

new masses

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Agenda for Action

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by Howard Selsam

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FOR TEACHERS**
by Charles Humboldt



just a minute



THOSE who have followed NM's affairs through the years—"From Spirituals to Swing," the John Reed Anniversary meeting, the annual award banquets, etc., recall events that, in the main, went off with a satisfying zip. There were ups and downs, of course, and our readers generally understood why. The people who run these affairs carry them off against every kind of adverse circumstance—shortage of manpower, strictly limited budget, pressures of time, and a hundred others you could imagine only if you worked with them. Every one of these factors was involved, the other night, at our Carnegie Hall affair.

It had its high moments. Paul Robeson gave magnificently of his great talent: his songs carried all the strength of the man—the artist and the people's champion. His short speech, closing the meeting, was a clarion call: give everything in you to smash the conspiracy against freedom and democracy. He spoke, too, of the vital place a magazine like ours occupies in this season of lies, doubletalk and confusion, and he urged everybody there to build NM to its potential. One felt Robeson's pride in battle, in being a spokesman for people like those in the audience; and he, in turn, inspired everybody with his superb qualities

of artistry and fighting prowess. Paul Draper, likewise, turned in one of those scintillating performances which have marked his career, and everybody loved it.

We wish we could say the same of the dramatization of the *Great Conspiracy*, that powerful book of Michael Sayers and Albert E. Kahn. We can't. A number of factors, most of which were entirely out of the control of those who put the evening on, added up to the result. In addition to the unseasonable heat, the sound system mysteriously broke down after numerous tests during the day in which it worked perfectly. The result was that many in the balconies could not hear the performers. By the time the mechanics of the company which had been hired to set up and operate the sound system got around to fixing it up, the damage was done. All those in Stage for Action and the producer and director, who had worked hard against the many obstacles to meet the deadline, were as heartsick as we were. Our disappointment is all the keener in that the attendance was even higher than usual at such affairs.

The committee in charge is retracing every step in order to learn all the lessons of the evening. We intend to make absolutely certain that you'll see the results of its analysis at the next affair put on for NM.

FOOTNOTE to Simonov's remarks on *Oklahoma!* last week: seems it's not only the actors who've had to cope with the problem of maintaining their sanity during the three-year run. The members of *Oklahoma!*'s orchestra, too, have doped out ways to avoid zombihood. According to *The New Yorker*, as soon as the overture is out of the way the trumpets get a chess game going, the guitar reads *Good Habits and How to Form Them* and the violins—apparently fellows of catholic interests—throw spitballs at each other, draw caricatures of the ladies in the front row—and read NEW MASSES.

LOOKS like the paper shortage due to the late truck tie-up hit some of our readers too. Here's a poem that arrived last week on an anonymous paper doily:

SEND THIS BY MESSENGER
TO ARTHUR M. SCHLESINGER

When I was young and rankin
I heard a bilbo say
"Let's give the kids a spankin'
Befo' we fade away;
Of space we have a-plenty—
McCormick—Cissie—Hearst—"
But I was eight-and-twenty . . .
Biography came first.

When I was young and talmadge
I heard a hamfish yell
"Beware a peaceful, calm age—
Let's give the comrades hell—
Take facts from G. A. Henty—
Karl Marx is *too* abstruse—"
So now I'm nine-and-twenty
And writing it for Luce.

B. M.

new masses

established 1911

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Agenda for Action

1. NOVEMBER — AND AFTER

By A. B. MAGIL

In the darkness with a great bundle of grief the people march.

In the night, and overhead a shovel of stars for keeps, the people march:

"Where to? what next?"

LISTENING to Henry Wallace over the air after he was forced out of the Cabinet by President Truman, I thought of these lines from Carl Sandburg's *The People, Yes*. In the room with us were a young veteran and his wife. They were waiting to be admitted to the Shanks Village housing project—and to so much of life on which an iron door seemed to have shut since the war's end. After the last of the Roosevelt men had been driven out—where to? what next? A great many Americans must have been fumbling for the answers that night.

Earlier in the evening a radio commentator had spoken bitterly of the Republican and Democratic Parties as equally reactionary and had called for a new political alignment. In the next few days I heard some people say: "What's the use of voting? There's nothing to choose between the Republicans and Democrats. They're both knifing the people."

No doubt about it: the Wallace episode has widened popular dissatisfaction with the two major parties. It has thereby provided an opportunity for accelerating a political realignment which, under labor's leadership, can in the post-election period bring this simmering discontent to the point where it boils up into a new vigorous people's party. The question is: how shall we today grasp this opportunity most effectively?

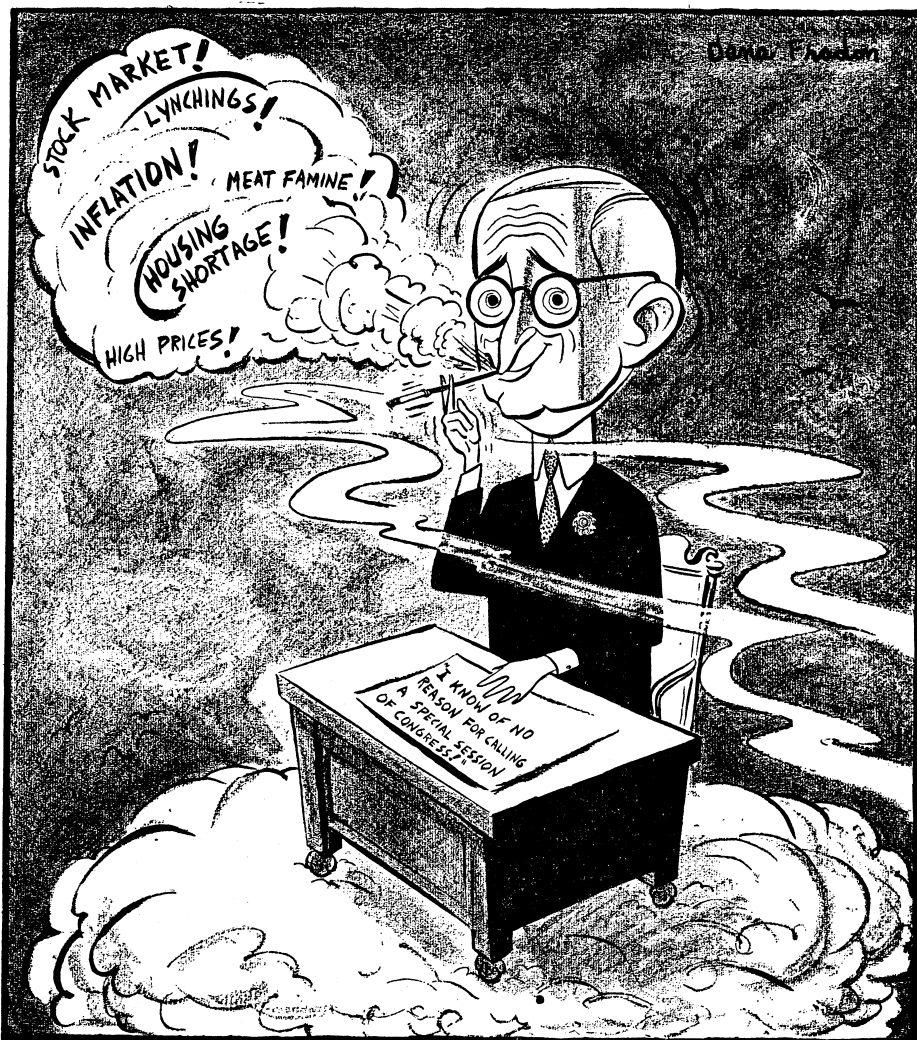
All progressives, both Communists and non-Communists, have three principal objectives in this election: to defeat those candidates that represent the naked power of big business, of the most hard-bitten enemies of peace and democracy; to elect those candidates whose record and outlook most nearly approximate the Roosevelt policies at

home and abroad; and to strengthen the activity and influence of labor and its allies as an independent political force. It can be said that the achievement of the first two of these objectives depends in part at least—and it may well prove the decisive part—on the realization of the third.

Let us ask ourselves: can we do any of these things by refusing to vote? That would leave a clear field to the reactionaries. How, then, can we participate in the election struggle in such a way that neither the Republicans nor

the tory Democrats profit, but, on the contrary, the objectives of the labor and progressive movement are advanced? This is a highly complex problem and to oversimplify the solution is to risk defeat.

In the first place, let us bear in mind that when we speak of labor and its allies we are speaking of an alliance or coalition of *different classes* in which labor is the dynamic force. This coalition, which as yet is in its initial stages, must include labor's long-term allies—the exploited sections of the



Dana Fraden.

farmers and urban middle classes, and the Negro people—and should also attract all capitalist elements who for whatever reason and however temporarily are prepared to join in combatting the designs of the Morgans, Rockefellers, Mellons, Du Ponts and the rest of the corporate plunderbund. And since this is a multi-class coalition, obviously its program cannot express the interests and views of labor alone. The key to the character of the coalition and its program—and this is also its decisive difference from the concep-

tions of Earl Browder—lies in its opposition to monopoly capital.

If the program of the coalition cannot be simply that of labor, the candidates which the coalition supports also cannot be limited to labor men or those that are closest to the labor movement. At this stage the coalition candidates inevitably include individuals representing various shadings in the political spectrum, excluding of course the extreme Right.

This doesn't mean uncritical or unqualified support of all such can-

didates, but it does mean recognizing the main enemy—in most cases the GOP candidates—and conducting the fight accordingly. Let us not approach the political struggle in any virginal spirit. In real life one is always compelled to make compromises—even after the establishment of socialism. The test is whether the compromises strengthen or weaken the battle against reaction. Munich was a compromise—and so was the Soviet-German non-aggression pact, but what a world of difference between these two compromises! And let no one tell me that the working class can "afford" to make compromises only after it has achieved power—not if he has read more than a few lines from the works of a man named Lenin.

Stop the Ballot Steal!

IT is a well-worn illusion. While it appears that the Flynn-Democratic machine is gunning for the Communist Party, the reality is that it guns for the franchise of every citizen of New York State.

The Communist balloting petition complied with every legal requirement. More than three times the necessary number of signatures to nominate Robert Thompson for Comptroller and Benjamin J. Davis, Jr. for Attorney-General was obtained. The attack of Flynn's henchman thus becomes not only an attack on the Communist Party but more specifically an attack against the whole concept of free elections. The fundamental democratic laws which these conspirators are attempting to withhold from the Communists can also be withheld from every citizen of the state.

This danger, serious enough in itself, begets another danger. It threatens to split the progressive coalition working for the defeat of the candidates of reaction, Dewey and Ives. In this way the right-wing Democrats play into the hands of their Republican counterparts. If we are to understand the Flynn move as a means of appeasing the tory Democrats, of tightening his machine control over his own reactionaries, we must also view it as a blow to the whole Democratic Party. Without the undivided support of all progressive elements of New York, the election of Mead and Lehman is seriously threatened.

The lawyers who are pressing the suit on behalf of Spencer Young, Democratic candidate for Comptroller, are not even bothering with legal grounds. They are relying more on their underhanded tactics of intimidation and pressure against individuals who have signed Communist nominating petitions. In this way they hope to invalidate enough of the signatures in any one of the up-state counties to knock out the entire Communist ticket. It is a dirty business. In Greece we see gunmen and armies settle electoral issues; here petition signers are called in and "told" to repudiate their signatures by city treasurers, heads of welfare departments, local judges and other officials. But the padded black-jack is as effective as the unpadded one and both destroy the rights of the people.

How shall it be? Will the legally nominated candidates be illegally removed from the ballot? Or will people of all political affiliations defend the rights of the Communist candidates, Robert Thompson and Benjamin J. Davis, Jr. and in this way defend their own important stake in free elections?

Write and wire your protests to Paul A. Fitzpatrick, State Democratic chairman; Sen. James M. Mead and Herbert H. Lehman, Democratic nominees for Governor and US Senator, Hotel Biltmore, N.Y.C. Demand too that Governor Dewey use his offices to protect the basic rights of the citizens of New York.—THE EDITORS.

CONSIDER the situation in New York State. The American Labor Party, which is based on the trade unions, especially those of the CIO, is the nucleus of the broad anti-monopoly party which on a national scale still lies in the future. However, the ALP is as yet a limited nucleus, embracing only a minority of the progressive-minded voters of the state. Most of these progressive-minded voters, despite the repeated surrenders of the Truman administration to the trusts and their GOP hatchet-men, continue to support the Democratic Party. Certain it is that the eventual new people's party will have to include at least a substantial number of such rank and file Democrats. To ignore their present level of development and to refuse a common electoral front with pro-labor or middle-of-the-road Democratic candidates would be not only to court certain Republican victory, but to weaken the possibility of influencing these Democratic voters in the direction of independent political action.

The ALP, therefore, while putting forward a few candidates from its own ranks (for example, Rep. Vito Marcantonio and Assemblyman Leo Isacson), in most instances is supporting Democratic candidates. One may debate the wisdom of particular choices (though such debate is pointless if it is conducted in the abstract rather than in terms of the concrete situation), but certainly no clear sighted progressive—least of all anybody who presumes to be a Marxist-Leninist—can challenge the necessity of the basic coalition strategy. And to reject a Mead

or Lehman because he doesn't talk like a Wallace is just as unrealistic as to reject a Wallace because he doesn't talk like a William Z. Foster.

In addition, the Communist Party as the party of the American working class whose ultimate goal, socialism, goes beyond the coalition program, is

appearing in this election as an independent force within the coalition. In New York it has put forward two candidates for state office, Robert Thompson for comptroller, and Benjamin J. Davis for attorney general. Unfortunately certain reactionary Democrats have resorted to foul play in an effort to rule the Communists off the ballot. Should they succeed, it would be a pyrrhic victory. For the removal of the Communist candidates, who are devoting their energies to the defeat of the entire Dewey ticket, would mean a serious weakening of the fight against GOP reaction in New York state and nationally.

I write this just before leaving for Chicago, where I shall attend the conference of progressives called by CIO-PAC, the Independent Citizens' Committee of the Arts, Sciences and Professions and the National Citizens' Political Action Committee. Chicago will also be the first stop on a speaking and writing trip that will take me to the West Coast. But I'll be back before election day. I believe the best way for New Yorkers to build the new people's party that America needs is

to roll up a big Communist vote and hundreds of thousands of votes for the candidates of the American Labor Party. If we do that, and act similarly in other states, the American people won't have to say; where to? what next? They'll know the answers.



Philip Murray



Claude Pepper

Konzal.

2. BYRNES MUST GO!

By JOHN STUART

HENRY WALLACE released a counter-flood. He gave voice to deepest anxieties. He sparked the energies of a disturbed people by telling them who it was and what it was that kept America teetering on the edge of catastrophe. But Stalin went further, for his answers to Werth, their timing and their impact over the globe, helped lift a thick pall of terror—a terror driving the confused, the passive, the inarticulate into the arms of the war-makers. Tersely he said there was no reason for war when millions, listening to hidden whispers, were led to believe there was. In an atmosphere of irrationality and hysteria, he was calm and confident. He again proved to the world that the policy of atomic bludgeoning was the work of criminal adventurers. It can no more succeed in solving the problems of peace than the atom bomb can decide the outcome of war. Stalin doused the flames made out of the tinder of falsehood, of provocation, of the incapacity of imperialists to unravel their internal dilemmas except through blood and hot steel.

But until American foreign policy is reversed and its administrators driven from the helm they will make every attempt to regain what ground they have lost. Standing at the head of the list for public purging is James F. Byrnes. He is among those figures in American history who have

blatantly betrayed a public trust by violating a national mandate. The reelection of Roosevelt in 1944 was based almost entirely on the evidence he provided throughout his years in office, especially during the war, that harmonious relations among the leading powers were indispensable to a secure peace. If the majority of voters were unconvinced, if they were doubtful of the worth of what Roosevelt was doing, they would have chosen Thomas Dewey. Yet by a twist of events the candidate whom the American people defeated has managed to see his foreign policies victorious.

We have now, instead of an unfolding of the Roosevelt heritage by men faithful to the national decision made two Novembers ago, a smashing of that heritage by men faithful only to the commands of the corporative brigands. The Cabinet has become a millionaires' club. With Truman hardly demurring, the presidency is ruled by monopoly's representatives who for years have milked the country of its treasures and given it in return nothing but tears and insecurity. The appointment of the millionaire Averell Harriman to the post held by Henry Wallace is symptomatic of the uninterrupted drift of the Truman administration toward the service of the robber barons. And despite the fact that there is only one Republican in the Cabinet the Republicans, through their alliance with the tarnished,

reactionary heads of the Democratic Party, have achieved virtual control and direction of US foreign policy. In terms of personalities the whole evil relationship is expressed in the political marriage between Byrnes and Vandenberg, Dulles and Connally.

