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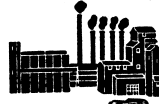
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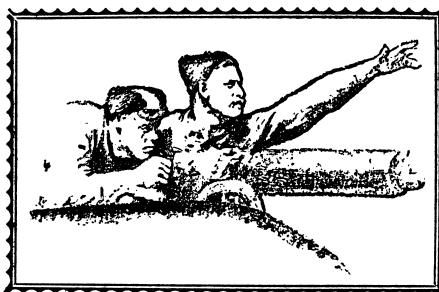
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JUNE 11, 1935

Rise of the Strike Wave

SIX thousand locals of the United Mine Workers of America—400,000 embittered, fighting men—have received the call to strike on midnight of June 16. This is, to date, the biggest of the multitude of walk-outs pending or already in progress, since the Supreme Court handed down its N.R.A. decision. That decision, as millions of American workingmen already understand by a glance at their cupboards, was the signal for a renewed offensive against labor. Wage-cuts got underway before the ink was dry on the N.R.A. decision—and all the unctuous protestations to the contrary by the Chambers of Commerce fool nobody. Labor is striking back with the only weapon it has—massed resistance on the picket-lines. The coal miners are not the only ones preparing for the major class-conflicts which seem inevitable this summer. All America, from seaboard to seaboard, witnesses strike preparations. At Duquesne, Pa., the steel workers in the Amalgamated Association are defying Mike Tighe, the reactionary leader of the union, and have adopted the slogan "Strike all Carnegie Steel mills June 16." The shooting of scores of strikers at the Republic Steel mills in Canton, O., a week ago did not put a damper on strike sentiment. The men, scattered at first by the bullets from deputized gangsters, rallied to tip the gunmen's armored car into a nearby river. As steel and coal go, so go the rest of America's workingmen. The renewed offensive of capital has aroused the counter-offensive of labor.

LAST summer's major strikes were hampered by the stubborn belief on the part of many workers in the efficacy of Boards of Arbitration and by their belief in the sincerity of Roosevelt's smile. Today there is disillusionment. The rose-colored haze has lifted and the forces of class-struggle are clear now to the worker's eye. But the A. F. of L. leaders never lose hope. They talk loudly of strike but continue to work for all the class-collaboration schemes—the Guffey Bill in the coal



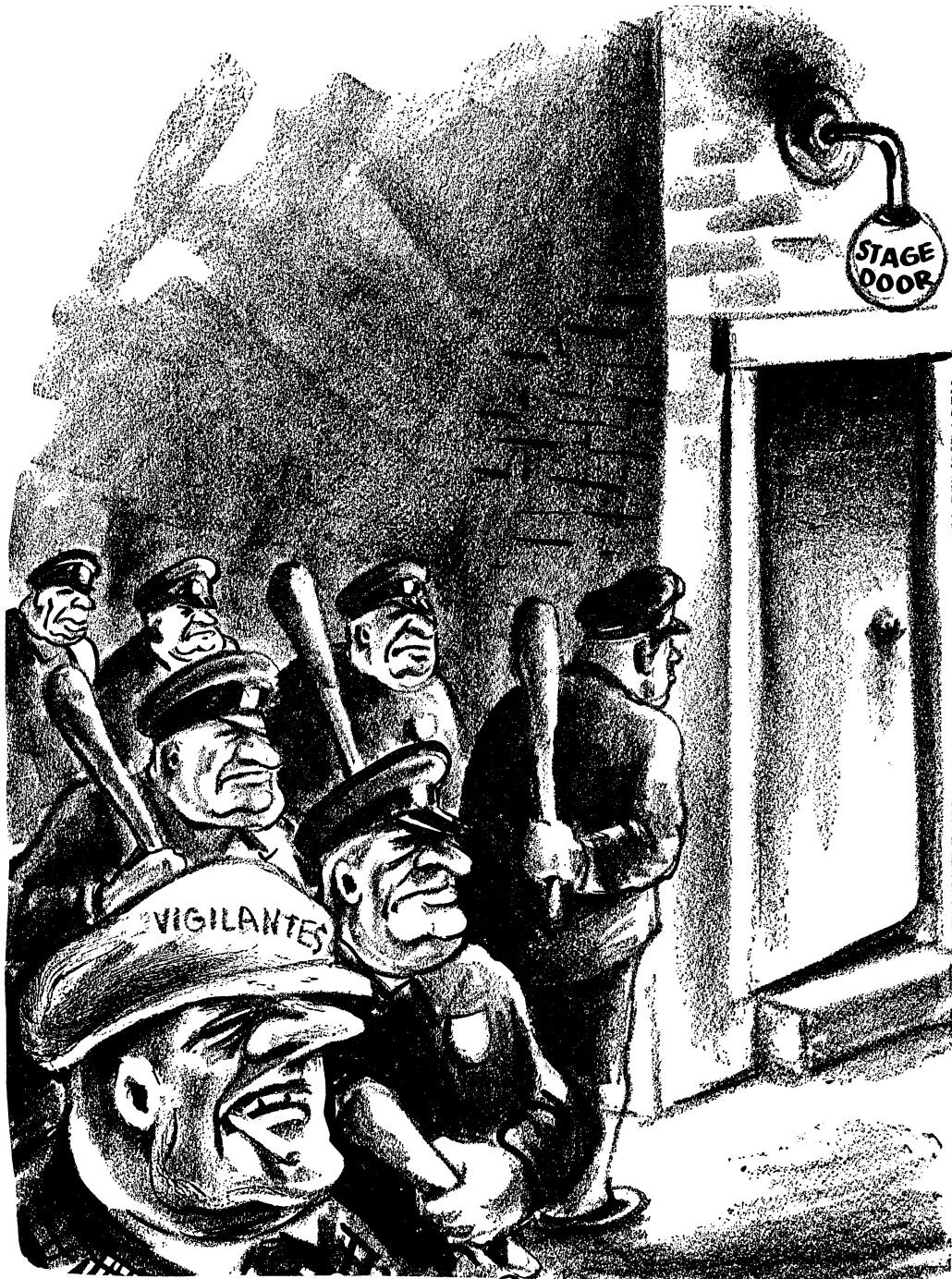
WAITING FOR LEFTY

Russell T. Limbach

industry, the Wagner Bill and for a brand new N.R.A. But picketers are already on the march. Here is a list chosen at random; Monroe, Ga.: needle trades workers struck against cuts in wages. Greenville, S. C.: all operatives at the Piedmont Shirt Co. walked out against a 25-percent wage cut and increase in hours. New York City: the general executive board of the International Ladies Garment Workers voted \$750,000 for the support of current and pending strikes. The generals of the A. F. of L. rattle their swords and send out emissaries for compromise. But the most energetic sword-rattling by A. F. of L. leaders no longer fools anybody. The enemy looks beyond them to the rank and file: and the men in the ranks mean business.

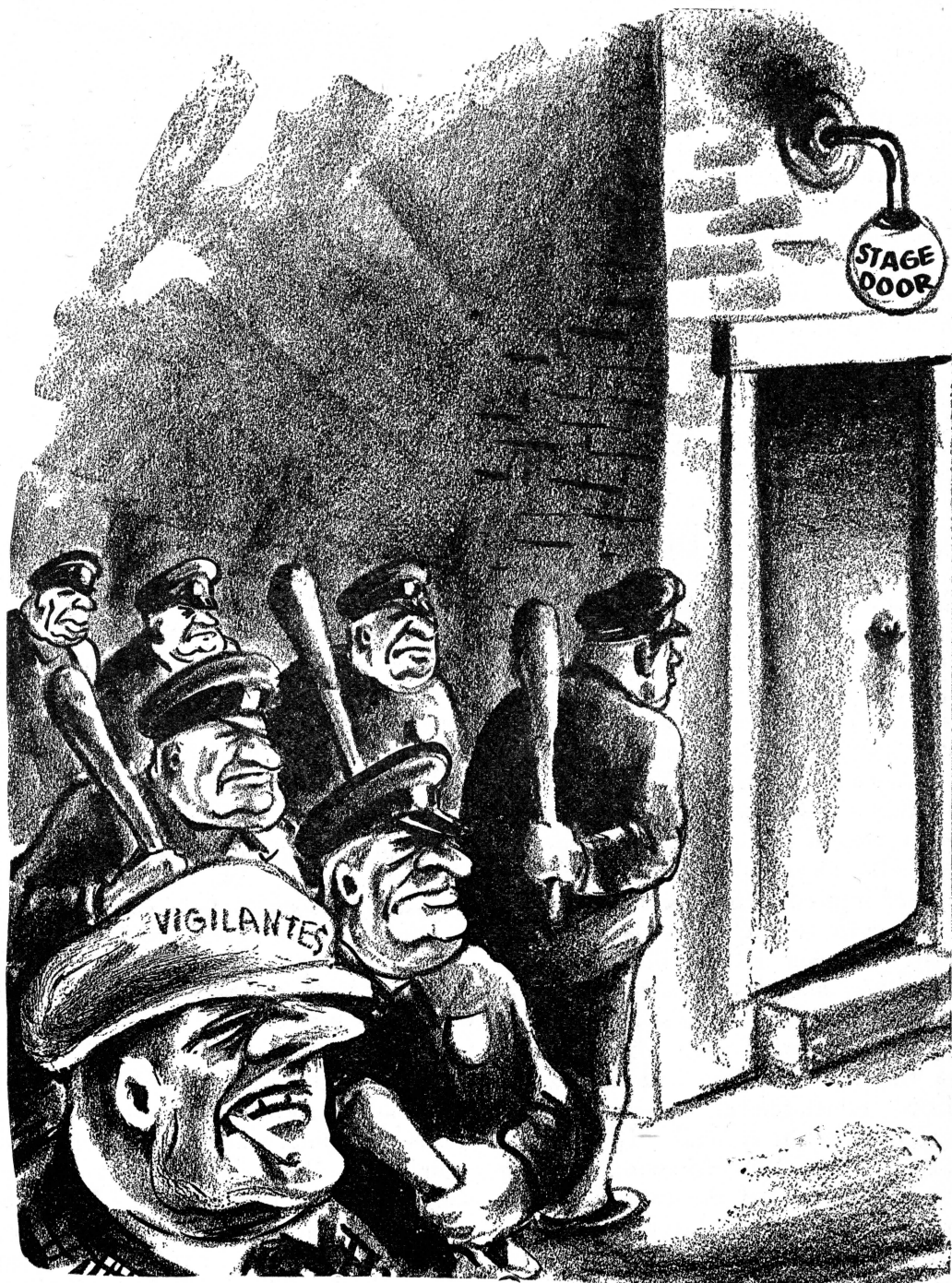
Storm over Rensselaer

WHEN Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute "released" Granville Hicks, the college administration evidently thought the incident was closed. Hicks openly supported the Communist Party; the trustees of the Institute dismissed him without warning; and that was that. But this attempt to stifle academic freedom of thought has not been so well received by the public as the authorities might have hoped. Under the auspices of the National Committee for the Defense of Political Prisoners, over fifty professors and instructors have protested Rensselaer's action. They represent such various institutions as Harvard, Bennington, Skidmore, Long Island University, Wisconsin, State Teachers' College of Mil-



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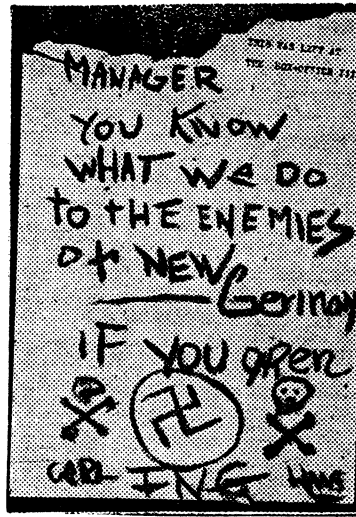
waukee, Columbia, Smith and others. Mr. Jarrett, acting executive of the Institute, experiencing his first taste of mass pressure, sulks in his office and stubbornly contends that there is no issue to discuss. To the American Civil Liberties Union's request for an interview to determine "whether principles of academic freedom have been violated," Mr. Jarrett answers, "I am at an utter loss . . . to conceive of anything to investigate, and am certain no conference with me would be helpful to your committee concerning 'charges,' 'claims,' or 'discriminations' of which I know nothing. . . ."

NOTWITHSTANDING Mr. Jarrett's loud protestations of astonishment, the A. C. L. U. refuses to be put off by denials that do not coincide with the actual situation. So Mr. Jarrett falls back on an attitude of "indignation," crying that insistence on an interview raises the question "whether or not we are telling the truth when we say that the necessity of retrenchment is the reason for our unwillingness to renew his contract." Mr. Jarrett's display of injured virtue is not convincing—not even to the Rennselaer student body. As soon as Granville Hicks' dismissal was known, Rennselaer students repudiated Mr. Jarrett's high-handed methods. Five or six petitions censuring the administration and demanding Hicks' reinstatement appeared spontaneously on the campus. Last week's issue of *THE NEW MASSES*, in which the implications of the case were first exposed, has sold in large numbers in Troy and particularly among the students. An editorial in the college weekly, *The Rennselaer Polytechnic*, frankly expresses the general resentment:

The administration's claim of retrenchment is an arrant smoke screen. Why pay Professor Hicks a half year advance salary as conscience money? If the necessity to decrease the teaching staff exists, why discharge the only really outstanding individual in the English Department? . . .

The students would much rather be stimulated by contact with him [Hicks] than to be put to sleep by the stupifying drivel so many of his colleagues hand out. Why penalize a man for having ideas? . . .

The Institute is constantly spending money in an attempt to get publicity. This is the very worst sort of publicity that could be found. No institution can be looked upon as a source of learning that does not hew closely to the standard of academic freedom. The restriction of the



Will Ghare, director of the Hollywood Group Theatre producing *Till the Day I Die*, received this note from four Friends of New Germany. A week later he was seized and beaten. See page 27.

scope of ideas presented to the student for consideration is not academic freedom. This discrimination against Professor Hicks is a manifestation of the narrow conservatism that dictates the school policy. . . .

The student at Rennselaer is being defrauded by being given a narrow and one-sided education. No idea, good or bad, should be withheld from their consideration. Professor Hicks should be encouraged to lecture to the students on his radical ideas, instead of being discharged for just having them.

THE editor who dared write and publish such an honest appraisal faces disciplinary action. The general opinion at Rennselaer is that he has committed academic suicide. Mr. Jarrett is not the type of man who takes kindly to criticism, particularly when that criticism comes from a student. Rather, Mr. Jarrett is interested in sheltering the Institute from ideas that are unacceptable to him and the Board of Trustees. Behind him, as behind most executives in universities and colleges and schools, stands a reactionary Board whose "practical experience" warns them that freedom of speech, thought or action are inimical to the aims of big business. "Education" must conform—even if that means arbitrary dismissals of men who have earned for themselves reputations as original contributors to culture.

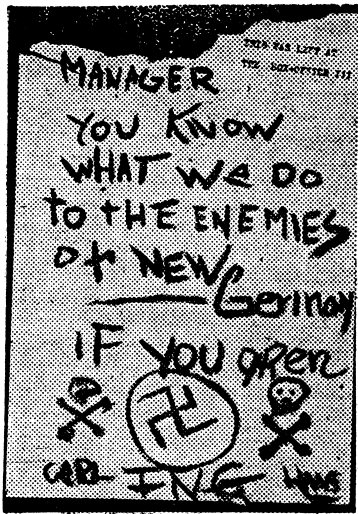
Drive Against Howard

HOWARD UNIVERSITY, a Washington, leading Negro college, is the latest school to be threatened with suppression of academic freedom on its campus. Congressman Ar-

thur Mitchell, Chicago Negro, has announced that he will seek a congressional investigation into the "teaching of Communism" there. He was aroused by the holding at Howard of a conference on the status of the Negro under the New Deal. Some of the school's professors, along with other speakers, were outspoken in their criticism of administration policies. More than that, the conference gave its sanction to plans for a much wider national conference to lay the basis for a determined campaign to secure economic and civil rights for the Negro people. The merest threat of unity between Negro intellectuals and workers is terrifying to those responsible for the congressman's presence at Washington. Mitchell fits into the picture perfectly. The darling of south-side Chicago bankers and racketeers, he has been highly praised by the most reactionary southern newspapers and he boasts that he is not the representative of Negroes at all but of the "richest congressional district in the United States." Southern congressmen are lining up with Mitchell and the fact that Howard University is almost wholly dependent on federal appropriations only makes more ominous this attempt to still the rising rumble of Negro discontent.

Fighting in Africa

APPARENTLY the Italian Duce has been taking the complacency of Downing Street too much for granted and now is feeling the steel hand of British imperialism in his attempts to subdue Abyssinia. For a time all was thought to be harmonious. The powers, including England, were giving Rome a free hand in her African venture. The League of Nations Council in April had unanimously rejected the request of Emperor Haille Selassie's government to act on the dispute, leaving Italy to postpone arbitration under the terms of the Italo-Abyssinian Treaty as long as she pleased. Meantime, Italian troops were pouring into Eritrea to the number of more than 150,000, many of them to sicken and die of dysentery, typhus, and the blasts of the African sun. But suddenly, on June 3, wireless dispatches, reporting two clashes between Ethiopians and Italian native troopers, simultaneously stated that the Fascist press had launched a campaign accusing Great Britain of "unwarranted interference in Ethiopian affairs." The charge is made that large quantities of war materials are being



Will Ghere, director of the Hollywood Group Theatre producing *Till the Day I Die*, received this note from four Friends of New Germany. A week later he was seized and beaten. See page 27.

passed through British colonies, one hundred motor trucks having been unloaded at Berbera, British Somaliland, in transit; that British agents are advising Ethiopians on defense against tank attacks; and that British doctors attended the Ethiopian wounded after the Ualual incident. It is significant that in the two clashes reported, all casualties were among Abyssinians and native soldiers under Italian command. London is playing her usual wily game. It now appears, according to a report traced to high British officers, that Ethiopia will place herself under a British "protectorate" in case of a conflict with Italy.

United Youth Day

WHILE "patriotic" organizations celebrated Memorial Day on May 30, using this excuse to preach jingo nationalism, American youth groups protested the growing threat of fascism and the obvious preparations for another world war. In the past, National Youth Day has been led by the Young Communist League. Each year since 1931, youth demonstrations have been met by police attacks in every section of the country. San Franciscans will remember last May 30, when young workers gathered on the waterfront to pledge solidarity with the marine strikers: police isolated four square blocks and sent five hundred armed men into the area. They gassed and beat

everyone caught in the streets; many boys and girls were hospitalized as a result and at least one man was killed. But intimidation does not prevent the movement from growing. This year, demonstrations and parades were sponsored not only by the Young Communist League but by the American Youth Congress in conjunction with church organizations, the National Student League, the Y. M. C. A., the Y. W. C. A., community centers and especially trade unions. While a year ago demonstrations were held in fifteen cities, in 1935 the United Youth Day (the name has been changed with its broader base) was observed in over forty cities. In many localities, the Young People's Socialist League defied their officials and joined the ranks. Even more significant was the support given by A. F. of L. unions. The Central Labor Union of Seattle endorsed United Youth Day; locals in most cities voted to join the youth. The anti-fascist, anti-war struggle of students and young workers has expanded in five years from a small, left-wing movement to a broad united front.

RESISTANCE to war and fascism is not a one-day demonstration, to be forgotten till May 30 comes round again. Under the leadership of the American Youth Congress over 185,000 students in schools and colleges staged a strike against war and

fascism in April. Twenty city and state conventions have met and discussed problems in the past few months. THE NEW MASSES has commented upon the fascist "Youth Congresses" held in New York City last year and in Louisville, Ky., more recently, and reported how delegates defeated the promoters when attempts were made to enlist their support in a fascist program. Next month, July 4, 5, 6, 7, the Second American Youth Congress will convene in Detroit. All anti-fascist groups in church and political organizations, clubs and trade unions, will send delegates to the congress.

