Sticks,

New York Police Regulation—twenty-two inches long; dark oak stain; with rawhide thongs." The request ends with the words *Emergency-Rush.*

What's the emergency, Mr. Ridder? What's the rush? Do you think you can beat the W.P.A. workers into submission?

Future Veterans?

WITH lightning rapidity, a newly organized movement with curiously confused cross-currents, is sweeping through the major American colleges, enlisting thousands of students. Princeton students seem to have formed it. It is an organization called the Veterans of Future Wars, whose demand is payment by the government of $1,000 now as bonus to those likely to be called to fight in the next war. The stated reason for the demand is that too many of the "Veterans of Future Wars will be deprived of any possible bonus later through being killed." Girls at Vassar formed the "Gold Star Mothers of the Veterans of Future Wars" asking to be sent immediately to France "to view the future graves of their future sons" who will be killed in the next war.

Though the organization was said at first to be sponsored by the American Veterans Association, a reactionary anti-bonus organization, which hoped to ridicule the bonus movement, in numerous colleges it has enlisted in support of the forthcoming April 22 students' peace strike and for active support of anti-war measures. However, "patriotic" groups are seeking to influence the movement to support preparedness and future wars; in some chapters, the Hitlerite fascist salute has been adopted.

This movement, which started as a college prank, may not survive the gag stage. On the other hand, sentiment for and against war is today so strong, that the organization may develop into a serious student movement in which tories and progressives will fight for control. It is up to the liberal students to see to it that the movement, if it survives at all, divests itself of its misleading wisecracks and becomes part of the real anti-war movement now growing throughout the country.

Roosevelt "Apologizes"

THERE was a marked note of apology in the relief message which President Roosevelt delivered to Congress on March 18.

President Roosevelt spoke of the unemployed but not to them. His message and its apology were very evidently addressed to those whom he had denounced as "autocrats" and against whom he had thundered in his earlier message, on the State of the Union. He was trying to explain why he cannot talk as they do, even though he is quite willing to "take a walk" in the same direction.

"It will not do to say that these needy unemployed must or should shift for themselves. It will not be good *for any of us* to take that attitude"—an explanation to the Liberty Leaguers. Thereupon, Roosevelt proceeded to show that he is quite willing to *do* the right thing for them, even though he may be compelled to *say* some things that might offend them.

'I am asking only for an appropriation of $1,500,000,000 to the Works Progress Administration. . . . The Federal Government cannot maintain relief for unemployables in any state."

A year ago, Roosevelt asked for and received an appropriation of nearly five billion dollars for relief purposes. Even with this sum the government relief program proved so inadequate that the staid and respectable American Association of Social Workers was forced to announce, after a survey conducted by its seventy-five chapters, that conditions of the unemployed were found to be "pitiful and horrible."

It is not difficult to imagine what will happen now if Roosevelt is permitted to abandon even larger sections of the unemployed to unrelieved starvation, as indicated in his peace offering to the Morgan-du Pont-Hearst League.

The merger of all the unemployed organizations which is scheduled to take place at the convention of the Workers Alliance in Washington on April 7 to 10, and the announcement that this convention will be followed by a national protest march in which at least 5,000 delegates are expected to participate, shows that the unemployed are drawing the necessary conclusions.

Mutual Aid

THE League for Mutual Aid is celebrating this month its sixteenth year of effective work in behalf of radicals and liberals who have needed financial or other help. To mark the anniversary the League is conducting a 30-day drive for an additional $6,000 for its revolving loan fund, and for new members all over the country. As an organization the League has no creed nor dogma. On its executive board radicals and liberals of all shades of opinion work on the principle of granting aid where it is needed.

New Masses

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EDITORS:
JOSEPH FREEMAN, MICHAEL GOLD, RUSSELL T. LIMBACH, BRUCE MINTON, ISIDOR SCHNEIDER
Contributing Editors: GRANVILLE HICKS, JOSHUA KUNITZ, LOREN MILLER
WILLIAM BROWDER, *Business Manager* WILLIAM RANDORF, *Circulation Manager*

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McSwain, Disciple of Hearst

THE news tickers last week sizzled with the warm compliments that passed between William Randolph Hearst and Congressman John J. McSwain. On the floor of the House of Representatives, the white-haired gentleman from South Carolina, chairman of the powerful Military Affairs Committee, said Mr. Hearst was "the most selfish, unscrupulous, arrogant and conscienceless newspaper proprietor that ever soiled the newsracks of America." And on the same day Mr. Hearst, from his stronghold in California, wired James T. Williams, his Washington editorial writer that Mr. McSwain was a "dangerous demagogue" and a "prize prevaricator."

Far be it from us to intervene in such a dispute. There is much to be said on both sides. What concerns us more is something else which Mr. McSwain brought out on the floor of the House. It seems that in the spring of 1934 the chairman of the Military Affairs Committee corresponded with Mr. Hearst about strengthening the Army air corps. To America's No. 1 fascist, the gentleman from South Carolina wrote:

"We have counted on you and Arthur Brisbane as our strongest allies."

The "we" refers to the House Military Affairs Committee. It has been known for a long time that William Randolph Hearst would like to run the United States. The American people will be interested to learn that in some vital respects he is already doing so. They will be interested to learn that in shaping war policies for Big Business, the House Military Affairs Committee crawled on its hands and knees before "the most selfish, unscrupulous, arrogant and conscienceless newspaper proprietor" in the country; and that the chairman of that committee declared himself to be a "disciple" of Hearst and Brisbane.

These revelations came out accidentally in the row over the Black senatorial committee's lobbying investigation. The Senate committee subpoenaed the Western Union to turn over to it a copy of a telegram which Hearst sent on April 5, 1935 to his Washington editorial writer. At this point, believe it or not, Mr. Hearst discovered the Bill of Rights. He still wants to suppress every vestige of liberty which the mass of the American people may retain; but to disclose the secret machinations of the warmongers, profiteers and fascists appears to be a violation of "Jeffersonian" democracy.

Hearst went to court, and the Black senatorial committee hastened to cancel the subpoena. But it sent a copy of the Hearst telegram to Mr. McSwain, who read it on the floor of the House. Mr. Hearst's wire to his Washington hireling reads in part:

> Why not make several editorials calling for impeachment of Mr. McSwain? He is the enemy within the gates of Congress, the nation's citadel. He is a Communist in spirit and a traitor in effect. He would leave United States naked to its foreign and domestic enemies. Please make these editorials for morning papers.

Mr. McSwain read this telegram to the House with great agitation. He recited his patriotic record in the army and in Congress. And now Mr. McSwain complained, Mr. Hearst had told that "little pen pusher, William"

> to turn on the spigit of venom and of spite and of falsehood and of assassination of character, and charged that I was a Communist. (Laughter.) God save the mark! . . . Is not my record plain?

Those citizens of New York who recently heard THE NEW MASSES symposium at which Congressman McSwain, Senator Nye and Joseph Freeman discussed war and peace, will no doubt gladly testify that the gentleman from South Carolina is anything but a Communist. And those familiar with the record of the War Policies Commission know that he is devoted heart and soul to protecting profits in the next war. Indeed, from Hearst's viewpoint, nothing should be more unimpeachable than McSwain's record. Is not the gentleman from South Carolina the leader of the majority of the Military Affairs Committee which favorably reported the Tydings-McCormack Bill, described by Representatives Maverick and Kvale as "a brash piece of Hitleristic fascism"?

What an ingrate this fellow Hearst is! His unjust editorial attacks keep McSwain awake at night. The gentleman from South Carolina often had to go to the "front piazza" and seize the afternoon paper so that it would not reach the eyes of his "wife and daughters." Unable to bear this torment any longer, he telegraphed Hearst on March 5, 1934:

> Committee on Military Affairs unanimous for increase in strength and efficiency of Air Corps of the Army. However, effort for investigation of Army activities not prompted by partisanship, but merely by desire to get value received for money spent for defence purposes. . . . *We have counted on you and Arthur Brisbane as our strongest allies. If you wish I will send you copies of my bills with brief explanation.* RESPECTFULLY ask you to suspend judgment on any representations to the contrary until you get all the facts.

On the following day, March 6, 1934, McSwain sent a letter to the Big Boss of San Simeon pleading again:

> I am sure that when you know the facts you will be convinced that no more loyal friend of the Air Corps is to be found anywhere than I am, though I do admit that I am a disciple often of yourself and of Arthur Brisbane in this respect.

And yet, after all this belly-crawling, all this loathsome servility, all this "respectful" explaining and apologizing, Hearst sent that telegram ordering an editorial attack on Mr. McSwain as a "Communist in spirit and a traitor in effect." Is this justice?

For the past three years Hearst has been conducting a vicious campaign against labor, against civil rights, against everything decent in American life; he has propagated fascism and the murderous spirit of the open-shop vigilantes. And during those three years McSwain was publicly silent. In private he wrote to Hearst "respectfully," as a "disciple." Only now has the chairman of the Military Affairs Committee discovered that Hearst has "befouled and besmirched, at least temporarily, the minds of millions of misguided readers."

When the comic aspects of this bizarre episode have blown away, the essential fact remains: the Democrat McSwain, America's No. 1 fascist and the Roosevelt administration are of one mind about war preparations. When Hearst wires *"also make editorials extolling administration for its preparedness policies, which are its main achievement,"* it is time for the American people to take serious notice.

William Gropper

"AN ACT OF GOD"

William Gropper

"AN ACT OF GOD"

Shall Britain Remain Hitler's Broker?

JOHN STRACHEY

LONDON, March 23.

THE first phase of the international crisis has ended with an agreement between France and Britain, the presentation of their joint terms to Germany coupled with the publication of a scheme for a Franco-British alliance in the event of Germany's refusal. At first sight this agreement between Britain and France seemed not so bad and no doubt it is not so bad as the complete capitulation to Germany for which the British government seemed to be working in the early part of last week.

The more the Franco-British scheme is examined, however, the worse it must appear to every member of the working-class movement and to every friend of peace. In the first place, Britain and France have done nothing to strengthen the League of Nations or the system of collective security. They have taken no steps to assert the authority of the collective system. They do not intend to restrain or to penalize the aggressor. All that has happened is that after a severe internal struggle those sections of the British governing class which fear Germany too much to allow her an entire triumph have made a bold bid to reestablish a military alliance between England and France complete with general staff consultations on the 1904-1914 model. The white paper, in which the proposals were issued, bears in every line the birthmarks of its foreign-office origin. Now the British foreign office is undoubetdly anti-German. It considers that the pre-war British policy of an alliance with France for the sake of ensuring the security of the low countries and other vital British interests in Europe, is still a necessity. But while the foreign office is thus pro-French, it is not pro-League; it appears to be incapable of even grasping the conception of collective security. The foreign office has not moved an inch from pre-war conceptions, hence the present scheme ignores the very existence of the League and hence its extreme danger.

There are two possibilities: Germany may refuse the present scheme outright or may do so after negotiations which break down. This is the less likely hypothesis, so let us dispose of it first. In this case, a complete Franco-British alliance will actually come into effect. This will certainly provide an effective check to Germany in the West—but only in the West it will cut Europe into half and by preserving the peace in one half will actually promote war in the other. It will tend to free Hitler's hands in the East by drawing France westwards. The only safeguards against this tendency will be the Franco-Soviet pact and the French alliance with Czechoslovakia, Poland and the states which stand in the path of German aggression. It will be the ceaseless object of the pro-German section of the British government to win France away from these engagements and from the whole conception of collective security and the indivisibility of peace. In this eventuality everything will depend upon mobilizing the pressure of public opinion against the British government.

But the other and more probable hypothesis is much more dangerous. In all probability Hitler will not refuse the offer outright but will make counter proposals which will amount to taking everything out of the plan to which Germany objects. Then the British government is only too likely to resume its role of Hitler's spokesman. It will go to the French and ask them to whittle down the agreement to suit Hitler. Karl Radek, the famous Soviet journalist, puts it like this: when Germany rejects them, Britain will start holding France back and persuading her it is not worth while to refuse to negotiate for the sake of mere "symbolic gestures." Moreover, the terrible thing is that it is only too likely that the British government, if it once more becomes Hitler's broker, will be supported by the incurable sentimentality of liberal opinion in this country. We shall be told that in fighting for Hitler the British government is only asking the French to be reasonable. It is of first-class importance that every honest man and woman in the labor movement should repudiate any such renewed betrayal of working-class interests, if it occurs, for pressure from the British government upon the French to modify the present agreement still further is certain to amount to the attempt to include Germany in the Franco-British alliance. Needless to say, such an agreement would instantly become an anti-Soviet alliance. It would consummate all of Hitler's plans for freeing his hands in the East.

It is very interesting to observe that not only the Soviet Union—which has no illusions whatever as to whither the British government's policy is tending and answers it by strengthening her defenses still further—but that Poland also has suddenly become alarmed. The official Polish press came out yesterday with strong protests against this line of development. Poland seems to have realized that giving Germany a free hand in the East is not such a good scheme after all. It seems to have suddenly occurred to her that if the German army is headed for the Ukraine it must occupy Poland en route.

Meanwhile what has the International Labor Congress, of all the organizations affiliated to the Second International, which has just met in London, done to redress the balance of this very grave situation? It has passed a resolution. Its resolution condemned Hitler's action in fairly strong words, but in relation to the situation the resolution was tragically weak. It condemned Hitler's aggression but it made no attempt to urge upon the League powers any measures for stopping that aggression and reasserting the authority of the collective system. I am informed that this hopeless weakness was due to the refusal of the British delegation to put teeth into the resolution. All the Continental delegations, with the exception of the Scandinavian, desired that international labor should use its strength to force the governments of the League states to do their duty to the system of collective security; but the British delegation refused just as they also refused the plea of the other delegations for a dreadful reflection that just as the British government is the essential obstacle to the formation of the system of collective security, so the British labor movement is the essential obstacle to the achievement and use of the united power of the European working class. The responsibility of Sir Walter Citrine, Mr. Dalton and other British labor leaders who have decided on this course is heavy indeed.

Hitler, in a speech of yesterday, said: "We shall not capitulate before any resolution." Indeed he will not. Why should he? Resolutions break no bones. The only thing before which Hitler would have had to capitulate is the united action of all the states which are members of the League of Nations. If, immediately after Hitler marched into the Rhineland, these states had acted by withdrawing their ambassadors and by telling Hitler that unless he marched out of the Rhineland they would promptly pass an act of economic nonintercourse with him, then Hitler would have capitulated. As the days and weeks go by and as the chaos of the European situation grows more profound it will become only too apparent that this was what should have been done. Those spokesmen of liberal and labor opinion, who flinched before the necessity of urging this course on their governments, have done a profound disservice to working-class interests and to the cause of peace. Immediately war in Europe is not a probability but another step has been taken along the road to the breakdown of the collective system, toward complete chaos and complete distrust in Europe, toward an end of treaties which are not kept and of pacts which are made to be violated. At the next step or at the one after that along this dark road war will break out. Now more than ever the only force which can pull Europe back from the abyss is the united vigor and clearsightedness of the working class.

Pittsburgh's Flood: No Act of God

BRUCE MINTON

PITTSBURGH.

EACH year at spring the water rises in the Allegheny and Monongahela rivers. Each year the basements in the workers' district on Pittsburgh's Northside fill with water and the living quarters are damp and disease menaces the people. Flood is an annual affair: the average is more than one a year.

Three weeks ago the ice began to break in the rivers, moving swiftly downstream. It looked very much as though there'd be a flood, worse than usual, as destructive as the catastrophe of 1907 when the water rose to over 38 feet. But the ice went through without mishap and everyone said that the danger had passed. Then came a heavy thaw and rain. The saturated ground in the watersheds could not absorb the water. It poured off the ground as it would off glass.

On Tuesday evening, March 17, at six o'clock no one in Pittsburgh thought of flood. Two hours later the rivers were swollen. Warnings came over the radio. By Wednesday morning people feared the flood would approach the 1907 disaster in proportions. By noon it had passed the former high mark. The waters rose to 46 feet, inundating the "Golden Triangle," the city's business district bounded by the two rivers where they join to form the Ohio. In the working-class district the water filled the first floor and seeped into the second.

Untold damage. Untold suffering. Fifty-six dead. Thirty-five hundred injured. Twelve thousand families homeless. An Act of God.

