

new masses



**“There Will Be
Riots!”**

New York's Relief Crisis

JULY 1933

15 Cents

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This Letter Concerns YOU!

Editor, *New Masses*,
New York City.

I am enclosing the editorial page from a recent issue of—notice especially the name—*Liberty*. LL

This editorial suddenly and without warning transformed me into something that has been two slow years in the making.

I am but an atom—one of fourteen million atoms—but I am also a mother of three perfect children. It is too late to save me, but I am vitally interested in the sort of civilization that my children, and my children's children will have to live in.

I was born of a West Virginia coal miner's family. I secured an education and became a trained nurse. A few years ago I married a good man—an accountant. We worked hard, as we always had. We had a nice little home in California; a cheap car; a radio; some savings and life insurance. I had a bathroom, running hot water and a washing machine. We were simple people, and with our three little ones were very happy.

My husband had put in his best years with the big corporation where he had been advanced to office manager. Then without excuse or warning he was let out. Depression! Our home went, our car, our savings, our furniture, and finally the life insurance. In almost two years he has never been able to find even a week's work.

So here we are today. We live in a two room shack. It has not a modern convenience. We have for furniture, three old chairs, two broken stoves and an old table. We sleep on bags of straw. Food we are handed by the state enough each week merely to sustain life—not health. We are humiliated in the process. We are treated as the lowest form of animal life by our towns people.

We have been, as the rest of the millions like us—**FOOLS**. We never bothered about how the country was run. We did our work, got the best we could for ourselves, and slept on! So we, like the millions of others had it coming to us! But we are awake now, and if I know anything, the others are coming awake, also.

This editorial took my breath away—and I thought nothing could do that again. This millionaire Macfadden cannot be an absolute fool, so I judge he is simply bold. **BOLD!** Bolder than others have dared to be. He is smart enough to know the temper of the hungry millions; to know that they are coming out of the lethargy, but he feels secure enough to sit upon his millions and adopt the attitude of the aristocrats before the French Revolution. Saying to his fellow plutocrats — “Here, these clods are coming awake. If we allow them to awaken they will be a menace to our security, so we must keep them asleep. They are animals, who are savage only when they are very hungry. If we keep just enough in their stomachs to keep the hunger pangs quiet, that will not cost us so much, and they will not awaken. Better that than take the chance that they, from savage hunger, pull us from our throne and rend us apart.”

I have never been a radical or even a socialist. Nothing at all but a quiet hardworking woman. Now I am a mother and this civilization is not fit for my fine children to grow up in.

I am not saying that I care for Russia's plan, although, it has its points. But one thing is absolutely certain — from this day forth — I will in some way work for something vastly different from the form of civilization we know here. I was once a proud, selfrespecting mother. I am now merely one of the hungry millions who would be the first to help pull millionaire Macfadden and all his kind, from their throne of power — and **DEVOUR** them.

I wonder if our people **ARE** such clods that, so long as they are thrown a bone to keep away severe hunger pangs, they will be satisfied to grovel indefinitely at the feet of the capitalists?

Also, I wonder if there are any sincere leaders of mankind? If most of those called Communists are not simply trying to grind their own little—or big—axes?

Robbed of all faith in human nature—I am wondering, thinking, watching. I am almost savage enough to welcome a revolution, since history has proven that to be the only way the oppressing powers have ever been dragged down—in order that a more progressive civilization may arise.

I have written this merely to say that I find some gleam of hope in the articles in *NEW MASSES*. I am an average person—and there are millions like me.

Danforth, Maine.

Sincerely,

ELIZABETH SANTANA

Reprinted from the June issue of the *New Masses*

To the *New Masses* come many letters like this. Letters which prove how vitally this revolutionary magazine is needed today by the “millions like me” of whom Elizabeth Santana writes.

We need your help—and we need it **NOW**—in order that we may build a circulation big enough and wide enough to include all the Elizabeth Santanas. We must make of the *New Masses* a magazine that measures up to their faith in us, and to the importance of our tasks in this critical historic moment.

Funds are needed, new subscriptions are needed. Unlike the commercial and subsidized bourgeois magazines, each issue of the *New Masses* is published at a loss. Heroic struggles are required to meet each month's expenses of the *New Masses*. But this is a situation which can be remedied very simply. *For the New Masses can break even financially if we can merely double the present circulation.*

Help us accomplish this. By doing so you will be rendering an incalculable service to the revolutionary movement. Ask your friends to subscribe. Send us a subscription for one or more of your acquaintances. Or send us the money and we will send the *New Masses* to someone who needs it and is not getting it now.

In addition to thousands of new subscriptions, the *New Masses* urgently needs cash contributions in order that we may publish more material, and better material in every issue—and so that we may immediately launch a circulation-building program which will put the magazine on a non-loss basis as a preliminary to a tremendously accelerated future growth.

Here are two coupons. Fill in one or the other and send it along **TODAY!** If you really **BELIEVE** in the revolutionary movement—**PROVE IT NOW!**

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CONTRIBUTORS:—Phil Bard, Emjo Basshe, Jacob Burck, Whittaker Chambers, Robert Cruden, Jack Conroy, Adolph Dehn, Robert Dunn, John Dos Passos, Kenneth Fearing, Ed Falkowski, Hugo Gellert, Eugene Gordon, Horace Gregory, William Gropper, William Hernandez, Langston Hughes, Joseph Kalar, I. Klein, Melvin P. Levy, Louis Lozowick, H. H. Lewis, Norman Macleod, A. B. Magil, Scott Nearing, Myra Page, Harry Allan Potamkin, Paul Peters, Walter Quirt, Louis Ribak, Anna Rochester, E. Merrill Root, James Rorty, Martin Russak, Esther Shemitz, William Siegel, Upton Sinclair, Agnes Smedley, Otto Soglow, Herman Spector, Bennett Stevens, Joseph Vogel, Mary H. Vorse, Keene Wallis, Jim Waters, Art Young.
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"There Will Be Riots!"

Jessie M. Stanley

HASTILY assembled, patched, graft-ridden, grossly inefficient, the city's huge charity machine, which had been grudgingly doling out bits of food and money, began to break down. No more money. "There will be riots!" the politician in charge announced. In a few days a million unemployed and their families would be starving in New York.

This was in the second week of July. The *New Masses* sent me out to see what the situation actually was. Obviously a crisis affecting the actual life or death of a million people cannot be adequately surveyed in so short a time. But while Commissioner of Welfare Taylor's warning was sending the cold shivers down Tammany's spine, and Mayor O'Brien was assuring the press that "it would work out all right," and begging them "not to get down to brass tacks" on the question, and asking for the special session of the legislature which he finally got, I went up and down the city, talking, asking questions and listening.

Actually the "brass tacks" of the situation are a good deal more serious than the bourgeois public realizes although some inkling of it appears to have seeped through to City Hall. Goaded on by the inadequacy of relief, the favoritism to Tammany adherents and the cynicism of financiers and bankers, steady and efficient organizing has been going on now for months through the Unemployed Councils and similar bodies. Commissioner Taylor's prophecy of "riots and martial law" was only a rainbow vision of what may happen if the present temper and energy of the jobless keeps up and the let-'em-eat-cake boys of Wall Street continue to ride their hobby horses.

City Hall is just the slightest bit disturbed but Wall Street, still dazzled with the spectacle of Charlie Mitchell being cheered by the Broadway serfs, doesn't want to know and doesn't care. The stock market is up again and they have the New Deal. With a standard national wage ranging from \$9 to \$18 backed by federal legislation and strikes outlawed, they think they are sitting pretty. The Roosevelt monkey-gland operation on the senescent capitalistic system is to them, not an Indian Summer, but the millenium. They take a breather, feel their strength once more. They won't underwrite any more relief bonds in New York City, the public is bucking at them anyhow.

And so Commissioner Taylor, faced with a bankrupt department and possibly losing his job, grows bitter and speaks up.

"Everything is being done to make the bonds the best securities," he said to me, "but the financial group just feel that they don't want any more. The bankers, or the group that handles the city's bonds, just feel that they cannot handle any further indebtedness in unemployment bonds, though they are as good as any bonds in the country. "We've tried everything to interest the bankers. We've even enlisted outside influence. They don't seem to realize and it's their problem as much as ours."

Just too bad—and an election coming along. The Commissioner's petulance is almost comic. Tammany's flesh creeps a little, watching the bankers, inspired by the Roosevelt policies, moving toward a showdown, leaving them high and dry. And on the other hand, the unemployed quietly organizing.

At the time of writing, the authorities state that the money is forthcoming to meet relief payrolls overdue and grocers and utility companies continue to accept relief vouchers which Taylor says he is issuing with no money to back them up. The special session at Albany will simply empower the city to raise money for relief. Just how this will be done no one seemed to know, except that Mayor O'Brien says "it will work out all right."

The real crisis in relief is deeper than the present fiscal dilemma indicates. Bitter feeling among the jobless as to the blatant inadequacy has been slowly accumulating and many state openly that they wish that relief would stop altogether so that there could be a showdown.

Look at the statistics. In round figures, the city's revenue is about \$500,000,000 a year, approximately \$300,000,000 of which is paid out in interest on bonds, amortization and such charges. Thus in the bitterest depression of all times, in this great congested city where tragic human need is apparent to the blindest plutocrat, the bankers and rentiers harvest a major portion of the taxes extorted from the multitude. And the bankers themselves do not pay taxes—at least not income tax.

The monthly amount being spent on public relief today is \$7,000,000. Of this sum only \$3,000,000 comes out of the city funds. The remainder is contributed by the state and federal government. This means that the city allocates a paltry \$36,000,000 a year for relief out of the half billion revenue, a sum probably less than the Tammany rake-off on the remainder of the sum left to operate the municipality.

There are 210,000 families, or approximately 1,000,000 persons on the relief rolls of the city. If the entire \$7,000,000 were actually spent on relief it would work out at about \$7 a head per month. But 75,000 of these families are supported by relief pay-rolls, wages for whole or part-time work totalling more than \$3,000,000 a month. In addition there are 5,000 regular salaried workers to be paid out of it. This leaves considerably less than \$4,000,000 to dole out to the lowest strata of relief cases. There are 135,000 families or 700,000 persons on home relief; these get an average of about \$5 a month per head.

And even this pittance is waning as the Home Relief Bureaus are compelled to spread their funds thinner and thinner to cover the new relief applications. According to Miss Mary Gibbons, head of the central office, these applications are coming in at the rate of 8,000 a week with a slight increase for July despite the ballyhoo of the New Deal. And prices are rising; the price of *bread* is going up!

Again, according to Miss Gibbons, the white collar workers are now stampeding the bureaus for relief. The appeal of gentility to the bureaucrats is obvious. John Smith, floorwalker, comes away with a rent check as well as food, while Mrs. Scarlatti, proletarian, and five lean kids who have been on relief for three years and whose faces they are tired of seeing, suddenly find their \$2.50 weekly food ticket cut down to \$2.

It is true that the Home Relief Bureaus will assure you that "everybody is being taken care of." Mrs. Goldman at Spring Street qualifies it—"every *deserving* case is being taken care of," she said. But the groups of haggard, hungry men and women outside on the pavements clamoring for food tickets testify that the bureaucrats lie.

Commenting on the situation as it existed at the end of May, William Hodson, executive director of the Welfare Council, told me:

"The usual seasonal decline in the need for relief was not apparent during the last month. Even now, with 275,000 families on the relief rolls of public and private agencies, the Home Relief Bureau is receiving each week new applications from thousands of additional families made destitute by exhaustion of life's savings, after three years of unemployment.

"While there are many signs pointing to improving business conditions, it is important that the community realize it will be a long time before the hundreds of thousands of families who now need the aid of relief societies to avert suffering will be able to return to employment and self-support.

"This is chiefly because this group represents only about one-third of the total number of unemployed in this community and we have not yet devised a method—nor is it certain that such a method is possible or even desirable—for giving new jobs first to those on the relief rolls, since there are many others not on the rolls who are equally in need and better qualified for the work in hand."

Cap in Hand

It makes no difference whether it be public or private charity, the worker must go cap in hand. The capitalist system which jauperizes him automatically reduces him to the level of a criminal. As an out-of-work truck driver who applied for relief expressed it to me: "I thought they were going to finger-print me and put me in a police line-up before they got through."

The business of applying for relief at the public bureaus appears to be a kind of hurdle race, devised to eliminate most of the field and let the best stayer win the cup. First, there is the long wait standing in line which soon eliminates the weakest. Complicated forms have to be filled in, details of ancestry, creed, environment, occupation and every other conceivable piece of information, regular cross-word puzzles for those who don't spell or write English well and whose blunders provide endless amusement for the bureaucrats. There is also an oral cross-examination. "Some of 'em take a quarter of an hour to answer one question; you'd think they were dopey," wise-cracked one of the Harlem hirelings, indicating a roomful of relief applicants. Some of them were old, their faculties blunted by privation and suffering. It would be easy to discourage them and send them home for another week or two until desperation sent them tottering back to try again.

The stayers, eligible for relief, then have to wait for an investigator to come to their homes. Sometimes this takes weeks, sometimes they never come at all. At the Mayor's request for particulars of urgent needy cases, the Unemployed Councils of Greater New York are flooding his office with details of hundreds of families on the verge of starvation, nearly all of whom have at one time or another applied for relief and been either ignored or refused. For accuracy's sake I must record an exception. I came across an old Irishwoman who had been inspected and cross-examined by only *seven* investigators before she finally got her fortnightly four dollar food ticket.

The most superficial enquiry reveals appalling cases of destitution. Scanning the streets on the East Side, it is easy to see evidence of the contention that 47 per cent of the city's children are undernourished. Annual income tax from the Morgan partners alone could prevent that.

A Walking Corpse

I came across Mrs. Sherman of 365 Madison Street, about 5 feet 4—weighs 88 lbs.—a walking corpse. She gets a fortnightly food ticket of \$7 for herself and daughter of twelve. She was recently ill. Malnutrition, the doctor said. When she could get to the relief bureau again, they cut her ticket by 50 cents. This woman is literally dying on her feet. The whole bone structure of her face stands out and the skin under her eyes hangs down in huge pouches. "I have to feed the child first," she told me.

When I was in the Harlem bureau, a family arrived, the mother crying and begging for food. Three of the children had the same sunken cheeks and pouchy eyes.

Frank Barber and his wife, both 69 years old, 303-A Wilson Avenue, the Bronx, have been refused aid. These old people are without food but because in a short while they will be eligible for pensions, the bureau apparently considers they can continue without food until then.

In Harlem, relief appears to have almost broken down and feeling runs high. The other day a woman living at 239 East 143rd Street with her five children committed suicide by jumping from a fourth story window. It is alleged that she had applied for relief and been refused and was at her wits end to provide food for her family. Random picking of desperate cases from lists being compiled for the Mayor disclosed Victoria Brown, 2170 Fifth Avenue, seriously ill in bed. Her four starved children sat around in the dark room without clothes to cover them. Three months ago, this woman asked for relief. No investigator has been near her. When friends brought food to the children, they seized the bread and tore it to pieces like animals.

At 47 West 127th Street another destitute family of five are living in one room in the most unsanitary conditions imaginable. The children have no clothes. A request for relief has been so far ignored.

Of the cases now being listed by the Harlem Unemployed Council, many have appealed for relief and been ignored. Almost all of them either have been evicted or expect to be at any moment and most of them have the gas and electric light turned off. Yet an official at the Home Relief Bureau assured me that all the needy were being taken care of.

Evictions continue all over the city. In the Bronx alone, according to the Bronx Tenants' Emergency League, there have been fifty people out on the sidewalk already this month. Realizing that evictions more than anything else have provoked militancy among workers, the Welfare Department has ordered that rent vouchers be given to the victim as the marshall begins to move out the furniture. This enables the evicted person to find some unsanitary old-law flat or room to move into for which the landlord is unable to get rent anyway and may as well gamble on a voucher. Workers assert that rent vouchers are refused by landlords whose flats are decent and rentable.

But at the most the relief crisis to City Hall is just another fiscal headache to be soothed away before election time. Fling a



EVICTED

WILLIAM SIEGEL

few dollars at the jobless, pat the Unemployed Councils on the back. Why should the Board of Estimate with their huge salaries, their limousines and their European vacations paid for out of public funds, worry about the starving men who comb the West Street garbage cans after dark, the million half-fed children of New York and the gaunt angry fathers and mothers milling around the relief bureaus? In the last analysis they must always be on the side of the bankers and do as they are told. The sequel to the City Hall hearing of Communist representatives was a recommendation of a new sales tax for relief, this time on food, and a pigeon-holing of Robert Minor's demands.

Not until several days after Taylor gave out his threat of "riots and martial law" did they manage to get together at the City Hall. Sun-tanned and overweight, the city fathers drifted into the room. The meeting was called for 11, they assembled at 11.45, a semi-circle of heavy men enthroned with O'Brien as the centrepiece, all staring insolently at the workers' leaders—the "rabble" out front.

The first tiresome chore was to have to listen to Robert Minor while he explained in simple language the meaning of the word destitution and told them in simpler language how they could raise funds to relieve it. Rattled at having to hear a "red" speak, they shifted uneasily. Lynch of Staten Island scowled at the Mayor for allowing it. Deputy Controller Priol sneered. As Minor started out by denouncing the city's non-income tax paying millionaires, O'Brien clutched his gavel convulsively.

Grey-haired, with broad shoulders and swinging arms, Minor faced that flaccid group of port-barrel squatters and jarred the smiles off their faces one by one. Yes, the money could be found, he said \$400,000,000 of it—the amount needed to cover the barest necessities. Cut by half the salaries of all office-holders getting more than \$5,000 a year, he thundered. The boys shifted nervously, Lynch was angry, the fellow was getting personal. Dismiss the Tammany parasites, continued Minor—declare a moratorium on bondholders' interest, put on a capital levy and a stock transfer tax. Not a flicker of life from the

Board. O'Brien stared at Minor with a dull glassy fixity.

Lynch and Harvey began to dose fitfully, Hester watched the clock anxiously, Mahan apparently still puzzling the words "capital levy."

Minor warned them to find relief funds and find them quickly. He reminded them of the fates of the kings of England, France and Russia who made concessions to the hungry multitude just a little too late. But the city fathers were back in dreamland again. Minor made his last shot. I know of no greater "intellectual stimulus to action," he said, than a quarter of a million men gathered in the square out there around City Hall, "united at last by the hammer blows of starvation." Startled, they sat up, hastily re-assured themselves that the police were present and glanced out of the windows. The city square was empty; all was right with the world. The "red" was finished, it was almost time for lunch—a quarter of million of 'em around the City Hall, they couldn't do it.