More Columbia Expulsions

TO DATE three technicians have been fired, two instructors asked to resign and six students refused readmission because of membership in the anti-war committee in Columbia-Presbyterian Medical Center. Four of the students were about to enter last year in Columbia University College of Physicians and Surgeons. Two were to enter third year class. During the past year Dean Rappelye has tried in one way or another to curtail activities of the Medical Center Anti-War Committee. The group acceded to every request which he made. For example he refused the use of the amphitheatre in which forums had been conducted, on the ground that anti-war activity was not a subject of "major medical interest." Later the fourth year class was addressed by Col. Darby of the U. S. Army who offered first lieutenantcies at \$240 a month to graduates of the school. On April 11 the committee had a conference with the dean in which he denied students permission to distribute their bulletin and to hold meetings in the Medical Center. On the following day an article appeared in The Columbia Spectator reporting the result of the interview. The dean called in the spokesman of the delegation and said that the article was objectionable and he would be held personally responsible for it, but the committee, in a letter, took collective responsibility for the article. The dean and committee on administration then took action against all who had signed the letter. Affidavits held by Prof. Karl N. Llewellyn, head of the law school, state that Dean Rappelye's motive in this latest of the long list of academic suppressions was due to his fear of big money groups who support the university.

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VOL. XV, No. 11	CONTENTS	JUNE 11, 1935
Editorial Comment	3	Sunny South Hamilton Basso 25
—But the Patient Will Die.....	6	Soviet Tempo in an American Novel
Four Billion Dollars—for Whom?		Alice Withrow Field 26
Maynard Boyer and Sidney Hill	9	The Theatre
Britain Backs Hitler.....	R. Palme Dutt 13	Jonas Lie, Red-Baiter
Between Wars on the Coast.	Bruce Minton 15	Stephen Alexander 28
What is Communism?		The Screen
6.—Communism and Religion		Peter Ellis 29
Earl Browder 18		Between Ourselves
Cyanide for Lunch.....	Tom Johnson 21	30
Correspondence	22	Drawings by
Review and Comment		Russell T. Limbach, William Sanderson,
The Work of Friedrich Wolf		Andrew Redfield, William Grop- per.
Erwin Piscator 23		

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WILLIAM BROWDER, *Business Manager*

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—But the Patient Will Die . . .

ON MONDAY, May 27, the Supreme Court took the crutches from American capitalism. The patient, confusing removal of a crutch with cure of an ailment, was exhilarated by the decision in the Schechter case, but only temporarily. The prospect of free competition restored that sick feeling in the stomach and that giddy feeling in the head. The rugged individualists are far from rugged. Nine wizards had waved their wands, but the senility remained. The first N.R.A. is dead, but new ones are on the way. American capitalism will never walk unaided again.

Business men met the change, as they meet most changes, with a rash of Rotarianism, but the action of the stock market indicated the true state of affairs. Profits were made in the first quick upsurge and as quickly taken by speculators too wise to take chances. Selling was heavy and the movement of prices realistic. Rails and utilities, their prices fixed by law, rose on the prospect of lower costs for materials and lower wages for labor. Fierce price wars for a share in a diminishing market faced industry, with labor too militant and well organized for comfort. "Industrial stocks," The Wall Street Journal reported on May 29, "*particularly in those lines which had strong and comparatively well enforced codes, bore the brunt of the selling. The Dow-Jones average for industrials broke 2.94 points to 113.76 . . . The pressure on the industrials converged particularly on such industries as steel, fertilizer, textile, oil, tobacco and sugar stocks where codes have played a prominent part . . . Industrial heads displayed more confidence than investors in statements that code abolition would cause no upset.*" The President of the U. S. Chamber of Commerce had sonorously appealed for maintenance of the economic *status quo*, but the investor knew that all God's chillun ain't got wings. Two headlines in The Journal of Commerce limned the picture with the brevity of a Picasso. One said, "Outbreak of Strikes Is Seen if Wages, Hours Break Down. Business and Labor Leaders Agree Such Is Prospect With Workers in Stronger Position as Result of Two Years of N.R.A. To Take Offensive." The other, "Commodities Break Under

Liquidation. Cotton and Sugar Sustain Sharpest Losses—Retail Prices Being Cut." Price cuts, wage slashes, and a rising wave of strikes including major walk-outs scheduled in soft coal and steel bear out the headlines.

The first N.R.A. was born to meet a similar situation. It had its roots in the long campaign of big business to get rid of the anti-trust laws. It found its theoreticians in the "planned economy" liberals. The great National Recovery Drive started in the atmosphere of a Lion's Club luncheon. The A. F. of L. slapped business on the back and business got ready to smack the A. F. of L. on the head, equally vigorous but less convivial. The (Hart, Schaffner &) Marxists of the Socialist Party even scented the Second Coming. "The growing of the new social society," said The Milwaukee Leader on August 8, 1933, "has begun." Mr. Roosevelt turned out to be more sociable than social. The New Deal was on its way, but the cards were already marked. Only the Communist Party saw the real nature of the New Deal. On July 7, 1933—only three weeks after N.R.A. went into effect—Earl Browder analyzed Roosevelt's program as follows:

Under the slogan of higher wages for the workers he is carrying out the biggest slashing of wages that the country has ever seen. Under the slogan of "Freedom to join any trade union he may choose," the worker is driven into company unions or into the discredited A.F. of L., being denied the right to strike; while the militant unions are being attacked with the aim to destroy them.

With the cry, "Take the Government out of the hands of Wall Street," Roosevelt is carrying through the greatest drive for extending trustification and monopoly, exterminating independent producers and small capitalists, and establishing the power of finance capital more thoroughly than ever before. He has turned the public treasury into the pockets of the big capitalists.

Capitalism *planned*, the only way capitalism can plan, by a thieves' truce and alliance for a concerted piece of mass pick-pocketing. Real wages fell, living costs rose, the profit margin widened, the masses ate less and the corporations made more. The Blue Eagle took them out of the red. In factory and on farm the Roosevelt

program turned out to be a giant plan for producing less at more cost, a Five Year Plan stood on its head. "You cannot abolish the paradox of want amid plenty," said Ogden Mills in a lucid moment, "by abolishing the plenty." Mr. Mills' own solution was to cut the wages of his National Biscuit Company employees.

For workers and consumers the Planned Economy, capitalist style, was one phoney after another. The partnership of capital and labor proclaimed by Mr. Richberg turned out to be a partnership in which labor was a whispering if not silent partner. It had no access to the books. It was not represented on the code authority. It had an advisory capacity and its advice was ignored, as was the advice of the consumer's advisory committee. Minimums were as full of loopholes as a sieve. Maximums came down in many industries. What little increase there may have been in money wages was more than nullified by increases in living costs, *i.e.* in the profits of the capitalist.

Section 7a was made part of industrial codes, not of the law itself. It was weak enough to start with. The Administration castrated it. A supposed guarantee of collective bargaining was made into a guarantee of the open shop and a stimulus to the company union. When employers violated Section 7a by discharging militant workers, General Johnson cracked down, and every time he cracked down he missed. But when workers actually tried to organize for collective bargaining, Mr. Roosevelt soft-soaped them, the National Guard tear-gassed them, and General Johnson called them rats. It was not merely that Mr. Roosevelt was insincere. It was that he could not be anything else but insincere. He went to the White House to save capitalism and capitalism could only be saved by boosting profits at the expense of worker, consumer and small business men. Wages could not be increased without cutting profits. True, cutting real wages to increase profits is also disastrous. But even if Mr. Roosevelt had been conscious of the contradictions of capitalism, it would have taken more than a smile to make them vanish. The hopes he raised were the very hopes he had to crush.

But raising hopes is dangerous business and this explains Wall Street's first relief at the Supreme Court decision. If Section 7a stimulated organization through hope, the outcome has made labor more militant through disillusion.

New concessions or new repressions were in the cards. The Schechter decision is a fit answer to capitalism's prayers. It provides a legal bulwark against use of democratic processes to better the conditions of the working class. It is, in this respect, one of the most important and reactionary decisions in American history. The narrow construction given by a unanimous court to Federal power over interstate commerce, and the sweeping way in which the principle is laid down, will prove a hindrance for many years—if capitalism lasts that long—to labor and welfare legislation of all sorts, social insurance, minimum wages, maximum hours, genuine guarantees of the right to unionize. The Constitution is a cobweb of phrases constantly being widened or shifted in accordance with interpretation or need. There was nothing inevitable about this decision. The Court, exercising a constitutionally dubious power to act as a super-legislature, might have held that the wages paid and the hours worked in industry were of nation-wide concern. Industrial products are sold the nation over. The wages paid in producing them are spent the nation over. The effects of wage changes affect the whole country. The Court might have taken a middle ground, disallowing Federal regulation of wages and hours in the wholesale and retail poultry business but laying down no general rule for all "intra-state" business. The door would thus have been left open to minimum wage and maximum hour legislation in major industries. The Court did not do so.

The Court has in the past widely construed the power of the Federal government in "intra-state" business when it was a question of breaking strikes, as in the Coronado case, or of protecting railroad rates, as in the Shreveport cases. The Fourteenth Amendment, passed to protect the Negro, has been turned into a mechanism by which the Federal courts constantly interfere in "intra-state" affairs to protect corporate and property rights. But when Congress passed a law to regulate child labor, it was declared unconstitutional on the ground that manufacture was an intra-state process, outside

the province of the Federal government. The Schechter case decision is in the dark tradition of the Child Labor and District of Columbia Minimum Wage Cases. That a unanimous court found the wide delegation of code-making power to the President (in effect a delegation of legislative power to trade associations and trusts) unconstitutional is understandable. That the die-hard conservatives on the court should have wished to lay down a broad rule against social and labor legislation is also understandable. But that the liberals should have gone along on this part of the decision is explicable only in the light of liberal capacity for intellectual contortions when basic class interests are at stake.

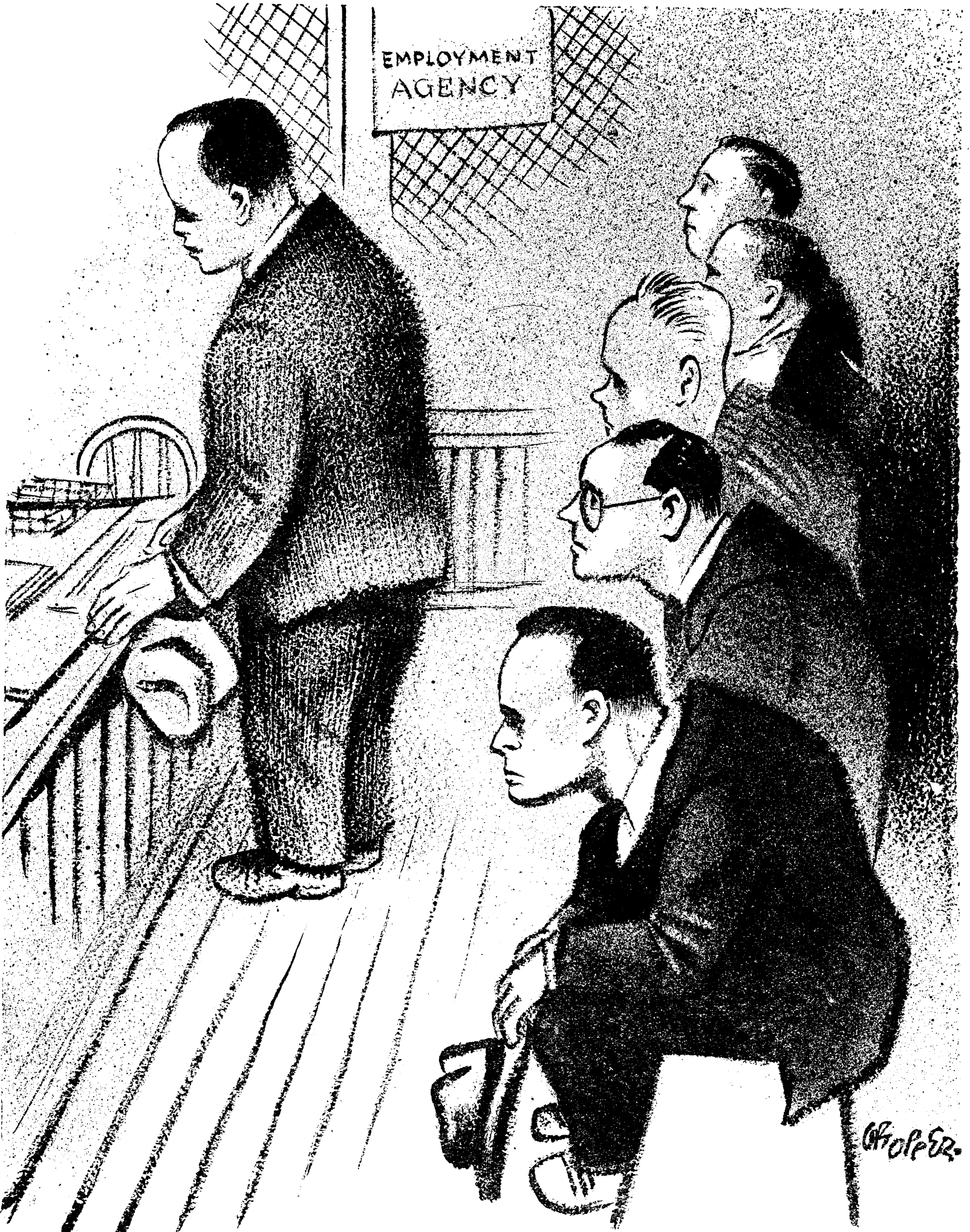
Chief Justice Hughes wrote the Shreveport decision widening Federal power over purely intra-state railroad rates and laying down a general principle applicable to most businesses. Justices Cardozo and Brandeis have tried to make the law grow with changing conditions. "If Congress and the States," Brandeis argued before the Court as an attorney in the Oregon Minimum Wage Case, "have power to prevent cutthroat competition in the sale of manufactured products, as this court had held in connection with the anti-trust laws, and as Congress has further undertaken in the Clayton Act and the Federal Trade Commission Act, there certainly exists power also to legislate to prevent cutthroat competition in wages." What happened behind the scenes in this decision? Will there some day be revelations like those in the Dred Scott case?

Labor suffered a reverse in this decision. Did capital likewise take a defeat in its movement toward monopoly? Far from it. The Circuit Court of Appeals did the job crassly. It upheld the conviction of the Schechters on the charges of violating the "fair trade practices" designed to safeguard business, but reversed the conviction on charges of violating the wage and hour provisions of the code, designed to safeguard workers. Protecting business, the lower court held, was constitutional. Protecting workers was unconstitutional. The Supreme Court *seems* to hold both aspects of codification unconstitutional. Actually it opens the door to a new N.R.A. program, with even present meagre safeguards for workers and consumers removed, and with less danger than ever that democratic process may be used as some check on big business practices.

The U. S. Chamber of Commerce on May 2 proposed just such a program. It asked "freedom from special forms of governmental control of trade associations," "voluntary codes of fair competition," "no provisions for imposing or amending codes by executive or administrative authority" and new legislation to "permit agreements between competitors which, upon receiving governmental approval, would be free from penalties of the anti-trust laws." (Also "the collective bargaining provisions of the present law have definitely disproved their worth." The capitalist is like the princess in the fairy tale who was so delicate and sensitive she couldn't even stand one tiny little pea under her mountain of feathery mattresses.) The Supreme Court chimes in beautifully, ". . . the statutory plan is not simply one for voluntary effort. It does not seek merely to endow voluntary trade or industrial associations with privileges or immunities." The Court strongly implies, in other words, that a U. S. Chamber of Commerce plan would meet with its approval. As The Journal of Commerce put it editorially on the day after the decision:

Furthermore, there is nothing in the decision to bar a Congressional grant of authority to industries to promulgate codes containing any lawful provision on a purely voluntary basis, with exemption from prosecution under the anti-trust laws granted thereunder. A new N.I.R.A. drawn up along the lines urged by the U. S. Chamber of Commerce, which conforms to these restrictions, would be found legal under the doctrines of the Schechter case in all probability.

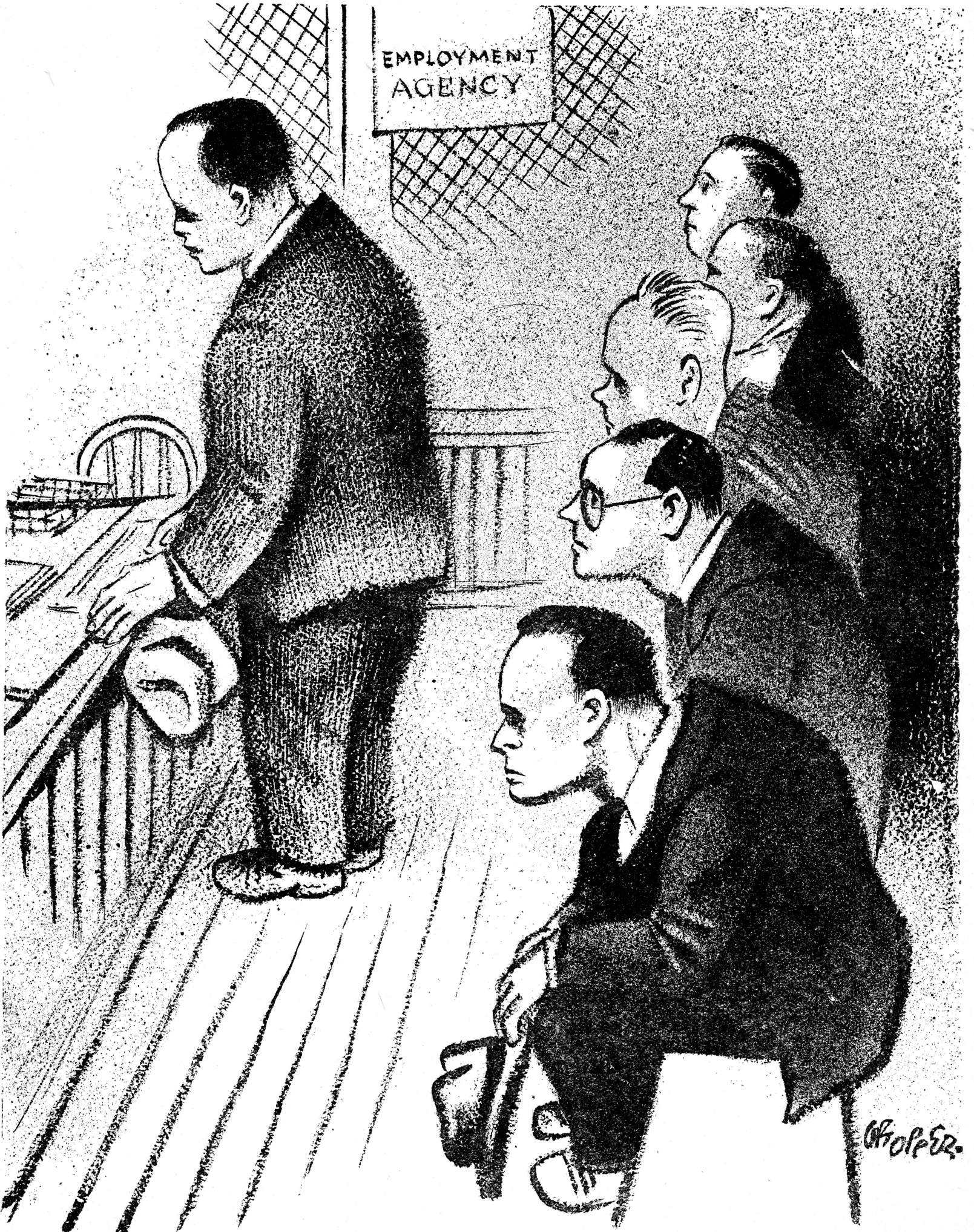
The Supreme Court has helped both the President and big business. It has tossed the old N.R.A. overboard just as the smell was beginning to get too noticeable. The rugged individualists are flat on their bottoms, yelling for help. A wage-slashing campaign may enable reactionary trade union leadership again to picture Mr. Roosevelt as a Messiah. Industrial and A.F. of L. leaders are already crying for a "new N.R.A." The new one will mark a further step in the development of American monopoly capitalism and fascism. The new N.R.A. will give labor even less protection and capital even more privilege than before. Coupled with the pauper wages of the new work relief program, the new N.R.A. will intensify the chief feature of the old—higher profits on lower volume of business. The workers will have less to eat and pay more for it.