The breaking of this marriage will help shatter the hold the moneyed tyrants have over America's foreign relations. The battle to divide them can take many forms and adopt many methods, among them the expulsion of Byrnes from office. As one of the leading architects of the policy of disaster he bears a large part of the guilt for:

1. The talk in military circles of a "preventive war" through use of the atom bomb; the bullying attitude that "we will sail our ships where we damned please"; the psychological terror directed against those who dare defy his foreign policy;
2. Encouraging the destruction of progressive forces in China, Greece, Indonesia, and assisting the fascists of Athens, Madrid, Nanking and Manila;
3. Fostering a policy of ringing the Pacific and Atlantic with military bases, thereby rousing the deepest suspicions of friendly countries;
4. Supporting and collaborating with British imperialism and its military in welding a western European bloc, among whose chief objectives is the rebuilding of Germany against the East;
5. Efforts to stifle the new European democracies;
6. The removal of Wallace from office by having Vandenberg, Connally and James Farley issue ultimatums to the White House from Paris;
7. Making America hideous in the eyes of peoples through-

out the world—people who desire nothing more than the right to determine their futures without the United States intervening, economically or politically;

8. His known hatred of the Negro people and his bitter prejudices against the trade unions and the aspirations of labor.

On all these counts the President must be shown that millions of Americans will no longer countenance Byrnes' leadership of the State Department. An unrelenting and successful campaign to have him removed from office will dramatize the desire for a change of policy and it will obstruct the unconditional surrender of the Executive to the bankers who are quietly winning State Department consent to remove even those remaining restrictions over their operations abroad. Byrnes' successor, whoever he may be, will have to take into account that his predecessor was ousted and that the same fate will await him if he practices the same policies albeit under another name.

We can no longer let the nation be doomed by the grand viziers of Wall Street, or its bi-partisan camarilla who deny the worker an extra dollar, who will not provide jobs at a living wage for the 1,750,000 unemployed veterans, who skyrocket the cost of food, who will not build homes for the homeless. The same practices they pursue here are indivisible from the practices they pursue abroad. Their patriotism is written on a dollar bill and Mr. Byrnes is foremost among them. Let him be discharged from office without honor. He will be missed only by the gilded and the well-heeled and all of us shall have a better chance to work out our lives in peace. Let the telegrams and letters and petitions flood the White House. *Byrnes must be fired!*

EMPTY HOUSES

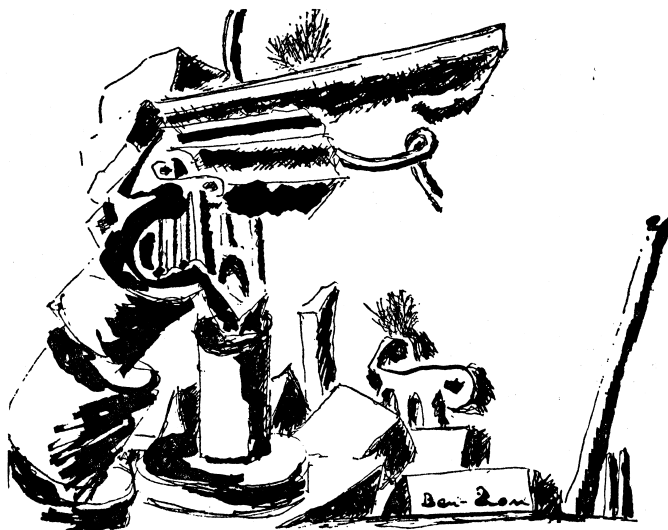
Coutances, July 1944.

The house at the crossroads is gutted.
It sits so quietly,
As quiet as the afternoon;
The long afternoon on the highroad.
Its neighbors gossip in their fashion,
Of football,
Conversation, and the slow
Miraculously rapid growth of children.
They ignore the empty house,
Lean together intimately from it,
Close their eyes.
It is not to be spoken of.

The empty house communicates with no one.
No one but the cow across the highroad.
The cow is also an empty house.
It hangs in the strong fork of a tree,
High above the highroad,
Lax and limp.
In the field,
Its fellows browse together amiably.
Their rumps sway in the summer sunlight,
Their soft tongues lave the grasses.
They make no sign to the cow in the tree.
It is not to be acknowledged.

By JULES ALAN WEIN

But in the afternoon,
And in the silent silvered night,
And in the days that follow on them,
The house and the cow
Scream across the highroad to each other.
The house screams out of emptiness.
The cow screams out of hollow eyes.



Ben-Zion.

PAUL BUNYAN: UNION MAN

Swede, Finn, Slav, Yankee, Negro and white—the coming of the union made these men brothers. A report on the International Woodworkers-CIO.

By KATHLEEN CRONIN

This is the second article in our current series, "Looking At Labor," the first of which dealt with the electrical and radio workers' union and was published in our September 27 issue.

THE Sawdust Empire is a vast land whose boundaries in the west extend south into the California redwoods and north into Alaska and British Columbia. On the sea slopes of the Cascades and the Coast Range are long logs, Douglas firs marching down the mountainsides into rain jungles of salal and fern. To the east, in the Inland Empire and the Klamath Basin, are short logs; and beyond that, more than a thousand miles beyond, are towns with legendary names where the saws still sing in the headrigs of Michigan and Minnesota mills. South of this lie the Virginia hardwoods, the turpentine hollows of the Deep South, and pine and more pine.

In spite of the wasteful cutting methods of the big operators in the industry's 300-year march from ocean to ocean, there still remain 385,000,000 acres of commercial forest within the United States alone. It has been estimated that more than one-tenth of our population depends on wood for a living. Next to agriculture it is our greatest single resource. In Oregon, more than half the manufacturing dollar is traceable to lumber. In Oregon, as in Washington and many sections of Canada and the South, labor is lumber.

Capitol of the Sawdust Empire is Portland, Oregon, and to this town, with its famous skidroad on Burnside Street, came on September 10 the Men of Wood to lay down their program for the coming year. It was their tenth convention, and the report of the credentials committee showed that the International Woodworkers of America-CIO had climbed out of the green defiles of the Western hills where it was born and was marching boldly on open shop strongholds in the South and East.

At the time the lumber workers went CIO (in 1937 at Tacoma, Washington) the union, then known as the Federation of Woodworkers, was receiving per capita taxes from some 25,000 members, of whom the Coopers and Shingle Weavers remained in the AFL. During the next two years, when the top officialdom in the Carpenters and Joiners was conniving with the operators to regain control of the woodworkers' dues dollar, membership figures wavered. But neither the lockouts which reached their peak in the historic three-year struggle of the plywood workers at the Malarky plant in Portland to retain their CIO membership, nor the NLRB hearings which for months cluttered the books of Oregon and Washington courts, succeeded in downing the new organization.

Membership figures quoted in the recent convention were in excess of 70,000. This marked a gain of more than 10,000 over the previous year, largely due to the strike won last June in British Columbia when lumber workers led by Harold Pritchett (international president until the immigration authorities refused to renew his visitor's permit in 1940) marched on the provincial capitol to secure a twenty-two percent wage increase.

"Organizational Resolution No. 3-C," whereby British Columbia woodworkers will match funds with the international to move on the 30,000 unorganized workers in Quebec province, and the IWA's share in Operation Dixie will bring additional thousands under the union banner in coming months. Proposals looking toward a merger of 37,000 furniture workers with the IWA which were adopted at the convention (actual amalgamation will take place next Fall when the two unions are slated to hold separate sessions in St. Louis) will do much toward making wood a powerful affiliate on the CIO roster.

However, according to J. E. Laux, international secretary, wood has a potential membership of 750,000. Of

these Pulp & Sulphite, the saw and hammer men (Big Bill Haywood's own) and about 30,000 sawmill workers in the Northwest Council are AFL. The IWA, which has jurisdiction over a majority of the nation's organized plywood and sawmill workers, all loggers, boom-men and rafters, box-shook and door and some paper mill and prefabrication plant workers, accounts for another 70,000. The rest are unorganized.

Woodworkers' wages range from the present \$1.10 minimum in Oregon and Washington to fifty cents and less per hour in unorganized areas. Negotiations looking toward a general pay increase in Big Fir and Pine have begun between the international Northwest Negotiating Committee and the Lumbermen's Industrial Relations Committee. Since the woodworkers' average annual earnings are minus the manhours lost from seasonal shutdowns, due to snow and the forest fire hazard in the camps and "semi-annual repair" in the mills, and from the fact that lumber has the highest accident frequency rate of any industry (64.65 in the over-all picture, with 81.95 for logging), at no time in their history, even on the Coast where pay scales are highest, have these workers succeeded in attaining an American standard of living. In Quebec, Alberta and the South their take-home pay entitles them to little better than a subsistence level. In marked contrast to the woodworkers' earnings are the profits made by the operators, which in 1944 showed a 1064 percent increase over the 1936-1939 base period. This was the highest percentage increase of any industry except coal. And profits continued to soar. The net profit of Harbor Plywood in the first quarter of 1946 was \$393,781, almost four times as much as for the corresponding quarter in 1945.

THE future of the IWA lies in the success of its negotiations, in its drive to bring the benefits of organization to the poorly-paid workers in



Sketch for a mural by Anton Refregier.

Eastern Canada and the Deep South, and most of all in its continued resistance to disruptionist tactics within its own ranks. That the woodworkers have faced this last need squarely is reflected in the fact that they turned thumbs down on Red-baiting in a historic statement of policy adopted on the third day of their convention. This read in part:

"Ours is a democratic organization. It is run by its members and for its members. We ask no man his national origin, his color, his religion or his political beliefs. It is enough for us that

he is a woodworker and that he believes in trade unionism."

Woodworkers have been called "Reds" by the operators for more than four decades. They have a tragic and colorful heritage of strike struggle. Old-timers at the convention spoke tenderly of Everett, Bogalusa, Centralia, Newberry, Seaside, and the Great Strike of 1935, which the Northwest Joint Strike Committee kept Abe Muir from selling out. The fact that the IWA has recently hammered out one of the best programs ever to come off its convention floors

was due in part to the work of old-timers who had trimmed strategy learned from the Wobblies to fit a streamlined age, and in part to the work of newcomers to wood, politically conscious youngsters like Craig Pritchett. When the "ayes" made the resolution calling for UN control of atomic energy part of the IWA program, the voice of this young delegate from Local 1-367, was loudest of all. His college had been sacrificed to a Tank Corps in Belgium and his fiancée, daughter of British trade unionists, had lost an eye in the blitz.

A lot of adjectives and a lot of floor work had gone into Resolution No 3-C, calling for the organization of Eastern Canada, but it was the report of Carl Hansen, Local M-441, describing conditions in Alberta—where loggers still carry blanket rolls, sleep in straw ticks and the "only shower bath is when it rains"—that piled up extra votes.

THE story of Rosella Sessoms, only woman organizer on the IWA payroll and the first Negro woman ever to attend a woodworkers' convention, is the story of Operation Dixie. The union has boosted wages in Virginia mills from thirty-five cents to fifty-seven cents per hour, Mrs. Sessoms said. Even more important, IWA organizers are persuading both Negro and white workers to pay as high as a \$5.81 poll tax "so we can carry our fight for democracy into the congressional elections." Negro and white workers from Southern districts voted solidly for the Political Action Committee-CIO.

Another newcomer whose voice counted at the convention was Roy Mah, young Chinese delegate from Local 1-118, Victoria, B. C. Mah's life history, more than that of any other delegate at the sawdust sessions, illustrates labor's stake in the peace. Separated from his mother at the age of eleven by the Canadian immigration laws, he grew up to wear the uniform of the country which, by refusing his mother entry, condemned her to die later of fever and pestilence in the Japanese-occupied province of Kwungtung. He was stationed with British Task Force 136 at an operational base on Ceylon when the war ended. Thirteen months later and half around the world Mah stood with Pritchett, Ted Doktor, Ilmar Koivunen, Karly Larsen, Roy Gann and



Sketch for a mural by Anton Refregier.

other stalwarts of wood for resolutions protesting seizure of Chinese trade unionist property by Chiang Kai-shek and calling for a World Federation of Trade Unions voice and vote in the United Nations.

The lumber workers, who are of diverse national origin (Scandinavian, Finnish and transplanted Yankee in the camps and Italian, Slavic, Japanese and white and black Colonial-American in the mills) have not always been kind to their minorities. At the time the operators were accomplishing their big steals in Wood under the Homestead and the Timber and Stone Acts, they were also importing Japanese workers for cheap labor in the camps. It was to their interest to exploit the differences not only between white and Japanese workers but between the migratory logger, who owned nothing but his bedroll and his dream, and the "home guard" sawmill hand, who lived in conditions bordering on serfdom in "company towns" scattered from Maine to Oregon.

The coming of the union made these men brothers. IWA locals with Japanese members are on record that returnees from the relocation camps and Nisei veterans shall be restored to

their jobs without loss of seniority. In Southern Pine, where Big Bill Haywood in 1912 found Negro and white members of the Timber Workers' Brotherhood holding separate meetings "because it was against the law for white and black men to meet together," these workers now sit side by side in union halls and sleep in adjoining cots in the dormitory of the CIO Labor College, at Monteagle, Tennessee. And IWA delegates at their Tenth Convention voted solidly for resubmission of the Fair Employment Practice Act in Congress.

*These are the ones the land cannot forget,
Her straight strong sons, tall as the fir trees are.
(The price of two-by-fours is blood and sweat.)
Faller and buckler, union labor leader,
Boom-man and sawmill stiff and plywood worker.
Unsung heroes out of the Sawdust Country,
Hard-biceped, handsome, thumbing their nose at fate,
Sons of the Skidroad, tall in the Western rain,
Blue-collared workers who know how to dream and hate.*

portside patter

by **BILL RICHARDS**

Livestock men complain that the OPA is the cause of the black market. Even this beef isn't legitimate.

Governor Warren's appearance on the Charlie McCarthy program may have been the start of a presidential campaign. The Republicans are progressing—they could probably find worse candidates than Mr. McCarthy.

Henry Kaiser has hinted that there may be something rotten in those shipyards not yet probed. Pennsylvania says PEW!

London newspaperman Alexander Werth is being complimented on his Stalin interview. With everyone so conscious of iron curtains nobody even thought of knocking at the front door.

The Democratic Party has evidently decided that the November elections may be somewhat tasteless unless they add Pepper now.

FREDERICK ENGELS: PHILOSOPHER

"Every question he touched took on new meaning, new sharpness and clarity." A discussion of the work of Marx's closest collaborator.

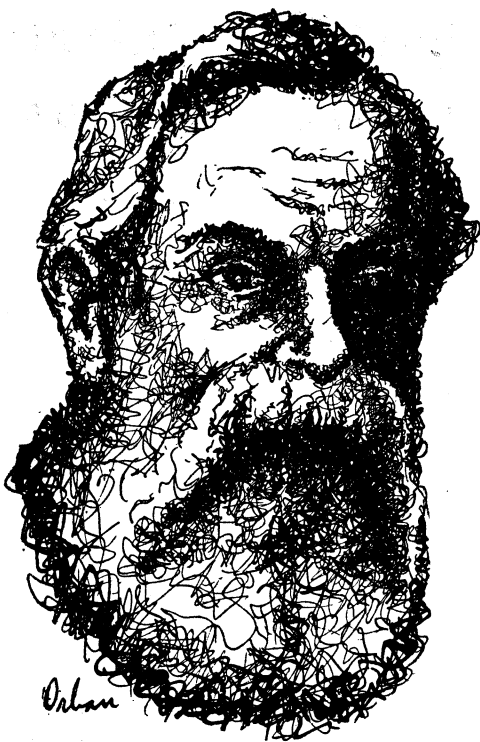
By **HOWARD SELSAM**

FEW professional philosophers—no philosophy textbooks or histories by bourgeois scholars—mention Frederick Engels. Some few refer to Karl Marx, generally as an "also ran" among the Young Hegelians. Occasionally they carry a word or two on another German philosopher by the name of Eugen Duhring. Yet many more people have read and will read Engels' book against Duhring than otherwise would ever have heard Duhring's name. Duhring is immortal solely because Engels went to work on him, and did some exciting thinking in the process. The verdict of history, of progressive working-class and classless culture, will be that, with Karl Marx,

Frederick Engels made the most important contributions to philosophy of any thinker during the second half of the nineteenth century. Engels was able to do this because he combined remarkable theoretical gifts with the social-historical perspective of the modern proletariat. In addition, he also had the benefit of joint philosophical work with Marx during the middle of the 1840's and of the closest continued association with Marx thereafter. He devoted much time and tremendous effort to philosophy and the sciences, both natural and social. Every question he touched took on new meaning, new sharpness and clarity, and he left it only when he had achieved a new in-

sight into an important philosophical issue.

Engels' philosophical comments and analyses are everywhere in his writings. Whether he is studying the housing question, the origin of the family, or the peasant wars in Germany, his profound theoretical sense illuminates these studies with vivid insights into the nature of the world, the nature of man and his life history. His three chief philosophical works are *Anti-Duhring*, *Feuerbach* and *Dialectics of Nature*. In these, as in his correspondence and everywhere else, one finds masterpieces of philosophical analysis. He tries to see everything in its relation to other things, in its process and development,



Frederick Engels

as reflecting and revealing the nature of the universe and man's place in it. His curiosity is insatiable. He loves facts, but facts alone are never enough for him. They are empty without understanding, as theory is blind without facts. He is forever concerned with method, believing that if we use the right methods we will ever more closely approximate the truth, and if we use wrong methods we will ever depart farther from it.

