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MARCH 26, 1935

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Kingfish Huey

An Exposé and Interview
BY SENDER GARLIN

PROTEST

NRA "SELL-OUT" and LABOR INJUNCTIONS

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new Masses

MARCH 26, 1935

IT IS evident now to every observer with a good pair of eyes, that President Roosevelt is not satisfied with reducing the standard of the American working class by the "slow" process of inflation; he now adds direct wage cutting to his strategy. The McCarren "prevailing wage" amendment has been flattened out by the Administration steamroller. Roosevelt has thus taken the lead in reducing the employed workers' wage to a \$50 a month basis. As Senator Bronson Cutting said, "We can be absolutely certain that the President will reduce wages." The noisy opposition to the President has died down to a whisper; the La Follettes and Wagners, all the liberals who put up a grandstand fight, are playing safe. But the fight for real unemployment insurance, for H. R. 2827, has not let up one jot. Popular pressure for its passage continues to grow. Legislators with an ear to the ground have reported favorably on the bill.

THE House Labor Committee has directly attacked the Roosevelt Administration's Wagner-Lewis unemployment reserves bill. It recommends H. R. 2827. The Committee declared the reserve's principle tends "to reduce rather than to expand purchasing power." It declared, too, that the Administration's work-relief bill "will, at best, if enacted, provide relief for approximately one-third of the jobless." It had this to say about H. R. 2827:

The Committee recommends the passage of the bill as necessary to prevent and relieve widespread destitution; as practical in view of the great productive capacity of the nation and its surpluses available for taxation; as sound in its probable effects upon purchasing power and the monetary system; and as constitutional under the obligation of Congress to legislate for the general welfare.

The fight now is to get the bill on the floor for debate. It stands only technically "before the House." The Rules Committee can still block the right of way. Senator Ernest W. Lundeen, who introduced the bill in Congress has declared he will, if necessary, file a petition to force the bill out upon the floor.



F. D. R.—We'll make him love you yet!

Limbach

The stumbling block is that 218 legislators must agree. They will agree only if the pressure from those scraping along on submarginal standards forces their hand. If the hungry were silent these legislators would all speak the language of Marie Antoinette.

READERS of THE NEW MASSES will be able to draw their own conclusions about Huey Long, the Hitler of Louisiana, from the first-hand report by Sender Garlin published elsewhere in this issue. Mr. Garlin has just returned from Louisiana, where he also wrote a series of articles on Senator Long for The Daily Worker. The issues of The Daily Worker containing

the first three of these articles were held up by the post office at New Orleans. On March 16, Clarence Hathaway, editor of The Daily Worker, sent the following telegram to Postmaster General Farley: "We demand to know whether Huey Long's dictatorship in Louisiana has been extended to include the United States Post Office. Copies of The Daily Worker remain undelivered by the post office at New Orleans. We demand immediate delivery of papers and investigation of means by which Long dictates regulations of New Orleans postoffice. . . ." Verily, the Long machine is almighty. Mr. Farley, who has not dared to hold up any newspapers carrying the Sena-



F. D. R.—We'll make him love you yet!



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tor's vitriolic attacks against himself, meekly submits the apparatus of the United States government to the censorship of the Kingfish. While the spectacle of Long getting away with murder is a horse-laugh to many, it is clear that for workers his antics are a real menace. In connection with the national struggle against Roosevelt's policies, workers and intellectuals must understand the tactics of Long and his kind. They will realize that through unity, through the building of a broad Labor Party, as Communists propose, can fascist dictatorship, foreshadowed by the Louisiana Caesar, be headed off in the United States.

A BREACH of major dimension occurred in the N. R. A. structure last week when cotton broke nearly \$2.00 a bale. One could not take seriously the decision of several federal judges who in the past month or so ruled against it on constitutional grounds. One cannot take too seriously the attacks on it by Huey Long and Father Coughlin and the chambers of commerce. They are the barks of friendly dogs. The break in the price of cotton, on the other hand, hits the N. R. A. at its most vital spot, at the theory and practice of artificially maintaining farm prices in the face of the crisis of world capitalism. In dealing with the domestic crisis the Roosevelt administration, to save the banking structure of the country, had to deal first of all with the plight of the farmer. When Roosevelt became president, American agriculture was bankrupt, because prices of farm commodities were at or near their historic lows. Thousands of rural banks that held farm mortgages and other agricultural paper had already failed; others were about to fail, involving in the process their city correspondent banks. Insurance companies and savings banks were similarly involved. To save them and with them the rest of the financial institutions of the country, it was necessary to raise agricultural prices. (No thought, of course, of lifting the burden off the mortgaged farmers' backs by repudiation). To raise the price of farm commodities means raising the value of the farm property. For, as is well known, it is not because farm land is worth a lot that the price of its products is high, but it is because prices of farm commodities are high that the farm land is worth a lot. Capitalization of income is the principle underlying

this phenomenon. To save the banks, the government therefore resolved to raise the prices of farm produce. This would raise the value of the farms. This would restore the value of the mortgages held by the banks. The banks would again be solvent. The city worker, unemployed, part time, working at half his accustomed wages, would pay the bill.

THE procedure adopted was nothing new. Hoover had tried it some four or five years earlier, through the Federal Farm Board, with disastrous results. But Roosevelt did it differently—called it by a different name, the A. A. A., and introduced the processing tax and allotment bonuses. Under Hoover, Congress had appropriated \$500,000,000 with which to "stabilize" agricultural prices. The government lent the farmer up to \$1.25 a bushel of wheat and 16 cents a pound of cotton to withhold his crop from the market, so long as he could not get at least that much in sale. But prices kept going down. "The policy did not succeed," commented Professor Sumner H. Slichter naively at the time. "It was the general expectation that Europe would exhaust other sources of supply [talking about wheat] by about January first and would then be compelled to purchase American and Canadian wheat. But Europe showed unexpected ability to get along without American and Canadian supplies!" The result was a loss to the government of over \$300,000,000. Roosevelt undertook to maintain the price of American cotton by lending first ten cents and since last summer twelve cents per pound. For months the market price was thus pegged at about 12.5 cents per pound. But the world in crisis cannot pay twelve cents per pound of American cotton, and the world can raise some of its own cotton. Furthermore, in spite of forced curtailment of production in America, the world's visible supply has not diminished much. World consumption of cotton has declined and last year foreign countries took 2,000,000 fewer bales of our cotton than the year before.

THE rest of the world, in the meanwhile, has increased its output of raw cotton over 20 percent. Domestic consumption was considerably less in 1934 than in 1933, and it has been on the decline since the beginning of the present year. The government

is holding 5,500,000 bales on loans in warehouses, and is pledged to lend on 2,500,000 bales more of last year's crop. Together that makes an amount but very little less than last year's total crop. For a century the United States was the world's chief source of raw cotton. The United States itself hardly ever consumed as much as 50 percent of its own output. Now, for the first time in history other countries are producing more cotton than we are. With the world market lost, the domestic market collapsed, Mr. Roosevelt has some tall thinking to do. The actual losses sustained may amount to a paltry \$35,000,000—\$40,000,000. But the threat to the market of the accumulated stocks in the warehouses is now no longer potential. It is a fact. And now that it has once gone out of hand, anything may happen. What becomes of the solvency of the private banks?

THE Mendieta dictatorship has struck back at heroic Cuban workers by sentencing to death many of their leaders and by confiscating bank accounts and other property belonging to trade unions, "united fronts and other associations" accused of the crime of striking. Cuba, it is rapidly becoming evident, has failed to achieve any great advantages since the overthrow of the Machado dictatorship in August of 1933. More than that, matters have gone from bad to worse. The prisons of Cuba are crowded with militant revolutionists. More than 800 labor leaders, students, and professionals are now in the most dreaded of all dungeons—Cabana Fortress. The death penalty has been decreed for all leaders of the revolutionary general strike. A reported Communist, Arturo Iser, has been condemned to death by a military tribunal in Santa Clara. Scores of other Communists, workers and students are expected to face Col. Fulgencio Batista's courts martial. The general strike, though officially pronounced dead ever since its beginning, is not over. The American press reports the payment of a 10 to 25-percent bonus to Batista's army for having "won the war." But victory is not assured and the bonus may very well be "blood money"—an attempt to retain the loyalty of the soldiery. The same dispatch speaks uncertainly of the "victory": "Although Mendieta had won, his position was not too secure. Economic and political troubles appeared in his way." The extent of this "victory"

can be gauged by the closing of most of the colleges. The universities are filled with troops. Industrial schools were indefinitely suspended March 16 by a Cabinet resolution. The major portion of the school system is expected to shut down shortly. Though 500,000 walked out in the general strike, Mendieta told newspapermen, "Only a small minority who realized they would not obtain support of the people in an election" went out on strike. They wanted, he said, to "triumph through violence."

IN THE meanwhile Washington suffers a grand headache. Its man, Mendieta, has lost his following. Practically all the parties that backed him yesterday are in the opposition today. He can count only on the loyalty of the liberals' erstwhile dictator, Machado's party, of Menocal's Conservatives and the remains of his own Union Nacionalista. And, of course, he has Col. Fulgencio Batista and the army. How long he will retain the army is open to question. And Washington knows this. Unbridled terror—the resort of the bourgeoisie after demagoguery has been exhausted—is on. Whether it will continue depends to a large extent upon the people of other lands—particularly of the United States. The 5,000 New Yorkers who demonstrated with red

banners before the National City Bank (which owns most of the Island) did not hesitate to say there would be no quiet in this country so long as machine-guns rattled in Cuba.

IT IS evident that the public is not buying products of the National Biscuit Company. The seven-column, paid advertisements in New York newspapers attacking the N.B.C. strikers show that the company is feeling the pinch. Meantime picketing at all plants continues; small grocers cooperate with the strikers by refusing to stock stale and scab goods, and urge their customers to buy other brands than Uneeda. In Wall Street last week, white-collar workers enthusiastically greeted a parade of strikers advocating an extension of the fight on the company's products. The N.B.C. workers participated in the St. Patrick's Day parade, distributing 6,000 leaflets on the line of march—leaflets explaining the position of the Inside Bakers' Union, leading the strike. Sympathizers are trudging in with food and clothing to strike headquarters at 245 West 14th Street. The advertising columns in the newspapers, with their transparently false claims of "high wages, pensions, free medical service, etc." have come too late to mislead the large part of the public who know the facts and

have banned Uneeda. Police clubs and mass arrests, as in the Ohrbach case, have only strengthened the determination of the picket lines.

WITH Secretary of Agriculture Wallace still talking vaguely about "economic balance" and advancing the idea that the old A.A.A. only needs a few more quarts of oats to pull it through a bad case of blind staggers, a large group of Western farmers have decided to work out a cure for their own economic ills themselves. For this purpose a conference has been called in Sioux Falls, S. D. where farmers from the West and the Northwest will meet toward the end of this month to draw up plans to fight the constant attempts of the government to drive down their standard of living, to prevent bankers from dispossessing them from their farms for failure to pay interest on the mortgages and also to force the government, both state and federal, from breaking up their self-protective organizations. The immediate aim of the conference is to unite the farmers in one plan of action to obtain these objectives. At present, as it is well known, they are divided into a hundred different organizations and the separation of their forces has left them a prey to the bankers, corrupt politicians and leaders who have swarmed down upon them like a plague of grasshoppers.

THE conference at Sioux Falls on March 25, 26, 27, will make two important demands: 1. Cash relief sufficient for a good standard of living to all families who are in need; and relief feed to maintain livestock in good condition, as opposed to the present 10-15 cents per day per person relief which is given only if the farmer has mortgaged everything he owns and has no credit left. 2. Production credit to equip farms with seed, livestock and machinery which the farmers must have if they are to continue farming. "The bitter terms of the national administration for such crop loans as they allow are second mortgages," the resolution states. "We say that our families hold the first mortgage." United action is the farmers' answer to attempts to drive the standard of living in rural communities still lower and the conference is a far step toward preventing them from being cast upon the economic dump heap by our beneficent government.

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The Strachey Case

AFTER John Strachey had delivered fifty-five of his sixty-odd lectures to audiences refreshed by a little clear thinking in the medley of maniacs, the Immigration Bureau made a remarkable discovery. Only a Hollywood detective could match their wits. Mr. Strachey had declared on entry he was not a bigamist, not an anarchist, and did not "advocate the overthrow by force or violence of the government." In *THE NEW MASSES* a few weeks later, however, he referred to the humors of being "a Communist drummer . . . peddling Marxism." This was enough for the hawk-eyed Col. MacCormack, Commissioner of Immigration. Mr. Strachey had "lied" in the first instance; an alien Communist is "mandatorily deportable." The strong-arm men of the bureau were rushed out to suburban Glencoe, Illinois, to arrest him.

However, Senator Bronson Cutting, and several million other people, want to know what courts have decided that "anyone who advocates Communism advocates the overthrow of the government by violence," and is automatically to be deported.

This attack on free speech through John Strachey is attended by some startling "coincidences":

The New York American in its edition which appeared on the streets at 8 o'clock P. M., Tuesday, March 12, announced in a *copyrighted* story that the warrant for John Strachey's arrest was out. This report was printed several hours before the arrest was made and was exclusive to the Hearst papers. A Hearst reporter accompanied the officers to make the arrest, having pointed out that an excellent place to capture Mr. Strachey (for anti-semitic purposes) would be in the Jewish Synagogue of the North Shore Congregation Israel in Glencoe.

Hearst articles on the arrest boasted that the Hearst press had been demanding the deportation of Strachey since December, and these articles carried reprints of the original editorials denouncing him and "his fellow foreign rats" as the defenders of "mass murder."

Samuel Dickstein, chairman of the House Immigration Committee, and one of Hearst's white-haired boys, defended the deportation in these terms:

"Free speech does not give one the right to advocate the overthrow of the government by unlawful means." Finally, as described by Martha Andrews in her article, "Teaching — A Peon Profession," in this issue of *THE NEW MASSES*, Hearst furnishes the steam behind the drive to destroy intellectual freedom and academic rights in the United States.

THE NEW MASSES last week wired the Secretary of Labor asking "whether the warrant for Strachey's deportation was issued upon Hearst's request." No answer has been received. We would now like to ask the President, the Cabinet and the Department of Labor the following questions:

1. What confidential connection exists between Madam Perkins' department and

the establishment of Mr. William Hearst?

2. Just who were the "numerous persons and organizations" supposed to have complained of Mr. Strachey's "subversive" lectures?

3. Is Mr. Hearst's program for dealing with aliens and labor prisoners on file in the Labor Department as a basis for action by federal authorities?

4. Finally, is this action, which is directed against foreign-born Communists, the beginning of a drive against all Communists in the United States?

In the hands of the immigration authorities today are Otto Richter, Carl Ohm, Erich Becker, John Ujich and others whose deportation to their fascist countries is equivalent to a sentence of death. The names of hundreds of others are in the files. Unless the fight is won against the deportation of Strachey on such flimsy grounds, the wholesale expulsions and suppressions will begin—and will not stop at aliens and Communists.

Der Tag Again

WITH HITLER'S announcement last week that Germany means to repudiate one of the most important articles in the Versailles Treaty by establishing conscription and building up as soon as possible an army of between 600,000 to 750,000 men, the imperialist race for military supremacy turned the corner and now comes thundering down the home stretch toward war. Though the Third Reich is still trailing far behind England, France, Italy and Japan at present there is little doubt that within the next few months we will see Hitler's followers, whipped into a paroxysm of militarism by their Fuehrer, surge forward into the foremost ranks.

The action of Hitler in repudiating the clause, a repudiation which casts the Treaty among the other post-war wrecks—the Naval Treaty, the Disarmament Conferences, the League of Nations—was hardly unexpected. Only a week before, Goering, Reich Minister of Aviation, had intimated Germany's future military policy when he announced that the "civilian" air forces of Germany were to be placed under direct control of the Reichswehr; an act which was a clear violation of Article 198 of the Treaty.

It is obvious from Hitler's announcement that Germany now plans to enter

the race, not to obtain equality of arms with other European nations, but because she is out for superiority in arms on land, sea and air. Though this proclamation, according to the press which loves such phrases, "fell like a bombshell upon the statesmen of Europe," the Soviet Union was well aware of what was coming and in fact Pravda had prophesied it several weeks before.

