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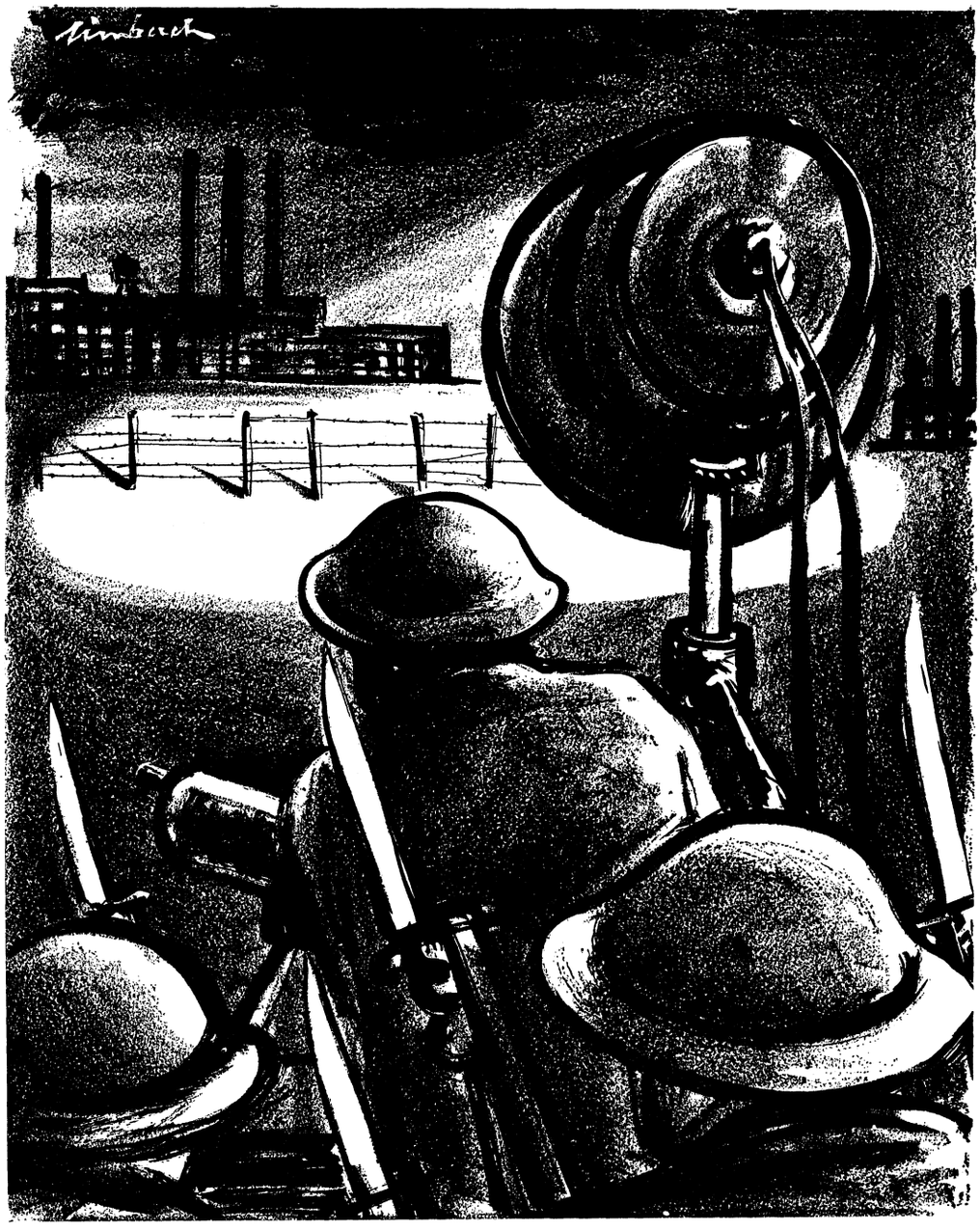
New Masses

AUGUST 6, 1935



MOONLIGHT ON THE WABASH — *Russell T. Limbach*

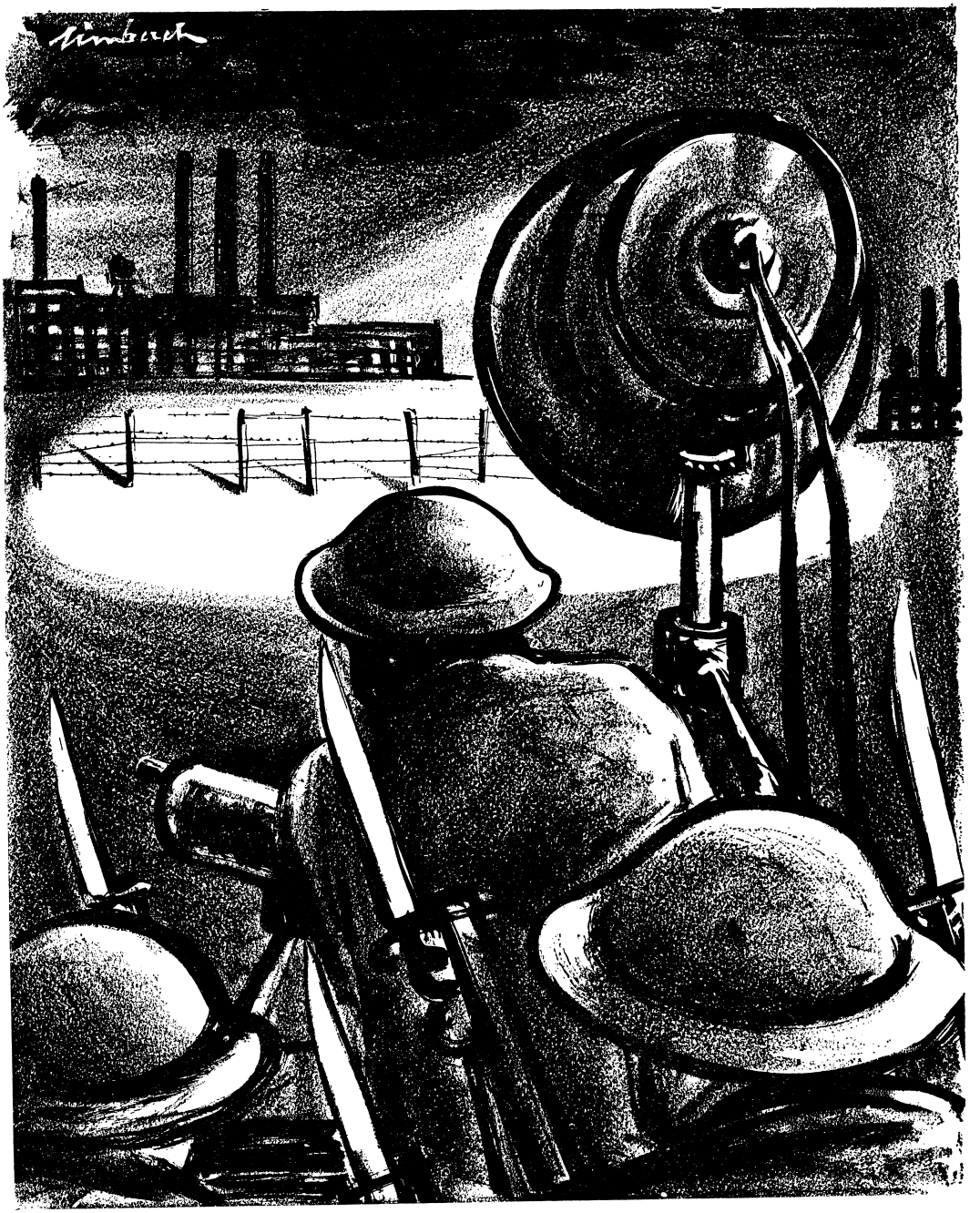
The Comintern Congress

NEWS from Moscow, as interpreted by the bourgeois press, is strangely contradictory these days. One day the newspapers discover the fact that the Communist International, which is meeting there, has abandoned its revolutionary outlook. The next day they report that the Comintern is a nest of revolutionaries plotting the overthrow of the United States Government. Some truly remarkable news beats have been scored by the excited correspondents. One of them is the fact that Communists are willing to enter into a united front with liberals and Socialists to combat war and fascism. One might have supposed that this was hardly news; working-class newspapers have been hammering away at it for years and in France the united front includes large sections of the petty-bourgeois parties. Earl Browder's report on the American Communist Party also came as a complete surprise to the cable editors. His statistics on Party membership found their way to the front pages; yet any person who had the slightest curiosity could have found the same figures, in even more detailed form, available here months ago. Similar treatment has been given reports on the Workers' Unemployment Insurance Bill, the San Francisco general strike and the drive for a Labor Party. When made in Moscow these reports become tremendously important but when published in the United States, as they have been repeatedly, they are ignored.

THERE is more method to this contradictory treatment than appears at first glance. The spectacle of delegates from fifty-seven countries united in a common purpose, and many of them present despite active terror in their own nations, alarms world capitalism. It is plain that in spite of all attempts to stifle it there is a growth of revolutionary spirit all over the world. There is a certain crafty purpose in attempts to discredit the Comintern as the leader of revolutionary forces and to convince workers that they can no longer look to it for guidance. On the other hand, enemies of the Soviet Union, led by Hearst, are anxious to seize upon the slightest excuse to sever relations with the Workers' Republic. Hence the wide circulation of reports made by Browder. The strategy is to make it appear that the Soviet Union is interfering in the internal affairs of the United States in violation of the terms of the Litvinoff-Roosevelt agreement. Hearst papers are already calling for a severance of diplomatic relations and Ambassador Bullitt has been ordered to look for evidence of treaty violation. Few persons will be taken in by either aspect of this specious propaganda. Efforts to confuse the Soviet Government with the Comintern have long since been discredited. Nor is there any indication that the yapping of small-bore critics is effective enough to discredit the leadership of the Communist International. Quite the contrary; the very fact that it is being assailed most bitterly by proponents of fascism testifies to the fact that its work is becoming increasingly effective.

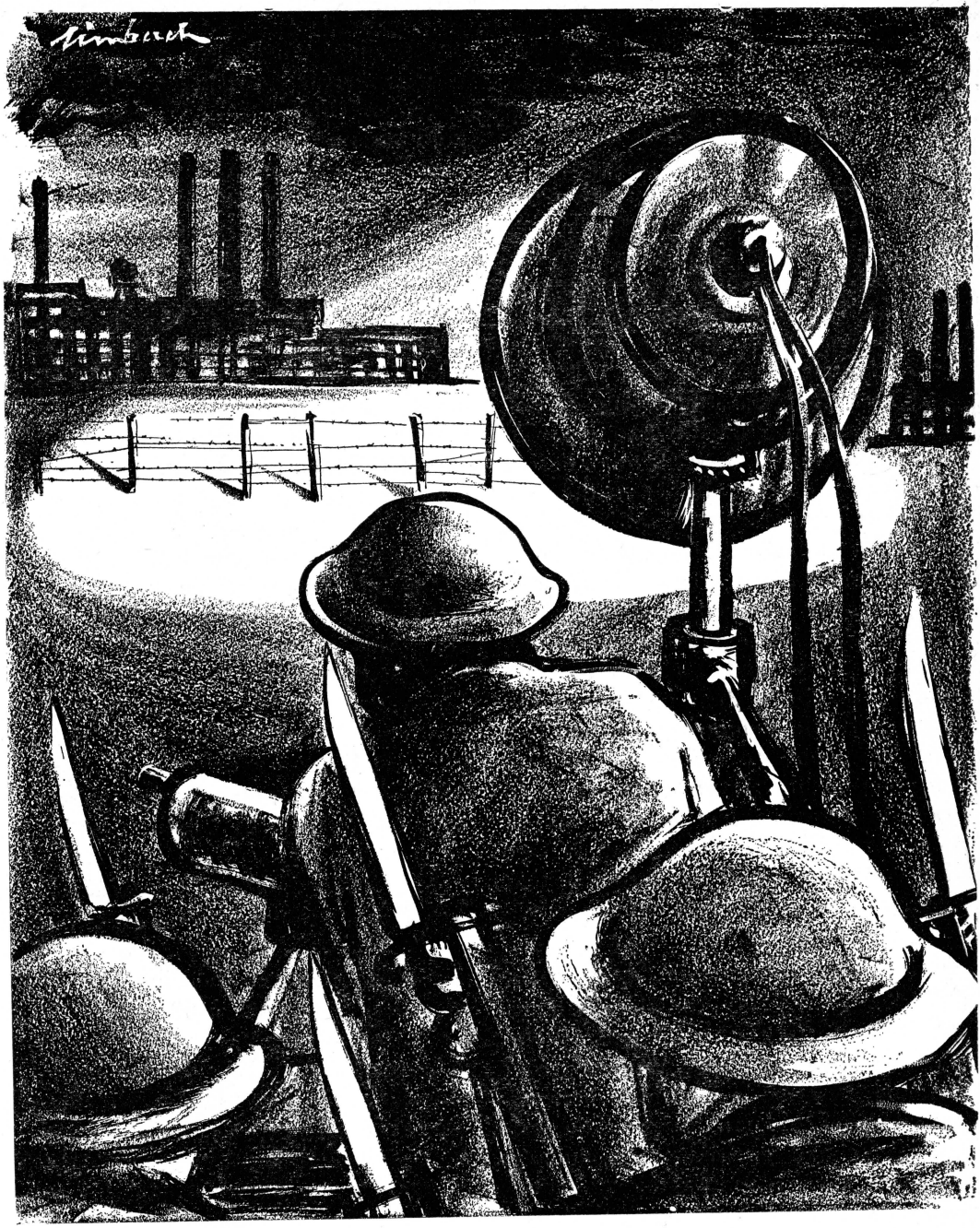
Dramatizing the Issue

MILITANT mass action became the subject of international diplomacy this week as the result of the demonstration Friday night when the German liner, Bremen, sailed. Evading a heavy police guard, anti-fascists got aboard the ship and raised their voices against the intensified reign of terror in Nazi Germany. While the demonstration was at its height the swastika flag was torn down. The police shot one of the demonstrators and beat up and arrested everybody they could lay their



MOONLIGHT ON THE WABASH

Russell T. Limbach



MOONLIGHT ON THE WABASH

Russell T. Limbach

hands on. The State Department hastily issued an unofficial apology before a German demand could be formulated. But apologies can't wipe out the effect of the demonstration, which has served to dramatize internationally the struggle against the Nazis. German newspapers, forced to headline the event, were forced at the same time to reveal to the German people the worldwide anger of other nations against the Hitler regime. News of the affair has spread around the globe and will have a salutary effect in stimulating opposition to fascism. Hardly had news of the demonstration been printed before even William Green awoke to the dangers of the Nazi menace and issued an appeal for an intensification of the labor boycott on German goods. The reactionaries were alarmed of course but it remained for Judge Jacob Panken, old-guard Socialist and La Guardia appointee, to express their opposition. He condemned the demonstration and advised the people to resign the issue to the government. Anti-fascists are in no mood to remain silent in the face of events in Germany. The Bremen captain was right when he shrieked that "we don't know what will happen next."

The League's Zero Hour

COMPLICATING the already hopeless efforts of the League of Nations to save its face, reports from Ethiopia describe a skirmish between Italian and Ethiopian forces. The Italian troops had crossed the boundary, where they were spotted by an Ethiopian detachment. The defenders altered the course of a creek and drove the Italians from their encampment; there followed an attack in which forty Italians and half as many Ethiopians were killed. This new outbreak of hostilities will be used by Mussolini as one more excuse for his drive to "vindicate Italian honor" and incidentally swallow up the Negro nation. While Mussolini makes a "peaceful" gesture by suggesting further arbitration discussions between the two parties concerned, he continues sending troops to Africa and building supply depots and roads in preparation for the advance early in September.

THE League convenes this week. The issue that it faces is clear-cut. It must avert the African war or go out of business. The Ualal-Ualal incident which ostensibly caused Italy to decide on an invasion of Ethiopia is trivial and its bearing on the dispute has no weight. Mussolini means to go ahead, despite serious internal financial difficulties that have necessitated the reduction of the gold basis of the lira. Moral persuasion can have no effect on the Italian dictator, who has signified his willingness to sacrifice the League for fascist honor. And neither England nor France has any desire to put itself in the position of opposing Italy and risk the consequences. The League cannot afford the loss of prestige which its inability to prevent a comparatively simple case of aggression will bring. Germany and Japan crippled the League; Italy will deal the death blow. And in the meantime, each country scrambles for a favorable position in the coming war, in particular Japan, which has suddenly expressed definite sympathy with Ethiopia. This is by no means due to any sentimental concern for a small nation; Japan realizes that a grand-stand play now might seem to place it in the position of defender of all colored races and divert attention from her own imperialist invasion of China.

Yes, The Nation Is

WE inquired two weeks ago whether The Nation, in view of its joining with the scab-herding American Mercury in a subscription offer, could be considered pro-labor. We are glad to record that The Nation not only considers itself pro-labor, but that it boasts, in last week's issue, of having "devoted more space and more vigorous language to the cause of the American Mercury strikers than has THE NEW MASSES." And we are even more glad to record that The Nation promises to desist from any further efforts to build up the circulation of the strike-breaking Mercury.

Foreclosure Finesse

THE attitude of the H.O.L.C. to the borrowers whose beneficent guardian Mr. Fahey claims to be, is well illustrated by the following quotations from the instructions to H.O.L.C. officials contained in the H.O.L.C. Regional Office Manual:

> . . . All extensions must be carefully considered and granted only when the circumstances of the home owner and condition of the security justify such extension. . . . No extension will be granted unless it appears probable that the borrower will be able to pay in the future. . . .
>
> The personnel for the interview herein referred to shall be carefully trained for the performance of the most delicate and important task confronting the Corporation. . . .
>
> In the event foreclosure cannot by any means be avoided, the Regional Manager shall forward the case to the Assistant General Manager in charge of the Region with his recommendations, and upon the approval of such Assistant General Manager, the case shall be returned for foreclosure.

For detailed procedure on how to foreclose gracefully, painlessly and in a New Deal manner see the Legal Department, Chapter VI, Sec. 2—par. d.

Did You Say "Anti-Trust?"

JOHN DICKINSON, former Assistant Secretary of Commerce, has been appointed head of the anti-trust division. This was made possible by kicking Harold M. Stephens, formerly in charge of the division, up two flights of stairs. Stephens was first made Assistant to the Attorney General, replacing William Stanley, and then given a life job as Judge of the Court of Appeals of the District of Columbia. Dickinson will now be in charge of all prosecutions under the anti-trust laws, presumably revitalized by the death of N.R.A. In the Department of Commerce, Dickinson acted as liaison man between Roosevelt and Big Business as represented by the Business Advisory Council. Before that time, as a partner in the Wall Street firm of Sullivan and Cromwell, he represented the sugar trust in its protracted anti-trust litigation. Wall Street has no intention of slackening the drive for trustification which it carried on so successfully under the N.R.A. With the right to enter into voluntary trade agreements under the friendly eye of the Federal Trade Commission and the assurance that Dickinson, as anti-trust prosecutor, will guarantee it immunity, big business has retained all that it now needs of the N.R.A.