The center of Engels' interest is always man. He is a humanist, in the best sense of the word—not in its modern corrupted sense that blurs class distinctions and makes all progress depend on "men of good will," and on abstract moral ideals. Engels feels immensely at home in the universe. He despises all dualisms which make a sharp and unbridgeable separation of man and nature, appearance and reality, mind and matter. If man is a natural product of this material world, then he truly belongs to it and it to him. If it produced man this once that we definitely know of, in our little corner of the universe, it certainly is able to have done it many times before and doubtless do it many times again. Man on this earth has a beginning and an end, but Engels believes, in full cognizance of all the accidents involved, that by the same necessity which caused life and man to arise

here, it must happen elsewhere. For whatever matter is, it can and does under certain conditions produce life and thinking beings, and these are as truly revelatory of its nature as are stars and atoms.

I have gone into this question at this point because it reveals more of Engels' stature as a philosopher than perhaps anything else. Never, before Marx and Engels developed dialectical materialism, had a philosopher so fully and clearly seen man as natural and nature as material. Either they took man out of nature and set him over against nature (the hostile, alien universe of mechanical materialists and Bertrand Russell) or they made nature anthropomorphic by attributing human desires and purposes to the world as a whole. Predominantly, of course, they created a God in man's image and then derived man in the image of God. By however different means, philosophers either found a place for man in the world by defying or humanizing the world, or they wrote the world off as hostile to man, or wrote man off as of no significance to the world.

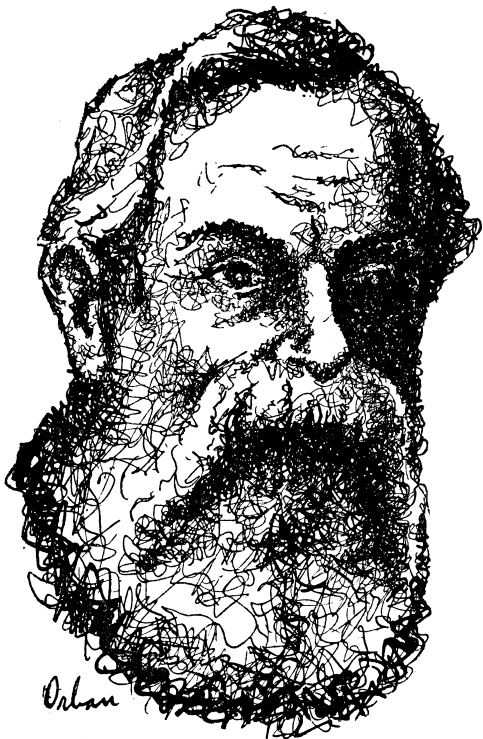
I believe that Frederick Engels, more clearly than any previous thinker with the exception of Marx, through his sound grasp of materialism and his profound mastery of dialectics, was able to dismiss all spiritualistic, anthropomorphic, idealistic conceptions of the world, while at the same time avoiding that separation, that antagonism, of man and nature that had characterized previous materialism. If matter is what matter does, then to know man and all his works is as much a part of knowing matter as is physics or chemistry. Engels' position can be summed up in the statement that he regarded man as a child of a material world, but at the same time recognized that it is such a world as can have such a child.

ONE of Engels' best known and much misunderstood statements on philosophy is: with the development of a completely scientific approach to all phenomena, which, of course, can come only in a classless society, philosophy will come to an end. Nothing will remain of it save dialectics as the study of the laws of motion of nature and of thought.

This doctrine might appear to be in contradiction with principles he employs in his discussion of the family and his approach to ethics. Marriage and the modern family, Engels believed,

is based on individual sex love, "romantic" love as we sometimes call it, and this is a product of the bourgeois world. Socialism, he believed, would not destroy the family, but rather would free it from the shackles bourgeois society places upon it, so that for the first time there could really be marriages for everyone based and maintained solely on love and mutual self-respect of equal partners. In ethics he believed that progress had been made, in theory and practice, but that a truly human morality could arise only when class antagonisms had been overcome and forgotten in practical life (*Anti-Duhring*, p. 105). It might appear that he employs different principles in speaking of the "end of philosophy." In reality, this is not the case.

First, we must understand Engels' conception of philosophy. It is the general theory of the nature of the world, of man and his knowledge. This has been a continual process and has made great progress. Often philosophers were ahead of science and anticipated new scientific developments. The trouble is, however, they did this only speculatively, only imaginatively, however good their reasons. But the very success of this venture, together with the division of our world into the divine and human, the mental and physical, the theoretical and practical, based on and derived from the class divisions in society, led philosophers to regard themselves as above science, as having a special, a "higher" way of knowing than that of the scientist with his painstaking seeking of facts and linking them together. It is philosophy in this sense, philosophy standing over and above science, as the pure theoretical construction of the world, that Engels believes will come to an end. It is already coming to an end insofar as science increasingly discovers the real connections among phenomena where philosophy had only speculated on them. It can really come to an end only when there are no class forces or class interests concerning themselves with something other than a truly scientific viewpoint towards all phenomena of nature and society. Then there will no longer be need for a special body of men to fill in the interstices of our world by means of speculative philosophy because science will increasingly be doing this in a concrete, material way. Then there will no longer be need for a special



Frederick Engels

intellectual class to create myths and illusions about human life and its conditions. Then there will be no more philosophy as we have known it—no systems of the world apart from the developing body of scientific knowledge.

In that sense philosophy will come to an end. But if we regard philosophy as the love of wisdom (which is the Greek origin of the word) and understand real wisdom as scientific knowledge, then philosophy in that sense will not end but will simply have come into its own. Hegel much earlier had said that philosophy has long enough been the love of wisdom—it is time for it to become wisdom. When the scientist is armed with more than the particular facts of his science, with a truly scientific or materialist approach to phenomena and with an understanding of dialectics, he will be a philosopher in the best sense of the word. There will be no philosophers as speculative theorists and abstract world-system-builders. Everything that is sound and progressive in contemporary positivism, logical positivism or logical empiricism, is contained in

Engels' teachings. The difference is, as Lenin was later to show, that the positivists want to keep some place for faith and so seek to get rid of materialism and thus to limit science only to some features of our world.

A THIRD remarkable contribution of Engels, and one might well put it first because it underlies all others, is his acute and original understanding of the nature of modern idealism. He was the first to see so sharply the identity of idealism and spiritualism in all its forms. He saw the identity of the doctrine of ideas of Berkeley, of the "transcendental" metaphysics of Kant, of the Absolute Idea of Hegel, with the basic teachings of Christianity and all other religions.

Seeing this clearly, Engels was able to show as no one had before him (remembering that Marx and Engels can never be clearly separated), that the one all-pervasive conflict throughout the history of philosophy, the one sharp dividing line through the welter of nineteenth century thought, was that between materialism and idealism. There is no middle ground—one is

either a materialist or an idealist. This recognition cut through a maze of contradictions and confusions, annoying liberals (and idealists) no end. For just as they want to stand above the class struggle and side now with one, now with the other, so too in philosophy they seek to see some good in materialism, some good in idealism. Or (and this too has its counterpart in social struggles) they argue that both sides are equally and absurdly "metaphysical" and dismiss them with "a plague on both your houses."

Exactly what is this dividing line, this basic distinction between philosophies? "The great basic question of all philosophy," wrote Engels, "especially of modern philosophy, is that concerning the relation of thinking and being." (*Feuerbach*, p. 30) This is the question of the relation of spirit to nature. It is the question: which is primary, which came first, spirit or nature? In theological terms it is the question: "Did God create the world or has the world been in existence eternally?" (*Feuerbach*, p. 31)

Engels continues: "The answers which the philosophers gave to this question split them into two great camps. Those who asserted the primacy of spirit to nature and, therefore, in the last instance, assumed world creation in some form or other—(and among the philosophers, Hegel, for example, this creation often becomes still more intricate and impossible than in Christianity)—comprised the camp of idealism. The others, who regarded nature as primary, belong to the various schools of materialism. These two expressions, idealism and materialism, primarily signify nothing more than this; and here also they are not used in any other sense."

It is impossible to overestimate the importance, the revolutionary nature, of this doctrine. It is to philosophy what the concept of class struggle is to social science. And it is resisted bitterly for the same fundamental reasons. The whole structure of bourgeois philosophical systems, from Hume and Kant to Santayana and Dewey, topples with this recognition of the fundamental opposition of materialism and idealism. It forces the issue on just those basic questions the bourgeois philosophers try to avoid. For example, is the brain the indispensable organ of thought or does the brain, like all so-called physical things, exist only in and for thought? Do our ideas reflect real-



Ego Aguirre

Aguirre.



Aguirre.

nm *October 8, 1946*

ity, or is reality a product of our ideas? Can we have, through our senses and thinking, real knowledge of the world, or is the world something of a different nature from us and unknowable? Is truth the correspondence, agreement, reflection of the world in our ideas or is it the mere coherence (pragmatic or otherwise) among our ideas?

Engels' doctrine radically transforms philosophy; it brings the class struggle into philosophy. It insistently interrupts interminable and learned discussions with the query: Which side are you on? Which comes first, which is primary, matter or spirit? Lenin, building on Engels' teaching, was the first to see in our own century that this issue of materialism or idealism was precisely the issue that the most popular philosophical schools—pragmatism, empirio-criticism, logical empiricism, and all the revived forms of the teaching of Hume—were trying to evade. And they were evading it because they were against materialism and at the same time unable openly to espouse idealism.

Working people who look for theory find little difficulty in understanding and accepting Engels' doctrine. Perhaps this is so because it parallels so well their own experience in capitalist society. For intellectuals it is often exceedingly difficult, but when they do understand it, they find it clarifies every philosophical question, lights up traditional obscurities, cuts like a knife through pervasive confusions—but offers a handicap to job-security in our universities.

ENGELS' next great contribution is to the theory of knowledge. The problem of how we can know the external world has lain like a dead weight on philosophy ever since John Locke sought to show that there was no such problem. In the separation of man and nature discussed earlier there was inextricably involved the separation of mind and its ideas from matter, now called "the external world." The one was set over against the other, and in the mechanical materialist tradition from Locke to Condillac, there were two fundamental questions concerning knowledge. First, how do ideas get into the mind from the action of bodies outside?—the mind being conceived as completely passive. Second, once the ideas are in, how do we know that they reflect, represent, correspond truly to the things outside?

Idealism, from Berkeley to Kant, Fichte and Hegel, took advantage of the materialist dilemma. It sought, for what were ultimately religious motives, to solve the problem of knowledge by denying the materiality of the world altogether. Engels clearly saw the impossibility and confusions of both positions. On one side, man must be seen as in and of nature and his knowledge as an active process derived from his activity in satisfying his wants. On the other, the idealist side, the real problem of knowledge is evaded by having God give us our ideas, as in Berkeley, or by Hegel's method of making the objective world a product of an "absolute mind." This made it easy to show that our minds could know the world because it is a mental creation to begin with.

It is especially in his brilliant short work on the philosophy of Feuerbach that Engels handles these questions, though a section of his introduction to the English edition of *Socialism, Utopian and Scientific*, also deals with the question of knowledge. Engels' chief affirmations are four in number:

1. The world is knowable. Against all mysticism and skepticism, against any "thing-in-itself," Engels finds man, through his senses and his reason, and by the methods of the sciences, able to know the world of which he is a part, without any reservations. Objectively, the world is knowable because it is a material world operating in accordance with the laws of matter in motion. Subjectively, we can know it because we are part of it, not something distinct. This stands in sharpest contrast to the major currents of modern philosophy from Hume and Kant to Russell and Dewey. It reaffirms on a higher level the position of such earlier progressive thinkers as Bacon, Descartes and Spinoza.

2. Practice lies at the root of all knowledge. Man learns through doing, through having to acquire objective knowledge of the real world to satisfy his needs. Knowing is not a theoretical but a practical relation we stand in to the world. Necessity, not intellectual curiosity, is the mother of knowledge, and practice its father. As Marx had said: "The doctrinaire professor represents the relations of man and nature from the very outset not as practical relations—that is, those founded on action, but as *theoretical*. . . ." But as he saw, men do not begin by standing in theoretical relations to the objects of the world. They

do not "stand" in any relation. Like other animals, they begin by eating and drinking, by functioning actively to satisfy their needs by taking possession of objects of the outside world. "Consequently," he concluded, "they begin with production."

3. Our knowledge is true when it adequately reflects the nature of things. But things are infinitely complex and are in constant process. Therefore any truth we can have is in process too, is constantly enlarging, deepening, developing. But at any time our knowledge is true only to the extent that it does reflect and correspond to objective reality. Engels holds this against all comers. And it is his insistence on this more than anything else that annoys the Sidney Hooks and all those who wish to "correct" Marxism in the light of the pragmatism of John Dewey. Engels is stubborn about this. He seems to be the first to see so clearly that the correspondence theory of truth is the touchstone of a materialist philosophy.

4. Practice is the test of truth. Just as knowledge begins with practice, so it is in practice that we prove the truth of our ideas. It is in practice, it is by doing things, making things, that we prove that our ideas correctly reflect objective reality. There is no other way. We know that a theory is true, we are able to prove the correctness of our conception of a natural process, when we can make it ourselves, can bring it into being out of its conditions and use it for our own purposes in the bargain. (*Feuerbach*, p. 32.)

Today we could not find a more striking example than the atomic bomb. For our ability to make it, to split the atom in accordance with a plan and to release a predetermined amount of energy, proves the validity of our theories of the atom as developed over the past fifty years. Pragmatists, too, talk of practice in connection with truth, but they conceive it as subjective experience, while Engels is always thinking of human social activity—agriculture, industry, technology and so forth.

While concerning the theory of knowledge as everywhere else it is neither possible nor profitable to separate Engels and Marx, the fact remains that it is in Engels' writings that we find the fullest development and most explicit statements of the problem. Today, when one reads Engels' clear and simple formulations about knowledge and truth one cannot but



"Waterfront," by James L. Wells.

New Age Gallery.

marvel at the curious perversity of the overwhelming majority of the academic philosophers of our century who exercise the utmost ingenuity in keeping themselves befogged. And this in spite of the fact that Lenin in 1908, in his *Materialism and Empirio-Criticism*, so beautifully developed Engels' doctrines and applied them to some of the major theoretical and scientific problems of our time.

ENGELS made a great many more contributions of philosophical importance, one of which is so outstanding that it cannot be left out of even this short discussion. I refer to his analysis of the meaning of human freedom. Few passages of all Marxist writings are better known than that from *Anti Duhring* beginning: "Hegel was the first to state correctly the relation between freedom and necessity." (p. 130.)

Engels was the first to give a full-fledged materialist conception of what kind of freedom men have and how they get it. But first a little historical background is necessary. Spiritualists and idealists had solved the problem of freedom by endowing man (or rather having the Creator do it) with a free will—a will that could decide one thing or another independently of all natural causes. This, of course, took man's will completely out of the natural world and made it live in imaginary independence of all nature's laws. The materialists, opposing this but not having a dialectical approach, denied human freedom altogether and

tended to make man a mere puppet, entirely determined in all his thoughts and actions by outer forces acting blindly upon him.

Engels saw both positions as absurdly unreal. Man is not a passive creature of his environment but himself acts upon and in part creates his environment. Insofar as he understands natural laws, including economic and social laws, and the psychological laws of his own being, he is able to utilize these laws for his own purposes. He is free to the extent that he can fashion the conditions of his life, to the extent that he knows where he wants to go and how to get there. But such freedom is obviously a historical product. It is not given to man as a biological or spiritual heritage when he first assumes human form any more than it is given the new-born babe. It is acquired by man in the course of his development. Its foundation is knowledge of natural laws and the power to utilize that knowledge to achieve his ends. Man is not free, for example, when he is in poverty—whether that poverty is due to insufficient technological mastery of nature or insufficient mastery and control of economic and political processes. Men are free to the extent that they can master natural and social processes to fulfill their needs and aspirations.

For Engels the final test of freedom lies in man's ability to make his own history after his own heart within the limits of objective possibility. This, he recognized, men heretofore had not been able to do, or only in a very

limited way. That is why he and Marx sometimes referred to all past history as man's pre-historic period. It was not yet history as a conscious human product. The goal of Marxism, of scientific socialism, is that socialist organization of society that will enable men to make their history instead of being made by history. This is for Engels the direction of social evolution. This is progress—ever greater freedom for men to attain their ends, to fulfill their potentialities, through the knowledge of natural law and its utilization in practice. In what startling contrast this doctrine stands to the current reactionary and confused notions of freedom of contemporary bourgeois apologists anyone can see for himself by reading the daily press or such books as Hayek's *Road to Serfdom*.