But the extent of the flood could have been prevented. The high mark need have been no greater than 35 feet—11 feet lower than the waters actually reached. The difference would have saved property and lives. The misery would not have been comparable to the present terrific blow to health and safety. An eleven-foot rise would not cripple electrical power, communication and water supply. Eleven feet is the difference between relatively small damage by flood and holocaust.

The Act of God was No Act of God. It was caused by men, by a small group of men. There was profit for this small group in blocking flood control. They had the influence to halt adequate prevention. A few men could make more from destruction totaling over $250,000,000, than they stood to make if flood control became a reality. For twenty-four years this small group vetoed flood control.

They lost property in the present disaster. But the loss was far smaller than the loss they figured they would sustain if the rivers had been dammed, if reservoirs had been built. The present flood must be considered as "overhead."

A small group of men vetoed flood control. It is as if they sanctioned the death list, the starvation, the misery, the danger of epidemic, the property loss, the complete pauperization of 12,000 families.

THE water did not rush in. It rose steadily, in the end at the rate of a foot each hour. It caught even the big corporations completely off guard. The stock of the H. J. Heinz Company was ruined; the General Foods Corporation lost all supplies stored in warehouses. The department stores were swamped, losing most of the goods in basements and on the first floor. Hotel guests were trapped in their rooms in the "Golden Triangle," the center of the business district. Workers were marooned in their two-storey brick shacks over on the Northside. Hundreds of refrigerator cars stood in the railroad yards and the water covered them completely.

And in the last three feet of rise the flood reached the power stations. The dynamos stopped. No electric light or telephone, no power with which to pump drinking water into the city. Gasoline supplies ran low when the electric pumps could no longer tap the storage tanks. Fires broke out; the water supply was inadequate to fight them. Streetcars stalled. Communication between sections of the city with the streets under water was next to impossible. The railroad tracks were flooded; trains could not come through to Pittsburgh with help or supplies. Sewers backed up, endangering what little pure water remained. The Red Cross ordered all water and milk boiled for twenty minutes.

When I arrived by plane in Pittsburgh on Friday morning the water had subsided. Only then could the real extent of the damage be realized. The water poured off, the soft, brown river ooze remained, clinging in a thick paste to everything the water had touched. The National Guard blocked off the Triangle. The crowds that viewed the destruction had a strange elation, an elation that came with the excitement, with the holiday for the thousands of clerks and stenographers who could not get to their places of work. Only the executives rushed around in the restricted area, harassed by the loss of property.

And then the small merchants, the petty tradesmen returned to their stores. Their stock lay in ruins. They poked about the dark stores, trying with candles and lanterns and flashlights to estimate the destruction. Wherever the water had been, goods were worthless. And the little owners began to work with feverish excitement to clean out the mud, throwing shirts and hats and musical instruments and food and books and all their ruined merchandise into the mud-covered streets. Their activity seemed to allay the gnawing worry that perhaps this was the end for them, perhaps the economic ruin which had been haunting them had been accelerated by the flood and now they were once and for all bankrupt. They had no savings. They had no capital to buy new stock with which to make a fresh start. The big fellows along the block could weather this catastrophe. The countless little merchants were done for. Each one I spoke to would stop his meaningless activity and look at me blankly when I asked, "What now? Can you go on?" They would stand there with a bewildered frown and finally shrug, "I don't know. I don't know," they said. "I just don't know what will happen now."

I visited the working-class district. I walked through the streets filled with chocolate-colored mud, the streets wet with dripping water from the sides of the houses, steps slimy with river ooze and the floors of the houses thick with the sticky filth. This property is owned by H. J. Heinz Company, 57 Varieties, but there is no variety to the houses—they are all the same, two storeys, brick, sodden. The dank, heavy smell of the river clung to them. The gray-faced workers, weary with despair and helplessness, made futile attempts to clean floors, to salvage whatever remained. Or they stood in little groups—stolid, uncomplaining, accepting this new misfortune as they had accepted misfortune all their lives. It was nothing new, nothing remarkable.

They had clung to their houses, watching the water rise in the basements until it spilled into the first floor. They had piled their furniture in the second floor, hoping the water would stop, watching it fill the room below them. Finally they had been marooned in the houses that threatened to collapse. The police and Red Cross and city rescue squads did not come to their aid. These agencies were busy in the "Golden Triangle" trying to save the few in hotels, trying to move property out of danger for the big owners. The workers were lucky to get out alive. They organized themselves, built rafts and managed to find a boat or two. The herculean efforts of evacuating the area cost lives. There was no chance to take property, even blankets or clothes.

The slimy streets were filled with belongings that these workers bought over long years by skimping and saving. A piano lay

before the steps of a house: a man stared at it. "That's a piano," he said as I passed, pointing to the battered wood and the wire that wound about it. "I used to play it." Radios looked like cardboard boxes that had been soaked for days in water. Carpets were matted rags.

I found that even before the flood most of the workers in this area had been on relief. In Pittsburgh the relief authorities subsidize private industry. Men work two or three days a week for a pittance in the Heinz factory or sometimes in the steel mills; relief supplements what they earn—so that in the end they can be more or less sure of seven or eight dollars a week for them and their families.

They have lost everything. When can they replace their furniture, their clothes, their pictures and radios? Not in their lifetimes, not while they are on relief at seven dollars a week. Their future? What worker can look into the future today?

I suppose intelligent people don't live in the lowlands by the river. The workers are not so smart—perhaps because rents go up proportionately with the height of the land, perhaps because Pittsburgh slums are overcrowded and there remains no other place to live except in the danger area down by the river. The workers in this disaster, as in every other disaster, bear the brunt of hardship and suffering. They must live where they can obtain dwellings for the lowest rent—not where they want to live. They have no means of escaping from danger areas. What is true of Pittsburgh is just as true of Johnstown and Hartford and Wheeling and the countless other places where the misery is as great as that which I saw in Pittsburgh. Countless men and women in every stricken area are now truly "destitute"—satisfactory cases even in the eyes of the most conscientious relief investigator.

THIS misery did not have to occur. The responsibility for the flood can be placed on a small group of men. The flood was no surprise; everyone knew that some spring Pittsburgh would again experience a disaster similar to that of 1907. That was why, way back in 1908, the Pittsburgh Flood Commission was appointed. This commission perfected plans that could have eliminated the present catastrophe. From an engineering standpoint, the plans had merit and practicability. Experts declared that the plans would eliminate almost completely the annual floods that fill the basements in the workers' quarter, and in abnormal years such as the present, the project would reduce the loss of property and life. Actually, flood control could have eliminated 11 feet of water—the high point would have been 35 feet in Pittsburgh, 3 feet less than the 1907 mark instead of 8 feet above. The plans have been ready for execution since 1912. The newspapers mentioned them, but that was all. Nothing was done to make flood control a reality either in the state legislature or in Congress.

The commission advocated a series of dams and reservoirs, thirteen in all, later supplemented by a dam now under construction as a P.W.A. project in West Virginia. The project would control the headwaters of the Allegheny, the Monongahela and the Ohio rivers by regulating the flow of water into them and holding back over-supplies of water when these occurred. Such control would not only provide greater safety to Pittsburgh and to all other cities and towns along the banks (incidentally helping to control the flow of water into the lower Mississippi and so lessening the flood danger there) but would also provide irrigation facilities, storage of water, sewage dilution and prove a benefit to navigation. The project is no secret; in fact, the Tri-State Authority (Ohio, West Virginia, Pensylvania) has published a pamphlet entitled "Let Us Have Protection from Floods." The project has the full approval of the U.S. Department of War.

The project would have increased the production of electrical power.

That is the catch. Andrew Mellon controls most of the state of Pennsylvania. Andrew Mellon's holdings form a virtual monopoly in the production of electrical power in the Pittsburgh area. When it came to flood control and the resultant power production, that stepped right on Andrew Mellon's toes.

In all the talk since the disaster in favor of flood control, in the nawspaper campaigns, Mr. Mellon's name does not appear. Why in all this turmoil about the flood and the "Act of God" does the press not ferret out the "gods" who are responsible for the Pittsburgh flood, the "gods" who live in Pittsburgh? Why doesn't the Hearst press or the "liberal" Scripps-Howard newspaper with their agitation for flood control (a popular slogan with which to increase circulation) mention Mr. Mellon?

They certainly know that Mellon owns a controlling interest in the U. S. Electric Power Corp. And this holding company controls the Class A stock of the Standard Power and Light, another holding company; and in turn the Standard Power and Light controls the Standard Gas and Electric Company, a holding company which owns the capital stock of the Duquesne Light Company, the Equitable Gas Company of Pittsburgh and the Pittsburgh Railway Company (street-cars). They know that Mellon has enormous interests in the Westinghouse Electric Companies. They know that from these corporations—virtually a monopoly of the utilities in the Pittsburgh area—Mr. Mellon makes huge profits. And they know that flood control would allow for the sale by the government of electrical power at a cheaper rate than is now demanded for such power in Pittsburgh and vicinity (since it would be produced from water power rather than from coal as at present). Finally, they realize that flood control means that Mr. Mellon's monopoly of the electrical power industry would be a thing of the past. For flood control is a public project and electrical power would be sold by the government.

Mr. Mellon's bituminous coal interests are second only to those of the U.S. Steel Corp. Flood control would allow electricity to be produced from water power and sold at a cheaper rate than it is now sold. Cheaper rates would allow more consumers to buy electrical power and substitute it for coal and gas—which would interfere with Mellon's Koppers Co. The consumption of coal and gas would diminish. Mr. Mellon could hardly benefit if that happened.

For years Pennsylvania has been run by the Republican Party. Andrew Mellon is the most powerful Republican in the state. So it is not surprising to hear considerable talk in Pittsburgh to the effect that the federal government vetoed flood control in this vicinity because the administration is Democratic and Jim Farley had no intention of handing out funds to a politically hostile state.

If that accusation is true—and it is by no means far-fetched — Farley, the Democratic boss, gave aid to the small group of men whose interests are furthered by preventing flood control, the small group that looks primarily to Andrew Mellon for leadership. And it is also worth remembering —a fact which those who howl the loudest for flood control seem to overlook—that Mr. Mellon served as Secretary of the Treasury in three Republican administrations and so far as I can ascertain at no time did he advocate flood control.

The project would cost money. Fourteen dams necessitate an expenditure of eighty-six million dollars. When Congress looked favorably on the project, the state refused to put up its share, claiming that flood control would benefit not only Pennsylvania but other states as well and therefore was of national concern. When the state became more inclined to bear some of the burden, Congress lost interest. For twenty-four years, ever since 1912 when the plan was ready to act upon, flood control in Pennsylvania has been a political slogan and nothing more. It has been a political football kicked round the state in order to pull in the votes: the politicians had no intention of pressing it to fruition.

The present catastrophe destroyed at least $250,000,000 in property—and that is a conservative estimate. Workers lost everything they had saved in a lifetime. Others are out of jobs, without pay while the steel mills and furnaces are closed. Small shopkeepers and little merchants have been wiped out. Over 50 lives were lost, over 3,500 were injured. The cost of epidemic, sickness, starvation, exposure or the dislocation of lives cannot be estimated in dollars and cents.

And yet as a business proposition, flood control is sound. It can pay for itself. To

quote a section of the report of the Tri-State Authority:

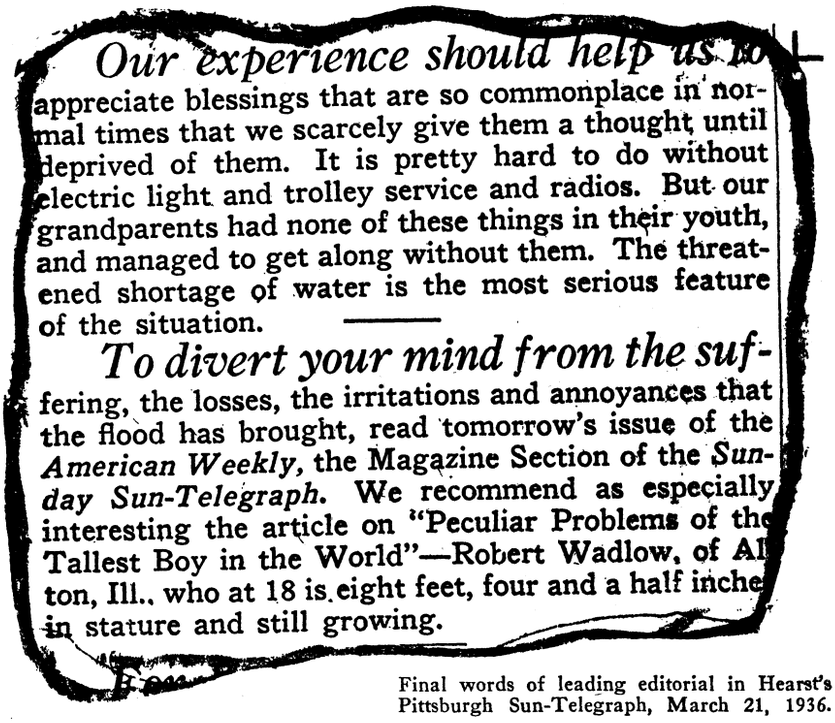
A summary of the minimum benefits calculated by the Commission is as follows:

Benefits to property of all classes from flood control	$65,560,000
Benefit to navigation	5,000,000
Hydro Electric	750,000
Water Supply	1,500,000
Sewage Dilution	16,000,000
	$87,810,000

In addition there is a regional benefit, or removal of restraint to the development of these valleys, which is very real although not readily calculable. Various studies lead to the conclusion that this benefit is at least as great as the combined calculable benefits . . . or, $175,000,000.

Note that electrical power production is played down in this estimate—an attempt to sell the idea without raising objections from the Mellon and other utility interests. But these corporations are not so easily hoodwinked. The best interests of the majority, safety, health, human life don't count. Misery haunts Pittsburgh and vicinity—*misery that could have been prevented.*

Capitalism cannot plan for the good of all. It dare not. The safety and the welfare of the millions are secondary considerations. It is the millions in profit for the few that come first, even though that profit is gained from hunger, disease and degradation of the masses.



Final words of leading editorial in Hearst's Pittsburgh Sun-Telegraph, March 21, 1936.

WITH thousands homeless, without water or light or communication, Pittsburgh took hold. The Red Cross, with an appropriation of one million dollars from the city and a like amount from the federal government, was designated as the official instrument of relief. The grant of money is of course totally inadequate. Governor Earle has already demanded nine million dollars for relief of flood victims.

So far as I could ascertain, the Red Cross has up to now functioned in a haphazard manner. Churches have been commandeered; recreation houses, police stations, libraries are used as temporary shelter for the homeless. Kitchens have been set up to feed those who need help.

Significantly, the state immediately ordered the Emergency Relief Bureau to refuse to handle all flood cases. The Red Cross has federal and private funds. The state does not want to go to any unnecessary expense. Shunting the problem on to the Red Cross means that *the state does not have to pay for relief of flood victims.*

At present the authorities are ready enough to house the destitute, to feed them as well as possible under the difficult circumstances. The danger to the flood victims who lost homes and possessions is not apparent during the first week when talk of cooperation and public responsibility is the result of the initial shock of disaster. But in two weeks, in a month, when public spirit begins to wane, the administrators and the city council face a relief problem that is by no means temporary. The dislocation of thousands of human beings will stretch over months and in some cases over an even longer period. The Red Cross will not solve the emergency. It will soon withdraw, leaving the destitute to the mercies of local and federal relief bureaus.

Right now, relief is on a temporary basis. Food comes in most cases from private donors—from the corner grocer, from small dealers, from housewives who cook and volunteer their services. The public is beseeched to give generously to the less fortunate—and the public responds. The Atlantic and Pacific chain stores, so far as I know, have not responded—they leave that to the small merchant. Instead, the chain stores raised prices. Plenty of owners saw a chance for a quick profit in time of stress. But the small businessmen and the neighborhood storekeepers, the workers and the middle classes, the professional and white-collar groups give time and money and energy. I have seen no announcement of Mr. Mellon making a contribution. But then Mr. Mellon, in one sense, contributed the flood.