Gropper

GRADUATION WEEK—

William Gropper



Gropper

GRADUATION WEEK—

William Gropper

Four Billion Dollars—for Whom?

MAYNARD BOYER and SIDNEY HILL

THE "final drive to rout the depression" got under way with a big bang on May 16 when twenty-two government officials, known collectively as the Advisory Committee on Allotments, met with the President around a table in the White House and allocated \$1,091,802,200 for a variety of public works projects. That made the headlines in every last newspaper in every one of the 3,000 odd counties in the country. The Four Billion Dollar Work Program was here, in cold figures—so much for housing, so much for roads, so much for grade-crossing elimination and so on. Unemployment was on the run again.

The same evening the three Number One men of the latest "recovery" move spoke over a coast-to-coast hook-up: Frank C. Walker, chairman of the Division of Applications and Information and friend of the President; Harold Ickes, chairman of the Advisory Committee on Allotments, Secretary of the Interior and Public Works Administrator; and Harry L. Hopkins, Works Progress Administrator, Federal Relief Administrator and straw boss of the whole show. I receive the projects, said Brother Frank. I sift out the good ones and pass them on to the President, said Brother Harold. I get them from the President and make the dirt fly, said Brother Harry.

On 10,000 movie screens the next day, moving shadows showed trucks dumping earth, steel girders rising and turbulent rivers held in check by concrete dams. A flash to the President at his desk: "This is a great national crusade to destroy enforced idleness, which is an enemy of the human spirit generated by this depression."

Behind the headlines, the microphone and the screen is the most high-powered publicity machine the country has seen since the heyday of the President's "Re-Employment Drive" in the summer of 1933. Every available government publicity agent—and no administration ever carried more on its payroll—has been pressed into service. A private telephone system keeps the central unit in Washington in close touch with its men in each of the sixty-odd government agencies entangled in the new and hastily constructed work relief set-up. Rails bar the public. Inside are private offices for the "public relations" men, a room for reporters and a circular table hot with press releases. Everybody is on the jump again.

To judge from the material coming out of the Washington hopper, the President's program contains the following elements:

1. A gradual withdrawal of the Federal Government from direct relief by providing jobs for the employables on relief—esti-

mated at 3.5 million—and by turning the care of the unemployables—estimated at 1.5 million—to the states and localities.

2. The setting up of a job program that will spend four billion dollars in wages and materials on useful projects between now and July, 1936, that will produce a maximum of employment, will not compete with private industry and will as far as possible be self-liquidating.

3. The termination of the work program in July, 1936, by which time, presumably, the stimulation given purchasing power as a result of the expenditure of so vast a sum of money, will have produced industrial recovery and make further emergency expenditures unnecessary.

4. The meeting of the residual relief problem in two ways:

a) Old-age insurance (under Federal auspices) and unemployment insurance (under State auspices) plus Federal subsidies to the States for old-age pensions and mother's aid (Wagner-Lewis Bill).

b) Local relief, under public and private auspices, for unemployment and for employables pending the enactment of proper security legislation.

Why a Four Billion Dollar Work Program, asks the puzzled reader, why a whole new series of alphabetical agencies (D.A.I., A.C.A., W.P.A., R.A., R.E.D. and D.G.C.E.), when we already have the F.E.R.A., the P.W.A., the C.C.C., not to mention the N.R.A. and the A.A.A.?

Obviously these agencies are failing to meet the situation created by continuing unemployment.

What were they set up to do? How successful have they been in achieving their objectives? Why have they failed?

An answer to these questions will furnish an important clue to the results which may be anticipated from the newest "job" stunt being engineered in Washington.

The Relief Program 1933-1935

WHEN Roosevelt took office in March, 1933, the picture presented by the country was roughly as follows:

1. Unemployment was at its peak (13,689,000 by the A. F. of L. estimate; 17 million by Labor Research Association).

2. A total of 4,560,000 families or 16 per cent of the population, was on relief, with local resources nearing their end and the states clamoring for federal aid.

3. Industrial production was at the lowest ebb of the crisis; banks were failing by the thousands.

Roosevelt's answer is properly a subject for a detailed political analysis, but for our

purpose we need discuss only the devices set up to increase employment and to meet the pressing relief problem. These devices may be listed under two heads, the Immediate and the Long-Time Programs.

The Immediate Program was confined to Federal aid to the states to maintain relief, for which purpose the F.E.R.A. was set up.

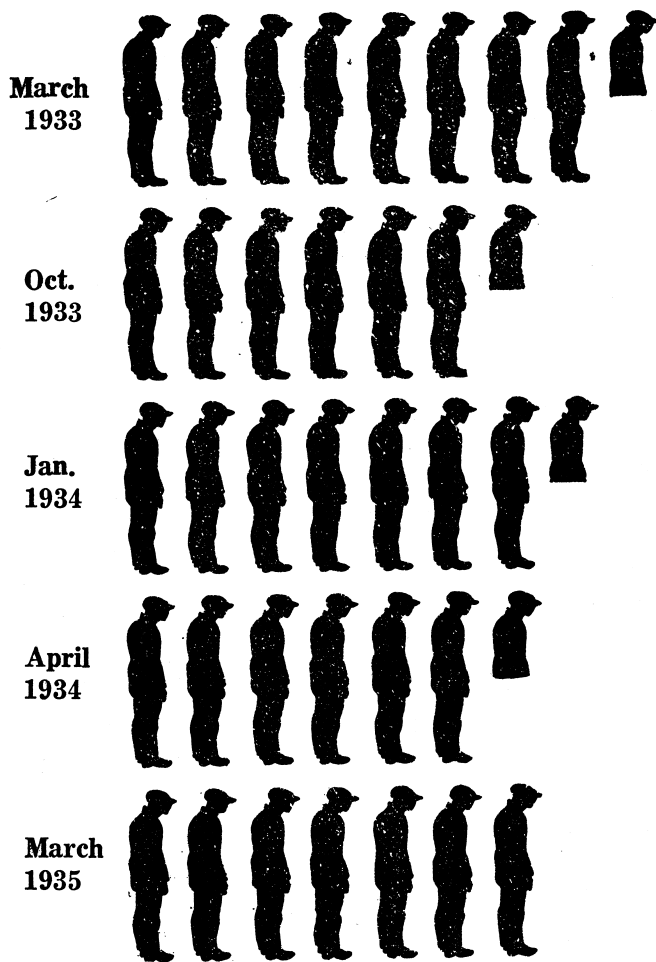
The Long-Time Program comprehended first, the C.C.C. to give 300,000 needy young men immediate employment and second, the P.W.A., to provide "real jobs" and to prime the pump of industry by letting contracts for projects requiring steel, lumber, cement, etc. More important in the Long-Time Program was the stated aim to increase employment through the operation of the N.R.A. codes, which were avowedly designed to shorten hours (providing more jobs) and raise wages (increasing purchasing power, putting more men to work).

The Immediate Program need not detain us at this point, except to observe that the Federal Government, through the F.E.R.A., kept digging into its own pocket deeper and deeper and by the end of the two years had spent over two billion dollars (exclusive of C.W.A. expenditures) for direct and work relief despite heroic efforts to toss the job back to the States (which during the same period were able to put up only \$800,000,000 or less than 30 percent of the grand total) and to reduce the number of persons on relief (which swelled from approximately 19,000,000 to close to 21,000,000 million persons by January, 1935).

The Long-Time Program

THE Long-Time Program has many aspects, some of them confusing and requiring more detailed treatment than space allows. Our present concern is with the effect upon unemployment and the need for relief.

Public Works. P.W.A. started off with an appropriation of \$3,300,000,000, to which was subsequently added another grant of \$4,000,000. After nearly two years of operation, P.W.A. has allocated (not spent) \$2,300,000,000 (the rest went to C.C.C., C.W.A., F.E.R.A.), of which only about \$1,300,000,000 has actually passed through the Treasury for payment. For the two years 1933 and 1934, the construction of public works and utilities in the country, federal and private, amounted to \$1,500,000,000. Compare this figure with the \$1,800,000,000 spent on these items in the one year 1928. But even if P.W.A. had succeeded in spending all of its allotted \$2,300,000,000 (an increase over actual expenditures of 50 percent) and had thereby put to work a monthly average of 750,000 men



"PUTTING MEN TO WORK"

Chart of unemployed from March, 1933 to March, 1935. Each figure represents two million unemployed. Figures compiled by National Research League.

instead of the monthly average of 500,000 on public-works projects during 1934, it would not have made an appreciable dent in unemployment.

From another point of view, of course, the P.W.A. was an astonishing and resounding success. Millions in profits were made on materials, and more important the Army and Navy have had a half billion more than usual to play with. Of this additional sum, \$200,000,000 went to the War Department Engineering Corps and the Coast Defense for "rivers and harbors," \$60,000,000 to the Quartermaster Corps and \$238,000,000 to the Navy for battleship construction, pushing up the total spent on war preparations (not counting the C.C.C.) from one to one and a half billion in the period June, 1933 to June, 1935.

N.R.A. Codes. Let us now examine what has happened to private employment since March, 1933. Whatever the nature of the factors operating to increase production in the Spring of 1933, available figures indicate that unemployment decreased approximately three and a half million between March and September, 1933. In the latter month there were nevertheless 10.1 million persons out of work as counted by the A. F. of L. and 13.3 million as counted by the National Research League. Nothing that has occurred since has pushed the figure any lower. *The re-employment drive of the Roosevelt Administration had spent*

itself in six months. Despite minor fluctuations, the number of unemployed increased rather than decreased in the following twenty months. Young people are entering the labor market faster than industry can absorb them, and today there are anywhere from 11 to 15 million persons seeking work and unable to find it.

The contribution of the codes to the restoration of purchasing power has been a completely negative one. While average weekly wages rose 8 percent in the last two years, food prices have soared 40 percent and total living costs are up by 14 percent. Not by any stretch of the imagination can it be maintained that the general standard of living has shown an improvement. The average worker who has a job today is worse off in terms of what his dollar can buy than in March, 1933. Not so the corporations, for 840 of which, according to the National City Bank of New York, profits between 1933 and 1934 rose 43 percent.

The Civilian Conservation Corps. Equally successful from an administration point of view was the C.C.C. Designed presumably to provide employment for 250,000 young, unmarried men between the ages of 18 and 25 years, whose families were on the relief rolls, the C.C.C. has been the outstanding military achievement of the New Deal. A total of \$750,000,000 has been spent in putting close to one million men and boys under

army supervision for an average enrollment of six months. The \$30 monthly wage was actually the first attack of the New Deal against the practice of paying prevailing wages on work relief projects. By a rough estimate some \$190,000,000 of the \$750,000,000 found its way to the families back home; the rest went towards the strengthening of the American military machine. The more than half a million youth who have been in and out of the camps are today precisely where they were two years ago—unemployed. But big business, checking closely on governmental relief expenditures, has never once criticized the C.C.C., the favorite child of the New Deal and now destined to assume even greater importance under the Four Billion Dollar Program.

The Plunge into C.W.A.

SO MUCH for the long-time program. The reader is now asked to hurry back to November, 1933 and to examine with the writers the dismal outlook facing the Administration after the honeymoon days of the New Deal were over. Despite the codes, there were still from 10 to 13 million persons out of jobs. P.W.A. spending was moving along at a sluggish pace. Fifteen million men, women and children were still on the relief rolls and winter was coming. Hope in the New Deal, rapidly dwindling, had to be revived. And so, with a great fanfare of publicity the Administration announced a huge program of *immediate jobs*—again, to relieve unemployment and to increase purchasing power. One last pump-priming effort, said Roosevelt, and back to prosperity by 1934.

Into the C.W.A. effort was flung \$400,000,000 from P.W.A. funds and \$89,000,000 from F.E.R.A. money. Subsequently an additional \$375,000,000 was appropriated, making a total federal expenditure of \$864,000,000. The F.E.R.A. was now also the C.W.A., and state relief administrations became civil works administrations. A frantic search for projects ensued, with results that did not always reflect the best engineering skill of the country or the real needs of the people. But the primary object was to put persons to work. Taking over the approximately 800,000 on work relief under local auspices in November, the C.W.A. quickly expanded until it reached a peak of 4.1 million in the middle of January. The weekly payroll mounted rapidly from \$8,000,000 to \$62,000,000. Money was getting into circulation and store sales were rising.

And then, just as suddenly C.W.A. came to an end. Frightened at the hole made in the Treasury and under strong pressure from employers who found the competition of the 30-cent-hourly minimum on C.W.A. jobs too stiff to meet, Roosevelt and Hopkins called off the deal in February. The number of employes at work and weekly payrolls took a headlong nose-dive. By April first, C.W.A. was a memory. Seven hundred million dollars in wages had been thrown into circula-

tion in four months, another \$300,000,000 had been spent on materials, but April, 1934, found unemployment no less than in November, 1933 and the relief rolls just as crowded.

After C.W.A. This had been foreseen by the administration a little earlier. Around January, Roosevelt and his advisors began to realize that the crisis was more serious than the brain trust had calculated and that the government had better retreat from continued responsibility for the relief program.

"The Federal Government," said Roosevelt in February, announcing the end of the C.W.A., "has no intention or desire to force either upon the country or the unemployed themselves a system of relief which is repugnant to American ideals of self-reliance."

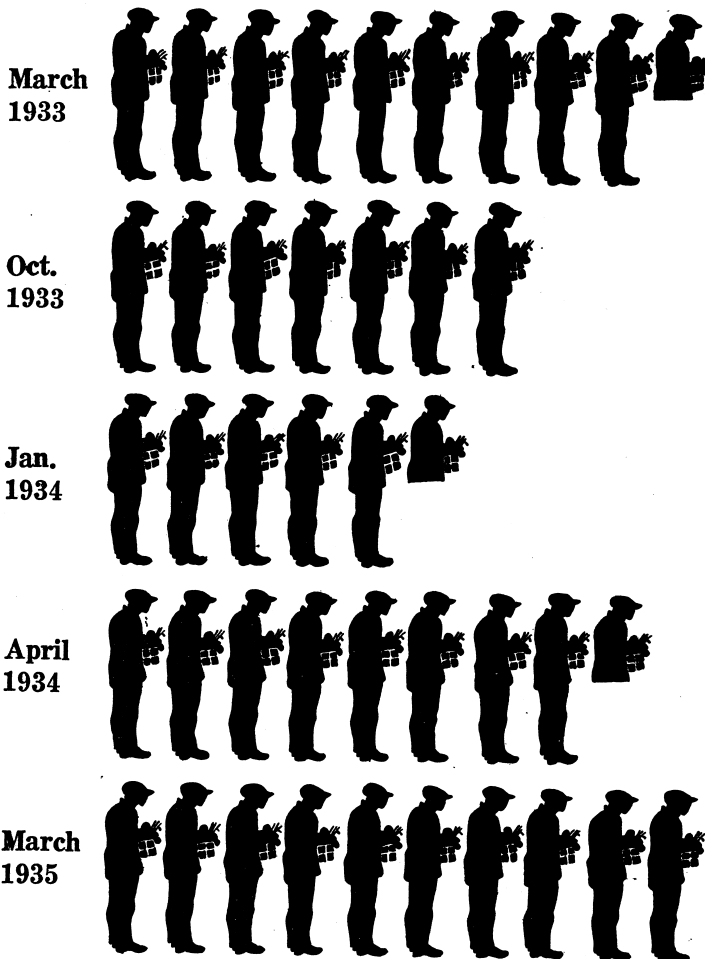
Not repugnant to American ideals of self-reliance was the transferring to work relief of 30 percent of the C.W.A. who thereby had their monthly earnings cut 30 and 40 percent. The others were put out on the street. A good many of them applied for aid not long after. They kept on doing so in increasing numbers. Persons on relief jumped from 11.1 million in January, 1934 (at the peak of the C.W.A.) to 20.7 million in January, 1935.

With relief expenditures (which reached \$197,000,000 in January, 1935) going up and up and no end in sight, business became alarmed and in the fall of 1934 began calling for a halt. The National Economy League led off with a blast against "federal hand-outs." Senator Borah denounced "waste" and "inefficiency" in relief. Directors sitting on the boards of banks and railroads that had dipped liberally into the billions of the R.F.C. demanded a balanced budget. Lewis W. Douglas, former director of the budget held up the spectre of inflation. Continued F.E.R.A. allocations to the States "must inevitably plunge 125 million people into the destructive effects of a collapsed currency," he predicted, "a ghastly social and economic calamity" which can be prevented only by "sacrifice and hard work" (read "no federal money for relief").

The line the government was eventually to follow was laid down in December at the Joint Business Conference for Economic Recovery in White Sulphur Springs.

"Relief," said the Conference, "is not properly a function of the Federal Government but is primarily the obligation of the family, or private charity, of the municipality and of the State. The Federal Government should aid only when absolutely necessary. An unwillingness on the part of the States and municipalities to share in relief aid is manifest. A constructive step in overcoming this reluctance would be to return to the States as soon as practicable the burden of relief." The Conference had no strong objection to work relief, but recommended that wages should be substantially below those in private industry and that direct relief payments should be even lower.

In January came the Four Billion Dollar



"THIS BUSINESS OF RELIEF"

Relief totals, March, 1933 to March, 1935. Each figure stands for two million. January, 1934 represents the C.W.A. period. Figures compiled by F.E.R.A.

Work Program and the announcement that the Federal Government was getting out of relief. But before we proceed to the new dispensation, we should summarize the net results of the 1933-1935 program:

1. A reduction of only 2.5 million in the number of unemployed, which remains between 11 and 14 million.
2. A net increase of about one million persons on relief.
3. A total expenditure of only \$4.2 billion in relief benefits, P.W.A., C.C.C. and C.W.A. wages to compensate for a loss to workers of about \$40,000,000 in wages during the same period due to unemployment.
4. A failure to spend more than one-third of the money allotted for public works, with about half going to military projects.
5. An actual decline in real wages in private industry and a sky-rocketing rise in profits, with a net reduction in the standard of living of the American worker.

The New Program 1935-1937

THE broad outlines of the President's work plan were first presented by him in his address to Congress January 4. With the cleverness that is the mark of the shrewd politician he posed the desirability of work as against relief, and then calmly announced that the "Federal Government must and shall quit this business of relief." Why? Because continued dependence upon relief is a "nar-

cotic," a "subtle destroyer of the human spirit," is "inimical to the dictates of sound policy," a violation of sound American traditions.

Work would replace relief. But not work relief of the old type. "I am not willing that the vitality of our people be further sapped by the giving of cash, of market baskets, of a few hours of weekly work cutting grass, raking leaves or picking up papers in the public parks. We must preserve not only the bodies of the unemployed from destitution, but also their self-respect, their self-reliance and courage and determination."

What would preserve self-respect, self-reliance and courage and determination?

Public Works!

But public works, as our analysis has tended to show, will do nothing of the sort for 14 million unemployed in this country. What then is the President driving at?

This question can best be answered perhaps by asking these five questions:

1. Are three and a half million jobs being created?
2. Will four billion dollars be spent between July, 1935 and July, 1936?
3. Will the wage-schedule announced for the new program provide a minimum standard of living?
4. What will happen to the so-called unemployables on relief?
5. Who will benefit from the new program?

No Jobs Created

1. *Are three and a half million jobs being created?* The new work schedule, in the President's words, will unite "in a single new and greatly enlarged plan" all emergency work programs—the P.W.A., the C.C.C., and of course the work relief projects at present carried on by the F.E.R.A.

In January, 1935, these three programs had 3,215,000 persons working as follows:

F.E.R.A. work relief	2,472,000
P.W.A.	344,000
C.C.C.	399,000

Total	3,215,000
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Among the first announcements made by President Roosevelt in connection with the Four Billion Dollar Program was the government's intention to raise the enrollment of the C.C.C. from 399,000 to about 700,000. This addition of from two to three hundred thousand boys to the C.C.C. personnel to the total on emergency work gives us Roosevelt's 3½ million jobs. This represents the net contribution of the new program to the unemployment problem. The cheerful newspaper talk about the coming transfer of men from the relief rolls to work projects is sheer flapdoodle.