Tugwell Does His Part

SUBSISTENCE homesteads under "honest Harold" Ickes, built some fancy $2,600 houses. Now resettlement has inherited subsistence projects from Ickes. A staff of 6,000, preparing for "resettlement" in the Walsh-McLean mansion, has found out that poor whites and Negroes of the South cannot afford this subsistence splendor. So Tugwell's architects and engineers have set to work to un-improve the houses to a $1,600 level. This can easily be done by cutting out such un-

necessary luxuries as plumbing and electricity. The realistic Mr. Tugwell reasons: "The price must come down to people's means. We must not set impractical standards of living."

Works Fund or War Fund?

THERE can no longer be much doubt that the Works Fund is in effect a War Fund. While red tape and delay hinder the spending of money for relief purposes, war expenditures go smoothly and swiftly forward. The following projects have been approved by the President's Committee:

$390 million for roads, quite in line with Hitler's program of road building.
$500 thousand for the Alaska Road Commission, quite in line with the Matanuska project for developing a war base in Alaska against Japan.
$ 15 million for the Navy Department for building.
$ 5 million for the Coast Guard, Navy ancillary.
$130 million for the War Department.
$600 million for the C. C. C. camps for greater enrollment.

The total is $1,140 millions already alloted for war purposes, direct or indirect. This amazing sum should be compared with the total allotments made as of the same date. The grand total of allotments is one and one-half billion: taking out war allotments, the actual allotments to date for real relief purposes are less than 400 million.

Lessons of Terre Haute

THE principal lesson of the Terre Haute general strike is this: the underlying factors that operated in this Indiana city are in no wise different from those operating in a thousand American industrial centers. The conditions which Joseph North describes at Terre Haute obtain in industry in every community: A continued assault upon proletarian living standards by reductions in wages and increases in prices; violation of every constitutional right by the employers—and their state power—when workers strike. The A. F. of L. national leadership's antipathy to the general strike is well known and well advertised but the reasons for its violent hostility are not. Messrs. Green, Woll and Lewis fear that during a general strike "the mob will get out of control." At such times the "mob" has a way of not only dealing with their enemies but of identifying their false friends. That was clearly seen here at Terre Haute. The A. F. of L. leadership frowned on the strike. They tried to sabotage it by terming it "wildcat." When the men came out in spite of the leaders, the latter through T. N. Taylor, state representative of the A. F. of L. (guided by Washington's conciliators) called it off within forty-eight hours. They did not hold a plebiscite on the question—although a general vote had been taken calling the strike. The rank and file, as well as the local union heads, are now discovering certain glaring errors—mistakes they were bound to commit without experience or leadership.

THEY fell into the trap of arbitration. Although the strikers have little regard for the Wagner Bill, they retain considerable faith in Roosevelt personally. "He's with labor but the bankers got him hog-tied." When F. D. R. bundled his star conciliator, C. K. Richardson, into a plane and shot him to Terre Haute the strikers thought a friend had come down from the skies. Richardson is one of the most consummate delayers in the administration, his technique of procrastination until the strikers are worn out is unexcelled. (Richardson, as General Johnson declared in his Scripps-Howard column July 29, telephones to Washington every two hours on this strike). Furthermore, the strikers should have demanded an enlarged strike committee, one closely in contact with the rank and file and that would react to their will; third, they should have raised economic slogans — demanded higher wages, shorter hours and union conditions. Again, the "spread the strike" movement did not live up to the potentialities of the situation. Flying squadrons could have pulled out most of Southern Indiana to support the Vigo County "holiday." Miners in the vicinity were still walking out when the strike was terminated. Again, the strike committee should immediately have organized a commissary for food and supply, thus nullifying the fear of starvation during the general strike. However, our correspondent reports that many workers are aware today of these mistakes; that a re-strike movement is the demand of the rank and file. At the moment military terror is in the saddle. The wires of all the local leaders are being tapped. Military inquisitions are the order of the day. The slogan should be "Out with the National Guard and the gunmen"—the revocation of martial law. THE NEW MASSES has wired to Secretary Perkins protesting the use of militia to force strikers back to work. What happens in Terre Haute will prove a precedent for the rest of the land. The widest circles of the population are affected. All who oppose living under the bayonet must bombard Indianapolis with the demand that the troops get out of Vigo County.

New Masses

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The War Against War

"FIGHT Against Imperialist War! Fight Against Fascism!" Millions of men, women and children demonstrating throughout the world on Anti-War Day, August 3, will raise these slogans. Marching side by side, Negro and white workers, housewives, students, teachers, professionals, trade unionists, members of peace and church organizations of many political creeds will unitedly register their solidarity against capitalist war.

This year's Anti-War Day comes in the midst of a desperate armament race among all the capitalist powers, in the midst of actual military aggressions by a number of them. Fascist Italy, seeking a way out as the increasing misery of its masses threatens it with revolution, has hurled an army across the sea against Ethiopia. Japan, lusting to exploit more of China's rich territory, is pushing its soldiers farther into Mongolia. Hitler rattles the saber in the face of rival European powers, which might oppose him if he threatened to conquer their own territory, but would support him in an attempt to seize the Ukraine by attacking the Soviet Union.

The United States is not lagging behind. With Pacific islands and the Orient as a lure, it is arming to the teeth. Only this week, Washington Naval authorities announced Congress would be asked to approve a $904,000,000 appropriation, to include construction of ninety-five new war vessels and fortification of Alaska and some islands in the Pacific. This immense sum would be pyramided on top of record-breaking military appropriations the past year. The announcement was made to emphasize to rival imperialist powers that the United States at any cost would seek to exceed the $750,000,000 naval construction program Great Britain had announced a day previously.

The history of capitalism moves in descending spirals toward its appointed grave. The outbreak of the World War in 1914 was heralded by just such an armament race. In the intervening two decades capitalism has moved immeasurably nearer its end. In several countries it has drawn its last weapon, fascism. Huger sums are constantly spent on armies and navies and the war preparations now are carried out not only with no secrecy, but with insolent boasts and threats. In 1914, as now, easily identifiable preparations showed that the capitalist countries were determined on war—to gain colonies, to expand their markets.

In one decisive respect the pre-war situation in 1914 was different from that of 1935. Neither in Europe nor in the United States was there a militant, organized force against war. The Communist Party was not in existence. There was no Soviet Union, making one-sixth of the earth's surface the strong bulwark for peace that we have today.

There was opposition to war, but in general, it was unorganized. The anti-war movement was composed of loosely united humanitarians, emotionalists, conscientious objectors. They were aware of the horrors of war but mostly they were unable to plan or put forth any active resistance once the war did break out.

When war came in 1914 the Social-Democratic leaders crowded the church in a wild scramble to endorse the slaughter. Adherents of the Second International, when the test came they jettisoned their own program in favor of a bourgeois nationalism. They forgot that at their Congresses, from 1907 to 1912, they had resolved:

> In the event of the outbreak of war, it is absolutely necessary to fight for its rapid termination and strain every effort to utilize the war caused by the economic and political crisis in order to rouse the people and thus hasten the end of the domination of the capitalist class.

Pacifists who had spent years trying to prove that it was impossible for war to come suddenly discovered that now merely to say "We oppose war" was futile. Reformist leaders in all countries announced this particular war was "exceptional" and therefore they must support it.

Today, in all countries, in the hearts and minds of millions, there glows a determination to carry out a militant program of action against war, not merely at the moment when war breaks out but always, from day to day, while the capitalist nations, in the time they call peace, drive toward armed conflicts.

The vanguard of the working class, the Communist Party, in the United States and throughout the world, is committed to a program to arouse the masses against imperialist war. When the Soviet Union's Foreign Commissar Chicherin went before the League of Nations in Geneva and amidst an embarrassed silence of capitalist statesmen said: "Gentlemen, the way to disarm is to disarm," his words and their reception by the rulers of the rest of the world once and for all disillusioned millions everywhere with the demagogic phrases which accompany capitalist "preparedness propaganda." The Soviet Union throughout has been the only government actually desiring peace, working for peace, making sacrifices for peace and for the past dozen years, maintaining the peace of the world.

Everywhere there are signs of the increasing opposition to war. In San Francisco now, you could not find one of the 4,500 longshoremen who would move a munitions cargo, loading or unloading, were the United States embroiled in war. Their stand is typical of the stand of dockworkers in the entire Pacfiic Coast area. In England, a recent poll of eleven million voters resulted in a 92 percent expression in favor of an unremitting peace policy. Two million youths there have signed a pledge not to participate in any capitalist war. In the United States, college students in 1934 demonstrated in colleges and schools against war, 25,000 students participating. This year, 175,000, seven times as many, left their classes to strike against war.

A focal point for militant opposition to war is the World League Against War and Fascism. Two years ago at its congress in Amsterdam, 2,196 delegates met (many delegates, from fascist countries, were prevented from reaching the meeting). The Amsterdam delegates represented 30,000,000 people in twenty-seven countries. They included workers from all industries, students, intellectuals and middle-class groups and their decision was to build a movement aiming at the abolition of capitalism. At its own congress in Chicago, the American League, now representing more than 2,000,000 in af-

filiated bodies, reaffirmed its program of mass action and realistic opposition to war.

The League does not sit still and wait for a declaration of war by an imperialist power. It fights the colossal armament program of the Roosevelt administration, its militaristic C. C. C. camps which under the masque of "reforestration" train a gigantic auxiliary to the regular army. It fights against legislation which endangers civil rights, against the deportation of militant alien workers and against police terrorism in strikes. These are fascist menaces and fascism is the forerunner of war.

It is on the broad revolutionary base of such active opposition to war, as is shown by the workers of the Pacific Coast, by the students, by the masses enrolled in the American League and in militant trade-union groups and finally in those sections of the working class led by the Communist Party, that hopes must rest of averting the next world war.

Washington Cuts Wages

A NEW wage offensive is being carried forward by the administration. Led by the President, each government department is doing its bit. The strategy of attack is brutally apparent in the current jumble of Washington news. Increased strengthening of all military forces. A concerted drive to lower wages, in which the Relief agencies and the National Youth Administration will take the lead. An attack on living standards through further "purging" of the relief rolls, smaller doles and still further reduced "security" wages, combined with the wave of foreclosures by the H.O.L.C. and a scaling down of subsistence homestead standards. And finally, a more open control by big business of government activity, as evidenced by the choice of recent appointees.

Here, briefly outlined, are examples of how some agencies of the New Deal are mobilized.

The spearhead of the attack is the F.E.R.A. and its successor W.P.A. On July 11, Hopkins asserted that charges that persons on relief in the Hammontown area of New Jersey were refusing to accept berry-picking jobs "are not supported by the facts." To prove that he did not intend defiance of big berry growers, Hopkins said, "All single able-bodied men were removed from the relief rolls several weeks ago and about ninety family cases, representing nearly four hundred persons, were closed in June." And, further, that the family labor unit, with husband, wife and children working in the field, was what the growers wanted—"the Relief Administration did not attempt to recruit families, which would have meant forcing child labor into the berry fields."

Ten days later Hopkins was forced to give more positive aid to the attack on wages by using the whip of "take what you can get or starve." About 19,000 heads of families were summarily denied relief by state and federal agencies in South Dakota. Their insistence that they "must have pay equal to or above the relief wage" for a day's work in the harvest fields, plus the assurance that when the brief spell of employment was past they could return to the relief rolls, was regarded as "chiseling." Illinois, Kansas, Nebraska, Missouri, Iowa and other western and mid-western states followed suit. A complete stopping of "this business of relief," backed by Washington, can be relied on to bring harvest wages down to $1.00—$1.50 a day.

And when the harvest is over?

When the harvest is over, applicants for readmission to relief rolls will meet a "Relief Roll Purge." The headlines say: "Abrogation of existing lists and stricter regulations for readmission planned." That the purge is not only planned, but already effective is shown by recent F.E.R.A. figures and reports. The F.E.R.A. report for March attributes a marked drop in relief cases to "fall in unemployables," who were taken off the lists, and to "improved case work"—which means weeding out. There was also a drop in the relief allowed per person in March.

The pretense that work relief was to mean an increase in income over direct relief has long been abandoned. The $19 to $94 wage rate left no doubt on that score. But a careful scrutiny of the $19 wage shows that even $19 is not the nadir of official wage depression. The maximum working hours are 140. This means 13½ cents per hour. The two-fold purpose of the rulers is thus revealed:

1—To condemn 2,500,000 to 3,000,000 persons to a sub-subsistence existence;

2—To use these same wages, translated into hourly rates, to deal a solar plexis blow at the entire American wage structure.

The N.R.A. shocked liberals by proclaiming $12 per forty-hour week to be a living wage in the South. Two years have elapsed and instead of 30 cents we find 13½ cents an hour—a cut of 55 percent—while during the same period a 20 to 40 percent rise in the cost of living has served to cut the worker's real wages by an equivalent amount.

But this is only the first attack. Further study of Executive Order No. 7046 shows that the 140 hour month does not hold "(c) For persons employed on projects located at points so remote and inaccessible that camps or floating equipment are necessary," where "the maximum hours of work shall be eight hours per day and forty hours per week."

Now forty hours per week means 173 hours per month or less than 11 cents per hour.

Even this is not all. Hopkins in a recent "interpretation" has decreed that where it is necessary to maintain workers in such camps a charge for "subsistence" of a fifth of the monthly pay may be made. The $19 a month now turns out to be $15.20. This brings such workers' pay down to the twentieth century low of less than 8.8 cents an hour, which is 37 percent lower than the iniquitous 14 cents an hour which Roosevelt "reluctantly" approved in the never-enforced N.R.A. laundry code early last year. To show the depths to which this threatens to push wages under capitalism's system of sex wage differentials—the laundry code of 14 cents was for women, and this 8.8 cents is for men.

"WE DEMAND AN APOLOGY!"

William Gropper

"WE DEMAND AN APOLOGY!"

William Gropper

What Is Happening in Terre Haute

JOSEPH NORTH

TERRE HAUTE, IND.

Dan "Red" Evans, organizer of the Teamsters local, after an eight-hour grilling by Major Walter S. Fowler of the National Guard: "I'm a red-headed sonofabitchin' liar, am I? Let me tell you this, officer. Every dog has his day. Today's yours. Mine's acomin'. We'll see. I'll remember your face at the bottom of hell. And that's no lie."

The Major: Is that a threat?

Dan Evans: No, officer. That's not a threat. That's a statement of fact.

THIS city on the Wabash, Gene Debs' home town, was scarcely less astonished than the rest of America when, on July 22, the headlines flashed "General Strike." The Hoosiers are native, 100 percent Americans, long-suffering, patient, capable of the long pull. But patient folk act swiftly and furiously when goaded beyond the limits of their patience. That's what happened in this Indiana city. Although this was a spontaneous upsurge and happened almost overnight the underlying factors operated here for months, ever since the 600 employes of the Columbian Enameling and Stamping Company walked out for union recognition in March. Given the royal runaround by the employers, the city, the A. F. of L. officialdom, Washington, they and their sympathizers in this 95 percent unionized city endured it for just so long. Then bang—General Strike.

The employers acted with similar swiftness. Within twenty-four hours, the National Guardsmen moved in, 1,100 strong.

For forty-eight hours Terre Haute was run by the men in overalls.

Today it is run by the men in khaki.

When the working class took over power it padlocked every saloon and joint in Vigo County. Since the militia arrived, the bayonet is parliament. Governmental violence occurs on every street about the mill and the commercial press is silent. That's not moonlight on the Wabash. It's the glare from the military searchlights in front of the Columbian plant.

The people of this city have been teargassed four times since the Guardsmen came in. More than two hundred, including college professors and students, have been arrested by the military. Vigo County is still under martial law, Terre Haute is run by an armed dictatorship.

Yet the officials of the A. F. of L. here called off the general strike within forty-eight hours after it had gotten under way without their sanction. They called it off even though civil rule was usurped by the soldiery.

The Guardsmen have moved in as though in a besieged foreign city. Major Fowler gave me the rare privilege of examining his arsenal inside the Columbia works. I saw pyramids of gas bombs. I saw the weird, lethal contraptions up-to-date science has produced in America—among them a twelve-gauge automatic gas gun that operates like a Thompson machine-gun.

Gen. D. Wray De Prez announced upon his arrival, "We are here to preserve the peace and protect life and property. We are not here to break the strike." Gen. De Prez is a liar and 60,000 men in Terre Haute know it. The Governor knows it and so does the President. I can prove the General was lying.

I can prove that Henry Sappingfield, an employe at the Columbian, who chances to be a lay preacher, was roused out of bed by a detail of guardsmen. The officers greeted him: "You're a goddamn yellow sonofabitch of a dog if you don't go back to work." When his wife remonstrated, the officer said to Sappingfield: "That big-footed bitch of yours ain't good for nothin' except to raise kids. She ought to be taken out and horsewhipped."

I can prove that Warren Thomas, another striker, was picked up on the street, taken inside the mill and locked up "till he was willing to return to work." The affidavits attesting these facts were sworn before Attorney Morris Niccoson, offices in the Grand Opera House in Terre Haute. The affidavits are now in T. N. Taylor's possession. Taylor is the local A. F. of L. organizer.

But the Terre Haute workingman—tall, bony, the pioneer type—(they look for all the world like brothers of Debs) mows his patch of grass in front of his clapboard bungalow and smokes his corn-cob under martial law. Across the street the Guardsmen stand, bayonets aslant, warily eyeing the indifferent-looking man on the other side. But the Guardsman knows as everybody here knows, dynamite is a harmless looking substance. They don't show emotion well in Indiana. The lights go out in the bungalow shortly after dark and the entire proletarian neighborhood is pitch-black.

Inside a thousand homes Hoosier corncobs glow in conferences.

They Call It Fascism

THE significance of this strike is even greater than its spectacular character. It is, first of all, the first major outbreak since the N.R.A. folded up. What the moneyed people do to smash this strike will prove a precedent for the rest of America. The workers of Terre Haute know this. "If we're licked at the Columbian, they'll go all the way down the line. They'll smash every union in the county." And Vigo County is 90 percent organized.

Furthermore, Roosevelt is being kept aware of the day-to-day happenings here by his "ace" conciliator, C. K. Richardson. Is outright terror, military dictatorship, to be the national policy in "labor disputes" now with the N.R.A. dead and buried? In the past the terror was concealed as much as possible. Here it is naked, unashamed. The only people who don't know about it are the men in the news agencies of Indiana.

Thirdly, the action of the middle-classes here is of utmost significance. It proved this to me: a strongly organized working class, in motion, influences the middle classes irresistibly.