Private charity cannot handle the emergency. The Red Cross will abandon the scene—they do not plan to dip into their reserve for war. The homeless will become a community problem, one that necessitates planned action by the city, the state and the federal government. If the attitude of these agencies toward the problem of relief before the flood can be taken as a gauge, relief will be completely inadequate. Families cannot move back into the damp houses, breeding places for disease. Nor can they afford to recondition these houses. The city must take over this task. The catastrophe does not end when the waters recede or the "Golden Triangle" is open for business. The suffering caused by the flood — the great Mellon Flood—will continue for months, in some cases for years.

There is much work to be done cleaning the city. But the unemployed on home relief, the newly-created homeless, are not given these jobs. Instead, the city calls only the W.P.A. workers to take over. They can be had at a cost below the prevailing wage, at less than fourteen dollars a week—and the federal government foots the bill. Pittsburgh is anxious to save as much money as possible, to pass whatever expense it can on to the federal government. The attitude does not augur well for the future of the homeless.

THE flood is over. The mud will soon be gone from the "Golden Triangle." The homeless will become less dramatic as the weeks pass.

There is no way of estimating the real cost of the disaster. But there was and there is a way to avoid future disaster, a scientifically endorsed project of flood control. Mr. Mellon's interests, the coal operators, the other utility companies, the politicians will be no more eager for flood control in the future than they were in the past.

Flood control is a costly affair. Congress will be asked to appropriate money for the project. It would be well for Congress to find out just who prevented this necessary project from being authorized before. What lobbies, what men? Did Mr. Mellon's companies block authorization in the years gone by? Did Mr. Mellon himself play a part in the sabotage of property, public safety and health?

These are questions that I would like answered. These are questions on which millions would like detailed information.

A Generation Is Stirring

JAMES WECHSLER

IN ANY election year Congress wants to go home early; in 1936 you can't blame its occupants for frantic haste. They have much to explain, countless apologies to make. Somehow they must draft new promises that will not be too reminiscent of broken ones. Somehow they must stir renewed faith out of cynicism, disillusion and resentment. Politics is conducted on tiptoes. This is the worst hour to offend anyone.

Suddenly, irritatingly, Congress ran headlong into one of its most dreaded constituents last week: an army of crisis-ridden youth. You can tell your secretary to answer letters from those who want to know whose government is sitting in Washington. You can dictate a reply pledging to "look into the problem at once." You can do these things without feeling too distraught or too aware of the power of those you are evading. They are at least miles away. They seem inarticulate.

But last week a generation, weary of lip-service, drove and hitched and hopped freighters and walked miles; and marched into the high-ceilinged, marble Caucus Room of the Senate to say what no Senator, harried by the "economy" wave and bludgeoned by bold industrialists, can hear with equanimity. For years the politicians have been sentimentalizing over one theme: "the nation's youth." They have sworn to ecstatic audiences that "by God, I'll look after your children if I have to do it out of my own pocket." Suddenly these children—"the hope of the nation . . . our future leaders . . . America's challenge to the world"—descended on the Capitol.

They are growing up now. Many were ill-clothed and hungry and tired long before they arrived. And others were in that gnawing transition stage: falling out of their middle-class security into desperation—terrified because they know what is happening to them. The New York Times ironically reported that they were a "cross-section of the nation's youth." There were the unemployed and the homeless of a generation; there were young workers from the centers of industrial exploitation; there were farm boys and millhands—and they stood together in a room with students, professionals, boys from settlement houses. Some were already poverty-stricken and others wore frayed collars and still others did not yet show outwardly what they were facing. Some were white, others Negro. All of them, in one way or another, have met the degradation and fear and hopelessness of a world in which they have no place to go. Through three days they streamed into Washington, all of them young and alive and seeking the same thing: security. Through three days they crowded before a Senate committee of well-fed men who were alternately bored, nervous, aroused—and self-conscious because of their unwillingness to serve those who had come to them.

It required weeks of resolutions, letters, telegrams from the thousands whom the American Youth Congress has rallied to insure that the hearings would be held. Who sent the letters, who forced the hearings? Young men and women, most of whom had probably never before sensed their own influence, to whom the Youth Act was the first tangible measure for which they had ever fought on so national a battleground. It was the beginning of a new stage launched three years ago when an ambitious young woman called a "youth congress" to rubber-stamp the New Deal—and succeeded unwittingly in precipitating a real, enduring united front of a dispossessed generation. That generation drafted the Youth Act to provide education, vocational training or jobs for the millions between 16 and 25 who have been victimized by the crisis.

When hearings were granted on the Act by the Senate Committee on Education and Labor, the way was paved for perhaps the most damning indictment of a social system ever delivered in Washington.

A slender, pale girl, daughter of a West Virginia coal miner, testifies at the first session. Standing in a room more splendid than anything she has ever seen, before the committee of a mysterious government hundreds of miles from her home, she is quiet and composed and unafraid:

> My father was injured in the mines. He will never be able to work again. . . . We receive $3.50 a week for four people. . . . Unless the federal government gives aid to the hundreds of thousands of young people in West Virginia, there is little or no hope for their future.

Senator David Walsh, chairman of the committee, listens politely (his conduct at the hearings was eminently fair and sympathetic). When she is through, he comments hollowly:

> I am sure anyone who has analyzed the situation so intelligently will succeed.

From an East Side tenement in New York a boy recites the luxuries of life at eighteen dollars a week as the sole support of a family—"and the axe may fall any minute." And an unemployed youth from Philadelphia follows him:

> Those of us here from Philadelphia come from all centers of the city. We borrowed pennies and nickels to come here in crowded trucks. Pass this bill and give us a chance to find our place in the world.

A barrage of statistics—lifted from dullness because those in the room dramatize them—begins. A young Negro, Edwin Strong, speaks for the millions of Negro boys and girls whose misery has been rendered double.

> There are 900,000 unemployed Negroes in the nation . . . in many cities sixty to eighty per cent of the Negro population is unemployed. . . . The N. Y. A. aided 19,000 Negroes in school out of hundreds of thousands who needed help.

From the South, from areas of pitiless struggles, Edwin Mitchell, Socialist leader of the Southern Tenant-Farmers' Union, reports. He is barely nineteen—"when I was ten years of age, it was nothing unusual for me to have to go out and work in the field" —but in this room he is unflustered, resolute. When you have faced the terror of Arkansas landlords, you do not fear the badgering of Senators. He parries their questions fluently. He recites figures to demonstrate the plight of Southern education.

The throng—more than 300 have gathered already and this is the first day—cheers him. The committeemen—there were never more than four present at one time—do not reply. All that they are hearing is truth and they cannot demolish it.

There is a flurry when Professor Charles A. Beard rises to testify:

> If a flood or an earthquake or a trainwreck destroys a few lives, newspapers are filled with flaming headlines and full-page reports. . . . The nation can survive calamities of nature. . . . But if it is to endure, carry on its great traditions and accomplish better things, it cannot allow the hope and faith of youth to die.

Through three mornings and one afternoon this testimony is heard. Francis Gorman: "Young people are being used as a bludgeon to defeat those things for which the trade union movement has fought. . . . They are hired at non-union wages; they are put into the National Guard and taught to fire on picket lines and they are taken out of colleges and used as strike breakers in time of strikes." A Pennsylvania teacher: "I've seen high school kids kept home for ten days at a time because they didn't have clothes to wear to school." A young Negro from Harlem: "Hundreds of Negro families are being broken up by poverty . . . we face constant discrimination on relief." Gil Green, speaking for the Young Communist League: "We support this bill just as we support every measure which will improve the conditions of young people. Is the bill 'too expensive'? We say that the Morgans and duPonts and Rockefellers can and should pay for it." Hayes Beall, speaking for 1,500,000 Methodist youth: "Millions of young people

are facing degradation and demoralization every day." A young Progressive Democrat from Texas: "Fellows in our state have had to go to school half-hungry even before the depression." A spokesman for the International Ladies Garment Workers' Union: "40,000 young people in our union are going to fight for this act." A procession of students testifies to the woeful inadequacy of the National Youth Administration, itself threatened with withdrawal in June; they cite the one fruitful occupation remaining open to them: "scabbing." A spokesman for the Young Men's Protective Association: "Senator Walsh, if you are really sympathetic to the plight of youth, we urge you to lead a demonstration in New York on April 4 for passage of the Youth Act." The Senator gracefully declines.

The press "authoritatively" reports that the committee is "cool" to the Youth Act. The bill is "impractical"—not because it won't work, not because the sum required cannot be raised through steep income and inheritance taxes but because the Liberty League chorus has dictated "economy." The President, who said one year ago that he was "determined to do something for the nation's youth because we can ill afford to lose the skill and energy of these young men and women," is once again making his peace with Wall Street. He does not dare deliver an *open* attack on the Act. Neither did those who unofficially represented him at the hearings. When his own N.Y.A. administrator confesses that "five to eight million young people between the ages of 16 and 25 are wholly unoccupied" and almost three million people are on relief and "70,000 had to quit school last year before they had finished high school" and "thousands graduated from school and college into a labor market that was greatly surfeited," Roosevelt can only retreat to ambiguous reassurances.

But those voices that were heard in Washington will multiply. They are gathering strength, conviction, purpose. They are becoming aware of their own power. Can we pass the Youth Act now? Certainly the parliamentary odds are against us. Must it be reserved for the distant future? Emphatically no. The need is too great and youth requires action. If you had been in Washington, if you had seen the grim faces and the strong arms, if you had heard those voices, if you had watched the committee stir from its boredom and shift uneasily in its seats, this would be plain.

In cities and towns a generation is stirring. I never knew the extent of its rising and its impact until I saw the hundreds troop into the Senate chambers. They march slowly but with a dignity which left a Senate committee ill at ease. They have entered confidently once and the door cannot be closed in their faces again.

"In the Name of the Great Jehovah"

ROCKWELL KENT

TICONDEROGA; night. The men from Vermont are swarming up the outside stairway to the officers' quarters. A door opens at the top and a man with his pants in his hand steps onto the landing. "Come out of there, you damned old rat!" shouts Ethan Allen. "By what authority?" *"In the name of the Great Jehovah and the Continental Congress."*

And by that act of eviction by the forces of Vermont was the Revolutionary War precipitated.

Vermont in those days was a wilderness of forest-clad mountains and inundated valleys. New Hampshire and New York laid claim to it. To the court action on conflicting claims that was brought in Albany went Ethan Allen, heading a delegation of Green Mountaineers. The lieutenant-governor, the presiding judge, the attorney general and the lawyer for the New York plaintiffs were all grantees of large tracts of Green Mountain land. So New York won.

"The Gods of the hills are not the Gods of the valleys," said Ethan Allen and went home.

When the first New York grantee moved in, cleared land and built a cabin, armed mountaineers came down on him. They kindled fire round the settler's cabin while Ethan Allen dragged him out.

He said to him: "Go your way now and complain to that damned scoundrel, your governor. God damn your governor, laws, King, Council and Assembly."

"God damn your soul," he added then and let him go.

The settler fled.

A New Yorker came to Bennington and read a proclamation outlawing Allen. Allen came up; struck him three times. He said, "You are a damned bastard of old Munro's. We shall make a hell of his house and burn him in it and every son of a bitch that will take his part."

When the New York Governor's name was pronounced, Allen, as though addressing the Governor, said: "So your name is Tryon. Try on and be damned."

Allen, freebooter for settlers' rights, turned pamphleteer. "Can the New York scribblers," he wrote, "by the art of printing make wrong into right or make any person of good sense believe that a great number of hard-laboring peasants, going through the fatigues of settlement and cultivation of a howling wilderness, are a community of riotous, disorderly, licentious, treasonable persons?" and he added: "Women sobbing and lamenting, children crying and men pierced to the heart with sorrow and indignation at the approaching tyranny of New York."

Well, Allen and his boys held their Green Mountains.

Fourteen months before the Declaration of Independence they took Fort Ticonderoga and brought upon themselves the reproof of the Continental Congress. In 1777 Vermont, in defiance of the law, declared itself an independent commonwealth. In 1790 the State of New York recognized its independence. And in 1791 Vermont, the only free and independent commonwealth on the North American continent, joined the United States.

In the one hundred sixty-six years that have elapsed since the settlers of what is now Vermont declared their independence, Vermont has emerged from wilderness to be a region of cultivation. Its valley lands are cleared, its swamps are farms. Industry has come to thrive. Today, its products, in the inverse order of their value, are knitted goods, lumber and timber products, metal working machinery, dairy products, cereal products, paper and wood pulp, woolen goods and granite, slate and marble. More than one-quarter of the total marble output of the United States in quantity and more than one-third in value, is of the State of Vermont. Marble is Vermont's great industry.

With the growth of the marble industry in Vermont men were drawn to its center, Rutland, to work in the quarries and shops. They settled there. And their sons and grandsons grew up to take their place.

On November 4, 1935, over six hundred workers in their state's chief industry having, through a period of many months, argued and pled in vain for such improvements in the terms of their employment as they claimed they must have to exist, went on strike. That they struck at a moment when their employers would not be too seriously hurt by their withdrawal from work and on the threshold of winter, is evidence that the workers felt themselves to be in desperate straits. And that throughout the hardships of the particularly severe succeeding months they have maintained their solidarity as strikers almost to a man may be taken as indicative of their own belief in the justice of their cause.

How few people—even of the nearby East-

ern states—are aware that these hundreds of workers have for four months been waging a death struggle for existence! Yet news of such things does leak out: in consequence of that a large delegation comprised of labor leaders, lawyers, writers and publicists, college student bodies, members of college faculties and unattached students of social problems met on February 29 in the metropolis of the marble region, Rutland, to inquire into the situation and to conduct a public hearing on the respective grievances of the Vermont Marble Company and of the strikers. In preparation for the hearing, numerous committees of the delegation visited respectively the strikers' homes, the scenes of alleged violence, the workers' hospital; and by interviews with representatives of the various classes and interests involved they gathered data and secured such various expressions of opinion as might contribute to the delegation's understanding. It must be stated that the Proctor family, the virtual owners of the company, and the company's more responsible officials either could not be reached or refused to be interviewed.

The public hearing was conducted in the large town hall of West Rutland, a strike center. It was packed to standing capacity. Upon a roll call for those invited to be present no one responded for the company, for the state or local government or charity administration, for the sheriff or his deputies. Terming the company and state the plaintiffs, no witness for the plaintiffs was on hand. Mr. Post, impartial observer for the Federal Department of Labor, sat in the front row. The striking workers and their wives and families were there in mass, and many of a sympathizing general public. The plaintiffs' case rested therefore upon its printed statement and, in the minds of the fair-minded delegation, upon such information about the Proctors' conduct of affairs as Proctor partisans in interviews had yielded.

The Proctor family looms large in recent Vermont history: three Proctors have been Governors; and other Governors have been the family's henchmen. The family is finely representative of a capitalist aristocracy that cherishes a benevolent interest in its workers as dependents, indulging itself regularly in such acts of charity toward them as, within limits, are consistent with that convenient form of Christianity which doesn't take too literally the Sermon on the Mount. They hold a feudal attitude toward labor, bestowing on a docile tenantry at Christmas time such baskets of goodies as may be well calculated to win the gratitude and loyalty of simple-hearted peasant folk. They are supporters of the church; in prosperous times they give large sums to charities. They are people of culture, displaying in their various cultural interests and in the surroundings of their homes such well directed affluence as we are led to believe should be the aim, and may be the reward, of honest industry, intelligence and thrift. (It may be mentioned here that it is apparently in no way inconsistent with the ethics and the culture of the family that their Company employs men on such of its jobs as the Supreme Court building in Washington to "fix up" surreptitiously with white cement and paraffin defects in marble work before inspectors shall discover them.)

In the Company's Statement we read that the Company maintains a hospital for the workers, looks after their old age by an insurance plan (the workers pay for it), houses many of the families and supplies them with electricity and water (at the workers' cost) and that they have "always encouraged and helped employes to own their own houses." In the statement it is claimed that the company's earnings during depression have been low and its expenses continuously great, that its "social obligations," its "moral obligations both to its employes and to society," require that they keep their business (not their workers) "healthy." Becoming eloquent, they quote Lord Bacon: "Be so true to thyself as to not be false to others." This, the company argues, forbids them to increase wages at this time. It apparently forbids them also to recognize the union. They do not state whether during periods of great prosperity — and the Proctors have grown enormously rich—they would have held it being "false to others," presumably their workers, to have let them by a generous increase in wages share in that prosperity. They have, they state, "a keen desire to improve earnings of the employes." They publish this statement conveniently at a time when they can argue that they have no earnings themselves out of which to increase those of the workers. In support of this they produce no figures; and they refuse to submit the issues to arbitration.