No three and a half million jobs are being created. This figure simply represents only the effect of a doubling in the C.C.C. army upon the number already employed at the present time on emergency jobs.

2. *Will the government spend four billion dollars in a year?* We have already estimated that in the two-year period May, 1933 to May, 1935, approximately \$4.2 billions was spent by the country (local, state and Federal) in relief benefits, C.W.A., C.C.C., and P.W.A. wages. The announcement, then, that the Federal Government alone will spend four billion dollars in *one* year, and on work relief *only*, surely represents a tremendous stepping up in net benefits to the destitute unemployed. Actually, however, there is likely to be very little change for the better in the flow of money into work and relief expenditures for the coming year.

In the first place emphasis is being put in the new plan upon "useful" projects, which means construction projects by and large. Construction jobs require careful planning in advance, and it is precisely this kind of planning which is lacking in the new works program. "Promises were made of the great vision of building," comments John T. Flynn, Washington financial observer. "Schools, housing, public projects of every kind were to rise throughout the land. But they turned out to be largely castles in the air."

Nine hundred million dollars are earmarked for loans to state and cities for public works, but the entire P.W.A. experience goes to prove that states and cities are not borrowing extensively from P.W.A. funds because

of the high interest rate and lack of resources with which to finance repayment. The same factor will act as a drag upon loans in the new program, despite the recent increase in the outright Federal grant from 30 to 45 percent and the cut in the interest rate from 4 to 3 percent.

In a moment of candor, Robert Moses, New York City Commissioner of Parks, declared recently that "the most preposterous nonsense has been talked about public works in this country . . . I am a public works advocate in this situation, but I believe in getting to the facts and not living on moonshine. The fact is that comparatively few people can be employed on public works because it takes so long to prepare plans and because of the numerous competing schemes which in our political system are all bound to get consideration, and perhaps not equal consideration."

"The rate of spending is likely to be slowed up rather than speeded, because of faulty organization," says the Kiplinger Washington letter of May 4, commenting on the "lack of plan" in the work program.

The probability that the administration will not, or at least does not intend to spend four billion dollars on work projects in one year is borne out by the following additional considerations:

a. Under the terms of the Act, the money is available until June 30, 1937 and does not have to be spent by June 30, 1936. Curiously enough, this date set by Roosevelt as a "deadline," coincides with the Convention of the Democratic Party.

b. The President is given full discretion, within very broad meaningless limitations, to spend the money as he sees fit.

c. The Act appropriating the four billion dollars permits the use of some or all of the total sum for relief as well as work relief. As will be developed below, the need for direct relief has not abated appreciably.

To sum up: the sluggishness characterizing past P.W.A. spending (over a billion dollars is still unspent of the old program) the lack of plan in the present program, and the continued need for direct relief make it extremely doubtful that four billion dollars will be expended on work projects in the coming fiscal year (July, 1935-June, 1936). *No new rise in consumption power need be anticipated.*

A Cut in Wages

3. *Will the wage-scale provide a minimum standard of living?* "Compensation on emergency public projects," said the President, January 4, "should be in the form of security payments which should be larger than the amount now received as a relief dole, but at the same time not so large as to encourage the rejection of opportunities for private employment or the leaving of private employment to engage in government work."

This paraphrases the dictum of the National Association of Manufacturers in its Platform for Recovery enunciated the pre-

ceding month: "Wage rates for work performed on work relief should be lower than current wage rates in private employment and must never be sufficient to entice workers from private employment."

The wage-schedule announced May 20, sets up a scale ranging from \$19 monthly for unskilled rural workers in the deep South to \$94 for professional and technical workers in New York. On the basis of a 30 hour week, the scale represents hourly rates from 14 to 72 cents. Is this an increase or a decrease from current rates on the emergency job programs?

Three areas were set up for P.W.A. jobs: the South, where skilled labor received a dollar and unskilled labor 40 cents an hour; the Central States, where skilled labor got \$1.10 and unskilled labor 45 cents an hour; and the North, where the hourly rates were \$1.20 and 50 cents respectively.

As compared with P.W.A. rates, the wages to manual workers to be paid under the new plan represents a cut of from 45 to 65 percent.

According to the administration, prevailing rates will be paid on projects financed by loans to the states and cities, but as we have already pointed out, few persons will find their way to jobs on these largely paper projects. Moreover, the P.W.A. announced May 29 that it would no longer demand code compliance by firms entering into P.W.A. construction contracts—a tip to go ahead and slash wages and lengthen hours.

How does the wage-scale compare with rates now paid on F.E.R.A. work relief? In January rates of less than 20 cents an hour predominated in Alabama, Georgia, South Carolina and parts of Tennessee, dropping as low as 10 cents an hour in many counties in South Carolina. In other Southern states "wage rates for common labor, while below 20 cents per hour in some cases, were most frequently between 20 and 30 cents." (F.E.R.A. Monthly Report, January, 1935.)

From the same source comes evidence of hourly rates in other parts of the country that are likewise generally above those announced for the new program. Low as they are, the hourly rates for unskilled labor on F.E.R.A. projects, with exceptions, are higher.

The new scale cannot really be compared with the F.E.R.A. rate, since the President himself has described the work opportunities under the Four Billion Dollar Program as jobs and not as work-for-relief. Under these circumstances it is legitimate to question the effect of wages to be paid upon hourly rates in industry. That labor sees the danger is attested to by the storm of protest which greeted announcements of wage-schedule.

Not by any feat of intellectual gymnastics can the \$19 rate in the South be defended as capable of maintaining a family of five in normal health. The real explanation is to be found in the abysmally low wages in the South and the Government's avowed intention not to interfere with them.

4. *What will happen to the unemployed?* This is the crux of the matter. According to the administration there are some five million families on relief, of which 3.5 million will be taken care of through the Work Program, leaving 1.5 million to go to the states and localities for direct relief.

Our analysis, however, shows that no families will be taken off relief to be cared for through "work." The total group now on direct relief, 2.5 million families, will stay right there. In other words, states and localities, which put up only 27.7 percent of the total relief spent in 1934 will be required, under the President's plan, to care *completely* for 50 percent of the country's relief load.

The effect upon the size of the relief grant may well be imagined. The drive to "purge" the relief rolls of "chiselers" will be intensified. Relief grants will be slashed. The lowering of wage-standards that may be anticipated as a result of the demise of the N.R.A. will be reflected in still lower relief standards. The sales-tax, in effect in 23 states for unemployment relief or for meeting school needs, will spread to the remaining 25. (Additional sales-tax bills are pending in a dozen legislatures.)

Recent efforts of the F.E.R.A. to force states to step up their contributions (a preliminary move to turning over the entire direct relief burden to them) have resulted in crises in Arkansas, Idaho, Illinois, Missouri and Pennsylvania, with untold suffering

Conclusions

5. *Who will benefit from the new program?* Not the five to seven million unemployed not yet on relief. No jobs are being created for them.

Not the families on direct relief. They will stay on relief and will be turned over to the niggardly resources of the States.

Not the employed, whose wage-structure is threatened by the new coolie wages.

Not the workers on F.E.R.A. work-relief working longer for less per hour.

But, the industrialists who are promised \$1.9 billion for materials out of the \$4 billion, the Army and Navy for whom hundreds of projects will be completed by work-relief labor and for whom an enrollment of 700,000 in the C.C.C. camps represents a gratifying addition to their military machine.

It is clear that the Work Program represents no essential shift in the administration's plans for the unemployed, except in two respects: first, a new slash in hourly rates on work projects, and second, a callous resolve to get out of direct relief at any cost. No new jobs are being created. No additional money will be spent. The drive is clearly towards lowered relief standards, towards increasing dependence upon the sales-tax for the financing of relief, toward lowered wages in industry and a strengthened war machine.

The four billion dollar program is the New Deal all over again.

Britain Backs Hitler

R. PALME DUTT

LONDON.

THE open role of Nazi Germany as the center of preparation of the new world war is visible to all. What is not equally visible to all is the decisive role of British Imperialism as the main backer of Nazi Germany (despite certain conflicts of interests) and behind-the-scenes fomenter of the future war. As under Grey before 1914, so under Simon and MacDonald today, British foreign policy, under a thick cloak of "indecisiveness" and a "mediatorial" role, is the pivotal factor in the present drive to war in Europe and is whipping forward the antagonisms and war-preparations in such a way as to ensure that the future war shall take place in the direction desired by Britain.

German rearmament has already reached such a point of actual and potential strength as to cause sharp alarm in British ruling circles, voiced by the old Conservative leaders, Austen Chamberlain and Churchill. This alarm is caused by the menace of German air superiority, by the naval and submarine-building program and by the open colonial demands. But while strong warnings have passed from Britain to Germany against any expansionist designs in these spheres, in Western Europe or overseas, this has not prevented the continuance of the National Government's practical support to Germany and its rearmament. Every warning against aggression in Western Europe has been accompanied by explicit declarations that Britain has no concern or commitment with regard to what may happen in Eastern Europe.

In reality German rearmament has only been carried through by British support—financial, economic, material and diplomatic. Without such support from the midst of the dominant powers, German rearmament would not have been possible.

Financially, the heavy cost of Hitler's armament program, originally disguised as a public works program, has not been covered either by taxation or, save to a small extent, by loan, but in the main by Reichsbank credits. Behind the Reichsbank, and in turn giving it credits, stands the Bank of England. The leading city newspaper, The Financial News, reports:

We learn that negotiations for the granting of a new credit to the Reichsbank by the Bank of England have been pursued for some time. The idea is to repeat the transaction concluded towards the end of last year when the Bank of England granted the Reichsbank a credit of £750,000. . . . In practice the result was the granting of new commercial credits to Germany. . . . In a sense the assistance thus received helped Germany to secure the raw materials required for rearmament purposes. Thus in arranging the credit of £750,000 the Bank of England unwittingly

(!) contributed towards the process of German rearmament.

(Financial News, London, May 13, 1935.)

The principle raw materials for German rearmament have come from the British Empire. This is strikingly illustrated in the case of nickel since 90 percent of the world supply of nickel is in British control, and it thus depended on the British decision whether German rearmament was to take place or not. Exports of nickel and nickel alloys from Britain to Germany increased from £889,000 value in 1932 to £1,308,000 in 1933 and £1,704,000 in 1934. In another direction may be noted the increase in the export of cotton waste from Britain to Germany, rising from £87,738 in 1933 to £262,067 in 1934, and of ferro-tungsten from £33,000 in 1932 to £59,000 in 1933 and £98,000 in 1934.

Direct arming of Germany by British armament firms has also taken place. This was illustrated already two years back, while the Versailles military clauses were supposed to be in full force, by the appearance of a Vickers advertisement of tanks, forbidden by Versailles, in a German military organ (subsequent "explanation" offered by the Chairman of Vickers was to the effect that the advertisement had been inserted in the German military organ as a way of reaching the South American public!) At the annual meeting of Vickers Ltd., in March, 1934, the Chairman, Sir Herbert Lawrence, on being asked for an assurance that the firm was not engaged in re-arming Germany, could only reply:

I cannot give you an assurance in definite terms, but I can tell you that *nothing is being done without complete sanction and approval of our own Government.*

In respect of air arming, recent questions in Parliament have elicited the fact that ninety-six airplane engines were exported from Britain to Germany during 1934. Further questioning of the President of the Board of Trade, Runciman, produced the following answers:

Question: In view of the illegal arming of Germany, will the Government take steps to prevent the export of any more of these airplane engines, and are they aware of the great feeling growing up against this treasonable traffic?

Answer: We have no reason to suppose that engines exported for civil airplanes are not fit and proper subjects for export.

Question (from a Conservative M. P.): Are any of these engines used for military aircraft?

Answer: It is impossible for us to say.

Question: Will the President of the Board of Trade take steps to stop the further exportation of these machines?

Answer: No.

(House of Commons, May 2, 1935)

The practical and technical assistance in German rearmament is only the counterpart of the diplomatic policy. Since the advent of Hitler, Britain has worked overtime to smooth the path for German rearmament and to stonewall all opposition. This was the essence of the MacDonald "disarmament" plan immediately after Hitler's coming to power, which demanded the doubling of the German army and the cutting down of the French. It underlay the line of the Four Power Pact, which sought to isolate France under the domination of a British-German-Italian combination and thus establish the bloc of western imperialism under British leadership. The French Foreign Minister, Barthou, replied with the closer approach to the Soviet Union and the preparation of the project of the Eastern Pact. Barthou was thereon removed by the familiar fascist murder methods; and his successor, Laval, has shown considerable vacillation and leaning towards Hitler. Britain, however, was compelled to express platonic benevolence to the project of the Eastern Pact, while in fact working to kill it by the simple device of declaring that it could only be accepted if it were acceptable to Germany. This was the "compromise" reached in the British-French London declaration of February, which apart from this concession expressed the British aim of removing all military restrictions on Germany and drawing up a Western European Air Pact. As soon as Germany made clear its determination at no cost to agree to any pact of mutual guarantees in Eastern Europe, the British press hastened to proclaim the Eastern Pact "dead" and that the only practical questions remained the sanctioning of German armaments and the Western Pact.

Whether or not the German Military Law of March this year—to allow for which the Simon visit was postponed a fortnight—was made with the connivance of England, it is evident that the immediately following Simon's visit to Berlin cast the mantle of British approval upon this action of open treaty-breaking and intensive war preparation. The whole character of the Simon-Hitler meeting, at which Hitler proclaimed the aims of the anti-Soviet crusade with an openness even embarrassing to his British hearers, the refusal of Simon to go on to Moscow and sending of the subordinate Eden instead, and the subsequent breakdown of Eden on return, strongly indicated the dominant line of policy. Britain had to go to Stresa in order to maintain contact with France and Italy; but Britain went there, in the expression alike of *The London Times* and of the German press, as "Germany's spokesman." Similarly Britain had to acquiesce in the Geneva resolution of formal condemnation of Germany's lawless arming; but the formality of this acquiescence was shown in the immediately following debates in Parliament and the press campaign on behalf of Germany. The keynote of this was typically

expressed in *The Times* editorial on "British Foreign Policy":

Germany simply must be given a position appropriate to a nation which is normally the most powerful single state in Europe.

(*London Times*, May 3, 1935)

Today the position has reached a very sharp point. In consequence of the German refusal to come into a general Eastern Pact of mutual guarantee, this pact has had to take the form of the Franco-Soviet Pact, signed on May 2. The British-German press has at once attacked this pact as equivalent to a "military alliance"—oblivious of the elementary fact that an alliance is always a combination against another power or powers, whereas this pact is by its terms expressly open to Germany or any other power to join. The British-German forces are, however, preparing their calculations to use Locarno against the Franco-Soviet Pact. The calculation is as follows and is openly expressed in the German press: If Germany begins war on the Soviet Union and France stands by the pact and fights on the same side as the Soviet Union, then Germany will at once invoke Locarno to call for Britain to come into the war on its side. Questioned directly in Parliament whether this was the understanding of the British Foreign Office, Sir John Simon has replied (May 2) that Britain would not "automatically" intervene in such a case, but that there was a "proviso" that in certain circumstances Britain might do so:

Suppose that Russia and Germany were to get into conflict and France went to the help of Russia by invading Germany, would that bring this country in automatically on the side of Germany? The answer was "No." . . . That was the general proposition, but there was a proviso that should be stated. In order that that should be the position and Germany have no claim under Locarno upon us, then of course the assistance of France to Russia must be given in virtue of certain stipulations of the Covenant of the League of Nations. The terms of the prospective Franco-Russian Pact, so far as they knew, were subordinated to the operation of the Locarno Treaty.

(Sir John Simon in the House of Commons, May 2, 1935)

Under this ambiguous diplomatic language can be seen the loophole of preparation of future British intervention on the side of Nazi Germany against the Soviet Union, if the plans work out as intended; for the operation of the Covenant of the League can be interpreted in a hundred fashions when the crisis comes.

Meanwhile the British chauvinist press is in full blast for alliance with Nazi Germany and for the future war on the Soviet Union. *The Daily Mail* writes:

The vast majority of the British people would welcome the collapse of the Soviet and its evil regime.

The Sunday Dispatch gives its columns to Mosley to write:

The future of Germany must lie on her Eastern Frontiers in an Empire to which the future sets no limit.

The Aeroplane, spokesman of the Air Forces, writes on February 13, 1935:

For years we have preached that the next really big job of the Royal Air Force will be to go to Germany to help in staving off a Russian invasion, and consequently we hold that any kind of Western European Pact should be an alliance of all the white nations, including Mediterraneans, against the yellow or red people East of Warsaw.

Just as the Anglo-German war was preceded by a spate of anti-German novels anticipating the future war, so now a best-seller novel is launched on all the bookstalls, entitled *Menace! A Novel of the Near Future*, with a Foreword by Air Vice-Marshal Sir Vyell Vyvyan K.C.B., the character of which can be gathered from the enthusiastic notice in the fascist official organ:

It is refreshing to come across a book called *Menace!* in which the author writes of aviation, air fighting and the R.A.F. in a sensible manner. His enemy is Communist Russia, and the objective of his bombing raids is Moscow.

At the same time the British Government is preparing public opinion for war. Baldwin, the real head of the government, declared in his speech last December:

The day may come when those who have still preserved their freedom may have to stand together lest freedom perish from the earth.

The British Government Arms Memorandum of March this year gave the explicit proclamation that "the existing international machinery cannot be relied on as a protection against an aggressor." On this basis the intensive war-preparations are pushed ahead.

The situation is serious. On the diplomatic horizon the only force backing the Soviet Union's fight for peace is the Franco-Soviet Pact. But we should beware of failing to see even here the strong forces in French imperialism which are fighting against the Pact and for alliance with Hitler. As the old Field-Marshal Lyautey declared already in 1931: "I feel more hatred towards certain Frenchmen—the revolutionaries—than towards the Germans on my own class." Or as Louis Bertrand, member of the Academy, more recently wrote: "I feel closer to Hitler and to his men, infinitely closer, than to the Communists who dishonor the name of Frenchmen." Only the strength of the mass struggle and of the united front in France broke the fascist offensive of 1934, with its pro-Hitler policy, and thereby made possible the Franco-Soviet Pact.

The diplomatic maneuvers, the contradictions of the imperialist powers and the skill of the Soviet Union's diplomacy in hindering the war-plans by utilizing these contradictions for the fight against war, all help to give us time to prepare our forces. But the final issue of the struggle depends on the strength of the revolutionary mass front against imperialism throughout the world; and the decisive stage of this struggle draws visibly closer with the present development of world events.

Between Wars on the Coast

BRUCE MINTON

WEST COAST employers face the immediate danger of another general marine strike. In San Francisco and in almost every town in California, preparations for industrial war have intensified. Meetings occur weekly to discuss the threat, meetings which sometimes convene in the General Attorney's office. Though every attempt is made to assure the utmost secrecy, THE NEW MASSES has received trustworthy information as to what goes on behind the closed doors. This, together with such news that leaks out in the daily press, with letters and bulletins published by the Industrial Association and the Chamber of Commerce and designed only for members, provides a picture of the employers' drive to organize private fascist armies. At a recent conclave of the Industrial Association, the Chamber of Commerce and the police department, the discussion turned on the question as to how fully the National Guard could be trusted to obey orders in the event of another waterfront strike. The conclusion was that the Guard could not be depended upon. And one member went even further, suggesting that federal troops were even less predictable—"with that Communistic government of ours in Washington."

If the employers cannot trust the troops, either state or federal, then they have only one resource left. They must enlist "trusted" people in organizations that can be relied upon to club and shoot and gas the workers. And, even more important, strikes must be forestalled—by intimidating the workers. On this page is reproduced an editorial which appeared in The Pacific Shipper. The coast-wide tanker-seamen strike threatens to grow. To break it, the corporations threaten "remedies" which they frankly admit are "loathsome." Employers seldom speak so baldly.