To piece together the complex factors involved here and get a complete mosaic, is a pretty difficult task. But when it is done you get a startling result. You have here, concentrated in one spot, the interaction of all the classes in America today. (Bearing one factor in mind, that Terre Haute is 95 percent union.) What happened in Terre Haute today, may happen in any other American city tomorrow.

At the moment Terre Haute is ruled by the National Guard, who take instructions from the heads of four chief industries here. At the opposite pole stands the working class, in a fever of resentment, anxious and rarin' to go, but their guides, chiefly honest but confused old-line A. F. of L. local leaders, are, in their own words, "a settin' on the lid." They are concerned lest the "mob get out of control." Yet there is a marvelous solidarity here. Every union man chips in to stock the commissary of the Columbian strikers who have been out for eighteen weeks and haven't had a penny to buy food. This is done through the Central Labor body here.

The leaders of the middle classes, the professionals, are confused and deeply frightened. I spoke to college professors at Indiana State Teachers' College, to the leader of the local clergy, to businessmen and they are frankly scared. "God only knows what's coming next." They call it fascism. Military law affects them in a hundred different ways: for one, the insult to their dignity to be forced to truckle to lads of 16 whose authority is the bayonet, tear gas and nausea bombs. Then, actually, their daily life is affected. The church, for example, dared not hold services. Even God is under martial law. As Major Fowler told the Rev. George E. Francis, head of the Pastor's Association, representing fifty-three churches, most working-class people believe in God. They attend church. Most pastors heed their flocks' desire. Therefore, a session with God

may easily be converted into a conference with the devil, who has criminal syndicalist ideas. I stood in the armory when a priest came in and asked permission to hold a church picnic the following Sunday. The officer in khaki wanted to know the composition of the priest's followers. Middle-class? Okay. Working-class? Nix. (But even a clam-bake of the Elks was tear-gassed.)

The middle class has come a long, long way. Eugene Debs' brother, Theodore, told me yesterday that in 1918 the Terre Haute businessmen took you out if you refused to buy a Liberty Bond, put a noose around your neck and threw the loose end over a limb. You danced in mid-air until you agreed to love Uncle Sam and buy a bond.

Monday and Tuesday these businessmen shut up shop in sympathy with the strikers. The whole city was shut up. Every man and his son was out on the 100 percent strike.

When they say 100 percent in Indiana they don't mean approximately.

The Chicago Plug-Uglies

THE importation of fifty-eight Chicago plug-uglies into the Columbian Enameling and Stamping Company provoked the "holiday." Six hundred workers of this plant had been out since March. All they ask is union recognition. They picketed quietly for months in the fashion that most A. F. of L.-led strikers picket.

Last June 16 the company had brought eight gangsters into the plant. Some of the younger peaceful picketers raided the works, chased the gangsters from department to department and finally caught them hiding in the women's washroom. The gangsters were immediately withdrawn.

July 15 the company repeated. This time they brought fifty-eight of the best flavored gangsters of Chicago into the scene. Terre Haute's police force guided them into the works. What irritated the strikers further was the fact that the plant stands outside of city limits and has never paid taxes. The strikers say the company therefore had no right to Terre Haute police protection. Nevertheless, Smilin' Sam Beecher, the mayor, sent the police force out to help the gangsters enter. When the peaceful picketers, their wives and families, surged toward the factory gates, the police force turned riot guns on them. The crowd surged on. They refused to turn back unless the cops put their guns down.

H. R. Blood, who later was chosen secretary of the general strike committee, jumped up and ordered the cops to put down their guns else "the bloodshed will be terrible. We'll not retreat until the guns go down." The guns went down.

Nevertheless, the gangsters got in. Twenty-four cases of beer and twelve of whiskey went in with them. So did sawed-off shotguns, gas bombs, machine-guns, all the well-known paraphernalia.

The strike committee of the Columbian mill called a general meeting of all organized labor in Vigo County. They called the meeting over the heads of the Central Labor body leaders. They met Sunday, July 21, in the Labor Temple, erected "in honor of Eugene V. Debs." So many turned out that a motion to continue the meeting outside, on the steps of the county courthouse was unanimously adopted. The delegates marched through Terre Haute streets and held a poll under the eyes of the county authorities. They called the roll. The question had been put: Will your union come out on general strike if the Columbian guards are not withdrawn by one a. m. Monday?

Carpenters? Yes.

Restaurant workers? Yes.

Teamsters? Yes.

Packing-house workers? Yes.

So on down the line for forty-eight local unions. When the representative of the brewery workers hemmed and hawed and finally came to the point of suggesting the Wagner Bill, the response he got turned his knees to jello.

"Yes or no!" the crowd roared. About 3,000 had gathered by this time. The delegate from the brewery stammered his way to acquiescence.

At the eleventh hour the mayor (the strikers now call him Silly Sam) called a special citizens' meeting attended by the various welfare groups, churches and the unions. But the owners of the enameling mill refused to attend. They sent word that so long as the issue was a closed shop they would refuse even to discuss the situation.

At one a. m. Monday every wheel in Terre Haute and Vigo County stopped turning. Taxi drivers pulled their cabs in; the milkmen had delivered their wares earlier in order to walk out in time. Miners washed up and came to town.

The men in overalls, their wives and children marched down the main street "in the middle of the street." "Labor's on a holiday" they told those storekeepers who had opened. "Won't you help labor win by closing up?" Every store in the city closed. Every filling station shut up shop. Not a bus or trolley ran. Even the local press halted activity. For the first time since The Tribune was founded in 1903, it failed to come out.

The shut-down was so all-embracing, so complete, that the bourgeoisie became panicky. They put terrific pressure on the mayor and the sheriff. The latter rushed to Governor McNutt. The troops were called. Martial law was declared. The employers' state acted with breakneck dispatch. National Guardsmen were yanked away from their jobs, rushed into uniform, guns and gas bombs put in their hands and transported to Vigo County.

Then the boys in khaki were ordered to do their stuff. The local A. F. of L. leaders, under pressure from Washington, from their immediate superior, T. N. Taylor, called the strike off. Taylor went on the air Tuesday night and advised everybody to return to work, except, of course, the Columbian employes. He graciously thanked all the workers and their sympathizers for support and said he believed the conciliators would be "able to handle the situation." Taylor's radio speech was censored by Gen. De Prez when he tried to say a word in criticism of the city administration.

Angered at the sudden termination of the strike, the rank and file again marched on the plant. Again they were tear-gassed and bludgeoned back. The next day most of Terre Haute had returned to the job, the workers bewildered, resentful. The city today seethes with talk of re-strike. Terre Haute is still under martial law.

The Men in Khaki

MAJOR FOWLER stomps around in the Columbian mill but suddenly confides in me "Things are too goddamn quiet, son, something's going to pop soon." I had gotten acquainted with the Major the previous day when my NEW MASSES press card got me through the bayonets about the enameling works. The farm-boy guardsman saw "New York" and "managing editor" on the card and NEW MASSES meant no more to him than abracadabra.

The Major, a rotund figure in khaki, a fat cigar shooting out of his fat face, is publisher of The Frankford, Ind. Times, a newspaperman himself. And here is a New York newspaperman. The Major is a Rotary, life-of-the-party type and he bubbled over when I suggested he show me the lethal weapons the Guard brought in.

He escorted me around with the air of a major-domo in a Swiss hotel. I saw one hundred and twenty machine-guns, neatly stacked, like Ford parts in an assembly room. The Major chuckled as he showed me the gas guns. "So far," he joshed, nudging me with his elbow, "we only made 'em cry." He picked up an egg-shaped cylinder, bouncing it in his hand. "Wait till we give them the nausea." He grinned. "The bastards 'll double up then."

The gas guns lay on a long table like surgical instruments, brand new, shiny. The Major did the honors. "This, my boy, is a twelve gauge automatic gas gun. Works like a Thompson machine-gun. Twenty-five shots in less than a minute." He grew thoughtful suddenly. "Each shot costs $1.20," he said meditatively. "Gas runs high." He shook his shrewd, small-town, cost-accounting head. "But it works wonders."

I saw gas guns I never dreamed existed. They were stamped "Lake Erie Chemical Co., Cleveland," and a new supply had been brought in after the previous night's "rioting" when Mrs. Ed MacBeth, a striker, grabbed a bayonet going her direction and had her fingers half slashed off.

"Anything comes up I'll give you a ring at the hotel," the Major said, shaking hands.

On my way out he called me back. "Want to see military court operate?" I did.

Terre Haute on the Wabash is not far from Kentucky and the workingmen wear overalls nine tenths of their days. Three overalled prisoners stood before the desk where the trial was going on.

It's martial law in Terre Haute and the army is in the saddle.

The Major bounced up. "Out with it, out with it," his pleasant voice turned hard, mean. "You talked loud enough before but you're dumb in here. What's the name?"

The worker protested he had not been inciting to riot. "I did not call the troopers names," he said. "I was a-unloading the truck when these tin-hats went by," he turned to the guards with drawn bayonets standing at his side, "and all I said was howdy, boys."

A guardsman stood glum at his side—the kid was no more than 18—"He did not say, 'Howdy, boys', sir."

"What did he say?" the Major thundered.

"He said 'Piss on you, boys'."

There was a stir; the Major shook an indignant forefinger. "Take him back," he roared. They returned the worker to the room in the plant marked "Personnel" an impromptu guard-room.

The Major took the cigar from his lips. "He said 'Piss on 'em,' did he? Well, we'll see."

On my way out I talked to a couple of guardsmen (that's a misnomer, most of them were boys of 16, the oldest 20).

They did not like the job worth a damn. Besides, they were "hongry." The Commissary functioned poorly. They had been yanked out of their jobs, rushed into uniform and speeded to Terre Haute before preparations had been completed for their grub.

This lad, tall, his trench-helmet hanging on the back of his head, the strap cutting a line in his chin, spit tobacco twenty-five feet. "Hell," he said, "Course I'm a working man too. I work at the Van Camp packing in Indianapolis. They send us and we got to go. Course I hate to pour it into women and kids, but hell, pardner, you can't pick and choose, as the sergeant says." But he was ill at ease, his eyes shifting when I asked what will happen if he goes on strike sometime.

A couple of the brawny Chicago plug-uglies sauntered by in shirt-sleeves, big bulges at the hip.

The guardsman pointed them out to me with his chin. "Gunmen," he confided. "They all got criminal records long as your arm. It ain't fair a-bringing them in. That's what started all this here trouble." I am certain many of these boys would refuse to go into action if proper fraternization were attempted by the strikers.

A companion of this guardsman, a gangly, 18-year-old lad, pimply about the chin, looked the gunmen over. "Tough hombres," he said. "I don't want none of them." The guardsmen were afraid of the gunmen, afraid of the men for whom they had been summoned at a minute's notice to leave home and to protect, even at the risk of life. "Course," he said, "I don't like it none when the women-folk comes on out on the picket-line. But you know orders is orders."

A big, peculiar bug with green markings on its wings flew onto his uniform. This guardsman was a farmer boy from near Shelbyville, Ind. He picked the bug off his uniform, examined it carefully and flicked it away. "Funny," he said, "the kind of bugs they got here in Terre Haute. I don't even know their name."

Ace-Conciliator

I MET the President's ace conciliator, corpulent Mr. Richardson on the seventh floor of the Deming Hotel, about the highest and coolest spot in Vigo County. Richardson had flown here from Washington. A fan whirred and cooled him while down below in the 100-degree heat the Guardsmen were clubbing citizens. He sat by the open window meditatively smoking a Camel.

"Well," he said, "the conciliator's job is to do the most good for the most people." He smiled benignly. He had done the most good for the most people by helping call off the general strike.

"Have you met with the employers and strikers yet, Mr. Richardson?"

"Why, no, not yet."

"When will you?"

"Oh, in a few days. When things get cooled off a little. They'll be around to see me."

He switched the conversation around to a sudden ominous note. "Of course," he said, "I don't know what provoked this general strike. Now me, I believe every man's got a right to his opinion, be he Republican or Democrat, Socialist or Communist." He lit another cigarette. "But, if what they tell me is true, that these imported gunmen are Communists, then I say there's something pretty wrong with Communists. Then I'm against them."

I failed to bite. "That's a rather strange notion, is it not, Mr. Richardson, charging these gunmen with being Communists?"

"Oh, now, of course, I can't tell. I don't know the facts, but that's what they say." And he reiterated his avowal of the rights of free speech. "Now I believe in every man thinking as he pleases. You, now, can be a freethinker. All right. But me, I want to believe in God and I do. But you got a right to be a freethinker. You know, son, I read the Bible every day and I've learned this, son. The winds howl, the rain falls, the night follows the day, everything goes on as the Bible had it. Science has never stopped the rain from falling. Right? All right. I believe in God and the freethinker can believe in what he wants to."

Every direct question I asked about the strike, he answered obliquely and within a sentence or two was back in the Bible, quoting Matthew, James and Luke.

"Yes," he said, shaking hands, "we conciliators must do the most good for the most people. Of course," he grinned, "we often don't let the right hand know what the left hand doeth. You've got to, you know, son, when you deal with capital and labor."

Hoosier Proletarians

MRS. TERRY PHILLIPS (I disguise her name for obvious reasons), mother of two strikers, a woman of sixty, gaunt but with a bright blue eye, told me:

"I was a threadin' my way home last night in the dark and sure enough I come across some of these tin horns layin' on the pavement next to their guns. I makes out I don't see him layin' there bayonet and all and I makes like to stumble. I digs my heel in his face. He jumps up a howlin' and a screamin' and points his bayonet at me. 'Why bless my soul,' I says to him, 'I didn't know you soldier boys gits so tired you-all got to lay down on the ground. You pore, pore boy.' I'm sorry I didn't see you layin there so tired and all. It must get awful wearisome a' totin' that great big gun all day long and you so young. Why don't you be a good boy, son, and go home to your mother?' "

"The little rascal," she suddenly got grim, "I could of wrung his neck, standing there with his tin hat, bayonet and tear gas. Believe me I turned my heel when I stomped on his face."

The Hoosier workingman, like all workingmen, is almost incredibly patient. But like all workingmen, is fearful when in wrath. This old woman goes on the picket line; half of the Columbian's 600 strikers are women and they took their turn on the line along with the men. No sex discrimination here.

And they are courageous in a way only working people can be. They march up into the muzzles of the guns. They catch tear gas bombs and pitch them back. I was at Twelve Points when the workers demonstrated spontaneously the first night of martial law. The troops were patrolling the streets here in trucks from which bayonets bristled and machine guns poked their noses. I happened to be in a beer saloon where the workers go of an evening with their girls or their wives, sometimes taking the kids.

An automatic piano jangled away at a year-old Tin Pan Alley ditty. A few couples were on the floor. You could see the khaki-colored truck at the curbstone, the Guardsmen peering through the window, looking, I thought enviously, at the dancers.

Suddenly somebody from outside cried. A Guardsman had thrown a gas bomb at someone whose face did not appeal to him. In a twinkling the saloon was emptied; the dancers, the beer-drinkers, the bartenders, every man-jack was outside surging towards the Guardsmen. Within five minutes a few

thousand workers popped up from nowhere. The Guardsmen tossed bomb after bomb, the street grew cloudy, everybody was fighting fiercely, silently.

Then the Guardsmen tossed the vomit gas. "The nausea" they call it. This is literally unendurable. Reinforcements of the soldiery arrived and the crowd was slowly dispersed.

A deep hatred and indomitable courage motivates such action. These workingmen here have cause for hatred. They earn, when they get a full week, $11 for 40 hours work. They are fearfully speeded-up. The price for food is high. Pork chops cost 30 to 35 cents a pound. When I asked about bacon they answered: "Bacon? What's that? Ham? Ham? What's that." It was months since they had eaten a slice of bacon —even when they were working.

The family, the sacred family which the bourgeois fear will be barred through edict by the Communists—the family is no more. Father works and mother works, when they can find work. The children work all the way down to the kids of twelve or thirteen.

These are the pioneer stock. They produced 'Gene Debs. They are starving when on the job. But, as yet, they have faith in "the government." "Roosevelt's done his best but the bankers got him hog-tied." They heard Roosevelt had phoned to the Terre Haute mayor and demanded the gun-thugs be brought out of the plant.

They have faith in their A. F. of L. leaders. T. N. Taylor, Indiana leader of the Federation, hails from Terre Haute. He has been in charge of activities here. The strikers think him ace-high. They call him T.N.T. "Oh, T.N.T.," they say, "He'll up and give them what-for."

T.N.T. is as shrewd an A. F. of L. top leader as ever walked down the pike. Suave, a good speaker, he puts it over among workers who are touching in their faith. He himself is eaten through and through with the A. F. of L. spirit of "compromise." You can do best around a round-table, boys. Conciliate, arbitrate, leave it to the President, boys.

The local Central Labor Union is led by workingmen, men still at the bench, but who too are strongly influenced by the A. F. of L. bureaucracy's tradition. Yet they are near to the masses. They are "aristocrats of labor," the better-paid workingmen, but they are too near the lowest depths not to heed the cry of their fellows. And they are the unhappiest of the lot. Tom N. Fuson, for instance, treasurer of the Central Labor body, is a working tailor. A tall, lean Hoosier of about 35 who surprised me when I came to the big store where he works by finding him sitting cross-legged and sewing like the little Jewish tailors I know in New York. He is a courageous man, honest, I believe, yet influenced by the bureaucracy.

But all the leaders of the Central Labor body themselves are on the spot. They called off the general strike. And they got nothing in exchange except some soft words from the ace-conciliator. As a matter of fact, they are being shadowed, their wires tapped. They expect military arrest momentarily.

I know for a fact that Blood, chairman of the general strike committee, got fifty phone calls last Friday. "For God's sake, Blood, bring us out again. The company's getting away with murder."

But Blood, like Fuson, listens to T.N.T., who listens to Green, who listens to Roosevelt.

It hurt when I heard L. G. Brown, president of the Columbian local say to one of the Central Labor Union heads: "We're new to this game of organizin' and we got faith in you older heads. We believe you're competent to handle this situation. What you suggest we'll heed."

But Tom Fuson and Blood and the rest of the local leaders are not so certain of their competency, now that they are committed to arbitration, conciliation. "I don't know if I'm doing right by sittin' on the lid," one of them told me.

Substitute any other American city's name for Terre Haute and it's very similar. Sitting on the lid is a dangerous policy these days.

I was in the Labor Temple talking to a Columbian lad—a handsome Hoosier of about 23, who lives a few blocks from the mill.

"I got me my field glasses," he told me, "and I picked out one of the gunmen standing in the mill there by the window. I studied his face and I'll know it. And one of these days I'm going to give my itching knuckles a treat." Knuckles are itching all over America today.

Bourgeois Hoosier

WERNER H. GRABBE, owner of the Columbian Enameling and Stamping Company, didn't quite catch the name of the magazine. Middle-aged, with the jittery mien of a macaw, he cocked a wary eye at me. "New York? Eh? NEW MASSES? Eh? What sort of magazine is that?"