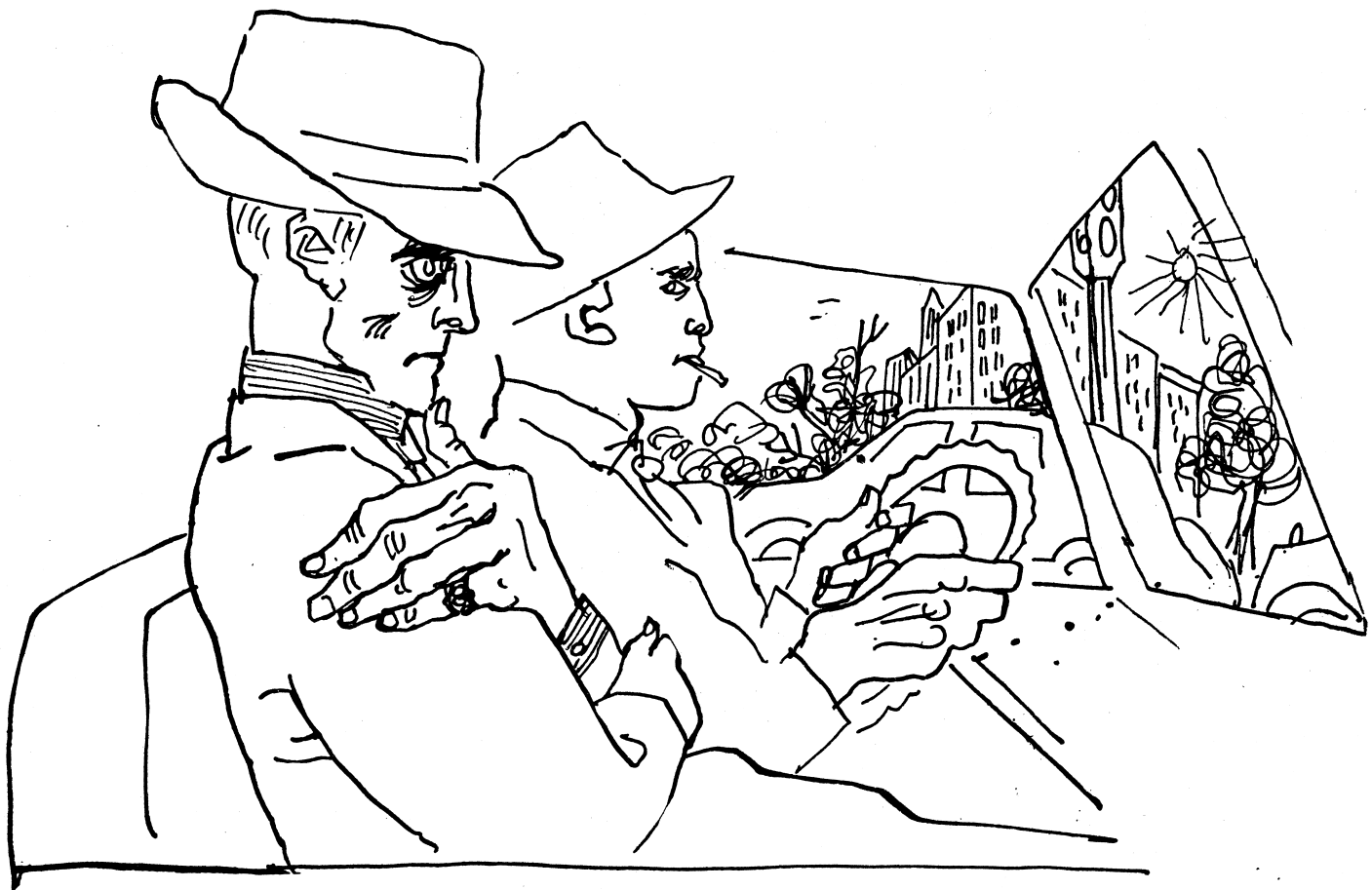
EVEN from this brief survey of his philosophical teachings it is clear that Frederick Engels was an outstanding philosopher and belongs among the great. He is part and parcel of the classic tradition too. By that I mean that he was no narrow sectarian, pursuing special whims and fancies of his own, spun out of his own head. In terms both of the problems he dealt with and the solutions he offered he belongs to, and is inseparable from, the tradition of the great masters from Democritus and Aristotle to Spinoza and Hegel. He was perfectly aware of this himself, even though at the same time he recognized that it was his special function to bring this tradition to a close and to start man's theory of the world on a new, a scientific path.

If our generation of philosophers had gone to school with Engels, had studied him with the diligence lavished on a Hume or Kant, we would not have the sterility of Dewey, Russell and Santayana, but our philosophy would have been immeasurably enriched, both in relation to the sciences and to social life. But Engels would warn us at this point not to expect the bourgeoisie to be proletarians or their theorists to embrace a working class point of view. They cannot be materialist and dialectical any more than they can afford the luxury of a genuine social science. But we of the working class have the special responsibility and privilege of reading and studying Frederick Engels. Ours is the task of continuing and developing his heritage in the interests both of sound theory and of world progress.



"Waterfront," by James L. Wells.

New Age Gallery.



THE LAST DAY OF PRETTY ROSS

"His tired hand eased into his pocket for a coin. The wad of bills was in the way. His thin fingers fumbled for the hard touch of a dime."

A Short Story by MILTON BLAU

Illustrated by Henry Boyd.

THE long black limousine shot out in front of the squat blue truck and cut it off as it swung left around the corner into Central Park West.

"Who's chasing you?" Pretty asked in his thick voice. He pushed himself up straight again. "You crazy bum."

"Take it easy," Mick said in an offended tone, "all the paint's still on this load, ain't it?"

"Told ya to drive slow. If ya wanna be cute wait till you got your broad with ya."

"Whatja get a big job like this for anyway?"

"I like it."

"I don't."

"Who asked ya?"

Mick didn't answer. He knew Pretty well and he could sense the beginning of anger in the even voice in the back of the car. Mick rolled slowly toward

the red light and shifted smoothly as it blinked green.

Pretty sat stiffly on the grey upholstered seat. He watched the buildings as they skipped past the window. It was getting warm out and it had made him feel tired—more tired than he generally was.

When the car had nosed its way through the eighties Mick slowed down to pick out the right number. The tires rubbed against the curb. Mick winced; he was afraid Pretty would sound off about it. Mick pushed out from behind the wheel. When he walked around to the sidewalk Pretty was standing there picking a hair off his coat. He had left the door open again.

Mick watched Pretty as he sampled the spring air. Pretty's thin hand stroked the broad lapel of his coat. He did this for what seemed to be a long

time. Mick slammed the door. Pretty looked at him sharply.

Mick looked down at the sidewalk nervously.

"When do ya want me to pick ya up, Pretty?"

Pretty broke out a pack of butts and offered one to Mick. They lit up.

"We got to meet at Charlie's six o'clock," Pretty said with his eyes far down the street. "You pick up Big Ed and Sam the Round. Have 'em at Charlie's at five. Tell Charlie to throw them a steak while they're waitin'. After you get done with them you come for me. I'll be sittin' in the Park up by the Circle."

"Something up, Pretty?"

"What'd you say?"

"Nothin', I didn't say nothin'."

"That's what I thought." Pretty looked down at the white wall tires which pressed the curb. "Get those

clean," he said, "and bring me back a carnation."

"What color?"

"White. White, you jerk!" Mick got quickly into the car because he knew that Pretty was angry. The limousine roared off. As Pretty watched him cowboy in and out among the other cars he thought that what Mick needed was a little time in jail to wise him up, the silly kid.

WHEN Pretty opened the door he was annoyed because it felt so heavy to push. It had not been that way a couple of months ago. Now everything was hard; walking, talking, and he had to lay off women.

Pretty eased himself into a soft brown leather chair in the waiting room. He had come a few minutes early because he enjoyed sitting here. There was something nice about the pictures on the wall. He liked the big one of the guy in a tall red hat and fancy floppy clothes—some kind of a soldier, he thought. The guy's eyes were strange—like Big Ed's.

A woman turned the pages of a magazine noisily. Pretty got the feeling that she wasn't reading, wasn't even looking at the pictures. Just turning. She wore good clothes. Pretty priced her fur jacket at about a grand and a half; something to knock around in. There was a small white handkerchief in her hand into which she coughed frequently. Her face was thin and her legs were fat.

The nurse came out and asked the woman to go in. "Good afternoon, Mr. Ross," she said to Pretty. "The doctor will see you in a moment." The door tapped closed after them and it became very quiet in the leather room with the pictures. Pretty lifted a magazine from the table at his elbow. Almost all the pictures at the beginning of the magazine showed the wreckage of buildings and people. There were boys and girls in dirty, torn clothing and people who were as thin as skeletons. The starved people made Pretty wet his lips, not because it made much of a difference to him that they were dying but because it reminded him of his own body and made him wonder if he were not going too.

Toward the back of the magazine in the movie reviews he saw the holy face of Anyse Court. She had just scored another hit. Her big brown eyes dripped the sadness for which she was famous. He had never liked her. She

had been good in bed but phony—a marvellous sluttish phony: her and her "love me forever and when are you going to introduce me to The Lucky?" On the glossy paper her face was holy.

The door opened and the woman came out and the nurse followed. The white handkerchief daubed at the woman's eyes and as she passed the flesh on her legs shook with her step.

"Will you step inside, please, Mr. Ross?" the nurse said in her high, starched voice. Pretty got up and followed her through the door, which she held open behind her until he had cleared the entrance.

Pretty reached across the desk to shake the doctor's hand. He plopped his hat on the desk and sat down. The doctor took off his eye-glasses and pointed them at the ceiling as he spoke.

"Your condition is very serious, Mr. Ross."

"Yeah. I know."

"Why haven't you gone to the sanitarium?"

"Because you didn't know why you were sending me."

The doctor shuffled the papers before him; it reminded Pretty of the warden up in Ossining. The warden had done the same thing when he had told Pretty that his parole had not been granted. Pretty watched the doctor as he squinted at the charts and X-rays before him. Pretty knew that he was about to be offered a backdoor-commute. He had to smile because he was sure that the doctor was thinking about the big fee he was about to lose.

"What's the score?" Pretty asked evenly.

"You will have to go away to rest for a long time. If you do not——" The doctor shrugged his shoulders.

"Come clean, doc. If I go away how long will I last?"

"With complete rest and competent treatment—at least a year."

"If I don't go?"

"That's difficult to say: from week to week, day to day."

"Anytime."

"Yes, Mr. Ross, anytime."

"That's a pretty cold deck you're handing me." Pretty took one of the doctor's cigarettes. "When I came here they told me you were the big gee in the lung line. Is that right?"

"I have a certain reputation."

"Do you know any one bigger than you? I can pay anything."

"It's hardly a matter of money."

"Look. If you can think of someone who knows more than you I can see you riding in a new Lincoln."

"I appreciate your generosity, Mr. Ross, but your condition can no longer be remedied by medicine."

"OK," Pretty said and blew a cloud of smoke across the desk to the doctor. He laughed. "Too bad, doc—if you were a little smarter I would have fixed you up right. Too bad."

Pretty stopped at the nurse's desk to pay for the visit. He gave the nurse a hundred for herself. She began to thank him but he was already at the door.

PRETTY ROSS walked slowly downtown. He walked on the Central Park side of the street so he could smell the trees. The bird noises tangled with the traffic noises and it was impossible for him to hear his breathing. He wanted to listen to his breathing to hear for himself what it was that was killing him.

His grey trousers stilted out, flopping smartly from side to side, eating up the sunny pavement. He could feel the bones grinding in their sockets up in his hips someplace. None of these parts, not the legs, not the arms, seemed to belong to him. They were hooked into his emaciated body like dry pieces of board. It was all in his lungs, this business which was melting the flesh from his body. Pretty had to laugh because he couldn't see his lungs and the people who watched him pass could only see his fine coat and the rare quality of the grey suit which covered his thin legs. Only his face, sharp now, and so drawn that his eyes appeared to stare, spoke of his ill health. It was a lousy way to get paid off, he thought.

Pretty looked up at the street marker: it was Sixty-Eighth Street. He had walked only a few blocks and he was tired. He breathed heavily as he lit a cigarette.

A woman asked him for a light. She smiled and said something about what a fine day it was. Pretty said something too, and walked on. Even if he had not been so tired he would not have given her a play. She reminded him of the fur-racket days when you used to shake down the boss and bang the wife. Her kind used to stumble all over themselves in those days to sleep with a gangster, or sometimes, for variety, with a prize fighter.

When Pretty reached the beginning

of the park he felt that he was ready to cave. He eased himself slowly into the lap of one of the green benches. The sun was out strong; it spilled through the naked branches of a budding tree. Pretty spread his fingers out along his thighs where the sun was warming his dark blue coat. He liked this; it reminded him of a big feed in a classy joint. Everything in the park was laid out just so. Even when he had sat down it had seemed as if a waiter had pushed a chair under him and the sun had fallen quickly across his thighs like a white napkin. He closed his eyes for a second. He listened as the impartial air rumbled up his nose and fell into the infested pits of his lungs.

The hotel windows sparkled down at him. Pretty grunted out a chuckle and wondered how the nights of his life might be divided among these stone castles with the long rugs lapping through the hallways. So many women. Pretty closed his eyes again. Little dreams began to dive through his pink lids with rainbow splashes.

“ONE day a bum and the next day a baron,” he could hear his mother say when he had alibied how he had got his first hundred-dollar suit. His father had known at once what had happened and he had stopped speaking to him. He had forbidden his wife to take any money from Pretty and she hadn't, except for two occasions in the Thirties when the old man wasn't working. Since the time of the new suit until the time of his father's death, not a word had passed between them. They were good people, Pretty thought in his dream, but blind, very blind. It was for laughs; all for laughs. They just couldn't understand. All life is a racket. You just had to make up your mind which end you were going to be on: the hitting or the getting hit.

Pretty thought he would have liked to have his father sitting on the bench with him to tell him the truth of things. He would have liked to tell him of the judges, the mayors, the legislators and the police forces they had bought. He wanted to prove that the life his father had believed in was crooked from top to bottom and that you were legal or as illegal as you had money to pay for it. But the dreams kept dancing in and his father, his mother and the tenement-lined street disappeared.

Somewhere Pretty saw himself throwing five grand to a bookie. Then he sat down and squirted his column of smoke into the air around the ring. The fighters moved quickly, jerkily. One of them exhaled noisily through his nose. The flesh-catch-leather rhythm plopped through the ropes into the tobacco smoke. Blood from the nose. The round markers blinking merrily. A skinny eye. A fat lip. Bell. Bell.

The sun got warmer; Pretty unbuttoned his coat. His heavy silk tie spilled out on his suit and the maroon vines on it seemed to blossom out.

It flies so nice, Pretty thought, as the sparrow fluttered through the branches. He listened to it squeaking and tried to find where it had perched through his half-open eyes. There was a smile on Pretty's face and he chuckled through the smile because he wanted to stop smiling but his mouth seemed stiff and wouldn't close. He laughed through his smile; his lips loosened by themselves and fell back into the line of his mouth.

A couple of kids were playing a short distance away. They had pieces of chalk in their hands and they were playing that nought-cross-cross game. The little girl had fat, brown curls which hopped around when she moved. Against the grass her curls looked like a set of red dice thrown on the green felt of a game table. The boy screwed up his face and pulled his lip before putting down a mark in one of the empty squares.

It was very strange, Pretty thought when the kids went away, how you could remember everything about being a kid—how the rain came down, how the air smelled, how the ice-wagon sounded as it bounced along the stones. Also it was strange how when you had grown up the places and the times blurred. Pretty tried to think into the years of the blur. Card tables, night clubs, pay-offs, clothes, ball games, prize fights, race tracks; split up and punctuated by important jobs and cute maneuvers. There were the guys who were dumped: their faces came back with the heavy terror on them or the unsuspecting swing of their shoulders working down the street. Pretty's feet moved involuntarily under the bench and he felt his mouth lift up. His mind seemed to reach out with grey hands into the indistinct past and covered the memories of murders with breasts and thighs

and women and more women and the niagara sound of endless bathrooms.

For a moment Pretty could see a man climbing up the tall electric sign of a hotel which leaned over the park. Then the sun, brighter now, watered his eyes. He sneezed. When he looked again the man had disappeared.

PRETTY wanted a cigarette. He watched his hand, thin and sunlamp yellow, move familiarly into his coat pocket. Then the smoke curled from his mouth up the wide, grey brim of hat where it flattened out and scrambled off the edges into the sunshine. Everything seemed very nice, and Pretty did not want to move.

A squirrel stopped near him. Pretty heard himself mumble to it, but it just squatted there on its rump. The squirrel juggled a peanut between its paws. The shell crunched and fell to the ground. Pretty could hear the sound of the squirrel running and then the small scratches as it clawed its way up into a tree.

There was the federal judge; it had cost fifty grand to set him and so much per each right judgment. He was a good guy. Understood how the cards were stacked. He played a good game of bridge, too. Pretty remembered how his gut would flop over his belt and the trouble hizzoner used to have with the women because of the way he was shaped. The judge had a nice family too. Educated guy; he had read a lot of the books in his big library. Pretty had admired the judge. There was nothing about which the old guy couldn't give a small talk.

Now, how was that? A guy is legal and with everything a guy should have: and he's got nothing and sells himself to reach for something. But for what? The judge's big laugh suddenly sounded in Pretty's ear. Pretty could see the big belly shake. It was like the time the judge had caught him stripping down his daughter with a cold stare. He had laughed. “Go ahead, go ahead if you can arrange for it,” the judge had said, “She's quite legal.” Big laugh. Big gut.

A breeze began to push through the park. It stumbled along the grey paths and tripped on the shoelaces of grass. In the tree over his head it made a creaking sound and the branches swished. Pretty felt it along one side of his face. His clothes felt thin. The breeze seemed to move past the cloth as if it were frisking him. It touched

on the gun inside his coat and then slipped into his shirt, where it picked at the woven monogram. It pressed on the handkerchief in his right hip pocket before it slithered to the long pockets of his trousers where it counted the coins and fingered the keys. Pretty could feel it counting the bills in the single folded wad. He could not recall ever feeling the wind like this. It was like a dame teasing, running her fingers lightly through his clothes.