The public hearing was in the nature of a court of inquiry. The delegates, represented by Counsel, were strictly non-partisan in their attitude. Guided by the Company's printed statements, by local press reports of the strike, and by such information and complaints as had been brought forward, they called for witnesses. Each witness in turn mounted the platform, and the evidence was given in tones loud enough to be generally heard, or was repeated by an "interpreter." For nearly five hours the delegation listened to the outpourings of suffering workers. They heard complaints against the company, detailed denials of the company's statements, accusations against the company, against the police, against the county and township law enforcement and welfare officials. They heard evidence that these officials were actually in the employ of the Vermont Marble Company. They learned that the majority of the deputy sheriffs, equipped with badges, armed with guns and the authority to make arrests, were in the private employ and pay of the company. They heard the evidence of a seventy-two year old man, an enfeebled, harmless old rag dealer, who had been gratuitously clubbed on the head by a sadistic deputy; they inspected the evidence of his blood-stained garments. They heard from the mothers of large families that throughout the severities of this Vermont winter they had been without clothes to dress their children in to send them out to school; that the overseer of the poor, contrary to law, had refused them aid. They heard of the conviction and sentence (a suspended sentence) of that overseer, and of his begrudging paltry doles thereafter. They heard the deputies charged with having precipitated every act of violence that had occurred, charged with framing-up dynamite explosions (two strikers have subsequently, on the deputies' charges, been tried and acquitted). They heard vociferous denial by the strikers of the Company's claims that they had not paid checks below $5 in a stated period of time; and they saw vouchers in evidence of this. They learned that no workers resorted to the Company hospital because of its exorbitant charges. They heard that the company charged its tenants for electric light at a rate many times in excess of that endured only under protest by the general public. They learned that the Vermont marble workers, living in a severe climate, had to exist on wages that are but a small fraction of that minimum which our federal government has stated families must have to live. They heard an indignant and derisive roar when the company's statement that workers were encouraged and helped to own their own houses was mentioned. And they heard that on the first of April, two months before the last frost strikes Vermont, one hundred eighty-six families—men, women, children—are to be evicted from the Company houses in which they live and in which many of them have been born. They heard, in all, from the lips of ill-clad and poverty-stricken men and women such a detailed arraignment of the "benevolent" Vermont Marble Company as roused the entire delegation to unanimous indignation. And they heard from the lips of strike leaders and participants, such determination to endure, fight on and win as stirred in them a new belief in the manhood of America.

In 1775 that law-breaker in the cause of liberty, that founder of the liberties of Vermont, Ethan Allen, evicted the British from their stronghold at Ticonderoga "in the name of the Great Jehovah and the Continental Congress." On April 1, 1936, the Proctors, with the aid of the armed forces of their state and, no doubt, in the name of the Great Jehovah of the marble church at Proctor (photographs to be seen in all Vermont Marble Company's sales agencies) will evict some hundreds of defenseless human beings from their homes. If Ethan Allen lived today, where would he stand? Perhaps on the eve of April 1 he'd say again: "Women sobbing and lamenting, children crying, and men pierced to the heart with sorrow and indignation at the approaching tyranny of—Law." The first Vermont eviction brought about a war; what will this one do?

Ridder Urges Violence

MARTIN FIELD

THE Federal Theater Veterans League are at a meeting in the Union Methodist-Episcopal Church. Though they are in a church, there is nothing Christian about their sentiments. There are some 500 of them, mostly journeymen actors and actresses who have been through very thin times—not the Lunts, the Barrymores, the Leslie Howards—but little men who are today on W.P.A. jobs. It shows in their eyes.

Phelps Phelps, German born, who was once a silk-stocking Assemblyman, is blasting the City Projects Council!

"We do not want fascism in this country, but our Communist friends are asking for it *and when it comes* they will think the so-called hard-boiled dictators of Europe are amateurs. . . . If the authorities will not move, it is up to us to make the riff-raff behave itself while it enjoys the hospitality of this country. There is only one way—force, unionism and Americanism!"

They rise in their seats and cheer until they sink back with exhaustion. . . .

This is the answer of Victor F. Ridder, the New York administrator of W.P.A., to the efforts of the City Projects Council to fight cuts in the work relief rolls and to secure a decent subsistence for relief workers. You are reminded instantly of Germany where the National Socialists talked nationalism to the workers to make them forget socialism. Could Victor Ridder and his lackeys hope to enlist these fascist battalions in a war whose slogans shall be, "More Cuts! Less Pay!" Obviously not. So the thing to do is to call anybody who fights for decent relief a Communist and an agitator, preferably an "alien agitator," which rings with irony when you consider that Mr. Ridder as publisher of the Hitler-cowed Staats Zeitung made his fortune from being a professional hyphenate.

It's an old technique: when you cannot answer your opponent's arguments, merely call him a Communist and sing "The Star Spangled Banner." We even saw this reach the silly stage the other day in the instructions telegraphed by Hearst to his Washington editorial writer to attack Representative McSwain, of South Carolina, chairman of the Military Affairs Committee as a—Communist.

On March 2, Mr. Ridder, speaking at the Broadway Temple, said:

> I hope that the peaceful elements on these projects—those who believe in God, in the family and our Government—will resent such representation as these agitators appear to give them. I hope that the members of the American Legion, of the Catholic and Methodist churches and others like them, who are in the vast majority, will take action to organize for themselves. These Communists don't believe in God, the American family or government. I cannot stop them alone. I must have the cooperation of the peace-loving workers.

He has had his wish. There is evidence that even before this public entreaty he had already called in ambitious vigilantes of the Federal Theater Project to congratulate them on their start and urge them ahead.

When they had held their first public meeting, on February 29, more than one speaker boasted that Ridder was behind them. Thus inspirited, they shouted:

> We will drive the rats back into their holes. . . . The only thing a radical knows is force and he must be met with the same weapon. . . . We will place our men everywhere to spy upon them. . . . We will drive out those in lucrative offices and put in true Americans. . . . We have no personal axes to grind, but there is an axe which we want to be ground, sharper and sharper and sharper, until the time comes to use it.

March 14 they held another public meeting, the one at which Phelps Phelps spoke. It was announced in advance by Major William P. Ball, "honorary president" and legionnaire, that Ridder himself would attend this meeting and say a few words.

Today Ridder chooses to deny that he had any intention of attending. But a dozen newspapermen can testify that Walter Miller, W.P.A. press agent, was there and that he stated he had come there to meet Ridder who had first to attend a conference with Harry Hopkins at the Biltmore Theater that day. Adolph Pincus, chairman of the meeting, kept promising until the sun went down that Ridder would be there and Miller at first kept giving the press the same assurance. But after hearing a few of the speeches, Miller, who understands public relations, got the idea that his boss would be badly advised to appear on the same program.

If Victor Ridder had spoken that day, he might never have stopped regretting it. Inflammatory attacks were made at that meeting on *Triple-A Plowed Under,* the first Living Newspaper Project of the Federal Theater, for depicting Earl Browder among those whose views on the A.A.A. were quoted and members of the League went directly to the opening of the show that night and attempted to disrupt it. They needed only a few words from the chief to carry crowbars instead of their empty hands.

It opens with a mass pledge, administered by Pincus:

> I do solemnly swear and renew my oath of allegiance to the Government of the United States of America, as I did when entering the service of my country, and I do further swear to do all in my power to combat and discover all subversive propaganda, sabotage and disloyalty to the Government of the United States of America. . . .

He hails Phelps as a "real American—we need more like you." He accuses members of the City Projects Council of being inefficient, of not being actors at all and so having obtained their jobs falsely and even of having stolen paper from the government on which to run off their shop journal.

James McCoy, thin and frantic, a vaudeville actor, by his own description, of the journeyman kind, who never do better than second billing, screams:

> The hell with those who want to throw down our country! The Communists have little children in their May Day parades—do Republicans and Democrats do this? The C.P.C. stands for chiselers, parasites and crooks. . . . The Administration took no notice of us until we proved we were 100-percent American. Any man or woman who attends these meetings will never lose his job. We should be thankful in our time of trouble for a guide—and that guide is Victor F. Ridder.

They're actors and they put on a good show. Yet with every purple passage and heart throb, the question comes back to you, "How about payroll cuts? How about less-than-subsistence wages?" This has to be answered and no amount of stage training can make the answer satisfactory. Pincus, sniveling sanctimoniously, remarks, "There isn't one of those half-wits that earned the money I did as actor and manager. I was thankful to get $15 a week as watchman and I am thankful to get $23.86 as company manager."

Before they go home, a little bewildered by Ridder's run-out, Pincus claims that his group has enrolled 2,000 members, veterans and associated members and that similar groups on other projects have drawn in a total of five or six thousand veterans and a hundred thousand associated members.

Later, at his office, Major Ball, who is in the finance department of the Theater Project—a big red-faced man of the country squire sort—announces the groups are soon all to merge into the Veterans' Temporary Employes Organization of the United States of America. Incidentally he is also head of the American Naturalization Committee which picketed Earl Browder the night of his radio address.

"Will you be a union?" he was asked.

"That depends on what you mean by a union," he replied. "Collective bargaining? Existing to get better wages and hours? No, indeed! We thank God, we've got the jobs we have." Always God. They want to put Him on the side of starvation wages as they enlisted Him in the World War. And if you don't thank Him for your $50 a month, you're a godless Communist.

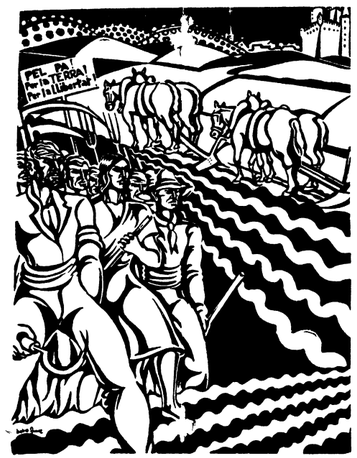
Spain: 1931-1936

Drawings by Helios Gomez

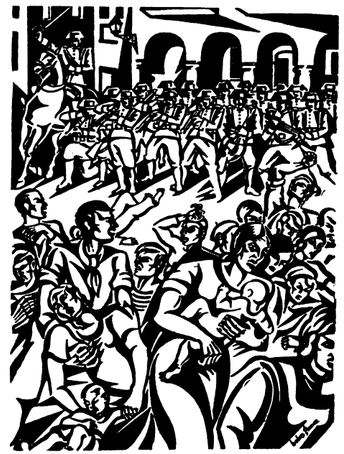
The electoral victory of the anti-fascist People's Bloc brought the government of Azana, Left Republican, into office on February 16, 1936. Since then, working-class activity within and without of the Cortes has brought pressure on Azana to fulfill the program of the People's Bloc to which he is pledged. The working class, strengthened by the unity of Socialists and Communists, is drawing the peasantry closer to itself and gathering forces for the establishment of a Workers and Peasants government. Such a government will guarantee the fulfillment of the democratic revolution, which includes the distribution of land to the peasantry. It will lead to the triumph of Socialism in Spain.

Aida Lafuente, Young Communist, is killed while manning a machine gun during the revolutionary seizure of Oviedo in October, 1934

"Spain is a Republic of All Toilers"—The Constitution of the Republic, April 14, 1931



Peasants and laborers begin to expropriate the domains of the feudal landowners



The official "Republica of the Toilers" replies: massacres in Arnedo . . . Zorita . . . Casas Viejas

Under the banner of the Workers and Peasants Alliances . . . toward the final defeat of reaction and toward Socialism

In the name of the Father, the Son and The Holy Ghost

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Lerroux the traitor and Gil Robles the Jesuit in the October Days

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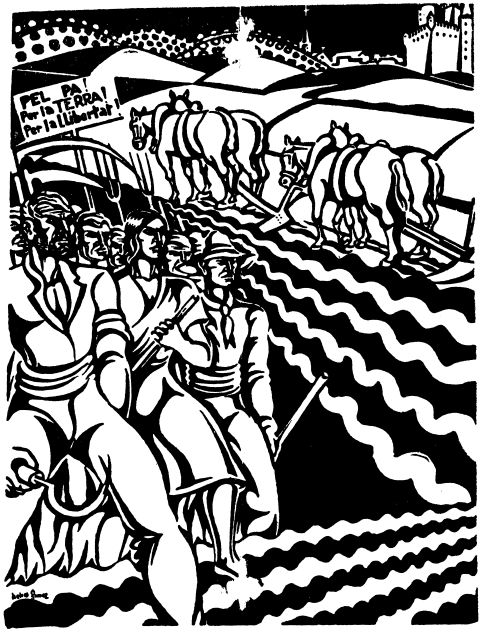

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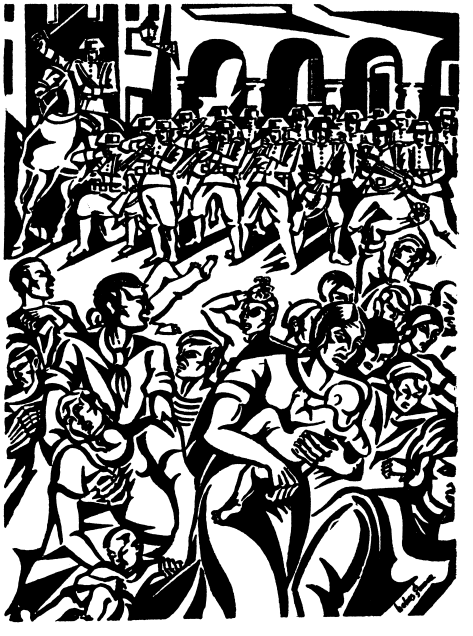

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Taxi Dance

A Short Story

NATHAN ASCH

I WENT UP the narrow, badly-lighted stairs to the second floor, stopped at the booth and bought ten tickets for a dollar, walked through a swinging door into a large dim room, with an orchestra stand and an orchestra playing hot music, a roped-off dance floor—only three couples were dancing—and a single spotlight swinging its beam slowly from one wall to the other. There were perhaps fifteen girls in evening dresses standing near the entrance and when the spotlight moved across them, you could see their bodies inside of their dresses.

I walked toward the rope and the girls smiled at me, rolled their eyes at me, lasciviously wriggled their hips at me. One of them put her arm through my elbow and brought her head close to my head and stuck her tongue in my ear. She said:

"I want you."

I shook my head "No." Another girl leaned toward me and whispered:

"I bet you could do it to me good."

A magnificent blond girl stood bored in a doorway, half looked at me and moved her head slightly, said:

"Let's have a beer."

I said: "All right."

We went into the adjoining room that was still darker, that had a bar along one wall and in the shadows were tables and couples sat at the tables and whispered. We sat down and we ordered a beer.

I asked: "What is this, a whore house?"

"No," she said. "It's the same old taxi dance hall."

"Well, why the come on?"

"Well," she said, "times are bad. The customers are bashful. You've got to give them the works."

She drank up her beer quickly.

"Let's have another."

"All right."

She ordered another and drank it up and said:

"Let's have another."

I said: "Listen, you'll lose your figure."

"All right," she said. "Let's dance."

"I don't want to dance," I told her. "I'll give you a dollar, and you sit down and talk to me like a human being."

She said: "We're not allowed to take tips. You've got to spend it in drinking or dancing."

"All right, you keep right on drinking. See how much you can put away."

"I can put away an awful lot of beer."

"Let's see."

She smiled. She said: "All right. I'll lay off for a while."

We sat in the darkness and we smoked cigarettes and I stared at her beautiful face.

She said: "There's the boss now. I better order some beer."

The boss was in his shirt sleeves and was husky. He went up to a couple at a table nearby and said in a loud voice:

"Helen, I'm telling you this for your own good. If I catch you again making dates outside, I'll throw you out on your ear."

I said: "This is a nice place."

"Oh, there's worse," the blonde girl said. "There's a place on the Cook County line where you don't even wear dresses. You've got to work in a brassiere and panties."

I was drinking beer too, and I was getting sentimental. I said:

"My God. They ought to dynamite these places."

She said: "Where would I work then? I've got a husband in the bug house I've got to support."

"What?"

"Sure, I've got a husband who's a dope fiend and who's nuts."

"How did that happen?"