"A magazine with national circulation."

"What do you want to know?"

"What are your plans concerning the strike?"

"By God, man, I own this plant. Long as I own it I'm going to run it like I want to run it."

"The union—"

"The union! the union! by God, man, the union won't tell me what to do. I own this plant—not the union."

The bell rang and he screamed into the mouthpiece: "All right—all right—I'll be there." He turned to me. "Sorry Mister, I'm a busy man—a busy man. Just write that so long as I run this plant the union won't! Good day."

Mr. Grabbe has $70,000 worth of manufactured enamelware in his storehouse and he gave instructions to the National Guard officers to pull in Dan "Red" Evans, the business agent of the Teamsters. Mr. Grabbe had tried for five days to get a truck to freight the wares out of town, but Evans said "No" and no truck would take the wares. The Guardsmen picked Evans up at the office and took him down to headquarters, grilled him all night long. "Called me every kind of a red-headed sonofabitch. But I sat there and laughed at them," he says.

Mr. Grabbe has given the list of the active strikers to the Guardsmen and directed them to give them the works. The impartial National Guard is "preserving the peace" by rounding up these strikers and giving them what-for.

Last Wednesday night Mr. Grabbe called together the leading manufacturers, the leading merchants and held a secret session in the offices of The Terre Haute Tribune. A resolution was presented and unanimously adopted to "fire all union help while the National Guard is in town." That is the program of the manufacturers who today run this county with the National Guardsmen while the leaders of the workers are "sitting on the lid."

The authorities are hysterically seeking Communists who in the face of martial law distributed circulars warning the workers against relying on conciliators, relying on anybody but themselves. The Communists, participants in the heroic "holiday," call for extension of the sympathetic strike throughout the state and are working toward that end. Grabbe shouted at the meeting the Reds are behind all this. Grabbe shouted by God he would run his plant the way he wants to and the hell with the Reds. Grabbe shouted . . .

The workers hate Mister Grabbe so fiercely that when he rides by and sees a man in overalls he slumps down in his car and tries to disappear. The workers have their outposts everywhere and the day before I left Terre Haute they discovered this:

Mr. Grabbe, forever guarded by two of his Chicago plug-uglies, jumped out of bed and roused the startled gunmen. He piled feverishly into his car, proceeding, however, behind his bodyguards who stalked gingerly out of the house at 3:30 a.m. with drawn revolvers. Mr. Grabbe sped to the Deming Hotel, the same one that houses Mr. Richardson, the ace-conciliator, and rented a room on the top-floor—after his bodyguard had searched the closets and climbed beneath the bed to make sure no strikers or Reds were hiding in some crevice. Mr. Grabbe, the busy man, thereupon sighed and tried to doze off, his two trusty gunmen seated at the foot of the bed, with drawn revolvers. A Terre Haute policeman was stationed out in the hall.

The strikers say Mr. Grabbe goes around mumbling to himself, often breaking into a shout: "By God, man, who owns this plant? Me? Or the Union. . . ."

The United Front in France

MICHAEL GOLD

PARIS, July 10.

ONLY four more days to Bastille Day, the July 4 of France. The bourgeois newspapers are brimming like purgatory with howls, screams and curses. Rumors of a fascist putsch and a proletarian uprising plunge the nation into alarm. Paris is jittery as in the days of Verdun. The mother of a young Frenchwoman I know has gone into hysterics and is pleading with her family to flee for safety to a refined royalist suburb.

Today the cabinet had a special meeting to discuss the police preparations for Bastille Day. "Frenchmen, there is no cause for alarm!" the ministry announced, thereby adding hugely to everyone's cause for alarm. "Our police are ready; there can positively be no civil war!" they say, and everyone, who has not yet known there was such a danger, now naturally fears a civil war.

There has never been so much stir over a Bastille Day in France since the first one, when the enraged proletarians and shopkeepers captured good King Louis' chief torture prison. Bastille Day has always been a joyous people's carnival, with loads of wine and music, much kissing and multiplying and general dancing in the streets.

Why then all the fear, the cabinet meeting, police plans and political hysterics? Answer: the United Front. The parties of the Left plan to celebrate this Fourteenth of July on a mass scale. They are urging the people to take this holiday seriously and to make it a stupendous dedication for the defense of the Republic.

> The National Organizing Committee for the Popular Celebration of July 14th, holding a mandate from more than fifty groups, organizations and political parties, who have instructed us to make this 14th of July a grandiose manifestation of the people's power and discipline, hereby announces that the following are the slogans that have been unanimously accepted by us for this day:
>
> For the defense of all democratic liberties;
>
> Disarmament and dissolution of the fascist leagues;
>
> For the organization of world peace and disarmament by uniform control;
>
> Bread for all; to the peasants the fruit of their toil; work and life for the youth;
>
> For the destruction of all the Bastilles;
>
> That the youth of France may live by its labor in peace and in freedom.

For nearly two weeks the Socialist, Communist and republican press have conducted a national propaganda to prepare the masses for the approaching Bastille Day. The conservatives have been yapping from the sidelines. They have been discovering dark and terrible meanings in these slogans of the committee. That phrase, "For the Destruction of all the Bastilles," for example. Does it sound very sinister to you: is it not, at worst, an inoffensive and familiar piece of libertarian rhetoric, a line out of Victor Hugo? But an "impartial" newspaper owned by the Metal Trust, that cautiously sneaks propaganda on to its naive readers, has made a great to-do over this slogan.

"Destruction of all the Bastilles!" What can this mean, the intellectual sneaks daily inquire, but an incitement to the people that on July 14 they storm the Bank of France and capture the arsenals, the power plants, the police stations and the department stores —"destroy all the Bastilles," in short?

No doubt of it, France has the most disgustingly venal press that exists in any of the remaining "democracies." There are journals and all, with the exception of the Left press, are owned by some financial group or other with an axe to grind. Millionaires own the American press, too, and color the news, but there is still a tradition that they give us some news at least. In France the capitalist papers never print any news they don't like; and what they do print is as subjective as a Greenwich Village poet's stale sonnet to the moon. Hearst could learn from them. They are fascist house organs, without the honesty of the label.

These "impartial" papers have slandered the preparations of the United Front for July 14 until the readers see proletarian machine-guns on every rooftop. Step by step, the government is being provoked into a pogrom. Is it any wonder that the fascist bands are in a state of unusual activity and that they have announced a counter-demonstration on July 14? The newspapers pave the way for them to commit any violence and egg on the police to butcher the united front demonstration. It is a little game we have also seen in America but in France the provocation is pursued with an amazing frankness and brutality.

"If they demonstrate, it means civil war, therefore shoot them first!" repeat the café-lizard journalists of capitalism, day after day in a hundred sensational forms.

Armed fascists, under police protection, are making daily raids on workers' municipalities. In most cases they are chased out by the enraged workers and as I reported in my last letter, quite a few workers have been injured and one killed, without a hint of investigation by the police.

All Paris, of every political camp, has a horror of bombing planes over the city, a neurosis that began during the World War. And the Minister of Air, a man known to be in intimate relations with De La Roque, the fascist leader, has just announced that platoons of armed aeroplanes would patrol the united front demonstration. What is this but a provocation? It has met with a universal burst of anger from the united front masses, who know exactly what the threat signifies. But it has not terrified them; the preparations go on; every day the columns of the Socialist, Communist and republican press are filled with stirring manifestoes that call upon the people of France to show their mass power to these plutocrats who think the time has come to liquidate the republic.

AFTER a fashion, all this furore is a tribute to the United Front. The capitalists fear and hate it but how they respect it, too! Better than any weaselling Cahan-Oneal Socialist the French plutes know that here is the most formidable weapon the workers have yet devised. It can defeat fascism.

Some of the local reactions to the United Front are as amusing as the attempt of Al Capone when on trial to prove that he was just a great-hearted patriot and church-goer. Thus the French plute papers have recently developed a democratic solicitude for the masses in the United Front and are constantly warning them against each other.

One of the more "liberal" fascist papers recently broke out in a rash of tender regrets for the Socialist Party. It solemnly warned the Socialists that this United Front was only another plot that had originated in Moscow. Pursuing their usual tactics, the Communist Machiavellis had lured the innocent Socialists with soft, false words into a spider's parlor. The United Front was a plot by which the Communists hoped to steal the masses away from the Socialist leaders. When the dirty deed was finished, the Socialist leaders would find themselves hanging from lamp posts, oh, la, la!

But Leon Blum, the Socialist leader, and his fellow-leaders, have learned some history on their own. In the Socialist organ, Le Populaire, they answered their kind advisors with a sufficient irony that exposed this whole farcical tactic for splitting the United Front.

Other "impartial" newspapers have been counselling the middle-class group in the United Front. They warn the good burghers against the dangerous red-flag Socialists and Communists, who are really not "patriots," but are madmen anxious for a civil war that will throw open the gates of a helpless France to Hitler's hordes.

But the middle-class republicans too have learned their lesson and they, too, know how to laugh at these cheap and obvious saboteurs, these capitalist wolves who have donned the lambskin.

Most amusing of all, to me, has been the Royalist paper, L'Action Française, edi-

ted by those two venerable wind-jamming rascals, Leon Daudet and Charles Maurras. These H. L. Menckens of France are really funnier and noisier than our own Baltimore desk-hero and beer-garden superman whom Hearst and Macfadden have recently acquired at such a bargain price.

Daladier was the premier of France February 6, 1934, when the fascists made an armed march on the Chamber of Deputies. Daladier's police shot and beat some of them. Fascists are only heroic under police protection. Since February, 1934, every fascist and royalist has hated Daladier, the republican liberal, and his party, which is in the United Front; hated them even more than Socialists and Communists.

Daladier's is the Radical Socialist Party, which is neither radical nor socialist, but a party of the lower middle class whose ideals are expressed in America by Senator Borah and Upton Sinclair.

Well then, here is L'Action Française of today, July 10, and on its first page, the leading article by M. Leon Daudet, flunkey of "the King," has this headline: "What is the United Front?" Underneath in smaller type is his own answer: "It is a camouflage for thieves and assassins!" Just that.

You would think that this meant the Communists; isn't that the classic style in which a capitalist verbalist is always supposed to describe us? But no, M. Daudet, hoary mountebank, didn't mean us; it seems it is Daladier and the bourgeois republicans who are the thieves and assassins!

The article is a gem; as violent and nonsensical as a diatribe by Schnozzle Durante or the aforesaid Mencken. Oh, that I were a competent translator of the passionate French tongue, to give you the full-flavored Daudet as it splurges down the asbestos page!

> **The majority of those who will march next Sunday in the Red procession believe, in good faith, that they will be demonstrating against "fascism," that movement which nevertheless has won in Italy the almost unanimous approval of the workers and peasants.**
>
> **Communists, trade unionists, radicals and state employes, in reality you will be the dupes gathered under a phrase, Red Front, to serve as a camouflage and protection behind which will be hiding the thieves and assassins uncovered by the Stavisky affair and the events of February 6.**
>
> **Yes, the Free Masons, and their leaders Daladier, Frot, Cot, Chautemps and the rest of the accomplices and fraternity brothers, have snared in their sinister adventure of the United Front a host of unfortunate blind men, miserable folk who will perceive some day when it is too late the immense swindle of which they have been the victims.**

And so on. He even uses Marxian history, this gray-whiskered whore of royalism (pardon, I am plagiarizing this epithet from one of his own denunciations), yes, Daudet quotes Marx to prove that the middle class has always used the working class to win its revolutions and then has betrayed and suppressed them!

This veteran royalist intriguer, notorious during twenty-five years for his black hatred of the working masses, dares to warn the Communist and radical workers against their allies, the middle-class republicans! Is it not as humorous as a speech by Hoover? Is it not as senile as one of George Jean Nathan's epigrams about love?

BUT such are the ineptitudes and stupidities of the French reaction. One could laugh at it all, as one does at the movietone poses of the ham actor Mussolini or these fat-hipped clowns Goering and Hitler, if the big money and the heavy artillery weren't behind such men.

De La Roque, the fascist leader of France, was a mediocre colonel in the war, busy and heroic at some desk job, I believe. I regret that I cannot explain the obscure steps by which he rose in the confidence of M. de Wendel, one of the directors of the Bank of France and a chief of the Commité de Forges, which is the French metal and armaments trust.

The oligarchy which rules France and which de Wendel represents is against the Franco-Soviet alliance. It wants an alliance with Hitler, both for reasons of state and private profit. It believes that an alliance with Nazi Germany would break England's domination of the European balance of power, which for so long has kept France from expanding.

This oligarchy has a secret partnership with the German metal and armament trust, as was demonstrated during the War (see the book, *Merchants of Death* and similar exposures). Also, if it can inflate and preserve the Hitler regime, this trust can sell more arms to France, which will always fear Hitler. A war against the Soviet Union by Germany would also mean profit for the French metal industry.

There are other sufficient reasons why the great parasites of France want an alliance with the Nazis. To procure it, they have begun a campaign similar to that of the British rulers, "good-will tours" by Nazi war veterans to France, "objective" studies praising the German solution of the labor problem, etc., etc. But it is hard to sell all this to the French people, who have a hereditary fear of the Junker militarists. Hence, M. de Wendel has appropriated millions of dollars to create a fascist movement in France, since only a fascist France would ever consent to be the ally of a Nazi Germany.

But I believe M. de Wendel has placed his money on a spavined horse. His man De La Roque is not even a good ham. It is true that he enters the game under a severe handicap; first, Mussolini played the role of divine "leader," then Hitler aped him and now the world knows all the cues, the struttings, the threadbare rhetoric and machinery of the great fraud. Poor De La Roque has no originality. The French people have a wonderful underlying instinct of simplicity and democracy. They have had experiences with three dictators; and finally saw through them all. They hate Hitler for his face and mannerisms alone, which remind them of the Prussian officers who burned their villages during the War. So how can they take to De La Roque, a leader without the wit to invent some peculiarly French pattern of demagogy that would ensnare the masses as Hitler did his own, or as Huey Long and Coughlin are doing in America? What I am trying to say is, that De La Roque, I believe, will never build up any mass appeal. He has unlimited sums of money at his disposal, he has part of the government leaders behind him, he has arms and airplanes and the loyalty of several hundred thousand aristocrats, snobbish bank clerks, perfume manufacturers, jobless pimps and the usual corps of declassed and penniless adventurers, the bourgeois riffraff that anybody can hire.

But he hasn't got the people of France. He will never get them. He may conquer them with the money and the guns supplied him by the Metal Trust but he will never attract even their temporary sympathy. The United Front has been their answer to De La Roque, this colorless army hack who is even more mediocre than a Hitler.

The fascist movement has been built entirely from the top in France. This does not mean that it can be misprised; if not fought, it would be given the state power overnight. But there has been no abortive workers' revolution in France, to which fascism was the bourgeois reply. History took the other way around. The labor movement was apathetic and reformist until the Metal Trust introduced fascism. As a reply to that menace, the people of France created their glorious United Front and nothing, I believe, except the complete liquidation of fascism will ever shake this United Front.

It was the Communists who inaugurated the United Front. Two years ago the other parties would have answered it as they do in America, with knowing sneers and contempt. But in France, you see, the bourgeois democrats and the Socialists have learned a lesson. They know they will surely hang from lamp posts if the Metal Trust and De La Roque win. So they are glad to have the help of Communists.

You can't have a United Front anywhere without the Communists; they have become the catalyst and the cement, the element without which a United Front has no reality.

Many American Socialists and Upton Sinclair Democrats don't understand this lesson as yet. They still feel as cocky and secure as the three little pigs, but wait till the Big Bad Wolf gets bigger and badder and begins growling, as in France, about lamp posts.

THE French Communist Party has abided by the letter and spirit of its contract. It has made generous gestures to support the United Front, such as in the election of the liberal Professor Rivet. In the first run-off the Communist candidate got the highest poll; the Communists could have insisted on claim-

ing the votes of the other united front parties, but they felt that Professor Rivet had a better mass appeal and to be sure of a United Front victory they withdrew in his favor. He was elected over a fascist councilman who had held the district for a decade. It was the first election victory in Paris itself, which is reactionary; a break in the wall, that made a big impression on France.

No, the Communists actually believe in the United Front. The logic is simple and perhaps even an Abe Cahan can understand it: a socialist world is our goal but in the battle between fascism and bourgeois democracy, we are 100 percent against fascism. We fight for bourgeois democracy, since it is better than fascism for the workers, just as historically wage slavery is better than chattel slavery. This doesn't mean we like wage slavery or will stop fighting for socialism because, temporarily, it is necessary to fight chattel slavery. Marx taught us this when he threw all his splendid agitational powers into the work of rallying the socialist workers of Europe into support of the North against the southern slaveholders in our Civil War. Marx surely knew what the northern capitalism was like.

Let this explanation, Mr. Cahan and Mr. Trotzky, also serve as explanation for the Franco-Soviet military pact against fascism, which both you "super-revolutionists" think such a disgrace.

Let me also inform you that the French Communists have *not* given up the fight against militarism. Every day, in the Communist journal here, Humanité, appears a full column of news from all the different military barracks, telling of the struggles of rank-and-file conscripts against their officers.

Fascism is strongly present in the upper ranks of the army. If it is allowed to win the army, France will not fight for the Soviets but with Hitler against them. The Franco-Soviet pact can only be preserved by defeating the French fascists, outside the army and inside.

BASTILLE DAY and the great United Front demonstration are only four days off. I wish I could wait but food and rooms are amazingly high in Paris and as usual, I have spent all my cash. Pardon me. I have a ticket for the boat that leaves tomorrow. You must read about the demonstration in the papers.

I asked Vaillant-Couturier whether there would be bloodshed, as all the bourgeois press seemed to be furiously prophesying.

"No," smiled this Communist Mayor, editor and author, whom I must write about in another letter. "Not now.

"You see, every good French bourgeois hates to make a revolution in the summer; it interferes with his vacation. In the fall, when the fascists return from the seashore and mountains, they may try their putsch but winter and summer we are always ready."

But the Swastika Fell

WILFRED EVANS

STARK horror and ludicrous farce were incongruously united Friday evening, July 26, at the pier of the great German liner, S.S. Bremen.

The attention of thousands on the pier was directed to the prow of the vessel by two shots in rapid succession which felled one of three men who had just torn the swastika flag from its mast. The eyes of these many people, mostly German-Americans, were on the foredeck when the wounded man and his two companions were grabbed by hordes of brown-shirted Nazis and swarms of detectives from the New York Police Department who had been planted on board the liner.

With no attempts made to hide them from the watchers on the pier the beatings began. Over each victim about a dozen men toiled for more than a quarter of an hour. Side by side, brown shirts and white shirts, the sluggers started in on the defenseless anti-fascists. Up, DOWN, up, DOWN, up, DOWN went the blackjacks while from somewhere nearby came the puny hoarse tooting of a bosun's whistle. Toot! Toot! Toot! monotonously accompanied the monotonous up, DOWN, up, DOWN, up, DOWN on the heads, the backs and the shoulders of the three men. One of them, evidently the one with a bullet in his groin, wasn't held up long, but lay down while the forces of law and order took turns with the Nazis in kicking his face.