Off a little way somebody was selling peanuts. Pretty dreamed the picture of the white bag with the red elephant on it and he could smell the hot nuts. His mouth watered with the peanut taste. "Peanuts, peanuts!" his mouth said so softly that Pretty could not hear it. In the small dreams Pretty saw piles of peanuts with the squirrel

walking on the little peanut mountains husking shells. The nuts rolled down the hills and rattled loudly inside Pretty's head. He tried to walk into the peanut dream but inside his head Pretty did not see himself appear.

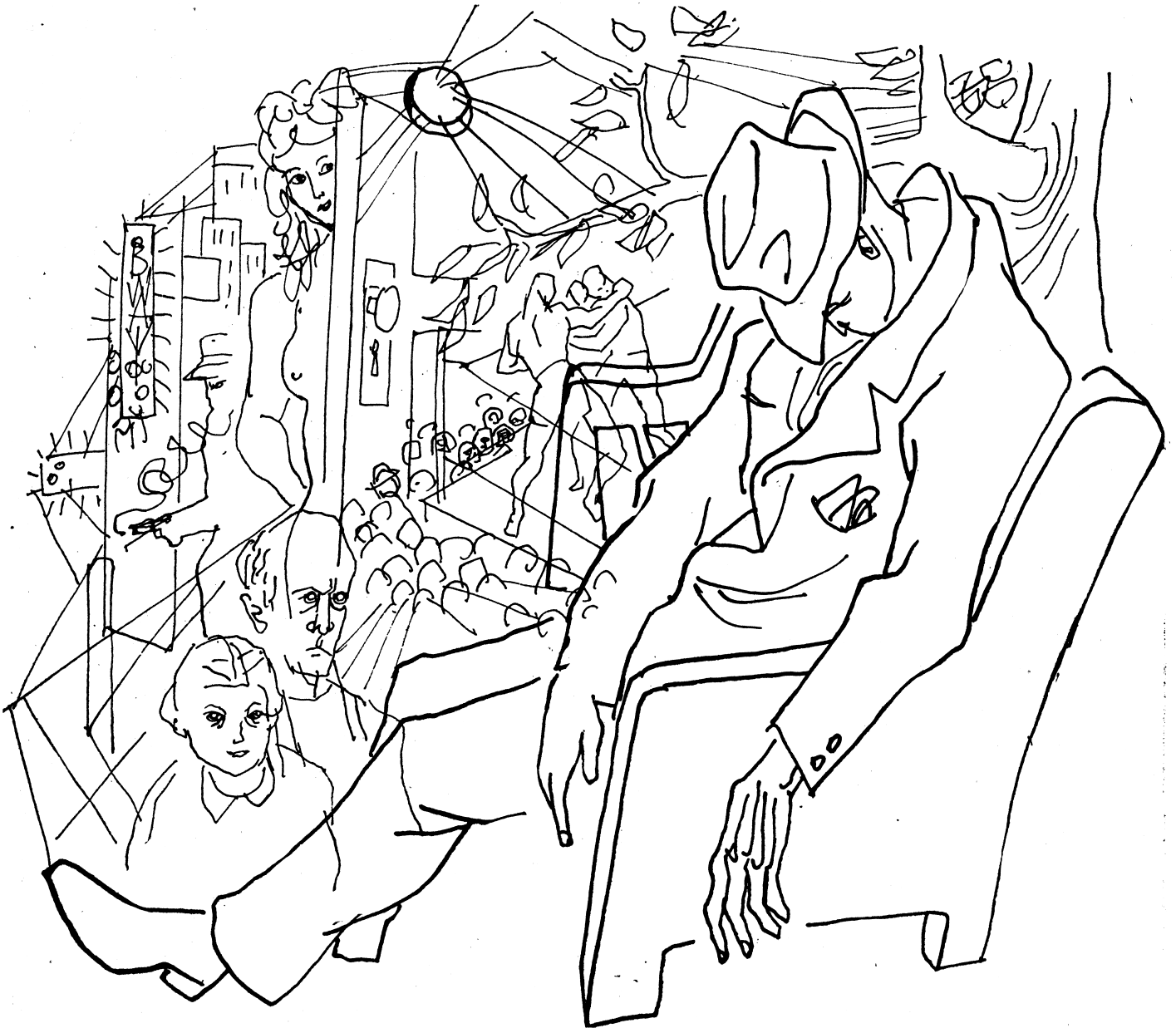
His tired hand eased into his pocket for a coin. The wad of bills was in the way. His thin fingers fumbled for the hard touch of a dime or a quarter. When his hand withdrew, the stack of money nestled loosely in it. Pretty's hand fell heavily on the wooden bench, but he did not feel how his knuckles hit the wood. His fingers opened in the sunshine.

The breeze kicked the fold in the green paper open and then danced about it, fluttering the edges, before finally lifting one bill after the other into the air.

MICK watched the money scampering along the grey paths and into the grass as he walked into the park to get Pretty. Quickly, and like an inspired cotton-picker, he clawed the bills from the ground and grass and from the bush twigs where they had caught. He stuffed the bills in his pocket as he walked toward Pretty.

Mick smiled down at the dead, smiling face. He wondered what Big Ed and Sam the Round would say when he told them. He wondered who would fill Pretty's spot. Mick pushed the carnation into Pretty's lapel.

Where the path turned Mick stopped and looked back at Pretty. He laughed. Some pigeons had descended and were trotting about Pretty's quiet feet. One flew up and perched on the top of his wide-brimmed, grey hat.



LESSON FOR TEACHERS

"Hard-hearted teachers"—they wouldn't work until paid a living wage; yet a Norwalk man called them "the Covered Wagon folk of our era."

By **CHARLES HUMBOLDT**

This is the second of a two-part article. The first appeared last week.

Norwalk, Conn.

SOME people say there are two sides to every question. Others, seeing it differently, claim there is a right side and a wrong one, though there may be a lot of angles. If I go into the angles of what happened in Norwalk, it's not because I've forgotten the sides, but so that teachers all over the country will know what they have to buck against, and where to find the things that certain people don't want them to discover. If I talk about false assessments on industry, or mention the unpaid taxes which the Corporation Counsel will not pay because he's let them lapse until they are uncollectable by law, if I warn them what to expect from big property owners, or tell them why they must hold tight when the pressure's on hardest, it's only to make it easier for them to win when they follow the road of the Norwalk teachers. You and I know there is a side to be on when, in these United States, with a teaching force of 800,000, more than 600,000 instructors have left their profession since 1939 because it could not provide them with a decent living.

TUESDAY, September 3, was one of those days when a leader of employes—I can't say union leader in this case—feels feathers in her stomach. The heat is on; there have been meetings, arguments, accusations, sleepless nights, and appeals to the nobler sentiments of the teachers. The employer pretends that he wants to hear no more from them until they come begging on their knees. Will they hold out those few precious days until the bluff has been called? Recognition has again been withdrawn from the Teachers Association, and the Board of Education in a seven minute closed session has voted to open the schools next day. "They'll do it without teachers," says Alice Cole, their leader.

The teachers are denounced at a

mass meeting by bank and probate lawyer Lovejoy, a member of the Board of Education. "The teachers are entitled to consideration but they have adopted a method of doubtful authority and of doubtful good to the country. It is an effort to destroy our system of checks and balances. This can eat away our democracy." He sees himself as a fateful figure. "Some day in history it will be said that Fred Lovejoy warned us."

Mayor Kelley assures everybody that the teachers will return because "they love the children and their work." They are even exhorted in poetry. An anonymous letter to the town newspaper, *The Norwalk Hour*, urges them to realize that their paychecks should not be the greatest consideration in the present crisis, and commands them to observe an ideal:

*I ask Thee for a swell and certain skill
A patient and a consecrated will
I ask Thee for a white and perfect dream,
A vision for the deep and wide unseen.
Dear Lord, I need these things so much, so much,
A little child is plastic to my touch.*

Hard hearted teachers. They are unmoved. On September 4, janitors stand at the doors of the schools of Norwalk and wave their hands jauntily at some six thousand pupils. There is some jitterbugging for the newspapers, but most of the kids go home quietly.

"It wasn't at all the joke the papers tried to make it," said Miss Yost. (I call her that, though the strike is settled, and the administration pledges no reprisals.) "Many of us, sitting alone in our rooms, felt like crying: so that's what all the years of studying and the high hopes had come to, a squabble with our appointed officials to keep body and soul together. Do you really believe we're as greedy as some people say?" She looked at me earnestly. I was a little embarrassed; I guess she hadn't caught the name of the magazine I represented.

Miss Yost, a pale, straw-blond woman about thirty, lives in a medium-sized frame house with her parents, whom she supports. She reads *Life*, *Time*, *Readers' Digest* and *The Woman's Home Companion*, and offers her guests weak tea. She has had four years of college, and ten years' teaching experience. She earns forty-nine dollars a week.

"I'm a churchgoer," she told me. "The Community Baptist Church. Well, the other night I went to a mass meeting, the first one in my whole life. And who should I see there but Dr. Zeigler, our minister. And do you know he got up and said it was not the teachers but the Board of Estimate that was undemocratic, and that teachers have as much right to join a labor union as anybody? He said that many of us were not receiving as much money as pastors, who are supposed to be as poor as church mice. Well, I thought, if Dr. Zeigler can stick up for us, we'd better stick up for ourselves.

"I guess you don't know what a teacher's life is like," she continued. "Half of us have families, often invalids, to support. We used to be able to buy books, and go to concerts or to the theater once in a while. Now we have to scrape just for food. Almost all of us have debts to worry about. We pay almost twice as much as before for clothing, and you know a teacher has to dress respectably. And what with the income tax so high, there's just nothing left. Still we're supposed to improve ourselves by taking additional courses at our own expense.

"Do you know, many of us work at night to meet our bills? I have friends who wait on tables in summer hotels. Others are shoe salesmen, accountants, and clerks in stores that stay open late in the evening. You want to hide when Johnny, to whom you've been teaching geography in the morning comes into the shop at five o'clock and sees you selling shoelaces.

"Is it any wonder that we get sick with worry? And when one of us stays

out, they just let another teacher take the class as well as her own, because there aren't enough substitutes to go around.

"I'll tell you a funny one. It's about a married woman, a friend of mine. She has a little girl three years old. Well, last year she had to resign from the system because the nursemaids whom she tried to hire would not work for the salary she was earning as a teacher! And I've spent at least ten thousand dollars on my education. It seems, though, I'm only beginning to learn something now. My, how I do rattle on," she said smiling anxiously. "You must have more important things to do than listen to me." I assured her I hadn't.

MISS FALK (that is not her name, either) had lost her respect for Norwalk's leading citizens. A large, snorty woman, near forty, she had

none of Miss Yost's genteel diffidence. "NEW MASSES, hey? I thought you said 'New Taxes.' You'd better not come around with a name like that. Some of our pillars of society would start howling like wolves."

"Do they expect to run the schools without paying for them?" I asked.

"Do they? I'll say they do. They're proud of their nice Colonial high school, but they don't like to mention that it was built with wicked WPA money. They like to believe it just grew out of their hearts, like flowers in a rock garden.

"The very day the schools didn't open—you won't hear the big, bad word 'strike' from any of us, we have too many fine illusions—the Taxpayers' Association got into action against us. Of course they spoke for the city's interest as a whole. They weren't against raising salaries, if only it could be done without raising taxes. Norwalk

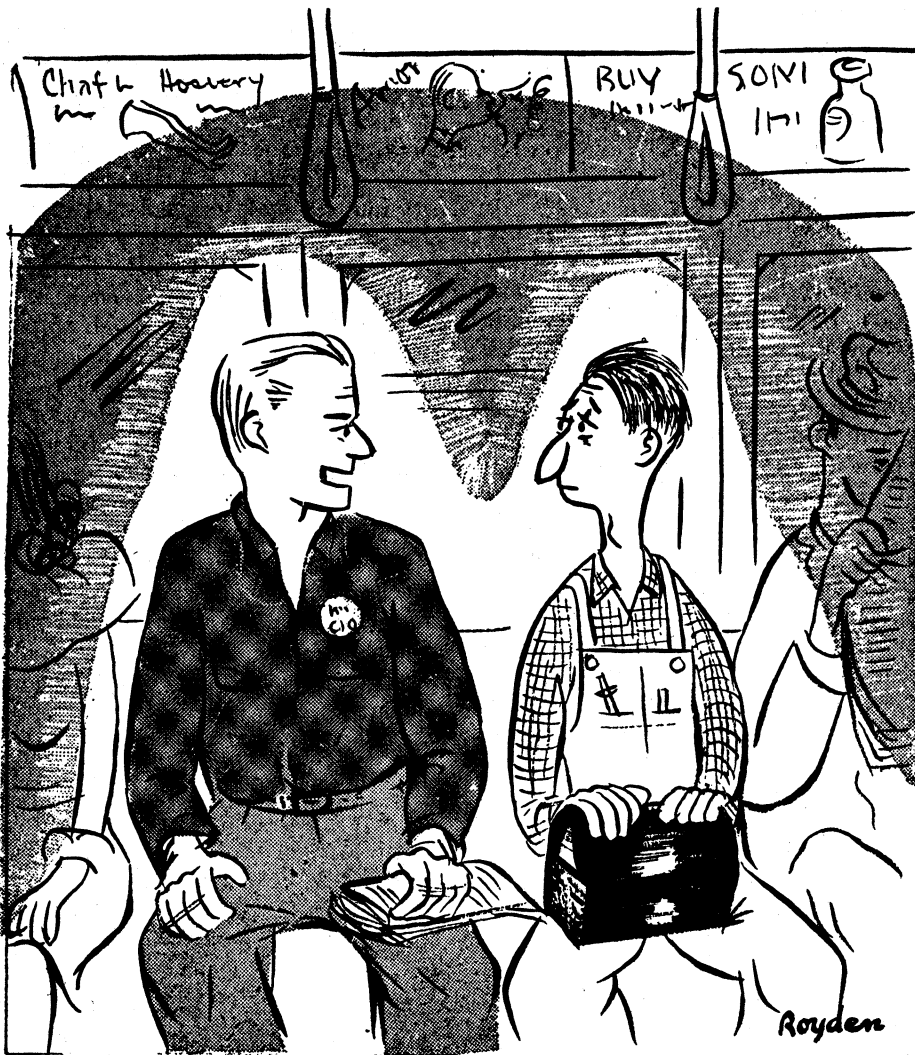
was losing its attraction as a center of business and home owners. The teachers were killing the goose that laid the golden eggs. Seems to me that goose ate its own eggs.

"They had a mass meeting. What a laugh!" Miss Falk let out a trump of disgust. "A nobody got up and said that everyone paid taxes in one form or another today, and anyone who had children should have a say in the matter. A somebody shouted, 'the rent payers are protected by OPA.' All the somebodies bared their fangs. Nobody was going to take their outfit away from them. So they changed its name to Property Owners' Association, and sent telegrams to the governor appealing against us. All this to save about six dollars on a ten thousand dollar home. For six dollars we were the enemies of democracy." Miss Falk earns somewhat less than Miss Yost. Although she has taught nineteen years, she has only two years' college credit and so she earns forty-two dollars a week.

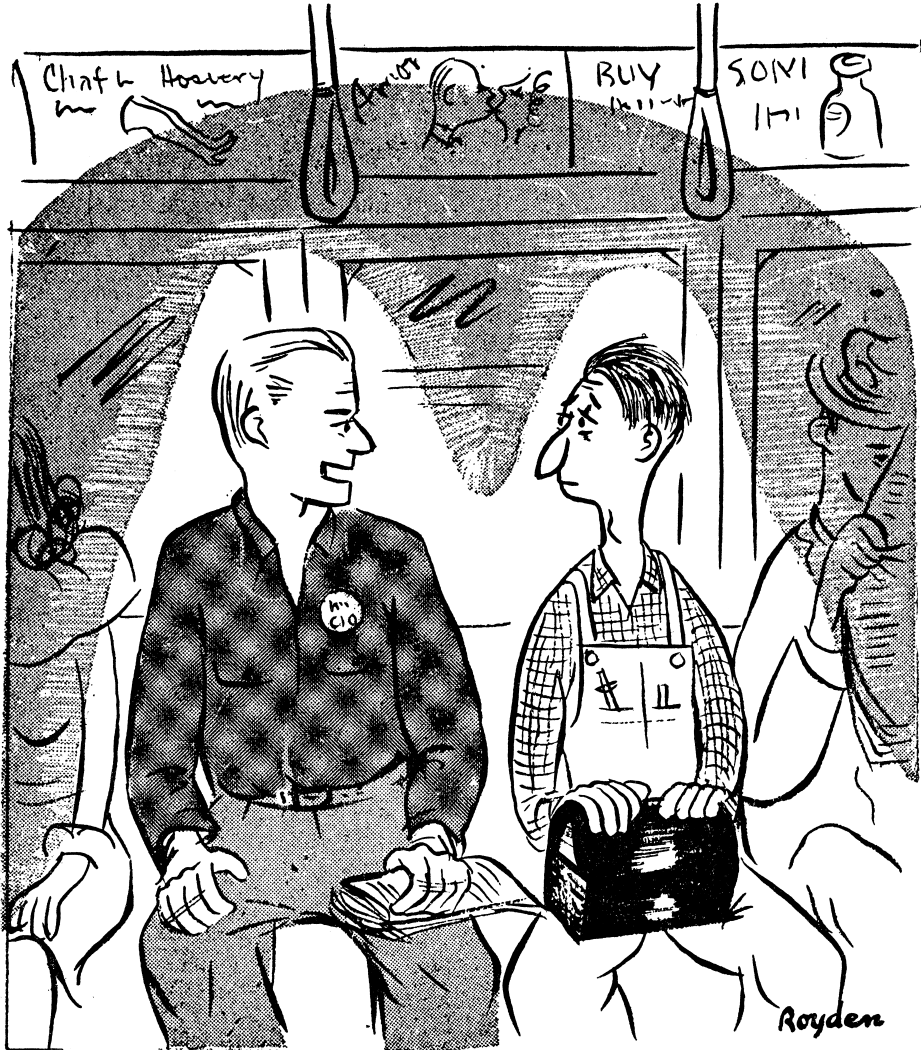
Property fought hard against the teachers. Rumors spread that perhaps they didn't deserve higher pay; there were too many incompetents among them. (No one had ever thought them incompetent before.) Certain people began asking what there was in it for Sidney Vogel, the teachers' legal representative. "Vogel could sell surplus iceboxes to the Eskimos," the president of the Parent-Teachers' Association told me. I felt that the whispers had rocked him a little too. Then he said something that surprised me. "I admit I have my doubts at times—can a child have respect for a teacher who deserts her post? Isn't someone leading them by the nose? And then I think, by God no, they *do* know what they're doing. They're the pioneers we go to see in the movies. They're the Covered Wagon people of this era."