At the present time the status of the various European countries seems to be in utter and complete confusion. England's reactionary policy of attempting to hold the balance of power gave Hitler the opportunity he had waited for, and by his sudden decision now leaves Britain empty-handed in her attempts to strike a bargain with the Third Reich. Sir John Simon, who was to have visited Hitler several weeks ago, but was prevented from doing so by the Fuehrer's famous "White Paper cold," was to have granted Germany limited rearmament for certain concessions in England's favor. However, as German rearmament is now a *fait accompli* Britain is placed in an embarrassing position when Captain Anthony Eden and Sir John Simon will finally catch up with Hitler.

Britain's mealy-mouthed note of protest to Germany against the repudiation of the Treaty has that ring of insincer-

ity which confirms the suspicion that in order to make the best out of a bad bargain she is ready to capitulate to the Third Reich, even at the expense of her alliance with France. The British statesmen, who have constantly shown their antagonism toward Soviet Russia, are evidently fearful of the diplomatic gestures France has made toward the Soviet Union, and will attempt to checkmate the growing friendship between these nations by permitting Germany to build fortifications along the Rhine. That Russia is not unaware of the danger of a British-German alliance is evident in the recent speech of Kalinin, president of the Central Executive Committee of Soviets, in which he stated that the "present political whims of the dominating classes of capitalist countries are preparing . . . a new slaughter."

Meanwhile France is tearing her hair and talking of "sanctions," the "integrity of the Treaty" and darkly hinting that she will invade Germany. However, there is little doubt that she is terrified by the turn the affairs have taken. Though her material equipment is greater than Germany's, her manpower is about two-thirds that of Germany and with one-third of her army stationed in the Colonies her military forces would be considerably less than those of the Third Reich.

If the Allied countries, however, continue to maneuver and permit Germany to build up her army to its pre-wartime level, there is no doubt that the danger of an attack upon the Soviet Union will increase with every regiment Hitler adds to his Reichswehr. Like the Kaiser he has stated openly that the destiny of Germany lies to the East. It is the only direction in which Germany may move and yet win the support of the other capitalist lands. France and Italy stand like an impregnable wall to the South, and as any colonial expansion would predicate the building of a fleet, England would oppose it with the last ounce of strength. It will be the Soviet Union that will bear the first attack and there are many reasons to believe that in his march eastward Hitler will receive the tacit support of Britain at least.

In the darkness of the gathering clouds of war, we can discern one bright ray of peace—the policy of the Soviet Union. Last week the Soviet Ambassador to Tokyo initialed an agreement for the sale of the Chinese Eastern Railway to Manchukuo. This removes one aspect of the Soviet-Japa-

nese relations which, during the past years, has provided the Japanese lords with a talking point in their policy of whipping Nippon's people into a war-like frame of mind.

A few days after this sale had been agreed upon Moscow proposed the mutual removal of the Japanese and Soviet armed forces to a certain distance on both sides of the border providing the Japanese signed a non-aggression pact and agreed on other outstanding

problems. Should such an agreement be reached the U.S.S.R.'s position will be considerably strengthened in the East—and Hitler, Krupp and Thyssen will have to think it over once more before beginning their *Drang Nach Osten*. This latest peace proffer of the U.S. S.R. proves once again that had it not been for the indefatigable Soviet drive for peace the war which the jingoes of the world dream about, would have become a reality some time ago.

The N.A.A.C.P. "Denies"

IN OUR issue of January 8 we published an exhaustive analysis of the George Crawford case by Martha Gruening in which serious charges were brought against Charles H. Houston, the lawyer whom the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People had retained to defend Crawford. Crawford, our readers will remember, was convicted of the murder of Mrs. Agnes Boeing Illsey and her maid. Though there was strong presumption of a frame-up, though witnesses were ready to testify that Crawford was far from the scene of the crime when it was committed and though Negroes were excluded from the jury, the lawyer whom the N.A.A.C.P. had retained refused not only to establish an alibi but also refused to appeal the case.

In an effort to clear himself of the charges of betraying his client, Houston, accompanied by a number of newspaper men, recently visited Crawford in his cell where he is serving a life sentence. They procured, according to their story which the N.A.A.C.P. has given wide publicity in the press, a statement from Crawford in which he announced that he "was satisfied with the outcome of the case, that he approved of what had been done by Charles H. Houston, his attorney, and had no complaint against the N.A.A.C.P."

Serious doubts, however, were immediately cast upon the validity of this report by a letter which Crawford voluntarily sent to Miss Gruening a few days after his interview with Houston. In this letter Crawford reiterates the charge that Houston had abandoned him when he was to make a second plea. Moreover, he insists that Houston informed him that it "would do

no good" to call the alibi witnesses who were ready to swear that on the night of the murder he was not at the scene of the crime. "So I told him," Crawford writes in his letter, "they would have done just as much good as those testifying against me." He also denies the statement in the news release that he had told the newspapermen that if an alibi were established it "would be a lie."

When Houston refused to enter a second plea for Crawford, virtually abandoning him, Crawford writes he told him: "I have nothing more to say, just leave me alone, and I also told him right before those people who came over here with him how he did me in my last trial . . . (Houston) had left me and said he had done washed his hands up with me." This latter refers to the time just before Crawford, bewildered and alone, decided to plead guilty to the second frame-up indictment.

And he ends his letter: "Some one framed me, just as sure as God lives." He directly contradicts some other assertions of Houston, such as that the clothes Houston obtained in Washington as being those worn by Crawford supposedly on the night of the murders were really clothes he had not worn for a year prior to that.

His veracity questioned, his legal defense of Crawford branded as inadequate by his own client, his failure to appeal on the jury issue a betrayal of trust to the whole Negro masses, Houston yet managed, at these costs, and that of a Negro worker imprisoned for life on the flimsiest of evidence, to retain before his ruling class friends, his "dignity" and his "gentlemanliness." After all, he called the life sentence "a great victory."



"DER FUEHRER"

Russell T. Limbach



"DER FUEHRER"

Russell T. Limbach

KINGFISH HUEY

An Exposé and an Interview

SENDER GARLIN

I have not undertaken to persecute the rich, but, on the contrary, I have sought to favor them.—From a speech by Huey P. Long in the United States Senate. (Congressional Record, May 12, 1932, Seventy-second Congress, First Session.)

“WHOO-OO—OOEEE!”
The stillness of the tranquil evening was shattered by an ear-splitting, old-time, Indian war-whoop. “Whoo-oo-ooeee!”

Down Canal Street, in New Orleans, tore a well-knit man in a natty suit, untamed red-brown hair blowing wildly in the wind. A few of his cronies followed on his heels. “What’s goin’ on?”

“Why, that’s Huey.” From lip to lip the question and answer flew.

In a few minutes, a curious, wildly excited crowd was following “the Pied Piper.” Into the empty theatre in which he had scheduled a mass meeting, the mile-runner led the ensnared citizens.

Huey P. Long, now U. S. Senator from Louisiana, begins to deliver his oration.

His feet are planted solidly on the platform. His cadenced sentences rise and fall over the entranced audience. The speaker’s face is pudgy, his cheeks flushed. His bulbous nose is red. There is a deep cleft in his forceful chin. His face appears wilful. He has the voice of a side-show barker, with the gestures of a Hitler.

Concluding a speech full of incisive attacks upon minor evils, vague promises of future Utopia, and interposed with moving biblical allusions and homespun anecdotes in his best “hillbilly” style, Huey Long thunders:

Then no tear-dimmed eyes of a small child will be lifted to the saddened face of a father or mother unable to give it the necessities required by its soul and body for life; then the powerful will be rebuked in the sight of man for holding that which they cannot consume, but which is craved to sustain humanity; the food of the land will feed, the raiment clothe, and the houses shelter all the people; *the powerful will be elated by the well-being of all, rather than through their greed.* Then those of us who have pursued that phantom of Jefferson, Jackson, Webster, Theodore Roosevelt and Bryan may hear wafted from their lips in Valhalla:

EVERY MAN A KING.

The audience, composed of small business men, harassed professionals, state employes of the Long machine and a scattering of workers, rises to its feet in a delirium of applause at this glowing picture of the Promised Land.

What a meteoric rise this demagogue has had!

Only a few months earlier his armed thugs had kidnaped from the Gardner Hotel in Shreveport, Louisiana, an engineer named Sam Irby, formerly connected with Long’s state highway department. He had been rushed about the state by car and plane, manacled to a tree in a marsh, almost devoured by mosquitos, starved, and threatened with assassination. All this, Irby had charged, had been done on the eve of Long’s election to the United States Senate, to prevent him from filing a libel suit against the Kingfish which would have revealed information damaging to Huey’s election prospects.

As a boy Huey was a regular attendant at all religious ceremonies. He read the Scripture from cover to cover. In school, Huey was a debater, declaimer, mile-runner and member of the relay team. Later he became a travelling salesman for a large supply house which had a branch office in New Orleans. He distributed pie plates and cook books and occasionally held baking contests in various cities and towns of Louisiana. It was in this way that he met pretty Rose McConnell, his future wife, who had won a pie-baking contest arranged by Huey in Shreveport.

How shrewd and unscrupulous that salesman Huey had been! He had managed to convince a merchant in the little town of Waynesboro, Mississippi, that he would have no trouble in selling a carload of starch to his customers. Huey obtained the merchant’s order for that amount and left him hopelessly overstocked with that commodity.

This experience was excellent training for his later career as a lawyer. He studied law seven months in Tulane University in New Orleans with the money lent him by his eldest brother, Julius. His money gave out in the spring and Huey couldn’t wait until June to take the bar examinations. He got the Chief Justice of the Louisiana Supreme Court to assemble the judges in special session to give him the quiz.

Huey was a good lawyer. He has boasted to friends that his first case as a lawyer was one in which he defended a cousin against the charge of stealing a hog. Huey easily convinced the jury that his kin was a victim of a foul frame-up and was entirely innocent of the charge.

Huey received the hog as his fee.

Later Huey became a member of the Louisiana Public Service Commission. He

abused the “special interests” in his speeches, but at the same time his income rose from fees received as a corporation lawyer. When the Shreveport Street Railway Company sought to raise street car fares from five to six cents, Long pretended violent opposition, making speeches and taking the matter to court. In the end, he consented to an increase. Huey’s violent “opposition,” resulted in a seven-cent instead of a six-cent fare.

By such “violent struggles” against the corporations, and the acquisition of influential friends, Huey managed to build up a political machine which swung him into the governor’s chair. One of his chief supporters was Mr. Robert Maestri, who had made a fortune of the bawdy houses in the notorious New Orleans “red light” district.

After Huey was elected governor, the Old Regulars and the Long gang organized a love feast in the form of a “peace-and-progress” banquet. The business men of the city decided to raise money for a chest of silver to be given to the governor and Mrs. Long. Along came Bob Maestri with a personal check for \$1,500. New Orleans business men are practical and very, very tolerant, but they gagged at taking Maestri’s money for such a noble purpose, fearing embarrassment. The check was shipped back to Maestri who smiled, went out and bought a glittering emerald stickpin set with diamonds and this he personally presented to Governor Long. The governor took it gratefully, wore it, and brags about it often.

And then it came to pass that Mr. Robert Maestri became the head of one of the most valuable branches of Louisiana’s government—the Conservation Department, with its control over millions in oil lands, furs and standing timber.

Huey’s political opponents did not let him rest for long. The struggle over booty waxed hot, and soon a move was launched to impeach him as governor. The indictment contained nineteen articles of impeachment. The charges included bribery, graft, corruption, misappropriation of state funds, violent abuse of public officials, favoritism, intimidation, and the hiring of assassins.

Huey went into action. He sped around the state in his high-powdered limousine, rounding up his men in the legislature, and by those methods of lubrication so familiar in American politics, Huey killed the impeachment threat. He had “persuaded” fifteen state senators to sign a “round robin” that they would vote against the impeach-

ment regardless of the evidence, thus barring the two-thirds vote required.

"Vindicated," ambition began to mount in Huey's proud breast. From local boy in Winn Parish he had risen to Public Service Commissioner and then to the governorship. And three years ago, with the aid of the same methods which had brought him so far, Huey landed feet-first on the floor of

Louisiana Special Session

"SPECIAL SESSION CALLED" was the headline in The Shreveport Journal, an afternoon paper. It reported that the session was due to convene that night at 10 o'clock. Shreveport is a six-hour train ride from the capitol at Baton Rouge, and if you were a senator or representative from Caddo Parish (county) where all the cotton and oil comes from, you'd have just time enough to pack your bag and kiss your wife goodbye if you wanted to get to the opening session of the Louisiana legislature in time to be counted for a day's pay by the state auditor. Nor is the ten-cent-a-mile transportation expense money which the state generously allots to be despised by *any* Louisiana statesman.

At 5:30 A. M. the next morning, just as dawn was breaking, I arrived at the Heidelberg Hotel in Baton Rouge. Slumping into one of those soft, brown leather chairs they have in those swell hotels in which Communist reporters do not generally register, I took up my position of watchful waiting for the Kingfish. I approached the hotel clerk for information about the habits of the Kingfish. What time did he usually rise? Would he answer the telephone if I called up? How watchful were his famed bodyguards?

At eight o'clock I called United States Senator Huey P. Long and the voice which answered, I later learned, was that of Joe Messina, Huey's chief bodyguard. "Naw, you can't see him," he snarled derisively. "Huey's busy today."

Undaunted, I walked to the Capitol and entered the legislature hall. It was empty except for the presence of a tall, red-haired young man in a black derby seated at the press table. "Reporter?" I inquired. "No, representative," he answered proudly.

"Well, maybe you can help me get hold of Huey." I had learned that if you say "Senator Long" no one will know whom you're talking about.

"Maybe I *can* get you to him," answered the representative doubtfully. "But I took another newspaperman from New York to see Huey and I sure caught hell for it. It was this fellow Westbrook Pegler. He later wrote some snotty stuff about Huey."

"You won't catch hell if you take *me* to him," I assured the young man. "I don't belong to *his* crowd."

The young man led me to the room on the tenth floor where the Ways and Means Committee was "considering" bills for the legislature.

the United States Senate at the age of 38.

True, Huey P. Long is now a member of the United States Senate, making a bold bid for national power, but he is no less the dictator of his home state, Louisiana.

Just come back to Shreveport after visiting Negro share-croppers on cotton plantations, I heard the newsboys shouting Huey Long's name.

I recognized my man at once. He was sitting at the head of a long walnut table "explaining" various bills to the committee members, most of whom showed not the slightest interest in them. In one hour the Kingfish had succeeded in explaining and having voted favorably nearly twenty bills. When time hung heavily on the hands of the bored legislature, Huey waxed witty.

"Talking about this here business about the state insane asylums," remarked the Kingfish, "I may as well tell you that a relative of mine has taken over the business of running it, and we've got quite a surplus. Fact is, the insanity rate is getting mighty low these days what with the decline in the anti-Long movement."

The legislators guffawed appreciatively.

At another point when the Kingfish was at a loss to "explain" one of his bills to Jack Williamson, of St. Charles Parish, youthful opposition leader on the Ways and Means Committee, Huey declared:

"This is a fine bill, a fine bill. George, here [Wallace, assistant Attorney General] tells me it removes some of the clockwork and gives the hands a chance to move."

By such profound analysis Long prepared his bills for speedy passage in the Legislature.

Along about noon the solons decided on a luncheon recess. Seeing my chance, I approached the Kingfish and remarked, "I've been wanting to meet you for a long time, Senator. How are you?" I didn't bother to go into details about credentials at the moment.

"Could I talk to you for a few minutes now, Senator? I'm making a study of conditions in Louisiana and I'd like to ask you a few questions, if you don't mind."

"I'm very busy right now," Long countered, turning his back on me politely and addressing himself to the Hon. George Wallace, assistant Attorney General of Louisiana and reputed to be Huey's "brain-truster." I stood hesitating for a second, then approached the Kingfish once more.

"You don't mind if I accompany you down the elevator, do you, Senator?"

"Hell, no!" Long continued talking with his Attorney General.

"Quite a building, this capitol, eh, Senator?"

"Sure is," replied the Senator, glancing around with evident satisfaction.

"Expect the session to last very long?"

"Few days."

We passed through the doorway of the committee room into the wide spacious hallway of the capitol. Huey and I were being followed by the watchful Attorney General, several members of the Ways and Means Committee and at least two members of Huey's omnipresent bodyguards.

We finally landed in the elevator. Ten floors, even in a modern \$5,000,000 capitol, are good for a few questions.