The mobilization is headed by men who have built up the highest reputations for "civic loyalty" and "patriotic integrity." In Berkeley, suburb of San Francisco, approximately 7,000 men have been enrolled in the Berkeley Nationals, pledged to fight "subversive influences." According to the Industrial Association, "subversive" should be defined as any attempt on the part of labor to organize into militant unions and to fight for improved working conditions. The Nationals have their duplicates in almost every other California city and town; without exception, they are closely identified with the police.

A month ago, the San Francisco Chamber of Commerce notified all members by letter:

Business leadership is under a challenge as never before in American industry. The safeguarding of the American idea requires a united front by all business interests, and concerted

action under a strong forward moving program.

The Chamber of Commerce will shortly announce such a program and will make a vigorous campaign to unite the intelligence of the city under it. Additional funds will be required for new work. What we need, primarily, however, is man power. To be specific, we need the services of your good men of sales ability, for a three day campaign in May. . . .

(Signed) B. R. FUNSTEN, President.

It costs money to break strikes. Industrialists and bankers have set aside, and are continually adding to, large funds for emergency use. Then there is the problem of equipment. A reporter on The San Francisco News stated that he had learned that some 20,000 pistols had been distributed in the Bay Region among deputies and vigilantes. Apparently this is not quite accurate. What is happening is that large arsenals of revolvers and machine-guns and stores of tear gas have been established in every locality in California, with particular concentration in the Bay Region. It is worthwhile recalling that when street car workers struck in Los Angeles last autumn, the Chief of Police admitted using gas against the strikers *that had*

been bought and paid for by the street car companies.

With each strike, the vigilantes, backed as they are by the Industrial Association and the Chamber of Commerce, grow bolder. Recently, when miners were locked out in Amador County, California, the "Mother Lode Vigilante Committee, Local 84" published and distributed the following bulletin:

We are pleased to find that most of the pickets have learned that the best place to spend the night is in bed and not on the picket line where they might endanger their health and their lives. . . .

This local climate is none too good for the health of union officials or Mr. Brown would not have left our community. Automobile rides these cold nights are liable to give one pneumonia—IF NOTHING WORSE. . . .

FROM NOW ON THE VIGILANTE COMMITTEE WILL BE KNOWN BY ITS DEEDS AND NOT BY ITS WORDS. Advise your red friends to leave the country so that the committee will not have to take action.

And what is occurring in California repeats or foreshadows the situation in every other part of the country.

PACIFIC SHIPPER

Weekly Compendium of Pacific Coast Shipping

GEO. E. MARTIN - PUBLISHER

EDITORIAL

APRIL 22, 1935

AWAKE BUSINESS MEN of the Pacific Coast! Do you not realize that one by one the industries of this area are being picked off for subjugation by labor unions dominated by men who envision the overthrow of the economic and political system? Can you not see that they are winning and that industry is fighting an unspirited, planless, incohesive and hence a losing battle?

The plain fact is that the radicals are meeting with no intelligent opposition of a co-ordinated nature. Virtually single-handed and unprepared, a lone industry (such as shipping last summer) is thrown into a conflict against the combined forces of organized labor. There are, it is true, divisions in the ranks of labor, but so far, and largely because of the inopportunist of the employers as a class, the revolutionaries have been enabled to manipulate the whole force of organized labor as a unit.

The consequences of such a situation already have reached down to the grass roots of the Pacific Coast commercial estate. New industries have been frightened out of this area. Local capital has been frightened out of expansion. And the established industries who merely have felt the indirect effects of this state of affairs are deluding themselves if they think they are not marked out for the slaughter. Undivided they may or may not hang as only the future can tell; but divided they surely will hang.

The stock theories for meeting the situation evidence an abysmal ignorance of the true conditions and the underlying influences. There is little reason to believe that the proper strategy is either to shut up shop or to adopt Fascist tactics. The one is plain surrender, playing directly into the hands of the radicals. The other is a stupid method of solving by might the problems that ought to be solved by right. Yet there is very grave danger that industry will belittle or evade the issue until it is either too late to save capitalistic industry at all, or necessary to apply loathsome Fascistic remedies.



CAPITALISM ON PARADE

What Is Communism?

6. Communism and Religion

EARL BROWDER

WE HAVE scores of questions relating to the attitude of the Communist Party toward religion and especially asking how it is possible, in view of our opposition to religion, to enter into a united front with religious organizations. We quote from two typical examples:

Is it true that the Communist Party is abandoning its historical struggle against religion, compromising with it and even entering a united front with the church? . . . Can you explain why the Communist Party permitted the Father Divine movement to participate in the May Day demonstration and thereby open itself to such bitter attacks as those being made by *The Forward*, *The New Leader*, *The Socialist Call* and the *Trotskyites*?

No, it is not true that the Communists are abandoning the historical struggle against religion. On the contrary, it is only now that we are seriously beginning this struggle where it really counts—that is, among the religious masses themselves. The very means of taking the anti-religious struggle among the religious masses, is what has disquieted our questioners. That is only another sign of the old disease of sectarianism from which American revolutionaries have so long suffered.

It is true that the Communist Party is participating in united-front movements in which religious organizations are taking an ever more active part and, to some degree even, including churches. This is not compromise with religion on our part. Our united front is on burning social issues, mainly the struggle against fascism and war and for the Workers' Unemployment, Old-Age and Social Insurance Bill (H. R. 2827).

How does it come about that religious organizations can be drawn into such united-front actions, in spite of the active anti-religious work of the Party?

Here we reveal one of the deep contradictions among the many which tear apart present-day society. The Communists, estimating religion as "the opiate of the people" and combatting it untiringly, do so on the basis of our program of complete and unconditional religious freedom. The rising fascist movement throughout the capitalist world, which more and more presents itself as the only alternative to Communism, before the masses marches under the flag of religion (Hitler's latest speech made a special accusation against the U. S. S. R. as "unchristian"), but has revealed itself before the masses, especially in its Hitler-German example, as the destroyer of all freedom, including religious freedom. As against the anti-religious Communists who fight for religious freedom and the religious fascists who fight to destroy it, it is becom-

ing more and more the tendency of the progressive-minded sections of the religious mass organizations to choose the Communists. They tend to join in the broad united front against fascism and its accompanying accentuation of the war danger, and to be glad that anti-religious Communists are shoulder to shoulder with them in the fight.¹

Does this united front soften down the anti-religious work of the Communists? No, on the contrary, it has aroused a great interest among religious people as to the Communist position and brought about a tremendous increase in the circulation of our anti-religious literature. As a result of this united-front development, we can say, for the first time, that we are conducting *mass* work in this field. True, we are much more careful to avoid offending the religious prejudices, especially among the workers; we try not to be offensive to them, because that would only close their minds to what we have to give them. The abandonment of ineffective, offensive, rude and roughly satirical attacks upon religion, among the religious masses, is a loss for which we can be thankful.

When in the Ruhr plebiscite, last January, a united front against Hitler was formed among Catholics, Socialists and Communists, this was a serious achievement for the anti-fascist front. Its revolutionary logic was so clear, its value so apparent, that very few critics could speak openly against it. The trouble with it was that it did not include enough Catholic and Socialist workers, that it was still only a beginning.

Here in America, last August, it was the united front of religious youth organizations, together with Socialists and Communists, which defeated the fascist-inspired Viola Ilma, with her Washington support, and turned the American Youth Congress into an inspiring mass movement of the youth throughout the country against war and fascism. This Youth Congress movement contains, as its main bulk, the religious organizations of young people. At the same time it is all-inclusive, having furnished the vehicle for the first nation-wide unity of Socialists and Communists, in spite of the many difficulties in this respect (only gradually being overcome by the pressure of non-party masses). This movement has drawn *millions* of youth under its influence.

¹ Readers interested in going more deeply into this question will find a valuable contribution in *The Communist*, April, 1935. Under the title "Religion and Communism," there is a stenographic report of a discussion between Browder and a group of students from Union Theological Seminary, which goes into great detail.

Who could be so utterly stupid as to suggest that the young Communists should keep themselves "pure" and uncontaminated by association with these religious youth organizations, by withdrawing from this great mass movement? It is the outstanding merit of our Communist youth that they have plunged into the very heart of it!

An interesting feature of the Youth Congress is this, that while there are still some few young socialist leaders who try to exclude the Communists (and who would be delighted if we should isolate ourselves), there are very few with that idea who can speak for the religious youth masses. In fact, most of the religious youth will now fight to a finish to maintain the leading position of the young Communists in the Youth Congress movement. Strange as it may still seem to some people, they like us!

This brings us to the much-debated question of the self-styled "God" of Harlem, Father Divine, the participation of whose followers in the New York May Day roused so much comment.

Most of our critics, who condemn us for association with Divine's followers, are willing, strangely enough, to accept or at least condone the united front with the more respectable, more established, church organizations. But they demand that we Communists should be more discriminating, that we should be careful to associate ourselves only with "good" religious organizations, that we should avoid the "bad" ones, like that of Father Divine. They find something especially outrageous in the fact that Divine's followers locate their God in Harlem instead of in the skies or in his Vicar at Rome! Their sense of decency is shocked when Divine's flock shows its religious enthusiasms in the street! They want us to help discipline the Divine congregation into the mold of the older established church institutions!

But, dear critics, can you not understand that we Communists are so fundamental in our anti-religious position that we are unable to distinguish between "good" and "bad" religions, because for us they are all bad?

Can you not understand that, for those who have really rejected religion, the idea of God is unacceptable, quite independent of the supposed geographical location of that mythical being?

No, we find it impossible to make a choice between the object of worship of Father Coughlin on the one hand and the most deluded follower of Father Divine on the other.

We do find a difference of values, however, as between various religious organizations, when we come to judge among which

it is most important and profitable to carry on our work. While we try to carry our united-front program among the masses in all these organizations, we can see clearly that this is most important in certain ones. And these most important ones are, precisely, the youth and Negro organizations. That is because here, among the youth and the Negro masses, we find the greatest suffering from the crisis and, therefore, the greatest response to our message of organization and struggle.

What church organization has made the most complete mobilization of its members to demonstrate opposition to fascism and war? Unquestionably, it is that of Father Divine. Other churches could well be proud if they had done as much!

What church has adopted resolutions in support of H. R. 2827 and sent delegations to Washington to register this support before Congress? We would be delighted if a thousand other churches would do it, but so far the Divine church does not have much competition for first place!

Is there any one who can deny that these activities are gradually succeeding in giving a social and political education to the Negro masses who belong to Father Divine's church? Is there anyone who can deny the tremendous importance of this political education in the heart of Harlem, and spreading throughout the country precisely through this united front? And can anyone doubt that the liberation of these masses from slavery to religious superstitions is thus being carried out in the only way possible at this point in their development?

Some of our correspondents have written to us about the Divine church followers in very contemptuous terms. We want to answer all such critics, in the most explicit terms, that we have nothing whatever in common with their contemptuous attitude. Neither have we anything in common with the fantastic religion of Father Divine, in which we see the characteristic features of all religions. But we most emphatically do have much in common with the masses of Negroes who follow Divine; they are our people, they are suffering, toiling masses, they are our brothers and sisters. We will fight for them, for their interests, and we will do everything possible to draw them into a common struggle with us. We grant them the same right to their religious superstitions that we grant to the Catholic masses, the Jewish religious workers, the members of the multitude of Protestant churches and sects; while we reserve to ourselves the right to oppose all such superstitions, in the most effective ways we can find.

The next question is that posed by a certain churchman, who writes us the following:

I am heartily in sympathy with your objectives, and with your judgment on most current questions, but I am somewhat doubtful about the existence of all these revolutionary qualities that you ascribe to the working class. I see the biggest organization of labor, the A. F. of L., consistently lined up with the capitalists on all big questions and sometimes even with the most re-

actionary capitalists, as in their opposition to the recognition of the Soviet Union. On the other hand, from what I see going on in most of the Protestant Churches, I am inclined to think that the Communist Party will capture the leadership of the churches before it does that of the trade unions.

We Communists would be the last ones to deny the reactionary character of the higher official leadership of the American Federation of Labor. This reactionary leadership, however, does not arise out of, nor base itself upon, the main body of organized workers which it claims to represent. Still less is it representative of the working class as a whole. It is a product on the one hand of the narrow craft interests of the relatively small group of highly skilled or strategically placed workers who, in the pre-crisis and especially in the pre-war period, had purchased a privileged position at the expense of betraying the majority of their class brothers. This group is what we Communists designate as the "aristocracy of labor." On the other hand, it is the product of capitalist corruption, fraud and coercion extending over many years, in which the working class had not yet become conscious of its separate interests and of its historic role.

This lack of class-consciousness among the workers in America is evidenced by the lack of any separate political organization of the mass of the working class, by its subordination to the open capitalist political parties. The causes of this political backwardness are to be found in the peculiarities of American historical development. These may be indicated, without going into any great detail, as chiefly the higher tempo of American capitalist development as compared to other countries; its greater breadth and sweep in the conquest of a new continent in which pre-capitalist forms were largely absent; the accompanying feature of what is known as "the frontier," that is, over a long period the possibility of dissatisfied workers becoming settlers of new territory with the incorporation of the most active and intelligent of them into the bourgeoisie; the existence in America of a higher degree of civil rights than in most capitalist countries; the extreme heterogeneity of the American working class, as a result of immigration from all over the world; and the higher standard of living, as a result of all these peculiarities, of the American workers as compared with those of Europe over a considerable period—in fact practically up to the present economic crisis.

WHAT reason have we to believe that this political backwardness of the American workers can and will be overcome? We have many and good reasons. These are not weakened by the facts just cited, but on the contrary they are strengthened. The higher were the previous standards of living of the American workers, the greater is the consequent dissatisfaction, awakening and revolt when these workers are suddenly, catastrophically, cast down to the

European level as at present. The greater were the democratic rights that existed in the previous period when they did not threaten the capitalist rule, the stronger is the present resistance of the working class when capitalism in America is systematically curtailing and destroying these rights and moving towards fascist dictatorship. The same applies to the effects of the crisis upon increasing strata of the farmers and middle classes. Precisely because the United States was the land of the highest development of capitalism (which is the general explanation of the lateness of the working class awakening to class consciousness) the more rapid will be the speed of its development as a conscious independent class force. The problem of revolutionization of the working class is the problem of bringing it to consciousness of its class position and class interests.

In contrast with this, among the middle classes it is precisely the growing consciousness of their intermediate position and the contradictions embodied therein, which gives rise more and more to vacillations, hesitations, indecisiveness.

We have reason, therefore, to expect that, with the sharpening of all social problems caused by the capitalist crisis, the working class more and more will emerge as an independent revolutionary force struggling against capitalism, and more and more understand the necessity to overthrow capitalism. And in fact that is what we do witness going on today.

There is sometimes a certain appearance of truth given to the facetious remark of our churchly friend about middle-class church people being more revolutionarily inclined, at least for the moment and on the surface, than large and significant sections of the workers. But it would be a great mistake to be misled by such superficial appearances. The slightest probing beneath the surface would show that all of these manifestations of radicalization among the middle classes follow, and are dependent upon, the basic movements and struggles of the wage workers. It would be impossible to witness such significant signs of radicalization as the great student strike against war, the leftward movements in the churches and especially among the church youth, the growing struggles of the farmers, the growing organization and activities among technicians and white-collar workers, etc., except upon the basis of the rising strike movement in the industries: the great solidarity strikes of last year, the historic San Francisco General Strike, the National Textile Strike of half a million workers, the nation-wide struggles of the unemployed and so on.

We have every reason, therefore, to expect the continued, though uneven and spasmodic growth of revolutionary action and leadership among the workers, organized and unorganized, which can end only with the complete victory of the working class. On the other hand, much as we welcome and appreciate the expressions of the revolutionary

process going on among the churches, we cannot expect an analogous development there. Precisely because the Protestant churches in America have been, to a greater degree than in other countries, removed from direct contact with the social and political struggles as a result of the separation of church and state and of their decentralized and split-up organizations, there has been a certain opportunity for a freer expression through some of them of the revolutionary trends operating among the masses. This will find its limits, however, with the further development of the class struggle. These churches are fundamentally controlled, as organizations, by the capitalist class. Very soon we may expect to see the anti-Red campaign with its Dickstein Committees, its Hearsts and so on, carrying through a purge in these institutions. They can never become basic weapons in the hands of the toiling masses in their struggle for a new society.

The basic and leading force to resist the degradation of living standards by the capitalists is, and can only be, the working class and before all, the industrial wage

workers. This is the only class, further, that is capable of conceiving, planning and building a socialist society. In carrying out these historic tasks, however, the working class does not isolate itself from the other sections of the oppressed and impoverished population. On the contrary, it fights for the interests of all the toiling masses, and sets itself to win them in close alliance and active participation in the struggle for immediate needs and for the socialist society. *The Proletarian Revolution*, towards which the Communist program leads, is in the truest and broadest sense *the People's Revolution*. Only such a revolution can free humanity from the degradation and bestiality of the final stage of capitalism such as we now witness in Germany, free the stifled productive forces, preserve the cultural heritage of the past from destruction and lead the whole human race towards a brighter and happier future, a future of peace, plenty and prosperity.

In his seventh article, next week, Earl Browder will discuss "How the Communist Party Works."—THE EDITORS.

Questions from Readers

EARL BROWDER

Status of the Family

Question: What will be the status of the family under socialism? Is it true that the Communists propose to abolish the family as an institution? Is it true that the Communists are opposed to the social regulation of sexual relations, and advocate and practice promiscuity?

Answer: From the dawn of history, every revolutionary movement has had flung against it the charge that it would abolish the family, that it believed in "free love," that it would reduce mankind's sexual relations to the level of the lower animals. The same charge was made against capitalism and the bourgeois revolution by the spokesmen of feudalism and the aristocracy. There is only that much truth in the age-old slander, that each revolution, by changing the material base of society, brings forth new forms for all human relationships, usually higher forms, not lower. The socialist society will not abolish the family; on the contrary, it will give the family an opportunity to develop its full possibilities. That is something that capitalism never could give; for the masses, under capitalism, family life has always been crushed under the ruthless burdens of exploitation. In these days of the collapse of capitalism, the family is actually being abolished for millions, smashed by the inexorable hammer of unemployment. Under socialism, it is true, the typical family will not be, as now, based upon the special subjection and slavery of the woman and, therefore, the family will become quite different—something much higher and more beautiful. Every honest student of the actual development of the family and of sexual relations in the Soviet Union, where socialism is being built in the midst of great difficulties, has reported the new life, vigor and solidity of the family life that is growing up there upon the new social and economic foundation. A revolutionary morality in sexual and family questions, upon the principle of equality of men and women, an equality that permeates all social and

economic life, is being built up. The Communist Party, both before and after the revolution, is the sworn enemy of all looseness and laxness in personal life, which reduces the social effectiveness of the individual. It builds its moral standards upon this foundation, in contrast to those of bourgeois society, which are based upon the sacredness of private property and reduce marriage and sex to merchandise.

Question of Dictatorship

Question: How do you reconcile your statements about the dictatorship of the proletariat being a democracy for the workers, with the fact that where it exists there is only one party permitted to exist, and that Joseph Stalin is the dictator?

Answer: Our questioner is, first of all, badly misinformed (probably he reads Hearst) about Joseph Stalin being a dictator. The undoubted authority carried by the word of Comrade Stalin in the U.S.S.R. (and throughout the world among the toiling masses) has the same foundation, and is a continuation of, the authority that belonged to Lenin. It is the authority of the accepted leader of the Communist Party which has showed the way to a new life, to the solution of every problem, for the masses. It is the authority which comes from being proved correct by life itself, in every major controversy that has arisen within the Party itself. It is an authority based upon the love and confidence of the masses. Our questioner seems to think that workers' democracy can be realized only by two or more parties, on the example of bourgeois society. But capitalism needs many parties because it has no solidarity of interest, because it is composed of warring groups. The working class has no such need; on the contrary, it has every need of singleness of direction, without which it is impossible to build socialism. A dictatorship of the proletariat and a socialist reconstruction of society, carried out by two or three or more parties, alternating in direction of affairs, and competing for the favors of an

electorate according to the model of our Republican and Democratic Parties, would not be a workers' rule but a return to capitalism; its boasted socialist construction would go the way of Kautsky's famous "socialization commissions" in the German Weimar Republic; the whole conception fits only into an Alice-in-Wonderland fairy tale. United under the leadership of one Party, the Communist Party, the toiling masses realize democracy in real life for the first time. It provides the only possible means whereby the masses really take hold of their own life and rebuild it into a great social edifice, realizing step by step all their hitherto suppressed possibilities. Democracy and freedom, for the working class, means the freedom to UNITE, not to divide; means the ability to RULE with a single CLASS WILL and thus to defeat all enemies and overcome all difficulties. The tremendous authority of a Stalin is no personal dictatorship, but the symbol of a UNITED WORKING CLASS RULE.