The setting was perfect. For some time the pier police had been forcing all the visitors down towards the end of the long pier which faced the foredeck of the Bremen, so the sluggings were viewed by a gallery of thousands. And the Nazis and detectives on deck cooperated by staging the whole thing right at the railing of the ship, only a few feet from the pier itself. The crowds stood motionless, fascinated and horrified by the untiring rhythm of blackjacks on faces and heads now indistinguishable except as a mass of red blood and torn flesh. Up, DOWN, up, DOWN, up, DOWN. These were the people who read in their German-American papers that stories of brutality in Germany were inventions of Jews. Now many could not remain silent and from all along the pier came cries of "Stop it!" "You're killing them."

But the Nazi thugs and police had no intention of stopping. Brown shirts and red-spattered shirts, the blackjacks continued to swing, up, DOWN, up, DOWN, up, DOWN. Such energy doesn't come only from love of law and order. Nordic supremacy alone can't explain the tirelessness they were showing. They showed a positive revelry in their brutality; a deep hatred which is beyond race or religion or color of shirts kept the arms wielding blackjacks up, DOWN, up, DOWN, up, DOWN, on the now unconscious forms. Devout Catholic dicks, knowing that Catholic priests were being similarly treated in Germany, stood steadfastly beside Nazis who aimed to smash all Catholicism in the Fatherland. Up, DOWN, up, DOWN, up, DOWN, they beat together. A Jewish detective later interviewed by the press said, "I don't like Hitler myself, but I've got to protect his property." Up, DOWN, up, DOWN, up, DOWN on the unconscious head of an enemy of Hitler.

Now one of the anti-fascists took the center of the stage. A fat dick who had been detained below decks with some other beatings, waddled up to the foredeck and started to make up for lost time. Even while still barging up towards the unconscious man, he started that swing. From way down behind him the blackjack swung up. High over the heads of all the others it was accelerating, and then down it came with a whistle and a crack heard all over the great pier as it went down through the skull, DOWN through the cortex, deep down into the brain cells. A great moan went up from the massed thousands on the pier. The man was allowed to fall onto the deck and while a man in brown jumped on his stomach, two detectives slugged his upturned face, their bulbous rear ends jerking out behind them with each blow. Every blow, every move, was clearly visible from the pier.

But before the beatings had reached this stage the comedy relief had come thundering up the stairs to the pier. Dozens of police in uniform rushed toward the gangplank, but seeing that everything was fine on deck, they rushed back at the crowd. They were told that Reds were mingled with the visitors on the pier—but how to distinguish them? So they turned around and rushed the other way. A movable picket fence used to direct traffic on the pier was now separating the public from the gangplank passageway, and in the space about 20 feet wide and 50 feet long the cops had to do their clowning. They rushed to one end, turned around and rushed to the other. What to do? Whom to slug? Their clubs swung in empty air and their faces showed rage and frightful confusion. Glancing behind them they saw their plainclothes colleagues having a glorious time—but they were blocked, stumped, beside themselves with lack of activity. Reds right in front of them! But who were the Reds?

With the beatings still going on, the crowd left. They had seen something of German fascism. More, they had seen American fascism join hands in solid alliance, and the next day they would see the capitalist papers unite in vainly trying to hide the frightful brutality which all had seen. On the street before the pier a huge Communist demonstration was being held. Its orderliness was such a contrast to the atrocities on the deck that a very large part of the people from the pier stopped to hear the speeches and songs. It was a big lesson for a lot of people.

THE MAN BEHIND THE GUN

Jacob Burck

THE MAN BEHIND THE GUN

Jacob Burck

From a Soviet Diary

HAROLD CLURMAN

I WENT to see Alexei Faiko, the author of *The Man with the Portfolio,* in the afternoon. He received me cordially in a pleasant apartment. He did not strike me as a profound man, but he had the qualities of an intellectual and artist in the normal and rich sense that I used to hold as my vision of a European man of culture. He was simple, humorous, thoughtful, interested in many things in life and open to experience. In his room packed with books hung portraits of Chekov and Heine and pictures of actors and actresses who had played in his plays. . . . I went to see him chiefly to ask about plays and playwrights in the Soviet Union. What struck me first was something I had noticed in nearly all the playwrights and critics here: their fairness, their desire to be constructive in their criticism, their patience with one another, their moderation and kindness. No playwright will speak harshly of another; none of them *hates* the other fellow's work, none of them shows a trace of contempt for what the other fellow is doing and each will recognize something valuable in the other's efforts. This is not an affectation, a diplomatic strategy or an empty show of courtesy. It is a common recognition that the problem of the Soviet playwright is not an easy one, that this is a period of transition, that the great work or series of works that will synthesize the new society or symbolize its spirit in sound artistic form has not yet been written and may not be written for some years. All of them are sure of one thing, however, that nowadays the ideology or the propaganda of the plays cannot be as primitive as in the early days, that a real "mastery" (Faiko used the word) must be the goal. . . . Another cause — and a serious one—for the playwright's cooperative spirit—a cause of which I am perhaps more aware than they—is the absence of competition in the money sense and the unity of their ideals in the social sense.

I asked questions. Here are some of the answers Faiko gave me: Plays are chosen by the theatre's directors (generally the artistic director and the administrative director together). Formerly there used to be repertoire committees, which included a Party representative, to choose plays. Now nearly all the theatres choose their plays on the basis of the director's decision. After the first production, a playwright may sell his play to a number of theatres in the same city and in different cities. Plays are sometimes arranged for before they are completed, as in America. An advance is paid if the idea of a play interests the theatre direction, but the theatre is under no obligation to produce it if it is not pleased when the play is finished. The playwright can give his plays to any theatre he likes. Naturally, some playwrights have favorite theatres and some they care for less. Royalties are paid and some dramatists are as rich as anybody in the country: richer, Faiko said, than engineers. A playwright may write a part for a particular actor and find that the director doesn't agree and will give it to another actor. Faiko wrote a part specially for Babonova (one of the best actresses in the Soviet Union), but Meyerhold gave it to Reich (his wife) instead. Faiko was displeased (and Babonova soon left the Meyerhold Theatre). . . . A number of playwrights are Communist Party members, and they are allowed all their time to write. Pogodin (author of *My Friend* and *The Aristocrats* who is perhaps the most popular dramatist today) is not a Party member. Faiko himself had just finished a new play called *Concert* about composers in the Soviet Union to be produced at the Theatre of the Revolution. It would be rehearsed for about two and a half months, which seems to be the minimum rehearsal period in Moscow.

At night we went to see the dress rehearsal (perhaps the tenth to be given for an audience) of *Romeo and Juliet* at the Theatre of the Revolution. There was a distinguished audience: Nemirovitch-Dantchenko, who spoke to us in English during the intermission, Tschukin, Michoels, Boris Alpers. These people assembled in the director's office after each act. What was remarkable about these entr'acte meetings was the simplicity and relaxation of these people. There could be no thought of the production being a flop in the money sense so that all the talk, and the unspoken thoughts as well could concern themselves with the production as a work of art. Nemirovitch-Dantchenko looked thoughtful as if he were considering every facet of the production from the long perspective of his many years in the theatre. He spoke to us without a formal introduction: "When did you last see *Romeo and Juliet* in your country? It is not very often played with success." He told us that he had seen Duse as Juliet but that her partner was bad—When Cheryl* asked how Duse had played the part, he repeated "Her partner was bad." . . . "This production," he said to us, "is really Shakespearean. It has perhaps too much movement for my taste. I should like to have more of the text. But it is nice." . . . He also referred to seeing Basil Sydney in what he called "Hamlet in pajamas." Then he turned to Popov, one of the directors of the production (the other: Chlepianov, designed the sets). He spoke as he felt; asked Popov questions about this and that "Why did you dress Romeo in a bear costume in the party scene?" etc. He also added that he had thought of doing *Romeo* at his theatre, but he would not do it now, after he had seen the present production. Popov listened with intense concentration, nervous, moved, humble, very attentive withal, like a most devoted pupil.

AND indeed this production is brilliant. Boris Alpers, the critic, said it was an entirely traditional production. This is fundamentally correct; only what may be traditional for the Soviet theatre is entirely novel for America and England, where Shakespeare is concerned. First of all, the sets have a sweep, a variety, a largeness, a colorfulness that are beyond anything I have ever seen in a classic production in America. In fact, I later explained to the people during the intermission that we were too poor in America to put on Shakespeare this way. The production cost for us would be over $100,000 surely—not to mention the fact that the production was rehearsed for over a year. But not the lavishness only was overwhelming, but the way the stage was used. The first scene—the fight—was one of the most exciting theatrical moments you can imagine. The body training, the ease of movement, the ability to fence, to run, to jump, to time entrances was used to the full with an effect that was Shakespearean in its energy, breadth, fluency and strength. An actor without the special training that the Russian actors have would surely have had his eyes poked out in this furious but perfectly organized melée. The stage was so arranged that though there must have been fifty people on it, one saw every detail. In New York this scene alone would have been enough to make a sensation. And it was representative of the whole production, which was full of music and color, full of vigor, boldness, dash. It was Shakespearean in the sense that it had a Renaissance fullness, a largeness that is in Veronese and Tintoretto. At last, a virile Shakespeare instead of the literary sissy, the drooping, swooning, lisping namby-pamby son of a professional bore that he is in every American production I have seen. The nurse instead of being the old dope she is in our traditional productions was as spry, as quick, as gay and as muscular as any of the young bucks who surround Romeo. Even Friar Lawrence wasn't the old Presbyterian pillar-of-equity who generally plays it with us: he was also an active, exciting human being. When Juliet was in distress she rolled on the floor and slashed her dagger at the bed-

* Cheryl Crawford is co-director with Lee Strasberg and Harold Clurman of the Group Theatre.

spread, cutting it to bits. When Juliet's father heard her refusal to marry Paris he did not behave in the traditional manner of a grieved high-school principal: he practically knocked her down and kicked her. The costumes—a combination of Elizabethan and Italian styles were beautiful; the tomb scene at the end pictorially superb, and the use of two revolving stages with a free passage between them that led way back to the cyclorama wall, contributed not only to the speed and technical proficiency of the production but added to the sense of a large ebullient world which should always exist in Shakespeare. In the midst of all this we find very spirited and technically expert acting. The Juliet (though a mature actress) had a small figure, a particularly child-like voice and an unusual lightness of step (she seemed always to be flying over the ground) and some charming movements in the delicate, tender scenes in the early part of the play. But she apparently is not a tragedienne so her performance as a whole was not an important or memorable one. Romeo wasn't particularly handsome, but he had plenty of will and energy and a certain freedom from the romantic-heroic manner that prevented him from seeming the terrible fool that Romeo generally appears. The Mercutio was very sympathetic—young and good looking—his death scene, which included a sensational fall, was beautifully staged. The nurse was excellent. . . .

BUT generally speaking, there was no attempt to get a maximum of emotional content from the players—and the feeling of the play on its affective side was not created. In other words, what came through was not the romance or tragedy of love, but the general colorfulness and splendor of the period: the physical dynamics. This may have been the intention of the directors (although I believe it was more their spirit than their idea) but on the whole, it is characteristic of a general defect in production here that they treat the actors much too *instrumentally*. By this I mean that though, obviously, characterizations are worked out for the actors with great care, and though discussions of the parts and their meanings are detailed and full, and though the actors are thoroughly aware of the production problem in general, not enough attention is given to see that the actors really create out of their own complete organism the full image and life of their parts. In other words, the acting tends to have a restricted inner reality—this reality being taken for granted, that is, left to the general "temperament" of the actor. What is the difference one might ask whether there is this reality or not? After all the outer reality, the movement, the characterization, etc., if well done, will convey the meaning of the play. Unfortunately this is not so. The content of the play—the reason for the production generally and for art altogether—is diminished greatly where there isn't this inner life. Even the present *Romeo and Juliet* as a result of this *instrumental* method with the actor remains a little cold. But more than this—and we must never forget it, as I believe even people like Meyerhold himself have forgotten it—an actor directed externally only—howsoever brilliantly, remains slightly *untheatrical*. In other words, true theatricality does not reside only in "business"—in visually interesting or pictorially dramatic movement, in general stage colors, dances, leaps, etc., etc.; it resides also and perhaps even to a greater extent in the inner life, in the spirit—to put it baldly—in the emotion of the actor. There is a great value for actors and for directors in learning to use acting instrumentally, but beyond a certain point it is an almost fatal error for it strikes the theatrical production at its very heart. In this respect the premises of the Stanislavsky system are unalterably correct. Only it must be further remembered that the object of the actor's emotion—*what he gets emotional about and how* — differ, and the advance made by Vachtangov and the younger generation is really not a change from the Stanislavsky system as such, but a change in the *ideology* of the acting . . . a change of object.

Still this *Romeo and Juliet* is a Soviet event. When we heard that it had taken two years to do, when we saw how elaborate the production was, what immense resources had been put at the theatre's disposal to do it, Cheryl and I began to suffer a little from "inferiority complex." All we can say in defense is that not Russian talent and diligence alone make such a production possible, but social conditions — in other words, the Russian Revolution and the Soviet regime.

The diary from which this excerpt is taken is a purely informal record of the author's impressions and activities during a five-week stay in the Soviet Union, devoted mostly to a study of the Soviet Theatre.—THE EDITORS.

Deportation Special

THEODORE IRWIN

PAUL thought, I wish I could paint smells, the different kinds of smells around here, some day I'll try to draw a picture of them. The disinfectant in the air — these men from county jails seem to breathe it out. The smell from our bodies —we haven't bathed for a long time. The foodstaleness—from the stuff some have taken along. The scent of the five-and-ten powder on the women. The baby. The burned coal. The lavatories, open-doored. The peculiar smell from the insane Persian. I would have to find new colors, all of them muddied with a dung-brown smear, thought Paul.

The prison train glided over the Montana isolation. From Seattle toward Ellis Island it kept inching across the broad belly of the continent. At Spokane, at Whitefish, at Glacier Park, at other key cities over the long journey, aliens were being swallowed up; the Deportation Special was gorging itself. To the exit gate of the nation, and the train would spew what it had swallowed along the way. Then, out with you, go back where you came from, you dago, you hunky, you scoovy, you heinie, you mick, you sheenie, you limey. Get out and stay out!

The out-dated wooden Pullmans chattered with the cold. In the rear car Paul Kobel shrank into his upturned coat-collar, rubbed his numb hands together and dug them into his pockets. He watched the others. A few were slumped tight-mouthed in their seats. Others were reading, mending, gambling, to make the long day end sooner. Some were talking, talking endlessly in halting, faulty English or in glib foreign tongues.

". . . in this country you got to be in some racket." ". . . arrested me, didn't have a warrant even." "The Revolution will go marching on wherever they send me." "One from Syria who was in America would not want to go back to Syria, would he?" ". . . ninety-six of us, all in one room." "The inspector, he say, 'Drop your lawyer, we'll do everything for you.'" "In those border towns the jails are like sewers . . ." ". . . no mattresses, just iron cots covered with strips of canvas, double-deckers." "The warden, ten devils were in his bowels." "There were bums, panhandlers, dips, coke-hounds, most of them were lousy, they didn't put us in a fish tank for delousing until . . ." "All the two inspectors holler at me was 'We got the goods on you,' and if I do not say what I am told, they will not call my witness to the hearing." ". . . and my hearing it was like a third degree, if my answer was for my good, the typewriter she was told not to put it down." "They keep me in jail for seventeen months and the immigration people forgets all about me . . ." "Uncle Sam, he thinks when he deports me, he deports the depression."

The evening meal was brought in and the

car took on the smell of a cheap cafeteria. The steaming tub of stew—"slumgoolian," the Swede called it — befouled the already sour air. There was a lot of grumbling in the men's section. The doctor came in, looked at Tor turned green and slouched in his seat and gave the boy two tablets.

"It's the beastly grub that's made the lad sick," the Englishman said. "It's rotten to start with, but after the cook's had a chance at it . . . !"

The Bohemian gardener patted a wet handkerchief on the boy's forehead.

Since the day before, there had been increased muttering at each meal. Too many had writhed with stomach pains during the night. At noon they had banged plates on tables in protest. Inspector Lawrence told them the feed was all right, where do you think you are, at the Waldorf? A dozen voices complained that the stuff wasn't fit to eat, so he called the doctor in to testify. The doctor tasted the beef-hash and said, Certainly the beef-hash is very healthy, even though it doesn't taste like fried chicken. At the evening meal, they yelled again for the Inspector. This time he promised they would have more and better food when they reached Chicago. Marcel told the Inspector, Your cellar seems to have run too low—I miss the Sauterne we've been getting with our meals. That remark had eased the situation. But now the boy was sick and they remembered vividly their aches and rumblings of the night.

A few of the aliens proceeded to devour the food hungrily; others started to taste it gingerly; most of them sniffed at their plates, then screwed up their noses in disgust. Napoleon tried to cut a piece of meat. It slid out of his plate, along the table and onto the floor. The food's on strike, said Szuts, it refuses to go into human stomachs, it knows it was meant for pigs.

The Baron rose to make a grand speech. Are we pigs? Does the government of the United States think that because men and women are born in another country they are not human beings? Szuts stood up on his seat and competed. This demands action. The government allows the railroads fifty cents a meal for each deportee and we ought to have something to eat for it. The railroad bosses are making profits on the meals. We should go on strike, a hunger strike. We should eat no more the food that they give us!

Knives and forks and plates clattered and pounded on tables and against windows. Shouts rose to a clamor, a roar. Bertha yelled, "Take back your lousy grub!" and sent her plate sailing toward the forward end of the car whence the food had come in. Her gesture was the signal for a barrage. From all corners the plates came flying up the aisle, some splattering seats and walls. The women at the forward end, scared, ducked to avoid being hit. Even those few who had persisted in eating had their plates grasped from under their noses and dumped into the aisle. The car looked as though a tornado of slumgoolian had hit it.

Whistles blew, signaling a riot call. A dozen uniformed men ganged their way through the car, using open palms and fists on the aliens, pushing them back into their seats. Szuts, bristling, was dropped to the floor with a left hook that broke a front tooth. The yelling died down. The guards stood over them, searching eagerly for excuse to land a wallop. Inspector Lawrence came in breathless and red in the face. He started to lash them with a stinging tongue. The Bohemian cut in, explained that the food stank, that the boy was sick over something he ate. The Inspector barked, Why didn't you tell me about it? I'd have taken care of it. Hereafter, beginning tomorrow, you're going to get box lunches, it won't be hot food, but it'll be good and if there's any complaint, you come to me with it, don't try to start anything or you'll be sorry. The Spanish danseuse piped up with, There is no more soap or towels, we haven't had any since we left Fargo. I'll take care of that, said Inspector Lawrence, you just tell me about it personally, but don't try to start anything if you know what's good for you. The men nearest him laughed out loud. Lawrence turned on his heel and the guards filed out.