"Is the Standard Oil Company the only corporation you're hostile to, Senator, or do you fight big business all over the state?"

"I'm not hostile to anything. All we're doing is reducing rates and getting taxes out of them."

That very evening Huey's subservient legislature—at his bidding—was to revoke the tax on the Standard Oil Company!

"How do you feel about Roosevelt's program, Senator?"

"I don't know what his program is. I wish someone would explain it to me." (Sixth floor).

"Just who is behind this Square Deal outfit?"

"Oh, hell," Long grimaced, "they got nobody." (Third floor).

"Is it true that the Standard Oil Company is paying their expenses?"

"They ain't doing enough work for anybody to make them worth a cent."

Thus with a wave of the hand the Kingfish brushed away the latest manifestation of opposition to his policies.

The elevator landed on the main floor. Huey made for the governor's office and I tagged along.

Once inside, Huey threw himself into a luxurious leather chair. I sat down at the table, while the Kingfish's retinue, including a number of legislators and the Attorney General, waited patiently on the sidelines.

"You're considered quite a friend of labor in this state, aren't you, Senator?"

"Aw, hell, yes. Ever since I was Railroad Commissioner way back in 1918, and all along the line I've always been 100 percent for labor and labor's always been 100 percent for me."

"Senator, some of the union people in New Orleans tell me that men got as low as ten cents an hour on state construction work under your administration. No truth in that, is there?"

"I guess that's so. But, hell, that didn't have anything to do with me. That was a question of bidding. Whoever turned in the lowest bid got the contract."

"But, as a friend of labor, you could have stipulated union scales for all state construction work, could you not, Senator?"

"There's no such thing as unions on state highways around here," the Kingfish replied. Our eyes met.

"Senator, from what you hear in Washington, do you think there is any danger of war breaking out?"

"They'd go in for it if they could. It's



W. P. A. S.



W. P. A. S.

been the method of all condemned and rebuked administrations since the beginning of time."

"Don't you think, Senator, that the government should use the money appropriated for war preparations, that is, battleships, etc., to feed the unemployed and their families?"

"Absolutely. I ain't in favor of this government battleship business a-tall. Of course, I wouldn't scrap all of 'em, but I *would* have a better unified airplane study made." Huey is apparently in favor of a more efficient war machine.

"Your opponents say that Negroes will now vote in Louisiana as a result of your abolition of the poll tax. Is that really so?"

"Not a-tall, sir!" Huey barked. "The poll tax don't change the status of the nigger one damn bit! All it does is to eliminate the one-dollar poll tax. Of course the niggers are registering in droves, but the Registrar of Voters *still* has charge of setting the qualifications for all voters."

Several months previously Huey had got out a leaflet to this effect in order to reassure his lily-white supporters that he had no intention of helping to enfranchise the hundreds of thousands of Negro workers and share-croppers in Louisiana.

Over Huey P. Long's signature, the leaflet declared:

An underhanded and secret lie is being spread about that this amendment for free poll taxes will let the Negro vote in our elections. That is not true and everybody telling it either does not know the truth or doesn't want to know the truth. The free poll tax will not affect the status of the Negro at all. Negroes can pay and do pay their poll taxes now, but that doesn't give them any better chance to vote. It is the registration law and the white primary that keeps the Negro out of our elections.

Shifting the subject, I asked Long if it were true that Harvey Couch, power man and railroad president, was one of his main supporters.

"Those fellows (the opposition) would have it that I shouldn't speak to Couch, but I speak to them all, and tax 'em." Long was evidently conscious of the box-office value of the slogan, "tax the rich."

"What do you think of Upton Sinclair's 'Epic' program, Senator? John Klorer, the editor of your paper, tells me that Sinclair was one of the first to subscribe to it and has said some nice things about your ideas."

"I don't know much about what he's aiming for, but I believe it calls for confiscation. I'm not for that, my program is for limiting fortunes above a certain amount."

"What amount, Senator?"

"Oh, if a man has a million dollars, we let him he'p himself to it, but if he has a few millions, why then we put a tax on it."

"Senator, I recall that you once debated Norman Thomas in New York. Just what do you think of the socialist program? It has something in common with your 'Share-Wealth' plan, hasn't it?"

"No, we're about as far apart as the

poles. They believe in government ownership. I'm against that; the government's messing around in business too much as it is."

"Well, how do you feel about the Communist program for fighting the depression, Senator?"

"Oh, I don't know much about them."

Our eyes met for the second time.

"I do know, though, that they are a-seeking for the government to own everything. We call for the government to keep out of business. Our plan is nothing but limiting property."

"I'm not entirely clear, Senator. Didn't I understand you to say that it was the socialists who want the government to own everything?"

"Well, sir, I don't just catch the difference myself. Some say there is a difference between 'em, but I'll be damned if I know what it is."

Huey's eyes fell on a newspaper clipping on the table. He chuckled. I caught a glimpse of a cartoon portraying him as a crowned dictator.

"I understand that practically all the important newspapers of the state are against you, Senator. Is that true?"

"Yes, it's true, alright, and it's a damn good thing. We thrive on opposition. Senator Noe, here, will tell you a thing or two about it. Why, up in Monroe and Shreveport our boys had told us that the papers were a-layin' low and that we'd carry the election only three to one. Hell, I said, that will never do. It ain't fair for them papers to lay quiet against them bills of ours. Sometimes those sons-of-bitches make like they're on our side, and we have to get out our handbills to convince them to the contrary. Now, as I was saying, we got out the handbills up in Monroe and Shreveport and after a while the papers started printing front-page attacks against me and m'bills, and the finish was that we carried the election there eight to one instead of three to one."

"Senator, I've just visited the cotton country up North. The farmers, especially the poor ones, don't seem to be getting on very well. What do you think about it?"

"This damn AAA or whatever you call it hasn't he'ped anybody anywhere, in any way."

"How would you handle the farmers, Senator?"

"If you'd read my speeches like you said you did, you'd know that my idea is to store up the crops and hold it for a year until we got a good price for it. In the meantime we'd put the farm fellows to work on highway building and such."

"Well, isn't that fundamentally the same thing that Roosevelt is doing; you both seem to be in agreement about the necessity for crop curtailment?" The Kingfish grunted.

"Your program is considered quite radical by the people of Louisiana, isn't it, Senator?"

"Hell, I don't give a damn what folks call it or me—radical, conservative or reaction-

ary. All I'm advocating is right out of the Bible. It comes straight out of the Scriptures."

"A little while back, Senator, you stated that you were in favor of organized labor. How, then, do you account for the fact that labor organization is so weak in the state of Louisiana? You have considerable influence in this state; couldn't you help unionization along a bit?"

"No, sir, I couldn't do that. I'm for labor, have always been, and labor's for me. But I couldn't get messed up in that."

"Senator, I understand that your legislature defeated the Child Labor Amendment. How did *that* happen?"

"The rural vote wouldn't support it. I voted for it in Congress, though," he hastened to add.

"But couldn't you swing the rural vote around if you took the stump and spoke for the amendment throughout the state?"

"Well, now, I caint make the rural people do it without I ruin myself to do it, do you understand?"

I walked out of the governor's office, out of the capitol and into the Louisiana sunshine. At the head of the steps I recognized Joe Messina, Long's six-foot bodyguard. A few days earlier he had beaten and nearly murdered a diminutive newspaper photographer who had tried to snap a picture of the senator and the utility man Harvey Couch, in the latter's private railroad car.

Like it or not, Huey Long is a popular figure in the cotton patches and cane brakes of Louisiana, even though he attained and now maintains his power by means of a corrupt political machine, which operates with the aid of graft, intimidation and terrorism. He has encroached on the rights of the local municipalities of Louisiana and has stripped them of virtually all authority so swiftly that he can justly be described as the "Louisiana Hitler."

Huey Long rules the state like an autocrat: he has built up a dummy legislature, completely subservient to his will; he has placed a puppet in the governor's chair; he has a powerful and ruthless political machine which has crushed all opposition; he has created a whole series of boards and commissions to control the state's financial and tax structure, throwing the main burden of taxation on the backs of the poor; he has transferred local police powers to the state.

Senator Long enjoys the support of leading bankers, industrialists and planters. They include Harvey C. Couch, power magnate and president of the Louisiana & Arkansas Railroad and Rudolph Hecht, president of the Hibernia Bank of New Orleans as well as head of the American Bankers Association, controlled by Wall Street financiers. Nor should we get the impression that Long's financial support is of a purely local character. On the contrary, it leads directly into some of the most influential offices in Wall Street, directly into the Chase National Bank!

Testifying before the United States Senate Committee on Banking and Currency on December 5, 1933, in connection with the Banking Act of 1933, Senator Glass declared that:

One of the officials of the Chase National Bank is alleged . . . to have been in constant communication with the man who made the most vituperative and violent assault on those provisions of the law that were made by anybody. And I have been informed by trustworthy persons, and it is partially sustained by the record itself, that this man, without waiting to vote on the banking bill, boasted that he had practically filibustered it to death, left his place in the chamber, and took the next train out of Washington for New York and for an interview with this official of the Chase National Bank.

That senator was Mr. Long of Louisiana! The official referred to by Senator Glass, and named in the Senate testimony, was none other than Mr. Charles S. McCain, chairman of the board of directors of the Chase National Bank of New York.

As for Senator Long, the Wall Street rumor at the time was \$25,000.

As for Mr. Harvey C. Couch, one of Long's chief backers, the Senate testimony reveals a clear connection between him and the Chase National Bank of New York. I quote from the record:

MR. PECORA: Mr. McCain, from evidence heretofore presented to this sub-committee it appears that a loan was made by the Chase National Bank to a syndicate the managers of which were Dillon, Read & Co., H. C. Couch, and yourself; that the amount of the loan on January 29, 1930, was \$2,975,000. Do you recall the loan in question?

MR. MCCAIN: Was that a loan made to—

MR. PECORA: (interposing) That was a loan that was secured principally by shares of the capital stock of the Louisiana & Arkansas Railway Co.

MR. MCCAIN: Yes, sir; I recall the loan.

With such supporters, it is no wonder that Huey P. Long is a bitter enemy of union labor. American Federation of Labor men in Louisiana who are not attached to the Long machine are unrestrained in their private denunciations of the ruthless exploitation on the state projects of which the Kingfish is so proud. Workers on highway construction received as low as ten cents an hour, and the highways, airport and public buildings constructed under the Long regime are monuments to labor peonage.

Huey Long has tantalized the Negroes with the prospect of regaining their right to vote. At the same time his henchmen, in actual practice, have been depriving them of every human right.

Huey Long's political technique is illustrated by his policy on two measures: the Child Labor Amendment and the Prevailing Wage Clause. Both of these measures he demagogically supported in the senate. Yet, in his own kingdom where his power is supreme, he has prevented their passage.

A recent United Press dispatch reports that Norman Thomas is urging that Huey Long aid the victimized share-croppers of Arkansas. If the Kingfish ever had any in-

clination to aid the share-croppers or the Negro people generally, he would have found plenty to keep him busy in his own Louisiana kingdom.

Busy he is indeed. But not in relieving the distress of the masses of the state.

Huey Long's chief visible activity is demagoguery. And what a master demagogue he is!

His main appeal is primarily to the ruined rural population and to the middle class. He ensnares the impoverished farmers with glowing promises of future wealth, while he corals the harassed "little man" with bombastic assaults upon "special privileges" and the "big interests." His "Share-the-Wealth" program is a pretty soap bubble which is economically impossible. Such a thought is furthest from the mind of the Senator from Louisiana.

Huey Long says he thrives on opposition. All of the leading newspapers of Louisiana—eighteen of them—are "opposed" to Long, but their opposition merely serves to advertise him and his "program." They fear a real exposé of Huey Long for they know that it would expose capitalism as well.

Such a thought is furthest from the minds of the wealthy, open-shop newspaper publishers of Louisiana, and the Wall Street interest which they represent.

Meeting this superficial opposition is a comparatively simple matter for Senator Long. National hook-ups, accommodatingly provided by the giant broadcasting chains, bring his staccato speech right into the homes of millions. With the Louisiana State University under his pudgy thumb, Huey Long makes a full use of the facilities of its radio station, WDSU, to reach his Louisiana audience. From the state treasury he draws the money to buy and maintain several modern sound-trucks in which he makes whirlwind tours not only in Louisiana but also throughout the South. Those few who are reached neither through the radio nor by means of his sound-trucks are flooded with his countless handbills, written in the same flamboyant style as his speeches are delivered. Since the organization of his "Share-the-Wealth" societies, Long has vastly extended the influence of his monthly paper, *The American Progress*. The Kingfish now claims for these clubs a membership of more than 200,000.

Long's most potent weapon, however, is his oratory. He is colloquial, spontaneous, dramatic, humorous in a slapstick way—and his chief staple is the Bible:

"I wonder if it would shock the understanding and customs of the Senate if we were to turn back to the laws laid down for man when this earth was created? Read the Book of Leviticus, the 24th, 25th, and 26th chapters. It tells you there how to avoid depressions, how to keep everybody fed, and keep wealth turning over. It even prophesies Al Capone and his gang in those Scriptures."

The Kingfish seldom troubles to meet his opponent's arguments with logic. After he was elected governor, one of his first acts

was to tear down the old Executive Mansion and build a new one which cost the state a tidy sum. His opponents seized upon this extravagance as a campaign issue in the next election and pointed out that the mansion had been "good enough" for Long's predecessors, and should have been good enough for him.

The Kingfish met this barrage on countless platforms with a single anecdote:

"I can see," he remarked sarcastically, "where that criticism is sound. It reminds me of the old man who kept a boarding house. When one guest complained that the towel was dirty he said: 'People have been wiping on that towel for a month without complaining; I don't see what's the matter with you.'"

Long is a dynamo of energy; he has been known to rise at 4 o'clock in the morning in the Roosevelt Hotel in New Orleans, jump into his Cadillac and speed 110 miles to the capitol at Baton Rouge to confer with some of his henchmen. He has built up a powerful political machine of which he is the sole, unchallenged leader. Egocentric to the nth degree, Huey Long, however, insists on supervising every detail of its operation from top to bottom. When I was seated in Governor Allen's office in the capitol building interviewing Senator Long, a Senate page boy came to the Kingfish to request a transfer to another department. Long interrupted the interview, and, turning to the boy, bellowed:

"Not at all, young man, not at all. You aren't even fit to be a page boy and you won't be very long!" Just what the boy's fault was I do not know, but it was clear that these words meant dismissal.

Let no one now make the mistake, which many have, of dismissing Huey Long as a mere clown. It is true that he often acts like a buffoon, but this "trait," although native, is exploited deliberately for the purposes of demagoguery.

Huey Long is making a bold bid for national power in the hope of superseding Franklin D. Roosevelt as President of the United States. In order to accomplish this purpose he is parading as a champion of the oppressed masses and is holding out to them the empty promise of sharing the wealth of the nation and ending their poverty.

The struggle now raging between Long and the administration forces is one of method: how best to divert the rising mass discontent. Each one is attacking the other's demagoguery, but fails to expose its essence, namely the preservation of private property rights and the strengthening of the basic structure of capitalism.

Huey P. Long is a menace to every worker, farmer, student, intellectual and professional. Like Hitler he will attempt to solve the crisis at their expense by an attack on living standards and on civil rights. Only the unfolding of the class struggle to resist all such attempts of the Huey Longs and their ilk will block their advance.



W. Sanderson

Order in the Court!

IRIS HAMILTON

SACRAMENTO.

THE procession continues on the witness-stand in Sacramento, in the trial of the fifteen Reds for criminal syndicalism. For the prosecution, stool-pigeons, stool-pigeons, stool-pigeons. The judge, a scholarly-looking man, becomes so embarrassed at this parade that finally he forbids defendants to use the word.

The information gathered by these informers and spies paid by Industrial Association and police, overwhelms one by its "intelligence." Melville Harris, for instance, blond, twenty-eight years old, who became director of the membership drive for the Sacramento section, "reveals" to the jury a "plot" of the Communist Party—to increase its membership! Jack Crane, secretary of the Sacramento section told him, he asserts (in one of those secret confabulations Communists hold in underground cellars guarded by machine-guns), that "the C.C.C. boys are going to be used as cannon fodder." This young "intelligence officer" further "revealed" that a majority of the defendants, both in public speeches and private conversation, "condemned President Roosevelt and the New Deal."