But the farce which calls itself public relief is slowly causing the organizations of the quarter of a million. "Organize, organize," is the battle-cry in Harlem, the Bronx and the East Side. And they are organizing. Even the authorities realize this and secret orders have been given at the relief stations to appease applicants who have an organization behind them.

It is the opening wedge—and hardly a day goes by now but that workers are made to see the value of mass action. It was dramatically demonstrated last week in front of a Progressive Foods Grocery Store which closed its door and refused to give out food to holders of relief vouchers. Workers gathered in mass around the store, hastily elected a committee who, despite the line of cops with clubs raised, standing under the "food tickets accepted here" sign, made the manager open up and serve all persons with vouchers.

Clubs fly often enough in Harlem but the growing militancy is such that police brutality is just so much more provocation. The leaders are young and not afraid. An outstanding case is that the Negro workers Snipe, 332 Lenox Avenue, now out on bail on a charge of felonious assault. On May 19, he was one of a delegation of 700 jobless needy who marched down to the



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Home Relief Bureau. The riot squad was called and he among others got badly clubbed. He was arrested and taken to the precinct station.

There, according to his story, four policemen took him into a waiting room and beat him up until he was unconscious. "So you want free food," yelled one cop, "well, take that!" His fist crashed into Snipe's face. "So you want free rent; well, take that!" said the second, following suit. And so on with the others. A fifth who entered to watch the sport beat Snipe with a chair and tore his shoulder open. As a final stroke, the cops held him down in a basin of water until he passed out. A doctor attended him when he got to the Tombs.

East Siders can match these stories. But as the solidarity movement stiffens and grows, workers are learning to fight against police brutality. In recent demonstrations they have come out of them with more demands satisfied and fewer broken heads. Every needy person affiliated with an Unemployed Council can, if he wants to, be accompanied by a delegation when he goes to demand relief. And he will get it. The block committee, 35 of which have sprung up recently, are taking care of dispossess notices by forcing rent vouchers from the relief bureaus and also ones for gas and light, as well as food.

A leader of the East 12th Street block committee told me of an elderly woman who was evicted in that block a few days ago. Disdaining the help of any "red" organization, she sat out

on the sidewalk among her bits of furniture, holding two American flags and declaring firmly that "God would take care of her." Hour by hour went by and neither God nor the Home Relief Bureau came. Finally, she turned to the Block Committee which did help her. The next night she was one of the most enthusiastic speakers at their meeting.

Visits to these block committees reveal gatherings of grim, determined workers absolutely sold now on the power of militant organization. Neither are they interested in any "crises" as to maintaining the present relief. They are out for proper and adequate relief. One of the outstanding features is the keen young people who are joining up. The Welfare Department has been attempting to break up block committees. A department inspector called at the East 11th Street Committee a few days ago and informed them that they were not permitted under the law to give out bottles of milk to children, as they have been doing. She hinted at legal action. The secretary told her just to go ahead and try and stop them.

The first objective of the Unemployed Councils, aiming at adequate relief, is to force through their proposed Workers' Municipal Relief Ordinance. Their demands include: a base rate of \$10 weekly cash relief for every couple, \$7 for a single person and \$3 each for dependents; prevailing trade union wages for relief work, free gas, light, transportation for the jobless, complete cessation of evictions, and free lunches, clothing and schooling for children of the unemployed.

Kuomintang Murders

Conrad Komorowski

THE Kuomintang has not been able, or willing, to aid the workers and peasants of China. Its career has been one of the most brazen and treacherous, one of the most brutal and bloody, that ever sold itself for the imperialist's gold.

Today the Kuomintang is rapidly disintegrating because its bankruptcy has become so apparent even the most reactionary forces have been compelled to set up slogans of "regeneration." The Kuomintang is being "regenerated"—for some time Chiang Kai-shek has been preparing the ground for the coming of the new Messiah, with himself playing the role of the big, strong man destined to save his country from its people. It is not for nothing that Chiang Kai-shek has translated and distributed more than 10,000 copies of *The Life of Mussolini*, and that he has gathered the "Blue Jackets," a gang of fascist thugs under the leadership of Chiang Kai-shek's trusted butchers.

With the disintegration of the Kuomintang is unleashed a wave of terror against all revolutionary forces in China. On this question all the quarreling militarist lords, bankers, cliques in the Kuomintang, and imperialist powers snarling and yapping over the spoils, can and do agree.

The wave of terror is marked by many murders, many jailings, many deaths "from natural causes." There are two that concern us most right now. The first is the murder of Yang Chien, close associate of Soong Ching-ling (Madame Sun Yat Sen); the second the murder of Ting Ling, an outstanding left writer. The murder of Yang Chien was characterized by the *Evening Post* (Shanghai) as the most serious political assassination of the year; the murder of Ting Ling was a serious blow of the reaction at the cultural forces of China, and has aroused tremendous protest.

Yang Chien was one of a group of scientists who founded the National Research Council of China (Academia Sinica), and later became its General Secretary. He was also one of the founders of the All-China League for Civil Rights, and then later its General Secretary.

He has been in the forefront in all struggles for the release of political prisoners, in exposure of prison conditions, and so on. Of late, however, his work has taken on a more serious aspect, because with the sharpening of the crisis, all opposition to the Kuomintang became an opposition to its treachery and betrayal, and opposition to Japan's course of conquest and in-

vasion. As Yang Chien's work took on a more political character, as the development of the struggle itself brought him farther to the left, as he brought with him an increasingly large number of intellectuals, the Kuomintang determined to root out this "disease." His death is now a distinct threat at the life of Mme Sun Yat Sen, and to all the leaders of the valiant anti-imperialist, anti-Japanese, and national salvation organizations.

Ting Ling, murdered at 25, was one of the founders of the China League of Left Writers, a member of its Executive Committee, and a member of the All-China Cultural Federation. She came of an old feudal landlord family of Hunan. Out of such families have come not only the militarists and corrupt officials, but many Communists, such as Ting Ling, devoted to death to the fight of the workers and peasants.

Ting Ling began writing stories dealing with the themes then disturbing the student world. She wrote in a powerful style called "masculine" to distinguish it from the mid-Victorian languishing accents of other women writers.

As she developed in her craft and in knowledge, the short stories dealt with the White Terror, with workers, with the Yangtze flood, and with official corruption and brutality. She edited a monthly magazine, *The Polar Star*, and her stories were eagerly read by the revolutionary youth in the schools and colleges.

Before she was murdered, she was engaged on a novel dealing with the rise and fall of the feudal family of Hunan Province, in which all the social, economic, and political forces that have gripped China in the past few decades appeared.

Now she is dead. The murderous Kuomintang has butchered hundreds of young revolutionaries. The anti-cultural role of the Kuomintang should cause it to be hated by every person, regardless of political belief.

The Kuomintang murders the only progressive forces, the revolutionaries, aids and cherishes only the most corrupt and execrable forces, sells the workers and peasants into slavery, acting the prostitute and pimp of the imperialist powers, and lives a progressively degenerating life.

Against it rises the towering upsurge of the masses, soon to wipe it out. This is the only fit memorial for Yang Chien, Ting Ling and others.

The Brick

I. L. Kissen

THE foreman grunted and shook his head abstractedly. "Nope," he said briefly, "No jobs here. Scram." He was a heavy, thick-set man with a bull-neck and a large pendulous stomach. His hat was pushed back over his forehead. From one of the rear pockets of his overalls, a scale measure protruded, and in the other pocket was a tabloid newspaper. A newly-lit cigar was stuck in one corner of his mouth. Smoke streamed from his nostrils. He stood hunched over some blue-prints that rested on a little ledge jutting from a window, and he did not bother to turn around when he answered his questioner.

The latter, was a light, thinned individual whose cheek bones stretched out prominently over his face. His clothes, rusty and showing plainly the ravages of wind and weather, hung loosely on him. He might have been twenty-nine years old. He might have been twenty-four. It was hard to tell; hunger ages a person more quickly than time.

"Please," he begged, "just any kind of work. You don't have to pay me much and I'll work like hell."

"God dammit, I told you no," there was growing irritation in the other's voice, "beat it. No job for nobody."

The job seeker stood his ground. "Listen," he said falteringly. "I'll work just for meals. I haven't eaten anything since yesterday morning. You won't have to pay me nothing, only meals."

For the first time, the foreman turned around and faced his annoyer.

"For chrissakes," he shouted, "do you think I got a hand-out for every stinkin' bum that comes along! Get to hell out of here!" As his voice rose on the last phrase, the cigar slipped out of his mouth and fell to the ground. The other, on the instant, picked it up quickly and extended it to the foreman.

The thick-set man, looked first at the cigar and then at the slight, eager job-seeker and without any warning, suddenly spit full in his face; a brown-yellow blob, that reached its mark on the forehead and slowly coursed a path down the left cheek. He then turned about abruptly and once again pored over the blueprint.

The other stood stupefied for a moment. He faced about and walked lowly, in half-daze, down the street. The cigar fell, unnoticed, from his nerveless fingers. He reached the curb and sat down. Then, mechanically, he took a dirt-stained rag out of his pocket and rubbed away the spittle. But scrub as he might, he could not get rid of a feeling that there was a brown-yellow blob on his forehead slowly winding down his left cheek. The stain seemed to him to penetrate his flesh and his bones, running through his veins and mingling with his blood.

He turned his head to one side suddenly and vomited—a huge retching sob that seemed to bring up his insides. He sat there for a moment, gasping. Then as he regained control of himself, he carefully wiped the corners of his mouth with the rag that he used for a handkerchief. After his mouth and chin had been cleaned, quite unexpectedly, with a half-mechanical, totally involuntary, wholly unknowing movement, more a reflex than a conscious action, his arm jerked upwards and he wiped his forehead and traced a path down his cheek, rubbing deep into the hardened flesh.

He slowly realized the second motion of his arm. There came to him a vague conviction that for the rest of his life he would be thus wiping spittle from his forehead and his left cheek;

there would always be the feeling of tobacco juice staining his face.

And as the conviction gradually became a permanent certainty, the cumbersome machinery that made up his thinking process came to a sudden stop, all, except one tiny wheel that turned slowly round and round and round—one tiny wheel—slowly—round and round and round. All other motion of thought had ceased. His mind was a blank with one black spot in the center, a thick round empty cup, save for one quivering drop at the bottom; one thought, one idea, one purpose was all that was left of the infinite processes that had heretofore guided his conscious and unconscious being.

He looked about him. A little way off, there was lying on the ground the half of a brick, thick, red and dusty. He walked over and picked it up, moving in slow jerks as if he were a marionette or puppet, controlled by strings.

Stealthily he walked back to the spot where the foreman stood, still hunched over the blueprints, a fresh cigar in his mouth, and a reminiscent scowl on his face. On his toes the job seeker went, soundlessly, and now he was directly behind the other, less than two feet away. He looked about him. No one in sight. He drew his arm back, and with every energy that was pent up in him, with the greatest force that his arm was ever to command, at the apex of his frenzy he threw the brick. He was too close for the missile to go anywhere but directly and exactly to its mark.

The brick whizzed into the foreman's neck at a spot just where the hair came to a thin point. He gave an odd half-grunt and in one concerted movement started two re-actions—one hand was lifted instinctively to be clapped on the spot where the brick struck home, and his whole body began the motion of turning about. Both actions were stopped midway. His hand suspended in mid-air, his huge hulk half turned about, he crashed to the ground, face forward, inert resistless flesh. Earth received him heavily. A stream of blood gushed from his neck quickly formed a dirt-red pool about his head.

The brick thrower gazed down at him meditatively for a moment. Then he bent down, and after a struggle, managed to turn the other over on his back. The eyes were closed and the face was white and blood-drained. Still bent down, and summoning once again a force from some newly awakened fount, the slight one spit thickly and viciously in the foreman's thick, flabby face.

He straightened up immediately and looked about. His heart almost stopped beating. Upon a steel beam that projected a little ways above him crouched a worker, staring wide-eyed. Eyes met; both men were rigid.

The one above regained his voice. He spoke in a dry hoarse whisper.

"For chrissakes, kid" he choked, "beat it quick before somebody comes."

It was as if the other had been held back by a spring that was suddenly released. He ran swiftly down the street and rounded the corner. As he ran, the quick, jarring impact of his feet pounding over the pavement jogged the dynamo of his mind into its usual regulated action. Wheels revolved in and out of wheels, pistons glided smoothly up and down and ratchets wove in and out effortlessly.

Once safely round the corner he changed his pace to a slow leisurely saunter, hands in pockets, whistling as he walked.

A first hand report on the deepest South—Signs of slowly gathering anger among the white and Negro farmers, share-croppers and day laborers.

The Black Belt

Ben Field

SATURDAY afternoon in a Texas cotton town spread like a huge nipped sow in a wallow of dust and heat. Hundreds of cars clutter Main Street. The stores hum with whites and hoglice. Negroes, crawling to town in mule carts or by foot, swarm in side streets and back alleys.

A big bony Negro squats on the doorsill of a locked feed store. His strong toes stick out of broken shoes. His flappy overalls are patched in a dozen places. He thanks us for the cigaret and puffs slowly to make it last. He picks his words carefully.

He's a share tenant on a forty-acre farm couple of miles off. Got to supply own tools, seed, mules. Got to buy his seed from the boss at fifty cents a bushel and gets only eight dollars a ton for it. One fourth of his cotton and one-third of his corn goes to the boss who is a town merchant. The town merchants own the plantations. They dice them up renters and croppers, mostly Negroes. East rain hurt corn. He'll be lucky to get three bales off his fifteen acres. Things were some better during the war. No, he's against another war. But from the newspaper he reads some people think war's like chopping cotton: the more men chopped down the better the rest have a chance to grow. That's what the paper thinks....

Aware now that we are Northerners, he eases up a little. A lot of the colored farmers tend one-horse farms on half. They go around almost naked as jaybirds because the boss won't give them no clothes. The women wash and iron for the boss-family for a little milk and butter. Day labor out in the field make no more than forty cents. The boss won't ever pay that with cash but with a little spoiled lard and meat. And the horsewhip is always where they can grab it. . . .

The feed store is about a hen's flutter from the street corner where some whites are gathered in a small knot. A woman with a face like a hawk on a tree glares at the two talkers and spits angrily into the gutter. A loafer, clumsy as a shoat just trained to stand on his hind legs, inches up along the wall. "He's been trying to shove his ear in the last five minutes," whispers the farmer suddenly. Porkface catches our stare and looks away.

The Negro farmer goes on softly: "That's what we got always to be on the look out for. I ain't saying all I know, Mister. They weigh heavy on us, they sure weigh heavy on us."

The Pickers

ALL through the Black Belt the cotton fields are full of pickers. Little Negro children, humped like partridge chicks against the preying sun, hide between the plants. You're good if you can pick two hundred pounds. Pickers get from twenty five to forty cents a hundred. Sometimes you can make a little extra by starting early when dew's on. Then the cotton weighs more. There's a story of one widow woman who picks in the moon, starts about three o'clock in the morning. Once she heard chicken crowing and ran out, fearing she had overslept. She found out it was one o'clock later. She made about fifteen cents more than she had expected.

Near the Little Lynchies River, Georgia, a long field full of men, women, and children tearing away at the cotton and stuffing it into bags tied around their waists. A stiff old woman

sings plaintively. She makes up the words. The rest are her chorus and hum in their sweat. The sad song breaks for a moment. "Verbene, why I see you standing all the time?" The scolded girl grins and bends again. Again the low sorrowful tune tossed from one mouth to another, hour after hour.

In a corner of the field the foreman busy with his scales, soiled book, and wagon. He plods up in his tattered clothing. He explains that this field is part of a ten thousand acre plantation. All the pickers live on it, have their cabins, and a patch of ground for sweet potatoes and corn. Cotton is mighty poor this year. You can't make much more than fifty cents a day picking. Picking lasts from middle August till well in October when they finish off the creek bottoms. Rest of year mighty little doing. "We pray to the Lord for better times. This winter'll be tough. It'll be root, hog, or die. Some is talkin' of gittin' together and see the master again."

He looks up humbly. "Can you give us something, Mister?" We remember the newspapers and pamphlets we had brought along. Does he want some of them?

"Yessir, papers or something like pants or a shirt?" He looks up at the Ford on the road.

The night before it had been so hot and damp in the cabin we had slept over in that we had been unable to dry the drawers and socks we had washed. So we had hung them at early dawn on the car and they were still drying in the sun.

The Ford starts. The foreman turns away, disappointed. The pickers root harder among the plants as he plods back. Long after you lose sight of the pickers, their sorrow still sounds in the heavy air.

The Gin

ALL the men in the gin are black except the weighman on the platform and the graybeard in the office in front of the scales. The heat is so intense that the weighman starts bleeding at the nose over the bales. Lean mules with wedge-shaped rumps pulse in the shade of the church on the corner. The church shoulders an onion crate of a belfry with a gaunt cross.

Inside the gin, the thick sweetish air is full of flying lint. A Negro lad switches from the presses to the turntable, passes the bands thru and chops the jute cloth with a hatchet. Another Negro, built like a tomcat, mounts the snarling machinery with a dripping oilcan. He has time enough only to shout back, "Work's on from middle August till Christmas, two dollars a day, and rest of time, 'Nigger, you can go hang.'"

A white farmer backs up for his bale. The weighman jots down in his soiled book 528 pounds. His mouth smelling like an old silo from his yeasty stuff, the farmer says things are better than last year. You don't have to pay the niggers more than thirty cents a pound. It took a swig and a hop, he says happily. He loads on his bale. His rusty face half-hidden by his old black hat, he creaks back to his hot hill farm.

In a bin two Negroes are shovelling cotton seed which shoots down from a flue like rat turds. The bin sounds like the inside of a drum. The Negroes, sweat pouring down their naked breasts, sing a spiritual. The only words distinctly heard are, "Oh, Lord, Oh Lord," in gulps. In the cool office

Limbach



"GIVE!"

B. Limbach

the white boss dozes. His sharp beard pointing into his lap is shaped like a great dogtooth.

The Pepper Patch

ALL day long cattle with lolling tongues slump in caked waterholes. The freshest pasture grass seems shriveled like corpse hair. The Negro farmhands hide in their broken little shacks and sprawl as if their backs were broken. Fields stretch to the glazed horizon, stubbled here and there with a loose bent figure.