The slanders had to be met. They were, by Alice Cole in behalf of the Teachers' Association. Some people seem gifted with a sense of history, as others are with imagination. Alice K. Cole was like that. Here is what she wrote in the *Norwalk Hour* in defense of her flock (for they were that; she mothered them all):

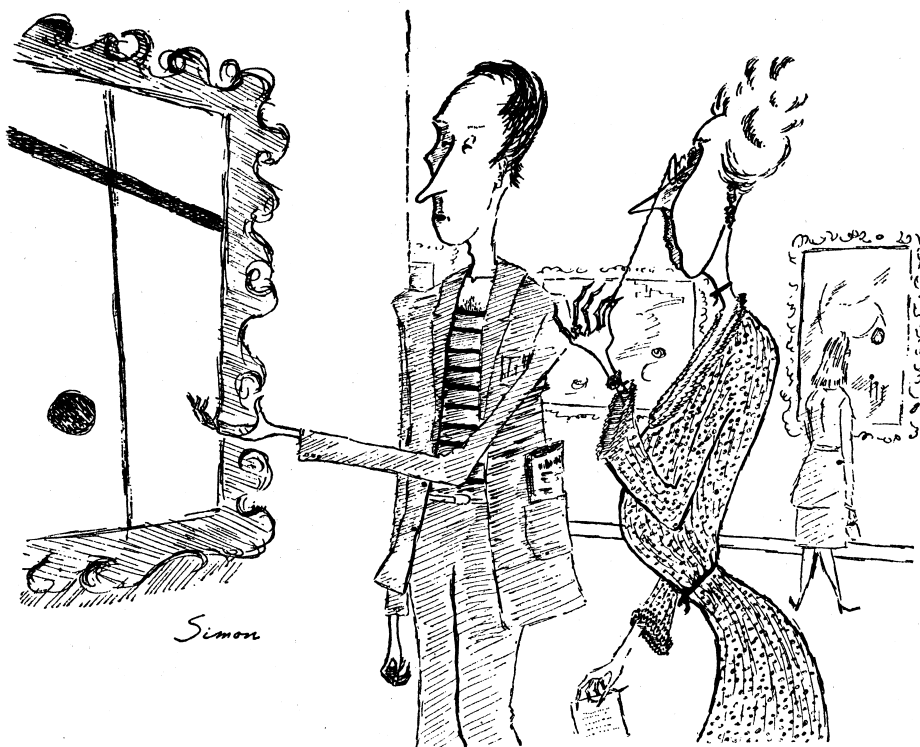
"They struggle now not only for themselves, but for all boards of education and for all teachers everywhere that the standing that they have as teachers be made a living standard, a proper standard and a standard that



"Now, you don't have to worry about the sixty-five cent minimum killing your initiative."



"Naw, you don't have to worry about the sixty-five cent minimum killing your initiative."



"Of course it's good—he's been dead ten years."

does not expose them to actual shame before the very children whom they are to teach. . . . It is for these teachers to place themselves in that position where with dignity and honor they can teach or with fear and cowardice thrust themselves further back into the slough of misery and despond that can have no value in a teaching system. . . . No man can say, and the teachers do not say whether the public is for or against, but we do know that in the public, silent and inarticulate, there is a vast repository of simple justice. The public may be beclouded, but the public is concerned with its children, and the public does know that when these teachers stay away from school the greatest sacrifice of all is made by them. The teachers must undergo during this controversy and until the day that it is solved, a continuous crucifixion. They bear it, and they bear it willingly, so that the public, not heard from, may be freed of the transgression that now rests upon it. . . ."

Statements like these did not make the City Fathers happy. Besides, there were other things to worry the boys in the back room. The State Teachers' Association announced that it considered it unethical for any outside teacher to accept employment in Norwalk until the controversy was settled. The New York Teachers' Union-CIO issued

statements of support, with teachers in Brooklyn assessing themselves to back their Norwalk colleagues. The State Commissioner of Education not only threatened an investigation of the Norwalk school and of the town's finances, but demanded that the Teachers' Association be recognized as a bargaining body. If this were not done, the state would sign contracts with the teachers, and bill the city for their salaries. The local officials put up a weak howl about state interference (shades of states' rights!) but there was no heart in it. Suppose some damned investigator dragged out that business of the phony assessments and the delinquent taxes and stuck a seal on it? Suppose it came out that the committee appointed by the mayor to investigate false evaluations on industrial property had on it members of the corporations alleged to be guilty of them? The boys were ready for a talk with the governor in Hartford.

So were the teachers.

The talk took place on September 12. It lasted four hours. The Republican governor, Raymond E. Baldwin, played the part of Statesman. (All things come easier in an election year.) The teachers got a ten percent increase in wages. About \$65,000 in the aggregate was thus added to the teachers' salaries. (They had asked for

\$90,000 and had been offered nothing.) In addition, a new salary schedule was to be drawn up for the following year, which would be geared to the cost of living and the needs of the teachers. Their Association was to be recognized as bargaining agent for all teachers who so requested.

It is interesting to note that no special taxes were to be levied for the raise in wages. Hearing of the settlement, members of the Board of Estimate immediately announced that the money would be withdrawn from a contingency fund which they had hitherto said they would not touch under pain of death.

So it ended—for the moment. They had learned a lot, the good, decent teachers of Norwalk. During the depression they had taken a salary cut of more than twenty per cent and contributed two per cent more of their wages to relief. They had served on rationing and selective service boards, directed the school plays on their own time, served as personal counselors, and done all the thousand other small jobs that teachers are always expected to do for nothing. And the City Fathers had rewarded them with a piece of their philosophy: "If other towns pay starvation wages, why not Norwalk?" But this time they had an answer.

"How do the teachers like their settlement?" I asked their lawyer.

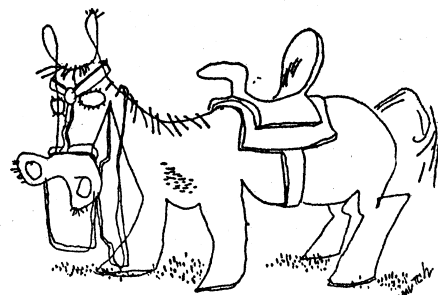
"Tickled pink," said Vogel.

"And you, how do you feel about it?"

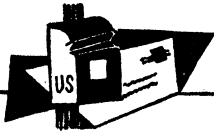
"Well," he paused to think about it. "If things had been a little different, I might have got them stronger guarantees. I might—you see, these people are still as fresh as MacIntosh apples. They didn't know that every damned teacher in this country was watching them, praying for them to hold out. Some day——"

"You mean they could use a union?"

"They could use a union."



mail call



Red Star and Lone Star

TO NEW MASSES: Thought the following example of American-Soviet friendship might be interesting to your readers.

Seven weeks ago when the Soviet ship *Kasistroy* called into Galveston to lift a cargo of sulphur, a committee was formed to entertain the members of the crew. This group consisted of a cotton merchant, a doctor, two port engineers of an English SS line who had been in the USSR, three social workers, a Russian orthodox priest and his wife, and a Russian couple on their way to Venezuela.

We invited crew members who were off duty, and transported them to an evening on the beach. We had sandwiches, modern Russian recordings, and a dance band. When a request for Russian music was made, the whole crowd on the floor and in the audience fell into the spirit of the evening and responded to the MC's call for "a hand to our good friends, the Russian people, who are in our part for the first time in many years." The people around plied these Russian men and women with refreshment and fellowship. They could not understand each other, but a fine impression was made. To the little Texas family out for a day at the beach it was a memorable day indeed.

The committee collected the following articles for the crew: three boxes of clothes for the women members of crew; a portable phonograph for the sailors' entertainment; pictorial magazines; medicine for medical chests; surgical and dental instruments and flashlights for infirmary service. We transported five sailors to the US Marine hospital for dental extractions, invited the ship's doctor to visit the Marine hospital, and arranged a luncheon for Texas doctors and the ship's doctor.

As I speak French, German, and a few words of Russian, I was invited by the chief engineer, the doctor and the captain to explain all this "exhibition of kindness and gifts." "This embarrasses us very much," they said, "we can't return this show," or words to this effect. I replied in mixed French, German, Russian and English, "All this is a very, very small expression of our admiration and humility for what you, your crew, and the good people of USSR have suffered to make it safe for us." We suddenly fell silent, with lumps in our throats, tears in our eyes. Every one of the crew was a battlefield casualty—every one had lost a member of his family.

We shook hands silently. They could not speak. I promised to bring a family of cats

for the steward department. My neighbor's son found a nice one, and we went down to the wharf with our gifts—the last ones, for the *Kasistroy* left at daybreak for New Orleans.

SONIA H. FINDLAY.

Galveston, Texas.

Farmer-Labor Unity

TO NEW MASSES: In your issue of July 30, you had a splendid article on the need for farmer-labor unity entitled "A Farmer Comes to Town," by Edward Blye.

I would suggest that you clip out the article, or better still, encircle the article with red crayon and send it to every decent labor leader who is really sincere about improving the lot of the common people. Many labor people do not seem to realize that the working masses cannot get very far without the cooperation of the working farmers. As Mr. Blye so ably pointed out, it is the very same forces that seek to exploit and oppress both the worker and the farmer.

I hope that you will continue to publish articles on this most important subject. As a former organizer and labor official it is my firm belief that unless the workers win the farmers over (for their mutual advantage), reactionaries will use the farming population in an attempt to crush unions. Let me urge that you ask labor officials for an opinion on a plan to help organize the unorganized farmers.

New York City.

VICTOR MARTELL.

Before receiving this letter we had already sent Mr. Blye's article to a number of labor and progressive leaders. Their comments will appear in an early issue.

NM's Art

TO NEW MASSES: NM has had pretty consistently good articles on a variety of subjects, but until recent issues the actual layout and selection of art work to accompany these articles has not been as good. I am therefore especially pleased to note what seems to me to be an improvement in this part of the publication. In two recent issues especially, the inclusion of articles on Russian artists and then "Art in Red China," accompanied by actual illustrations, made these issues standouts. Another neat little group of "spot drawings" by Levine, Zolotow, Shahn, Stefanelli and Jamieson also gave a sparkling touch to the August 13 issue.

I note Charles Keller is listed as art editor and believe he has added greatly to the interest of NM if he is responsible for the increase in thought and attention to the important detail of appearance of the magazine.

An art student myself and in touch with other aspiring artists, I find a well illustrated issue of NM a quicker introduction to the deeper contents of the magazine itself than any haranguing. The August 13 issue wandered into many interested and curious hands because of the merit of its sketches and the inclusion of the particular article on Chinese woodcuts, the better because they represented the work of Red China, almost unknown to these impartial readers. The use of a woodcut illustration on the cover was especially commendable.

I hope the section of the staff responsible for this part of the layout will continue to recognize the importance of keeping the magazine attractive and up-to-date as further "selling-value" for the contents within. Hollywood.

JEAN LACOUR.

Low-Cost Books

TO NEW MASSES: Progressives have always decried the high cost of books. A few years back Modernage Books published many low-priced progressive books. They were forced out of business due to lack of support by progressive groups. Today, as you know, there are several firms publishing low-cost (25c) books in large editions. Among these books are many progressive ones.

NEW MASSES is open to severe criticism for its failure to review or at least mention some of these books. Almost all of Howard Fast's books, Jack London's *Martin Eden*, and many others are out in 25c editions. All of your readers have a treat in store for them in *Heavenly Discourse*, by Charles Erskine Scott Wood, a book of satirical essays which originally appeared in the old *Masses* (the last essay is about Sacco and Vanzetti). This book is a Penguin Book and was published in July but NM has not even given it a line of type.

Progressives must support these books in order to ensure their further publication and on a larger scale and NM must help in bringing this about.

KARL PHILLIPS.

Brooklyn.

The Light Touch

TO NEW MASSES: I would like to take this opportunity to congratulate NM for its use of Bill Richards' political satire column. It is my opinion that satire and ridicule when presented with finesse can prove a strong argument. Bill Richards has the light touch NEW MASSES lacked and I hope he will continue to do articles in the same vein.

Newark, N. J.

WILLIAM WILBUR.

review and comment



THE CAST OF KASRILEVKA

Fishel, Feitel and Chlavne never let poverty degrade them. Aleichem's laughter saved them.

By S. FINKELSTEIN

THE OLD COUNTRY, by Sholom Aleichem. Translated by Julius and Frances Botwin. Crown. \$3.

THESE are stories of Kasrilevka, the "town of the little people." It gets its name from the word "kasrilik." A "kasrilik," the author explains, is "not just an ordinary pauper, a failure in life. On the contrary, he is a man who has not allowed poverty to degrade him. He laughs at it." A native of the town once found himself in Paris, and confronting Rothschild himself. "Move to our town of Kasrilevka," he tells Rothschild. "There you can never die, because since Kasrilevka has been a town, no rich man has ever died there."

The people of the town laugh at poverty, and laugh and bicker at each other. Their speech and actions make grotesquely funny reading. Here are the brothers Maier and Schnaier, at the synagogue door before daybreak, pulling each other's hair. Their father has died and left a favored seat in the synagogue without indicating which son is to get it, and each is determined that this colossal inheritance shall be his. Here is Chlavne, the shoemaker, lying drunk in the mud on Purim, dreaming of the beautiful Vashti and his arms around the skinny, shrunken Rothschild, who is called Rothschild because he is so miserably poor even for the miserably poor town of Kasrilevka. Here is Fishel the "melamed" (Hebrew teacher), who can see his wife and children only twice a year. Immersed in books all his life, he has never had a glimpse of nature. His eyes closed in terror, he is half stepping, half falling into the flimsy boat that will take him across the ice-strewn Bug River, so that he can be with his family on Passover. Here is Mena-

chem-Mendel, the matchmaker, returning home and being greeted by his mother-in-law. "Well, well! You mention the Messiah—and look who comes! Here he is, my bird of Paradise. If he doesn't spoil, he'll find his way home. Goats run away, chickens get lost, but men always come back. . . ." Here is the boy Feitel, who lives in a town where his is the only Jewish family. It is the eve of Passover, and he goes off to play with his gentile friend Pedka. They forget the lateness of the hour, and when they return Feitel's house is surrounded by an angry mob, led by people who swear that they already smell spilled blood.

Do these stories seem less than hilariously funny? As Sholom Aleichem explains, "since you know that I am not a gloomy soul who prefers tears to laughter and likes to point a moral and teach a lesson, let us part as cheerfully as we can. And I wish that all of you readers and everybody else in the world may have more opportunities to laugh than to cry. Laughter is healthful. The doctors bid us laugh."

The place of these stories of Jewish life is Russia, the time about the turn of the century. These stories add up to more, put together, than considered singly. There is no sign that the editors planned any special order. But the stories cling to each other no matter what the order, taken as they are out of the same texture of experience. Thus the book may be called a novel without a plot, although if one looks for it, the skeleton of a plot may also be found. The plot is the gradual rise of the flame of national feeling among the Jewish people of old Russia, and their welcoming of the means that rise to strike back at their oppressors. It is the genius of Sholom Aleichem that he

reveals a society not only in the types it created, but in its change.

The people he writes of are denied the ownership of even a scrap of land, so that they have to live by odd jobs and petty trade, bargaining with each other for a few copper coins. They are surrounded by a great sea of hostility, which may break out into pogrom upon any accident or upon conscious provocation by the Czarist authorities. They have learned the futility of heroic but useless gestures. They are denied any modern culture or education, except at the price of giving up their right to be Jews, and even then are treated as lackeys or servants. The few that rise to comparative wealth show the deep wounds of the struggle.