Other stools "identified," "revealed" and "exposed" Caroline Decker as a leader of agricultural strikes in California, "linked" her with strike agitation and quoted remarks she made (also many she did not make). Harris further revealed that Miss Decker had even asked him to distribute leaflets!

Every day we file into the crowded courtroom, plain, bare, with marble-tiled walls: a hundred and twenty workers, eagerly

watching, vitally interested; student and liberal, I.L.D. and EPIC delegations; reporters, dicks, watchers for "patriotic" organizations, Red Squad men; the publicity man for the Associated Farmers who happens to be also I.N.S. correspondent and reporter for Hearst's San Francisco Examiner. The three prosecutors are large, heavy-behinded, bull-necked. "Red" Hynes, who, from his record of beating up workers, breaking their bones, giving them bloody scalps, qualifies as an expert on Communism. His jaw hangs, his false teeth shine, and his red neck wags as he whispers suggestions and questions to the prosecution. It is interesting to remember that he had defense attorney Leo Gallagher, half his size, slight, grey-haired Gallagher, beaten up recently at a council meeting in Los Angeles.

One understands as the trial progresses why these men must resort to blackjacks and brutality. They know nothing and understand less, and they are scared. They do not know what it is about nor what they are up against. They have believed so long it is agitators that breed Communism, and now they have the agitators right here under their thumbs, have had them in jail eight months, and yet Communism goes right on—and even, according to their own men, worse than ever.

The judge sits with a photograph of Abraham Lincoln looking sadly down upon him; an American flag stands furled behind the witness chair. The jury—the jury defies description. You wouldn't believe it. Seven of them old, three very old, all belonging to some anti-Communist fraternal order, four confessing they don't know the meaning of

U. S. S. R. (as one didn't know what etcetera meant)—you want to take them out and tell them gently to play shuffleboard or discuss the price of eggs. They yawn, stretch, play with the cord of the window blind, write little mash notes, covertly peel chewing gum, examine their boots or their lapels, turn and smile at reporters or audience or prosecution, yawn, sleep.

Before putting on its procession of police and lay "informers" the state reads extracts from Communist literature, pamphlets and strike leaflets, mimeographed instructions, private letters and minutes of meetings. The reading of the literature was a riot. They would decapitate paragraphs, behead sentences, break up phrases, read part of one sentence and finish it with another on the next page. They got tangled up in words. McAllister, whom the judge now calls "Mr. Attorney General"—(no, not sarcastically) still trips over "ploretariah."

Then "witnesses" were brought from the strike areas—those fields and fertile vineyards and orchards of California which the underpaid laborers turned into heroic battlefields in a dozen different counties. For there isn't a fruit or vegetable grown in California, apricot, pear, peach, cherry, artichoke, grapes, lettuce, peas, asparagus, brussels-sprouts—that doesn't remind the student of California labor history of the last two years of some jail or trial, of sheriffs and vigilantes, state highway cops beating up workers, raids, shootings, maiming and even murder.

Prosecution witnesses say they heard defendant Decker say, in the apricot fields of Brentwood, that when there were 200,000 Communists in the United States there'd be

a revolution; they heard Pat Chambers say the strikers would make the streets of Pixley run red with blood as the streets of Harlan, Kentucky; and Carl Abbott, Red Squad right-hand man of "Red" Hynes, testified that he'd heard Carl Sklar say in Los Angeles at a meeting on International Women's Day: "After the revolution we're going to take out the bosses and shoot them and we're going to strip their women of their silks and satins and make them crawl to us on their white bellies."

Last week the prosecution rested, suddenly, without calling one of its expected star witnesses, Rachel Sowers, paid investigator of the State Bureau of Criminal Identification. She had performed the remarkable feat of acquiring such hidden underground documents as Soviet Russia Today (monthly circulation 35,000), The Daily Worker and The Western Worker (joint circulation 120,000), *Why Communism* (one-quarter of a million copies sold in America) and THE NEW MASSES. (It is hoped they raised her salary for this Sherlock Holmes sleuthing).

The defense has been presenting its case for more than a week as this is written, and already judge, prosecution and jury cannot believe their ears. Their case has been blown to pieces; it bursts like a spiked balloon. Since the case started, two defendants have been dismissed for lack of evidence, after seven months in jail; five counts have been dismissed against all defendants; and one count against four or five of them. Hanks has been accused of perjury, although the formal charge cannot be brought until the District Attorney agrees; the capitalist press has been called to the witness stand for its lying reports. Bail was reduced from \$6,000 to \$3,000 property bonds, and all defendants but two are now out on bail. And—triumph of triumphs—some members of the jury appear to be listening to the defense evidence.

The last few days the court has had a liberal education in the truth about American strikes, American vigilantes and American foreign-born workers.

Cotton pickers and small cotton growers have come from the San Joaquin Valley to testify. They heard Caroline Decker and Pat Chambers make speeches in their strikes, and they testify that both warned expressly and repeatedly against any acts of violence. A dairyman and an apricot grower from Brentwood and the president of the Oakland Window Cleaners' Council say the same.

"Did you hear Miss Decker say that when there were 200,000 Communists in the U. S. A. there would be a revolution?"

The small white-haired Swede with the strong accent, Ulrich Karrer, owner of an eighty-acre ranch, laughs.

"Vy no—not at all!"

"And you heard her whole speech?"

"Yess. I game at de beginning und I steyed to de very end, und heerd it all."

"All?"

"Yees—eggsept ven a neighbor spoke to me."

"Aha! And for how long was that?" crows triumphant Mr. Attorney General.

"Ooh, berhaaps tree minoots."

The jury wakes up. A smile flutters across a face or two, but is quickly wiped off as Teacher Prosecution looks at them.

They are visibly impressed. McAllister does not make matters better by imputing to these simple worker-witnesses the gangster, stool-pigeon and perjuring methods he and his gang are used to employing. The jury rather resents it. He cannot break the farmer's story, and no one disbelieves it.

So he tries to catch out the defendants. They coached their witnesses, they or their lawyer! He asks a dozen questions to catch out Mr. Karrer. No, the Swede didn't see the defendants before the trial, none of them had spoken to him. He came because Mr. Burroughs, another farmer, asked him to.

And Mr. Burroughs, tall, dignified, straightforward, came because Miss Decker asked him whether he'd heard her advocate violence in the apricot strike, and he hadn't, and he came to tell the court so. It is a clean bath to see and feel and watch their dignity. Dignity! That's what the fascists take away from life, leaving it cold and cowardly—shivering like a kicked cur in the gutter. Dignity! Even the hand-picked jury responds to the dignity of these human working men and women. Then come the witnesses from the cotton valley.

The cotton strike of 1933 has always particularly irked the authorities and Associated Farmers (the bankers' and shippers' and finance companies' organization), because everyone who was there—capitalists, reporters and college professors, students, writers, press photographers, picketers and cotton pickers, testified to exactly the same facts—that the workers were at all times unarmed and never used violence, while farmers shot into strike headquarters and killed three unarmed strikers at Pixley, and armed bands of vigilantes roamed the countryside terrorizing small farmers and workers and the shopkeepers who helped with relief.

The Brown family: husband, wife and one son, take the stand in turn. They had picked cotton for ten years in Tulare, and had earned respectively \$1.20, 60 cents and 45 cents a day average. How long had James, the son of eighteen, picked?

"Ever since I was old enough."

"And how old are you when you are old enough to pick cotton in the San Joaquin Valley?" It is Defense Attorney Grover Johnson speaking.

The blond-haired, frank-faced boy blushes. "Seven or eight."

They have picked cotton altogether for thirty years, from Texas to California. Life was a drab and monotonous ordeal, scraping, scrimping, never quite enough to eat and live and educate the boy.

And then one year, the fairy godmother came: the Cannery and Agricultural Workers' Industrial Union entered their valley

and their lives. No prosecutor, no Elk or Moose or Mason or Legionnaire can be expected to understand what this could mean to these itinerant agricultural workers, despised and outcast as they are by the society represented by Elks and Masons. These cotton pickers brought tears to the eyes of that courtroom audience when they spoke of the strike and the union. "Caroline" and "Pat"—"Pat" and "Caroline"—the flesh and blood symbol of a struggle for a freedom they had never known and no longer believed could ever exist—for them.

Mrs. Bowen on the stand was an experience that would need a Dostoyevsky to convey. Unafraid, unhesitating, because the truth that was in her had to come out, she personified the simple heroism of the workers. It was early in the strike that a carload of vigilantes came to Woodville, having threatened Bowen who was section delegate to the Central Strike Committee, when they met him in the street, that they would smash his furniture and run him out of town. Mrs. Bowen was at the ranch when they came, the truck-load full of them, and started driving into the ranch. She blocked the way and asked on whose authority they came. One man answered: "I have permission to



come to your place. I am captain of the villagantes."

This is how Sallie Bowen pronounced the word, and the prosecution and the jury and the reporters snickered.

"If you have an officer of the law with you, you can come in," I said," reported Sallie Bowen. "Otherwise you can't. They said they didn't have. So I told them not to come in. Then the captain said he'd get an officer, and he went for Sheriff Hill. . . ."

McAllister violently interrupted: "I move that be stricken from the record. How does the witness know he went for Sheriff Hill?"

Mrs. Bowen snorted. "He said so!" The prosecution slumped. Sallie Bowen continues, with rising contempt: "And he left, but he never came back. The rest moved their car over to the other side of the road; they were kind of restless. They had a rope with them and they kept swinging it around and throwing it in the road, and several times they started their car up and made for the entrance to the ranch, but each time I went and stood in front so they couldn't go on."

The courage of Sallie Bowen! How did she know they wouldn't ride her down? They have ridden down, beaten up, shot and killed in our agricultural valleys, our California vigilantes have. But she stood her ground, she and her two children and another boy, and after a while, leaderless and defeated by the simple proletarian courage of one woman, the brave vigilantes sheepishly up and left.

Then came Kearney, farmer Mike Kearney. He'd had his experiences with the guardians of law and order too. And now he told it on the stand to keep Caroline and Pat out of San Quentin, even though he himself had had to pay the higher wages won by the strike.

He went to a meeting of 300 farmers at the Corcoran Ball Park, he reported, where they circulated a petition to "eliminate the striking cotton pickers forcibly [later changed to 'legally'] from the fields" where they decided to "take the law into their own hands," to "go across the tracks and run the little dago [Chambers] out of town." Mr. Kearney, American farmer, didn't like these goings-on so he went to a telephone booth and 'phoned union headquarters and told Chambers about it. He'd never met him, only heard him speak once, but he thought a fellow should have a fighting chance for his life.

The prosecution saw they couldn't deny these clear, straight facts: their only line was to try and discredit the witness. McAllister finally uncovered that Kearney no longer took his cotton to the gin run by Mr. Ellert, who had been chairman of the Corcoran meeting.

"Isn't it a fact, Mr. Kearney, that you went and told Pat Chambers all this you say happened at the meeting in Corcoran because you had a grudge against Mr. Ellert?"

Clear and unhesitating the answer, "No, sir."

"Why, then, did you stop taking your cotton to Mr. Ellert's gin?"

"Because I found I could do better; the cooperative gave me three or four dollars a bale more for my cotton."

"Oh they did, did they?" collapses Mr. Attorney General. This he could understand. Mike Kearney's story remains unshaken.

The simple obvious truths the prosecution cannot break through in court the newspapers deal with in their own manner. A day's defense testimony which blows prosecution allegations into vapor receives a five-line paragraph at the end of a column or two of comic or cheap abuse of "Reds."

In several Western Worker editorials bearing on the question of the use of force and violence, revolution and strikes—the questions the defendants are on trial for—the judge would allow the reading of perhaps twenty lines out of an editorial of a hundred or more. The lines not read told the facts that would present the true picture of California's labor struggles. The prosecution fights tooth and nail to keep out any line of truth that may really reveal the nature of the Party. That would spoil the pretty picture they and Hearst, The Bee and the bankers, the Associated Farmers and Industrial Association are trying to build up to frighten California, smash union labor, and get the militant union organizers thrust securely out of the way into jail. Stool pigeons, cheap newspaper ridicule, vigilantes and lies, prejudice, perjury and provocation, gangster methods and gangster violence—these are the weapons of trial by jury in Sacramento today.

Teaching—A Peon Profession

MARTHA ANDREWS

THE SCHOOLS are the backbone of the status quo, Secretary Roper pointed out in a recent speech. Eight hundred and forty thousand American teachers are continuously injecting political and social ideas into the heads of their twenty-six million pupils. To an increasing extent, these ideas are being handed to the teachers ready-made by chambers of commerce and business-controlled boards of trustees. The "social function of education"—as liberal theorists love to call it—is directed more and more consciously along the path toward open fascism which American capitalism is traversing.

The drastic cut in teachers' standards of living, and the poverty into which they have been forced by scrip payment plans, payless pay days, etc., coupled with the threat of dismissal at the slightest protest, throws them into a status that can be described as professional peonage. Because of a lack of adequate organization—due to a deliberately fostered middle-class pride—they are easy

prey. Even the Teachers' Union, affiliated with the American Federation of Labor, is not a union in the strict sense of the word. It has no power to conclude collective bargains, and in its established policies renounces the right to strike.

There is a constant outcry against the "overproduction" of teachers. The Office of Education of the U. S. Department of the Interior presents various proposals for restricting the training of teachers in order to meet a falling demand, and devotes a special circular to this subject. But the statistics of other government agencies present an entirely different picture. Thousands of schools and scores of colleges have closed; school terms have been cut; and nearly three million children of school age are receiving no schooling. In spite of this, the number of children in school increased by 675,000 between 1930 and 1934, and is increasing annually by 200,000. The number of teachers decreased by 40,000 during the same period. This speed-up not only makes the teacher's

work much harder, but decidedly impairs the efficiency of the educational system from the standpoint of the pupils. F.E.R.A. Director Harry Hopkins proposed to narrow the gap by authorizing state relief administrations to assign teachers to schools that have been closed down or drastically curtailed, especially the rural schools. These teachers are to work at relief wages, thus further hammering down the living standards of the employed teachers. The F.E.R.A. proposes further that two million persons whose requirements are not covered by state educational budgets be taught by 40,000 teachers, working on relief wages. Again, the White House Conference on Child Health admits a need for over 100,000 properly qualified special teachers to care for three million mentally and physically handicapped children.

These contradictory facts parallel the economic contradictions of the crisis. On the one hand, there are over 250,000 unemployed teachers in the United States. On the other, classes are being consolidated at such a furi-

ous pace that "an added load equal to that of 40,000 teachers is being carried by the teachers of the U. S. without extra salary and at three-quarters of their 1930 salaries."

What does the government propose to do about it? The special circular of the Department of the Interior, referred to above, faithfully supports the policies of the United States Chamber of Commerce, and advises schools and colleges to follow the example of New Jersey, California and other states in achieving savings by (1) foregoing all anticipated salary increases; (2) replacing high-salaried instructors with low-salaried ones; (3) replacing other employes with workers starting at the bottom of the salary scale; (4) replacing full-time instructors by part-time instructors; (5) withholding appointment of teachers until they are urgently needed; (6) paying teachers partially out of student body or other funds; (7) reducing the per-hour pay of student help; (8) increasing the number of pupils per teacher and consequently the size of classes; (9) eliminating courses (in Pennsylvania State College over 100 courses were dropped); (10) raising registration fees and tuition. This last point is likewise stressed by Commissioner of Education, George E. Zook and President Henry N. MacCracken of Vassar College. Tuition fees have already invaded the free school system. Dr. A. F. Harmon, Alabama Superintendent of Education, maintains that, "The boasted free school is no more. . . . It must be maintained as a private or subscription school."

The increased burden of tuition upon

What Happens to the Salary Checks?

According to Rex David's pamphlet, *Schools and the Crisis*, teachers' salaries were cut 9 percent between 1932 and 1933 in about 90 percent of all city school systems. In 1934, the cuts averaged 26 percent. The reductions are probably most severe in the South where teachers' salaries were at an indescribably wretched level even during "prosperity." An article in *The Virginia Teacher* of May, 1934, points out that teachers' salaries have been slashed "all the way up to 49 percent. In one southern state alone, 27,000 teachers receive less than unskilled labor is paid under the N.R.A. blanket code."