Three porters came in to clean up the mess, but the foul odor of the castaway slumgoolian hung over the car for days. Now the aliens sat glum and ill-tempered, gradually realizing they were hungry. A smile went hunting in vain for a face to rest on.

After a while night walked up on them and with the darkness came a new let-down of spirits. Nothing to do but talk and listen, till you're tired of talking and listening to one man and you go over to another. Or your throat gets worn out trying to beat the sounds of the train, through tunnels, over bridges, the click of the wheels. Accents differing with every speaker, an olio of mutilated King's English.

"There's Australia and New Zealand and South Africa," Mac was saying, "but Christ Jesus, every mother's son of us wants to stay in this God-forsaken United States of America. What the hell for, I'd like to know?"

Szuts started to catalogue all that was wrong with the United States of America. Organized cupidity. Exploitation. Opportunism. A planless social and economic system which has been proved unworkable. Speculating financial pirates. Inequitable distribution of social income. There is no adequate social and unemployment insurance. The farming population is on the verge of peasant servility. Crime costs about one-fourth of the national income. Two-thirds of the national budget is paying for wars of the past, present and future. What is left for civilized purposes?

"You're right, it's a lousy system," said the Swede. "Look at the way they treat the workers, especially the foreigners. How do you think they broke that general strike in San Francisco? By getting after them who couldn't show citizenship papers. You should have seen the stuff the 'vigilantes' pulled and got away with, raiding workers' headquarters, smashing windows, beating up the men and then trying to deport them just because of strike activities. The government was used to break the unions, it encouraged union employers and state officials everywhere to drive out labor organizations. I know, I was out on the Coast. The Labor Department is nothing but an agency for strike-breaking and Red-baiting, that's what!"

"Sure," said Mac. "What's happening is that the ruling class in America, by appealing to nationalism and pushing the idea of racial superiority, is paving the way for fascism. To keep on ruling, discredited as they are, they have to play off one section of the people against another. They always have to find a goat, just like Hitler's doing in Germany."

And the Bohemian gardener: "Who are the American people to close their doors on the rest of us with immigration quotas and deportation drives? Other countries are crowded, this is not. There are three million square miles of land here which should give a living to ten times the population today. What right have they got to set it aside for themselves? This country can easily feed two hundred million more people—look at the surpluses of corn, hogs, wheat and other products. It's still a land of plenty."

The porter came in, began to unlock the berths and called out, "Get your berths down." It was eight o'clock. Talk died down. They were two to a berth and each had to fix up his own.

Striding through the darkness with its huge unblinking eye, the train was a Cyclops walking in his sleep.

Five thousand miles above sea-level, the cold bit through the paper-thin blankets and their clothes. Few of the deportees could find sleep. It was too easy now to unbraid the big hum which was the train into all the many strands of sound. The creaking and straining of the antiquated tourist-type Pullmans, built for endurance rather than comfort. The tooting of the train-whistle at every grade crossing. The clickety-click of the wheels in their ears. The slam-banging of the couplings. The sound of escaping steam . . . All the windows had been shut, and the odors of ten-day socks and underclothes corked their nostrils. The lights had been doused; it was so dark you couldn't see the face of the man sleeping next to you.

Too worried to rest, they tossed in their berths. All the weeks and months of uncertainty, in jail and detention, were behind them. This was the climax, it was happening right now—they were being kicked out. In the night, each was alone with himself; the others were not there to keep a man's mind off his troubles. In the night, you

battle with yourself, you try to figure out what is going to happen to you and you worry yourself sick. You can't sleep.

They tossed. The bedbugs played devilish games. Here and there strident snores hit the ceiling. Just when some might have dropped off to sleep, the guard came around counting them. At all hours of the night he counted. Either the lights were turned on or the guard shoved a brakeman's lamp into their faces, touching them as he counted.

For hours Ranashad, the insane Persian who believed he was God, kept stumbling along the aisle, humming, moaning, mumbling an endless song like the intonation of a mass. Finally the doctor was pulled out of bed and a hypo silenced the old man. Mrs. Gomez got train-sick and had to spend half the night in the lavatory.

AT FIVE in the morning the guards came around, yelled Turn out! and shook them awake. Someone muttered, What the hell's the use of getting up, we got no place to go. The guards had to come around three times to get them all out of bed, so dizzy were many of them with sleepiness.

A hoarse shout from the rear of the car catapulted them all into the aisle.

The Baron had puked at the door of the men's washroom, his face a white sheet. Pointing over his shoulder, words making no sense spluttered from his bloodless lips. The guard stationed at the rear was already past him; the guard at the forward end was coming pell-mell down the aisle, pushing the aliens aside as they plunged toward the washroom.

As the second guard reached him, the Baron could only make a sign: a forefinger drawn across his throat. "The Lithuanian," he said, and involuntarily glanced behind him. The sight again was too much for his delicate stomach; he staggered to a corner. The little doctor came up breathless, then bustled around to show off before the nurse.

The word leaped from mouth to mouth in harsh whispers: Kracevich slit his throat, bent his head over the washstand, used a razor, did a good job, cut his throat from ear to ear.

Obituary: John Kracevich. Age 58. Born in Pompiani, Lithuania. Came to the United States in 1889. Worked in mines in Pennsylvania, West Virginia, Montana, Washington. Was in cage of mine shaft when wire broke; fell, leg broken. Leg poorly repaired in company hospital. While insurance-compensation case pending, mine would not employ him; he was a cripple and too old. Forced to apply to charity. Insurance company, to avoid paying compensation, informed Immigration Bureau he was dependent on charity. Three years before, Kracevich had gone to Canada to visit his son. Now he was considered a public charge within five years after last entry. His son failed to answer letter, two telegrams. Kracevich was crippled, penniless, 58 years old and no longer knew anyone in Lithuania. Kracevich heard an Italian bricklayer on the deportation train say, There is nothing for us where we are going, we might as well die. Kracevich cut his throat.

An air of morbid hysteria closed over the aliens. Tears rolled down Mrs. Gomez's puffy cheeks and Big Bertha kept shaking her head. Among the men, the first spasm of horror and wild gabble gave way to a subdued unquiet. The Englishman kept muttering, The poor blighter, the poor blighter. The Greek said, The old gent's better off now. But Szuts was vehement: "The old fool, he didn't have the guts, you've got to fight!"

And the wheels of the train kept turning in the brains of the men and women, grinding their rancors and their crumbled hopes. Always intruding was the whistle of steam, the straining of couplings between cars, the continuous tremor of the train.

Mad Anna, down front, began to spit on her hands and wash her face. "That dame's leading a clean life," wisecracked Nick. The laughter had no spine. On this train no laughter could stand up against the flat melody of the wheels.

Correspondence

Selling Out a Strike

To THE NEW MASSES:

The National Guard is often used by the employer and his police and politician allies to break a strike. In the strike now going on at the John Morrell and Co., Packers, a Judas of the labor movement, J. P. McCoy, by name, is also using the National Guard to break it up. The employer threatens the union with the militia and McCoy threatens the militant worker with it. Both are bound to beat the strike.

Have you ever heard of an honest-to-God strike leader who issued passes to scabs? Have you ever heard of one who said, "I don't care how many scabs they got in the plant. I wouldn't care if the whole union went back to work. The boycott will win this strike." These reactionary "innocents" like McCoy (International Vice-President of the Amalgamated Meat Cutters and Butcher Workmen, A. F. of L.) point out militant workers to the police, and swear in a public meeting that he hates a strike as much as the employer. You bet he hates a strike. He hates it so much, he wants to sell it out in a hurry.

Have you ever heard of an honest-to-God strike leader tell the unemployed and other union men in town to keep away from the picket line? Have you ever heard of such a one refusing to call on the Central Labor and Trades Assembly for help? Have you ever heard one say that the more scabs working the stronger the strike? The real McCoy said all this.

When the unemployed were cut off relief, and the Relief Administrator told them to work at Morrell's, or with farmers who couldn't afford to pay them ten cents a day, there was a huge mass meeting. Sam Twedell, McCoy's henchman and business agent, came down and told them to keep away from the picket lines.

How was all this explained away to the men? These Judases tell them the only way they can win the strike is through the boycott and by keeping the militia off. It took a long time convincing the men. The first day, fifty scabs were sent to the hospital. But from then on . . . 500 were permitted in.

The militia is used by Morrell's to frighten the strikers from being militant, and if they are not militant, the strike is going to be lost.

The boys are fighting for the reinstatement of 29 blacklisted men and for seniority rights. They have a lot of enemies, Morrells, the Police Department, the Chamber of Commerce and the Messrs. McCoy and Twedell.

Sioux Falls, S. D. GEORGE WILLSON.

"Excellent Innuendo"

To THE NEW MASSES:

Enclosed is a letter from my daughter who is attending evening class in public speaking at a large university.

Boston. MRS. D. F.

Dear Mother:

I am having a harder time than I thought I would, convincing my class that the sole reason for the last war was profit. I've done my best to show them that we entered the war at a period when Wall Street credit faced collapse from overstretching it in war loans. That a prolonged war under existing conditions, with no knockout blow in sight, would only expand credit even more. That social upheavals (revolutions to you) were becoming dangers in lands which held Wall Street loans. I praised Wilson, saying that he cheated us, but in the interests of profit, and we should not condemn him, as he had our best interests at heart. I pointed out that German peace maneuvers in 1915-16-17 made stocks drop from 5 to 40 percent every time. I showed the set-up of the National Defense Council so amiably and so completely that the other Communist in the class could hardly keep a straight face. And I ended calmly, "We are forced to wonder whose wars we fight. We are even forced to wonder whose government it is." And the result?

Prof: Miss F—— uses innuendo very well. Hers is a method of understatement rather than overstatement. Her voice was much clearer, too.

Student No. 1: Yes, I caught every single word for the first time.

Student No. 2: She was confident of her statistics, too. You felt that you couldn't argue without reading a book or something.

Student No. 3: But she prejudiced us. She made it seem that profit was the only reason for entering the war. We know of course there were many other reasons for entering, and it wasn't as simple as Miss F—— made it out.

Prof: That's true. But as far as it went it was very good. And the innuendo was done excellently.

Student No. 4: Well, I of course don't take much stock in speeches of that nature. You hear a lot of that sort of talk these days—about war, the utilities, capitalists and all that. But as that type of speech goes, I like it better than the kind that picks on the individual firms. I'm not so unsympathetic to it because it is so generalized, rather than applying to one person, like J. P. Morgan or the like.

Prof: Well, most of us are capitalists at heart, of course. Why, I have a cousin who. . . .

Student No. 6: And I have a brother that. . . .

The Other Communist: But I disagree with you wholeheartedly, Professor. We all want security, true, but that makes us sensible—not necessarily capitalists. It is training. . . .

Student No. 2: (in an aside to me): Say, if that fellow got $10,000 he'd change his tune.

Me (to the bastard): Mr. Y—— (comrade to you) has more sense, I'm sure. (All sweetness and light, but the man turns away suddenly.)

Dear God grant I have courage to take up the Communistic cudgels again tomorrow. Down with war! Fight against fascism! War is hell, to hell with war. Hearst is a liar. Turn the guns the other way. Down with war with war with war with war! F. F.

The Fight For Krumbein

TO THE NEW MASSES:

Charles Krumbein, member of the Central Committee of the Communist Party, serving an eighteen month term for a technical violation of the Federal passport regulations, is extremely grateful to the hundreds of workers who have sent letters to him since his imprisonment. He has made a careful practice of acknowledging as many of them as possible. Each of the letters he is permitted to send contains a long list of such acknowledgements, with a word of personal greeting or advice in the case of all those whom he has known personally.

He was a little astonished that so many of those who wrote him urged him "to keep up courage." His comment on this, on an earlier occasion when he faced a jail sentence, was that it takes much more courage to remain on the outside and do the work, than to remain in prison.

It takes no stretch of the imagination, though, to understand that a man like Krumbein, to whom daily activity in the labor movement has become his air, food, light, must have the highest kind of courage to face the mental and spiritual idleness and isolation of a prison.

But like all Bolsheviks, Krumbein takes full advantage of all the favorable elements that may exist in an unfavorable situation. From the time he finishes his day's work until "lights out" he reads. And that's no small boon to a man whose daily routine for many years has left him no time for meals. O. Piatnitsky after describing ten years of unflagging revolutionary activity, tells, in his memoirs, that he was finally arrested by the Czarist government and sentenced to a long prison term. For the first time since he had entered the revolutionary movement, he comments, he had an opportunity to give undivided attention to the reading of the classics of Marxian theory. So with Krumbein.

How did Krumbein come to use an assumed name in getting a passport to travel to China in 1928? Krumbein knew that his record as a revolutionary labor leader laid him open to every type of persecution conceivable by the Chinese puppet government of European and American imperialism. The persecution of Agnes Smedley, American writer, has proved that. The imprisonment of the Rueggs without so much as a protest from the Social-Democratic German government of which they were subjects, proved it. So did the more recent deportation and maltreatment of the delegation of American professional men and women who tried to investigate political and economic conditions in Cuba.

No one else was involved in Krumbein's case. No intent to commit an anti-social act was even charged by the prosecution. The severity of the sentence passed against Krumbein, as contrasted with the suspended sentence given to Thomas Walker, Hearst hireling, on a similar charge, can be attributed only to his long record of activity in the revolutionary labor movement.

Krumbein is eligible for parole. The Federal Board of Parole meets on August 3 in Washington. Thousands of letters, postcards, telegrams, must reach the offices of the board before August 3. The three members of the Parole Board must be made to know that the thousands and thousands of workers to whom Krumbein has given 25 years of devotion and leadership want him freed.

New York. PHILIP STERLING.

Letters in Brief

The Provisional Committee for Cuba sends us a letter it received from the Cuban ambassador to the United States, Guillermo Patterson, refusing the Committee an opportunity to present a statement relative to the deportation of the Commission of Investigation, sponsored by the Committee.

The Committee to Support Southern Textile Organization, a group of sixty professional and white-collar workers, has issued an appeal to the national executive committee of the Socialist Party urging the united front and pointing to the successful coöperation of Socialists and Communists in North Carolina.

The Repertory Department of the New Theatre League announces a new service to be known as the Social Drama Book Service. The new department will fill the needs of the 300 acting groups affiliated to the League for plays other than those published by the Repertory department. Classics as well as contemporary plays will be available. All theatre groups are invited to avail themselves of the service Headquarters of the League are at 114 West 14th Street, New York.

June Croll, secretary of the Anti-Nazi Federation of New York, writes that August 18 has been set aside as International Thaelmann Day. The meeting in New York will be held at the Luna Park Arena, 10th Street and Surf Avenue, Coney Island. Similar meetings will be held throughout the country to protest the continued imprisonment of Thaelmann.

Beth Moses Hospital strikers have won their long battle for the right to organize and bargain collectively, the Beth Moses Hospital Workers Council advises us. The controversy began two months ago when 100 workers, skilled and unskilled, were locked out for calling a two-hour stoppage in protest against the dismissal of seven workers. Under the terms of settlement the employes are unconditionally reinstated and the right of collective bargaining is recognized.

A correspondent sends us a letter recently sent out by the Institute of Scrap Iron and Steel, a strike-breaking organization of employers. The letter details the Institute's recent success in breaking a strike in New York City. Plans for a nationwide offensive against scrap-iron workers are disclosed.

Stockholders in the Remington Arms Company are being urged to fight against proposals for higher income taxes for large corporations, one of them writes us. The drive against increased taxes is led by the National Association of Manufacturers which proposes "governmental economy," an indirect appeal for reduction of social service payments.

REVIEW AND COMMENT

The One and Only

THE American criticism of the title[1] is, according to Professor Shafer, in a bad way. In the first chapter he slaughters T. S. Eliot, J. E. Spingarn, and Ludwig Lewisohn. Subsequently he demolishes H. L. Mencken. Van Wyck Brooks, he is kind enough to say, is "fairly well read," but he has no "serious importance as a critic." Lewis Mumford is frivolous and insignificant. Edmund Wilson is guilty of "muddle-headedness" and "shoddy work and slapdash thinking." Newton Arvin has a gift for distortion. John Jay Chapman, except for his essay on Emerson, was "spotty, fragmentary, sometimes aimless, sometimes unexpectedly weak." Even Mr. Shafer's humanist allies fare badly. Of course Stuart Sherman became a renegade and therefore it is not surprising to learn that, though he wrote "brightly," his work was superficial; but it does seem brutal of Mr. Shafer to call the essays of W. C. Brownell "mechanical, labored, monotonous." Even Irving Babbitt arouses no stronger emotion than "a feeling of mingled admiration and dissatisfaction." As for "Comrade Hicks," Mr. Shafer finds it unnecessary "to emphasize the crudity, shallowness and falsehood of such criticism."

The other half of Mr. Shafer's subject is a vastly different matter. At the end of the first chapter there is a prolonged rolling of the drums and then way up at the top of the tent we perceive a portentous figure in spangled tights. "Amongst those," says Mr. Shafer, "who are keeping alive the true critical spirit today I would suggest that we can learn most from Mr. Paul Elmer More." From then on, "the most significant figure amongst American writers today," whose "later prose is really perfect in its kind," who has "a critical power not short of genius" and "the sure grasp of the master," is contrasted with the "ostensible critics," "anti-critics," and "cheap propagandists." Mr. More not only towers above his contemporaries; he is, quite simply, the greatest critic who has ever written in English. (Mr. Shafer takes up the rival claims of Matthew Arnold but quickly dismisses them. He does grant, a little hesitantly, that France has produced one critic, Sainte-Beuve, who might be considered Mr. More's equal.) It is no wonder that "the general run of American critics," whose ideas are "youthful, confused, teeny-weeny," have "resented the presence amongst them of a man whose thought is incisive and profound, whose judgment is incorruptible, whose concern is with the greatest subjects and whose style is that of a Christian gentleman."

Between gasps of awe and outbursts of adulation, Mr. Shafer presents Mr. More's familiar philosophy. The central tenet, as everyone who survived the humanist controversy will remember, is that human nature does not change. Nothing, therefore, is to be gained by improving social organization. Much, indeed, may be lost by the attempt to change external conditions, since the effort distracts men's attention from their proper concern, which is the improvement of themselves. Self-improvement depends upon the recognition of the dualism in man, the division into the human and the animal, and the cultivation of the human. One aid to this process is the study of the writings of the men of the past—primarily the Greeks—who understood the development of human potentialities. This intellectual discipline should, however, be supplemented by religion, specifically by the "acceptance of Christ as the Incarnate Word."