Inevitability and Fatality

Question: If the proletarian revolution is inevitable, if the free-will of man is an illusion, if the law of causation operates continuously in human history, then what is the use of man trying to do anything about the whole business at all?

Answer: Our correspondent has confused inevitability with fatality. Communists are not fatalists; we are the first to reject the nonsensical idea that socialism is inevitable regardless of what men do; we say it is inevitable *because* of what men will do. Man is not free to will—effectively—that capitalism shall continue; all the exercise of will-power, free or otherwise, cannot keep that rotten old system going for much longer. The only direction in which the human will can be effective in guiding society to a solution of its problems, is the direction of socialism. But even the will to socialism doesn't drop down from the clouds, it also is "caused," it is a product of human evolution and, therefore, is not free in the metaphysical sense. "Freedom" is a grand old word, however, in spite of the great amount of abuse from which it has suffered. We Communists would not abandon "freedom," but rather we would rescue it from its violators. We would set free the productive forces of humanity, which are being choked and destroyed by a superannuated capitalist system. We would, thereby, set free the human spirit from its oppression by a diseased society, create the possibility for the full development of all the creative capacities of the human mind. In this historical, concrete sense, "freedom" ceases to be the meaningless, confused slogan of contradictory and warring camps; it comes down from the clouds, it stands on the earth, it takes sides in the class struggle, it stands on the barricades with the workers against the capitalists. Man makes his own history, but—and here is where Marx entered—he doesn't make it out of whole cloth. He makes such history, at each particular historical moment, as has been made possible—and necessary—by the growth of his productive forces. Freedom is the understanding of this historic process and the full participation in it that is made possible by such understanding. A real understanding of the laws of social change does not, therefore, bring the conclusion of our questioner, that efforts are futile; on the contrary, nothing *activizes* a human being so fully and continuously. For evidence, one needs only to look at the way in which our still small Communist Party in the United States is able to keep the issue of socialism, as the next step, constantly in the foreground of the whole national life.

ROOF GARDEN—Reception and Dance

for

Prof. Margaret Schlauch

SATURDAY, JUNE 15, 1935, at 8:00 P. M.

at HECKSCHER FOUNDATION, 1 EAST 104th STREET

Admission: Anti-Fascist Literature Committee

on the Eve of her departure to the Soviet Union

SUBSCRIPTION, 75 CENTS

Cyanide for Lunch

TOM JOHNSON

DETROIT, MICH.

ONCE again the unpredictable Henry Ford has done it. With the dramatic suddenness characteristic of America's greatest showman, he has announced through his advertising agents, N. P. Ayers and Company, the return of the Ford Motor Company to the \$6-a-day basic wage—incontestably the highest minimum rate now in effect in large-scale industry the country over. Columns of space have been devoted to it, hundreds of editorials have analyzed and praised it, leading figures of industry, finance and labor have given it their stamp of approval but, as yet, the voice of the Ford worker has not been heard on the matter.

I am a Ford worker and I write from the workers' standpoint, but every assertion I shall make is buttressed by facts and figures and is susceptible of proof. The truth about Ford is that despite the myth of high wages and the recent raise to \$6 a day, the Ford Motor Company pays on the average *lower wages* than any other large unit of the industry in the Michigan area; that by means of increased speed-up and the dismissal of several thousand men the Ford Motor Company has actually *decreased* its wage fund in many departments since the introduction of the \$6-a-day wage, while maintaining production at former levels; that graft and corruption, ranging from petty blackmailing of the men by foremen and the almost open bartering of jobs, to the theft of thousands of dollars worth of material and labor by department heads and higher officials, is a commonplace in the great River Rouge plant; that the most elementary safety rules and regulations are daily and flagrantly violated in the Rouge plant, sometimes with fatal consequences, in the terrific drive for more production; that during the whole period of the N.R.A. the Ford Motor Company knowingly and continuously violated Section 7-A by the discharge and blacklisting of all known or suspected members of the American Federation of Labor and more radical working-class organizations; that the Ford Motor Company not only maintains the most efficient professional labor-spy service in the world, but that it systematically endeavors to corrupt weaker elements among the workers in order that they may spy on their fellow workers on the belt; that the whole labor policy of the Ford Motor Company is predicated on this one idea—above all the worker must be made to *fear* his employer.

ON June 3, there was to open in Detroit a coroner's inquest on the death by poison of a worker in the Ford plant. The facts behind this inquest may well serve us as a starting point. Briefly, they are as follows:

At four o'clock on the morning of April 1, the workers in the huge dim-lit Motor Building of the Ford plant shut off their machines, the maze of endless conveyors slowed to a halt and the men on the midnight shift flopped down on the oily floor for the fifteen minutes allowed them to wolf their lunch. They had no time to waste. Swiftly they rubbed what oil and dirt they could from their hands and hurriedly they tore open their paper lunch sacks. Some few, who carried no lunch to work, walked over to buy a sandwich or two from the lunch wagon that had been trundled into the shop a few minutes before. No one washed his hands that night or any other night; with fifteen minutes in which to eat and prepare for another four-hour grind at the belt there is no time to wash. Suddenly a worker rose from the floor with a hoarse scream, his face distorted with agony and white foam on his lips. He staggered a few feet and collapsed. While his shop mates gathered around him his writhing body stiffened. He was dead. Another worker screamed and fell. They took him to the hospital on the run and they saved his life. There was no mystery about the seizures. Both men were victims of cyanide poisoning. Traces of sodium cyanide were found in their sandwiches.

Some twenty-four hours later the Detroit press carried its first stories on the tragedy, obviously re-writes of a Ford press statement. The Free Press declared that a three-cornered investigation conducted by "Assistant Prosecutor John A. Mowatt, assistants of Harry Bennett, head of the Ford service department, and Carl A. Brooks, chief of police of Dearborn, was under way." And further that "A theory advanced by the investigators was that the act might have been committed by persons bent on sabotage." What persons? Obviously Reds or union members. This was "theory" number 1.

To substantiate it, The News of April 2 stated that, "Police were calling on drug stores near the plant to learn if any poison of the kind found in the sandwiches had been purchased or stolen recently."

On the same day the local union of the American Federation of Labor in the Ford plant issued a handbill exposing for the first time that literally tons of sodium cyanide used in the case-hardening of certain steel parts were scattered indiscriminately throughout the Motor Building where the poisoned men worked. On April 3 the press carried similar news and the combined Ford and police investigation of drug stores to find the source of the poison was dropped with a dull thud.

With monotonous regularity a new "theory" made its appearance on April 4 in The Times under this seven-column head "POISON VIC-

TIM'S BROTHER GRILLED." Murder was now declared to lie at the bottom of the business. Simultaneously, The Times reported the police investigating the death by poison of a stray dog some fifteen miles from the Ford plant in the apparent expectation that it would throw some light on the matter.

"Theory" number 4 arrived on schedule, April 5. "Carl A. Brooks, Dearborn police chief, said officers would investigate to determine if Sherry might have committed suicide," declared The Free Press.

And on April 6, the Ford Motor Company, with the helpful aid of the Dearborn police, brought forth its final "theory." "Two detectives of the Dearborn police department left for Elizabeth, N.J., last night where they have been ordered to investigate Sherry's past life and to question Mrs. Jacob Bashal, an aunt. Mrs. Bashal is beneficiary of several insurance policies carried by Sherry, Chief Carl A. Brooks of Dearborn said, and Sherry had lived at her home for several years." (Detroit Times.)

Theories of sabotage, suicide, murder. They are all here, but not one statement of the police or the company and not one story appearing in the local press from start to finish even hinted at the possibility that Louis Sherry met his death because of inadequate safety devices or improper handling of the deadly chemical sodium cyanide in the production process in the Ford plant itself.

SO MUCH for the "theories" of the Ford Motor Company. Now for a few facts. First, sodium cyanide is in daily use in the Ford plant in not less than twenty departments. It is commonly stacked against the sides of cyanide furnaces or left beside them in open 200-pound drums. It is accessible to thousands of employes at all times. Second, this chemical is so dangerous that enough to kill a man or a half-dozen men can be picked up under one's fingernails while handling it. Third, the men working in cyanide are not always equipped with respirators and on occasion have been denied them when they asked for them. They are not provided with impenetrable working clothes. They are not provided with dust-proof lockers (or indeed lockers of any kind) in which to protect their street clothing from cyanide dust which may be deposited on them and carried home. Fourth, in the department of the Motor Building where the poisoned men worked, and in other departments in this building using cyanide, there are insufficient washing facilities and *there is no hot water*. Fifth, the men in several of these departments are allowed only fifteen minutes for lunch on one shift and twenty minutes on the other. They have no time to clean up. Sixth, both Sherry and

Wicker, the other poison victim, while not themselves working directly with cyanide, worked within a few yards of open drums of the deadly stuff. Moreover, the records of the Ford hospital show that Sherry had been treated on at least two occasions before the night he met his death for what the records term "food poisoning."

These are not merely opinions. They are attested facts culled from a confidential report of inspectors sent into the Ford plant by the Michigan State Department of Labor and Industry, at the insistence of the Ford local union of the American Federation of Labor, immediately following the poisoning. I quote excerpts directly from the report (a report, incidentally, never before made public):

Motor Building. The cyanide solution is piped from an elevator tank . . . and is run down from an open pipe into six tumblers at such distance as to cause the solution to splash, causing a serious eye hazard as they are about six feet from the floor and the employes were not wearing goggles.

Motor Building: Inspected Dept. 498. In this department there are four heat-treat furnaces. At this location the cyanide is stored in a metal receptacle out of which the cyanide is taken and placed in crucibles by means of a hand shovel. Around the metal receptacle were five full cyanide cans. *On one of these cans an employe was seated eating his lunch.* [My emphasis, T. J.] A washroom with facilities for twelve persons is

about fifty feet distant. [There are over 150 men in this department who may use the above described washing facilities, T. J.]

We next inspected Dept. 6510, the split-bushing dept; in this department the employe who met his death from cyanide poisoning was employed. There is no cyanide used or stored in this department. Department 6510 is in the same building as Dept. 498 [described above, T. J.] . . . and an aisle about twenty-five feet wide separates the two departments.

Department 728 was next inspected. In this department there are seventy-one furnaces. The cyanide in this department is not stored, being indiscriminately piled on the floor adjacent to the furnaces. . . . There is a lunch period of fifteen minutes in this department and employes select any convenient spot to eat lunch.

B. Building—Dept. 13. There are forty-one cyanide furnaces in this department. *Lunches in open stock bins were noticed about ten feet from furnaces.* Approximately one peck of cyanide was on a metal shelf near the furnace, so as to be handy for use, some of the cyanide had fallen to the floor. [It might as easily have fallen on someone's lunch! T. J.] Washing facilities are similar to other departments; there was no hot water at the time we visited the department.

Motor Building—Dept. 2455. Cyanide is handled in this department by means of a hand shovel direct from can which always leaves the partially filled can accessible. *About eight men were eating lunch approximately fifteen feet away from cyanide furnaces.*

And finally this gem:

Mr. Smith, Safety Engineer, [of the Ford

Motor Company, T. J.] in a conversation with both inspectors relative to the men eating lunches near the cyanide said that the employes could eat their lunches away from the cyanide or wash their hands if they wished; there being no rule to stop them. He admitted the practice of eating in any convenient place. His general attitude is that the men are familiar with cyanide and know how to handle it and that the condition around the cyanide is as good as it is practical to make it.

SUCH is the viewpoint of the Ford Motor Company. That this viewpoint is shared not only by local police, but by the Michigan State Legislature as well, is indicated by the fact that during the height of the insistent campaign of the Ford Local Union to secure a public investigation of the poisonings, the Legislature for the sixth consecutive time acted adversely on a bill designated to place occupational diseases on equal footing with industrial accidents under the Workmen's Compensation Act. What action, if any, will be taken by the authorities following the sensational disclosures certain to result from the coroner's inquest starting June 3, remains to be seen. Meanwhile, the union, through widely distributed handbills and the word-of-mouth agitation of its members in the plant is working hard, and as far as one can judge, with considerable success, to expose the more obviously dangerous conditions in the Ford plant.

Correspondence

Time to Cheer

TO THE NEW MASSES:

Out of the most extreme personal and collective poverty there has come a theatrical production which for sheer artistry is as fine as the very best we have ever seen in New York City. The Workers' Laboratory Theatre, functioning for many years as a mobile agit-prop theatre whose mobility revolved literally around the subway with the actors living on a flophouse diet and carrying their scenery under their arms, has developed into the Theatre of Action with *The Young Go First* now running at the Park Theatre. It is time to take off our hats and cheer. It is time for us by the most energetic support of their present production to pay tribute to the integrity, the deep-going artistry and the genuine heroism of this group.

New York City.

ALBERT MALTZ.

A Letter From John Ujich

TO THE NEW MASSES:

You may wish to publish the enclosed open letter to Frances Perkins from John Ujich:

AMERICAN COMMITTEE FOR PROTECTION OF
FOREIGN BORN

Frances Perkins,
Department of Labor,
Washington, D. C.

Madame Secretary:

I, the undersigned, John Ujich, entered legally into this country in the year of 1906. I have worked for thirty years in the mills, mines and smelters of America, and am now ordered deported to Fascist Italy, of which country I am not a citizen and whose language I do not speak nor understand.

Deportation charges against me were brought by Tacoma, Wash., relief officials. They stated that I preached the overthrow of the United States Government by force and violence, which I did not do. I objected to the standard of living placed by them at \$1.50 a week, which was imposed upon me by the Tacoma relief officials. For this they branded me "dangerous to existing society" and the relief heads acted as prosecutors. The chief witness, A. B. Comfort of Pierce County Relief Bureau, is now under indictment for misappropriation of the State and Federal relief funds. On such hear-say testimony of such questionable character the warrant for my deportation was issued.

My deportation to Italy under such charges actually means to hand me over to Mussolini's henchmen and sure death, for I was never restrained in stating my opinion of Fascist regime of Italy. It is a well known fact that at least seven persons were taken from the town of my birth by fascist officials, and taken to Rome and no one has ever heard of them since.

Miss Perkins: Since I have read so much that you stand for humanization of immigration laws, the right of asylum for those who would face persecution if sent back to their country (so-called) for their political opinions, and for the right to demand better conditions and to organize without discrimination.

Are you aware of the fact that in signing my deportation warrant, not only were the above mentioned promises violated, but you also sign my death warrant? If this has been done without your knowledge, you can still save my life by stopping my deportation.

I am to surrender tomorrow, Tuesday, May 28th.

This I will do in order not to break the faith with the people who came to my defense. I am sending copies of this letter to the press, and hope you let the people get an answer, if it will be too late for me to know.

New York City.

(Signed) JOHN UJICH.

Letters in Brief

Vera Cox's prize-winning essay in the Thomas Boyd Memorial Contest is highly praised by John P. Caldwell, New York, who urges that it be reprinted for mass distribution among college and high-school students.

Johanson, of San Francisco, writes that the recent polemic between Jay Gerlando and Edwin Seaver over *Lean Men* sent him scurrying to read the book for himself, and what he found there "amply justifies that reviewer who had taken up cudgels in its defense."

Lem Harris, secretary of the Farmers National Committee for Action, states that The Farmers National Committee has obtained documentary evidence that the recent "farmers march" to Washington of 4,000 prosperous farmers was financed by A.A.A. jobholders with approval of the Administration. A letter establishing this is photostatically reproduced in the current issue of The Farmers National Weekly.

Lillian Lustig, secretary of the Book and Magazine Guild, 215 West 92 Street, invites men and women employed in professional and executive work in book and magazine publishing to send her their names. The guild includes workers in the editorial, production, promotion and distribution branches.

REVIEW AND COMMENT

The Work of Friedrich Wolf

MY STUDY of the theatre in Moscow leads me to single out a writer whose work is represented in the Soviet theatre by three plays. Two of these have drawn favorable comment in the Soviet Union and abroad, from those interested in the progress of the drama. Both these plays were popular in his native country. The work of Friedrich Wolf remains national in its rooted identity with all that his Germany, and he through her, have experienced, yet it is international in its appeal.

Our author has grown beyond the national mold, bearing with him its vital impulse towards international socialism. Each of his plays in turn bears witness to this development, this growth.

Born in Stuttgart, Germany, Friedrich Wolf has been identified with what is youngest and most forward-looking in the theatre of Germany of our time. Not that one can dismiss him with the casual statement that he is a journalist, a playwright interested solely in seizing the moment by its political forelock, while completely ignoring the dictates of art. Any dramatic critic worthy of the name is the first to reject as superficial or nearsighted the type of criticism that hails the so-called "timely" play—the play of the hour. However, in rejecting the timely, such a critic has often rejected with it reality itself, welcoming in its place an alleged neutrality, an aesthetic "objectivity," best summed up in what is called in popular drama "unchanging human nature." Only recently has the pendulum swung around. To our revolutionary insistence that every art is political in nature, there has been opposed a theory with all our symbols as it were, in reverse.

One of the first to realize this situation was Friedrich Wolf. True enough, he passed through the incipient stages of individual expressionism in such plays as his *And This Is You* and *Black Sun*. Still, even in these he shows a disciplined mastery of dramaturgy, and that freshly coined dramatic virtuosity almost exclusively characteristic of Wolf's work as demonstrated in the international success of all his plays. In the unending discussion of late years as to the "epic" versus the "dramatic" contents of the drama, Wolf unhesitatingly takes his place with the dramatic, as its living exponent; just as Brecht, his direct antithesis in dramatic art, looms as the exponent of the epic content of the drama. It would take us too far afield to go into the analysis of just why, from time to time, in political drama, the epic element has seemed more immediate, more in-

dispensable than the dramatic. By the dramatic principle we mean that treatment of the subject matter along lines of theatrical or dramatic movement which leads to its simplification, its crystallization, allowing freer stressing of political mood and truth than could the corresponding epic treatment. To the successful application of this theory of his plays, we must needs attribute their instantaneous success, and their unquestionably greater domination of the stage than the plays of the strict adherents of the epic drama. Not only have such works as *Zyan-kali* and *Sailors of Cattaro* and recently *Mamlock*, held the stage (with the exception of the latter), over a long period, but they have been and continue to be staged with no less success all over the world, although the political and economic axioms on which these plays are posited apply at different stages in different localities.

In Wolf we have not only a dramatist of unusual endowment, but one whose very first play, *Poor Conrad* (written in 1923 and originally presented at the People's Theatre in Berlin), initiated a struggle for socialism which since then he has continued to wage with growing insight and forcefulness. Like the rest of us, even before this play, Wolf had already undergone a strong revolutionary conditioning. He had thus attained a political maturity in advance of his artistic maturity. Historically speaking, of course, this does not in itself argue a defect. On the contrary, we should confront those who simply dismiss a revolutionary dramatist with the contemptuous epithet of "propagandist," with the fact that the artist can liberate himself from a gagging conservative personal and political viewpoint to the revaluation of his aesthetic creed only when he is prepared to tear himself loose from the grip of the deeply-rooted taboos of his own field of creative art. For normally he is bound by the forms of his art, its media of expression, its creative end-products. Thus, Wolf remained an expressionist long after his political emancipation. This merely points to his having remained, with all his facility as a "journalist," and despite his activity as agitator and propagandist, thoroughly an artist, the master of his art-form, one who, to use the critical phrase, had been a "formalist" before he had become a political writer. And that even at that time he was no mere novice, is attested to by his stimulating little comedy, *Black Sun*.