His overalls are looped over his shoulders with knotted cord. He shoves his bare feet against the burning dirt and blinks in the fierce light. He's been picking since morning in this patch of pepper—mostly sport, which looks like knocked-out teeth, and chili. The chili, he mumbles haltingly, brings in only seventy-five cents a hundred. Should be at least one dollar seventy five to pay. Beyond the field of pepper is cane. North wind came down and hurt cane some. He's working half shares on fifteen acres for a colored farmer who rents from a rich white planter. Never voted in his life, don't know what a poll tax is, don't know who Hoover is or James W. Ford or Roosevelt, never went to no school, he mutters finally. Questions hurl him into a great bush from which his powerful hands and legs can't help him. He stands distressed, trying his best to hitch the right kind of words to a tongue stiff as a wagon pole. When he looks down at the bloody little peppers, his eyes show understanding. Soon as the white man is through, he passes his hands over his face. His face is pock-marked, eaten away. He stoops in the hellish dirt. And picks. The sun hangs in the sky like a buzzard.

Cane

THROUGH the Sugar Bowl of Louisiana the cane stands high, legs straight, strained like fighting cocks'; leaves sickling over. On the plantations, spacious milk-white houses with royal palms and horsemen in pith hats supervising the field workers. Near the barns, the "nigger cabins" like squat boxes for setting hens. Before one stable, a Negro boy, hitched to the rope like a mule, is pulling hay up from a wagon. And overshadowing mansions, shacks, and towns, loom the sugar mills like monstrous feeding animals, their refuse all about them.

Many plantations are run down; fields bare. Planters trot around morosely. Business men wag their heads. Even local baseball teams have had to disband. Telegrams and notices, announcing the sad news, are pasted to telephone poles.

In this small bayou town there's almost been a lynching to break the droning afternoon. A huge mulatto took up most of the sidewalk as he sauntered down towards the courthouse. A white storekeeper took offense and knocked him into the middle of the gutter. The mulatto could have wrung his neck as easily as a sparrow's. Long ropy arms, great cask of a chest, fists like tackle blocks. Yet he had to slink off as the street filled with whites. One of them, trousers pulled up above his knees because his legs are scabby from poison oak, swears these niggers are hard to hold down, more nerves than brains, Christ Almighty. He's a sign painter, originally from New York, and been along the coast forty years, he wouldn't go back for any amount of money, just think of having to sit near a stinking nigger like you got to up North . . .

On the corner opposite the courthouse an old Negro farmhand rests against a post. He is so feeble that a squirt of tobacco, it seems, could knock him over. He studied the long line of black folks waiting for relief at the small courthouse door. They're being given twenty five-pound bags of flour, first help in four weeks. They were promised forty nine-pound bags. You can't say a word about it or they'll get ugly and give you nothing. The old hand isn't afraid to talk. He has nothing to lose but his rags, his hunger, his long years of being cuffed, booted about and skinned. A bunch of old Negroes, shaken out under a tree, look timidly at him. He keeps on in dribbles the way the old do.

In 1918 cane sugar pretty good. In 1919 things started going bad. The mills promised fifteen dollars a ton but the cane growers got only four. It's harder to raise cane here. A spell of cold comes on, then hot, and the cane sours to vinegar. In Cuba it's easier. They have no such weather changes. So they've been flooding the country here with Cuba sugar, regrinding and granulating it. In the mills it's hot as hell, valves leaking, machinery broken, the burnt millhands getting a dollar twenty a day. Farmhands seventy cents. Last year it was eighty. In many places nothing. Growers find it don't pay any more raising cane for market. The companies stopped paying freight. Before, there was always a different

Limbach



"GIVE!"

B. Limbach

Limbach



"GIVE!"

B. Limbach

weight between the railroad company's scales and the mill scales. You had to take mill's word. You got nothing anywhere. And now even if you manage to raise a hog you can't call its hair truly your own you're so hell-deep in debt.

The old man hangs on to the post and looks, leaky-eyed, across the street. Negroes are filing out of the courthouse door, hugging the little sacks of flour. From the bayou a boat sounds like a wild goose finding water. The majestic courthouse glitters in the afternoon sun, palmettos about it like fans. The courthouse is built of bricks brown as the sugar tens of thousands of Negroes plant, tend, harvest, and grind till their last sweat. On the courthouse dome, high above the reach of the people, stands justice. It's a gilded figure with an empty poked-out hand.

The Dipper

THE pine wood is cool in the heat. A stocky Negro and his helper go from one tree to another scraping the sap off tins and cups into their pails. The boy watches us like a cornered mink. The stocky Negro props his pail up against a pine.

His work lasts only five months a year. It's three days a week. Sap is running poor. They manage to dip three barrels a day. Forty cents a barrel for the two of them. Last year it was a dollar a barrel. At the beginning of the season fifty cents. In the swamp beyond this one, the dippers are getting twenty five cents. When they clear a wood for getting at the sap, they send in women and children to hack down the laurel where the snakes hide. You get a few cents, and they think colored people are like the hogs that don't take the poison. At the still they fired the white man and put a Negro in his place, and give him less and that cocks white against the black. Times is getting a little better, but it's for the town merchant. Meat's up from six to ten cents, and flour is sixty five cents a sack. That makes it harder for the working man, and puts him fast in the gin.

He's no money for a newspaper but he's heard of the Scottsboro boys. About time something was done to kick the heel off the black man's neck. The colored people here are waiting and biding their time. He talks as if they are waiting for a Messiah on a Mule, for some Morning Star. He looks down at his big hand and mutters that praying and hoping ain't the only way out.

A truck can be heard churning up the sand road like a locust. The dippers swing their pails up to their bellies. They'll have to hump themselves today to make the third barrel.

Peaches

SHIFTY-EYED, both Negro lads jerk about to face the car. They take the offered cigarets suspiciously. Even when they are given a dime more for their overripe peaches, they don't brighten up. Their faces still show the same lowering, half-resentful, half-frightened expression. If you just as much as shove out a hand, they seem ready to squat like pullets long locked all alone in a coop. At last, one of them mutters huskily they ain't sold nothing the whole day. No, there's no home for either of them. They've been picking a penny here and there. They worked last in a big orchard from seven to six every day and got seventy five cents. Peaches was selling four dollars a bushel towards the end of picking because of scarcity brought on by drought, and so it's hard now to make much on them. If they could get to the other side of these Carolina mountains, they might be able to hit a better spot for peddling. There's no room in the car, but they're willing to lie slapped up against the mudguards like jackknives. Fifteen miles ahead, at the crossroads, they get off. They look away as the car speeds on. Under a glaring sky without an eye of rain in it for weeks they shuffle about their broken basket. The road stretches for miles in both directions, empty in the sun, like a driven machine belt.

The Sorghum Grinders

NEAR a cypress swamp a dozen Negroes clumped around a mill grinding sorghum. The mill is about the size of a pepper grinder. Carts rattle up with the cane which is dumped on the grass. Mose the mule goes sleepily about his circle. You expect any minute the boom, creaking round and round, to knock off the head of the Negro feeding the mill. The pail of juice is swung over to the pans simmering over a crackling

cypresswood fire. The syrup froths and bubbles and comes out clear, thick, honeybrown.

A boy with a greasy cap does most of the talking. Sorghum don't bring in anything much. They use it for butter. Very few has cows around here, and they ain't got money to buy butter or even milk. Cotton's the big crop, but last year it was six cents. They got to give away the cotton seed for ginning and wropping. So when his folks raised sixteen hundred pound, they paid \$4.80 for ginning and \$1.50 for wropping, and that from eight dollars a ton for the seed left nothing. And then they never give you true weight; the scales is false rotten wood. They'll even say so. Sure, the reason is we're dependent, and they're independent. Somewhere i town a few colored folks got together with whites and they held a meeting which was broke up. They talked about voting proper. But there's a poll tax few can pay, and them few can't vote anyhow because of some other laws. He's found Red papers in the lunchroom when he comes to town once a week. He hears they're still holding meetings somewhere in the hills. Hears some of them farmers talks like the iron is working up in them.

The other Negroes cock their heads a moment and go on with the grinding. An old stuffed-looking little man listens eagerly. He pipes up something should be done. What it is, he can't or won't say. Lean as a spear of cane, a tall Negro falls against a wagon wheel and coughs up blood. He's been a cook in Chicago, always tried to keep north of the line. But he got sick bad, lost his job, and had to come here. He can't get a health certificate anywhere now. He staggers over to the feeder with a heap of sorghum. The saddle-colored Negro near the pans blurts, "Is you American?" Strange to him to have a native white show some concern about conditions. The feeder peals some cane and offers it. Then whips up the mule, "Come on, Son, come on, Mose."

The boy with the greasy cap looks beyond the cypress swamp. He says, "I wish I was a foreigner. I likes boats. I ain't never seen clean water or salt. I—there ain't nothing like a big boat." His eyes smolder. He looks around helplessly. The mule wiggles his hairless ears and turns drowsily.

Tobacco

THE edges of the horseshoe bend in the road are patched with gray stringy weeds. A skinny mule is on its knees in the dust, trying to crop under the fence. A Negro keeps yanking its bridle.

Scattered along the fields are tobacco sheds. The sheds, large, airy, and clean, dwarf the hotboxes of the little shacks into which the Negroes are stuffed like cotton waste.

The Negro waves off a cloud of pesky little flies before he talks. Tobacco harvest is over. There's no work. The drought hurt the crop some. He heard the planters are getting half what they got last year for their crop, and that was pretty low. He hears one planter say cigars is just about as high and the big companies are still making fast money. All he knows is what he hears. He ain't got no land but a patch long enough for the mule to stretch out, muzzle to tail. During harvest he was working fifty cents a day. The mule made fifty too. No difference between man and mule. Even the mule is finding it hard to pick up a grass. He can't buy feed for him. The mule's got to git his first because he's got a bigger belly. Ten years ago friends of his went North. Hears they're still making two dollars a day. Wishes he could agone. But here a man is worse off the better off he should be. The colored people on the plantation are taken care of, one way or another, by the master. When tobacco and cotton comes, they git the first piece of work. But if you're your own boss, you got to depend on yourself, got to go out hunting far and wide, got to keep your mule fit or else you might just as well lose leg and arm. To keep honest and cut your own loaf is turribly hard. A man's between two devils and little way out.

The hungry mule jerks on the bridle. The gaunt Negro shakes his head and lets it drag him slowly along.

Rice

ALL afternoon coast showers have been sweeping down from the Gulf across the rice fields. The shockers, all Negroes with the exception of four, are soaked to the skin, their feet balls of mud. Cutting is late. You got to keep on the run in spite of lashing blacksnake whips of rain. When it gets too dark to see straight, you crouch among the wild indigo or under the tarpaulin the tractors carry with them.



"A LITTLE MORE NOISE, PLEASE!"

Warsager

Suddenly the sun swims out again fiercely like a crab; the tractors drum up; the water sloshes around you as you rush among the shocks picking like ricebirds with hooks in your slippery paws.

The gang on the far side of the field gets through first. It waits in the mud for the tractor-lugged binders to spill more shocks. The new hand, a white fellow from Oklahoma, talks about things his way. Used to be in beef and dairy business. Remembers when he made milk for twenty five cents a quart. Now first time in his life working for another guy. Got some work near Fort Worth in the wheat fields for a time. Last night slept in the woods, was damned lucky to hit this job this morning.

He learns that the Canal Company leases most of the land in this section to the white farmers. Ten dollars an acre for flooding the fields. Rice is about a dollar and a half now. Costs more than two dollars to raise it. A Negro hand says soon as they finish threshing there won't be more work till January. Wages was three dollars from sunup to sundown, and now it's a dollar and a quarter and they think that's kind of high. Well, the Canal Company squeezes the farmer and the farmer squeezes the hired feller to keep his own breath going. If you work direct for the Canal Company, it's terrible. They pays you less, keeps you in their camp, watches you with dogs and guns, and whoops you if you so much as make a face. None of the natives'll hire out to it, but they got some yellow boys from Louisiana. You could live on sweet potatoes and

some corn, but garden stuff ain't so good this year. The duck season was short; possum and coon is scarce they been hunted out so. There was a time when a feller could work in the woods, logging pine, ash, oak, gum. Seven dollars a day if you had a truck and worked with a partner, but now sawing's a dollar and a half a thousand and hauling's a dollar a thousand, and even that's mighty scarce getting.

The white man grunts. After the war, everybody said times would always be good. He soldiered in France and thought so too. The boys spilled their guts for a better world. But look how they treated the bonusers, just like dogs.

The Negro waterboy trots up on a broken-down horse. He unslings the old kerosene can. Each hand draws a long slug of water. The chicken-breasted little boy with the rickets peeps, "If I was a soldier, I'd marched down with this here bonus to Warshington."

The ex-soldier says, "I didn't go. But my heart was with the boys down there anyway."

A big Negro swings his hook. "They killed a colored and a white feller when they was only hongry down there."

"We'll show the bastards yet," the white man hawks up desperately. "Killed them like fleas, like dog fleas, Holy God."

The wind sweeps across the field. The clouds clear and a rainbow cuts the sky like a scythe. The tractor chugs down along the skirt of heavy beaded rice. The binder kicks the shocks into the mud. The hired men, black and white, leap to their feet. They run forward with their hooks.



"A LITTLE MORE NOISE, PLEASE!"

Warsager



"A LITTLE MORE NOISE, PLEASE!"

Warsager

Women of Maltby

Ann Barton

IN "good times," the wives of anthracite miners did not stray far from their warm stoves and well-built houses. Anthracite women were content to let their men worry about things. The pay came in regularly, except in times of strike. And then, it was the men's affair. The wives could only sit, and listen to the talk.

But times have changed. The crisis throws its shadow on every town, into every home. The anthracite area is no exception. The women of the anthracite have new things to talk of. Common suffering makes them question, and talk with each other, makes them leave their stoves.

They tuck the youngest baby up warmly, and trudge through the muddy road to Concetta's house. Her house is in the little mining village of Maltby, where mine after mine has shut down this past year. Concetta's kitchen is large and shining. Her huge stove is polished until it looks almost like glass. Her furniture is cozy enough, bought in "good times"—but there is a scarcity of bread in Concetta's home. On the wall is a rotogravure clipping of Stalin reviewing the Red Army.

Twelve women, four of them holding infants sit around the stove. One woman, a member of a Slavic patriotic order, introduces two Slavic women to a group of dark-haired Italian women. Someone knocks at the door. Concetta leaves the group to answer. It is a stout, brisk Italian woman who shakes every one's hand warmly.

Concetta says, "well, shall we start?" The meeting begins. It is a meeting where Slavic, Russian, and Italian women meet for the first time, although they have lived in a radius of miles from each other.

Concetta has drawn up an order of business. She opens the meeting with a little talk. She makes it shyly, and with great difficulty. "Us ladies have a hard time. Our men, most of them aren't working. Those in the mines are being cut. We have to walk four miles into town, and wear out our shoes to get relief. And when we get into town, they promise to investigate us. They take weeks to do it. No milk for the babies, unless the doctor says they're sick—and no clothes or food for us. Most of us had a little money saved. There used to be money for the miners of the anthracite. But now that's gone. I think us women ought to see what we can do to help each other, and get better conditions. We've been sitting by the fire for a long time. We don't know much about how to get together, but I think we should try. That's all I got to say."

Concetta says, "Well, shall we start?" The meeting begins, vigorously up and down the kitchen, as the brisk woman translates into Italian for the women who do not understand anything but Italian. Another woman translates into Slavic.

A woman from outside the village talks. She is Concetta's friend. She explains how all over times are hard—outside the anthracite, from East to West. She explains how men and women are getting together. These women here tonight can do much for themselves and their neighbors—get relief, get milk for the children. Getting together—demanding their rights. That was what was necessary. "All women will fight for their children. We've got to do that now—or see them suffer from hunger under our eyes."

After the translations into Italian and Slavic, a pale, Italian woman speaks.

"Sure, no more than right. I was saying to my neighbor lesterday If we stick together, we can get what we need." The young Russian woman, listening intently, is nursing her baby. She nods her head.

"Yes, and keep sticking together," says a strong-faced woman

with a husky voice. "Not just tonight, but all the time—and grow. The stronger we get, the more we can do."

They speak slowly, hesitatingly. "There's nothing wrong in it," says a beautiful, doll-like woman with the youngest baby, and the Slavic woman nods in agreement.

They elect officers. They call themselves the Working Women's Club of Maltby. They decide at the next meeting to bring up cases that need relief, to plan how to get milk for all babies, to keep them well. The meeting adjourns. Concetta serves them all with coffee.

The anthracite women go out into the muddy roads again, headed towards home, in groups of two and threes. A few of the men kid them about their meeting, but they answer back hotly.

Anthracite women are questioning the precept of meekness. They are organizing to demand from the authorities, for themselves and their hungering children. They talk with their neighbors, persuading them to join the club. The "backward" women of the anthracite, now, as before, polish their stoves to a stage where they shine like glass. But their talk is of other things. Although they would not name it that, it is of class struggle, of meetings, of demands. The women are preparing to play a decisive role in the developing struggles in the anthracite. Hunger has taught them to question. Militant organization gives them the answer to their questions.

Salvos for a Father

O padre mio
born and sufferer of a thousand
aching things.

O padre mio
son and father both from blood
to lonely blood.
I am your flesh and blood and
forever *figlio tuo*.
Son and heir to now returning
sunken years.

This is no time for sore remembrances.

Tho we must not forget the too
familiar anguishings.

The hour not for tears and all
the sad accoutrements of your despair
and mine.

Not the minute of penitential genuflection
or prayer.

Not even that long last moment when,
by our grief, coiling pity, embraced,
defeats us all.

Nor can we cry and praise the terrors
of our deaths,—

for praise and cries persuade us
to a forgetful grieving ruin.

O padre let not the slow visions
of this mind and sometimes heart
betray you to an alien stroke of some
disconsolate lament

*wars and all the marching armed workers
of this earth.*

*a million miles of not lost and
not forgetting agonies.*

Lenin.

Sacco and Vanzetti.

*and that sixth of glowing fire
U S S R.*

These, O padre, all these visitings are
the cries in my designing world.

And all the swollen pity of your gods
cannot quench our conceiving thirst.

—VINCENT FRENDRER

The Symposium—a magazine edited by professors of philosophy—recently published Thirteen Propositions against Marxism. Paul Salter exposes the fascist nature of these propositions.

Fascist Philosophers

Paul Salter

THE revolutionary situation is developing. New evidence of this has recently appeared in the form of "Thirteen Proposition" set forth by Messrs. Wheelwright and Burnham, editors of the Symposium in the April issue. These propositions must be regarded as indicating a heightening crisis in the realm of thought and literature, and hence in the material basis of our society, for three reasons. First, they show that it is no longer possible for even so conventional a review as the Symposium to remain aloof from the conflict, and that it must take a definite stand on the economic and political organization of our society. Second, they show that we have reached a stage in which the situation is so acute that one must go on one of two sides. Third, they give eminent testimony to the fact that the only alternative to communism is fascism, and that fascism must mask itself today in slogans and phrases borrowed from Marx.