The philosophy of Mr. More and Mr. Shafer has been refuted so many times and in such detail, and the absurdity of its assumptions is so transparent, that it would be foolish to waste space in elementary discussions of the fallacies of humanistic dualism. What does deserve comment is that Mr. Shafer tries to present these views as "not so much conservative as honestly realistic." There is more realism in the wildest utopian dream and as much honesty in a tabloid editorial.

Equalitarianism, Mr. Shafer insists, is impossible and undesirable. "The good we get from social organization arises from the division of labor and of responsibilitiy. . . . But there can be no organization without order, and no order without subordination, while equally there can be no division of labor without diversity of talent, of training, of station, and of reward. One prime requisite of a justly ordered society, therefore, is the fair division of rewards. . . . We cannot reasonably hope for a perfect division . . . but to do the best we can demands unceasing watchfulness and effort. . . . This in turn means that we are in constant need of untrammeled, enlightened, honest criticism."

If this reasoning were realistic, honesty would demand at this point some comment on the proportioning of rewards in contemporary society. (Mr. Shafer might, for example, examine the chart of salaries and wages in The New Republic for July 10, 1935.) But there is nothing of the kind. There is, instead, an attack on "the zealous bureaucrats, narrowly trained experts, professional reformers, plausible charlatans, flattering demagogues, blackguards of the daily and weekly press, self-appointed censors, and bigots," who want "to extend without limit the scope and functions of government," and do so "at the expense of personal responsibility." The danger, in other words, to "the fair division of rewards" comes, not from the business men, but from those who, with whatever degree of sincerity, propose to curb the business men's greed.

[1] *PAUL ELMER MORE AND AMERICAN CRITICISM, by Robert Shafer. Yale University Press. $4.*

This is typical. Mr. More, we learn, has no use for "sordid plutocrats." In believing that civilization depends upon "the security of private property," he recognizes, we are told, the possibility that "the man made free by the security of his possessions may misuse his freedom," and he holds that this is "something to be corrected, as effectively as possible." But Mr. More, so far as I can discover, despite his "deeper, truer understanding of what is real in the brotherhood of man," has never used that disinterested, powerful, incorruptible mind of his to correct the abuses of the system of private property he endorses. He has written many attacks upon the humanitarians and reformers, discussing them specifically and by name. The "sordid plutocrats," however, remain nameless and even as a class they are criticized only parenthetically and in general terms.

Mr. Shafer is a good pupil. Eloquent about the "absolute tyranny," "abject slavery," and "cruel, ruthless, and bloody dictators" of the Soviet Union, he has not a word to say about the tyranny of capitalism in the United States. Like William Randolph Hearst, he weeps for the peasants in the Ukraine, but he is far too staunch an anti-sentimentalist to waste a tear on the workers and farmers of America. He worries only about the danger that "our great and widespread material prosperity," combined with the Rousseauesque humanitarianism of the New Deal, may undermine the national character.

There is a sense in which Mr. Shafer is right in maintaining that Mr. More has not been properly appreciated. Observing the similarity of his views on the Soviet Union to Mr. Hearst's, of his views on property to Mr. Ernest Weir's, of his views on liberty to Mr. Herbert Hoover's, of his views on reform to Mrs. Dilling's and Mr. Jung's, of his views on education to President Angell's and Chancellor Bowman's, of his views on morality to Bernarr Macfadden's, one cannot but feel that his light has indeed been hidden under a bushel. Surely that almost perfect prose of his would grace the pages of The Wall Street Journal or The Saturday Evening Post. And there is no good reason why, if he would try very hard, he should not be printed in Liberty.

GRANVILLE HICKS.

Pamphlet Poetry

LENIN LIVES, by Henry George Weiss. B. C. Hagglund, Holt, Minn. 25c.
YOU OWN THE HILLS, by L. Spier. Alpress Publishers, Philadelphia. 25c.
PRELUDE TO DAWN, by Martha W. LeCoq. Burlington Chapbooks, Philadelphia. Price not stated.

WHILE publishers blanch at the mere thought of issuing poetry written by unassuming proletarians whose names would make but the sound of cotton falling in the cash register, proletarian and revolutionary poetry is being written, collected and published. It appears in pamphlet form from widely separated geographic points (a significant fact for revolutionary publishers to remember, what with the intensification of fascist tendencies and the imminent dangers to our press). The publication of these pamphlets is in itself a poem to courage and faith. It means that the poet has dug deep into his own pockets to defray the expense; or else that the publication was a truly cooperative enterprise, with comrades contributing dimes and quarters to make the pamphlet possible. When the history of the early publishing of proletarian literature is written, B. C. Hagglund of Holt, Minnesota, who has been pioneering in this field, will surely occupy an honored position therein. For many years he has operated a press that hung together only through the grace of God and haywire, setting type by hand, moved by a rare and beautiful courage and faith to work desperately at net wages that would make a sweatshop worker seem affluent. It was largely because of his endurance that the poetry of H. H. Lewis appeared before the proletarian public and it was through his efforts that the present *Lenin Lives,* by Henry George Weiss, appears.

Weiss had been writing revolutionary and proletarian poetry for many years before this term became current as a distinct concept in poetry. Before there was a Communist press, he wrote for the wobbly press and his poems have appeared in almost every working-class newspaper in the country. He has lived for many years in Arizona, a victim of tuberculosis, but his work has not suffered in loss of vitality because of that. Of the proletarian poets now practicing the art, Weiss may be said to approach more nearly the concept of the "Party poet" than any other. He has something in his work that suggests the immediacy of Demyan Bedny and the informality of Joe Hill. He disdains subtleties, his lines have the clarity of a manifesto by Lenin and breathe such an easy air of familiarity that they could easily become the structure for a mass poetry. He is not lost in the mazes of an "esthetic lag," striving desperately to impart a Communist spirit to the rhythm of a T. S. Eliot. His message is direct, often unliterary and uncouth, and is usually an exhortation to battle with very little of revery in it. Quite often he strikes a forceful note by relying solely on simple contrast as in *Contemporaries:*

> Resting by the roadside
> an old man
> covered with festering sores
> hugging to his breast
> a bag swollen with money.
>
> Across the road,
> swinging a sickle,
> a young man in overalls
> clearing ground for a grave.

Occasionally relying not even on symbolism or contrast, he achieves considerable force as in *As Men Having a Job to Do:*

> Not in anger (though we feel anger),
> nor in hatred (though we know hatred),
> do we say this; but thoughtfully,
> as men who having a job to do,
> would do it and be done.

Revolutionary poetry written in conventional rhythm and meter often enough seems naive, sentimental and hackneyed; Weiss, however, does secure a different response, as in *His Grave:*

> They say no lettered granite marks
> The spot where Wesley Everest lies,
> That vandal feet have stomped the ground
> Into his wide and staring eyes.
>
> They say the place is all unknown,
> That never sad-eyed mourners come
> To leave their wreaths of flowers on
> That lonely and deserted tomb.
>
> Perhaps—but ah, what matters it!
> We say to them who tread him down,
> Six feet of earth is not the grave
> On which we lay the martyr's crown.

Weiss' poems bear titles that have about them something of proletarian urgency and nearly every poem could be a "Party poem." However, some of the poems in this pamphlet have something so casual about them that they appear uninspired and badly in need of revision. His method of dealing directly with the subject at hand and the disdain with which he views aesthetic subtleties give some of these poems the baldness and uncouth directness of a journalistic report, justifying altogether the current criticism of "leftism" in poetry. On the whole, however, probably more so than any other poet writing directly from and for the proletariat Weiss *belongs* and has in him potentialities for becoming a mass poet.

Leonard Spier, in *You Own the Hills,* continues, in the main, the excellent note struck in his previous pamphlet of poetry *When the Sirens Blow* (also printed by Hagglund). Spier comes closer to grips with the formal elements of poetry. He has more restraint than either H. H. Lewis or Henry George Weiss, a wider imaginative power and a greater precision, but he has not the passion of either of them. Where one will excuse Lewis quite often for his grotesque face-making in a mirror, because of the searing hate and passion and satire that seethe in his lines, in the more formal and cool and precise lines of Spier one is more apt to stumble over a faulty rhythm or badly chosen word. Spier's poem, *Alien? Who Is Alien?,* a really fine revolutionary poem, has about it the solidity and satisfying breadth of a Walt Whitman chant. He is also successful to a lesser degree in *Medals, Vigil in Hungary* and in the title poem. When he essays the long

ballad form (a type of poetry strangely absent in proletarian verse) he fails lamentably, both in imagination and technical facility and succeeds only in mawkish sentimentality. His pamphlet is divided into two sections, *You Own the Hills* and *Escapades,* the latter being intended to be in a lighter mood, thus following superficially the practice of some of our better-known poets who dedicate a few slim pages to the class struggle with the air of making a great sacrifice of "art" for the sake of the barricade, but the resemblance is only superficial. For even in lyrics ostensibly dedicated to grass, indian carrots and love, the class struggle breaks into his pattern and vitalizes his lines. In addition to his unquestioned gifts as a lyric poet, Spier is also performing a valuable service in making available to American readers poetry written by revolutionary Hungarian poets in what seem to be competent translations.

It is difficult to go into detail concerning *Prelude to Dawn,* a very small red pamphlet containing four pages of print. The poem loses its force somewhat because it apparently deals with an episode not generally known to the reading public and despite a fairly well sustained imaginative vigor, occasionally lapses astonishingly into "washing the streets with patriot red" "to the tune of traitor guns" and "in the homes they had built for their children."

JOSEPH KALAR.

Answered Sixty-three Years Ago

THE HOUSING QUESTION, by Frederick Engels. International Publishers. 75c.
SLUMS AND BLIGHTED AREAS IN THE U. S., by Edith Elmer Wood. Bulletin No. 1 Housing Division, Federal Emergency Administration of Public Works. Free.
REHOUSING URBAN AMERICA, by Henry Wright. Columbia University Margin Press. $7.50.
SLUM, by Howard Marshall in collaboration with Miss Avice Trevelyan. William Heinemann, Ltd. $1.
THE HOUSING PROGRAM OF THE CITY OF VIENNA, by Charles O. Hardy and Robert R. Kuczynski. The Brookings Institution. $2.
MODERN HOUSING, by Catherine Bauer. Houghton Mifflin. $5.

IN 1872, Frederich Engels wrote a number of newspaper articles, later republished in book form as *The Housing Question.* The present volume is a reprint of the second German edition and is here translated into English for the first time. In the preface to this edition, Engels explains that his special interest in this question was aroused by the need for exposing the "social quackeries" involved in certain schemes which were being brought forward at that time not only as projects for clearing slums and rehousing the workers, but cures for other social ills.

Today in the United States, the housing question is also being raised and in much the same manner. It is raised on the one hand by workers and farmers who are beginning to demand better living conditions including housing. The question is being raised most energetically, however, by other interested groups; for example, the Roosevelt Administration, which needs votes, the builders and manufacturers who need business, the native housing experts and those exiled from Austria and Germany who need jobs and the social reformers who do it for nothing. The books under review reflect this current interest in housing and significantly enough, the solutions which they offer are in all fundamentals similar to those dealt with by Engels over sixty years ago.

In *Slums and Blighted Areas in the United States,* Edith Elmer Wood officially presents the liberal position which is also maintained, with proper caution, by Administrator Ickes and the Housing Division of the P.W.A.

Despite the final liberal phrases and the plea for government subsidy, we do not find in the Housing Division's Bulletin No. 1 any serious challenge to the forces which, it repeatedly indicates and implies, are effectively obstructing an adequate program of workers' housing.

Quite similar to the above, is Henry Wright's *Rebuilding Urban America.* Mr. Wright is an architect and so his approach to the question is somewhat more technical. His book traces the development of slum and blighted areas in our cities, the chief cause of which, it would seem, is a "lack of planning." In spite of the numerous ground plans and other illustrations and in spite of Mr. Wright's desire to be practical, his conclusions and his program for getting some low rental housing done are singularly vague and unconvincing. The best he can offer us, apparently, is the example of Europe.

In this he is encouraged by Lewis Mumford, who, in the preface to *Rebuilding Urban America* talks of "the promise held out by the new standards of domestic living and the cooperative technique such as those that the more advanced planners in Europe and America have been building up." (Mr. Mumford doubtlessly includes America in his statement only out of courtesy to his friend Mr. Wright.) This argument is quite common today. We find Mrs. Wood and others also making the point. "Europe

THE HOOCHY-COOCHY GIRLS

Adolph Dehn

has done it," they say, "why can't we?"

Before answering this question let us find out whether Europe has really "done it." In *Slum* Mr. Marshall, after describing England's post-war campaign to build "Homes for Heroes," informs us that of the approximately 2,000,000 government subsidized homes constructed since 1919 "more than a million are of the more expensive type and only 700,000 are workers' homes. These 700,000 are built to let and the majority of them are at rents which are higher than the poorer workers can afford." From this fifteen-year record, says our author, "we are forced to the conclusion that the Government plan can at best do no more than clear away some of the bad spots in the slums." Nevertheless, despite his frankness, Mr. Marshall offers the reader a solution which is practically identical with that advocated by liberals in this country. His "Housing Corporation," which is to be directed by "men of vision whose functions will correspond to those of H. G. Wells' professors of foresight," will be equally powerless to remedy the conditions he describes so well. We see then that the example of English housing, at any rate, is a poor one for workers to follow.

It used to be the fashion, before fascism came to Germany and Austria, to refer to these countries as shining demonstrations of how to solve the housing question. The famed Karl Marx Apartments in Vienna were last year riddled by shells; and the housing societies and the municipal developments of Berlin, Frankfort and other cities have been vitiated by the Nazis. The point to be emphasized, however, is that even in the heyday of their glory, these "demonstrations" demonstrated something else than their advocates claimed.

The Housing Program of the City of Vienna contains a great deal of factual information. The authors do not say so directly, but the facts which they have collected show that although Vienna built a good many municipal apartments and passed stringent rent-restriction laws, the net result was that only the better-paid workers could afford these dwellings. The rest remained in their slums. Another outcome of this "socialist" housing, the authors indicate, was lower wages. It was Otto Bauer, leading Viennese socialist who argued after the war that a housing program would serve to ease "social restlessness" and dissuade the workers from doing anything rash like deciding to run the government themselves; in other words, dissuading them from doing the one thing which could give them decent homes. It was the Bauers also, who urged the objecting taxpayers and industrialists to agree to these concessions on the ground that they would improve business. The low wages which followed the reduced rents in Vienna, did indeed help to accomplish this to some degree.

Those of our authors who urge us to follow the European example forget to point out that what little housing was granted to the workers of Europe after the war was largely the result of fear on the part of the ruling class, of the strength of the workers; and that the intense reluctance with which even this pittance was yielded is illuminated by the bloody violence with which it was withdrawn at the first opportunity. Miss Wood and the Messrs. Wright and Mumford deplore the profits of the slum, the high rents and the poverty which prevents workers from enjoying the very housing which our experts are nevertheless trying to promote. They are all quite careful, however, not to conclude (at least not in direct, unmistakable language) that since profits and poverty are characteristics of capitalism, it is the capitalist system which is the root of the evil.

Not so Catherine Bauer in *Modern Housing*. This author at least comes to grips with the question. Her book makes a broad survey of the housing conditions and the reforms of the past century or two in Europe and in the United States, and the author gives evidence of having read *The Housing Question*. We may very well imagine her addressing her conclusions to Engels as follows, "Yes, I agree with you that, in order to obtain good housing for all, it is necessary to abolish capitalism and transform all the means of production into social property. But this is possible only in the distant future, a future which, for all practical purposes is quite out of sight. In the meantime, is it not desirable that we formulate practical, workable plans toward that eventuality?"

The answer to this question of necessity brings us to Engels' invaluable booklet. We have already seen in the case of Europe and in America also, that the "plans" which our well-meaning friends formulate while waiting for capitalism to abolish itself are far from "practical" or "workable," at least in the interests of society as a whole. The books under review prove on almost every page that capitalism can no more plan an adequate housing program than it can plan to give all workers an adequate wage. But, as Engels points out, even if, by some miracle everyone were decently housed under capitalism, we would not, by virtue of that fact alone, have advanced the cause of the masses of workers. To see this clearly we must first understand that the relationship that exists between the tenant and the landlord or between the home owner and the mortgage company is of only secondary importance. It does not matter whether the tenant is an industrial worker, a farmer, a small business man or a shop keeper; the vital factor for him is not where or how he lives, but how he makes his living. In other words, the factor which really decides whether most of the American people have "a life worth living" is not the homes they live in, but rather their relationship to the capitalists who own the factories, shops or offices in which they work.

But it is precisely this relationship which our housing reformers are most anxious to avoid and frequently to conceal. Consequently, their schemes for what Engels calls "patchwork improvements" are not only utopian but, in effect, socially reactionary. It is on this point particularly that *The Housing Question* is of such value today. The liberals and the "experts" may talk their heads off, as they do in the books noted, about housing reforms and slum clearance. Occasionally some foul-smelling hovels are cleared out, as in the case recently of Knickerbocker Village, a high-rental "slum-clearance" project in New York City which replaced the notorious East Side "Lung Block." In the process, it was shown that the former occupants simply moved into adjoining slums. Engels shows that this was an old phenomenon in 1872.

> The infamous homes and cellars in which the capitalist mode of production confines our workers night after night, are not abolished; they are merely shifted elsewhere! The same economic necessity which produced them in the first place, produces them in the next place also. As long as the capitalist mode of production continues to exist, it is folly to hope for an isolated solution of the housing question or of any other social question affecting the fate of the workers. The solution lies in the abolition of the capitalist mode of production and the appropriation of all the means of life and labor by the working class itself.

For those who would clearly distinguish between the bright-colored housing and slum clearance schemes which are juggled before them and the immediate militant demands for better housing conditions, *The Housing Question* by Engels, is required reading.

SIDNEY HILL.

Old Russian Soul

DOSTOEVSKY, A LIFE, by Avrahm Yarmolinsky. Harcourt, Brace and Company. $3.75.

DESPITE his years of labor, Yarmolinsky's life of Dostoevsky is not a critical biography, but a romantic fictionalized biography of the André Maurois type. Yarmolinsky has assembled many more facts than Maurois would allow to trouble him. But these, instead of reducing the amount of imaginative interpretation, have only added length. The result is an extremely readable but somewhat pretentious volume which has at least the merit of not appearing a mere expansion or repetition of E. H. Carr's life published in England four years ago.

Nevertheless, a comparison with Carr's book can only show that the latter's method is more adequate. Let us examine, for instance, the two treatments of Dostoevsky's last visit to a gambling casino. Yarmolinsky describes the renunciation that followed this spree almost in the language his hero would have used. He explains it by an obscure but unmistakable inner conversion. "The mad dream had inexplicably lost its old power over him. He never gambled again. Dostoev-

sky has furnished no clue as to how he found release from his obsession." And Yarmolinsky fingers in vain the pages of the novels that followed. Carr, however, using facts that Yarmolinsky neglects, furnishes a plausible explanation. He observes that Dostoevsky virtually stops gambling in 1865 when his wife stops accompanying him to gaming resorts. Each of the three trips that occur after this date end with a frantic appeal to his distant wife upon whom he was becoming more and more dependent. The last was in 1871. In 1872 Germany passed a law forbidding gambling, and the Dostoevskys did not have money enough to pursue it in resorts further away from home.