We get surprising information concerning the widespread practice of returning a month's salary or more to the school board, forced contributions to relief funds, etc., from articles in the *American School Board Journal*. Daniel R. Hodgson, Esquire, writes: "All these contracts which have come to the attention of the writer have been illegal and unenforceable, usually because the attorney to whom the Board of Education went for advice made the fatal mistake of believing that a Board of Education had the same contractual powers as any other quasi-corporation or municipal corporation." What a handicap

teachers' training schools means a discrimination according to pocketbooks rather than a selection of teachers according to ability.

There are other and equally serious types of discrimination. In a large number of cities, married women will not be hired, and in the majority of cities they are discriminated against. Frequently the contracts for women teachers can be automatically voided in the case of marriage or pregnancy. In New York City, men are frequently chosen for appointment in preference to women even when the women have higher positions on the merit list. Racial discrimination is prevalent; and as far as age discrimination is concerned, the Educational Service Bureau of Teachers College considers that people over thirty-five cannot enter the teaching profession.

Even *The School Board Journal*, mouthpiece of the reactionary school administrations, admits that the following point of view governs the hiring of teachers: "I don't believe that we ought to go out of our city to find teachers. . . . I don't believe that married women should be hired. . . . I don't believe that we ought to fill the schools with men. . . . The women will work cheaper. . . . I am against hiring persons belonging to certain denominations. . . . I know of districts in my state where the teacher who wants a place on the staff has to go to see the men with influence, the local aldermen, the near friends of board members, and others of the inner circle. . . . It is frequently a pleasant advantage to be young and easy to look upon."

In spite of their illegality, however, these forced contributions were levied, and payless furloughs were imposed as well. In Chicago, the teachers' pay checks were more than a year in arrears, and for more than two years payment was made in scrip or tax warrants. In fifty-nine Illinois cities salary payments were overdue, while in twenty-four Illinois towns salaries were being paid in scrip subject to a discount of between 10 and 50 percent. According to the U. S. Office of Education, the teachers' average earnings were \$1,050 in 1933-34; but the rural teachers averaged only \$750 as compared with the blanket code minimum for unskilled labor of \$728, and 40,000 of them earned less than \$500 a year. Negro rural teachers earned only \$388 a year on the average in 1930. If we apply the percentage pay reductions reported in *The Virginia Teacher*, we have to ask ourselves whether Negro teachers are able to live at all.

The model "socialist" city of Milwaukee has been somewhat more adroit than Chicago in its attacks on the salaries and living standards of the teachers. A 10 percent voluntary contribution was levied to save the city's finances, followed by a seven million dollar slash in the budget with a recommendation

that salaries be reduced. Mayor Daniel Hoan then presented a plan to put all city workers on the thirty-hour week with a corresponding pay reduction. This share-the-work program created an all-round reduction in living standards. In 1933, the socialist administration was forced to choose between meeting its interest charges to the bankers or paying its workers. Accordingly, the employes went unpaid for three months and the bankers got their money. Mayor Hoan followed this up with a scrip payment proposal affecting city employes which was defeated by opposition party votes.

One of the most important problems facing the teacher is that of tenure. The drive toward fascism is being accompanied by a widespread undermining of the teacher's job security. This makes it easier for boards of education to dispose of militant elements, and facilitates the removal of teachers who have attained their salary maximum in order to substitute beginners who must work for considerably less. The New York State Department of Education recently promulgated rulings providing that teachers must apply for new licenses at the end of five years and every ten years thereafter. License renewals would be granted provided the teacher's rating was "satisfactory" for 60 percent of the period, provided the teacher "submitted satisfactory evidence of good moral character, good health and that he is otherwise fit for teaching," and provided finally that the teacher take "alertness courses" throughout the period. This gives the political machine and business interests a much tighter control over teaching personnel. Under pressure, the effective date of these rulings was postponed until 1936, and a bill was introduced in Albany exempting New York City and Buffalo from the provisions of the rulings. This serves to place the burden on the shoulders of the underpaid and underprivileged rural and town teachers who are insufficiently organized to resist.

The retrenchment drive involves the replacement of regular teachers by substitutes at a salary saving of approximately 60 percent. In New York City, recently, 1,768 substitutes were appointed to positions requiring regular teachers at substantially higher salaries and with full tenure rights. The Commissioner of Education was forced by the pressure organized by the Unemployed Teachers' Association, to rule that these 1,700 positions be listed as regular appointments and paid accordingly.

Closely similar to this is the teachers-in-training situation. In order to obtain practical experience, the teachers-in-training are supposed to instruct a few courses under the strict supervision of more experienced teachers. With the economic crisis, they have been given teaching schedules of five courses a day for which they are paid (in New York) \$4.50, or one-third of the regular teachers' salaries. The Unemployed Teachers' Association has fought this practice with the result that New York State educational au-

thorities admitted the charge that teachers-in-training are being used as scabs, and drew up regulations limiting the practice.

Another aspect of the economy drive against the teacher is the multiple job system. This means that regular teachers are permitted to do extra work at a time when 250,000 teachers are unemployed.

The teachers have little voice in deciding what the school should teach. No textbook can tell the truth about the Civil War or the World War, and the discussion of religion and economics is restricted to the conventional lies which capitalism finds it convenient to inculcate.

The Teachers' Council of N. Y.,—a reactionary paper organization—compiled a book entitled "War Work in the Public Schools," "in appreciation of the leadership of Dr. William J. O'Shea," former superintendent of the New York City schools, and a lackey of the Tammany big-business line-up. This book is a documentary account of the dismissal of anti-war teachers, the campaigns for "Americanization," etc. It contains such self-revealing sub-titles as "Schools Combat Kultur."

The leadership which the Teachers Council appreciates so well can best be characterized by the report of the last superintendent: "No teacher who ardently holds an extreme view can avoid injecting it into his teaching. A sneer, an intonation of voice, an imperceptible gesture, a one-sided presentation, will carry their meaning to the impressionable children in the class." George J. Ryan, president of the New York City board adds to this: ". . . may I urge upon you . . . that the board of examiners make certain as to the loyalty [of prospective teachers] to their country before admitting them to the school system . . . let us close the door now against any who may seek a teaching position for the purpose of teaching American citizens un-American or subversive doctrines. . . . Let us have no one whose professed zeal for 'academic freedom' is merely a high sounding excuse to make an attack on American ideals."

It will be recalled that Dr. Ryan has just returned from Italy and is enthusiastic about the "patriotism and discipline" of the Italian schools.

While teachers have not yet been removed for "imperceptible gestures," they have been discharged on the counts of "utterance of any treasonable word or words or the doing of any treasonable or seditious act or acts" and "conduct unbecoming [a teacher's] position." The latitude of these charges is indicated by the Board of Superintendents' decision that: "The Board of Education may not be subject to attack by one of its employes," which is interpreted to mean that a teacher who failed to protest when the board was attacked at a public meeting is equally culpable.

The case of school principal James Shields, of Winston-Salem, is well known. Mr. Shields in his book *Plain Larnin'* exposed the

tactics of the Reynolds Tobacco-controlled board of trustees in suppressing teachers who insisted on talking about such "disagreeable subjects" as economic conditions. On publication of the book, Mr. Shields was summarily dismissed.

With the heightened class struggle on the agricultural strike front, California amended her criminal syndicalism law to include one of the most sweeping provisions against militant teachers ever drawn up. The amended law provides that any teacher accused of criminal syndicalism in a written complaint is forthwith dropped for a period of thirty days. Unless the teacher files an appeal within the thirty-day period and successfully refutes the charge, he is permanently discharged. The California bill is a taste of what teachers can expect under fascism unless they organize to prevent it.

The American liberal was horror-stricken by the auto-da-fé of scientific books in Germany, but he does not have to go far to find similar cases in his own country. Mayor William Hale Thompson of Chicago ordered the history books thrown out and new texts substituted. He "purged" the library of forbidden books and made a bonfire of them in the streets, thus anticipating Hitler by more than a year, and did all this without causing too much consternation among the liberal champions of "truth."

The campaign against what is commonly known as the teacher's "academic freedom," a freedom which has never existed and can never exist in a class society, is most violent wherever workers resist capitalist attack. Thus a bill is pending in the Arkansas legislature which, if passed, will make the continued existence of Commonwealth College impossible. The bill is a direct response to the activity of the students and faculty in defending the share-croppers' organization against terrorist attacks, organizing for an anti-lynching conference in Chattanooga, and

cooperating with militant elements in the United Mine Workers.

The self-appointed leader of the "crusade against learning" is William Randolph Hearst. Of course, the militant and honest elements in the school system, both teachers and student youth, stand in the way of this ardent "patriot." As early as last April, Hearst demanded that the student leaders of the nation-wide anti-war demonstrations in the colleges "be stood up against the wall." The following month The New York American denounced the 700 teachers who signed a petition for the repeal of the Ives' oath as "enemies from without" and recommended that "such people must be rooted out like germs of pollution and disease." This winter Hearst sent stool-pigeon reporters to interview allegedly Communist professors in Syracuse and Teachers' Colleges. The reporters played their confidence game so clumsily that the matter was exposed and raised a nation-wide stench.

The New York City Board of Education examiners report with "sadness" that the certified intending teachers are bitter against the school authorities. Their attitude toward education, toward society, toward life itself is unquestionably antagonistic—says the report. "They have become indifferent to what the public is used to expect of teachers in the way of decent and restrained behavior in public."

Mr. William McAndrew, writing in *School and Society* for September, 1934, urges the Board of Education to view these naughty children with understanding. "You have only to imagine yourself in their situation to understand the difficulty of keeping to good manners." His solace to trained teachers who want to teach and can't is Walter Pitkin's advice: "to accept the hard fact that America as a whole must accept a lower standard of living than it is accustomed to."

Turn the Other Cheek?

But what if the American teacher is unwilling to accept this lower standard of living which is being forced upon him by the ascetic Hearsts, Roosevelts and Morgans? Evidence shows that the teachers are beginning to revolt against this prospect and are turning to militant organizations and groups which lead the fight for better economic conditions.

There is a Joint Committee of teachers' organizations in New York, composed of seventy-seven organizations, many of which are either defunct or exist only on paper, or represent supervisors rather than teachers. The Joint Committee has no responsibility toward the groups it represents. It acts on all important questions concerning teachers' welfare, without the formality of consulting its membership.

The Teachers' Union, which is local 5 of the American Federation of Teachers, is the

only body affiliated with the general labor movement. It advocates in principle at least, economic organization of teachers.

The original program of the Teachers' Union called for academic freedom, economic justice for teachers, security of tenure and sound pension laws. At times, for example in 1917-18, it conducted militant fights, and the increasingly militant rank and file membership at present resents the participation of the union in an organization as reactionary and undemocratic as the Joint Committee. It therefore requests the withdrawal of the Teachers' Union, and further proposes that the union organize a democratic assembly of teachers, the delegates to be elected from the classrooms on a proportional basis.

The reformist leadership of the Teachers' Union, however, is unwilling to cooperate on a democratic organization basis. Membership meetings are rarely called, and have

been stripped by the leadership of all their power. As the rank and file sentiment grows, Linville and Lefkowitz, the present leaders of the union, are usurping all powers for the smaller executive board which they control.

In spite of the frantic attempts of the Linville-Lefkowitz machine to make a harmless debating society out of the union, successful fights have been carried on under rank and file pressure against the Moffat Charter Revision Bill which would have deprived teachers of their elementary civic rights; against the Brownell Bill, which would have placed the teacher under local

control; and against the Board of Aldermen's Residence Ordinance, requiring residence within city limits on the part of all municipal employes. It fought for full state aid for education, calling for a special session of the legislature, etc. The leadership was successful in preventing endorsement of HR 2827, but the Delegate Assembly of the Union has accepted many rank and file proposals.

In Philadelphia, the local of the American Teachers' Federation has a straightforward union program, based on struggle for the economic needs of the teachers. The Unemployed Teachers' Association in New York

City is organizing fights against retrenchment, against pay cuts, the use of teachers-in-training as scabs, and against multiple jobs. In many instances it has achieved significant victories.

The Classroom Teachers' Groups organize both union and non-union teachers on a school basis and stress the need for organized activity.

The union of all teachers, both organized and unorganized, on the basis of the immediate issues confronting them and in the face of a growing fascist attack, is the objective of the rank and file in the Teachers' Union and the other militant groups.

Fremont Older

MICHAEL GOLD

FREMONT OLDER is dead. His passing must have brought real grief to Californians who remember their state before realtors, Red-baiters and the Hollywood hams had made it the joke of the western world.

Older was a romantic figure, one of the last of the pioneer editors. California is only several generations from the pioneers, and the old-timers still know how to admire men whose strength owes nothing to money or modern press agency.

In cartoons by Rollin Kirby and other such trained-seal artists, you will find a stock figure who symbolizes Mr. Average Citizen—the taxpayer, the good father and patriot. This typical American is middle-aged, paunchy, and ineffectual, a little business man in eye-glasses, the flabby dweller of a steam-heated office. His hair has thinned out and so has his soul. He clutches a brief-case and an umbrella. Some racketeering politician is always giving Mr. Average Citizen a fine raping, and you can see he is indignant, as noble in his civic wrath as a wet hen. That is why the umbrella is raised in perpetual protest.

Fremont Older was an American of the earlier school. I worked for him in San Francisco in 1925. He was then near his seventieth year, but still tall and rangy as Leatherstocking, with a great piratical moustache, shaggy eyebrows, a booming voice, and a hatred of trivial bunk. Much of the fire had gone out of him, and he was tired of living. But you could see that here was a real man, one of the last monuments of the heroic age of the American bourgeoisie.

He had migrated from Wisconsin to the "golden state" in 1872, when he was sixteen years old, and worked as a printer and reporter in San Francisco, the city with whose history his own life is interwoven.

The primitive democracy of gold-miners and pioneer ranchers was still roaring lustily,

and whelping a free and easy culture of its own. Hearst, Robert Dollar, Herbert Fleishacker, and a few score other unimaginative hogs hadn't yet reduced the glorious land and sea and sky to their private money trough. Their dull dictatorship was not yet established, and the common man could still whoop as he struck it rich. It was a time of adventure and free land.

Fremont Older was as worthy a contemporary to Mark Twain, Bret Harte, and later, Jack London, Ambrose Bierce and Frank Norris as William Lloyd Garrison, another famous editor, was to Emerson and Thoreau. Here was a Jeffersonian democracy of sun-burned men with horny hands, making money and slinging it about recklessly; digging ditches, triggering six-shooters and writing a full-blooded, fearless literature marked by the masculine sentimentality of pioneers.

Yale and Harvard were effete, but most of these Athenians of the gold camps hadn't been to college. I remember Older telling me how he had first run into the poetry of Walt Whitman, his favorite bard. It was in one of the more famous whore houses on the Barbary Coast. We can assume that the young reporter spent many of his social evenings in these gaudy dance halls. In the midst of the carnival one night, the Madam, a stern and stately dame held up her hand for silence. She stepped to the middle of the floor, and in the hush, read for the gamblers, miners, whores and traders, divine stanzas from the epic of America's first proletarian poet. The riff-raff crowd liked it. Fremont Older was moved by it. Whitman's large, diffuse and cosmic democracy was the true voice of millions of pioneer Americans like Fremont Older. A great message, yet dangerously incomplete, for its industrialism left them an easy prey to the fascist Willie Hearsts and the sordid Fleishackers.

Older became the outstanding newspaper

editor of the Pacific Coast; but the bourgeois contradictions were always at war in his life. A true circulation wolf, he was ruthless in his methods for piling up newspaper profit, yet could never forget the grand democratic dream of Walt Whitman. His newspaper, to the discomfort of the churchly, printed raw human documents, honest confessions out of the lives of convict burglars, red-light madams, dope fiends and others. The confessions of Donald Lowrie and Jack Black first appeared as serials in his paper. Older was one of the first prison reformers in America.

He was also one of the few influential people in this country to take anything but a conventional attitude toward prostitution. When the reformers and preachers of San Francisco were conducting one of their annual orgies of virtue, to drive out the whores, Older and a few friends organized a parade of the women. With banners flying in the sunlight, several hundred of them in fancy clothes marched down Market Street and into the aisles of the ritziest and most pious church in San Francisco. Their spokeswoman, a well-known Madam, seized the pulpit and made a speech. She asked the respectable reformers what they meant to do with the "fallen women" after persecuting them out of their jobs. What did they mean to do about the social conditions that produced new armies of prostitutes each year? The godly, then as now, had no better answer than to call in the cops.