The Thirteen Propositions of the Symposium fall roughly into four groups. Propositions 1 to 4 deal with the Symposium as a critical review. The critical point of view does not present simple alternatives. Simple alternatives arise in practice from the exigencies of social action, and even from the viewpoint of social action, alternatives are not so simple as they might seem to be. Propositions 5 to 7 are concerned with politics and economics. These two are inextricably united "in the present world" (whatever that may mean). The natural end of industry is the providing of material goods to the individuals of society, in proper subordination to moral and spiritual goods. This end can no longer be fulfilled by the capitalist method of production. Propositions 8 to 12 assert that there must be a revolutionary change in the methods of production, that this change involves the collectivization of naturally social property, and can be accomplished only along with the seizure of political power. The motive power for this can come only from mass pressure under the leadership of a militant and organized party, but the Communist Party in this country is not acceptable for it fails to adjust its methods to the United States, and it relates the economic program to unacceptable moral and spiritual goods. Proposition 13 relates again to the Symposium as a critical review. At the present time the critical point of view must leave the critical level, recognize the issues at the level of social practice, and seek to reconcile the two.

Logically, the basic principle underlying this whole argument is the separation of theory and practice. The authors maintain that they take a "critical point of view," which they interpret as meaning, for example, that experience cannot be tagged good or bad, Fascist or Communist. It is only in practice that such absolute alternatives arise, and they insist throughout that theory and practice "will always remain really distinct." This is true, they maintain, because theory is the product of the mind, whereas practice comes from "mass feelings and activities." In short, they say that the Marxist contention with regard to the unity of theory and practice is all wrong, and hence, at least in theory, there are other alternatives than taking sides with the bourgeoisie or with the proletariat.

But as one studies this ingenious document one finds that the authors belie their own words. They inject race prejudice, nationalism, and religious morality into their argument. And

through these interjections they arrive at what seems to them a third course:—a dictatorship not of the proletariat, nor of the bourgeoisie as it is now constituted, but of an intellectual caste. Their ideal seems to be that of a theocracy adjusted to modern machine production. But only two alternatives here are possible. Either this is a bourgeois dictatorship and hence fascism, or it is a purely utopian dream. Other propositions in their system, however, indicate that Burnham and Wheelwright are not utopians, for they accept the principle that their end can be obtained only by a mass party. They carefully avoid any reference to the constitution of this party, whether it is to be proletarian or middle class, but since they reject the Communist Party, it is a safe inference that they refer to a bourgeois organization.

Proposition 6 states: "The natural end of the industry of any society is the providing of material goods for the individuals of the society in question, in proper subordination to moral and spiritual goods." This sounds like a statement by any early New England theocrat, which will not seem strange to anyone who turns to an earlier article by Wheelwright entitled *A Defence of Orthodoxy*. Who determines the moral and spiritual goods to which material goods must be subordinate? Fortunately, they tell us. The revolutionary party must not concern itself with moral and spiritual goods, but must leave "the cultural construction for individuals in their non-political capacities. . ." And what are the goods in question, the sacred moral and spiritual goods that must not be touched by any revolutionary movement? They are for us "given by the tradition of western civilization, generally; and, further, by the American cultural tradition." Germany for the Teutons, is the cry of Hitler. Mussolini preserves the traditions of imperial Rome. And now we have appearing from a new and significant quarter: America for the great "American cultural tradition." These authors explicitly state that the justification of revolutionary change is in the probability that it will conserve what is best in this tradition. They do not ask *whose* tradition it is. They already know, and as staunch members of the American bourgeoisie they will uphold it as all costs.

It is doubtful if Wheelwright and Burnham realize the predicament they are in. They are voices crying in the wilderness; prophets ahead of their time. They see the breakdown of the present capitalist order; they have derived from their association with Marxists the theory of revolution; and consequently they confuse the change they seek with that sought by the Communist Party. As a result they denounce the Communist Party as useless, as Slavophilic, and in its ideas of literature, art and morality, barbaric. The thing is truly pathetic and witnesses the backwardness of America in revolutionary development. Here is the theory of fascism, its call to arms, and there are no black or brown shirts yet mobilized to answer the call. That such a party is necessary for their ends these writers are well aware. In Proposition 11 they state: "The motive power to bring about the politico-economic change can come only from mass pressure, under the leadership of a militant and organized party." These gentlemen will not have long to wait. The American Legion, the Employers' Associations, the Klan, the Daughters and the Sons of the American Revolution, will soon arise to carry out this program. If it were not so

dangerous it would be amusing to think of these professors laboring the Communist Party for being what it is—the party of the revolutionary proletariat—and for not being a fascist organization, pledged to the maintenance of the American tradition, through the suppression by force of all subversive tendencies.

The Symposium denounces Marxism as “ridiculously utopian” in its “exaggerated internationalism.” (It is first to be noticed that in calling this utopian they are merely expressing their hatred and contempt for it.) One would scarcely have suspected before this pronouncement that Messrs. Wheelwright and Burnham were such devoted nationalists. For them to criticize Marxism for its internationalism is plainly to indicate their alignment with the fascists. They seem ignorant of the fact that it is the mission of the proletariat to destroy national boundaries, just as it was the mission of the bourgeoisie to create them. Next, they denounce communism for its equalitarianism, again, supposedly, on the grounds of utopianism. This antagonism to equalitarianism (and they fail to mention in what sense communism held to it) is inevitable for the men who believe in “levels of being” and who are jealous of the prerogatives of the middle class intellectual. Naturally, too, the only kind of revolution that can possibly seem desirable to such persons is one which will leave the existing class distinctions untouched. But only a fascist revolution aims to do that. Their third point of attack is against the “revolutionary optimism” of communism. Again, one has every reason to be suspicious, on the basis of the rest of this statement, that the objection is not to this as utopian but as proletarian; not as consisting of impossible ends but rather of “undesirable” ones.

They next proceed, in this same note, to denounce communism for the ideology with which “it loads and impedes its political activities.” This criticism is made, of course, on the basis of their theory of the complete divorce of theory and practice. Yet it is almost incredible that these men, acquainted as they are with communists and some communist literature, should fail to observe that it is this ideology that makes the Communist Party the party of the revolutionary working class rather than a party of the industrialists or middle class reactionaries. It is clear that their real objection arises from their recognition of this ideology as diametrically opposed to their own middle-class interests.

Finally, they call the Marxist ideology, including its “analyses of literature, art, morality, religion and human nature,” barbaric. Since this is not logic and is not supported by rational argument, one can scarcely say anything logical about it. They are airing their prejudices in favor of traditional literary, moral, artistic, and religious views. As for human nature, one is at even more of a standstill. Marxism has no other theory of human nature than that of honest psychology and anthropology, based on the premise that our knowledge of human nature is always a knowledge of men in society under particular conditions.

But even more markedly fascist than all this, is the discovery of our bourgeois professors that Marxist internationalism “is actually Slavophilism.” Hitler would call it Semitism, and indeed one is free to call it whatever one does not happen to like. These gentlemen are injecting race prejudice into their argument in the best fascist tradition. True, the logic of it is hard to follow, but as masters of “Philosophic Analysis” they can no doubt explain how anglophilism, for example, is nationalism, but internationalism is slavophilism.

Underlying the whole argument of these 13 propositions are two fundamentally philosophic assumptions. Both of these are not only shop-worn but have been in ill repute among self-respecting philosophers for some time. The first is the doctrine of levels of being, in fact, of “genuinely different levels of being.” What is a “level of being?” It is a good phrase, as phrases go, but since the decline of the Platonic tradition few philosophers have been bold enough to mention it. Contemporary philosophers are suspicious of all such expressions as being horrific rather than denoting a distinction in things. Is it that some things possess more *being* than other things? That could be seriously maintained by a disciple of Plotinus but can hardly be held to be the meaning of a living professor of philosophy. Or does it mean that some things possess more *goodness* than others? Like the first, this requires a God who

is perfect being and perfect goodness. It may be that these gentlemen seriously maintain some such belief. It is difficult to say, and also useless, whether their platonism leads them to fascism, or whether their inherent fascism finds theoretical justification only in platonism. Either way, the connection is inescapable.

Their second important philosophical tenet is derived from their first. It is the absolute separation of theory and practice. They are separate because the mind is the instrument of theory, and that is a different level of being (a *higher*, of course, is implied) than mass feelings and activities, which are the instrument of practice. This whole thing is so ridiculous that one wonders if it is possible that such shabby thinking can go on in American academic philosophic circles. Yet it does, and it corroborates the Marxist view of the decadence of modern bourgeois philosophy. On the question of the distinction of theory and practice one need only refer to J. S. Mill for a respectable liberal view. He tells in his *Autobiography* how as a youth he told his father that something was good in theory but it wouldn't work in practice, and how his father reprimanded him for it. His father told him, what should be clear to anyone who thinks at all, that if it didn't work in practice it was because it was bad theory. It is just this which Wheelwright and Burnham, because of their platonism, fail to see. They can't understand that the compulsion of action to drive one to one position or its opposite implies the mutual antagonism of objective conditions, and that therefore a description of the antagonism is the theory which enables one to orient himself in action, that is, to engage in correct practice. Only the most muddle-headed aesthetes could ever arrive at the notion that the distinction between theory and practice had something to do with the difference between “mind” and “mass feelings and activities.” They think it is merely a question of the “exigencies of social action,” and this belief is what allows them to think that they have some third position, and hence to swing the way they do—the fascist way. For they admit that when the revolution begins we must be on one side or the other, and take that as implying that until it begins they can choose some other course—namely, that of denouncing Marxism and of finding a way out of the crisis which conserves what is best in the American cultural tradition.

We are glad to know where the *Symposium* stands. Not that any one would ever have suspected that it stood for anything else, but that it had made its position unequivocal. One must congratulate its editors for realizing that they can no longer straddle, no longer be mildly liberal, but must come to grips with the developing situation. The *Symposium*, we know now, is not only bourgeois, but militantly bourgeois. And to be militantly bourgeois means to be fascist.

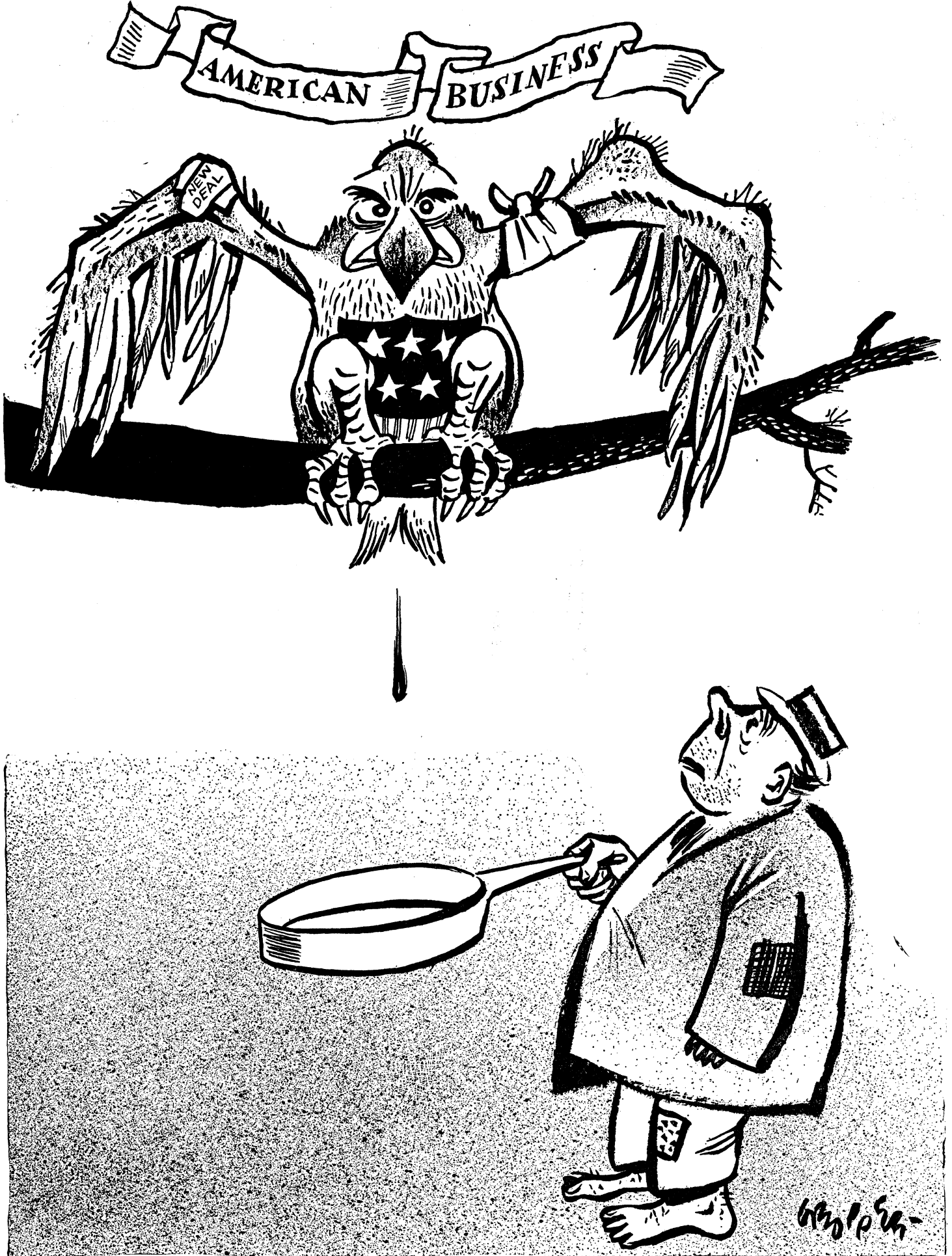
Hunger Knows No Holiday

greasy gut I said to him
if you can find a guy that wants this job
give it to him
I don't want it

send us home at four a'clock
send us home at three o'clock
send us home on Saturdays
on Fridays
you can't turn hunger off at Wednesday noon
hunger knows no holiday

greasy gut I said to him greasy gut
take your job and stuff it

WARREN C. HUDDLESTON



"SO WHAT?"

This analysis of Negro literature by a well-known Negro writer gauges the novel against the background of the Negroes' development in the United States.

Negro Novelists and the Negro Masses

Eugene Gordon

AS A NATIONAL minority, the Negro people in the United States had their origin in the agricultural South. The institution of slavery in this country, being confined principally to the southern section as a matter of economic necessity, was the second stage in their development from a heterogeneous medley of tribal remnants into homogeneous people. They were heterogeneous to begin with because so-called Negroes came neither all from Africa nor (when they did come from Africa) from any one section of that continent. They were brought here not only from the West Coast, the South-eastern Coast, and the Upper Niger, but also from the Sahara Desert region, from Senegal, from the Lake Chad region, and from the Zambesi Delta. Captives included also men so alien to the African black as Moors from the southeastern Mediterranean coast, Malays from Madagascar, and natives of East India. This diversity in their origins accounted for the diversity in the "racial" characteristics of the plantation "blacks" even before inter-mixture between them and the whites had taken place. On the same plantations, moreover, there were often slaves who possessed not only different physical characteristics, but customs so different as to indicate sharp differences in social and economic development. There is no telling how long this physical and social disharmony would have persisted, if circumstances had not brought an end to the first stage of development of these aliens into a nation and begun their second stage.

The second stage marked off the end of their status as indentured servants; it indicated the beginning of their status as slaves. I must go somewhat into detail at this point. Negroes were not brought to the American colonies originally as slaves, but, as many of the poor whites who were coming in at that time, as indentured servants. The status of the blacks was identical with that of the white servants. This servitude to which both the poor whites and the stolen blacks were subjected was (according to the International Encyclopaedia) "a legalized status of Indian, white, and Negro servants preceding slavery," and was common throughout the English colonies. The system originated in 17th century England, when, driven to desperation by debts, men indentured (or bound by contracts) themselves indefinitely into servitude to pay their passage to this promised land of America. "The transition from servitude to slavery was effected in the case of the black man," explains the *Negro Year Book*, "when the custom established itself of holding Negroes 'servants for life.'"

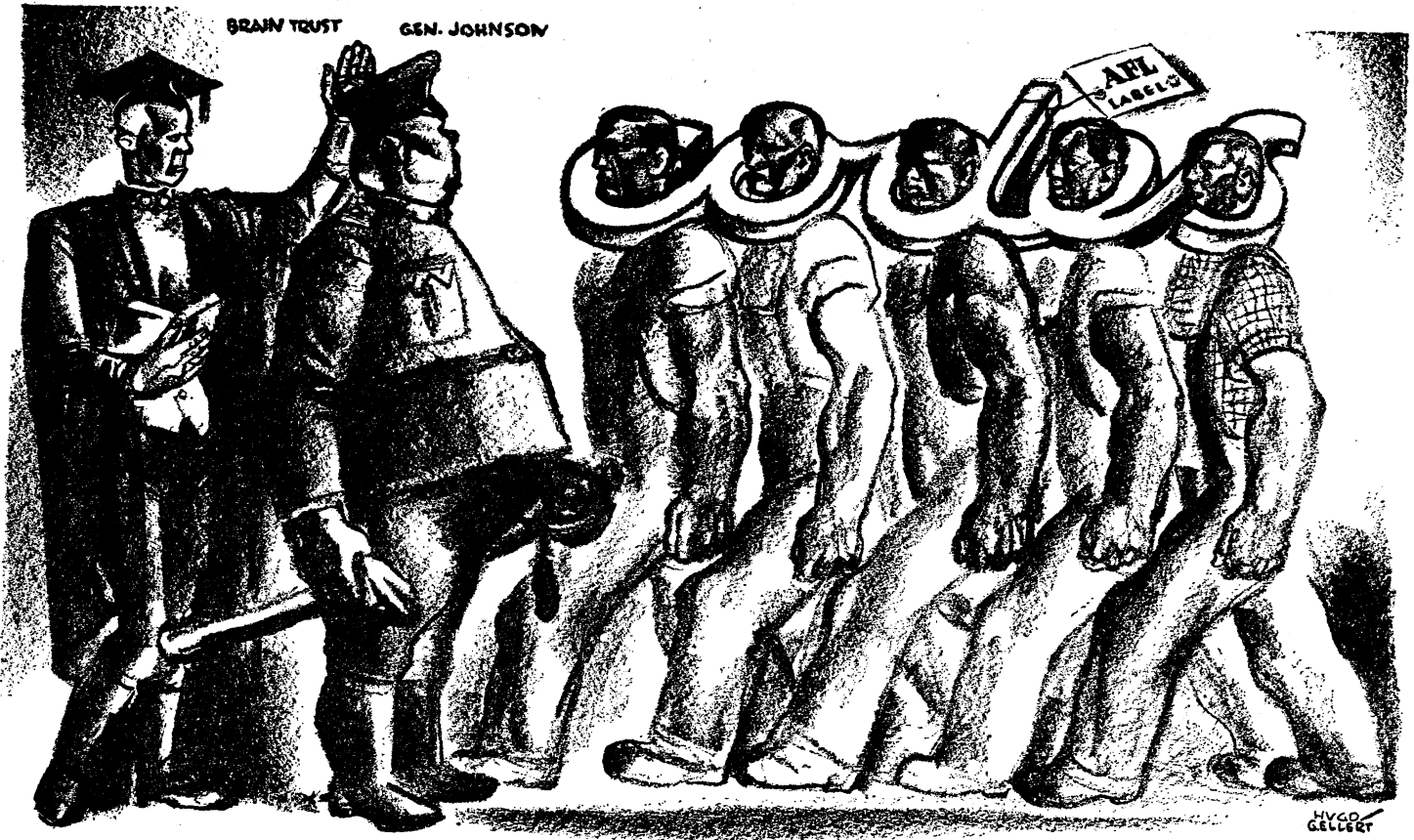
It was a natural sequence of the system that those who enjoyed its benefits should come in time to lengthen the terms of their servants from an indefinite period to life. It was a logical consequence of the system that the black servants rather than the white should be those whose status became that of private property. Being an alien race, and feared because they were an alien race, the Africans were forced deeper and deeper into the morass of servitude in perpetuity. The changed status was so gradual and occurred over so long a period of time as to be almost unnoticed. It was a change that grew naturally out of the objective conditions of society: increasing necessity for cheap

labor; increase in the number of laws restricting movements of slaves (as fear of them deepened); change in the sentiment of the master class from regarding the blacks as servants to regarding them as slaves. In general terms, the reason for the change of status from servant to slave was that as slaves these black aliens, whom the master class did not understand (and made no effort to understand), were more readily controlled as slaves than as servants. Before the heterogeneous mass of blacks was conscious of what was happening, generations had passed. It was already taken as a matter of course that the child should inherit the status of the mother (a custom, incidentally, which was partly responsible for the beginning of the freed-Negro class, since children born of white servant women and black slave men were not slaves). Children born in slavery thus were slaves; the institution of slavery was thus firmly established.