"I don't know," she said. "Maybe he fell on his head when he was a baby. All I know is it's costing me twenty bucks a week."

A couple came up to our table. They were both tall and handsome and the boy wore a new suit. The girl said:

"Cynthia, do you mind if we sit down?"

"There's lots of room," my blonde said. "sit down. Clio, this is my boy friend. There's the other boy friend. Shake hands."

They sat down, and the other boy friend had a bottle of whiskey. We hid the whiskey back of the table, and we ordered beers, and we leaned under the table and drank out of the bottle and we used the beer for chasers. Clio said:

"My boy friend is just out of jail."

"Sure," the boy friend said. "This is my first evening of freedom. I'm out on parole. I should have been in bed at nine o'clock tonight."

Cynthia said: "You God damned fool, why didn't you go to bed?"

The boy friend said: "I've been promising myself this night for two years. I've got it all figured out, every minute of it; and if I go back for the rest of my life, I'll do exactly what I want tonight."

Clio brought his head close and kissed him on the lips. She said:

"You come home with me tonight."

He said: "I haven't got enough dough for you."

"I ain't a hustler," she said. "You come home with me."

I was drunk by this time. I said:

"Can I go with you, Cynthia?"

"Well," she said, "I've got somebody waiting . . ."

I said: "I don't mind. All I want to do is sit somewhere and not think about the trouble I've seen."

The boy friend's name was Arthur. We hired a taxi and we waited a block away from the dance hall. I wanted to ask him about the jail, but I couldn't. I was silent and waited, and then the two girls came and we drove to a house on North LaSalle Street.

We opened the door, and went through a dark hall, into a room; and then the light went on and it was a kitchen, with a window, and there were geraniums in pots on the sill. We opened the whiskey we had bought and poured out drinks.

Clio and Arthur disappeared somewheres, and Cynthia and I sat and continued drinking, and then Cynthia's taxi driver came and she went off with him. I was left alone and I continued drinking.

It was about four in the morning and outside Chicago was quiet. I could hear nothing, but the clock ticking some place away; and then I heard the door open. A girl stood in the doorway; she was little, and she had curls around her head; and I thought that she was very lovely.

She asked: "Where is Cynthia?"

"She's busy. Who are you? Come in and have a drink."

She said: "I can't drink. I've got to go to work in the morning."

"What do you do?"

She didn't answer.

I said: "Forgive me. I've got to ask questions. Please tell me what you do."

"I work in the radio assembly plant."

"What do you do there?"

"I put in the wiring."

"How much do you get?"

She looked at me as if I were crazy. Then she said:

"Eight dollars a week."

"Why aren't you a taxi dancer?"

"I'm not old enough. I'll be a taxi dancer next year."

I said: "Come here."

She came closer. I was very maudlin. I took her hands, and I kissed them, and I said:

"Forgive me, my sister."

She looked at me scared and she ran out of the room.

God Pity the Others!

ROBERT FORSYTHE

MY TOPIC for the quarterly issue was to have been the humorists of the middle class, but since the assassinations in Tokio and the reoccupation of the Rhineland by the Nazis, I find myself in no mood for humor. What I feel instead is the horrifying and almost hypnotic beat of the war spirit, the deliberate and steady and inexorable step of the brute on the stairs, coming to murder humanity. First the murder of Dollfuss by the Nazis, the slaying of King Ferdinand of Jugoslavia, the Blood Purge in Germany, the flouting of the rearmament clauses of the Versailles Treaty by the Nazis, the Ethiopian venture, the overrunning of China by the Japanese, the border conflicts in Manchukuo—tension, tension, tension until one almost cries out for speed. *Kill us but don't keep us in this misery!*

For months I have been obsessed by a news-reel picture of marching Germans, with the camera set at an angle which gives the impression of iron automatons goose-stepping over the body of the observer. Again the Huns, the Barbarians, the ruthless subhuman surge of cruelty and power. But last week on hearing the news from Germany, I suddenly discovered that I was thinking not of airplanes and poison gases and long-range destruction but of New York in spring. Specifically I was thinking of those mild gently-stirring evenings when one may stroll on West 46th or 47th Streets between Fifth and Seventh Avenues in that period after the workers have gone home to their suppers and before the theater crowd has started coming. I thought of summer nights in Vermont with the moon shining hazily through a mist like a scene from a fairy tale and of winters in Vermont with the snow lying white and everlasting in the fields.

And then I realized that what I was feeling was possibly what the world was feeling, a sense of utter hopelessness, a last look at the beauty of life before the end.

Whatever we may think the lessons of the last war have not been lost on the capitalistic powers. If they fight it is from desperation. Europe stirs with the false animation of courage, feeling only futility and a sense of impending doom. War now will be only the struggle of men trapped and waterless in a desert, seeking each to kill the other for the pleasure of being the last to die.

The parallels with 1914 are obvious. As Winston Churchill points out in his war books, the first flagrant break in the peace of the world came with Italy's attack on Libya. Exactly as in 1935, the nations allowed the Italians free sway in a region they had sworn to protect from assault. There had been crises before and there were to be other crises before the World War broke, but it was the fact that Italy could take the law into its own hands without recourse to the instruments of arbitration which were even then available which indicated that the great war would be not impossible. Yet men came to think it impossible just as they now feel that the recurring crises mean that crises can be continued indefinitely.

The British in particular seem to learn nothing from either wars or peace. The action of Earl Grey in allowing Germany to feel that there might be a possibility of neutrality in the event of war with France in 1914 (although military covenants had been drawn up between the French and British General Staffs) is being equalled now by the attitude taken by British opinion over the reoccupation of the Rhineland. Whatever Downing Street thinks of Hitler's aggression has nothing to do with the case. What is important is the false reassurance given Hitler by England's anxiety to negotiate with him. To the German mind it can only mean that British foreign policy follows the guidance of the King, an open friend of the Nazis. In truth, of course, England has no concern with the Continent beyond its own dominance in the balance of power.

Whatever may be England's doubts about the French, it has not forgotten 1914 and there is little possibility that it will assist Germany to a conquest over its former ally and possession of the channel ports. All it will succeed in doing is to bring about another world war because of its cupidity in seeking to work both ends against the middle.

Many things operate to create a false sense of security in a time of danger. The Ethiopian War has been among the worst. Because it has been comparatively free from casualties (the airplane campaigns in particular have been ineffective), one tends to forget that the air forces, even in 1917 when aviation was just reaching its maturity, had established a record for destruction. What is possible now in densely populated areas is beyond imagination. The secret of gun-making which allowed the Germans to pour shells into Paris from seventy miles away has certainly not been lost. With long-range guns and bombing planes, the mind falters in contemplation. If the war on the Western Front occupied the attention of the experts in 1914-17, one has only to survey the battlefields of Poland and East Prussia to learn what war can mean even under the more open conditions which obtained in that region. The Austrian army alone lost 600,000 men in dead and wounded in the Battle of Lemberg. An entire Russian army of 200,000 men was annihilated at Tannenberg. A new war need be no more deadly than the American Civil War to complete the devastation that made such headway in 1914.

What happens over the Rhineland question is of no decisive importance unless it brings war itself. There is no Aerenthal and Berchtold of Austria to dupe Isvolsky, who was trying a bit of chicanery himself with the Bosphorus. None in fact were needed in 1914. Instead of reading the various books which seek to prove that if only a certain action had been taken in July, 1914, war could have been avoided, read *Memoirs of a Diplomatist* by Sir Arthur Nicolson and the memoirs of Count von Buelow to see that the forces of imperialistic rivalry and greed, the inevitable contradictions of the capitalistic system, were making war inevitable in 1914 as it is inevitable today.

We have no wish to taunt the good people who have been happy at the thought of Europe saved from Bolshevism. If the arch-saviors happen at the same time to be the war lords of the world (the Hitlers, Mussolinis, Arakis), we can only lay the two alternatives side by side and let the world take its choice—Communism in Europe; War in Europe. For the Soviet Union is the greatest force for peace in the world today, just as World Communism by its very nature would mean universal peace. We offer the choice of War or Communism to such men as Joseph Wood Krutch, who have been honestly concerned at the thought of the collective spirit overwhelming European culture. What is to be said of a civilization, European civilization, which is so avid of destruction that it arranges for a periodical blood-letting? Can the world afford "civilization" at such a price? Can European civilization bear up under another blow such as the World War?

In truth the sole hope for culture anywhere, European or Oriental, lies with the Soviet Union, that living force which will refuse to perish in the face of universal disaster. Nations can be conquered; ideas never. If there is any solace to be gained from another war, it is that we shall not be fighting as dumb driven animals, churning wildly up a shoot to the slaughter house, but as defenders of the only sane idea in a maniacal world. If there was nothing more for us than a share in another imperialistic massacre, humanity could have no hope but suicide.

No Communist wants war, but if world war must come, our supreme consolation is that we have something to fight for. May God have pity on the others!

Program for Professionals

CARL HAESSLER

WASHINGTON, D. C.

A NEW deal for the middle class, particularly for professional men and women, and a concrete program for obtaining this new deal, were outlined last week in Washington, D. C., at the first national conference of the Inter-Professional Association. It was apparent that the delegates belonged to the middle class. Their occupations, as they appeared on the registration cards, included not only social workers, writers, secretaries and teachers, but also accountants, engineers, librarians, architects, doctors, lawyers, artists, publishers and even a rate analyst. Moreover, the delegates were members of a score of professional organizations and some belonged to trade unions such as the American Newspaper Guild, the Typographical Union and the American Federation of Teachers. They came from all over America, but because of the expense of traveling the eastern states had a majority of representation.

The motives underlying the Roosevelt administration's hostility to adequate relief were the subject of a good-humored but pitiless analysis by Harry Lurie, director of the Jewish Bureau of Racial Research and a member of the American Association of Social Workers. Middle-class people, he told the convention, professional workers on W.P.A. projects, are easily organized to push their common interests. The government does not take kindly to such organization nor does it welcome the pressure of several million W.P.A. workers for better wages and improved working conditions—which the election promises and public statements of President Roosevelt and his relief chiefs led them to expect. After the coming November elections, Lurie predicted, relief will be severely cut, whether Roosevelt or a Republican wins office. Experience shows that professional men on W.P.A. projects received better pay when they united their forces: pressure from organized groups in the W.P.A. succeeded in raising the $14 a month relief average to $30 a month.

The guiding spirit of the conference was Mary Van Kleeck, director of the Department of Industrial Studies of the Russell Sage Foundation. She presided as the re-elected national chairman over the five sessions with a friendly tact that aided the drive toward the main objectives of the conference.

Miss Van Kleeck also realizes that the I.P.A. as an organization of middle-class people must exert an influence in cooperation with all other groups that want security and opportunity to earn a decent living. She stresses the formation of inter-professional councils to serve as clearing-houses among the professions themselves and with leagues of small home-owners and taxpayers, with labor organizations and small businessmen, against the oppression of big business. The delegates endorsed her statement that fascism in America is developing with menacing rapidity and can only be checked by common action on the part of all who will suffer under it.

1. The I.P.A. program for social legislation is one that will benefit the middle class. The little businessman, instead of being taxed under the so-called Wagner Social Security Act, will be relieved of such burdens by taxes on the wealthy—on huge incomes, large inheritances and surpluses of big corporations. The conference endorsed the Frazier-Lundeen social-insurance bill scheduled for Senate hearings this month. Unlike the Wagner act, which makes no provision for the small businessman, the proposed legislation will provide that in the event his business is lost, or the individual businessman becomes disabled or too ill to work, he will be cared for. In the event of death, his widow and dependents will have adequate protection. No previous plans for social insurance have included the self-employed, whether professional, businessman or foreman.

2. The I.P.A. also endorsed the Marcantonio Relief Bill providing two billion dollars a year for direct relief, four billion for work relief. A housing bill provides that federal funds will be allotted to erect a million dwelling units a year over a period of ten years, such units to be rented at not more than $5 a room. Such vastly-improved housing at low rentals would leave a greater proportion of a family's income intact and would allow greater purchasing power for food, clothing and other commodities. Hand in hand with housing is the demand for comprehensive health service at federal cost to provide protective medicine, treatment and hospitalization. Similar provisions for education and support of youth are outlined in the Benson-Amlie National Youth Bill supported by the I.P.A.

3. The conference clearly indicated that suppression of civil rights is becoming increasingly prevalent in America. Compulsory loyalty oaths, lynching, sedition bills such as the Tydings-McCormack and Russell-Kramer measures, the declaration of martial law in industrial disputes and the deliberate miscarriage of justice have robbed the majority of people of fundamental rights guaranteed in the first ten amendments of the constitution. Delegates pledged support of all those whose liberties are threatened and resolved to fight every attempt to curtail such liberties. The promotion of organized anti-semitic propaganda and of racial incitement was condemned in a statement protesting discrimination of every sort.

This ambitious program cannot be won without the cooperation of workers and the middle class. The conference pointed to the necessity of increasing the membership of the I.P.A., improving the effectiveness of its propaganda and building committees to lobby for legislation assuring civil rights—such lobbying to be carried on in cooperation with other groups concerned. The temper of the conference was amusingly illustrated at the evening session when Mary Beard, co-author with her husband Charles Beard of *The Rise of American Civilization,* boasted of the achievements of women but neglected to find an economic base for their present inferior position.

The delegates all listened respectfully, but during the question period, when it became apparent that she was dodging all fundamental issues, they mercilessly challenged her position. When she announced that the Nazi regime in Germany was a soldier revolution even the chairman, Miss Van Kleeck, could not restrain herself any longer and, amid great applause, pointed out that the German Nazis are the tools of German finance capital, which is bent on pauperizing, for the maintenance of their own profit, the vast masses in the working class and the middle class.

In the present period of social ferment, with a Farmer-Labor Party still in the process of formation, the I.P.A. is an organization for middle-class elements alert to the breakdown of the present social system and seeking like-minded people with whom they can cooperate for planning to set the social system right.

A middle-western delegate who just recently became a member of the organization expressed the feeling of the conference:

> On my way to Washington I told a friend that the whole world, except the Soviet Union, seemed to know concretely what to do, but the I.P.A. is not drifting, it knows what needs to be done. Its program covers social security by legislation and protection of liberty and of professional standards by organized pressure. People like myself can take hold without the feeling of isolated helplessness that formerly incapacitated us for action.

Students of history have pointed out that the French feudal monarchy was weakening when criticism of the intellectuals became increasingly outspoken. In America today the intellectuals, the professionals, the huge middle-class groups, are joining with the working class in heaping criticism on the present bankrupt system of monopoly capitalism.

YOU TAKE A CHANCE

every time you cross the street; but when you enter the NEW MASSES TITLE CONTEST only nice things can happen to you—such as, for instance, winning the first prize of $1000 or one of the other cash prizes. And don't get the idea that there's anything hard about competing! Did you ever play "Donkey Party?" Did you ever play parchesi, post-office, drop-the-handkerchief or anagrams? Well—this is just as much fun. And, as in everything else in Life, anybody can win!

SERIOUSLY—there are still four weeks left, in which to enter. The purpose of the contest is simply to increase The New Masses' subscription list as pleasantly and attractively as possible—and quickly. There is still time for you to enter the contest. All you need to do, to qualify, is to send in one new 10-weeks' subscription, for $1. Read the contest rules below. Think what YOU could do with $1,000—or $250—or with one of the other cash prizes listed at the left. Then mail your entry—promptly. Remember, anyone can win. Your chance is as good as anyone's.

—RULES—

1. Anyone (except employes of the New Masses or their families) is eligible to enter the title contest.

2. The contest opened January 23. Titles must be received at the New Masses Contest Dept., Box 76, Madison Square Station, New York, N. Y., on or before April 15, 1936. Awards will be made as soon after the end of the contest as the titles can be considered by the judges.

3. You need not use the attached coupon, although it is most convenient, but in order to be eligible in the Title Contest, your subscription for 10 weeks for the New Masses with $1, the subscription price, must accompany the titles you submit.

4. In case of a tie of two or more, then the judges will ask for a competitive twenty-five word descriptive essay on the three cartoons. Their decision on the essays will be final.

5. The title winners, by acceptance of the prizes unconditionally transfer to the New Masses all rights to the winning titles.

6. The judges will award the prizes on the basis of the best set of titles submitted. Their decision will be final. No additional cartoons will be printed in the contest. All you need to enter is right here.