"Not until the sun excludes you, do I exclude you," Walt Whitman had boomed grandly yet vaguely to the prostitutes and malformed of society. This was the spirit of Fremont Older. It was a kind of Christian anarchism that swayed his emotions. Lincoln Steffens, Governor Altgeld, Clarence Darrow, were others of the same generation of anarchists. They were the last real individualists in this country, survivors of a primitive de-



Ned Hilton

NO MORE LYNCHING

mocracy like buffaloes in a zoo on the prairies. They believed all social evil was the fault of bad individuals, and that reform could be accomplished through the work of good individuals. In brief, they had a naive faith in the capitalist system. This is why few of them, except Lincoln Steffens in his later years, recognized the war of classes, and attached themselves loyally to the working class for the building of a new system.

It was inevitable, as one reform after another collapsed and the system continued to grind out new evils, that these men should grow disillusioned with the years. They were pouring their passion into a bottomless hole in the sand. Lincoln Steffens has described the tragedy of his generation in his classic autobiography.

Just before the earthquake of 1905, Fremont Older and his paper led the reformers in an exposure of the grafters who ruled San Francisco. It was the same brazen crowd that still rules every American city, but Fremont Older must have believed the millenium would set in if he could rid the earth of this group of minor racketeers. The fight was long and hazardous. Once he was kidnaped off the streets. His life was frequently threatened. But he broke the ring, and put the boss of San Francisco, Abe Ruef, and others in jail.

No millenium followed, nor did Santa Claus. It was the first of many spiritual shocks to this honest reformer. Thinking it over, Fremont Older made one of the most amazing about-faces in American political history. He began a campaign to get Abe Ruef pardoned, and stated his Christian anarchist reasons.

The episode probably helped him catch some glimmer of the class forces that really created America's shame. Fremont Older be-

came a "friend of labor." The brightest spot on the record he leaves to posterity will be the gallant manner in which he leaped to the defense of Tom Mooney. In the reactionary world of California, it was the outcast position to take, but Older stuck by his guns and fought for Mooney through all the years.

The darkest spot of his record is the fact that for the past fifteen years Fremont Older worked for Dirty Willie Hearst. That degraded panderer and fascist millionaire has always had a cynical practise of buying literary "names" for big money, much as he buys curios, castles and women. Older despised Hearst, but he was old, disillusioned, and thought he needed money. He became a Hearst editor. All the courage and power and rugged genius seemed to vanish from his journalistic work. At last the lion was caged.

This is about the time I knew Fremont Older. I was a young and reluctant inmate of the Hearst bawdy-house and one day kicked off the traces. Older called me into his office and reasoned with me. It was a curious conversation. I caught a glimpse of the dark defeat that had broken the old lion's spirit.

"Nothing can be changed in this world," he said. "It's all a matter of glands. There is no good or evil, men are determined by their glands. The criminal and saint, the capitalist and Communist, all are made such by their glands. It's true that a man has to degrade himself to work for William Randolph Hearst, but we are all degraded who must live and work under capitalism. You cannot avoid being socially a sinner, any more than a criminal can escape the dictation of his glands. Are you better than I am, or the rest of us? Is it social to try to save your own private soul, when all the rest of us must be sinners?

Isn't this spiritual selfishness? Aren't you the real individualist, the holier-than-thou prig?"

And so forth. It was easy to sense the long, lonely nights and days in which this great old man had tortured himself trying to rationalize the position he was in. I felt sorry for him but rejected his crooked logic, then and now. There is a better life to be led than being a piece of Hearst property with "spiritual" qualms. Capitalism is not eternal, and will not go on forever crushing and corrupting vital spirits like Fremont Older. Even now, hosts of young American intellectuals are seceding from capitalism, and the false dilemma in which Fremont Older found himself trapped. He was born fifty years too soon—that was his misfortune. The generous young Communist pioneers of our day have a bloodier but more glorious path before them and they, too, may die—but not in chains.

Bertrand Russell

These many years having gained no more
Than a logical turn of phrase, I find that
what I say

Is as a poor house built of good stones.
These many years the uncompromising
compromise

Of Skepticism has been good for all. A
simple way—

Destroy all passion with algebra
For passion can make things far too real
In this world of appearances.

Wanting peace I write for Hearst. This is
nought.

For justice I have learnt is but a
Prostitute who gives herself to many
definitions.

ROBERT SCHUMAN.

Correspondence

What Do Other Readers Think?

TO THE NEW MASSES:

The great preponderance of political articles over cultural in THE NEW MASSES, both in length and number, is to be regretted. Primarily, THE NEW MASSES aims to reach the middle class, to whom the strongest appeal is through news in cultural and professional fields. I believe these readers would appreciate full-bodied discussions in the several arts and sciences, instead of the shortened and cut articles in current practice. . . .

Would it not be better to present fewer political articles, so that those in the cultural fields might be complete and more informative? In this way, the reader would be given a criterion of judgment in the arts as well as in politics.

GLADYS FISHER.

Bouquet for Miss Pitts

TO THE NEW MASSES:

The February 19 NEW MASSES is without doubt one of the very fine numbers. Among its able articles is one by Rebecca Pitts, "Women and Communism."

I wish it might be read by every intelligent woman the world over. As a long-time feminist and one who has labored for equality for women, and rather a fair student of the long involved analysis of the course of our present position, I feel I have a certain right to comment on this article. Most literature put out by women's organizations fails to convince simply because it is basically unsound. Miss Pitts, however, has written a clear and sane analysis.

I was in Germany and Russia this past summer and I can assure you that the comparison between German and Russian women was so glaringly real that by the time I reached Switzerland and the group of women whom I had worked with before over a long period of years for equal rights, seemed nothing more sensible than a squirrel in a squirrel cage, rushing about with no place to land. What we gain in this piece-meal fashion can only be justified if we gain momentum toward Communism.

I hope a greater use than the publishing in one issue of THE NEW MASSES can be made of this truly remarkable article. It has put into a few thousand words the material that would take any one of us years to amass.

Milwaukee, Wis.

INEZ BARR.

It Costs a Lot to Live

TO THE NEW MASSES:

According to figures in official government publications, grocery chains sold 8.7 percent less food in December, 1934, than in March, 1933, the month Roosevelt came into office. Dollar sales increased somewhat, according to the index given in the Survey of Current Business, publication of the Department of Commerce, but food prices increased far

more, according to Bureau of Labor Statistics figures. Combining the two, we get the 8.7-percent drop.

But this isn't all the drop. For one thing, the index of chain store sales, which the Commerce Department copies from the Chain Store Trade Association, covers only the most prosperous companies. If it included them all, it would show a much greater drop. For another thing, chain stores have been steadily grabbing a larger percent of the business, so the quantity of food sold by independents probably declined far more. Add these things to the 8.7 percent, and then add the growing nuisance of sales taxes, and add the 11-percent increase in food prices which Wallace promises us for the next half year, and it's plain that the New Deal has done and is doing plenty to living standards—and the government isn't even promising higher wages any more. Plainly workers will have to fight to keep from starvation standards of living.

HAROLD F. WATSON.

Not the Same Man

TO THE NEW MASSES:

Erotic circulars are being distributed in huge numbers throughout the United States advertising a book entitled *The Scented Garden: Anthropology of the Art of Love of the Levant*, by Dr. Bernhard Stern. The similarity of names has led many persons to believe me to be the author of this work. The publisher has intentionally concealed the fact that it is a translation of a book by a German physician first published in Berlin in 1903.

Will you please publish this information to dispel suspicion that I am responsible in any way for this sex racket.

BERNHARD J. STERN.

Theatre of Vigor

TO THE NEW MASSES:

The high priests of the theatre and the keepers of the box office receipts are constantly bewailing the fact that the theatre has lost its vitality, that it has no outstanding playwrights, no fervent audiences, no creative artists free from the rather prevailing desire for a portion of the box office receipts.

However, what they are bewailing is the loss of vitality of the *bourgeois* theatre, the lack of artists who will play their pitiful stuff, the audience that can be duped into paying high prices for marginal utility nonsense.

However, there is a theatre movement which is vital, which has vigor, whose audiences thrill at every play, whose artists play for their audiences and not for how much that audience can shell out before it enters. That theatre movement is the *workers'* theatre movement, organized as the New Theatre League.

An important section of the New Theatre League are the affiliated Youth Branches of the International Workers Order.

Here are young working men and women who come together night after night to rehearse so that they can serve the working-class movement. Here are groups, without any funds, without any scenery, stage settings, costumes and all the other necessary paraphernalia, performing vital, complex, short revolutionary plays before hundreds and thousands of enthusiastic people.

The New York Youth branches of the International Workers Order will hold their annual dramatic contest Sunday, March 24, 2 p.m. at Washington Irving High School. Many interesting plays will be given, among them "America, America," by Alfred Kreymborg, "A Letter from the Village," and others. We invite all real lovers of the theatre to come and see our groups in action.

IRVING GARBATI,

N. Y. Secretary of Youth Section.

The Ohio Relief Racket

TO THE NEW MASSES:

Evidently the relief racket in the Eastern states, as reported in your March 5 issue, is almost Utopian compared with the same in central and southern Ohio. Let me illustrate with a few unfortunate facts:

In Zanesville, Ohio, at least one investigator carries a case-load in excess of 325. In Marietta, Ohio, the average case-load approximates 175, and investigators who receive pay for forty hours of work per week often in reality are forced to work over twelve hours per day. Too, holiday privileges are usually violated.

Other considerations that might be stressed are the tendency of relief executives in this section to "doctor down" the maintenance estimates for clients drawn up by the statistics department; the lack of cooperation between relief offices and public health authorities; the domination of American Legion men in work relief offices with consequent preferential treatment to Legionnaire clients.

Certainly it should be to the interest of both investigators and clients everywhere to organize mutual defense leagues against the relief executives and the whole corrupt system.

Marietta College.

JOHN DELANCEY.

Terror in Phoenix

TO THE NEW MASSES:

There has recently been unleashed in Phoenix, in particular, and in the state of Arizona generally, a wave of terror directed against the working class, particularly against the foreign-born workers. In the recent F.E.R.A. strike here in Phoenix, workers were clubbed and badly beaten, and twenty-eight workers were arrested, charged with "Riot." Clay Naff, one of the most militant leaders of the working class here in its fight for better conditions, has been sentenced to serve one to two years in the state penitentiary at Florence. A clear picture of the fascist drive in Arizona can be seen from the following bills which have been introduced into the present session of the legislature.

1. A bill to deport all foreign-born workers regardless of naturalization.

2. A bill to enlarge the state police force.

3. A bill which makes it a felony for any alien, ineligible to citizenship, to own agricultural land or manage such land on which are grown crops for human consumption. And also that all aliens ineligible to citizenship, must register with the Secretary of State before being allowed to work on such lands. There is an additional penalty for violations during time of war.

4. Criminal syndicalism laws have just been introduced with penalty for violation, one to fourteen years in the penitentiary.

In addition to this proposed legislation there are already "Riot Laws" which can be compared to the Dangerous Thoughts laws in Japan.

The International Labor Defense, 16 South Second Avenue, Phoenix, Arizona, appeals to all liberal organizations and individuals, to assist the fight against deportations and terror against the working class of Arizona. We are badly in need of funds for legal expenses. Also we ask that protest resolutions be sent to the following: Frances Perkins, Washington, D. C., against deportation of Rufino Rendon. A. A. Spurgeon, Immigration Inspector, Phoenix, Arizona and Gov. B. B. Moeur, Phoenix, Arizona. Immediate and unconditional release of Clay Naff, and the dropping of all charges against the twenty-seven other workers.

Copies of all protest resolutions will be appreciated.

JAY FREDERICK, secretary,
Frank Little Branch, I. L. D.

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REVIEW AND COMMENT

Strachey and the Pundits

NO BOOK in recent memory has so effectively put the capitalist economists on the spot as this book of Strachey's on the capitalist crisis.* The conditions of the times are with Strachey. It is not only that the general features of the crisis are burning themselves into the consciousness of the masses through experience. The political doctors and the economic "scientists" are confused, divided, and at bottom despairing. So the Marxist weapon in the hands of a skilled writer cuts deep, producing an effect in the realm of ideas which was unheard of in this country a decade ago.

Strachey first gives the capitalist economists their innings. They march in review, "left" to "right," amateur and professional, inflationist and deflationist. Each particular school in turn is allowed to present its case through one of its leading spokesmen such as Major Douglas, Hobson, Irving Fisher, Hayek and Robbins. Through quotation and summary the position of these gentlemen is stated with ample justice. (In fact the summaries are often clearer and more persuasive than the original works). There are no straw men here. While the capitalist economists are set up in order to be knocked down, the setting-up process is one of faithful representation. In the end they are thrust politely by a Marxian rapier—more politely perhaps than Marx would have done it, but nonetheless with fatal results.

The two main schools of capitalist economic thought today are united, as Strachey shows us, on the main point of the necessity for restoring profits. But they differ as to method. One group (inflationist) would raise prices. The other (deflationist) would cut wages directly. Both possess a considerable cogency from the standpoint of temporary capitalist "recovery." But both of them fail dismally in their claims of "stabilization," for the nemesis of reduced mass purchasing power catches them in a vital spot.

The school of "under-consumptionists" fares even less happily, if anything, at Strachey's hands. These liberal gentlemen, the "high-wage philosophers" or amateur economists, as he dubs them, include upon examination such diverse types as Stuart Chase, G. D. H. Cole and Henry Ford (by courtesy). They have glimpsed a real truth when they see that the masses of the people must have money if goods are to be produced and sold. They prate glibly about the undenied paradox of starvation in the midst of plenty. But they suffer from the fatal illusion that capitalism can be made into a

system of producing for needs. They fail to see the elementary truth that the paying of high wages is a *bad* business policy because it cuts into profits. Carried far enough to raise perceptibly the consuming power of the masses, this policy would immediately reduce profits so far as to stop the wheels of industry *under capitalism*.

Thus the contradictory schools of capitalist thought reveal in their partial way the inherent contradiction of the capitalist mode of production:

The system runs into a crisis one way if it maximizes accumulation (of capital) and another way if it maximizes consumption. By the same line of argument, however, both schools can be shown to be wrong on their positive sides. For each proposes a remedy, which, while it enables the system to avoid one horn of the dilemma, infallibly impales it on the other. Thus each school is able to show, and does show, that the other's constructive proposals are no remedy; that they are, indeed, worse than the disease.

A considerable part of Strachey's book is devoted to an elucidation of the Marxist theory of capitalist crisis as found in Volume III of *Capital*. This is splendid work. It enables him to pierce directly and positively, as well as by internal criticism, the fallacies of the capitalist economists concerning the nature of crisis, depression and recovery. In addition, this part of the work constitutes a valuable aid to many of us who can navigate Volume I of *Capital* fairly competently but find Volume III, for technical reasons, rather hard going. The subject matter of Volume III is particularly difficult.

As the book reviewers sat down to do the Strachey assignment for the capitalist press, their thoughts must have been troubled. Their master's voice was prompting: "Better be diplomatic. You'll have to give it a break, but pounce on it hard some way." And so they pay the book some grudging admiration. It is safe enough to praise Strachey's style. In fact the reviews fairly drip with the word "lucid." But . . . (there is always a "but") the content is the rub.

Take Henry Hazlitt in *The New York Times*. He gives a competent though patronizing summary of Strachey's attack on the economists. He complains that Strachey "tries to play off one capitalist economist against another." The real contradictions which Strachey reveals seem to be regarded by Hazlitt as some sleight-of-hand on Strachey's part. He further accuses Strachey of quoting out of context. (No evidence of this is presented. None can be in this case, unless one expects an author to quote a whole book. Strachey is very careful in his quotations). Towards the end of his review Hazlitt re-

sorts to some of the old chestnuts alleged to demolish the labor theory of value. These have been refuted a thousand times. Finally, Hazlitt makes the astounding statement that Volume III of *Capital* "remains merely as a vague ethical flourish." And for Strachey "to defend not only the theories of Marx but their successive changes and contradictions—that is truly touching loyalty." On the contrary isn't it Mr. Hazlitt's loyalty to his publisher and his publisher's class that is quite obvious, especially when it leads to such fantastic disregard of the truth?