We will find exciting theatre in his other plays, too, however unequal they are, as a

result of the specific problems Wolf has undertaken in each—exciting theatre that sweeps away the calmest, most self-possessed listener, forcing him to think in terms of the play's idiom.

In *Poor Conrad*, Wolf presents on the stage for the first time the history of the Peasants' Rebellion in Germany along the lines set down by Engels. At the same time, he does not neglect the dramatic sweep and power of the central situation in the rebellion: the setting up by the peasants of the Court of Fools of the medieval days in order to place before the nobles, their oppressors, an unforgettable picture of their immediate miserable lot. Not even in Goethe's *Goetz von Berlichingen* or Hauptmann's *Florian Geyer* do we find any such clear analysis of social lines of force. Both in *Poor Conrad* and *Kolonne Hund* (written in 1926), we see Wolf's interest in the farmer involving him deeper and deeper in the agrarian crisis in Germany. This brings us to the production of *Farmer Beetz*, currently holding the boards with great success in Moscow.

We must bear in mind that neither in *Zyankali* nor in this third play on peasant life does Wolf in any way deal with the Soviet collective farm problem. His theme is the state of farming peasant population of Baden and Swabia (Wuertenberg). The incident around which the play is woven showed the unorganized steps taken in self-defense by this petty, marginal farming class, being rapidly swept to complete ruin. Wolf has Beetz tie his cow to his bed, so that when the sheriff calls to seize the cow, the latter's bell will wake him. Then it is that Beetz shoots the minion of the law. But the whole village backs him to a man; the authorities do not dare to institute regular proceedings. Instead, they put him in an insane asylum. At the ensuing auction sale, not one bid is offered. From an individual case, Farmer Beetz has grown into a mass symbol. Fashioned out of reality, this play has woven the psychological tragedy of character into a background that sets off boldly the truth that only true socialism can erase the harassing poverty of the small farmer; all other paper reforms or demagogic promises of relief from oppressive laws—these do not suffice! Nor can the farmer fight his battles alone, as an isolated individual or as a separate class. Only through a united

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front of farmer and city worker will victory come:

To whom flow credits? To the great of the land!
Whose taxes are remitted? The industrialist—
he knows!

To whom go the taxes wrung from your earnings?
Whom do they foreclose? Throw in jail? Beat
without mercy?

Workers! How long—how long yet must we
bear it!

How long, comrade farmer? While you and we
are strangers!

Just so long, comrade farmer, as face to face we
stand—

Between us a furrow of distrust by others sown—
Farmer—must you and we alone bear it any
longer?

Farmer—Brother—don't you see we must lock
arms!

Farmer! the smoke from our pot and our chim-
ney is one—

Farmer and worker—we both crave bread!

When Farmer Beetz was presented originally to the very audiences for whom it had been written, they reacted quite strongly. Caught up in its psychic ferment, perhaps for the first time in their lives, they saw themselves face to face with the reality of their relationship to their own environment. Within the loose dramatic framework of the play at that time, those audiences realized not only the poetic objectives of its author, but flesh-and-blood protagonists of their own destinies, such as Farmer Beetz.

Yes, at those performances the atmosphere was fever-hot, charged, electric. True, the play called for a wise revaluation, pleaded for deeper understanding; yet above the audience brooded the spirit of revolt, of breaking loose in any or all directions. For the foe is right here—perhaps there in that box—or there—known to all! The foe has not changed with the years. Struggle's hot breath is panting for the outcome! . . . Such was the effect of the play itself upon its first audiences. . . .

But what about the reaction in the Soviet Union? Here, after all, the issue, the outcome, is a fact of the past. What, in Germany, startled the scales into wild commotion, here leaves the scales in equilibrium, the silver pointer motionlessly centered. Here, in fact, Wolf's play breathed a quality of a tale of struggle far away, in a different—an unhappy—world, the tale of some unhappy mortal whose sufferings aroused one's keenest proletarian sympathies. Such sympathies were the more easily aroused as even the most advanced collective farmer in the audience had his own haunting memories of just such a struggle in the near past. For he, too, had had to make the same life-and-death decision that the characters in Wolf's play to this day are facing daily, and he feels only too keenly, even in his seemingly impregnable collective, the need for unflagging vigilance. Kirov's assassination was an alarm that roused many people out of their utopian dream of a classless society attained. The realization of such a society had been set by Stalin for the end of the Second Five Year Plan, with the proviso, however, that no effort should be spared to effect that end, and that no one take for

granted its realization until then. Today once again both farmer and worker have been rudely reminded of this harsh truth, and each feels bitterly disposed to those enemies who would wipe out all his gains and successes, taking from him each year his fully-earned prosperity. Of such prosperity, socialism offers irrefutable proof. During my stay in the Volga region, I found no trace of a food shortage. On the contrary, I spoke with many farmers who were no longer Farmer Beetzes, but who, besides the big collective herd, owned their own individual cow in its own stall, and in their clean homes led a life of growing well being. . . .

I hardly intend to determine whether all of Wolf's demands for realistic socialism have been met. Nor shall I question whether the very poetic universalization of a work of art rooted in a finite moment in history does not demand a less fettered, a more emancipated political and aesthetic treatment. Such a question brings us sheer up against the vast unsolved problems of the nature of the creative spirit of our times. Is it possible to write history while one is living it? Does not the passing moment strangle the truths too closely bound to it? All the more urgent, therefore, for a writer like Wolf, actuated as he is by a vital social conscience, one whose training as a day-to-day physician has taught him to grasp each moment on the wing, to plunge into his artistic work swiftly, realistically, leaving the question of the eternal nature of his art to pursue its own devious ways. This attitude makes all he writes autobiographical in content, which he reshapes, and in which he binds history and its realities.

This self-identification of Wolf with his work is easiest to recognize in his recent *Professor Mamlock*. On his mother's side, Wolf's ancestry goes back to an old German family in Freckenhorst; his father, a merchant, is of Jewish descent. Naturally enough, Wolf considers anti-Semitism, in the words of Bebel, "the socialism of fools."

Despite his self-identification with the subject-matter of the play, Wolf attacks the problem on a broad, ethical plane even more effectively than the Bruckner-Tagger treatment of the same theme in *Races*.

Professor Mamlock is a Jew, head doctor in the surgical department of a large clinic. In the first scene, we at once see the point of view, motivating the leading character. About to undertake an operation, Mamlock turns to Simon, a nurse:

Mamlock: Tell me, have you a single vein left that hasn't been drained? (*He contemplates Simon, who is flexing his powerful muscles.*)

Simon: Enough there yet, professor, for a few more blood-lettings!

Mamlock: (*disinfecting himself*) Purest Maccabean!

Seidel: What do you mean, Maccabean?

Mamlock: Well, he is so powerful, and so plucky—and—a Jew!

Dr. Inge: (*a woman assistant, a staunch fascist*) How do you know, then, that he is a Jew?

Mamlock: You mean on the ground of racial purity?

Dr. Inge: I mean his vitality.

Mamlock: My dear doctor: in the Orient you will find porters, smiths, laborers, farmers—Jews, all of them. Our calling it is, our work, the air of the land wherein we draw our breath—that determines our physique, conditions our personality.

Hellpach: (*a fascist assistant doctor*)—You surely are acquainted, professor, with the researches of Guenther and Fritz Lenz, who have established that "the hereditary hormones remain constant, wholly independent of extraneous influences, such as work, profession, climate"?

Mamlock: Theories—wish-fulfillment theories, nothing more! Why, haven't you heard of the Mendelian laws of cross-fertilization for the improvement of the species?

Hellpach: For all that, when you get right down to human beings, all specific spiritual characteristics remain constant!

Mamlock: For instance?

Hellpach: Heroism, for instance, is typically Aryan-Germanic.

Mamlock: Ridiculous, my dear doctor, ridiculous! What about David, who laid low the mighty giant, Goliath, and who undertook campaign after campaign? Was *he* a coward? And Simon, who ripped up the gates of the fortress, and who fought single-handed against a whole city! Do you consider *him* a weakling, or a coward?

(*Mamlock continues with other instances. . . . He might well have mentioned the American boxer, Max Baer, who knocked out the giant Carnera. . . . Mamlock continues*)—

Of course, my dear colleague, each race has its own life-pattern, its own characteristic beauty. But racial mysticism is not a desirable trait; and racial self-adulation gets into one's nostrils!

Hellpach: There are things which cannot be fought out on an intellectual plane: the weapons are too ill-matched!

Mamlock: Right. Let's get to work. (*He puts on his operating apron. Still quite excited, he keeps on talking, almost to himself, powdering his hands meanwhile, and putting on his rubber gloves*)—

Mamlock: Yes, enough of this. I am sorry to have stirred up this discussion on the racial issue. There's so little objectivity, so little noble aloofness, so little inner justice in what has been said. True enough, in our day the generations face each other in conflict. But when has Youth ever been so brutal, so presumptuous? Why, youngsters, the devil take it all! Have you altogether forgotten who General Field-Marshal von Hindenberg is? Haven't your parents told you how, over three generations that this man's life has spanned, he has unselfishly given himself to the cause of his nation? Well, if they haven't told you, then I will! I followed him to the Front; from 1914 to 1918, I served under him on the field of battle. And when the great collapse came, it was *he* who led us back home. He was, as Cicero put it, "unmoved, unmoving, in the midst of tempest"—the model of loyalty for the whole nation — him I follow unquestionably, blindly! This I tell you upon my word of honor as an old soldier, a democrat and a Jew! . . .

Thus Wolf presents us with his old soldier and democrat in all his rooted loyalty to the conservative established order, in which he inflexibly, unalterably believes, insisting upon its perpetuation and thereby weaving the pattern of his own destruction. Since this individual is incapable of recognizing the one indestructible power that the socialism of Marx and Lenin offers us in the class war, there lies before him only one way out—the way of those who have lost all hope: a bullet in his own breast.

. Despairing of his fatherland, which has kicked him out of doors like a mange-eaten

cur, him, the renowned, esteemed Professor Mamlock, he can think of no land where he can find asylum. . . . Part of the audience must share his sense of impotence unless they see the path that Wolf points out over the abyss of Mamlock's "way out." Mamlock's own son and the young Communist, Ernst—these do not shoot themselves. Undaunted, more hardened and class-conscious than ever, they march off on the highway of struggle, shrewdly gauging their adversary's strength, not for a moment taken in by the scare-crow terror under which he hides his weakness. Rejecting the present regime, their faith lies all with the future—the irrevocable, historically inevitable future triumph of Marxism-Leninism for which they are risking their lives. . . .

I cannot here go deeply into the *Sailors of Cattaro*. After its opening in New York late last year by the Theatre Union, an enthusiastic press hailed it as an outstanding production and one of the smash hits of the day. Both in Leningrad and in Moscow, the play was at once acclaimed for its excellent production by the Workshop Theatre (the W. C. S. P. S., formerly Proletcult Theatre).

The reaction to the play, both here in Russia and in New York, seems to parallel the reaction to the original production by the Berlin People's Theatre in 1930. Presenting as

it does irrefutable evidence that only through international socialism can war, as such, be rooted out forever, the play pleads irresistibly for the welding together of the masses into one invincible united front. A veteran of the battlefield, Wolf knows the language of the soldier, of the sailor in the Bay of Catarro, and utters in true accents the denunciation by man of the recurrent weakness that once more would bind him over to his gloomy, thwarted, twisted destiny.

Yet in all this reappears again and again Wolf, the undaunted propagandist, with the same true message on his lips. If he cries out, it is because he himself has suffered. But since he sees the way out, he no longer suffers. Early in his career he took as the motto of his life: "Art Is a Weapon!" Art is the weapon of the class struggle. Art is the one common, universal language of understanding that mankind possesses. But, as Marx says of theory, art must some day be converted into practice, just as Wolf already blends within himself poet and revolutionary fighter. A tireless collector of historical memorabilia, he has himself engraved upon the tablets of history the memorable story of the February struggle of the proletariat of Vienna—in *Floridsdorf*, his latest play.

ERWIN PISCATOR.

Sunny South

KNEEL TO THE RISING SUN, by Erskine Caldwell. New York. The Viking Press, 1935. \$2.50.

TENANT FARMER, by Erskine Caldwell. New York. Phalanx Press, 1935. 25c.

I HAVE some slight knowledge of the Tobacco Road country in Georgia and, because of that, I have often been asked if there are people really "like" those who appear in the novels and short stories of Mr. Erskine Caldwell. The only answer I can give is that while I have never come across a Jeeter Lester or Ty Ty Waldon, I have sometimes encountered their approximations. If Mr. Caldwell's characters do not actually exist, in all their various shapes and meanings, the circumstances of life and economics in that part of the world would all seem to conspire to create them. There will be many persons who, reading this book, will ask the same question and question Mr. Caldwell's "realism," and I would like to make the point that he is not a realist at all, not a person drawing exact cartoons, but a very fine and sensitive artist whose characters are idealistic creations; from which comes both the strength (as in *Tobacco Road*) and the weakness (as in *Journeyman*) of his writings.

The story *Blue Boy* in the present collection will further illustrate what I mean. Realistically, in the everyday prosaic sense of "could this have happened?" one might

argue about it all night long. It is my feeling that it could not have happened—that no middle-class farmer (as the farmer in this story is), regardless of moral decay and degeneracy, would entertain his guests after a holiday dinner by having an idiot Negro indulge in self-abuse. And yet, beyond the shock of horror (strengthened, perhaps, by the fact that I come from the South and do not want such a thing to be true) I also feel that, idealistically, as a creative and artistic truth, it not only could happen but did.

The title story in this collection, *Kneel to the Rising Sun*, by any critical standard whatsoever, is one of the finest short stories any American has written. It is not a pretty story, when you read it there is a sick, dead feeling in the middle of your stomach, but it is a story you are not likely to forget. It is bitter and merciless in its indictments, but it also has that quality of tenderness that so few critics who have tried to assay Caldwell have remarked upon; and a strength, a rightness, derived from its idealness which, if taken away, would make it no more memorable than the report of a lynching in a newspaper. It is one of those rare pieces in which everything is right; element fusing into element to make a hard, complete, compact whole and not any striving for effect or a single doubtful note.

I do not intend to hand down a ruling on each of the sixteen stories in the present collection. My own tabulation reads: one

fine story, three good ones, five that are fair and seven that, for one reason or other, fail to come off. All of them, however, with one or two exceptions, are worth reading at least once and many of them may be read with profit several times. In the latter category I would include as well as the stories already mentioned, "Honeymoon," "A Day's Wooing," "The Growing Season," "Slow Death" and "Travel Island." Mr. Caldwell has completed another section in the picture he is painting of one kind of life in the backwoods of Georgia and he has done it with his own gifts of economy, poetry and skill.

If, to get back to the question of "fact," one seeks an extra-artistic substantiation for Mr. Caldwell's writings I suggest a reading of *Tenant Farmer*—the result of the tour Mr. Caldwell made through the South for *The New York Post*. In this pamphlet, Mr. Caldwell becomes a reporter and puts down, as a reporter, what he has heard and seen. (It is worth remembering, if any further authentication of his accuracy is required, that an investigation conducted by *The Augusta Chronicle* verified Mr. Caldwell's more important findings.) This is a pamphlet I would like to see read by every Southerner who professed to be interested in the welfare of his section. If any further condemnation of the tenant-farmer system is needed and the whole plantation economy as it is now practised, here it is. And here also, is a graphic picture of the thing that Southerners, among them men of pride and decency, want to defend—a system based upon exploitation and greed and a total disregard of human beings.

There have been times when reading Mr. Caldwell, I have felt he has almost exhausted the soil from which all his writings have sprung. I felt it most strongly in *Journeyman* and I felt it in some of the stories in this book. I remember some things Mr. Caldwell has written that do not derive from the Tobacco Road country and I am sure that Mr. Caldwell does not depend, as so many southern writers depend, upon their region. But each man to his own plowing. Only Mr. Caldwell could have written *Kneel to the Rising Sun*, it could only have come out of that part of the world he has made his own and it is a contribution of first importance to the literature of our time.

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Soviet Tempo in an American Novel

MOSCOW YANKEE, by Myra Page. G. P. Putnam's Sons. New York. \$2.50.

ONCE the characters in *Moscow Yankee* come out from hiding behind the weak impressionism of the first few pages, the book becomes so interesting that it is almost impossible to put it down. Not that it is a great piece of fiction writing, unfortunately, but it is a good story and Miss Page has done much with it. By using the development of the Bolshevik Revolution during the First Five-Year Plan as the axis on which to swing her story, Miss Page has been able to follow a varied group of Americans and Russians through a series of quite natural but frequently difficult experiences which throw their personalities into clear relief and allow for considerable character development. Social changes can never be ignored and in the Soviet Union they are so startling that they challenge the very foundations of habit and thought and action, thus forcing each person who lives and works there to face with whatever experience he brings with him from his past, the confusing and sometimes conflicting details of a new social order. Miss Page has glossed over none of the difficulties of life in Moscow, in fact it is through them that her narrative gathers strength because it is in their day to day problems that her characters develop or stagnate according to their various abilities, ambitions and standards of value. Such a theme leaves no room for aloofness, it destroys false claims to objectivity and it creates a story crammed with action. And since no one in or out of the Soviet Union can escape the actuality of the Russian Revolution there is a great deal more to *Moscow Yankee* than a novel about how a group of Americans and Russians reacted to certain social facts which they could not ignore.

Besides Miss Page has managed to put more of Moscow into her novel than any half-dozen non-fiction accounts of that city. The book is alive; about real people and working in a real place and reacting in one way or another to the sometimes confusing but always real situations in their daily lives. Anyone who has lived in Moscow will attest to the fact that the picture is true. Moscow's curious beauty and charm are not lost because they form a background to the many apparent paradoxes which are so puzzling especially to foreigners. Not all of the people Miss Page writes about like living in Moscow; many of them do not; but they quickly find out what they do like and some of them discover that the meaning of the Revolution is identical with their own hopes and ideals. It is because work must continue if people are to live that the trite reactions of the antagonistic and the superficial fall down of their own dead weight; and certainly an active understanding of what the Revolution does and will mean can only grow out of the accumulation of experience which comes with working for a new set of objectives. Miss Page has man-

aged to convey all this without once allowing her characters to voice forced and obvious conclusions. The daily events of their lives, those which for the moment seem all-important, carry the thread of the argument and it is through them that the advantages and disadvantages of life in Moscow are demonstrated. Through just such stories as this it becomes clear why the Russian people are working for their Revolution and why so many non-Russians see in it a security and a future which is denied them elsewhere.

All this being true of *Moscow Yankee* it is a pity that in a few places the book is so badly overwritten. In addition, Miss Page appears to have confused slang with American processes of thought to such an extent that her principal character, Andy, occasionally seems more a symbol of transition than a human being. The Russians and the middle class Americans are handled much more convincingly and the action in most of the book is

so lively and the writing so restrained that it possesses a moving vitality not quickly forgotten. The real trouble is in the ending. It is more like a pink sunset than anything else and it is out of keeping with the rest of the story. Just because an American decides to cast his lot with the Soviet workers does not mean that all his problems are solved; he still has to struggle with his comrades for the life he wants. The difference is that now that he has changed his approach he knows that he can get what he is after if he keeps up his end of the struggle, whereas before, his future seemed mostly a matter of luck to him no matter how hard he tried. Probably Miss Page abandoned realism in order to predict the future of the Soviet Union without becoming too obvious, but in so doing her characters grow vague and the strength and sense of reality which she so cleverly developed throughout the rest of the book are minimized at the very moment when they should have predominated.

ALICE WITHROW FIELD.

Brief Review

RENAISSANCE IN ITALY, by John Addington Symonds. (*Modern Library Giants*, 2 vols. \$2.) A historical classic written in the Victorian period long before the materialist approach had won tolerance in historical scholarship. Flowing in style and useful in its assemblage of material as the book still is, its total ignoring of economic data often gives the writing a naïve tone.