The birth and death of generations of blacks, who passed from the status of indentured servants to the status of slaves, effected profound changes in the mass psychology of the blacks. The factors of slavery had already so welded together these diverse peoples that long before 1863 they had been forced into the category of an incipient nation. Differences in physical characteristics were less sharply apparent; a common tongue (English) had been developed; they all lived compactly together under the enveloping aegis of slavery. Here lay a condition fallow for the birth of a national psychology; here lay a promising of a peculiar national culture.

If the upper classes were unconscious of what they had created when they altered the Negro's status from one of servitude to one of slavery in perpetuity, subsequent events made them aware of it. Certainly the 25 or more insurrections of slaves—even before the revolution against England!—was irrefutable testimony that the black had suppressed all ethnic, tribal and cultural differences among themselves and had grown to recognize the slave-holder as their common enemy. It was directly a result of the common national understanding among the slaves that plantation owners, in gradually mounting waves of terror, began to restrict the free movement of the Negroes, that they abrogated the right of slaves to assemble even for Christian service, and that they decreed it a major crime for blacks to seek an education. In Maryland, for instance, the blacks were "forbidden to assemble or attend meetings for religious purposes which were not conducted by white licensed clergymen or by some "respectable white of the neighborhood authorized by the clergyman." The slave-owners were learning already that the church was a sword that cut both ways: toward power through organization, in the hands of the slaves; toward suppressing the slaves by anesthetizing them, in the hands of the masters. Thus, real slavery heightened the second stage of the Negro's development into a homogeneous people; gave this development an impetus that ordinary servitude could never have given.

This artificially created nation, of necessity, gave birth to an unhealthy culture. Of necessity, there arose from this culture an unhealthy psychology. Developing as a nation, the Negroes

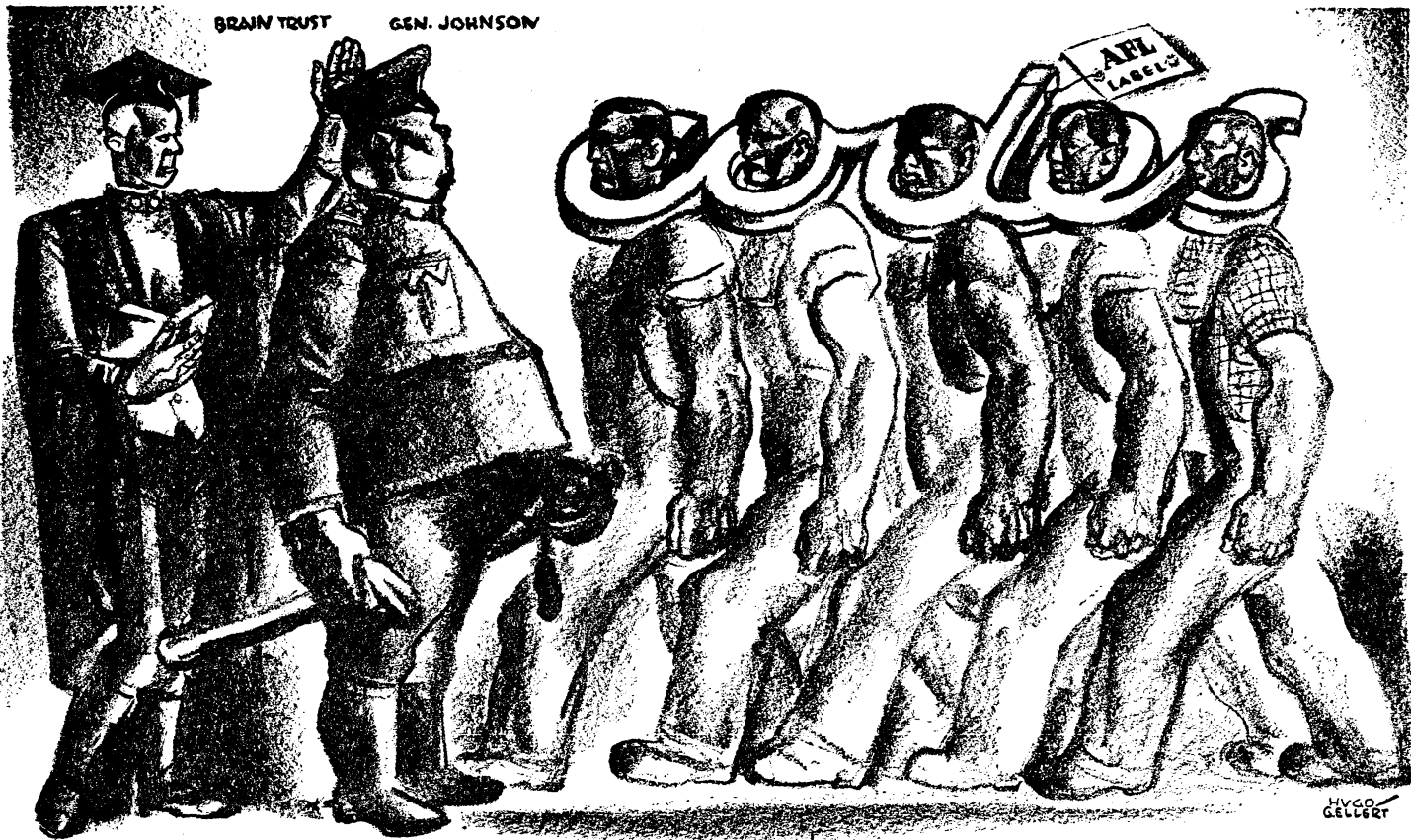


were, nevertheless, a suppressed nation, more, they were a slave nation. Natural vents to national aspirations were clogged up, so that a national psychosis resulted. National aspirations could find no outlet except in futile protests: prayers and hymns to the white "God" of the master class; uprising which, betrayed by the Christians among the slaves, were turned into abortive gestures; a fierce hatred which included all whites, but a hatred which in various slaves manifested itself in various forms,—hypocritically, as loyalty or love; as cunning or deceit; in actual physical violence against any white who crossed their path. The psychology of the slave nation was, therefore, as malodorous as the culture from which it grew. The gradual transition from indentured servant into slave-in-perpetuity, the status extending to unborn generations; the ruthlessness with which tendencies toward the most innocuous social organization were crushed; the savagery with which uprisings were put down;—these factors, bearing upon the developing national culture, created in most slaves a fatalist outlook on life, in spite of their white God. They would get what was decreed for them (having a suspicious feeling that God was a sort of puppet, anyway, manipulated by the master class). It was as inevitable that this unhealthy psychology should stamp the slaves with a sense of inferiority as it was that the psychology developed in the white servants should operate in the opposite direction. The black slave, on the one hand, had "learned" that he was an inferior being; the poor white, on the other hand, forced out of his position by the black slave, nevertheless felt a superiority over all blacks. The master class wrote "scientific" and religious treatises and books to prove that both the black slave and the poor white had the correct outlook on life.

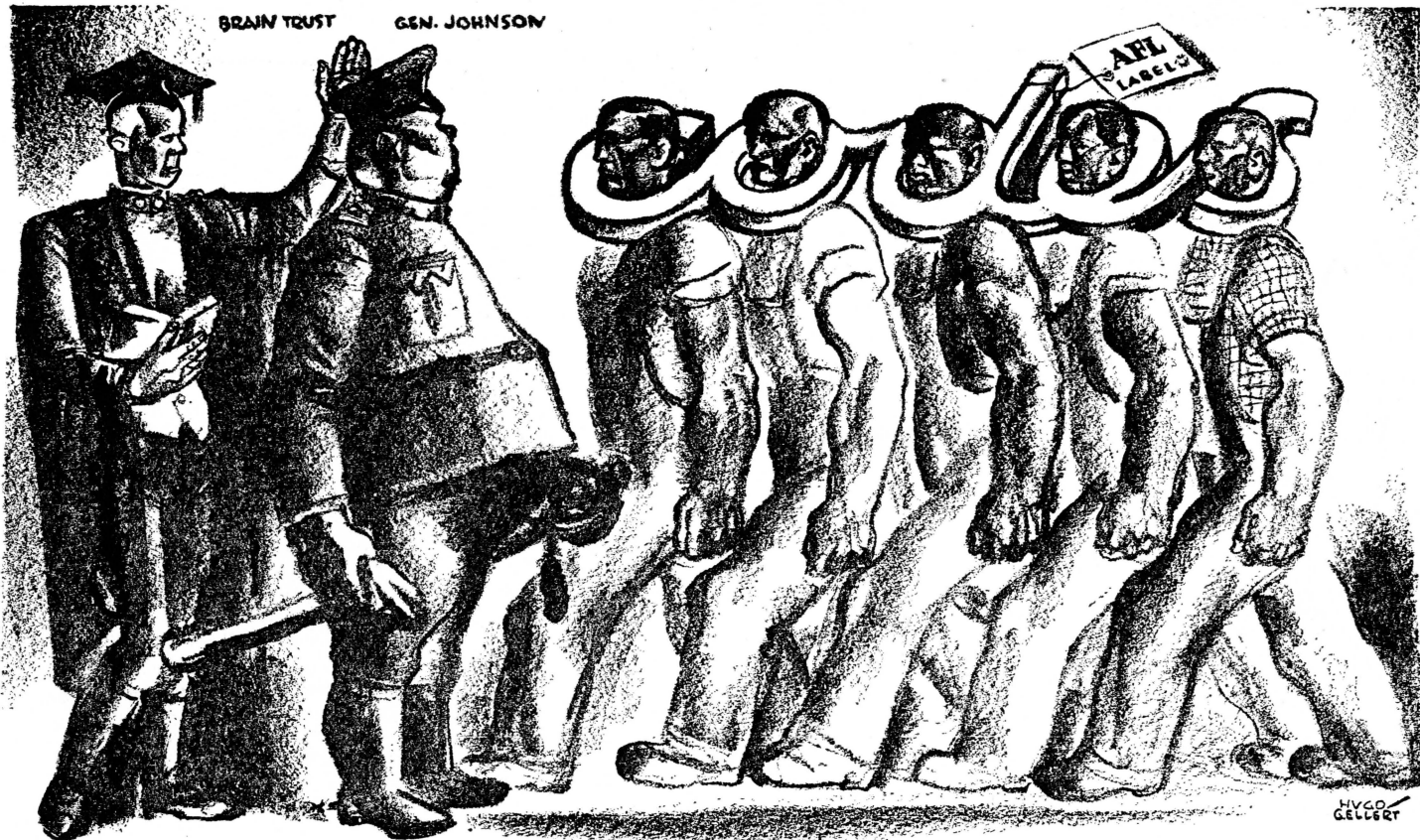
The Civil War crystallized this geographic-economic-political situation into a peculiar national situation, and from this peculiar national situation there emerged an unhealthy national culture; an unhealthy national culture which was reflected in the national psychology in the form of a peculiar national psychosis. Cursed with this psychosis (which was a result of repressed desires for national and individual actions), the developing Negro fiction writers inevitably epitomized in their characters and situations the "virtues" that slavery had taught them most passionately to desire: in general, all those things which to

the slave seemed to make life on earth worthy the struggle,—wealth, and all it signified, including especially leisure, education, a sophisticated culture, and a freedom of action comparable to that of the former master. Of course there were individual writers who approached the matter of interpreting their people according to their individual outlooks on life and their individual comprehensions of the Negro's problem.

For instance, the preacher who turned novelist did not immediately abandon the churchly for a materialist approach to life. In the case of the Rev. Lorenzo D. Blackson, to cite a specific instance, religion was the force which eventually would free the blacks; he tried to prove it in *The Rise and Progress of the Kingdoms of Light and Darkness*; or, *The Reigns of Kings Alpha and Adabon*, a fantasmagoria based upon an illiterate preacher's understanding of *Paradise Lost* (published in 1867). Blackson's "novel" is significant only in that it marks the beginning of imaginative expression in prose among the ex-slaves. Those who followed him, however, were of hardly more value to the masses of Negroes who were crying desperately for leadership. Blackson, the preacher, thought religion would open the way out. Charles W. Chestnut, the first Negro novelist to attract the attention of the white upper class, thought an Olympian detachment was essential to an interpretation of "primitive" Negro psychology; he wrote simple folk tales, after the fashion of Joel Chandler Harris and Thomas Nelson Page, maintaining his Olympian balance so well that, as a recent critic said of Chestnut's *The Conjure Woman* "There is nothing... to indicate that the author was colored." Chestnut's novels and short stories of the black masses of the South were such innocuous but sentimental portrayals as the whites of the North demanded. The fact that many of these works appeared in the *Atlantic Monthly* (from 1887 to 1905) is not only suggestive of their content but is also evidence of their author's upper class alignment. Being as white in appearance as any "Nordic," Mr. Chestnut held himself physically aloof (as he had a right to do, of course), from the masses of blacks, and when he wrote of them in *The Colonel's Dream*, *The Conjure Woman*, and *The House Behind the Cedars*, he wrote as a liberal who sympathized with their plight and wished them



H.V. GELBERT



HUGO
GELLERT



LITTLE FISH FOR THE BIG FISH

Bryson

well in their struggles for "equality before the law," but who felt no common bond between them and himself. Psychologically he reflected his class, which was the class of those who, reading the Atlantic, looked upon the ex-slaves as quaint "darkies" belonging to another world. Their only contact with these Negroes came through the sentimental "interpretations" of Harris, Page, and Chestnutt. Bostonians desired no other contact. Chestnutt was their contact man, bringing the flavors and the odors of the Old South vicariously to the quivering nostrils of the Beacon Hill bourgeoisie.

Early Negro fiction writers assumed varied attitudes in their approach to the black masses, these attitudes representing in each of them his own psychological reaction to the objective conditions of his life. There are two reasons why the Negro proletariat, during the decade following emancipation, produced no writers of fiction. One reason was their depressing ignorance, a natural heritage of slavery; another reason was that they had no leisure even to try to express themselves in imaginative prose. This was a period also of the rising Negro bourgeoisie, a class which chafed fretfully under the oppression of the white upper class; a Negro bourgeoisie which, stunted in its historical development, was forced by necessity to express its resentment through the best means at its command. This means was fiction, and those who employed it most successfully for their class were Charles W. Chestnutt and William E. Burghardt DuBois. Both these men belonged to the Negro upper class, and they both, therefore, dreamed of the day when the "racial" barriers separating the white bourgeoisie from the black would be demolished and destroyed. But Chestnutt's approach to the Negro masses as a novelist was purely in the tradition of the Olympians, while that of DuBois was more the approach of a sociologist than a novelist. As a creator of "pure" art, Chestnutt did not share the pangs of those whom he made suffer; he was psychologically the aristocrat. DuBois, on the other hand, although by training and temperament an aristocrat, nevertheless suffered intensely with the characters whom he created. The reason for this difference in approach of two upper-class Negro novelists lay almost wholly in their environments. Chestnutt's was a "normal" American environment; DuBois, while still very young, came face to face with what he describes as "the veil" of color. He himself describes the shock

of realizing suddenly one day that he was "different" from his white playmates when a little girl called him "nigger." Here was the beginning of a new and personal psychosis superimposed upon his national psychosis. This unhealthiness has shown itself in everything that he has written. He has resentment against white peoples in general, because, he feels, they are responsible for the ignominy of the colored bourgeoisie. His two novels, *The Quest of the Silver Fleece* and *The Dark Princess*, although purporting both to be concerned with the problems of the Negro masses, are actually concerned with the problems of the colored upper class. His interest in the Negro masses is obviously theoretical.

Paul Laurence Dunbar belonged to the Negro proletariat, but his aspirations, as he acquired friends among both the white and the Negro bourgeoisie, were toward the upper class. That is why his earlier poems expressed faithfully the aspirations of the Negro worker, while both his later poems and his novels reflect his desire to be with the class which had adopted him. Dunbar's three novels, *The Uncalled*, *The Love of Landry*, and *The Fanatics*, deal in a most artificial manner with the trivialities of parasitic whites. In the first two there are no Negroes at all, and in the third book black workers are used only to create "atmosphere."

There were two Negro novelists of this period whose propaganda works aimed to place the Negro masses favorably before the "reading public"; but there was no such public, because the stuff was unreadable. These men were Frank J. Webb and William Wells Brown. Up to 1920 the Negro workers had not produced a writer of fiction with a proletarian-revolutionary approach to the Negro's problems.