Norman Thomas, reviewing for *The Nation*, has some approving words to say about the Strachey book. He also recommends the works of Prof. Slichter (Harvard) and of the Brookings Institute of Washington. He attempts to derive some sport in poking fun at the algebraic formulae which Marx used as shorthand for certain parts of the theory. It seems, however, that Strachey's volume has strengthened Thomas' "own conviction of the inevitable destruction of *laissez-faire* capitalism by its internal contradictions." (My italics. A. T. C.) This fits with Thomas' assertion that "Marxist theory of the rate of profit necessarily depends on capital being free to move from one industry to another under competitive conditions which a semi-monopoly capitalism rather successfully limits." Does Mr. Thomas really believe that monopoly capitalism solves the contradictions instead of aggravating them? This appears to be his view. Perhaps more of Lenin and less of Slichter would be helpful.

Thomas comes close to admitting the case against socialism through reformism and the British Labor Party. All of which naturally enough leads him to discuss fascism. Here Mr. Thomas sees "certain tendencies in Germany which make me think it barely possible that in the end fascism may produce a poor and dreary sort of planned economy in which the mainspring is no longer profit, but under which the present beneficiaries of surplus value may be granted allowances, a kind of payment of rent upon what they have hitherto regarded as their capital as well as upon their land." This is rather more direct support for fascism than we are accustomed to expect from Norman Thomas. The direction of his political program has earned the characterization of social-fascism on more subtle grounds than the above. An attack on the "official class" in the Soviet Union and more gibes about Marxist algebra wind up the Thomas review of Strachey. An unnecessary tribute is paid when Thomas generously grants that socialism is "deeply indebted to the Marxist's manifold services."

George Soule, reviewing Strachey in *The New Republic*, concedes that Marx was "at

* *The Nature of Capitalist Crisis*, by John Strachey. Covici, Friede. 393 pages. \$3.

least three-quarters right." Of all the reviewers for the bourgeois press, Soule seems to be most profoundly impressed by the truth of the Marxist economics which Strachey is using. He is quite bothered. After showing the tremendous strength of the theory, with slight reference to Strachey, Soule admits that the "rough confirmation of experience is overwhelming." Soule, like the others, has plenty of "buts." They appear in the form of agonized puzzles. I confess to an inability to follow them, perhaps for lack of sufficient economic training in the Soule school. Mr. Soule is still making up his mind. He would still seem to be in need of someone to hold his economic hand.

Many of the reviewers, including Charles A. Beard (he ought to know better) indulge in the stale joke of Marxism as a religion. References to salvation, gospel, etc., are frequent. Mr. Elliott Thurston of The Washington Post entitles his lengthy review, "Strachey at the Shrine of Marx." Mr. Lewis Gannett complains in The Herald Tribune that the revolution has not come off on "time." This makes him skeptical of the whole business of Marxism. He rather likes Strachey's book.

From War to War

IN TIME OF PEACE, by Thomas Boyd.
Minton, Balch & Co. 309 pages. \$2.50.

EVEN now this novel, the last from Thomas Boyd's pen, gives signs of reaching a larger audience than any other American revolutionary novel. Although it can be read independently of the earlier novel, it is a simple and moving sequel to his war story of twelve years ago, *Through the Wheat*, in which William Hicks is carried through the worst fighting the Americans saw in France. By virtue of its honest and very popular approach, it will have a great number of readers. And in it their understanding of the fanatically optimistic '20's will be much clarified. This is of considerable importance because too often we find the American middle class repudiating only the worst symptoms of that period and actually talking of getting back to it. *In Time of Peace* will help them realize that these bad features were the inseparable blood brothers of all the other features of our history from Harding through Hoover. They will recognize Hicks as their own prototype.

William Hicks' grandfather cleared and stumped and ditched his Ohio land, reaped on it prosperously and then lost it to the bankers when he was a red-bearded old man. Meanwhile, his mother took menial scrub jobs in town, just to be free of the mortgaged land. These were the bitterest memories Hicks took overseas with him when he joined the Marines at nineteen. In the trenches and in Belleau Wood, he found himself bound in a sort of slavery, as his

In reading the reviews of the capitalist press, one cannot help wondering how Marx's *Capital* would be received if it came fresh from the publisher today. The story might run like this: ". . . A rather unusually able work on political economy by an author who is becoming increasingly known. Mr. Marx has some harsh things to say about the capitalist system, and he says them well. Still, but, nevertheless, . . . John Stuart Mill is better."—Or words to that effect.

The Nature of Capitalist Crisis is not a second *Capital*. It does not present the full Communist program. It gives no hint of the relation of immediate demands to the general revolutionary perspective in the conditions of declining capitalism. It is not a manual of class-struggle tactics. It does not pretend to do any of these things. As a contemporary Marxist analysis of the contradictions of capitalism and the sterility of its economists, it is a first-rate piece of work. Its reception and use by the crisis-ridden workers and middle-class elements will be more important than the headaches it gives to the camp followers of our rulers.

ADDISON T. CUTLER.

forebears had been. He learned that a soldier is a manual laborer in a united gang of men working with guns and shovels—a worker receiving through his officers the orders of unseen, unknown masters. Hicks ended his military service outraged and yet numb.

In Time of Peace finds him a veteran working in a machine factory on a twelve-hour night shift. He leaves to marry his girl in another city and gets a reporter's job on a farmer-labor newspaper. Disillusioned with the quackery of the "peoples' friend," he finds work on a frankly capitalist newspaper. Thrown into the swamp of city politics, newspaper venality, sordid police beats and commercial promotion, Hicks struggles against bills, debts and moral discomfort. As the Coolidge boom gets going, he discovers that sixty dollars a week leaves you with as much fret and scrabbling as thirty had done before. The battle to make ends meet brings out a protective cynicism in him, divides him against his wife in the close home and sends him off to a wealthy girl for emotional color and relaxation.

Apparently success and a circle of rich friends only bring fresh responsibilities and debts. Finally the crash comes, dragging down his enterprising city editor and taking Hicks' home and later his job. Standing on line when Victory Motors gives out false news about "re-employment," he hears chanting workers and their families coming up from the Hooverville shacks, demanding jobs. His line presses forward with the rest and the company guards suddenly open

fire, hitting Hicks' leg and dropping him to the pavement:

His chin dropped, wagging from self-pity. But no, by God! Back of the guards stood the police, back of the police the politicians, back of the politicians the Libbys, and behind them all, the sacred name of Property. In the name of property men could be starved to death, and even if they so much as raised their heads, there was war. Hicks gritted his teeth. If there was war again, he was glad to know it. He at least had something to fight for now.

Hicks' days on the battlefield had been a proletarian school for him, teaching him the realistic collectivism of the rank and file—their willingness to share risks and their sharp disrespect for shirking and officers' soft jobs. Throughout the '20's, this attitude had given him a cutting insight into the world he encountered as a reporter. Now it revealed to him the task he must perform. So he passes from the war of destruction to the war of liberation.

It is no doubt obvious by now that *In Time of Peace* is a book about one man in a socially important setting. As in *Chapayev* and *The Nineteen*, we live with a single personality around whom are concentrated the greater share of the reader's sympathy and of the narrative's revolutionary significance. Now the biographical method is certainly the most effective one open to the revolutionary author who wishes to reach the most people and who wishes to unleash their basic sympathy. It demands of him that he unite in his hero the traits of many men in a similar, socially significant lot. This Thomas Boyd accomplishes successfully, with the result that *In Time of Peace* is a fine and valuable dramatic study of his chief character. This type of work, exercising the one arm of revolutionary art, the exploitation of a popular, traditional mode—the other arm is experimentation in new techniques—is to be warmly welcomed.

A second achievement of Thomas Boyd's is the clear-cut way in which he uses his Marxist knowledge to analyze dramatically the social situation in which Hicks finds

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himself: the officials, the police, the bankers, the workers, the loan associations, the country club, the automobile and radio booms, the newspaper publishers. We have only to contrast this accomplishment with the static realism of authors unequipped with Marxism to appreciate its worth. Instead of a catalogue of types of muck and crassness gleefully collected, we have a selective, fairly well integrated application of Communism in art. In short, Thomas Boyd has successfully employed the fundamental method of socialist realism in his treatment of Hicks and of the 'twenties. A weakness of the novel is felt in his failure to employ it in studying the personalities of the people with whom Hicks was intimate, for they are really incomplete sketches with the exception of Hicks' mother-in-law. It is amazing, when you come to think of it, that we learn so little about his wife and his mistress and several other important characters. This is a very large flaw, a constraint upon the breadth of the novel; and the very clarity of Thomas Boyd's style and structure, which brings out meanings so well, only makes this fault much more apparent.

When Thomas Boyd died last month

Malraux's Sketch Book

THE ROYAL WAY, by André Malraux.
Translated by Stuart Gilbert. Harrison
Smith and Robert Haas. \$2.50.

THIS book was first published in France five years ago and may have been written ten years earlier. *Man's Fate* is so far superior to it that its American publication is an anti-climax. The French reviewers of this first novel, who called it "promising," must feel pleased with themselves. For us, greeting it out of its proper season, it is valuable only in that it provides material for a study of the development of one of the most interesting revolutionary novelists of our time.

The Royal Way is the story of a young archeologist who drove into the Cambodian jungle in quest of Khmer sculptures. His object was to follow the ancient main road of Khmer civilization, the Royal Way, large stretches of which still remain unexplored. He receives indifferent help from the authorities, who try to discourage him. He finds an ally in Perken, a Dane in the service of the Siamese government. Perken is secretly establishing a principality of his own on the borderlands between Siam and Cambodia. He is collecting money wherever he can to buy machine-guns for his tribesmen, and readily joins the young archeologist's expedition when he learns that Khmer antiquities fetch high prices. Their path leads them into territory inhabited by wild tribes. They get their sculptures and stop in a native village. There Perken discovers an old friend, blinded and unspeakably brutalized, bound to a tread-

mill, carrying a harness like an animal, and ending in that degraded manner, turned into something less than a beast, the career of a typical arrogant white adventurer in inner Asia. Perken cuts his bonds, and the three white men are then surrounded by the armed natives who obviously plan to fire their hut and kill them as they run out. In advancing to a parley, Perken falls upon one of the sharpened stakes with which the natives have sown the ground. His parley is successful,

CHARLES HATCHARD.

but his wound festers and becomes fatal. He dies not only in the physical sense, but in his ambition as well, for, as he lies impotent on his sickbed a Siamese punitive expedition, beating the way clear for a railroad, occupies the land he has reserved for his kingdom. The drums, the rifle fire and the laying down of the railbed beat equally upon his ears.

In many ways *The Royal Way* is an embryo of *Man's Fate*. Perken, the Westerner of enormous but aimless will, confronting the apparently moldable destiny of Asia, is a preliminary sketch for the sensual consortium banker in *Man's Fate*. So also is Malraux's preoccupation with the meaning of death to different types of men; so also is his play with the theme of eroticism, which he sees as the vice of strong-willed men, seeking to enjoy in their control of a woman's responses the palpable evidence of their power, but being always frustrated, since ecstasy is the moment in which the human body escapes the power of others and achieves its most complete independence. The same elements are present in *Man's Fate*, but there they are subsidiary to, or transmuted into, more powerful and more profound social passions. Claude, the upstart young archeologist, and Perken, towering in corrupt greatness, are studied with elaborate but uncertain psychological care. The machinery grinds, and the subject is scarcely worth the imposing apparatus.

Again, as in *Man's Fate*, the best passages, those that constitute Malraux's distinction, are the minute and absorbing and strangely vivid description of the processes of a man during a heroic or despairing act; and the agony of waiting for an agonizing death. For these grim areas of human consciousness Malraux has a peculiar taste as well as a remarkable competence.

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This Music Business

REFLECTIONS ON MUSIC, by Arthur Schnabel. Simon and Schuster. \$2 and \$5.
THE VICTOR BOOK OF THE SYMPHONY, by Charles O'Connell. Simon and Schuster. \$3.50.

THE review department of S. & S. informs me that Arthur Schnabel's *Reflections on Music* is published largely through the personal enthusiasm of Mr. S and Mr. S., who are frankly—both of them—rabid Schnabel fans. Schnabel is the greatest interpreter of Beethoven and Brahms of our time. In addition . . . he is a man of parts and a philosopher. . . . In his introduction to *Reflections on Music*, Mr. I. A. Hirschmann writes—and at this point I stop, incredulous; but it is indeed true: the volume does contain an introduction by Mr. Hirschmann.

Let me assume the impossible—that the commercial value of Schnabel's name was not the larger reason for publishing his 5,000 word essay in a fancy binding for \$2 (and a limited edition for \$5). Let me assume what is not impossible—that Mr. S. and Mr. S., both of them, were impressed by Schnabel's reflections. In any case, merely as a great pianist, if a negligible reflecter on music, Schnabel should not have been insulted by an introduction from a man whose qualification as a commentator on music is that he was publicity director of the department store that owned the radio station that broadcast the concerts of the New York Philharmonic, and for several years was in a position to disfigure the broadcasts with this sort of thing: "As he (Beethoven) emerges from the Pastoral Symphony, singing the glories of the endless and deathless beauties of nature as no man before or since has sung them, he wraps about him the heroic cloak which he donned as he stalked through the pages of the Third, the Eroica, threw aside for the more lyric Fourth, and stands in as Napoleonic a defiance as we have ever seen or heard in his immortal Fifth"; and this: "When we stop to look into deeper channels, to express a living more fundamental with human problems that come closer to the warmth and sincerity of nature rather than big buildings and artificial stimuli, so will our art-spirit and our music"; and worse. True, in the present introduction Mr. Hirschmann has in some mysterious way—or perhaps it is not so mysterious after all—acquired a more grammatical style; but the ideas are still recognizably his.

As for the reflections of Schnabel that overwhelmed Mr. S and Mr. S., for the most part truism leads imperceptibly into nonsense, in a flow of pretentious language. The only way to make this clear is to quote; so here goes: "If nature by design gave to men and women the ability to develop their aptitudes, and brought about their utmost differentiation, it was bound, also, to assign them duties which would lead to the division

of labor. Surely Bach's Art of Fugue cannot be derived from the instinct for self-preservation alone. Hence there must be active in man an urge to change, progress and rise. He was given the obligation to grow and the possibilities of growth, but the purpose of that growth is unknown. Though his body cannot escape mortality, his work may, by comparison, be incorporeal and imperishable. When a possibility reaches maturity, it must become a reality."

Out of their enthusiasm for Art, presumably, Mr. S and Mr. S. have also published 500 pages or so of worthless and useless interpretation of orchestral music by Charles O'Connell, recording manager of the R. C. A. Victor Co., under the title of *The Victor Book of the Symphony* (the sales possibilities in the Victor name and Victor advertising were no doubt considered only incidentally). The art-loving tie-up is completed in this instance by that dweller on non-commercial heights, and Victor artist, Leopold Stokowski, who contributes a foreword of praise. And well he might, for the book, Mr. O'Connell says, includes not the rarities but the staples of the orchestral repertory; and while it omits Mozart's symphonies in E flat and G minor and other great works of his, like the piano concertos in A major and B flat, it includes a dozen of Stokowski's transcriptions of Bach.

B. H. HAGGIN.

FILM FRONT. March 15th issue. Published at 31 East 21st Street, New York. 5c.

WITH this issue *Film Front* enters the second stage of existence. Formerly a mimeographed semi-monthly magazine, it is now printed in offset and if it has the response it deserves will be able, perhaps, to come out weekly and to cover still more comprehensively this important sector of American life. The expansion of *Film Front* comes opportunely. Hearst is campaigning for, among other things, the prohibition of Soviet films; and a definite militarist tinge is appearing in the Hollywood offerings. *Film Front* is the medium through which the proletarian movement can counter-attack with any consistency.

The current issue is extremely lively and readable. In fact it goes too far, sometimes, in its desire to be colloquial and sprightly and becomes almost Menckonian in its epithets. Getting fun out of calling names, like everything else, has its saturation point. In its running commentary on doings in Hollywood, its account of the growing movement for organization among the more exploited groups in the movie firmament, its analyses of current films, its reports on the healthy developments among radical film groups, it is constantly stimulating. It serves very capably its function of uniting film-worker and film-viewer in a common interest.