COUNTERFEIT — NOT YOUR MONEY BUT WHAT IT BUYS, by Arthur Kallet, co-author of *100,000,000 Guinea Pigs*. Illustrated. (*Vanguard Press*. \$1.50.) In lay-out, photography and text as effective as the expert advertising that it exposes. Arthur Kallet shows how the capitalist profit system ends in a colossal graft exacted from the consumer. From many points of view the best of the exposé books issuing from the archives of Consumers' Research. The book concludes on a page carrying a photograph of Senator Copeland broadcasting for Eno Salts. "In the opinion of the author goods counterfeiting cannot be ended so long as it pays; that is so long as industry is privately owned and profits are the motivating force behind production; and to suggest any easy remedy would be to offer only one more counterfeit to consumers."

EXPRESSIONISM IN ART, by Sheldon Cheney. 205 illustrations. (*Liveright Publishing Corporation*. \$5.) Mr. Cheney has enthusiasm, energy and wide-roving eyes. His book will be popular. He is, however, as indiscriminate in his dismissal of all realist painting and sculpture as he is in his acceptance of most of the expressionist product which has developed its own banalities and fakes. Mr. Cheney's sympathetic

understanding of the work of revolutionary artists is one of the strongest points in his book.

MANCHURIA, CRADLE OF CONFLICT, by Owen Lattimore. New edition, revised. (*The Macmillan Co.* \$3.) An excellent example of what a determined avoidance of the Marxian approach can lead to. As substitutes Mr. Lattimore offers ingenious interpretations of the role of Manchuria past and present in Chinese politics that leave the reader in a more impenetrable haze than when he first opened the book.

WISDOM AND WASTE IN THE PUNJAB VILLAGE, by Malcolm Lyall Darling. (*Oxford University Press*. \$5.) Mr. Darling believes in the gospel of co-operative societies and acts as agent for their activities in the Punjab, one of the chief Mohammedan districts in India. He has written several books covering long and extensive tours and set down directly what he heard of the peasants' daily problems. Plain and practical Mr. Darling is able to view without animus the vast transformation of that other largely peasant state, Soviet Russia, but he does not advocate a similar revolution, is frightened by the *patiletka* pace and proposes a twenty-five year plan without indicating how any government could be instituted that could put such an amorphous plan into effect.

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The Theatre

ARE theatre-workers of the left alarmists? Is the New Theatre League creating bogeys when it shouts for an immediate nationwide united front against theatre censorship?

If anyone still asks these questions, let him address them to the people of Hollywood, Calif., who on May 27 tried to attend the New Theatre Group's production of Odets' *Till the Day I Die*; or the audience that bought tickets for the Newark Collective Theatre's June 1 performance of *Waiting for Lefty*.

Will Ghere, director of the Hollywood theatre, had received threatening notes ever since the preview which the American Legion had tried to break up. The day before the opening a note was left at the box office (reproduced on Page 4):

Manager: You know what we do to the enemies of New Germany—if you open. F. N. G.

One week later the signers came to make good their threat. As Ghere stepped out of the theatre four men grabbed him, forced him into a car and drove to a lonely spot in the Hollywood hills where they beat him half unconscious. Several hours later in the Hollywood Receiving Hospital he described his assailants as members of the "Friends of New Germany" who said they "objected" to the scene in the anti-Nazi play in which "Hitler's picture is torn from the wall."

Five days later, in Newark, N. J., the school board cancelled the permit it had granted the Collective Theatre to perform *Waiting for Lefty* in one of the public schools. The theatre-workers flung a picket line around the Mayor's office and engaged Sokol Hall. Suddenly the Building department condemned the building. The players hired Ukrainian Hall. No sooner had the audience entered than the police arrived. One of the company rose to introduce the chairman, Joe Gilbert, militant leader in last year's New York taxi strike. At once both introducer and chairman were arrested. Five persons, one after another, then tried to speak, and one after another they were arrested. Two members of the audience were arrested for "interfering" with the police.

None of the nine victims were allowed bail. After spending Saturday and Sunday in jail, eight were released on \$25 bail each and one, Harry Lipschutz, an I.L.D. lawyer, was released on parole. Meanwhile the official charge had been changed from "unlawful assemblage" to technical infringement of a minor city ordinance.

In both cases, mass protests have been sent by mail and wire and actions have been taken by working class and liberal organizations defending civil rights. In Newark the American Civil Liberties Union has engaged Arthur Garfield Hays to defend the case. In Hollywood a number of prominent screen actors (including Victor Killian, Walter Abel and Russell Hicks) have joined in the flood of protests.

The issue of theatre censorship has crystallized in these two attacks taking place the same week in cities three thousand miles apart. In one case censorship is administered by due process of legal frame-up; in the other, a committee of hoodlums, immune from police interference, takes direct fascist action. The results as far as the freedom of the drama is concerned, are identical. And the only weapon against this threatening fascization is a nation-wide unity not only of theatre-workers, but of audiences as well. It is essential that protests pile the desks of Mayor Ellenstein, City Hall, Newark, and George Rochester, foreman of the Grand Jury, City Hall, Los Angeles. S. B.

The Negro Peoples Theatre

IF A DOUBT ever existed as to the prospects of a genuine Community Theatre in Harlem, that doubt was multitudinously routed by the audience of nearly four thousand people who jammed Rockland Palace to welcome the Negro Peoples Theatre in their first production, *Waiting for Lefty* (June 1). In the Negro cultural field it was an event of no less significance than the spontaneous upsurge of March 19; for it proclaimed decisively the beginning of Harlem's emancipation from the false and degrading picture of the Negro perpetrated by the commercial theatre and film. It laid the foundation for a theatre of and for Negroes which will present their *real* problems.

Whether the first production realized the fullness of their aims may bring qualified answers. Certainly, in the face of the almost impeccable production by the Group Theatre, *Waiting for Lefty* was a hardy choice. Besides, the conditions of preparation and performance in a noisy hall were arduous indeed. But the chief difficulty grew out of the script itself. *Waiting for Lefty* was not

drastically rewritten—as it should have been—to meet the specific problem of production by and for a Negro Peoples theatre. Instead, there was a mechanical substitution, for example, of the word "Negro" for "Jewish" in the passages on racial discrimination in the hospitals. And, of course, no degree of acting excellence could overcome such obstacles. But *Waiting for Lefty* was not planned as an integral part of the Negro Peoples Theatre repertoire but rather as a curtain-raiser to its career. And from the fervor and sincerity of this opening production, it is clear that the Negro Peoples Theatre has begun a project of inestimable importance. A full-length play about Negro workers in Southern oil-fields has already been announced as its next production. ALLEN CHUMLEY.

Theatre Notes

New Dance League Festival. Sunday afternoon and evening, June 9 (Park Theatre.) Arranged jointly by the New Dance League and the American League Against War and Fascism, this promises to be one of the most interesting dance events of the year. In the afternoon: a competition by seven amateur groups including those directed by Blanche Evans, Bill Matons, Rekud-Ami, Nature Friends, New Dance Group and two groups from the Unit of Dance, Music and Drama, (a C.W.A. project). In the evening, six groups will participate, of which one will be the winner of the afternoon competition. The others are: Weidman, Jose Limon and Group, Tamiris and Group, Ruth Allerhand and Group, the Dance Unit and the New Dance Group. (Tickets: 35c to 75c for the afternoon; 35c to \$1.10 for the evening; on sale at 114 West 14th St.

The Young Go First, by Martin Scudder and Friedman. (Park Theatre, Columbus Circle. Produced by The Theatre of Action.) An exciting play about the C.C.C., with a wealth of humor and action. This first full-length production by one of the oldest workers' theatres in the country demands the attention of every reader of THE NEW MASSES. The acting is as good as—if not better than—most of the current menu, and this goes for the staging, too. Mordecai Gorelik's unit set is one of the finest examples of the work of this outstanding scenic artist. By an oversight, mention of Mr. Gorelik's contribution was omitted from our review last week. This is particularly unfortunate since his scenery played a greater part than usual toward the success of the whole production.

Parade. Guild Theatre. Although the original version by Paul Peters and George Sklar has been copiously watered down by the producers, *Parade* is still one of the most enjoyable entertainments in town. The bourgeois reviewers didn't find it funny, but you will. Some seats at \$1.10.

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Jonas Lie, Red-Baiter

WHEN President Roosevelt was floated into office on a tremendous wave of popular resentment against the reactionary policies of Hoover, he not only had to plug the gaping holes in the economic dike but also give at least an appearance of progressive policies generally. His lip-service to a "social outlook" drooled over into the cultural field, where a New Renaissance was announced. Along with the mural painting projects for public buildings, initiated as part of the C.W.A. program, tons of lyric leaflets told the artists what a big human heart our government had and how broad-minded it was. The artist was not only to be paid, but he could virtually choose his subject matter. If there was anything in artist's utopia which the government had not provided it was not mentioned.

But when the projects began the artists learned that any effort on their part to create a work of any vitality and truth, dealing with the life of the people, had about as much chance of getting by the censorship as a fine work of literature has in Nazi Germany. It has now become a byword among the artists on mural projects that anything above moronic mediocrity runs the risk of rejection by one or another of the governing officials with whom they have to contend. The worst of these is Jonas Lie, head of the National Academy. Although the Municipal Art Commission has several members, Lie acts as a one-man jury on mural paintings, being the only painter-member. Mr. Lie's latest contribution to the progress of American mural art has been to prevent the realization of one of the finest projects to be submitted for a public building in New York.

When in June, 1934 the written synopsis for a series of murals for Rikers Island Penitentiary was presented by Ben Shahn and Louis Bloch to Austin H. McCormick, Commissioner of Correction, that gentleman was not only enthusiastic about it but even felt honored to sponsor such a project. He even took the initiative of making changes that would help the project meet the Mayor's approval. The plan of the murals is to portray contemporary methods and practices in American penology and the reforms that have been advocated (and in some instances inaugurated), by prominent penologists, sociologists and psychiatrists. It is important to have a clear idea of the nature of the project because the public has been given a viciously distorted impression by Jonas Lie. I use the description from the outline approved by Mr. McCormick and Mayor LaGuardia (memorandum to the Mayor, Dec. 10, 1934).

The corridor for which these murals are intended is about 100 feet long by 18 feet wide and the available space for painting above a tiled dado is about 12 feet. As you enter the corridor facing toward the chapel entrance, the left hand wall deals with those prisons which

are still administered under methods which leave little to which the inmate can look forward. In the sketches which you have, this wall begins with a cell block indicating the filing cabinet nature of this type of institution. This permits no possible chance for individual treatment or rehabilitation of the prisoner. It is also intended to indicate the over-crowded unsanitary conditions which exist in these prisons.

The new arrangement for this wall will present the police line-up and various phases of routine prior to conviction as the opening panel. The succeeding panels on this wall carry through the different types of penal institutions and methods which have not encountered the influence of reform. The chain gangs of the South, institutions in which no work is provided for the inmates, and a survey of similarly unenlightened institutions are portrayed.

The wall over the chapel entrance contains a symbolic figure of Thomas Mott Osborne pointing the way toward proper prison methods. Behind him is a repetition of the theme of the dreary round of prisoners in dark prison corridors. The long right-hand wall contains the positive activities of institutions which are administered under more enlightened methods. The introduction into prisons of schools for illiterates, facilities for teaching trades with well equipped shops and civilian instructors, outdoor recreation, and work under healthful conditions are shown on this wall. There is also visualized the entirely modern medical service which now pertains in the newer institutions assuring the inmate of proper medical and surgical care, and also going into the more involved branches of psychological treatment. Also included are suggestions of the possibility for individual avocation among the inmates.

The wall over the exit door is to contain an apotheosis of both walls. Existing conditions such as the difficulties facing a man released from prison; unemployment; the hostility of the pub-



"Ah, vodka! All I need now is a whip and a few peasants."

Redfield

lic to an ex-convict; and similar circumstances make any summation hard to arrive at. What we would like to suggest is the possibility of a full realization of reform direction as it affects a convict both in prison and after his release, reacceptance without stigma by society, the opportunity for employment, and a general readjustment calculated to prevent a return to crime.

To make their murals as accurate as possible the artists spent months in research, consulted prominent penal authorities and made extensive studies of actual conditions in Welfare Island, etc. Mr. McCormick added further endorsement to the project by giving the artists virtual *carte blanche* to visit state penal institutions, photograph prisoners, etc. Finally after months of intensive work preparing the sketches, their project received the blessings of the Mayor and Commissioner McCormick. It was now ready for final judgment by the Municipal Art Commission, which is supposed to see that projects maintain a high aesthetic standard. In this case, however, the commission (Jonas Lie) chose a different function—that of Public Keeper of Patriotism.

To strangle this splendid project, Lie chose to drag in the Red scare, manipulating press releases which distorted the facts and confused the issues. An examination of the newspaper-accounts shows Lie giving at least two different grounds, each stated as *the* reason for rejection. A headline in The Herald Tribune of May 9, 1935, said: "Prisoners' Poll Kills Murals for Rikers Island." Actually the poll was *overwhelmingly in favor* of the murals. McCormick, who had now decided to abandon the project, tried to turn this favorable result into an unfavorable one by saying that the prisoners' statements were "not reliable." But more important is the question of why a poll of the prisoners was dragged in as a test of the worth of the murals, when the original outline for the

project stated specifically that it was *not* intended for the inmates.

We would also like to point out that these murals are not directed to the inmates of the penitentiary but, *in accordance with the plan of Commissioner McCormick*, are intended to visualize for visitors, especially visiting penologists and students of sociology, the problems which have been set forth in this series of murals. (*Italics mine.*)

This is from the final paragraph of the draft submitted to the Mayor, Dec. 10, 1934. In other words, both the Mayor and Commissioner McCormick knew and approved of this basis for the project, permitting the sketches to go forward, and yet a "poll of the prisoners" was offered as ground for rejection. As a matter of fact, the prisoners would be unable to see the murals from their cells, and only during the infrequent moments when they are marched through the corridors would they see them at all. But none of

these facts has deterred Mr. Lie or his brother politicians from trumping up false pretexts. Mr. Lie must, in fact, have felt uneasy at the flimsiness of such an excuse, because he added another and quite unrelated charge; that of "anti-social" and "radical propaganda." Here he was at home, on familiar grounds. If his intelligence failed him, at least his chauvinism could always be depended upon. This professional patriot who last year publicly defended a criminal destruction of a painting which criticized President Roosevelt, could indulge his appetite for Red-baiting to the full.

In this, his latest act, Jonas Lie has added to a long and distinguished career of reactionary activities in a manner that proves, beyond all doubt, his unfitness for any public office, save one. He would make a valuable assistant to Herr Streicher, the Nazi guardian of culture.

STEPHEN ALEXANDER.

The Screen

THERE have been arctic explorations before. There have also been polar films. Some were interesting, others were dull and spiritless (such as the film of Byrd's first expedition to the South Pole) and still others were lyrical to the point of deception (Flaherty's *Nanook*).

But no expedition achieved the international acclaim of the "Chelyuskin Expedition." The leavetaking from Leningrad on the morning of July 16, 1933 was not sensational, though the bourgeois press did emphasize the fact that women and two children were among the 105 in the ship's company.

The ship headed north, was caught in an ice floe. On February 13, 1934 the pressure of the ice crushed the sides of the Chelyuskin. The accident caused the death of one man; the 104 survivors were marooned on the ice. Here they lived, studied and worked for two months while the Soviet Union organized the most gigantic, the most efficient rescue in the history of exploration. By April 14, every Chelyuskinite had been taken off the ice to dry land. Their adventures and the thrilling rescue have been recorded in one of the most significant films of the working class, a film that portrays a great lesson in cooperative effort and is, at the same time, a rare epic of the sea.

This is the substance of the film-chronicle, *Heroes of the Arctic* (Soviet Film News-Amkino). When one sees this film, one has the same feeling as the author of "The Newspaper on the Ice Floe" (NEW MASSES, Sept. 25, 1934) when he looked at the wall newspaper of the Chelyuskin survivors: "an indescribable feeling of physical contact with one of the greatest historical events of our time. . . ." The cameramen were not two disinterested newsreel photographers employed by some movie company, but were part and parcel, both in spirit and body, of the Soviet attempt to open a commercial water passage between Archangel and Vladivostok. One of them, A. Shafran, was with the expedition to the end. The film records the voyage and the sinking of the ship; we see the mushroom growth of a proletarian collective on an ice floe drifting in the Chukotic Sea; the determination to conquer death; the preparation for the rescue, which consisted in laying out a landing field and establishing constant radio communication with the mainland. We see the thrilling rescues by airplanes of the

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There is power and excitement in the objectivity of the film, this objectivity being inherent in the documentary excellence. However, the film through its skill and point of view (referred to as propaganda by bourgeois critics) transcends the simple documentary film, the newsreel. It becomes an object lesson of Bolshevik determination and disciplined organization. As the Chelyuskinites themselves put it:

We Chelyuskinites have experienced proletarian solidarity in practical experience. We have felt it in our rescue from the grip of the ice. The first international proletarian state of the world has saved a handful of its members at an expenditure of effort and means which no single capitalist state would ever have been able to accomplish. And here on the mainland, already rescued, awaiting our departure to our places of work, we still owe our lives to the socialist system of our country. Here in the farthest north we still feel ourselves members of the united family of the Workers' State. . . .

PETER ELLIS.

NEXT WEEK:

THE TIMID PROFESSION

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in

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Next Week

Between Ourselves

LOUIS LOZOWICK, one of the founders of THE NEW MASSES and for some years its art editor, will conduct a summer tour of the Soviet Union for World Tourists, Inc., leaving New York July 5 and returning August 27. Special emphasis will be placed on various aspects of Soviet art, its meaning and evolution, in a series of talks, discussions and visits under Lozowick's guidance.

R. Palme Dutt is editor of the British Labour Monthly and author of *Fascism and the Social Revolution*.

Isidor Schneider of the staff of THE NEW MASSES will be among the speakers at a symposium held by the American Mercury Strike Committee on the question of union organization on magazines. William P. Mangold of The New Republic, Quincy Howe of The Living Age, Julian Funt of The American Spectator and other magazine editors will speak. It will be held at the

Union M. E. Church, 229 West 48 Street, Monday evening, June 10.

The meeting to observe the publication of Joshua Kunitz's book, *Dawn Over Samarkand*, announced for June 14 at Webster Hall, 119 East 111th Street, has been postponed to the evening of June 21 at the same place. The original program—Earl Browder, Angelo Herndon and Kunitz as speakers—will be carried out, as well as the presentation to Herndon (to whom the book is dedicated) of a specially bound copy. Tickets may be obtained at THE NEW MASSES office, 31 East 27th Street, or the Workers Bookshop, 50 East 13th Street.

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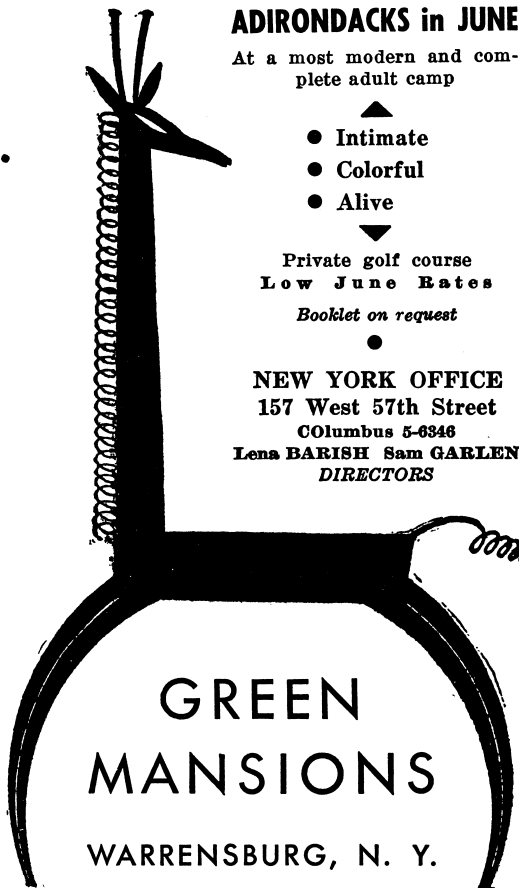
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