It is significant that the present group of Negro novelists, numbering fewer than twelve, appeared at the very moment when the bourgeoisie, having reached its apogee immediately following the World War and started upon its plunge into decay, demanded a new kind of amusement, a new kind of story, a new form of entertainment. The moment bourgeois culture in the United States began to crack and crumble, the moment the sated and blasé bourgeoisie began to realize that it need look no longer for new appetizers among the dregs of the old order, they turned to the Negro. Here lying at their very back door was a vast and unexplored dark continent, they thought,



LITTLE FISH FOR THE BIG FISH

Bryson



GOING UP

B. Limbach

and began to investigate it at its edges. The first hardy pioneer to venture into this unknown black wilderness came later to be known as the white-haired boy of Harlem Colored society. Carl Van Vechten came to the colored bourgeoisie as the final fruition of its despairing hopes, as the answer, at last, to its fervent prayers: the white aristocracy was taking notice of the colored aristocracy. Mr. Van Vechten was treated with the deference and honor due an emissary from one great people to another great people. Nothing was too good for him, whether it was their kitchen-sink gin or their women. Van Vechten tarried, for this experience among an exotic people was exhilarating. He wrote. The offspring of this strange cohabitation was named *Nigger Heaven*, and the bastard made its old man rich. Van Vechten tarried yet a little longer to thrill at the genuflections while the book was being extolled, but when the hosannas died down he began to long for home, and he took the long journey back to Mt. Olympus, the long trek back to Greenwich Village. *Nigger Heaven* was an "interpretation" of the colored upper class: a vicious distortion of the lives even of these fragile parasites. But it was what they loved, because it appealed to their childish class-vanity: they felt that now they had formed an unbreakable link with aristocracy, for, like members of the aristocracy, they had been immortalized in a novel. They did not know that instead of being immortalized they had really been embalmed. Van Vechten set the pace which Negro novelists of New York tried immediately to follow.

The reaction to *Nigger Heaven* among the Negro bourgeoisie was ecstatic, because they had been belatedly discovered by a "white artist" and fittingly apostrophized; their reaction to Claude McKay's *Home to Harlem* was one of general nausea and pains in sections of the anatomy other than the neck. For McKay, a retired radical sojourning in the Montmartre, wrote of the Negro worker. It did not matter to the colored aristocracy that McKay's workers were entitled to that designation only by literary courtesy; it despised these blacks of the "lower classes." What McKay really did, however, was to write an autobiographical sketch of himself, dilating upon his love life. For *Home to Harlem* was not the story of workers who worked; it was about "workers" who swaggered

through Harlem's night life perfecting the art of love. It was not a novel of workers who live in hovels of tenements; who schemed to outwit the greedy landlord and his eviction agent. It was a novel of "workers" who lie concealed in the rat holes of Harlem by day, drinking until sodden, the women fighting like beasts for the possession of some man's body, the men perpetually on the verge of committing murder to possess the body of some woman.

A novel by a radical which does not touch upon the workers' struggle to survive in a capitalist society is so queer an anomaly as to be weird: that was *Home to Harlem*. But McKay was no longer active in the radical labor movement. He had served his apprenticeship under Max Eastman on the Masses, had written an indignant poem wholly lacking in working-class content, attacking lynching, had disappeared mysteriously to the Soviet Union, and had retired exhausted to the sidewalk cafes of Montmartre. His treatment of a small group of Negroes, a few of whom had returned fashionably "disillusioned" from the World War, cannot in any sense be extended as adequate treatment either of Negro workers as such or of Negro soldiers. The returning soldier, disillusioned concerning wars in general, was rather a popular hero in fiction at that time; for that very reason, a radical ought to have handled the theme differently. For disillusionment alone—simple disgust and cynicism expressing themselves in physical debaucheries—is unfit as a theme for a working-class novel. If novelist's workers *must* have illusions, then these workers, to have any value for us, must have also disillusionment evolving into sanity of mind and clarity of vision. If there be no class-conscious action following this awakening into reality, there should be, at least, a forecast of it. Straying from this rule, fiction about workers has no validity for the working class. Certainly *Home to Harlem* has none. McKay's second novel *Banjo* differed in only unimportant details from *Home to Harlem*. The retired "radical" had grown fat, and ill, and indifferent in Paris.

Since Van Vechten captured upper-class Harlem there has been a small troop of Negro novelists, all viewing this subject from approximately the same level and the same angle. We



GOING UP

shall consider first George S. Schuyler, who used to be called a radical, but whose enemies, even, would blush at pinning such a tag on him today. Possessed of considerable talent as a newspaper man, Schuyler is nevertheless uninterested in the working class and its struggles. The masses of black toilers are, to him, a doltish lot, and he would, perhaps, like to do something about bringing them "up" to his own rarified status as a sophisticated "intellectual"; but for the present, he believes, imperialism is an excellent training course for nations like Haiti and Liberia, while, according to his pronouncement, "we cannot do away with the clergy in capitalist America or Communist Russia," because, he explains learnedly, "under any form of society the masses of people must believe, and it makes little difference whether it is belief in the miracles of Jesus Christ or the wizardry of Karl Marx." These quotations from Schuyler, who has never outgrown his adolescent cynicism, are typical of his writings, being designed to arouse a jeer from some Communist sympathizer (since the Communists themselves ignore him). To respond to such obvious bids for response would be out of place here, especially since they do not occur in his fiction but in a newspaper column; however, these quotations are indicative of Schuyler's methods, whatever he writes. The proletarians in his novel *Black No More* are an inarticulate mass of fools with eyes set upon the conjury of pseudo-science, hoping thereby to cure their fundamental economic and political ills by changing themselves into white men. Like most other Negro writers of fiction, Schuyler believes the Negro masses to be oppressed under capitalism because of their superficial racial characteristics, and, logically, Schuyler makes his workers voice Schuyler's profundities.

Four other Negro writers have dealt with the Negro worker in fiction, these being Wallace Thurman, Countee Cullen, Rudolph Fisher, and Langston Hughes, but none of them except Hughes has, evidently, heard of the class struggle. Thurman's dilettantism, revealed in his absorption in the "problems" of white and colored degenerates and common parasites; Cullen's snobbishness, betrayed in the speech and actions of his puppets,—their philosophical imbecilities; Fisher's carefree happy-go-luckies with their repartee suggestive of cheap vaudeville;—these men are obviously not to be considered for any proletarian-revolutionary treatment of the Negro worker. They are writing for the upper classes who demand the stereotype which fits most neatly into their conception of what the Negro ought to be.

Thus far, Langston Hughes, in *Not Without Laughter*, has written the only novel in which the Negro worker is pictured as seeing the way out through the class struggle; it is the only novel by a Negro which is at the same time a critique of fiction *Not Without Laughter* is lacking in many important elements, the reason being, chiefly, that Hughes at that time was lacking almost wholly in political development; but his political development since the novel was written indivates a fulfillment of the promise it contained.

The unhealthy national culture of the Negro people,—reflected in the national psychology as a peculiar national psychosis,—is gradually evolving into a sound national culture, as works other than fiction prove. As working-class Negro novelists arise, however, and organize the experience of the Negro worker imaginatively and artistically, they will turn the black masses away from the poison of bourgeois propaganda toward a healthy consideration of their own interests.



William Siegel

PROPOSED MURAL FOR THE COLLEGE OF THE CITY OF NEW YORK



William Siegel

PROPOSED MURAL FOR THE COLLEGE OF THE CITY OF NEW YORK

Brimmer wouldn't foreclose on destitute farmers—
Then he got his money mixed up with the county's—
So he took his shot gun. . . . A pastoral conversation:
Eastern Pennsylvania.

Tax Collector's Exit

Joseph North

FARMER Sharpless carries his fifty-five years little more painfully than I do the two-quart milk pail. A neighboring farmer once told me in all seriousness that Old Man Sharpless played the hoarder: had cached a bag of gold somewhere on his acres despite the president's injunction. Overalls and boots, spectacles and stubbled chin, there was little outwardly to distinguish my host from the surrounding farmers, worn by the new penury.

He took off his spectacles and set down with the formality tokening a desire to talk a mite with the city-folk: talk in that harsh voice pitched several times too strong for the kitchen. It was a tone accustomed to veering the team to right or left when plowing the hill across the way which lifted its Eastern shoulder against the horizon.

"So you heard the news, too?" he asked. "Yes. We was sure surprised." His leather face contained two chinks for eyes out of which the Anglo-Saxon blue peeps. He had told me previously in his drab tone from which pride was stripped, that his folks had been the earliest settlers in the section hereabouts. For a century and a half the soil nearby had been trod by Sharpless soles. There was little boast of history or genealogy; what there was of it derived from the rich loam across the way cut geometrically in long divisions by the spring corn just sprouting: that, and the two score head of Guernseys driven through our land twice a day to and from pasture, and, perhaps, the two eldest gals of his who taught school in town.

"We wouldn't none of us believe such a thing of Brimmer. The man's a Mennonite and there's nobody heeds the Bible stricter than that race."

"Yes and he appeared a quiet and upright man", his wife interpolated. Her voice cracked on a high pitch and I noted how much older a farmer's wife appears than her husband. Her face wrinkled, she already moved with the fidgety steps of the aging.

"And up to the time we elected Joshua Brimmer tax collector all of us believed him honest. We did." Farmer Sharpless continued.

"How did he do it?" I asked.

"Come in the house after milkin'. Took off his boots and socks. Took the shotgun. A double-barreled Winchester it was. Loaded it with ball. His wife says he set down then and washed his feet. Then he went upstairs carrying the gun. Her settin' there and eyein' him goin' upstairs. 'Fore she knew it, there it was."

"How'd he pull the trigger?"

"Done it with his big toe," he said dryly. "Missed the heart by half an inch. Just below and over to the right," he said, with his agrarian flair for detail. "Never come to. Lay there bleedin' and then he died."

His wife looking out of the window murmured: "I daresay, yes, he was honest, up till the time he was elected tax collector and after, too, till he went to mixin' other people's money with his own."

Farmer Sharpless shot her a glance. In his right hand he had a copy of the Tax Code. He laid it on the table open and then afterward his hand strayed to it and closed it as he spoke. I suspected him of attempting to conceal the nature of the booklet from me.

"Now the Tax Collector's dead. Well, I say a man's sins are on his own head. But..." and he put his spectacles on again, "people will say: 'Look here. We paid our taxes. Can't fix no blame on us when the tax collector misappropriates our moneys and then goes to shootin' hisself auditin' time.'"

Os, the hired man entered and sat down silently in the corner, tall with big features and wide blue eyes, his mouth clamped. Farmer Sharpless paid no attention to him. Instead he made that characteristic violent motion suddenly, after sitting motionless a long time. "If you paid taxes now you'd want a receipt, wouldn't you? And you wouldn't leave that office till you got one, would you?" He pursued the point with typical doggedness. "You come tell me you lost your receipt. I say you're out of luck. No receipt: no taxes paid." His chin projected a trifle. Outside the crows still made their racket and I thought that a lot of tax receipts must be plowed under in a row of tilled land. And how for centuries the writing folk had looked at a farmer and seen elemental qualities: storm and rain, draught and time; completely overlooking addition, subtraction and multiplication, the plethora of percents shaping the agrarian's existence.

"I say this," he continued. "Any man who can't pay tax, the sooner he's out of commission the better for him and the community, too. Less money the township goes in the hole. Me, now I find it easiest payin bills the day debt's due. Don't you?" he addressed me suddenly. I made hasty but embarrassed agreement. "Else who'll stand the loss of unpaid tax? Me that scrapes up some hard cash every which way? I say no. Can't." I glanced out the window at the fields. Row on row of young corn tipping in the breeze. Fences up and no weed visible.

"Know what was wrong with Brimmer?" he took off his square rimmed glasses and held them tight in his fist. "Brimmer never foreclosed."

He shook his iron-grey head. "Me now I would sell. Yes. Else how yow gonna collect cash to keep up improved highway?" It was the tone of arduously acquired prosperity, squeezed dry of human consideration; the goals of life not those he vouchsafed in the whitewashed church around the hill on Sundays; not charity, justice, generosity, but instead, it is the lingo of hard cash, the congelation of all reward to human labor; coin, glittering and round ever more prone to roll fro than to.

"There's those that says 'Cut taxes!' Show me how, man, show me how. On the School Board we been tryin' to figure that the best part of two years. School's down to eight months as tis. And that's lowest under the law. Teachers pay way down. My eldest gal's pay been cut to legal requirements. All right then. What. Cut out commencement exercises? That's twenty-five dollars. An item sure. But what's that to a whole township? Reduce the coal bid? Why that's down so low now, fella sold us coal last year had to go out of business. Penny wise now, if we cut taxes we'll be pound foolish."

He was suddenly thoughtful; his eyelids low, appraising. "Now there's farmers here in this county. Many somewhat in need. They're formin' kind of organ-i-zation." He strokes his chin. "Ever notice how when a man can't keep up his end none, he gets together like a swarm of bees, buzzin' and makin' a lot of noise? Plenty noise and hot air, some sáys. I



"THE BANKERS HAVE TAKEN EVERYTHING!"

Warsager

can't tell," he adds cautiously, "for I an't never attended. Some says they gonna do this and do that. Some says they aim to stop tax payments. Others say to stop foreclosures."

"How 'bout Bedminster?" his wife suddenly asks looking up from the Sunday School brochure before her.

He is talking slow now: slower than ever, each word treading on thin ice. "Yes. Bedminster now." he says. "They flocked together there and stopped foreclosure the other day, week ago tomorrow. Defied law and yes; police had to use those teargas weapons on them. Drove up in their cars and went to fightin' and defyin' law. Some usin' their crowbars and I hear some ready to use shotguns." He stroked his chin measuredly. He seemed to be estimating this phenomenon and it was not yet apparent how he felt about it. A century and a half of tight-fisted farming pulls at him, pulling earthward. The laws of husbandry are in the main, to him, immutable and taxes are as inevitable as the seasons. And lo! Here pops defiance. He knows what he feels about it but he walks around the thought slowly, still appraising, measuring its extent and its strength. "It's in my mind," he ventures, "it'll come to naught. They'll get no place." Suddenly he pushes his bulk forward rolling in the chair, his blue eyes strained and the pupils black in the eye's center. "Instead they'll get what's comin' to them. They'll get teargas and worse. Man must pay his taxes; meet his obligations." Final, irrevocable, fixed! And he said it with an undercurrent of fervency that I could see spelled bullets and powder to the debtor and I was glad I owed him no money. I can see that by force of his laws, a Brimmer today has become not only incompetent—but traitorous, deserving of Brimmer's self-decreed penalty. No. I would not like to be beholden to him.

"Yet," he speaks again of Brimmer. "He come down to the house here just three weeks ago yesterday. Tryin' to loan some cash. 'Sure brother,' I says, 'Come on in and set down. But you come to the wrong man for money. Who's got cash nowadays? Least of all me.' Besides he had no collateral. But I couldn't a told then he'd been mixin' his money with other people's. Just set there right where you're sittin' now—quiet, didn't raise his voice none at all. Just got up and went away. Got in his car and drove off."

I glanced about the room: the sturdy walls and gleaming

stove, the shiny sink and the outmoded organ relegated to the kitchen, superseded by the radio; the linoleum clean and new.

"Tax collectin' don't pay much," he said suddenly.

His wife spoke up from tomorrow's Bible lesson. "Four hundred a year the commissions mount up to," hse said.

"Yes and foreclosures bring extra," he added. "No. Brimmer had no education. I think keepin' them books must a been one too many for him."

He sat there thinking, probably figuring on his two daughters, schoolmarms, having lots of education. His farmhand, still Golem-like, hands no knees, blue eyes staring at the floor, ventures: "Don't need no education to steal money."

Having said his piece he sat there, his Adam's apple running up and down under the gray shirt. Farmer Sharpless looked at him over his glasses but said nothing. Mrs. Sharpless lifted her eyes, too. I picked up my pail to go.

"The dog out there. He won't bite. Only he's a mite cranky. Good night."

As I walked out he opened the Tax Code and re-read the provisions. He had evidently been studying the rules, sensing the inevitability of his appointment to the office, reasoning that the next Tax Collector of the township must be a man of his type. He feels these are times for the strict letter of the law: else law's abnegation. I walked through the sweetsmelling yard, the hay piled in heaps shadowy in the pasture, and honeysuckle in bloom. Night was coming on fast and the frogs calling in the gully. I walked down the road and the dok barked experimentally. I could almost hear Farmer Sharpless talking on there, sitting in the kitchen. His hired man silent, hands on knees, controlling his Adam's apple after every speech. And Mrs. Sharpless by the lamp with tomorrow's Sunday School lesson, all thinking of the next tax collector.

Of course Sharpless feels there is something new abroad on the land: something alien and at tangent with these seasons made to Sharpless' orders—something ominous and how deep its roots are he cannot yet gauge. Defiance spelled by gathered shotguns and multitudinous goose-necked crowbars suddenly drawn from automobile pockets, is not unknown: distant, yet not at all impossible.

But after all the job mounts up to \$400 a year commissions and cash is scarce and foreclosures bring extra.



"THE BANKERS HAVE TAKEN EVERYTHING!"

Warsager



"THE BANKERS HAVE TAKEN EVERYTHING!"

Warsager

The following is a section of a novel dealing with the experiences of an unemployed youth in New York. This is his first night without shelter.

You Can't Sleep Here

Edward Newhouse

LET me see now. The thing to do is to take stock. The thing to do is to get organized. Weigh possibilities. You couldn't weigh possibilities in all that noise and light. I crossed 42nd Street and turned down Seventh Avenue. The valleys of garment skyscrapers loomed like dows of great vultures. This was really a very remarkable city. Possibly it should be a source of gratification that unemployment didn't hit me in some one-horse Arkansas burg. Everything was numbers. Seventh Avenue. 34th Street. First National Bank.

Standing on the corner of 34th Street you could see the tallest building in the world, the greatest theatrical section, the second largest railroad station and a pack of other things. The people from Arkansas would very likely be tickled silly. A sharp raindrop landed on my cheek and flowed into my mouth. I passed between the columns of the second largest station and sat down in the waiting room.

My head droned blankly. I would shortly become sleepy. What about the stocktaking, I thought, the weighing of possibilities?

People came in shaking water out of hats and umbrellas. That was one possibility less. That let out the park for the night. I had vaguely expected to sleep there.

There was little use in going over old territory. No jobs. Acquaintances couldn't do a thing. I had neither aptitude nor stomach for the smalltime rackets at which I may have been able to pick up change.

Fellows tried lots of things. They opened beer gardens or tried to sell insurance or peddled white linen caps. One guy I knew operated slot machines. He paid out seventy-five dollars per to the manufacturing company which had the monopoly and bought protection in the form of police tabs and put ten dollars worth of slugs in each and now he was raking in heavy. He had a contact with the police commissioner's son who was reputed to be the head of the works. There was no reason why I couldn't get in on something like that. I had the nerve but not the initiative. And the little matter of finances.