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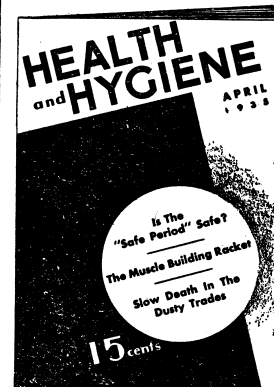
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The Theatre

"Awake and Sing"—A Protest

TO THE NEW MASSES:

I don't understand Blankfort about *Awake and Sing!* He writes that Odets has *something* invigorating to say, which he says in a *fresh way*, "that it is *competently* produced by the Group Theatre" and that the actors "do a *good job*." Now I may be wrong but I believe that the business of revolutionary theatre criticism has very much to do with *what* the author has to say and *how* he and the production have said it. Blankfort doesn't say a word in discussion of Odets' intention and the means he uses to fulfill it nor does he criticize the Group on the basis of their intention. Instead he finds clichés to describe the characters and then criticizes them on the basis of the names he has called them. "For though they are well-drawn," he says, "I can't help feeling that they are no more than characters in a play, well documented and well observed puppets." Perhaps they are precisely that—but the observation and documentation of a human puppet that leads to a well-drawn character in a play happens to be quite a feat of dramaturgy. Odets wasn't trying to present highly developed individualists. The typing of his people is one of the greatest values in the play when regarded with respect to his intention. And he has done it without exception in such a manner that he shows his audience that every one of the puppets has blood and the stuff of life—the ability, if you will, to awake and sing.

Blankfort says that "nothing is advanced through these characters." I'd like him to explain to me just how the play does advance. Or rather I should like him to point out one event in the play that does not occur because the characters are what they are and one other modern play in which this virtue is so completely existent.

Blankfort calls the unity of grandfather and grandson a mystic one and bewails the fact that Ralph's line of action comes out of this rather than out of that understanding of social forces which, he asserts, necessary to every revolutionary play. That's tripe. In the first place such a relationship

A Reply

IN THE NEW MASSES of March 5, Edwin Seaver described the functions of the revolutionary critic in an article called "Caesar or Nothing." In my opinion he set down many, if not all the critic's duties. However he qualified his description by saying that the critic must "first of all have a generally acceptable definition of what proletarian literature is." Mr. Seaver intends to spend a whole article on this very important definition, but, in order that this reply be more than posing my taste against Mr. Biberman's, I am going to offer one that seems to me generally acceptable and in use. Proletarian literature is any creative, original and profound writing which fulfills the revolutionary interests and the historical mission of the international working class. In other words, proletarian literature is propaganda, in the broadest sense of the word, on behalf of the proletariat.

With this definition in mind let us turn to Mr. Biberman's letter. In the second half of the first paragraph he refers to my estimate of Mr. Odets' characters. I am sure that he would agree with me that successful characters mean creating an illusion that real, living people are experiencing real life ad-

is not a mystical one; in the second, I want to know where he has obtained the authority to demand that in every revolutionary play some character has to clearly understand social forces.

No criticism of a play like *Awake and Sing* is worthy of the name unless it very definitely discusses the director's problems. What Blankfort did not see was that the whole message of the play lay between the lines, in the unsaid, and that the director's job was to make the audience get that message more clearly than any one of the characters. And he did it. The audience knew what it would take to make the Bergers really sing. All the acting which was criticized as good acting, was good because of that. This tendency to criticize acting away from its functional value comes from a lack of true awareness of what theatre is all about. A production of a play has one purpose and acting is good or bad depending only on how much it forwards or retards that purpose. That Clurman chose to begin his play fortissimo isn't important unless this beginning has added to or detracted from that purpose. Saying that this made the play unreal or brittle or feverish is impertinent unless the critic can show these qualities to be injurious to the purpose of the play as a whole. I believe that Clurman wanted a feverish quality in the opening of *Awake and Sing* and had every reason to want it.

Odets is no wise-cracker. It is downright insulting to accuse him of creating situations out of nothing in order to get laughs. Where? Generalities like that make me sore as hell. What audience of *Awake and Sing* was more interested in the next laugh line than in what the play was saying?

This production is a significant event in the American theatre. In the meanwhile I'd like the whole revolutionary theatre including its critics to see *Awake and Sing* and to come to an appreciation of what the theatrical value of a real collective can be. The Group is teaching an important lesson.

ABNER BIBERMAN.

ventures. When I reported that the people in *Awake and Sing* were "no more than characters in a play," I implied that they rarely stepped out of its framework to create the illusion of being three-dimensional human beings. Sometimes this is the fault of actors, and sometimes of playwright. In accord with my feeling, I said that they were "types" (an inadequate and often misleading word); and that they did not mature or progress in the play. Mr. Biberman admits they are "types" and states that this "is one of the greatest values in the play when regarded with respect to his (the

author's) intention." Unfortunately I don't understand what Mr. Biberman means inasmuch as I am at sea regarding this *specific* intention of the author's.

Mr. Biberman asks me to explain how the play can advance except through its characters. A play may advance by progression of plot, or by progression in characters, or both. In *Awake and Sing!* Moe Axelrod's relation to Hennie Berger and her family is the same in the first act as it is in the last act, with one exception. The difficulties which stood between him and Hennie were lifted by means of a plot-distortion, inasmuch as their final, happy reunion was not integrated with their character-patterns as set down by the author. Momma Berger is another example of static character treatment. It must be understood that this does not necessarily mean that the play, itself, is static. But I can easily imagine how much more dynamic it could have been had the characters grown along with it. I offer 1931—by Paul and Claire Sifton, as an example of a different sort of character treatment.

I can't quibble with Mr. Biberman whether or not Ralph had a mystical relation with his grandfather although I can't see a basis for it otherwise. Perhaps, however, we would disagree as to our definition of the word "mystical."

Nowhere do I find in my review the statement that "in every revolutionary play some character has to clearly understand social forces." And this brings us back to my definition, for if proletarian drama is propaganda on behalf of the proletariat then when I see a play which is in this category, I inquire whether its propaganda is clear, and whether it is effectively stated. If not, then whether its failure is the result of an inchoate intention, to use Mr. Biberman's word, or whether its intention, though clear, is distorted in its execution, either by writing or by production.

I used Mr. Biberman's word, "intention," in order to discuss a very important point which he raises in the beginning of his letter. He is irritated because I didn't consider, in so many words, the dramatist's intentions and how he and the actors and directors fulfilled them. Apparently Mr. Biberman thinks that this should be the keynote of revolutionary criticism. He doesn't realize that he is stating in almost the same words the old art-for-art's-sake theory of Messrs. Spingarn

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and Croce. When logically followed, this theory led Mr. Spingarn to offer the following advice to playwrights: "Don't think about your audience; that is the best way to serving it in the drama." Naturally, if an author had only to satisfy his intention, he does not have to consider anybody else but himself. I am sure Mr. Biberman doesn't mean this, but yet our criticism cannot afford to disregard the author's intention and how he fulfilled it.

This problem is clarified when the critic and the author realize that a proletarian playwright has two duties: to himself, and to his audience. Stated in another way, the dramatist must not only fulfill his intention as an artist, but also he must, by every means of his craft, direct the attention of his audience toward a proletarian point of view. The critic must see that he does both, for in proletarian drama as well as literature at large, both duties are inseparable. Thus, the intention of the dramatist must not merely be confined to dramatic form and content but must also include the means of using these same elements to stir the audience, to move it to action, or to stimulate it to revolution or leftward-moving thought.

The play is the thing; and the message it tells. If, for example, the director chooses to open his play fortissimo and for that reason obscures its reality, it should be obvious that its propaganda is also obscured or hampered. The critic must seek out the total effect. It would be the silliest sort of schematism to demand that some character must understand the social forces which move him in order to call a play a proletarian play. Nor does the propaganda in it have to be verbalized; it can lie between the lines, "in the unsaid" as Mr. Biberman put it. But does the audience know? Is the audience clear about what social forces are in action? Such questions have to be answered.

I regret that Mr. Biberman accuses me of calling Clifford Odets a "wise-cracker." I know that he isn't and nothing in my review would indicate that he is. I feel, however, that frequently he allows his brilliant flair for language and humor to run out of hand in lines and passages which are extraneous to the play. Sam Feinschreiber's scene while waiting for his mother-in-law

is a case in point. Is the reading of the two subway weightcards relevant to either the character or the play? I don't think so. And as to the statement in my review that audiences may be more interested in the next laugh line than the play, I can do no more than state that this observation is based on many inquiries. Mr. Biberman realizes, I'm sure, that most uptown audiences aren't particularly interested in watching a picture of their own corruption and decay, nor will they actively appreciate the message of the play. It is the easiest thing in the world for them to forget the forest and enjoy the glittering, brilliant trees.

I subscribe, in most part, to Mr. Biberman's final paragraph.

MICHAEL BLANKFORT.

The Moscow Art Players

The White Guard (Days of the Turbin) by Michael Bulgakov. Majestic Theatre. This play has been running in the Soviet Union for years. As it is presented by the Moscow Art Players, it has a definite counter-revolutionary tinge. The management has cut out episodes which show the White armies in a light much less favorable than that suggested in the present version. For instance, one striking episode of a poor Jew being tortured and finally shot by the Petlura forces has been omitted. Also, in the present version, the villain of the play, Colonel Talberg, is the only one of the intelligentsia who declares himself ready to work with the Bolsheviks. In the original, Talberg joins Krasnov's White Army. This twist makes all the difference in the message of the play.

The Strange Child: A Modern Soviet Farce, by V. Shkvarin. Majestic Theatre. In this play the direction took fewer liberties with the text. However, even here the Moscow Art Players manage to rob the play of a great deal of genuineness: by having the best actor in the cast personify the old intelligentsia, and by subtly overemphasizing the intelligentsia's argument as to Bolshevik lack of appreciation of cultural values, an argument quite obsolete and ridiculous to a Soviet audience.

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Movies

HAVING paid its seasonal debt to the national honor of Great Britain by producing *Lives of a Bengal Lancer*, and other films, the American film can get back to its self-appointed task of expounding the virtues of Hearst's Americanism. They sometimes call this entertainment. This new nationalism is dished out in the form of humor. It's easier and much more pleasant to take it that way. The first of this series was Paramount's *The Gilded Lily* which was followed up by *The Whole Town's Talking* (Columbia). These films expound the virtues of life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness, under our democracy. And now this thesis is carried on by the second film edition of *Ruggles of Red Gap* (Paramount) with that eminent English actor, Charles Laughton, as the chief protagonist. Although the setting of the film is 1908 it must be accepted as a contemporary projection of the producer's mental state.

You may remember, if you've ever seen the silent film or stumbled across the Harry Leon Wilson novel, that Ruggles (Charles Laughton) is a gentleman's gentleman. His father before him and his father before him were also gentlemen's gentlemen. You may also recall how Egbert Floud (Charles Ruggles) from Red Gap, Washington, in Paris on a little American spree, won Ruggles from his master in a game of "drawing poker." Mrs. Egbert insists on taking home their prize so that their social status will rise above the rabble in Red Gap.

English tradition and culture as represented by the English butler are staked against these homespun people of the Will Rogers variety who are supposed to represent the true American ideals. After a series of adventures the Britisher finds that America is the land of the free and golden opportunity. He decides to take advantage of the

opportunities of American capitalism by founding an Anglo-American Bar. He is so grateful for his "liberation" from the slave class (this being implied of course) that he takes the opportunity to recite, in full, the Gettysburg address in a manner that brings forth terrific applause from the audience. This bit of patriotic propaganda is so crude that even the film critic for Hearst's N. Y. American was able to recognize it.

Many of the sophisticated New York film reviewers were also taken in by the film. Only a week before, they shouted that *The Whole Town's Talking* was the best comedy of the season. The very next week, however, they again shouted that *Ruggles* was

the best. After all they both can't be the best.

Ruggles is definitely inferior to *The Whole Town's Talking*. There is no imagination in the direction. There is no coherent structure, many of the scenes having no relation to the theme of the film. The most obvious illustration is the way the Gettysburg address section is handled. The sequence actually holds up the film for the duration of the delivery. Charles Laughton is the only contributing factor in the film. But those of us who saw Ivor Montague's sharp satire, *Day Dreams*, made many years ago, will recall with keen pleasure the actor's swell comedy and impersonation. There is no clearer illustration of how the reactionary thinking (as in *Ruggles*) of a film will affect the actor's work.

PETER ELLIS.

Art

PAINTING, SCULPTURE AND GRAPHIC ART IN THE U.S.S.R. Published by the Soviet Union Society for Cultural Relations with Foreign Countries. 155 pages. Workers' Bookshop. 50 cents.

TO anyone not already familiar with its material this "almanac" is an invaluable aid in giving a brief but remarkably comprehensive presentation of the development of Soviet art since the October Revolution. The introductory discussion of basic theoretical and social problems serves as a general approach to the subsequent chapters which deal with the post-revolutionary history of art in its various branches.

Separate chapters are devoted to painting, sculpture, engraving, lacquer, poster and caricature, and book design; to the arts in the various Soviet Republics, European and Asiatic; to brief autobiographical resums of some of the prominent Soviet artists; to a gen-

eral description of the economic and social organization of the artist in the U.S.S.R.; to that large and growing movement known as "amateur art." A good deal of the material, illustrations as well as text, presupposes some knowledge of Russian life and history generally, in order to understand adequately this very compact survey.

Of particular interest to American artists should be the chapter entitled "Soviet Pictorial Art," which sketches Soviet art history in terms of the conflict of the major ideological tendencies represented by the various groups. Today when the artists in this country are trying to decide issues such as the recurrent "Abstract vs. Representational Art" controversy, it is especially significant to see how these problems were effectively solved in the workers' republic where the realism of socialist growth leaves no room for abstractions. Also of exceptional interest is the chapter entitled "Life and Work of Soviet Artists." In its straightforward factual description of the nature of the economic and social organization of artists in the U.S.S.R. it will give the American artist something to reflect upon and consider. Namely, artists under capitalism vs. artists under socialism. And no artist who considers himself revolutionary should miss the chapter on posters and caricature. Some idea of the tremendous importance of these two phases of art for the revolutionary movement is well brought out even within the limits of a short article.

In the matter of the reproductions which accompany the text there is much left to be desired in a number of instances, and the quality of reproduction and typographical design is not as good as it might be, but these defects are of relatively minor importance as against the general high value of the almanac as a whole. We badly need more extensive and detailed presentations of these phases of Soviet art.

STEPHEN ALEXANDER.

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The deadline for manuscripts submitted in THE NEW MASSES-The John Day Company Novel Contest, scheduled April 1st, has been postponed until June 1st. For the benefit of new contestants, the details of the competition will be republished in this column next week.

Manuscripts submitted for the Student Es-

say Prize contest announced last week should be addressed to the "Editors of the Student Essay Contest, NEW MASSES, 31 East 27th Street, New York City."

New Masses Lectures

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William E. Browder on "The Middle Class Must Choose," at 105 Thatford Avenue, Brooklyn, N. Y. Auspices: Brownsville Youth Club.

Sunday, March 24th

William E. Browder on "The Middle Class Must Choose," at George Manor, 57 Walnut Street, Binghamton, N. Y. Auspices: Binghamton Workers Educational Club.

Monday, March 25th

Benjamin Goldstein on "Religion and the Social Crisis," at 24 West Front Street, Plainfield, N. J. Auspices: Jack London Club.

Friday, March 29th

Benjamin Goldstein—Rabbi Jacob J. Weinstein, debate "The Way Out for the Jews—Biro-Bidjan or Palestine?" at Premier Palace, 505 Sutter Avenue, Brooklyn, N. Y. Auspices: Hinsdale Youth Club.

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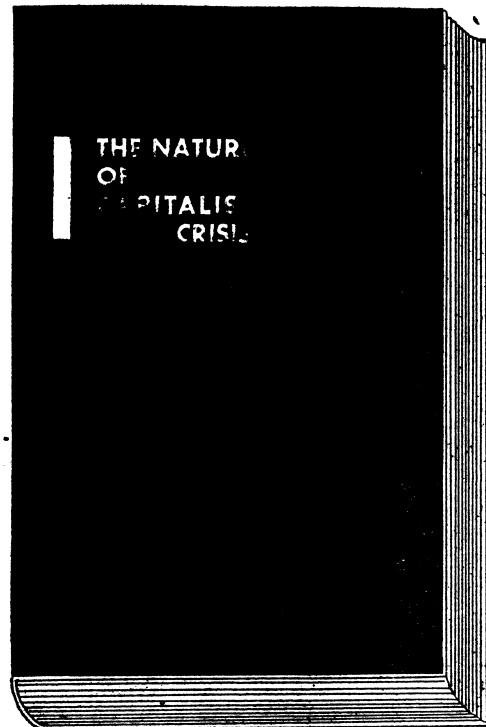
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