These people laugh at themselves, and so Sholom Aleichem can reveal the grotesque actions which, isolated and pointed up to make a story, give rise to our laughter. We are laughing at them, with them. The laughter is a sign of strength, an assertion of the human spirit over the forces that would break it down. And it is also a medium for the entrance of reality too bitter and challenging for plain speech. Comedy throughout the history of art has never been an escape from reality, as the Hollywood movie-makers discover when they attempt escapist comedy and find that humor remains with the world they deny. It is in simulated tragedy and the imitation of weeping that they can create an escapist art. Comedy is reality expressed in symbol, like the belabored pantaloons and cavoring clown of folk play. It was often a weapon through which only the folk could read the message intended for them, and yet protect themselves by playing the fool.

Four of the stories in this collection



Deckinger.

deal with Tevye the milkman, in whom is symbolized the change that filters into even the tight ghetto community. One of his daughters insists upon the strange new idea of marrying for love, at which Tevye vociferously objects, though he inwardly approves. Another daughter falls in love with, and marries, a young man who comes and goes on mysterious errands. One day, after he has long disappeared, she weeps and announces that she must join her husband in Siberia. He has worked for humanity, she tells her father. "So he worries about the world," Tevye says. "Why doesn't the world worry a little about him? Nevertheless give him my regards, that Alexander of Macedon of yours." He approves for he also bears the scars of the whip, has laughed and played the fool. He recounts a meeting with an "important person"—"We have heard, Tevel, that you are an upright man, even if you are a Jewish dog.' Now, how often does a person get a compliment like that? Do our own people ever praise a man? No! All they do is envy him."

In the spirit not of praise but of love, Sholom Aleichem introduces us to the people of Kasrilevka, the mythical town which can stand for all the Jewish towns of the "old country." "Look," he says, "at this poor little town with its rich cemeteries." The old country has thankfully become new and young again, but these comic stories still have their tragic symbols, for elsewhere the cemeteries are thriving.

Prostitute to Citizen

SIN AND SCIENCE, by Dyson Carter. Heck-Castell Publishing Co. \$2.50.

THE author of this book knows a way to end prostitution and venereal disease. He didn't invent the method but he has studied its application and results throughout an immense country and we in other countries might well listen to him. Surely we are interested in abolishing VD and prostitution; we have chased them with nightsticks, fought them with sulfa and penicillin, banished them to "districts" and houses from which they ever emerge again. We have excoriated the women as vile daughters of Eve and exhorted the men to be good, as resistant as St. Anthony and as human as granite. We have even, in recent years, taken to discussing the subject

in public print, and have regularly found the statistics "appalling" and the increase "horrifying"—never so appalling and horrifying, in fact, as they are today, especially in the armed forces of the United States. While we preach, medicate, outlaw, plead and "educate," with all the resources accumulated in some three centuries of struggle, the disease gains.

Yet, as Dyson Carter shows, the USSR vanquished it in little more than a decade. Ask the current generation of Russian youth how it was accomplished and you will likely get a vague reply, if any. All that was before their time; most of them hardly know the meaning of "prostitute," and venereal disease is not a problem except where Hitler's clean Nordics revived it. However, Russians who remember pre-Revolutionary days can tell a different story. Under Nicholas II their country, more than any other country of that time, was an obscenity of vice and vice-exploitation. A prostitute was not a citizen; she was a creature tagged with a yellow police card which labeled her unfit for employment and which, once thrust upon her, could no more be relinquished than the branded "A" of old New England. She could not even keep all the wages of her sin. A definite portion went to petty officials, whose proceeds rose with the number of yellow cards issued—a number readily increased by arresting perfectly respectable women (including pregnant and nursing mothers), who were falsely charged with "soliciting" and then presented with cards admitting them to life imprisonment in vice. As for the VD rate, even the nobility finally became appalled, if not downright terrified, at a spreading infection which was actually encouraged by the farce of police-medical regulations.

In 1917 the Soviets inherited this moral and physical mess among other relics of czarism. How they eliminated it is in itself a story of socialism and, most of all, socialism's attitude toward morality. In America we have a mocking gag about prostitutes: "A gal has got to make a living." It is said, usually, with the wise, leering smugness of people who can see right through any such alibi as *that*. For have we not learned from the pulpit or other moral fonts that the prostitute is the temptress, the carrier of evil, self-exiled from decency? The vice squads scoop up the women, leaving their "victims" unmolested. The logic is super-simple:



no prostitutes, no prostitution. The only trouble is, it never works; and the Soviet authorities did not try to work it that way. To them the prostitute was a human being, and since human beings are not born to evil there must be an external reason for their situation. What better way to discover it than by asking the prostitutes themselves? So they asked, and when the answers came in they might have drawn another laugh from our cynics but they did not surprise Soviet authorities, who had already perceived the stony truth in that old gag of ours—that many women did have to make a living and could find no way except by selling themselves. Out of their necessity the tremendous barter in "pleasure" had been built, not by themselves but by the exploiters of need, the madams and landlords, pimps, police and officials. When the Soviets conducted raids, they reversed our procedure: the exploiters were arrested, the prostitutes untouched. The latter were invited (literally) to enter a combined prophylactic and job-training center where they could be cured of VD and taught to support themselves. After twelve years even the need for the prophylactic centers had disappeared.

I have cramped a long story into a small space because it is only the threshold of a happier story. When the former prostitute entered her new world she found it new for all women. Under socialism, woman's right to work, to equality with men, had not been "granted"—it was guaranteed—and with it the right to a morally healthy love, marriage and parenthood. Here is a fact which baffles or frets

many a moralist in other countries. "The right to work" has such a *material* sound, while love is all sonnets and valentines—and as for morality, if you don't have it naturally there's always a law. Yet only the blindest moralist can imagine a valentine in a marriage sealed entirely by the wife's dependence on the husband's income. There were thousands upon thousands of such marriages in capitalist Russia, as there still are in capitalist nations today. And to the socialist way of thinking, they lacked not only romance but morality itself. For while it is not true that the Soviets regarded "all bourgeois marriages as prostitution"—as was once claimed by Red-baiters—they did regard the loveless marriage, and in fact any sexual relationship minus the love motive, as a degradation of women, whose necessity was being exploited as surely as that of the prostitute. The first step, then, was to relieve women of the necessity; and while this was not done solely to free them for a more realistic love life the emotional and moral results (for men as well) have been radical and sound—as others besides Mr. Carter have noted.

Another step was to remove the restrictions on divorce which had double-sealed the unhappy marriage. And another was to guarantee two more rights to women: (1) the right to have children; (2) the right not to have children.

Of these steps the most revolutionary has received the least notice from capitalism. While "free divorce," "free love" and "free abortion" were the anti-Soviet scandals of the press, little was said about free motherhood, or the right to bear children. There was nothing sensational about that—nothing even "new." Despite all our motherhood-versus-career debates, we are inclined to feel that whether or not a couple shall have children is a matter of their own free choice. There's no law against it; in fact, we have lyricized and adorned the subject of mother-and-child until the reality has nearly been effaced. In this, as in so many aspects of capitalism, we tend to live more and more on the shifting surface of appearance and pretence. Yes, the woman under capitalism has a choice—but except for the lucky handful who can stay home and pursue their "careers" at an easel or typewriter in the odd moment that a baby sleeps, the choice is often hard to make. One may

bear and rear children (provided the husband's income permits it) or support oneself and continue in the mainstream of socially productive life. And no matter how many exceptions you can cite, the choice remains the same for millions of working-class and middle-class women. This is not freedom; it is a punishment for having children.

In the Soviet Union, no woman has to make such a choice. By an essentially simple and commonsense arrangement, she is fully protected by the state before and after delivery of a baby, care of the child is provided, and her right to fulfill her maternal duties while holding her job is guaranteed. Perhaps that is not the poetic way to exalt procreation, but if you prefer babies to songs about them the Soviet method obviously has its advantages. And it is revolutionary in another sense: it is a permanent part of socialist life, while the easy divorce and abortion laws were not. As Mr. Carter makes plain, the Soviet authorities have *always* been opposed to abortion and divorce. For a time, however, it was necessary to remove the restrictions which, originally imposed upon a morally and economically sick society, had only produced more immorality in the form of prostitution, wretched marriages, and highly dangerous, secret abortions. Meanwhile the socialist state set about eliminating the conditions that made abortion and divorce desirable: poverty and economic slavery. When that was done, when parenthood was no longer a burden or marriage a forced dependency, the new laws were passed. The one against abortions, for example, was enacted after abortions had virtually been eliminated—it is simply a legal expression of the Soviet viewpoint from the beginning. People in this country who celebrate the fiction that Russia is adopting our own moral attitudes would be wiser to concern themselves with what goes on in America, where venereal disease has reached such a point that we have begun to look solely toward salvation through penicillin with no further regard for the moral problem involved.

In its conquest of juvenile delinquency, alcoholism and crime, the USSR has set still another record through what Mr. Carter rightly calls the scientific approach—which can also be described as the commonsense, humane method of digging out the roots of an evil instead of hacking at its victims. To appreciate the logic and spirit of such a method, you should

read the author's full account. It is really unfair to summarize any part of this book, for Mr. Carter's choice of detail and example illumines his subject in a way not possible for the reviewer, and the book itself is precisely constructed to yield at least twice the information you would expect from 212 pages. Yet it goes quickly, not in the style of science "popularizers" who imitate the sprightly tones of a kindergarten teacher but in the author's own style, which obviously arises from study, clarity, conviction and the wish to communicate intelligibly.

BARBARA GILES.

Anti-intellectual Trap

THE STRANGER, by Albert Camus. Knopf. \$2.

THE scene of this novel is Algiers. The young man who relates the brief sequence of events that befall him is apparently an ordinary, rather lusterless person. His only distinction is a morbid indifference to life and his pointed insistence on the meaninglessness of his experience. His story begins with a two day's leave from his job to attend his mother's funeral; he betrays no emotion during the service or afterward, for he acknowledges no feelings. Later, he spends a day at the beach with a girl who cares enough about him to over-respond to his mild interest. For no reason, he makes a friend of a shady individual who has antagonized a group of Arabs. Several days after this, he goes to the beach with this same friend, and after a brief encounter with the group of Arabs, returns later to the spot and fires a revolver into the prone body of one of the Arabs. He is jailed, tried, convicted; the latter half of the story concerns his reflections and his talks with the visitors to his death-cell. This is the story of *The Stranger*.

Since the story is told by the young man, his view of his actions and the world about him is imposed on the reader, and one soon begins to see that, within the framework of his perceptions, his actions are no more meaningless than the world in which he acts. During his imprisonment, it becomes clear that his own irrationality is as nothing to the gross irrationality of those who regard him as a stranger to human society.

One tenet of the French writers who are called existentialists, and with whom Camus has been loosely associated, is that fiction for them no longer

employs the expected convention of being a direct representation of real life. It only seems to be: in Camus one sees a flat, straight-forward realism, as unadorned as Hemingway's, used for ends as non-objective as the crayons of Paul Klee. What Camus impels the reader to do is to re-relate the world of the "stranger" to the reader's world; and the only key he willingly provides is a repetition of the effect of absurdity. This perversity in the esthetic of Camus, which seems to pass in certain circles for "difficulty" and a kind of heroic grappling with intangibles of existence, is the reflection of the perversity Camus seems to find in all human relations. As a literary showman and the prepotent founder of a cult, he complies with the old paradox of being "original" in proportion to his difficulty and popular in proportion to the number of those who fail to understand him. He seems well on the road to directing straying intellectuals to the stalemate of contemplating absurdity and willing to lead them into an anti-intellectual labyrinth.

One may inquire of Camus the sources of the manifest absurdity his nonentity of a hero quickens to when a sense of every other aspect of existence deserts him. If the absurdities of living seem omnipresent and overwhelming now, there must be a reason, and since Camus affects the dual role of *philosophe* and artist, one might expect that somewhere one could find a clue to his reiterated emphasis on absurdity. But I find in his writing a complete absence of respect for historical development; the contradictions in our society that make the most shocking moral and social disturbances commonplace of life, in itself an absurdity of no mean proportions, seem to be replaced by a private vision of the world in which the present historical situation is exchanged for a general, timeless condition. According to one of the exegesisists whom Camus

sensational "difficulty" has made necessary: "For Camus, man is essentially the stranger because the world in general and man as man are not fitted to each other; that they are together in existence makes the human condition an absurdity." I am quite ready to believe that here is an absurdity that tops them all, for it defies every last atom of knowledge that man has struggled for centuries to possess. One really stands aghast at the strange impulse for self-blinding, for the mutilation of intellect such an attitude suggests.

We are also told that "Camus has a double personality. As the philosopher of negation, he denies all values; as a man of action, he crusades for justice, for integrity." In an insane world, there is apparently much to be learned from the advanced schizophrenic. One reflects, however, that in Camus' novel his stranger is cursed with an idleness of mind that is capable of producing some monstrous irrationality of action. This state of mind—the vision of a dim chaotic meaninglessness in the outside world—requires that if he participates at all, it will only be as if he were blinded, and that is just the way the stranger behaves when he murders the Arab: he is blinded—blinded, he says, by the sunlight! I offer this as an unintended allegory on the potentialities of a philosopher for whom action has nothing to do with ideas.

In the final analysis, Camus' image of a world dominated by absurdity arises out of his projection upon the whole of society of a state of mind in which the contradiction between thought and action seems intolerable and yet irreconcilable. If he can go no further than this, there is not much more to be hoped from him than from others who dance around their anti-intellectual traps while their victims are stumbling into them.

ALAN BENOIT.

Analysis Without Insight

FULL PRODUCTION WITHOUT WAR, by Harold Loeb. Princeton University Press, \$3.50.

MR. LOEB notes in the preface to his book that in the land of the Mentawai rice is not cultivated nor milk cows tended because these people have so many holidays that they have little time for work. As a consequence, they have a lower standard of living than their neighbors who have fewer holidays. From this he draws a parallel

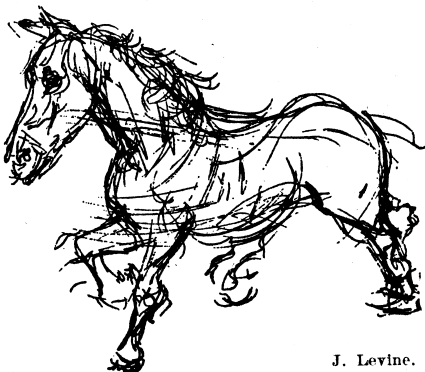
with contemporary capitalist societies whose people do not live at the level at which they might were unemployment liquidated.

The absurdity of idleness on the one hand, and desperate need on the other, must have made a lasting impression on the author, for shortly after the 1929 crash he became associated with Technocracy. In the present volume, he recants his technocratic past, asserting that he had tended "to underrate the function of the complicated business procedures by which prices and wages are set." In short, Mr. Loeb has suddenly discovered the "invisible hand" reputed to guide capitalist economy.

Mr. Loeb turns, therefore, to bourgeois economics for the tools of analysis he deems necessary to solve the riddle of unemployment. One cannot help feeling, however, that he is not entirely at home in this medium. His handling of the problem is amateurish and frequently inept, and the errors he makes are numerous. To mention just two, and not necessarily the most serious: the law of increasing costs is confused with the law of diminishing returns; it is claimed that people in the \$3,000-a-year income class saved only one percent of their incomes in 1929 when the source quoted clearly indicated that the savings was \$1,000,000,000, coming to thirteen percent, not one percent. Mr. Loeb apparently has little familiarity with the data. These are however, relatively minor considerations and a criticism of this book must be based on its main thesis.

The basic problem to which Loeb addresses himself is the impact of the growth in labor productivity on the economy. "Let us suppose, for example," he states, "that each man-hour of labor produced twice the quantity of goods formerly produced in a period when employment, wages and other prices were constant. It is evident that in this situation demand would be insufficient to buy the supply, in fact demand could acquire only half the supply."

Loeb has given expression here to a fallacy which is as old as economic theorizing, namely, that aggregate prices (supply) can exceed aggregate incomes (demand). The change in productivity at constant prices which he describes would result in a shift in the distribution of incomes, with profit growing to a larger percent of the national income. The effects of this



J. Levine.

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growing maldistribution of income would be a reduction in "effective demand," and this apparently is what Loeb really means although it is plain throughout the book that he has never grasped the distinction between aggregate demand (in the sense of available purchasing power) and effective demand.

In order to make available for purchase the increment of production resulting from increased productivity, Mr. Loeb suggests three paths: (1) reducing prices (2) raising wages (3) deficit spending. Should none of these measures be taken, unemployment would ensue and the increment would not be produced at all.

During the era of competitive capitalism reduction in prices was the chief method of releasing the increment of production for consumption, but Loeb notes that since 1900 this has no longer been true and attributes this fact to the growth of monopolistic competition (a bourgeois euphemism to characterize the condition prevailing under imperialism). During this period of monopolistic competition demand has been bolstered up by deficit financing and where this has not been of sufficient volume, unemployment resulted.

This is in essence Mr. Loeb's thesis. He does not believe in the possibility of organizing production in a systematic planned fashion, asserting that "no other procedure [than capitalist pricing] for allocating resources economically in a changing world has as yet been devised." He relies for this opinion on the writings of the notoriously reactionary economists von Mises and von Hayek. Since the existence of the planned economy of the Soviet Union belies his opinion Mr. Loeb can do nothing else than deny that Soviet society has a planned economy and to assert that the market mechanism of capitalism has been restored in the USSR.