The man next to me had a cowhide suitcase and a Herald-Tribune. He looked like an assistant district attorney or a line coach at Yale or a secretary to a Senate lobbyist for munitions manufacturers. I looked over his shoulder to see which section he was reading and it was sonnet at the bottom of the page. He looked into my eyes steadily and reproachfully and started back. Nonsense.

I stood up impatiently and went over to a poster announcing special excursion rates.

Let me see now. Get back to earth now. I hurried across the corridor to Seventh Avenue. The rain had stopped and a clean wind from Jersey was drying the asphalt. It was strange to see the garment center deserted like that.

Back at 42nd Street I waited for midnight edition of the Times so as to be among the first to read the want ads. When it appeared I took it into the automat and spread it open on a table. The manager came toward me. He was sorry but too many people used the place as a hangout without buying anything. If it were up to him he'd invite anybody that felt like sitting down but those were the regulations. Would I please?

Allright, I said. As I went for the coffee faucet he remained at my table, looking after me. I tried to think of something absurdly facetious to say when I came back. I thought I would buy a cherry pie and insist that he share it, saying it was an old Schenectady custom. I looked at my money but all I had was a quarter and a dime so I didn't buy anything else and when I turned around he was back at the cashier's booth. And there wasn't a single likely item in the Times. There were nine items in the Help Wanted column but they called for office executives and salesmen.

I didn't want so stay there under the supervision of the snotty manager. The coffee burned my tongue but I bolted it and walked out. It drizzled again. Nothing to do but go back to Penn station.

The man with the cowhide suitcase and the sonnet was gone. There weren't more than half a dozen people on the benches. I read the sports pages and something about disarmament. A French delegate called Beaulieu said his nation was ready to disarm if the other powers were. An associate professor of economics at Northwestern was convinced that if only somehow purchasing power could be restored, an industrial revival would follow.

I also read an interview with Winthrop Rockefeller, fourth son of John D. Rockefeller, Jr. He was taking time out of his studies at Yale to make a survey of industrial relations and he was starting at the Bayonne refinery of Standard Oil.

He was majoring in history, he had never heard of Charles A. Beard or Oswald Spengler, he didn't care to express an opinion on communism but he was interested in the labor movement. In fact, they had an association at the refinery and the men paid nominal dues only but a floral wreath is sent to the home of any member that dies. Also, "we put his name on a board out in front of the building and lower the flag to half mast."

It was only half past one but I felt sleepy because I'd been up the night before. I slid to the end of the bench and dropped my head against the papers and closed my eyes.

What the hell do I want cherry pie for, you don't see Lou Gehring eating cherry pie, he's an athlete but Babe Ruth squawked and said hell that ball was away over my head git yourself a truckload of binoculars, get a load of this, I put a nickel slug in and out comes the jackpot, of course Babe Ruth has a jackpot belly and get a load of that bottle of pop flying from the bleachers to the bullpen and around to the backstop and down on my shoulder.

"Hey, lookout," I said. At the sound of my voice I opened my eyes and a guard was standing above the bench, patting my shoulder.

"What train are you waiting for?"

"It's allright," I said. "I guess I snoozed off."

"Is it allright? What's your train?"

"I'm not taking any train."

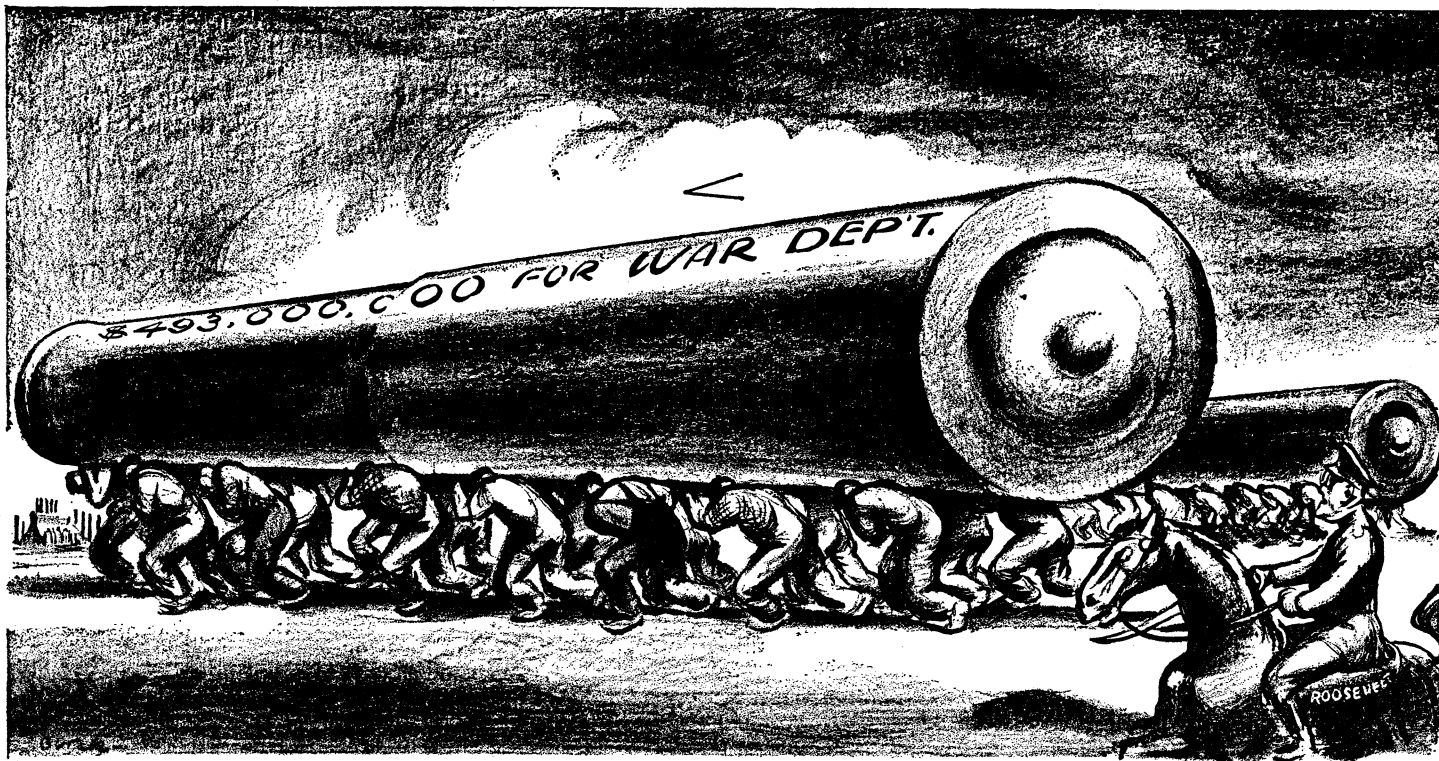
"What are you doing here?"

"Nothing. Sitting."

"You can't sit here, mister."

"Why not?"

"Because you can't."



JACOB BURCK

"Don't sit there arguing. Go on. Sit somewhere else."

"I like it here," I said, "Get your hands off me."

He took out a whistle. "You want to get arrested? Just say the word and I'll get you arrested."

"No, I don't want to get arrested," I said.

"Go on then."

"Keep your shirt on," I said, "no matter how dirty it is."

I walked through the corridor to Seventh Avenue again. This time I walked east until Park and turned up. I thought I could detect the motion of the hands on the illuminated clock over Grand Central. I hoped they would not kick me out of the waiting room there. How foolish of me not to have said I was waiting for some train in the morning.

There were two people on the entire vast concourse of Grand Central, a redcap and a newsboy. The restaurants and candy stand were closed and a cat sat on the information desk. I was alone on the benches.

I slept there for an half an hour, then a guard woke me. He was older than the other one and wore a different uniform.

"What train you waiting for?" he said.

I remembered I should have found out about some schedules. I said, "I was supposed to meet my sister who's coming up from Richmond but we evidently missed each other. She must have gone on to my hotel but she didn't have the right one, you see I moved yesterday, but I'm sure she'll come back here to look for me again."

My God, I thought, that was awful.

"Well, you ain't allowed to sleep here," he said.

"I'll sit then."

The clockhand moved jerkily. Reading would only have made me sleepier. It felt as though tiny strings were attached to my eyelashes with marbles fastened to the other end, pulling down. I whittled at the bowl of my pipe and cleaned my fingernails. Two men with pails came and began mopping the floor.

The guard walked up and down. I closed the blade of my knife and went into the washroom and bathed my face in cold water. When I returned the guard was talking to one of the cleaning men. I did not want to sit back on the benches.

"I'm going to look around," I said, "If a young lady with blonde hair and yellow suitcase comes, would you mind asking her to stay here until I show up?"

"I'll do that," the guard said.

Outside I did not feel like walking. There were some wheel chairs in the hallway and I fell asleep in one of them. The guard woke me.

"You can't sleep here," he said, "Better get up and start looking for your blonde sister."

Dollars

Isidore Schneider

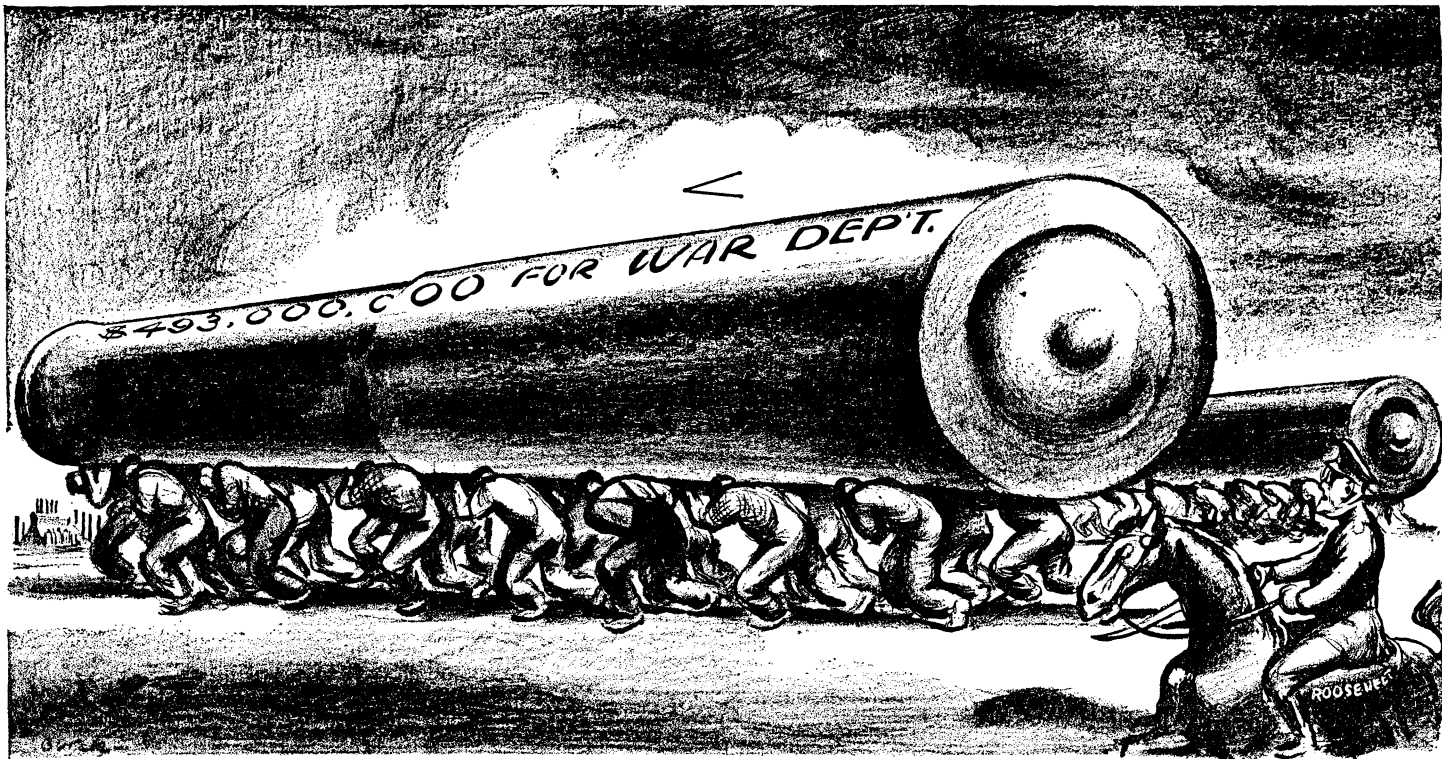
Cut dollars in the shape of men;
in the shape of men they best declare themselves.
The treasurer's stamp, and runes, and seals,
let be their thread and buttons.

To let men know that when they buy and sell
men are the payment—men—stamp dollars in
the shape of men. Cut tens to the cramped hips
of shop girls, soldiers' board backs, and limp
of errant boys; outline the twenty-fives
on eagle-shouldered clerks, and fifties on
mug necks of foremen and the creep
of ministers; cut hundreds plump to fit
brag bosoms of our young executives.
With thousands, oh, be very delicate;
the ruffle chins of bankers scallop clean
and neatly curve the ripe, pluck bodices
of movie queens, the suck of all men's eyes;
cut carefully the bevelled noses of
star actors famous for the faultless sneer.

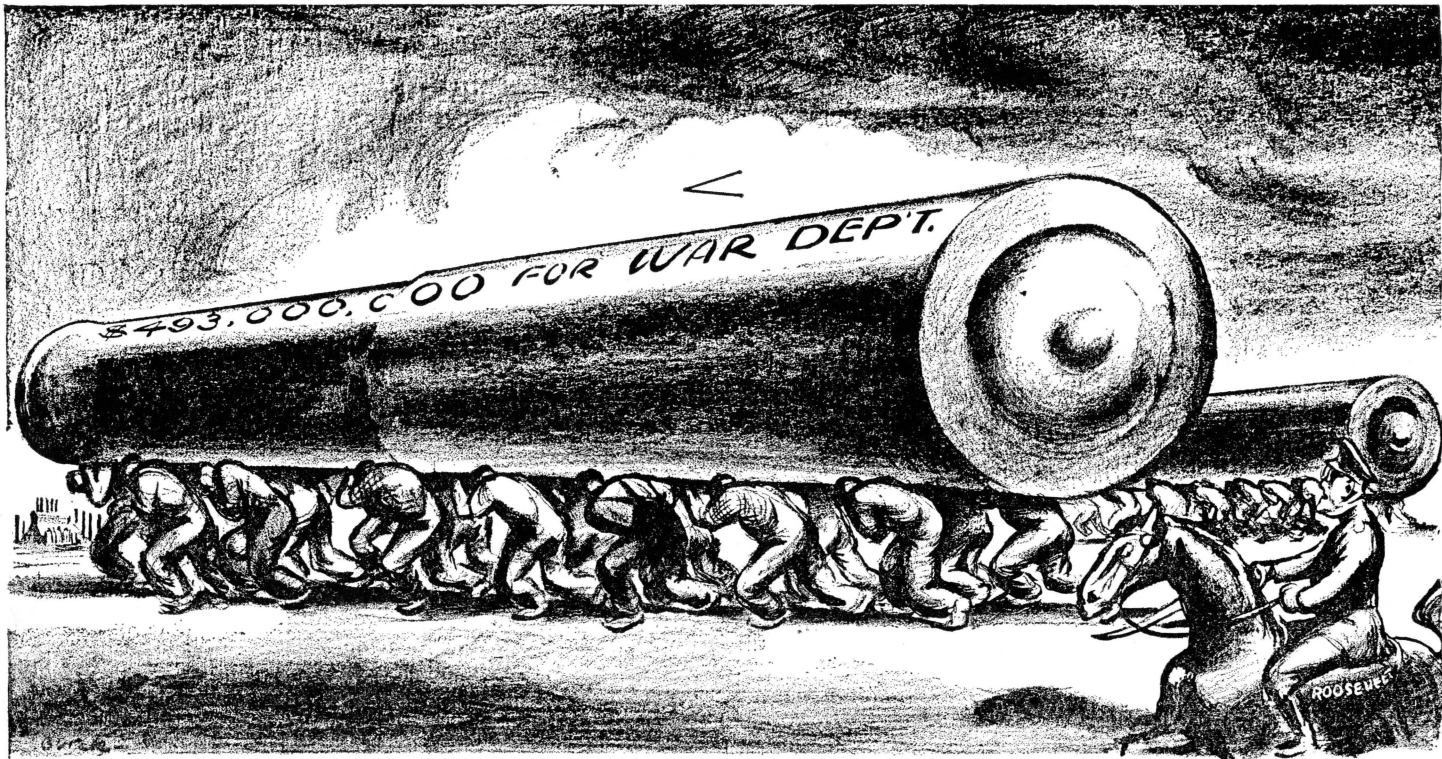
But singles frame to the shape of naked men
nicked between ribs and stamped from blue white paper.

When dollars are made in the shape of men
how loud will be the journals with confession!
Gov'tment will shrink to name the public debt,
the uncome generations it has spent
to spread the flag a shadow on bright earth.

Banks may beware of posting on brass signs
how many men are on deposit there.



JACOB BURCK



JACOB BURCK

Correspondence

Upton Sinclair Replies

My Dear Philip Sterling:

I have read your letter in the June *New Masses*, apropos of "Upton Sinclair Presents William Fox." I appreciate the gentleness with which you apply the whip to my back. (I am using your own metaphor.) I recognize the right of newcomers into the movement to keep watch over the old-timers, and see that they do not stray from the path. I have been saddened myself to see some who have strayed, and on a few occasions I have applied the whip to their backs—usually, alas, in vain. But you need not worry about me. I shall not stray far.

William Fox offered me a chance to tell the inside story of his fight with Wall Street. I might have said: "Mr. Fox, I will tell your story, provided you let me turn it into an appeal to your exploited wage slaves to revolt." In that case I would not have got the story, and neither you nor anyone else would even have heard of the matter.

I did not say that. I asked myself: "Does this story give me a chance to tell the American people things about Wall Street which they otherwise would not know, or would not believe?" The answer to that being, "Yes," I said to William Fox: "I will tell your story, provided you agree to give me ALL the facts, and to let me tell them all." On that basis the book was written.

Now, Comrade Sterling, you say that William Fox was a certain kind of business man, and you cite the facts to prove it. To that I can only say: "Your facts are taken from the book; which means that I put them into the book. Haven't I the right to be credited with knowing what I was writing?"

Let me try it again, Comrade Sterling. William Fox has spoken to you with my voice, and you have understood what he says. Why should you assume that I, the transmitter, have failed to understand what I transmitted? Think that over carefully; and believe me, I know every word I put in there, and what it was going to tell you. Maybe I even guessed what you, or some other young comrade, would say about it in the *New Masses*.