The Judges are: Michael Gold, Editor of the New Masses; Robert Forsythe, noted satirist; Gardner Rea, famous artist.

MAIL YOUR ENTRY IN THE BIG NEW MASSES TITLE CONTEST *NOW!* CONTEST CLOSES APRIL 15th

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Box 76, Madison Square Station, New York, N. Y.

Enclosed is $1 for a 10-weeks' subscription to THE NEW MASSES. Here are my titles for the cartoons in your prize contest:

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Write your name and address below. In case you want the magazine sent to someone else, write your instructions out fully, on another piece of paper and attach firmly to this coupon when you send it in.

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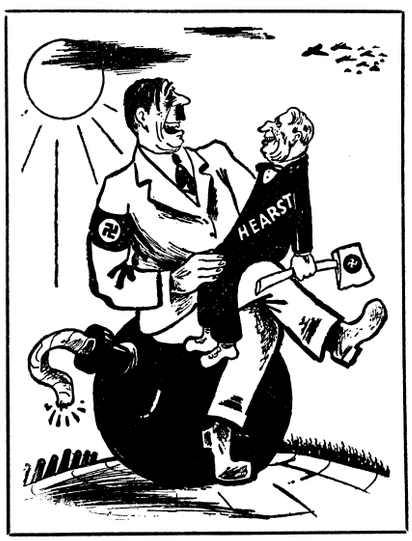
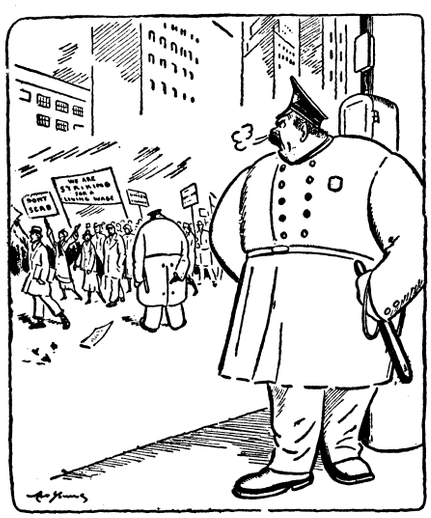
$1000 FIRST PRIZE

$250 second prize --- 50 others $5 each for the best titles for these 3 pictures



Cartoon Number One

The figure on the left is Mr. Hitler. The one on his knee, perhaps receiving good advice, or a pat on the shoulder, or both, is Willie the Chief Muckraker of his time, a particular object of loathing and aversion to all college professors, teachers and liberals. It is obvious that both of them are going places—any minute. *What is YOUR title for this picture?*



Cartoon Number Two

The cops have just finished "breaking up" the demonstration — including a few heads. And here, by Holy Tammany, they are again, back on another street with their ranks formed all over. Can you tie that? It's enough to make a good bull ask for a desk job or another precinct where there ain't no red agitators and the people are willing to starve quietly. *What's YOUR title?*

Cartoon Number Three

Look what old man WAR picked up — an olive branch. Must have been dropped by the Dove of Peace—in a hurry —when he heard Hitler's broadcast the other night. Anyway, old man WAR doesn't seem to be worrying much. . . . *Got your title for this one, yet?*

Our Readers' Forum

A New Subscriber

You can't know what a boot both Mrs. de Kruif and I got out of our first two numbers of THE NEW MASSES. Believe it or not, these are the first two copies I'd ever so much as seen the outside of. You see, it isn't Red literature but the facts of life itself that have jarred me and shook me to my shoes in the cushy world—Dutch, Calvinistic, respectable, scientific, clean, Lake Michigan, outdoor, naturalist's world I've been inhabiting. But now that Mrs. de Kruif and I have been through all we've been through these past three years, we know all you print in your paper is true, and even understatement. We both read the Quarterly and the first regular copy through from covers to covers and they remind us of The Saturday Evening Post, they are so goddam different.

Enclosed find check for three years' sub.

PAUL DE KRUIF.

War Manual Withdrawn

After reading the articles in NEW MASSES by George Seldes on Domestic Disturbances, I wrote for this pamphlet. After several weeks had elapsed I received a letter from the Superintendent of Documents advising that this Volume VII would be sent as soon as more pamphlets were printed. I waited patiently to hear further, but today I received the attached letter, which is self explanatory, so it seems I will not get to read this document after all. Have any of your other readers experienced the same?

M. E. COOKE.

Dear Madam:

Receipt is acknowledged of your recent undated card relative to your order for a copy of Basic Field Manual, Volume 7, Part 3—Domestic Disturbances.

This publication has been withdrawn from publication and use by order of the War Department and all remittances we were holding are being refunded as rapidly as possible. Your remittance of 10c should be received within a short time under our index number 118403-A.

ALTON P. TISDEL,
Superintendent of Documents.

From a Rural Organizer

The importance of building the United Front and the Farmer-Labor Party in the small towns and rural areas is particularly great for in such areas fascist demagogues can obtain a foothold most easily.

In Orange, Ulster and Rockland counties, hardly a stone's throw from New York City, almost unbelievable poverty exists among both the small town workers and the poor farmers. Coughlin units and Townsend Clubs, as well as trade unions and unemployed organizations, spring up almost simultaneously and these workers, confused but militant, eagerly accept the first leadership that offers itself to them—and if the leaders of the working class reach them first, the small-town workers eagerly follow them.

However, in our work up here, we are handicapped severely because we cannot reach a fraction of all the towns and villages where we are wanted and needed—the distances between these many points are great. We therefore take this opportunity of appealing for a car from any well wisher of the fight against war and fascism and of the Farmer Labor movement.

Box 683, Newburgh, N. Y. M. CROTTO.

"Friendly Contest"

It might interest you to know that nine girls who have been studying current periodicals this past quarter selected THE NEW MASSES as one that should be in every library. The following 9 weeklies were examined carefully each issue: Saturday Evening Post, Collier's, Today, New Republic, New Masses, Nation, Pacific Weekly, New Statesman and Time. At the conclusion of the course they were asked to select 5 out of 9 (with reasons). All selected NEW MASSES and Time, 7 New Republic and New Statesman, 5 Saturday Evening Post, 4 Pacific Weekly, 1 Nation, Collier's, Today.

NEW MASSES was generally chosen because it furnished information to be found in no other periodical.

University of Montana. PHILIP O. KEENEY.

Checking Up on Us

Please send me sample copies of your publication. I read an article in The Saturday Evening Post (Feb. 22) on subversive activities, so I want to check up to see just how bad you are.

GEO. E. WILLIAMS.

Pavlov and The Times

The death of Pavlov is a loss to the whole world. Pavlov's work on the physiology of the nervous system has laid a firm foundation for a materialist interpretation of behavior in the higher animals. It has demonstrated the underlying mechanisms of nervous interaction which are responsible for the extreme complexity of behavior, and, what is most important, indicated how man may purposefully alter and direct the formation of behavior patterns in other animals, as well as in himself.

It is therefore only natural that the Bolsheviks who were directing the October Revolution should have been well aware of the importance of Pavlov's work, and accord him every possibility to pursue his researches, uninterrupted by the stresses of the proletarian revolution.

The New York Times pitifully attempts to utilize the name of Pavlov to make another pea-shooter attack upon the U.S.S.R.

In the early days of the Soviet Government Pavlov did not sympathize with the aims and actions of the Bolsheviki. But The New York Times, in its obituary notice of Feb. 27, conveniently forgets Pavlov's words at the opening of the International Physiological Congress in Leningrad on August 10, 1935. We quote from Walter Duranty's report in the New York Times for that date.

> (Pavlov) stressed the facilities given to the cause of science by the Soviet Government and declared it was the duty of scientists to strive not only for knowledge but for peace and mutual understanding among nations.

A report of the Congress by McKeen Cattell in Science for September 13, 1935, quotes Pavlov:

> At the present time there is to be observed an almost world-wide desire and intent to avoid wars, perhaps by more certain means than in the past and I am happy that the government of my mighty fatherland, in its fight for peace, was the first to declare for the first time in history: not one inch of foreign soil [stormy applause].

To intimate, as does The New York Times, that the Bolsheviki did not molest Pavlov because he was too big is as ridiculous as to say that the Nazis, in their barbarous treatment of some of the world's leading scientists, have displayed a remarkable courage.

EDWARD CLAYTON.

No "Soothing Spoonitis"

Harold Ward's review of Paul de Kruif's new book is one of the best that has appeared in the MASSSES for a long time. There has been a strange phenomenon in the last year or so that might be called "soothing spoonitis." Any writer who showed the least sign of social consciousness, any author who did not say in his opening paragraph that this is the best of all possible worlds, was immediately sentimentalized over.

Harold Ward has made a clean-cut analysis of de Kruif's book, has shown sharply and clearly his former blindness, and has done it without going into a rhapsody of another soul saved from the damned.

S. MARTIN.

SMASH THE SEDITION BILLS!

Civil Rights of Americans will be destroyed if the Tydings-McCormack bill and the Russell-Kramer bill, both new pending in Congress, are passed. The former makes it a crime to criticize militarism; the latter under pretense of being directed against Communism, would stifle free speech by prohibiting the expression of any thoughts displeasing to the most reactionary and fascist forces in America. Overwhelming protest will halt the passage of these acts being backed by the tories in the hope of smashing America's labor movement.

Send your protest to THE NEW MASSES at once, and we will forward it to Washington. The Sedition Bills CAN BE DEFEATED BY MASS PROTEST. Act today, to safeguard your menaced civil liberties.

REVIEW AND COMMENT

Sex, An Opium of the People

IN A PAMPHLET defending Lady Chatterly's lover against the censors, D. H. Lawrence remarked that the success of modern capitalism might be traced to the appearance of women in business offices. The energizing contact between men and women, he implied, built up power resources in both. Lawrence gave quite a lyrical picture of the business executive, in the morning, ringing for his secretary and anticipating her entrance as if it were a tonic. Formerly, when male secretaries officiated, it was not likely that he had looked forward with any excitement to the shuffling, stoop-shouldered, spectacled, gray-faced, dead-voiced, questionably-male creature who would have made his appearance. Now, as a brisk, attractive, well-dressed young woman stepped in, hormones promptly bubbled in the executive's tissues; he was primed for big deals.

It was a bright idea but the depression quietly disposed of it. There became available to the executives of the nation beauty-contest winners, showgirls and models and the élite of the girl graduates, in almost infinite numbers, and all more suitable for and more resigned to serving as stimulants. And yet business remained in its torpor; sex did not conquer the crisis.

While no other advocates of sexual emancipation that I know of made claims like those of our apostle of the mystic male, nevertheless there was a general feeling, for which psychoanalysis seemed to provide scientific warrants, that with the breakdown of Puritan restraints millennium would be achieved. Writers especially felt, during the twenties, that they were in a period of ferment, with social revolution going on all around them. Everywhere the constitution was being daily disrupted, publicly in speakeasies and privately at home. And the unwritten laws were being broken as readily; people were studiously impolite, indecorous and obscene; and even in the courts, where they had formerly been invulnerable, the professionals of virtue, the Comstocks and the Sumners, were being set back. No wonder then, that political revolution seemed tiresome and doubtful by comparison and was left to the apparent sectaries of the splitting Socialist Party.

What were these victories of the sex-emancipators worth? There is no question but that the intellectual air of America has become a little freer, but some curious infections have at the same time entered, to which I shall refer later. In concrete terms, however, whose have been the gains? American people, by and large, have the right to read what they please—that is, those of them who have the price. For example, whoever has three-and-a-half dollars to pay for it, can buy himself a copy of Joyce's Ulysses; but it can hardly be said that those so enabled, will form any considerable part of the population. The contemporary younger generation has inherited the rights in common consent won by its flaming youth predecessor, but no jobs with which to make them effective. The apparatus necessary for sexual liberties is expensive. Economic stringency proves to be a more efficient censor than any anti-vice society. Proletarian writers dealing realistically, for the first time in literature, with "young love" as it may be witnessed on the park bench and in the tenement hallway, tell a damning story of the frustrations that blight young lives; and other classes than the workers are involved, now that the middle classes have been driven down in standards to the levels of the other depressed. The sexual freedoms won in the twenties turn out to be for the masses no more than a teasing abstraction. There are, perhaps, fewer virgins, male and female, than before but far less stable and satisfactory life altogether.

Nevertheless, in one respect, there is almost limitless sex-freedom. The exploiters of sex stimulants which have become as prevalent a narcotic in the capitalist West, as opium is in the Far East and for the same reasons, have been given full leeway. Sally Rand was the new Goddess of Liberty at the Chicago Century of Progress Exhibition and was perhaps the chief factor in its financial success. She stands, or twirls, as a fitting symbol along with privileged and influential voluptuaries like Hearst, of the debauchery of capitalist civilization, today. When a chamber of commerce sets out to honor its community with a festival it does not exhibit bleeding gladiators, which was the flesh Rome, in its degeneracy, delighted in; but it exhibits girls in bathing suits. The last Presidential inaugural had its bevy for peepers. As Mr. Walter Thornton, manager of "The World's Most Beautiful Girls," who supplies advertisers with sex appeal on the hoof, said in a recent New York Post interview, "Remember this: sex sells goods. Sex sells cigarettes and clothes and cars and cough drops."

The victories of the sex-emancipators have passed to the hands of the exploiters. It is not the free-minded writer who has profited. It is the publisher of unsavory rental library fiction with titles like *Broadway Virgin* and *No Bed of Her own*, with their sex accented cover designs; it is Mr. Hearst with his bawdry and Mr. Macfadden with his bawdry; it is the profiteers of smut who publish the fake "Art" magazines and the fake "Nudist" magazines, etc., who have profited. The doses are powerful and easy to take. Therefore, while our best writers are free to express themselves with almost unlimited frankness, their audience is as far away from them as ever. They go through their emancipated gestures in, more or less, splendid isolation. For them, as for emancipated youth, the sexual revolution, lacking a basic economic reconstruction to give it reality, is hollow sound and impotent fury.

Why did this "revolution," so gainless for those in whose presumable interests it was waged, win so easy a victory? It was primarily I believe because big business favored it. The press was generally and for its own good reasons, on the side of the "revolutionaries." The best people no longer, as they once did, appeared on the committees organized by the anti-vice societies. Even in its apparent indifference big business acted as the ally of the anti-Puritan crusade.

The reason is plain. In a number of large industries, both directly, as in the show business and the publishing business; and indirectly, as in the cosmetics, drugs, advertising, garment and other industries, freer attitudes toward sex seemed to offer the best opportunities for sales expansion. In a sense sex was considered a new natural resource and its exploitation was entered upon with the same ruthlessness and disregard of social values, as capitalist exploitation of other natural resources. Wherever one turns today we can see sexual stimulants sold; it is the chief commodity of the commercial theater, of the movies and of the commercial press. It is

also sold as the invisible ingredient of other goods through its use in advertising. Thus, one of the primary human emotions is as callously exploited, as lumber or ores and, we might add, as human labor. The best talents and professional skills are devoted to it.

Some time ago one of the leading psychologists in the country was engaged by an advertising agency. What use was made of his accomplishments? He worked out a new sales line. The contribution of this great mind was the doubling of sex-appeal. To the inevitable poster female he added the poster male who would serve not only to appeal to women, but to romanticize men to themselves, as the poster women had romanticized women to themselves, for the swelling consumption of cosmetics, clothes and other aids to allurement. Thus, inevitably the contributions of our best talents must come out corrupted and corrupting.

If the exploitation of sexual freedom of expression was not in itself profitable it is likely that it would be tolerated just the same, as a necessary opiate. The masters of China, the bankers and the Tuchuns and the Japanese imperialists, have sometimes indicated that the encouragement of opium production is not done for revenue alone but because of the demonstrated truth that a doped people is more tractable under oppression. It is not too far fetched to assume that the business of sex stimulants, the chief opiate legally purveyable in America may here be tolerated for the same reason.

ISIDOR SCHNEIDER.

Science Faces the Dawn

OUT OF THE NIGHT, A Biologist's View of the Future, by H. J. Muller. The Vanguard Press. $1.50.