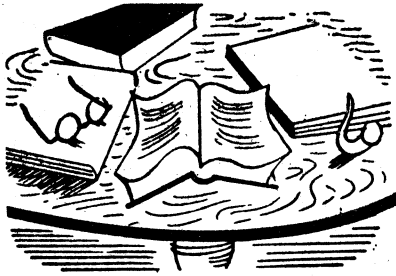
The author makes a very useful distinction between full production and capacity production. The former merely implies full employment regardless of what it is that is being produced, while the latter involves not only full employment, but that allocation of resources and labor which will produce the optimum output of goods—for example, less mansions and more workers' homes. Loeb thus contradicts himself. If the capitalist pricing mechanism is a method for rationally allocating resources in the economy, how can

there arise the distinction he has made between full production and capacity production?

What does the author present then as the solution to the problem of unemployment? Earlier in the book Mr. Loeb seemed to imply that all that was necessary was that industry expand production whenever there are unemployed men and idle machines, citing the huge increase in profits which took place as production rose from the trough of the depression to its peak during the war. He has apparently forgotten that the market problem is central in the capitalist dilemma and that the expansion of production he refers to was made possible only because the government provided a stable and enormous market for war materials. It was not the expansion of production which solved the market problem, but the temporary solution of the market problem which permitted the expansion of production.

Apparently as he approached the end of the book this fact became clearer to him, for the final solution he offers to the problem of full production without war is "new money spending, graduated taxation and the establishment of a minimum wage." While these are no doubt desirable, they can no more stabilize capitalism than can pious hopes or the fostering of illusions. Those who have arrived at the Marxist standpoint understand that it will take much stronger medicine than these proposals to put men and machines back to work.

The readers of this book who had hoped to learn of some technique to maintain full production will be sorely disappointed. Mr. Loeb lacks insight into what really makes capitalism tick and his analysis runs the gamut from the superficial to the erroneous. He does not come to grips with the fundamental and underlying problems presented by contemporary capitalism and if mention is made at all of class antagonisms it is only to depreciate their importance. His painful ignorance of the differentiating characteristics of various economic systems is admirably illustrated by the following quotation: "In our day theorists on the political Left usually advocate pure monopoly—over-all planning and control by representatives of the working class (Marxian Socialists), by engineers (technocrats), or by a strictly conditioned more or less arbitrarily chosen elite (fascists)." If the astonishment at finding a socialist economy described as



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monopoly has not floored the reader, the lumping together of Marxian socialism, technocracy and fascism, as representatives of the political left, undoubtedly will. This is the caliber of the political wisdom brought to bear on the problem by Mr. Loeb.

ALFRED DONSKY.

Feeble Blaze

THE BURNING MOUNTAIN, by John Gould Fletcher. Dutton. \$2.75.

THIS is the seventeenth volume of verse of a former Pulitzer Prize winner, who made his poetic reputation on the eve of World War I as a champion of that Imagist movement so noisily press-agented by the now almost-forgotten Amy Lowell.

John Gould Fletcher, we are informed in a biographical note, as a young man "read extensively the poets of the late Victorian period." Apparently he has never forgotten them. Even the Imagists' chastening influence on poetic language—to say nothing of later developments—has failed to rid him of his fondness for such old-hat poeticisms as "ere" and "naught" and "bygone." His poetry is slack, loose, inexact, its imagery almost never memorable; it sprawls. The ideas suit the language, deriving from the late-Victorian stock-in-trade of wholly humanitarianism, just as the poetic technique is an amalgam of the styles of Walt Whitman and Tennyson's minor successors.

At their best these lines run along with a sort of lulling murmurousness. At their worst they grate as harshly as these (addressed to those latter-day hobgoblins, our industrial plants):

*Pontifically their hammers had roared
down*

*The years onspeeding, ready to vent
their wrath*

*And quench repeated blows. The drift
of time was spanned*

*By that which was uprooted speeding
on*

From north into the south . . .

When things like this get by (and win Pulitzer Prizes) one wonders: were the poetic standards of Mr. Fletcher's youthful days really so low that a reputation could be founded on such performances? Or has Mr. Fletcher just been running downhill? Certainly a poet starting out to win his way in the world today has to try a bit harder.

WALT McELROY.

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THE YOUNG ARTISTS UPSTAIRS

An exhibition of fourteen youthful Americans faces a market which "prefers them dead."

By WILLIAM THOR BURGER

THE MUSEUM OF MODERN ART has launched the art season with a show of fourteen young Americans on its third floor. Downstairs the museum has had all summer an exhibition of painting from New York collections. The producers are faced with their market. The good taste of collectors is put on display in the same way as the objects on which they may exercise their taste.

The fourteen young artists presumably include some who will rank among the great names of the coming decades, while the seven collectors are among those most responsible for making the taste of our times explicit and vocal. Having the fortune to buy what they chose, the wit to write in defense of it, and the inclination to crusade, they were at least the implementers of taste, if not the initiators.

Miss Dreier was one of the founders of the *Societe Anonyme*, the first American museum of modern art. James Thrall Soby is a respected scholar of modern art, and Sidney Janis a noisy propagandist for the primitives. The standard by which these collectors bought, and by which they selected the works loaned to the museum, is given in the catalogue as "those they enjoyed most." From the works exhibited it is clear that they enjoy the painters of the Paris school, and they prefer them dead. Only half the paintings in the show are by the living, and only one-sixth by Americans. The styles are all "art for art's sake": Impressionist, Fauve, Cubist, Expressionist and Surrealist. The two exceptions are the primitives in the Janis collection and the Ben Shahn "Refugees."

This is the "climate of taste," as

Taine called it, into which the young artists upstairs have issued. The idea of the show of young painters was one of the most useful the museum has had. It was intended to gather together artists unknown in New York because of their youth or provincial origin so that an idea of the direction in which art was moving could be gained. Given superb judgment and strong legs the director of such a show has it in his power to guide and aid the course of American art. To be asked to participate is a guarantee of gallery support, sales and critical recognition. Pre-war graduates of the show, then unknown, include Jack Levine, Hyman Bloom, Joe Hirsch and Darrel Austin.

Unfortunately for the idea of the show, the museum had saved up during the war years a number of choices whose names and works are by now quite familiar. The show is a debut for less than a third of the participants. Nonetheless it gives a clear, if not thrilling, survey of the main paths along which young American artists move. With nice impartiality, two sexes, four regions of the country, five mediums, four main styles, and a cartoonist are included.

The largest group is that of the abstract artists: Theodore Roszak, I. Rice Pereira, Arshile Gorki, Bob Motherwell, Isamo Noguchi, Mark Tobey and, with surrealist overtones, David Hare. Each of these has some little gadget, some trick of technique, that serves as identification and is exploited through endless variations. Rice Pereira uses Villon's old but witty idea of painting in several layers and executes her work with a neatness and charm that would do credit

to a professional designer of juke boxes. Theodore Roszak finds himself torn between the late style of Lipschitz and the early style of Moholy-Nagy. That venerable Oregonian, Mark Tobey, writes in white over a confused background of color, a sort of palimpsestic calligraphy. Robert Motherwell has no trick and is content to turn out large, dull, grey abstracts in the classic manner.

The two abstract sculptors rise above the general level. Noguchi, a brilliant designer of ballet costumes and sets, and a long-respected draughtsman working with stone slabs, has some good pieces. Notable among them is a lamp in wood and hollowed stone called "Lunar Child" which, after the Statue of Liberty, is the first conscious use of the electric light in sculpture. David Hare's "Magician's Game," already seen at the Guggenheim Museum, consists of a phallic teeter-totter which, swinging on an axis, enters and leaves a hollowed-out construction representing a human body. Fragile and witty, his work repeats in a minor key the style of David Smith.

Loren MacIver, David Aronson, C. S. Price and Ben Culwell are American variants of expressionism. These artists explore a personal attitude rather than a technique. Loren MacIver is a big girl now, but she has adapted the conscious childishness of Klee. Her mode is to find an actual grouping in reality which of itself imitates an Expressionist painting. The "Hopscotch" series, for example, repeat the cracked, dirtied surface of a sidewalk on which a random child has numbered boxes. Price does large, flat animals and walls in the *Blaue Reiter* manner.

Culwell and Aronson are more interesting. A veteran of the Pacific



Dolores McFarlane.

war, Culwell has developed an expressionism of an intense and personal sort. Given titles such as "Finished man of war-sailor; he was forged between the ocean and the sky, between ancient sea death and new air death," they represent thoughts of fear and sex that arise from the terror and boredom of battle. When some transfer of meaning is possible to the spectator the Culwell drawings are extremely powerful. Two landscapes, "Morning at Attu" and "Tulagi Harbor," are finished performances rather than mere promises for the future.

Aronson is the third member of the renaissance in Boston, two of whom, Jack Levine and Hyman Bloom, are already in the first rank of American painters. Using christological themes, Aronson delights in catching the marred surface, the infinite shift of texture and color of objects in a museum. Like Roualt, Klee and especially Albright, he goes to great pains to manipulate the quasi-accidental effects of paint so that they duplicate the effect of time.

To this group should be attached Steinberg, whose cartoons captivate the readers of *The New Yorker*. His work is a popularization of the manner of Klee and Grosz, marked by magnificent wit. His joke consists of the reduction of complicated forms to deceptively simple ones, of the summary of large and complicated ideas and relations by childish simple ones. There is, of course, more than a touch of shaggy dog. His moving scroll "The City," where the city walks before the spectator who stands at ease, is an altogether beguiling presentation of one of those baroque cities, like Brussels or Turin, which the tourist sees for the first time.

The last group must be called realists, at least in comparison to the others. It consists of Honore Sharrer, Alton Pickens and George Tooker. These three consider the real visual world as consisting of a certain number of definite objects, marked by definite linear boundaries and modeled strongly within the boundaries. In the tradition, however distant, of Grant Wood and Paul Cadmus, their people and objects are related by context, action and linear composition, but not by a visual matrix of atmosphere and chiaroscuro. In Sharrer's minutely naturalistic paintings, for example, the objects, while strongly modeled within their boundaries in terms of local color and light

and shade, cast no shadows on each other or on the ground. This gives them a peculiar, floating, symbolic quality that is at odds with their otherwise painstaking literalism.

Sharrer is the youngest and potentially best of the group on exhibit. Her "Workers and Painting," which has been on display at the museum for some time, seemed to promise the initiation of a new period of social realism. It combines the life of workers in their social and familial contexts with the broad cultural background of our period. The two panels Sharrer has completed from her projected triptych "The Worker" are more advanced in terms of finish, but rather retrogressive in terms of depth of idea. They are simply genre paintings, brilliantly executed and charming to look at. The little reproduction of Sir Joshua Reynolds's child hung on the wall in "The Parlor" has exactly caught the horrid tones of a cheap reproduction and takes on meaning in terms of the actual mop-pets in the worker's parlor. But such a gesture is witty in terms of Norman Rockwell, not in terms of social realism. It is, incidentally, interesting to note that both Sharrer and Pickens have used the motif of card-playing gamins, when they wish to indicate that their children are real. This is a device first used by the Carravagisti toward 1600 when they, too, sought to establish a new realism.

One should not leave the museum without noting an unpretentious yet moving group of photographs taken before the First World War by Lewis Hine. His documentary photographs of coal mines, the Bowery and New York tenements are unforgettable. With simple earnestness he answers questions raised today by searching young painters.

Records

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Roy Harris is one of the disappointments of American music. His problem is so widespread in American art that it deserves careful critical study. One thinks, in the various arts, of Sherwood Anderson, Robinson Jeffers and Grant Wood, all of whom started similarly with a richly native idiom and human content, yet failed to grow

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because they became so involved with themselves. For twenty years Harris has been writing music of the most ambitious structure, with a melodic idiom genuinely native. Yet his music has been hard to take, not so much for its boldness of design as for its unclarity. His melodies are founded on such elements as spirituals and transplanted Scotch or Irish tunes, but given so introspective a treatment that all songful quality is squeezed out. His designs are intricately contrapuntal, and the descriptive note to any one of his compositions reads as if it were an appendix to "The Art of the Fugue." But these designs seem alien to his music, a substitute for a truly organic and meaningful form. What one usually hears is only a single accompanied melodic line. He is essentially a romantic, without a clear idea as to the kind of thought about which to organize his work; there is always a general feeling of aimlessness, in spite of its finished structure on paper. The present work is typical. It has some beautiful and exciting passages, and displays especially well his imaginative rhythmic patterns, which hang together in spite of their disdain for bar lines. But as a whole it is not a satisfying experience and indicates that Harris has not solved the problem he himself has raised, of being a composer to the American people.

Arthur Benjamin is an Australian. His work is more extrovert than that of Harris, written brilliantly and colorfully for the viola and piano. But even more than Harris, his idiom is a barren one in which he strains to work up a semblance of emotion. The performance by Primrose is an astonishing one technically and interpretively. (Victor M 1061.)

The Haydn Symphony in C Major, No. 97, is less dramatic than some of the others of the twelve great symphonies he wrote for London. Its special quality is a serenity and festive splendor. Sir Thomas Beecham, who reveals himself as so muddle-headed a tory whenever he opens his mouth on some subject other than music, does this kind of music better than anybody else I know. No other conductor has so firm yet elastic a beat, and so great an ability to project the inner voices of Haydn's musical design with full clarity, yet without overemphasis. (Victor M 1059.)

The Bach "Three Part Inventions" are fifteen short pieces of the utmost

beauty. And Bach reveals within them not only his gift for emotion but his scientific mind, investigating almost the full range of keys and a full variety of forms, from simple melody with obbligate to complex canons and fugues. Erno Balogh's performance leaves nothing to be desired in tone, feeling for musical line and penetration of structure. This album would be the outstanding piano offering of the year, were it not for the poor record material, which will not withstand heavy use. (Disc 770.)

Massenet's ballet music from "The Cid," played by Arthur Fiedler and the Boston Pop, makes light entertainment with some Spanish platitudes. (Victor M 1058.) An album of square dances, without calls, by Paul Hunt and his Rock Candy Mountaineers, provides plenty of bounce but leaves improvisation up to the dancers. (Disc 631.)

I have rarely heard a performance in which the performer seems so personally involved in the emotions of the music as in Koussevitzky's reading of the Tchaikowsky Fifth Symphony, with the Boston Orchestra. Yet there is no hysteria. Koussevitzky understands the structure of this music as well as its melody, and gives it a spaciousness and breadth which reveal Tchaikowsky as a man who thought deeply as well as one who felt deeply. Given clear and faithful recording, this is one of the finest of Tchaikowsky albums. (Victor M 1057.)

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"JEWISH LIFE," a new magazine published by the *Morning Freiheit* Association, will hit the newsstands October 15. Written in English, the magazine will bring a Marxist approach to problems of anti-Semitism at home and abroad. The editorial board consists of such writers as Moses Miller, Morris U. Schappes, Alexander Bittleman, Samuel Barron and others.

There will be a forum on The Negro and the American Theater held under the auspices of Stage for Action at the Fraternal Clubhouse, 110 West 48th St., on October 7. Speakers include James Gow, co-author of *Deep Are the Roots*, Maxine Wood, author of *On Whitman Avenue*, Abraham Hill, director of the American

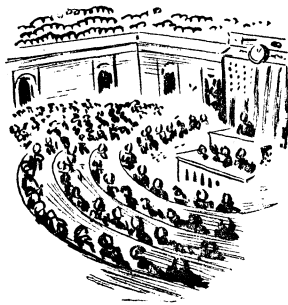
Negro Theater, Sam Sillen, cultural editor of the *Daily Worker*, and Fred O'Neal, of the cast of *Anna Lucasta*. Subscription is \$1.10.

The People's Educational Center, 1717 North Vine Street, Hollywood, is in high gear for a cultural winter. Classes in the social sciences, the arts and production workshops are filling up rapidly. . . . John LaTouche pacing the floor with his new musical, *The Begger's Opera*, with music by Duke Ellington. . . . The Washington Heights chapter of the Disabled War Veterans publically requested the removal of Rankin.

N. Y. newsmen enthusiastic about *Frontpage*, which is the old *Guildpaper* with its face lifted. An interesting feature in the magazine tells of the attempt of Guild President John T. McManus and Executive Vice President John F. Ryan to probe the anti-Semitic and anti-labor activities of a New York Times executive. . . . *The Manual of Practical Political Action* is finally ready for public enlightenment. As a political Baedeker on all the How-tos for a successful campaign, it has no equal. *The Communist Party and You*, by Betty Gannett, Assistant Organization Secretary of the C.P., is a new pamphlet put out by New Century Publishers. Informative and detailed, this picture of the party of Marxism will be a welcome antitoxin to the poison dished out by Schlesinger and Co. . . . Another book from the same publishing house is *Peace Key*, by John M. Weatherwax. As an assemblage of the full texts of all important international treaties, charters, documents, summaries of conferences and official policy statements, it has been widely praised by such men as Cordell Hull, Dyson Carter, Louis Adamic and Frank Kingdon.

And in Chicago: Josh White will give a concert at Chicago's Orchestra Hall in November. Jack Conroy starting a writer's course at Parkway Community House there for progressive writers. Frank Marshall Davis, editor of the *Chicago Star* and Associated Negro Press, scheduled to lecture on Music of Minorities at Lincoln Center, in conjunction with the showing of *Gypsies*, by the Chicago Council for American - Soviet Friendship. . . . The Pete Seeger "Music for Political Action" course for the Midwest School of Political Action Techniques has popular support.

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