Thus, Yarmolinsky's volume suffers because it has not the advantage of Carr's detached and sceptical approach. Written with no consciousness of environmental influences upon Dostoevsky and no consciousness of environmental changes since Dostoevsky's death, it is a product of the old Russian mentality. Its subjective method, apparently as modern as Maurois, only masks an uncritical acceptance of orthodox Russian mysticism. Personality, according to Yarmolinsky, does not change because of a complicated response to changes in environment. It is formed by God through the paradoxical method of heredity as something spiritually complete, buffeted but unmodified by circumstances, modified only by the interaction of its own elements.

In other words, Yarmolinsky writes with complete indifference to the fact that the Revolution has swept away the old Russian belief in the Russian soul. This "soul" and this belief survive chiefly in the aged, in the illiterate and in the hearts of expatriates like himself. But the most serious consequence of his obscurantism is that he does not bring into the foreground those aspects of Dostoevsky's personality and of his books which furnish a bitter ironic commentary upon this very mysticism. I do not wish, of course, a falsification of the facts, an attempt to show that Dostoevsky died a harbinger of the Revolution, but, rather what Carr has given, a stress upon those facts which are of most interest, and significant for our present moment in history. If we are to have another presentation of Dostoevsky as the prophet with no bigger message than the paradox, virtue is a distillation of sin, we might at least be afforded a comparison with Baudelaire and the other decadents. But what we really need is more investigation into those reaches in his personality where scepticism and shrewd observation of human nature awaited their cue while the decadence of old Christian Russia hugged the center of the stage.

EDWIN BERRY BURGUM.

Brief Review

TIME: THE PRESENT, by Tess Slesinger. Simon and Schuster $2.50. Miss Slesinger's stories are well made; she has wit and insight but she deals primarily with defeated individuals and her presentation is static.

THE MAN OF ARAN, by Pat Mullen. E. P. Dutton Co. $3. That Flaherty's photographically superb film, *Man of Aran,* was incomplete is indicated from a reading of this Aran Islander's autobiography. Instead of an epic of human perseverance we find the Aran Islander's lot involved in misery with the rest of the capitalist world, his living in more precarious dependence upon the kelp market than upon storm and tide.

A SAGA OF A PAPER MILL, by Laurence Pratt. The Caxton Printers, Ltd., Caldwell, Idaho. We are told the author of this book of verse has been "largely self-educated," working as "printer's devil, elevator boy, groceryman, music teacher, longshoreman, gas-meter man, pressman, high school teacher, college professor." But in his poetry, Mr. Pratt gives no evidence of ever having been a worker.

In *A Saga of a Paper Mill,* the manufacture of paper is glorified but as for the workers who make the paper, they are so many individuals whose histories are told in sonnet form in the manner of "Spoon River Anthology."

"The Eight O'Clock Shift" is composed of "Italian," "Swedish," "Fillipino" and "Lithuanian" workers, but—

> "Now dapper office clerks are swinging past—stenographers with rouge and cigarette.
> The spruce young office manager drives in; the foremen meet their crews. There comes at last the great mill manager himself. Now let steam hiss and plungers pound, and mad wheels spin."

The boss manufactures the paper; the workers merely enter and come out of the factory. The mediocrity of the poetry can be judged from the sample quoted.

P. S. These 77 pages of paper cost $2.

As Benito Desires Me

HENRY HART

LUIGI PIRANDELLO is about five feet high, sixty-eight years old and has a fine, bald, egg-shaped head, intense brown eyes and a small, gray goatee. Like most Sicilians, his skin is quite dark. Thirty years of his life were spent teaching Italian literature in a woman's normal school in Rome and some of the effects are still with him. One of these is his taste for formal amenities.

This was apparent the instant he entered the living room of his suite on the forty-first floor of the Waldorf. He repressed his surprise at our youth with such quick and complete urbanity that all five of us momentarily felt a sense of guilt because we were not Robert Underwood Johnson representing the American Academy of Arts and Letters. It was clear that our host did not know what the League of American Writers and the New Theatre League are.

Signor Pirandello does not speak English, but he is accompanied in this country by a kind of manager with whom he converses in French and who translates the French into English. This manager, or interpreter, was not a typical example of his profession, and, as the interview progressed, his personality became more and more interesting. His name is Saul Colin. He is approaching forty, has a white and round face, large pale blue eyes and spectacles and a habit of forming the letter O with his thin lips at the end of each sentence. Mr. Colin referred to Pirandello as "maestro," as did John Macrae, Sr., the redoubtable chairman of the board of E. P. Dutton & Co., Pirandello's American publishers. One other person was present. This was Mr. Colin's wife, an attractive woman with an eager personality, whose spontaneous translations seemed to please Pirandello more than her husband's, especially later on in the interview when things were becoming warm.

Aware that the purpose of our visit was so completely unknown to him as to make our presence a form of misrepresentation, we approached the point from a great and gentlemanly distance. "Is Signor Pirandello now engaged upon a play?" one of us politely asked.

A slight and almost undetectable relaxation occurred in the great playwright as he sat on the back of his spine in an especially low chair. No, he had just finished one. But neither travel nor New York interrupts the progress of his creative impulse. Like all of the best writers, Signor Pirandello keeps theme, plot and character within him for a long time before he starts to write. The idea for *Six Characters in Search of an Author* was with him for five years; the play was written in twenty days.

This indirection, however, irked the forthright honesty of John Howard Lawson, who precipitated the very kind of psychological drama of which Pirandello is so fond—the transformation within a short space of time of the human personality. We began to observe, with fascination, the metamorphosis of a distinguished cosmopolite, a recipient of the Nobel Prize, into an irritated aesthete affronted by being asked to consider ideas he had intellectually parked in a logic-tight compartment years ago.

"We have come here," Mr. Lawson said with native and admirable candor, "because your great literary reputation has been employed to defend a form of society which we believe means the death of culture. We believe literature has suffered under fascism and we would like to ask what work is being produced in Italy which would disprove our view."

Mr. Colin toned this down in translation and Pirandello mentioned the names of two Italian writers, unknown to the English-reading public. He was then asked whether, when he was fabricating his psychological dramas, he was not led to realize how much interior psychology is conditioned by external environment, by the kind of society in which the individual lived and loved—whether he did not think the individual was different in Russia, in Italy, in the United States.

Pirandello lit a cigarette.

He replied that governments are what people make them.

Herbert Kline, the editor of New Theatre, asked if he did not think the picture of fascism contained in *Fontamara* sufficient to alienate the allegiance of all writers. Signor Pirandello replied that he had never heard of the book.

He was then moved to exclaim that he regretted very much to find young writers in America so preoccupied with politics. Art and politics, he said through Mr. Colin, who took special pleasure in anglicizing the old Latin phrase, are antagonistic—one is of the moment, one is eternal.

Before Mr. Colin had finished translating, Pirandello spoke again with animation. It is dangerous, Mr. Colin said he said, it is dangerous to your artistic careers. Then, pointing toward Clifford Odets, Signor Pirandello said that if his plays were good plays, as he had heard they were, it is because they are good artistically, not because they concern politics. You young men are wasting your time and your talent, he added.

(In 1931, when he announced that he yearned to visit America, Pirandello said: "Europe is senile, full of animated corpses, living on the glories of two centuries ago.")

Mr. Colin declared, irrelevantly and on his own behalf, that he had once, as a young man, been interested in improving the world but that now, but now—. He finished the sentence with a wave of his hand.

Pirandello lit a cigarette and began wagging his knee rapidly from side to side.

Mr. Kline earnestly and politely asked whether Gordon Craig's statement that the theatre is dead in Italy must not be accepted as an indication of the effect of fascism—of politics—upon literature. Pirandello answered that it was most unkind of Gordon Craig to say the theatre in Italy is dead while Pirandello is alive.

Pirandello leaned over and spoke privately to Mr. Colin. "The maestro says," Mr. Colin declared with forced geniality, "that he had expected to talk about art with artists and that he does not wish to talk politics. He is willing to discuss the theatre in Italy or any literary subject. But as he has already explained, he considers the man and the artist separate."

"We appreciate that that is Signor Pirandello's position," Mr. Lawson said, "and we would like to know about the theatre in Italy, but we also feel that Signor Pirandello's public utterances endorsing the projected war with Ethiopia disproves the possibility of separating the man and the artist."

"Mr. Lawson says," Mr. Colin translated to Pirandello, "that they would like to learn of the great growth in the Italian theatre."

Pirandello began to speak rapidly and to wag his knee. He alluded to his own theatre, which he opened in 1925, and to the companies which tour with repertory. What is the subject matter of this repertory? Why, the best plays. Would anti-fascist plays be included?

"There is no anti-fascism in Italy," he said and lit a cigarette. He leaned forward and as though at bay, declared: "As an Italian citizen I am a fascist and hence am for the war." He fell back in his chair and his knee wagged rapidly from side to side.

Mrs. Colin and Mr. Macrae (who had not said a word) then intimated that we were abusing Signor Pirandello's hospitality. Realizing that this was so, we arose and asked Signor Pirandello to read a brief statement we had prepared in advance. This statement was:

"Because you are the foremost playwright in Italy and a recipient of the Nobel Prize, we ask you to take your place beside the leading writers of the world—Romain Rolland, Andre Gide, Waldo Frank, Heinrich Mann and Maxim Gorky—who raise their voices in defense of culture and against the barbarous threat of a new imperialist war.

"On behalf of the New Theatre League and the League of American Writers, we wish to ask you to disavow the imperialism, fascism and reaction which threaten culture all over the world. Your statements in support of war and fascism have come as a great shock to American writers and to the American public generally. We feel that you owe it to the American public to clarify your position."

Signor Pirandello refused to reply to this statement, but not on the sensible grounds that he had already made his position only too clear. As he refused (he was standing, one hand clutching the back of his chair) this son of the owner of a sulphur mine, who had lived so many of his years in rigorous isolation, who had only begun to write plays in order to keep his mind from the horrors of the World War, seemed resentful. The amenities had been affronted. One hour of mild and polite conversation had effected a transformation. Was it the man or the artist, to whom this had happened? Or both? The man believed in fascism and war. The artist believed in what?

Here it is—here is the epitome of Pirandello's artistic conception of what life is and what life means—in his own words:

"I see, as it were, a labyrinth where our soul wanders through countless conflicting paths without ever finding its way out. In this labyrinth I see a two-headed Hermes which with one face laughs and with the other weeps. It laughs with one face at the other face's weeping."

These Russians

ROBERT FORSYTHE

WHAT always interests me about visitors returning from the Soviet Union is their amazement at discovering that the Russians are not Americans. I am as eager as the next to believe that America is paramount in the world and have had almost no experience at scratching Russians to find Tartars, but I can't help feeling that in one or two minor details we can be equalled. My thoughts first turned in this direction at the time of the building of the Moscow subway. I can still recall the amused tolerance of a friend who had witnessed this undertaking and was no little concerned with softening the blow which must come when he told me how they were going about it. It seemed that the whole process consisted of moving one pile of dirt from the left side to the right and then in reverse. About everything, my friend went on to say kindly, was an indescribable air of confusion and wasted effort which would be understandable only to one who knew the Russians. They were willing enough and even went at the work with frenzy and devotion at the times when they surrendered their rest days for the sake of pushing the project to completion but after all they were an Asiatic people.

The shock this brought me was somewhat tempered by my own experiences as a subway watcher during the construction of the Eighth Avenue line in New York. At that time I remember having the same feeling about the work. Looking down into the excavation at night, it seemed a hopeless jumble. It was a mass of dirt and rock and there was the same apparently aimless shoveling and hauling back and forth. Confident, however, that there was a brain somewhere behind it, I worried little about it. The visitors to Moscow during the subway construction period were just as convinced that there was neither brain nor common sense behind it. The Russians were simply playing at building a subway because capitalistic countries had them and the Russians, like emulative children, felt they could be satisfied with nothing less. I very much doubt that the completion of the Moscow metro—admitted by all experts to be the most beautiful in the world—has convinced my tolerant friend. He is so firmly of the mind that all Russians are slightly demented and hopelessly inefficient that he would probably set the whole incident down (a) to propaganda, (b) to the fact that no American correspondent dares to relate the truth about Russia and (c) to the credulity of American radicals who will believe anything favorable about the motherland.

This is an extreme instance of the malady but it runs through all relations between Russians and Americans. If I should depend exclusively upon the reports of my visiting friends, it would be difficult to conceive of the existence of the Soviet Union at all. At the very least, I am led to believe, the Russians are touched. They consistently refuse to react as any sane person (any sane American person, that is) would react and it is naturally impossible to believe that any race can prosper which doesn't happen to be the American race.

One change, however, has come in the theory of the inability of the blundering Slavs to conquer the machine. No longer than four years ago it was generally admitted in conservative circles that the Soviet workmen were hopelessly inept in the presence of a lathe. Not only was it entirely new to them but there was every evidence that there was something about the physical character of the Russians which made it impossible that they could ever become competent modern workmen. The argument then proceeded logically to the conclusion that it was a manifest illusion to contemplate an industrial Soviet Union with such raw material to operate the machinery. As soon as the foreign specialists left and the first foreign-installed and foreign-operated machines stalled for the last time, the country would return to the period of the wooden plow. I may be remiss in my reading but I don't believe there has been a serious article published anywhere in the last two years which even mentioned the subject of the Soviet workman's inherent incapacity for becoming a skilled mechanic.

The place where this alteration of opinion reveals itself most clearly is in the work of foreign writers who have become "experts"

on the Soviet Union from residence there. For the first six months after their return they are filled with facts about the strange country. If they venture to keep their status as experts beyond the period of a year without a return to Russia, they find their data so outmoded that even The Saturday Evening Post would hesitate to use it. Naturally this does not hold for the Hearst press which considers that if a man has died in Kharkov in 1921 this is indication enough that no person can hope to keep alive in a state of such terror. When a Hearst correspondent on the ground—such as Lindsay Parrott at the present time—happens to find things in rather good shape, his dispatches are sidetracked for something by a gentleman who was there in 1929 and couldn't get chocolate sauce for his ice cream. The predicament of men such as Eugene Lyons and W. H. Chamberlin is even more pronounced. The articles now appearing by Mr. Lyons are already reading like something written by Bulwer-Lytton. Events persist in happening so rapidly in the land of the Soviets that one can only join in sympathy for gentlemen who are reduced to making a living by reporting Russian facts which are moth-eaten even before they hit the typewritten page.

We can look back at the time when the first Five Year Plan was considered doomed for failure because the Soviet Union lacked the raw materials without which no industrial state was possible. Joined with that was the remarkable judgment by Ellery Huntington, the geographer, who maintained that Russia could never be a success because of geographical conditions which made the citizenry, will-nilly, lethargic and worthless. This again was an inherent defect which nothing could correct, something which was handed down by God to confound such fanatics as the Communists who felt that something could be done with the hopeless country. The country was hot in this spot, cold in this and never the twain should meet. The result, according to Dr. Huntington, was inevitable—no proper geography; no possible Soviet Union.

As compared with the direful prophecies being made at the present hour in a whirlwind of enthusiasm, there is nothing so fantastic about anything which has gone before. The trouble is that the country refuses to act as a sensible assembly of states should act. Despite the scientifically established fact (by an "expert") that there are no raw materials it reaches such a condition of un-Americanism as to press our great Morgan-owned commonwealth for world honors in the production of iron and steel. Not only is this a direct refutation of nature but it is a reflection upon the judgment of hundreds of Americans who have watched the Soviet Union at work and knew with finality that no good could ever come of the efforts of people who went about things in that way.

If I thought the endeavor was worth the time, I should prevail upon such of my bourgeois friends who like a flyer at the track and in other ways like to back their opinions with cash to start a book on Russia. A rather nice fortune could have been made in the last twenty years by men willing to place a bet against every settled opinion by the general press and by authorities who knew from their previous experience in this country just what could or couldn't be done in the Soviet Union. Starting with the survival of the U.S.S.R. through the terrible days of the Civil War down to the latest pair of stockings made by a factory in Moscow, the opposition's record for error has been almost perfect. *The Bolsheviks can't last a week, the Bolsheviks have been annihilated by the armies of etc., etc., etc., Lenin has been shot and the Red leaders have fled into exile, the Five Year Plan is a fantasy springing from the brains of a demented people, collectivization of the peasants is impossible, the Moscow subway won't be built in a hundred years.* In between have come a thousand opinions by great capitalistic authorities, speaking with the unction and finality of men who had been ordained from above with the clairvoyance needed to see the Soviet Union for the hollow shell it undoubtedly was. Every opinion would have been a sure thing for a gambler who wanted to back his doubt with his purse.

Last week I was talking with a young man who had just returned and was shaking his head in concern about the Soviet Union.

"But how are things getting on over there?" I asked.

"Oh, they're getting along fine," he said. "You can almost see them getting better day by day. . . . But those Russians. Do you know what I saw them doing in Kiev. . . ?"

I suppose we'll just have to reconcile ourselves to the fact that the whole world wasn't born in Iowa.

Between Ourselves

MICHAEL GOLD will be the principal speaker at a meeting on the United Front in Culture, at the Labor Temple, 214 East 14th Street, Thursday night, August 1, given under the auspices of The League of American Writers. It will be based on recent events in France and on the International Congress for The Defense of Culture. Quincy Howe, editor of The Living Age will also speak. Malcolm Cowley, of The New Republic, will be chairman.

"Deportation Special" by Theodore Irwin, in this issue, is an excerpt from *Strange Passage,* a novel, to be published by Smith and Haas in a few weeks.

A committee of artists has been organized to prepare the next quarterly issue, which will contain a 16-page section of revolutionary art. The date of the quarterly is Oct. 1. In examining our records we find that since THE NEW MASSES became a weekly we have published the works of 95 artists and 340 writers.

For some time, the Brownsville Workers' Bookshop, Brooklyn, N. Y., has volunteered to make a mass distribution in its neighborhood of returned copies of THE NEW MASSES. We would welcome offers from other organizations to do the same, the results in Brownsville being traceably good in promoting circulation of THE NEW MASSES, both through newsstand sales and subscription increases.

New York-New Jersey commuters who have been buying the magazine in New York can now obtain it in Journal Square, Jersey City.

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On March 19, Harlem staged a violent protest to draw attention to the fact that unemployment and discrimination exist there side by side with night clubs and minstrel show trappings designed to amuse pleasure seekers. Loren Miller has looked behind the scenes and now tells us the real story of Harlem.

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