THE extraordinary popular reception given to Dr. Alexis Carrel's book, *Man, the Unknown* (nearly 100,000 copies since its publication last fall), should be a warning to those optimists who fondly believe that political reaction of the most sinister kind cannot—in this country at least—travel undetected under a forged passport made out in the name of "science." With Dr. Carrel as surgeon, as medical technician, as a gifted laboratory and research worker, there can be no quarrel—except as among his professional colleagues and on the basis of his actual accomplishments. In the interests of scientific probity it is for *them* to speak what they know. . . . But with Dr. Carrel as philosopher, as social "thinker," as a political reactionary and reactionary mystic of the purest variety, it is the business of every intelligent American to quarrel openly, forcefully, unremittingly and without compromise. For the issue raised by the millionaire watch-dog of the powerful Rockefeller Institute of Medical Research—stripped of all verbal magic, learned casuistry and the shimmering tinsel of "spiritual" glamor—is the issue of science chained to the rock of a decaying society, as in Italy and Germany today; or of science fully liberated and in alliance with the destinies of a new civilization under workers' control.

Dr. Hermann J. Muller, one of the greatest living authorities in the field of genetics, an American whose original researches on the mechanics and processes of heredity place him in the front rank of the world's creative scientists—Dr. Muller wastes no time in choosing between the swastika and the hammer and sickle. In the first place, as an honored Foreign Member of the Academy of Sciences of the U.S.S.R., Dr. Muller has for many years participated directly in the magnificent work being done in, and by, the Medico-genetical Institute of Moscow. This has enabled him to conduct researches of such crucial value for society and under circumstances where that value could be *at once* appreciated, that the Soviet form of government appeared to him as the only form within which not merely science but all of man's cultural activities could be most intelligently fostered and brilliantly perpetuated.

In the second place, Dr. Muller—in common with virtually all responsible geneticists—has absolutely no patience with the caste bigotry of bourgeois "eugenics" and the chauvinism of fascist "race-science." As far back as 1925—the year in which most of the seven essays in the present volume first appeared—he was calling attention to the "fundamental pessimism" with which the orthodox social scientists faced the deepening contradictions of their world. Perceiving, with a keen dialectic insight, that capitalism "contains within itself, despite its mushroom growth, the seeds of its own destruction or its own transfiguration," Dr. Muller fully recognizes the vicious economic basis of all national, racial, religious and class discrimination. For him the doctrine of biological evolution, so far from justifying the cruel defeatism of bourgeois "Eugenics" (associated in this country with such men as Paul Popenoe, Leon Whitney, Edward M. East and Ellsworth Huntington), is a "revolutionary doctrine" whose full implications can be realized only in a society freed of all artificial economic fetters and, *therefore,* of all class prejudice.

Dr. Muller's book, slight as it is in size, eloquently summarizes some of the more significant developments in the biological sciences, particularly as they relate to human heredity. He shows how the "red cord of life," originating in formless protoplasm, has persisted through aeons of ceaseless change, branching out into countless types of being, each one the product of the external environment and internal genetic "mutation" acting reciprocally. With the development of human societies there was introduced a special economic factor which itself "mutated" from the most primitive forms of tribal life to the life-cheating capitalism we know today. At every stage the harmful biological mutations outnumbered the beneficial. The latter triumphed through a superior endowment—superior, however, on no invidious "social" or "economic" grounds, but solely because they were better equipped, *as organisms,* to deal with the basic material facts of the environment—and, with the coming of man, to alter that environment in the direction of better control, greater productivity, more security and more leisure.

Today, faced with the immense potentialities for human betterment and social progress contained in the discoveries of scientists in every field (Dr. Muller outlines a few of them in a dramatization of the future), capitalism can offer nothing better than a brief for despair, helplessness and regression to barbarism. All "theories"—as we see in Nazi Germany—must promote the interests of a social class already doomed by the dynamics of class struggle which originally brought it to the fore; and all "techniques" have become subservient to war, repression and a systematic undermining of all genuinely creative activities. "The cardinal fact of modern social organization," writes Dr. Muller, "lies in the reduction of the mass of the population into a condition of dependence upon a relatively few great private industrial enterprises." From this arise the bitter contradictions between the great achievements of our science and the appalling misery of untold millions of human beings the final creators and beneficiaries of all social wealth. But now, with the issues made blindingly clear by the example of the Soviet Union—now we know, writes Dr. Muller, that

> the workers of the world are the only class with the economic incentive, the ethical background, and the force to accomplish this general transformation [of society]; and so when they come into their own it will be they, primarily, who will have the desire and the opportunity to reap the fruits of victory in genetic as in other respects. By that time the old standards, formed under the combined influence of the predatory principles of the leisure class and the partial slave psychology of the workers, will have been largely swept away. . . .

And that possibly is why Dr. Muller has called his courageous and eloquent little book *Out of the Night.* Not into the night envisioned by Dr. Carrel, but out of the darkness which during many millenia has engulfed the majority of the human race.

VICTOR BRINTON.

Divided Philosophy

THE THOUGHT AND CHARACTER OF WILLIAM JAMES, by Ralph Barton Perry. Little, Brown. 2 vols. $12.

THE 1,600 pages of printed matter under review display the intellectual life of William James as revealed in his unpublished correspondence, his published writings and in Mr. Perry's glowing commentary. Mr. Perry's inevitable superlatives foist upon James a lyric apotheosis he would have rejected with heat, and the attempts made to summarize James's philosophic position rarely serve to clarify the long controversial letters printed. Moreover, the attempt to render James consistent where he thought at cross purposes is hardly fair. Perry contends that James supplemented his empiricism with perfect consistency by providing a moral criterion of truth where the "exigencies of life" demand belief in a supersensuous realm of being. But Perry does not see that James worked back and forth between empirical science and supernaturalism, shifting the emphasis constantly, but unable to unify the two. Mysticism and empiricism were so mixed in James as to confound each other. As empiricist, he had to deny that extra-empirical reality can be theoretically proved; as mystic, he contended that ideas about the supernatural can be accredited by moral evidence, that is, by the will to believe. In later life, James leaned more heavily on the fideistic horn of this dilemma. His activities in psychic research (sittings with mystics, parapsychologists, mediums, etc.) led him to one fixed, dogmatic conclusion, namely, that "there is a continuum of cosmic consciousness, against which our individuality builds but accidental fences and into which several minds plunge as into a mother-sea or reservoir." This statement about a cosmic ego is, of course, empirically unverifiable. Nevertheless, Perry maintains that it is not only consistent with, but prescribed by, empiricism.

The truth of the matter is that James's religious, fideistic, voluntaristic leanings resulted from devoted study of his father's teaching. The elder James had been a theologian of the old school, insisting on the tragic essence of Christian hope and on death as a way of life. On the other hand, William James's empiricism was acquired in his constant attachment to the biological sciences and in his reading of Locke, Hume, Berkeley and Mill. These diverse streams—the religious and the scientific—never harmonized in him, though he wrestled with them all his life. The waste is the more pitiful since the two positions James struggled to reconcile are essentially contradictory. The nature of science is fundamentally at variance with unverifiable "certainties" about the supernatural. Any attempt to blend them produces a square circle instead of a rounded system. The philosophy of James remains the philosophy of a split personality.

In accordance with the prevailing beliefs of his day, James's views on social and economic problems—wars, lynchings, imperialism, patriotism, etc.—are painfully naive. His propensity to biological explanations led him to regard "human nature" as the source of warlike and imperialistic enterprises. He even thought war necessary, though he tried to out-maneuver the inevitable.

> The plain truth is that people want war. . . . The born soldiers want it hot and actual. The non-combatants want it in the background . . . to feed imagination on and keep it going. . . . Society would rot without the mystical blood payment.

James goes on to say that we must not talk of disarming and of peace—we must rather leave the imagination its food, the possibility of war. Somehow, he says, we must sneak peace lovers into power, seize every pretext to arbitrate and let armies find themselves frustrated.

Often, however, James saw through the grandiloquent flummery of political demagogues. The Spanish-American War and the imperialist myth of the white man's burden which was supposed to justify American annexation of Cuba caused him to write to The Boston Evening Transcript in 1899:

> We are now openly engaged in crushing out the sacredest thing in this great human world—the attempt of a people long enslaved to attain to possession of itself. . . . We are to be missionaries of civilization, and to bear the white man's burden, painful as it often is! . . . The individual lives are nothing. Our duty and destiny call, and civilization must go on! Could there be a more damning indictment of that whole bloated ideal termed "modern civilization" than this amounts to? Civilization is, then, the big, hollow, resounding, corrupting, sophisticating, confusing torrent of mere brutal momentum and irrationality that brings forth fruits like this.

H. N. FAIRCHILD.

"We really owe it to the lower classes to do something for culture. Maybe we ought to write a book or something." *Joseph Serrano*

"We really owe it to the lower classes to do something for culture. Maybe we ought to write a book or something."

Joseph Serrano

Bedroom Revolutionaries—

ACTOR'S BLOOD, by Ben Hecht. Covici Friede. $2.00.
PREFACE TO THE PAST, by James Branch Cabell. McBride. $2.50.

COCKAIGNE may be a long way from Hollywood, but it isn't so far from Hecht to Cabell. The careers of both these authors extended, roughly, over the same period; which, Mr. Cabell remarks, pretty well drew to a close in about 1929. Both men are, however, still writing. Mr. Hecht's present volume consists of eight short stories, six of which deal with highly crime-clubish murders. Mr. Cabell's book, made up of prefaces and re-prefaces written for the collected edition of his work, is a ruminative biblographical study which will be valuable to those who collect his first editions. Mr. Hecht's book should ease the tension of many a Pullman mile for many a tired Pullman mind.

Hecht is a kind of Jurgen, or should have liked to have been a kind of Jurgen. Cabell is much like the "over-charming and malicious" literary men with whom Mr. Hecht likes to trim his plots. Mr. Cabell's women are "creatures," to Mr. Hecht's bitches. Both authors have incessantly turned their often potent verbal machine-guns on the mosquito-morality of Victorian times. Both were white hopes of the literary trade and both were beacons to society. At the time when the War was ending and America was "going back to work," both these bedroom insurrectos were recruiting legions of upper-class young men for the final struggle against conventionality. Hecht whipped up the libido of sophomores by means of the excruciating masochisms of "Fantazius Mallare"; and Cabell, with Jurgen. Once the Kremlins of Back Bay and Washington Square were taken and many an infantile-leftist soviet of bohemian emancipation flung from Telegraph Hill to Mallorca, Hecht went to Hollywood for a quick clean-up and a quick getaway. Cabell retired to his Virginia manor and to the memory of his dreams, of which the present volume is perhaps his last warmed-over rehash.

It is hard to recognize the Hecht of "1,001 Days in Chicago" in the eight short stories which he gives us at present, in which he sometimes blatts out careless imitations of Poe and sometimes of O. Henry, at all times in a self-conscious style fattened and ruched and iced with bad grammar and bogus wisecracks. On the other hand, Cabell is elegant to the end.

What have been the attitudes of these two writers towards the world in which they have lived? If Hecht used to say "life is a dirty joke," today he should say no more than "life is lousy." Cabell speaks of "the chivalrous attitude, the gallant attitude" and "the poetic attitude." Where have these men been, all their lives?

To recognize their unquestionable talents necessitates lamenting the loss of these talents. Mr. Cabell's answer to Mr. Angel Flores' questionnaire, recently published in THE NEW MASSES, were these: 1. Is the present state of society endurable? Answer: No. 2. In that case, is it possible to disregard the present state of society? Answer: Yes. The society concerned may well regret the loss of such talent; but, regarding such character, there is as little to lament as there is to fear.

JAMES NEUGASS.

A Civil War Diary

A REBEL WAR CLERK'S DIARY, by J. B. Jones (edited by Howard Swittett). 2 vols. Old Hickory Bookshop, New York. Price $7.50.

THE chief war clerk—if not in title at least in the work performed—in the Confederate Government was J. B. Jones, self-righteous and colorless but hard-working and methodical. It was his job to read and reply to most of the War Department correspondence during the whole war. He knew many of the leaders of the Confederacy personally. Certainly he was in a position to write a history of the South's part in the Civil War. He early resolved to do it, noting in his diary at the beginning of the war: "At fifty-one I can hardly follow the pursuit of arms; but I will write and preserve a Diary of the Revolution." And he did. He wrote an entry every day of the war.

Jones stayed in Richmond throughout the war. Here in his diary we can find what that city was thinking and doing during the conflict; how the people acted on news of victory and disaster; here we find, naively given, the contrast between the life of the upper crust of slave owners and the common people and common soldiers; here are criticisms of the leaders, criticisms both serious and petty; here are frank admissions that the Federal prisoners were mistreated; and here is excellent material on how greedy were Southern munitions makers, contractors and speculators.

There are volumes much more informative on the South during the Civil War than this Diary. For instance Moore's *Conscription and Conflict in the Confederacy* gives a lot more on the life of the common people and the common soldier; the four volumes *Battles and Leaders* compiled in the main from the 116 or so volumes of the *Official Records* (North and South) give much more of every phase. But nowhere, perhaps, can one find a better picture of the day to day life of real people in the South during the Civil War than in this *Diary of a Rebel War Clerk*. WALTER WILSON.

Brief Review

SAFEGUARD PRODUCTIVE CAPITAL, by Louis Wallis. (Doubleday Doran. 75 cents.) According to the subtitle, this is "A new approach to the business problem"; in reality, Mr. Wallis' detour has the same old destination: a cut in taxes on industry and a June wedding between capital and labor. The new highway to prosperity is *Capretax* (Capital-Relief-Tax), which would safeguard productive capital by taxing ground values and untaxing industry. Capretax would shift the burden of social conflict from the "illusory" struggle between capital and labor to the "genuine" opposition of capital and labor versus land. Labor should combine with industry in revolt against the parasitical land barons living on inflated land values. This economic wizardry depends on three false assumptions: 1. That large industrial concerns, like U.S. Steel, pay excessive rents to a feudal baron, instead of transfering money from one pocket to another. 2. That higher industrial profits are automatically passed on in the form of higher wages. 3. That a single tax on land could not be passed on by landlords, assuming that their interests are hostile to those of the capitalists, just as the tax on business is passed on by the industrialists. Mr. Wallis adds another confused voice to the growing chorus of the saviors of capitalism.

Music

New Recordings—

EVERY so often one can find a note of mild protest in a few of the Negro blues records which are tucked away in the "race" catalogs of the Vocalion, Melotone-Perfect, Bluebird, Decca and Champion companies. But in general the studio supervisors are careful to see that the blues sound a note of defeat and futility, for it is middle-class whites and large chain stores that distribute records to Negroes in the South.

The way Negro talent is abused in recording studios deserves more space than I can possibly devote to it here. Each year the South is thoroughly searched for artists too naive to know their worth, who are transported in busses to New York or Chicago. The companies are careful to see that no one belongs to a union of any kind, and treat performers with a brutality that cannot be believed in the North. It is a rare phenomenon for the artist-composer to receive even royalties for his tunes, since the recording manager has already had the foresight to copyright them. The usual payment awarded these musicians is a jug of gin, but occasionally the officials give them a few dollars, just to show that their hearts are in the right place. It is interesting to note that these records are far more profitable as a rule than the popular records by world-famed orchestras.

The most significant of recent "race" records is "W.P.A. Blues" (Vocalion 03186), in which Casey Bill Welden expresses mild resentment with existing conditions in relief. A more recent record is "Silicosis Is Killin' Me" (Melotone 60551), by Pinewood Tom, with guitar accompaniment. Coming out soon on Melotone is an extraordinarily fine blues based on the burning of twenty convicts in Scottsboro, composed and sung by the very talented Joshua White to his own inspired guitar accompaniment. Leadbelly, the convict discovery of the Lomaxes, has recorded for the same company (60455) his own "Pigment Papa" and "Becky Derm," "She Was a Gamblin' Gal," accompanying himself on his strange guitar-like instrument.

HENRY JOHNSON.

Check New List Records

BACH: Brandenburg Concertos 1-4 (Columbia Set 249). By the Busch Chamber Players under Adolf Busch's direction. Extraordinarily fine recordings, by far the best on the market. Excellent tempi, superb soloists, and completely free of the pedantry so often associated with Busch.

HAYDN: Quartet in C Major "Emperor (Columbia Set 246). By the Lener Quartet. Good ensemble, bad intonation, needless sentimentalizing. The Leners are not suited to the crispness of Haydn.

MARION ANDERSON: City Called Heaven, Lord I Can't Stay Away, and Heaven, Heaven, Negro spirituals (Victor 8958). The American recording debut of this great contralto is an event of importance. To be reviewed in detail later.

WAGNER: Die Walkure, first act complete (Victor Set 298). With Lotte Lehmann, Melchior, Emanuel List, and Bruno Walter conducting the Vienna Philharmonic.

WEBBER: Concertstuck in F Minor (Columbia). By Robert Casadesus and an unspecified French orchestra under Eugene Bigot. A repetitious, banal work with a few charming moments, very much suited to the small-scale accomplishments of the pianist Casadesus, who exhibits fine technique and good tone.

MOZART: Symphony in G Minor (Victor Set 293). By Serge Koussevitzky and the London Philharmonic. Uneven tempi in the first movement ruin an otherwise adequate performance. Better recordings, but otherwise not comparable to Bruno Walter's Columbia interpretation.

Popular Swing Records

ANDY KIRK AND HIS TWELVE CLOUDS OF JOY: Christopher Columbus and Froggy Bottom (Decca 729). Badly recorded examples of a fine band from Kansas City, featuring a first-rate girl pianist, Mary Lou Williams. The second side has the better solos.

GENE KRUPA AND HIS SWING BAND: I'm Gonna Clap My Hands, Mutiny in the Parlor, I Hope Gabriel Likes My Music, The Swing Is Here. (Victor). Some of the finest colored and white musicians in the country, including Benny Goodman, "Choo" Berry, and Israel Crosby. Very bad vocal choruses and undistinguished tunes, but fine ensemble and solos.

H. J.

The Theater

"Case of Clyde Griffiths"

THREE years ago Erwin Piscator, director of the Berlin People's Theater, was preparing a startling spectacle. In collaboration with Lena Goldschmidt, he had made a new departure in dramatization, transmuting the essence of Theodore Dreiser's *An American Tragedy* into a play that evolved a form and substance of its own. It was nearly ready for presentation before the 250,000 Volksbuehne subscribers when the great Nazi misfortune fell on Germany, crushing the people and suffocating their arts. Piscator and Goldschmidt with hundreds of others were driven out of the country; their play temporarily abandoned. And the lapse continued till last May when Jasper Deeter staged its world premiere in his small Hedgerow Theater outside Philadelphia. But it remained for the Group Theater to bring this work to the attention of the theater capital, where it has immediately provoked the controversy which was inherent in its theme.

Even those who cordially hate it admit that the *Case of Clyde Griffiths* is one of the most remarkable theater spectacles (Barrymore Theater). Divided into rich camp and poor camp with "nobody's world" between, the stage at once comes alive as a dynamic illuminator of class divisions. Lee Strasberg's direction molds the action upon an absorbing background of rich scenic surprise; and the whole speeds on at a tempo precisely geared to the mood. As an imaginative accomplishment, the whole production is indispensable to anyone interested in the living theater.

It is scarcely necessary in 1936 to elaborate on the story. Dreiser's novel has been read by millions, it was staged here once before (1926), it was made into a Paramount film —or rather "vivisected," as Dreiser's lawyers charged. Based largely on the life of Chester Gillette, a Cortlandt, N. Y. youth who, thirty years ago drowned his sweetheart in an attempt to solve his predicament, the *Case of Clyde Griffiths* retells a wild, emotional tragedy. Employed in his uncle's collar factory, Clyde pushes out of his own poor class toward the luxury-world he craves; breaks with his fellow-workers, seduces Roberta, a factory girl, succumbs when the wealthy, glistening Sondra invites his attentions. He is ready to drop Roberta when she announces that she is pregnant. Half-mad with desperation, he is sufficiently sober to calculate his course in line with his supreme objective. Roberta is drowned, just as he had planned, but court's evidence charges him with the guilt. His death as the murderer closes the tragedy.

But Piscator attempts to unravel it in terms of basic social responsibility. And he introduces a Speaker "in order to formulate clearly the underlying ground-motive. . . ." Stationed in the orchestra pit from where he intimately addresses the audience, the Speaker is a transformer who turns the emotional current of the action into thought-waves sent on to the audience. He wholly succeeds in giving point to the story—perhaps too much point for purposes of simple emotional impact. For when he makes no comment or when the stage-action draws him in as a participant, the play accumulates intensity: the emotion flows in an uninterrupted line from the stage to the audience. But if Piscator had intended an impact of simple emotion he would never have added a Speaker whose business is to guide the feelings evoked in the audience to precise, reasonable conclusions. In the opening words of the Speaker:

> It is a mathematical theorem to the effect that today a Destiny of Fate leads and governs mankind as inexorably and absolutely as Fate in a Greek tragedy. The Greeks, however, looked on sin as a revolt against the commands of the gods. Our revolt is a revolt against the laws of man, and naturally must end with the triumph of reason. The personal responsibility goes back of the law. But there is one fate for us all: the law of Business, or, in other words, Money.

And finally, when Clyde stands charged with murder, the Speaker adds to the audience: "just as any single one of you might stand," for Clyde is the victim of this "Fate"; he "dies as a sacrifice to society."

It is this conclusion, of course, that has brought down the wrath of people who refuse to hold the social order guilty for the crime of a "youth who was bad from the start." As far as they are concerned, the conclusion of the play is not only false but "intellectually contemptible." Now Piscator's conception of Fate as "the law of Economics that inexorably and without compassion controls the destiny of mankind" may be mechanical in that it ignores man's power to change and guide his destiny. But he does not claim that capitalism has taken a random, typical worker and turned him into a murderer. He takes pains to show that from the time Clyde was a bell-hop in a Chicago hotel he was obsessed with the desire to share the life of the ruling-wealthy; that this passion conditioned his conduct all along; and that the *social order, with its ruthless and insane alternatives of action, aggravated his obsession.* Clyde would be a sad symbol of a worker. His first working-class experience shows him up as a scab. He even cheats his ragged parents. Faced with telling the truth, he runs away from the difficulty till the Speaker charges: "It seems to me you're as weak as water." When the Speaker asks him if he will lie to Roberta, he replies: "No. Only not tell her the truth."

But if Clyde's poverty of spirit and weakness of character are unmistakable, it by no means follows that they are responsible for his end. Where did he get this obsession for wealth and luxury?—where could he catch this disease except in the mental climate of the profit system? Who told him that cheating and scabbing and lying would send him to the top of the pile, if it was not the cynical code of success proclaimed in every tabloid, movie, pulp-tale and true-life-story dedicated to the get-rich theme? And finally, who held before his eyes the law that emotional problems must be reduced to brutal, degrading alternatives but the moral code of a corrupt and terrified social order? What would have happened to Clyde Griffiths in a socialist world where his native weakness could not be aggravated by temptations to scab, lie, cheat, flinch? Would he have been driven to murder in a world rid of all-consuming envy for wealth and a tortured, frustrated moral code?

Piscator makes no attempt to follow all the social implications. He has tried merely to deepen and explore a significant case-history. In the hands of the Group Theater it has become an extraordinary theater experience.

STANLEY BURNSHAW.

Current Theater

Theater Collective: Three Plays (Provincetown Playhouse, Macdougall Street). Robert Forsythe thinks this production of Maltz's *Private Hicks* "one of the best things in the left theater." The other numbers: *You Can't Change Human Nature* (Philip Stevenson), *The Pastry Baker* (Lope de Vega). Closes March 29. Seats 50 cents.

Bury the Dead. Irwin Shaw's play, produced March 14, 15 is by far the most brilliant, most powerful anti-war play—an unforgettable work. Watch for its next performance and be sure to go. (To be reviewed shortly.)

Triple-A Plowed Under (Biltmore Theater). Vibrant, incisive W.P.A. production of the Living Newspaper. Don't miss it! Seats 25 cents.

Bitter Stream (Civic Repertory Theater). The Theater Union's seventh production begins March 30. It is the first play about Fascist Italy to reach the American stage. Victor Wolfson is the author. Tickets 35 cents.

Theater Piece: New Dance (Adelphi Theater). The New Dance League sponsors this special repeat performance of the new work by Doris Humphrey and Charles Weidman. Divided into two parts, (1) a satirical analysis of our each-man-for himself system, (2) striving toward harmonious common action, it is often magnificent work, rich in design, beautifully executed. April 5.

The Screen

THOSE who attended the showing of the Joris Ivens' films at the New School will be grateful to its sponsors, The New Film Alliance, especially for *Borinage* and *The New Earth.* No documentary films ever shown here before have been as exciting, stimulating, dynamic, tense and as brilliant in execution of their purposes. These achievements are not accidental; as Variety would put it, "Ivens has got what it takes." He knows the cinema thoroughly. And what enormously aids him as an artist is that he has found his place in society. While his art has matured with his political development, Joris Ivens arrived at his social point of view through his work.

Born in Holland, young Ivens was first trained in economics and later in the physics and chemistry of photography at the Charlottenburg Technical School in Berlin. He spent a year as a worker at the Zeiss-Ikon factory in Jena. On his return to Holland he made technical films for the university and in his spare time determined to learn something about the elements of the cinema: movement, rhythm and cutting. *The Bridge* (1927) which dealt with the opening and closing of a steel bridge in relation to the various horizontal movements of the traffic, came out of it. Still exploring the elements of the movie, Ivens made *Rain* in an effort to experiment with the rendition of photographic texture.

Ivens was also instrumental in the organization of a society dedicated to the showing of good films. This was a natural direction for the young artist since the Dutch film was practically non-existent; the Hollywood films were intolerable to any sensitive and intelligent person; the German films were beginning to deteriorate into formalism; and Soviet films were forbidden. So the Filmliga was formed (about 600 members) and they imported independent and *avant-garde* works from France, Germany and England. It was on one of these programs that *Rain* was shown and Ivens received the critical acclaim of the Dutch press. They were amazed that there was a person in Holland who could make films as artistic as the Parisian *cinéasts.*

This publicity however brought Ivens to the attention of the real sponsors of the progressive art movements in Holland: the trade unions. The building workers asked him to make a film for their Fiftieth Jubilee. The result, *We Are Building* (1929), brought him into active contact with the working class. It also gave him an opportunity to work collectively and thus learn an additional problem of the cinema: direction. From all points of view the film was a success; not only did the building workers like it, but the miners as well. Ivens was thrilled when a delegation of workers' wives came to him and said: "We have never before known the nature of our husbands' work. Now we have seen how they work and what they build. And we are proud."

V. I. Pudovkin, who had been invited by the Filmliga for a lecture, saw *We Are Building* and was very much impressed. Six months later there arrived an invitation from the Association of Cinema Workers to come on a three-months' lecture tour of the Soviet Union. Not only did he lecture for the film workers, but to the building workers and miners. Wherever he went his films initiated broad discussion beyond technical film problems. Contact with the Russian workers and the critical estimate of his work was an inspiration for him, bringing him into contact with the problems of social realism. It was necessary to portray man's place in society; to scrutinize the modern world and man's relation to it. What the Russian workers missed in his *We Are Building* were the human elements. "How does the Dutch worker differ from us," they asked. "How does he live? What kind of houses do they live in?" These questions were crucial ones for Ivens, as they are for every documentalist.

And so with a fresh point of view Ivens went back home and began his first major film, *The New Earth.* He only made the first part of the film when he was offered the opportunity of making a commercial film for a radio factory. Part of it was shown Sunday night. It is called *Industrial Symphony,* but Ivens likes to refer to it as *Modern Times in Documentary.*

In 1932 another invitation came from the Soviet Union; this time to produce a film there. Being unfamiliar with the language, Ivens felt that he had to keep to the documentary form. The thing that struck him most on this second trip was the youth and their place in the completion of the Five Year Plan. This was expressed in a Russian film called *Song of the Heroes.* I can't recall any film I ever saw which shows revolutionary zest and youthfulness as well. Ivens' relation to the young people in the film, and their enthusiasm for their work was largely responsible for this. Here in a sense lies one of the secrets of the successful documentary. Many of the sequences, the night scene in particular, had to be reconstructed, re-enacted. And yet the result is as spontaneous as though Ivens had been there when it actually happened. As a matter of fact, the work he illustrates had been done some weeks before. Ivens told the people what he wanted to get—and they gave it to him. The problem became more than filmic: it became real to the workers and the director.

Upon the completion of *Song of the Heroes* he returned to Holland. *The New Earth*—which was begun as an exposition of the work done on the reclamation of land from the Zuiderzee—he completed as a presentation of the problems and contradictions of the capitalist system. This may not sound like exciting film fare, but my answer is, "See it!" In three reels Ivens gives us a pictorial condensation of the work of 10,000 peasants and fishermen working for twenty years to reclaim 200,000 acres of land from the sea. For two reels Ivens builds up terrific tension and pressure. Finally the dam is finished and there is a release. The mood becomes almost lyrical. And then reel 3: the new earth is fertile, the wheat is plentiful. But wheat is not to be consumed. It is a commodity of speculation on the exchange. And with the crisis there is too much wheat for the bankers. Not only in Holland but all over the capitalist world. The wheat is burned or thrown into the sea while people starve.

The most difficult kind of documentary film to make interesting and exciting is the straight reportage film. Photography has a curious way of making the most horrible examples of poverty and degradation look clean and acceptable. Thus when Ivens and the Belgian film-maker Stork went into the Boringe, the Belgian coal fields, they had a special problem. It required a sensitive approach to the human problems and a wide intimate knowledge of the local situation. Ivens and Stork lived in the Boringe (Van Gogh's village) for two months; they took part in the miners' social and economic life; their film became the people's problem. And so they constructed a simple but stirring picture of the conditions. The photography is intentionally bare in order to emphasize the effect of poverty. The eviction scene and the demonstration of the workers march-

ing with a portrait of Karl Marx painted by one of them can never be forgotten. As in all of his films, Ivens makes a generalization: Borinage is not an isolated village (one recalls the isolation of *Man of Aran*); it represents only part of the great struggle all over the world.

It hasn't been possible to discuss all important problems involved in these films. Their importance to the independent producer, to the independent filmmaker cannot be underestimated. Certain of our left-wing film makers are firmly convinced that the documentary film is the only important film for us to exploit. Therefore it will be of great interest to quote Joris Ivens on the subject: "I firmly believe that the documentary has its limitations. All we can do with it, is to accuse and show the way. Unlike the acted film, there is no possibility of identification with the actor, or emotional relationship to the development of the plot. Thus we can never indicate the future."

PETER ELLIS.

Between Ourselves

THE meeting held on March 22 by the Chicago Branch of the Friends of THE NEW MASSES was a huge success. Three thousand people filled the Ashland Auditorium to hear the main speaker of the evening, John L. Spivak, in his discussion of Europe under the present conditions of terror. William E. Browder, Business Manager of THE NEW MASSES, was the other speaker, and Ben Meyers, of the sponsoring group, was the chairman. Over 300 new subscriptions were obtained.

Another speaker appeared on the program in the person of Heywood Broun. He made an appeal for the joint benefit of the Chicago Branch of the Friends of THE NEW MASSES and the members of the American Newspaper Guild now striking against Hearst's Wisconsin News in Milwaukee.

A splendid organization of its forces enabled the sponsors of this meeting to put over one of the most successful events ever given in behalf of THE NEW MASSES.

James Wechsler, who writes on the recent hearings in Washington on the National Youth Act, is the editor of The Student Advocate, monthly publication of the American Student Union. Wechsler's book *Revolt on the Campus,* was reviewed in a recent issue of THE NEW MASSES.

In response to our request in last week's issue, protests have been pouring in from readers who wish to add to the growing pressure against the two sedition bills now in Congress: the Russell-Kramer and the Tydings-McCormack Bills analyzed last week. Readers are urged to combat these dangerous threats to civil rights.

The drawings reproduced on pages 16 and 17 are taken from a new booklet *Viva Octubre* published by E. P. I. (Education par L'Image), a non-profit organization located in Brussels. There are nearly twenty reproductions in this booklet by Helios Gomez with subtitles and an introduction by Jean Cassou in French. Copies may be obtained by writing to the publishers at 41 Boulevard Charlemagne, Brussels, Belgium.

Among the articles which will soon appear in THE NEW MASSES are: "Austria's Underground," by John L. Spivak; "The Jesuits Back Fascism," by Bruce Minton; "The Artists Must Choose," by Peter Blume; "Art in the U. S. S. R.," by Louis Lozowick, and Alfred Hirsch's exposure of further activities of the Red-baiting National Republic.

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