You end with the fear that the workers' movement is going too fast for me. Well, maybe so. I have chosen my rate of movement, and the workers will choose theirs. If you mean that I am slowing up, I ask you to read my new book, "The Way Out," from which you will see that I have the same belief now that I had before you were born—that is, unless you are over thirty. I believe that the great change will be different in America from what it was in Russia: it will be much more a middle class affair, because ours is much more a middle class country. I believe, or any rate I hope, that it will be more an affair of reason, and less an affair of violence. I am bound to plead that it should be, because I myself am a man of reason, and not of violence.

These ideas may seem to you out of date, even foolish. But at least you must understand that I hold them sincerely, and that I have held them from the beginning, and so they do not mean any back-sliding on my part.

UPTON SINCLAIR,

West Branch, Calif.

Struggle in Cuba

Editor, *New Masses*:

The Anti-Imperialist League is initiating a national campaign in support of the Cuban masses.

The present situation in Cuba calls for action on the part of

all American anti-imperialists, both organizations and individuals. Every organization will be asked to emphasize the particular angle of the Cuban struggle which fits in with its own work.

Too little support has been given to the masses struggling in Cuba, who, like other colonial workers suffer under the double oppression of Yanky and national bourgeois landlord oppression and unbelievable terror.

Yet, in spite of this, a real anti-imperialist and real workers' and peasants' movement is developing in Cuba to a greater extent than in any other of the Caribbean countries.

The workers and peasants are organizing on the sugar plantations. They are beginning to be a real menace to the imperialist native interests. So we see the United States sending down Mr. Sumner Welles to unite Machado and his bourgeois opponents; to do which Machado will be ordered to ease up on his bourgeois enemies, probably to release some of his victims including members of the A.B.C. terrorist organization, which is ready to make peace under the aegis of Sumner Welles.

But only the workers and peasants, supported by the real revolutionary students, are carrying on the fight to drive out the imperialism which oppresses the Cuban masses, no matter which native group is in power.

In carrying on the campaign in support of the struggle of the Cuban masses, we, following the example of the Cuban masses, make the following demands:

1. UPON THE ROOSEVELT GOVERNMENT: Complete economic and political independence for Cuba; for the abolition of the Platt amendment; against intervention; against the sending of American educational and election experts to Cuba; immediate surrender of the Guantanamo naval base, and the immediate withdrawal of American warships from Cuba; for the immediate cancellation of debts owed by Cuba to American banks.

2. UPON THE CUBAN GOVERNMENT: For the immediate and unconditional release of Vivo, Ordoqui, Villar, and the other political prisoners now in Cuban jails; for the right of the revolutionary organization to exist without interference from the Cuban government; for the right of the Cubans in exile to return to Cuba, especially the workers and revolutionary students.

With all mass organizations participating in this campaign, a real support can be given by the American workers to the struggling masses in Cuba, whose effect will be felt not only in Cuba but in all Caribbean and South American countries, and will be a signal to the masses under the yoke of American imperialism that at last the American masses are awakening to the fact that the fight against American imperialist oppression does not stop on the nited States borders and must be a common fight of all oppressed by American imperialism.

Yours fraternally,

CUBAN CAMPAIGN COMMITTEE,

William Simons, *National Secretary Anti-Imperialist League*

The New Bridge Again

Dear Comrades:

The May *New Masses*, which has just reached me, contained a review by Meyer Levin of his own book, *The New Bridge*. It is unjustifiably lax for the *New Masses* to print any article revealing the ignorance, lack of human understanding and the complacent conviction that this ignorance and non-understanding are due to human and social phenomena being inexplicable, the position taken by the review in question, without a following article showing the materialistic basis of the author's position, how wide-spread and current his conviction's necessarily are because of this basis and the author's exploitation of his own weakness, his highfalutin: "through their badly directed and insufficiently understood epic, improvising where the script is bare" instead of buckling down to the task of learning something about that which he has set out to describe. I shall leave the Marxian criticism of the author's ideology to you while I ask the author some questions about his characters which to me, as a worker, are very pertinent, questions which affect, I should say, determine, the relation of the characters

to each other. I finished the review feeling that the author doesn't know his people well enough and that it is the author who is left on the bridge wishing to throw other people's deeds overboard but holding on to a \$5 bill.

To me the characters and their actions as outlined in the review are not real, not typical, and not significant; that workers could not think as the author makes them act and think. Now for the questions. There are a lot of minor ones, such as, what does the author mean by the word 'though' as applied to Red Feingold and his mother and if so, why, which I shall not ask, confining myself to basic errors which shake his whole structure.

How did S. Marks acquire the money which he put into "blocks" of tenements and which he subsequently lost? If he owned "blocks" of tenements, he could not have earned the money to buy them with, therefore he must have exploited workers in order to own houses with the expectation of exploiting workers as rent payers, later.

When S. Marks is overwhelmed by the misery he has caused does he regret his exploitation of workers and rent payers? Does he stop eviction proceedings?

Why does Joracek want to kill S. Marks? Workers know that one boss is like another, one landlord like another; that is, only landlords who are ruthless enough to make property pay can continue as landlords; workers always face ruthless landlords, the others are inevitably forced out; therefore, how is it possible for a worker who is class conscious enough to take organized action against eviction proceedings to slide off into middle-class, individualistic sentimentalism over a muddled, vacillating, and "broke" landlord and forget his deep feeling for his hungry and outcast family? How can he forget that he must stop the eviction? Where is the author's sense of proportions? Where is the author's integrity toward real human sentiment? In order to make our characters "symbolic" must we make them react to the minor and be callous to the major? What kind of life is this and why?

I am not implying that S. Marks may not have had a change of heart. Extorting a landlord's standard of living (a landlord of "blocks" of tenements—not a small house owner) may become intolerable to an individual landlord here or there and S. Marks "broke" may even cooperate with Joracek against some surviving landlord yet there would be nothing typical, nor socially significant, in such action.

However, the author has noticed current significant human and social phenomena: social organization and action of the workers; although he is utterly unaware of its nature, meaning and power. This unawareness and the brazen smartness of his last words: "And who shall tell him?" leave one with little hope for his development but as we are living in a period of tremendous upheaval even that is possible. I am not blaming him for not showing a way out in an age when the way out is obvious, but for not being true to human reality, for being sensitive to trivialities and unalive to the terms of great social changes.

Sincerely yours

MARY SMITH,

An office worker.

Miners' Poverty

I am very grateful to you for your kindness in supplying me with information on the question of picketing in the Illinois coal fields. The information has been invaluable in justifying picketing in a debate of importance at the — — — — — College, which supplies most of the teachers of this part of the state.

I am enclosing fifteen cents in stamps for the July number of the *New Masses*.

Teaching in a mining town has made me keenly aware of the terrible degree of poverty among the miners.

Again let me thank you for your kindness.

Yours very truly,

B. A. L.

The Anti War Congress

SIXTY national organizations of workers, farmers, war veterans, unemployed, students, Negroes, pacifists, and intellectuals have responded to a call for a United States Congress against War along the lines of the anti-war congress held in Amsterdam last year. The call for the congress was issued by Sherwood Anderson, Theodore Dreiser and Upton Sinclair.

The Congress will be held in New York September 2-4. The office of the arrangements committee, whose secretary is Donald Henderson, is at 104 Fifth Avenue, New York City.

A program of struggle against the danger of a new imperialist war will be worked out at the Congress. The sixty organizations participating in the Congress have issued a call appealing for support of their anti-war campaign. The call says in part:

"We are united in the belief that the people of the world must arouse themselves to take immediate action against the wars now going on in the Far East and in South America, against the increasing preparations for war, and against the growing danger of a new world war. We appeal to all organizations, all workers, farmers, youth and professional groups to support this congress against the common enemy."

The call particularly emphasizes the rapid rise of fascism as "closely related to war."

The arrangements committee is taking special pains to draw trade unions into participation in the Congress against War. Speakers are to be sent to local, city and national bodies of the trade unions to draw them into active support of the anti-war struggle and of the anti-war congress. Similar appeals will be made to the intellectuals opposed to imperialist war.

The call for the anti-war congress declares that "the National Recovery Act has become the vehicle for launching the building of a vastly larger navy along the lines demanded by the big navy jingoes... Throughout the country, hundreds of firms are busy shipping munitions and basic war materials to the warring countries in South America and the Far East. With all this, the Roosevelt administration has developed centralized control along the lines of the War Industries Board of 1917."

The aim of the anti-war congress will be to organize and act against these war preparations which are leading to a worldwide imperialist slaughter.

The Communist Party has endorsed the congress and is mobilizing working-class organizations for participation in this united front against imperialist war. In view of the fact that a large number of mass working-class organizations were responding to the call for the congress, various Socialist leaders have given their names to the arrangements committee. Among these is Norman Thomas.

The John Reed Club is preparing a call to writers, artists and other intellectuals to support the anti-war congress and to participate in its fight against imperialist war.

Towers

NOW, towers are more terrible than Babel's was,
Whose heights became a noisy crowded hell,
For these are void and still. Their silences,
Loud with new doom, than curses are more fell.
Ghosts haunt tall ledges spurned by last despairs

And the satirical bright sun grins down—the blank moon stares.
Now, love has not yet failed, earth flowers no less sweet,
Dawn is as white and evening does not hide
The splendor of its stars from the dull street
But there, lined-up for bread, bows hungry pride
And love is numb with pain, its lifelblood cold
From watching faces of young men that suddenly grow old.

LILLIAN WHITE SPENCER.

B O O K S

A Tired Tory

LOOKING BACK: An Autobiographical Excursion, by Norman Douglas. Harcourt, Brace and Company.

Norman Douglas is tired. After a graceful life of leisure and travel, of unhurried excursions to the esoteric spots of the globe, he is ready to take his final bow, to make a beautiful gesture of his eclipse, as trivial as the charming days of his ascendancy.

"The winter of my days has come," Mr. Douglas admits in the opening pages of *Looking Back*. I have attained the Grand Climacteric. Now, if ever, is the time to take that promenade into the past and into regions which I shall never see again. . . ."

And so he proceeds to summon back the ghosts of lovely ladies he has known, beloved villas, chateaux and tapestries, rare editions of beautifully bound books, conversations with contemporary dilettantes.

There is something pitiful in *Looking Back*, revealed both in the method used to reminisce and in the incidents chosen for Mr. Douglas' retrospection. It is as if a charming woman, arrived at the age when further hope of salvation from her spinsterhood is no longer possible, were fingering the pink ribbons that bind small packets of love letters—sighing, reading and rereading them for the thousandth time. . . .

For Mr. Douglas is old—too old and too impotent artistically to have written a significant autobiography, one that might have explained his age to ours. He himself may not be aware of this, but it is true.

He wrote several charming and entertaining books during his life, and compiled a humorous and ribald volume of lime-ricks. He lived a serene and languid existence, dotted with love affairs, mild friendships, spicy conversations and carefully-chosen foods. When this has been said of him, nothing much remains.

Looking Back shows how completely he has lost his last hold upon himself, his last claim to distinction. Unable to write a sustained biography, Mr. Douglas has had to resort to the narration of a series of incidents, unrelated to each other organically, connected neither logically nor chronologically. True, he has employed a clever device: that of looking through an old box of calling cards and writing down whatever he remembers of the persons whose names he finds. But this time more than skill and ingenuity were needed.

Had Mr. Douglas grown wise, as well as old, with the times, had he been able to grow out of himself and his gay but enervating circle, he might have learned and told us many things of interest and importance in this last testament. He might have been able to understand that he spent his youth and manhood in an expanding industrial era; that the colonial markets being exploited by England created a sense of well-being in the British bourgeois mind; that he, as a member of his class, accepted the solid financial security of his age as a permanent condition. He might have explained the facts that his own talent and dexterity, as well as his bohemian rejection of his class, stemmed directly from his own environment and opportunities; that, living when he did, with his inheritance and environment, he could not fully reject the substance—the ideals, beliefs, hypotheses—of his class; that all he could do was to substitute one *manner* of acceptance for another. He and his companions made a fetish of leisure, of travel, of dandyism. And when the world war broke upon his unsuspecting mind, he escaped, in other ways than physically, to his Mediterranean island.

But the years brought others to encroach upon his perfumed solitude, Mr. Douglas bitterly albeit urbanely complains. What he means—although he cannot perhaps realize it—is that the

problems and struggles of mankind forced themselves upon his hothouse existence, that the futility of escape became apparent to him at last. His heritage, admitting no new growth, no new orientation in himself, forced him to resort to cynicism and despair.

It is significant that the one and only point in *Looking Back* at which he loses his carefully-cultivated temper is when he recalls an old acquaintance whom he "did not dislike, in spite of his pernicious doctrines. He was an amiable and rather prominent windbag, a Socialist."

"Are we never to learn," asks the momentarily ruffled Mr. Douglas, "that Socialism has its roots in envy and in nothing else?"

I fear we have spent too much time with Mr. Douglas. Let us leave him as he grows gracefully older and more feeble, mellow and more moldy, like old wine or old cheese.

EDWIN ROLFE

"Regulating" Capitalism

INDUSTRIAL DISCIPLINE AND THE GOVERNMENTAL ARTS, by Rex G. Tugwell, Columbia University Press, \$2.50, pp. 229.

An epoch in the history of capitalism in the United States has come to an end—the epoch of free private enterprise. The economic crisis of 1929 has seen the last of the race of "rugged individualists". To survive, that is, to solve the present crisis, American capitalism must recreate itself in a new image. To survive it must reform its forces; it must organize on a new basis. Free private enterprise must give way to "free associative enterprise." The individual entrepreneur must submerge his individual competitive advantage to enhance it in the common competitive advantage of the trade or industrial association. In the cartel there is strength. This is the gospel preached in the new book of the Assistant Secretary of Agriculture, R. G. Tugwell, recently a "liberal economist" of Columbia University.

The anarchy of capitalist production has brought American capitalism to the brink of chaos. American economic *laissez faire* must be harnessed and tamed, and that speedily, or it will surely end in self-destruction. What ails American Capitalism, Professor Tugwell tells us, is that "a set of irresponsible, possibly badly trained and certainly self-interested people half manage and half neglect affairs of whose consequences they have no adequate conception, but from which they have no hesitation in draining the last penny of profits." "It becomes more and more clear," therefore, says the professor, that the freedoms of traditional American individualism and the philosophy of *laissez faire* in industry "have to be restricted".

The restriction, to be sure, will be purely self-imposed, he contends, though under general government supervision, and will consist of "a linking of business with business and industry with industry as would insure the continuous and uninterrupted movement of materials and forces to their planned end."

Ultimately this is supposed, according to the Tugwell doctrine, to lead to socialization and public ownership. But at first "regulation" will have to suffice. ". . . the nature of our tradition makes it likely that we shall try it (regulation) pretty thoroughly before we go on to socialization in any complete sense."

But suppose businessmen refuse to be regulated? Then, Professor Tugwell says, they "are neither prudent nor wise." We still have our choices, but we must act now "before it is too late. Otherwise we are surely committed to revolution." And so, writing "against time and against the opposing pressures of stubborn privilege on one side and *dark destructive intention* [reviewer's italics] on the other, which threaten to obliterate civilization between them", the professor pleads with "stubborn privilege": "Men and women do not ask much from this world. . . They ask security." And yet, "with an equipment adequate to this purpose, this provision of a minimum of security still remains conspicuously lacking." "The system of unregulated business enterprise has failed us in this respect; it must be modified and regulated to repair the failure."

And so, if the bad, inconsiderate capitalists do not want a revolution on their hands, they'd better submit, voluntarily of course, to a certain amount of self-discipline under the gen-

eral supervision and regulation of the government. This would consist of (1) federal incorporation of business enterprises; (2) allocation of new capital; (3) the fixing of maximum prices and of minimum wages; and (4) the protection of "some vital interests, now wholly or partly neglected . . . the weaker businesses, consumers, workers, farmers, and technicians, all of which suffer now from disadvantages and discrimination which are too obvious to be denied." A central planning board composed of representatives from the various industries of the country and from the government would operate the scheme which would "have to be of a sort to which business men will at first voluntarily agree and which at the same time contain no threat to the public."

Here then, we have before us the essentials of a theory of social economic planning under capitalism as well as the very elements which make social economic planning under capitalism impossible. We have the promise of a "new democracy", as the publisher's blurb assures us, and of the very strengthening of the capitalist's stranglehold over the working masses through a consolidating and unifying of individual capitalist power into the joint power of the cartel and giant monopoly. The *voluntary* merging of the individual entrepreneur's interests into those of the industry merely raises capitalist competition to higher, and wider levels, permits of greater control by finance capital and leads to fiercer imperialist rivalries and to war. The role of the *government* as the coordinating *outside* body merely assures the hegemony of the bosses over the wages, working conditions and organization of the workers. Such social economic planning must lead to the complete submergence of the "weaker businesses", of the worker, of the farmer, of the consumer, to the interest and profits of the monopolies and cartels *with the connivance* of the state which now becomes partners with big business.

Professor Tugwell offers American capitalists the choice between a managed capitalism and a revolution. He knows what they will accept. The stage in which American capitalism finds itself after four years of the fiercest crisis in its existence offers no alternative, as it also gives rise to the very theories of which the Tugwells are spokesmen. But the worker knows that the American, the Tugwellian brand of managed capitalism is no different from the German brand of managed capitalism, or of the British Labor Party brand, or of the Italian brand. He knows that it is but the first step toward state capitalism, and fascism is then right around the corner. Proposals for social economic planning as a way of saving capitalism from the present as well as future crises must involve the further strengthening of the capitalist hold over materials and worker, the further exploitation of the worker's labor power and the nation's natural resources, the further concentration of wealth and power, and the more frequent and more violent crises, leading to imperialist wars and to the world revolution.

JOHN IRVING

Russia and Asia

RUSSIA AND ASIA, by Prince A. Lobanov-Rostovsky. The Macmillan Company. 1933.

In his foreword Prince Lobanov-Rostovsky says his ambitions do not go beyond the desire to stimulate interest in a field of historical research which has not received the attention it deserves, in view of the importance of Asia in the world of today and the outstanding and ever-growing importance of the role played by Russia in Asiatic affairs. This modest goal, we believe, is achieved in his book, although it displays its author's rather limited knowledge of the subject and his dependence not always on the best sources in preparing his compilation.

The book is not an authoritative, original work of an historian, but merely "a general view of the development of relations between Russia and Asia throughout the centuries," based

on a course of lectures given by its author. We can refrain from pedantic criticism of its details.

Undoubtedly, the author tried his best to present his material objectively, and with rather few exceptions, succeeded. Of course he exaggerates in describing the growth of industries in Russia in the second half of the Nineteenth Century, probably because it is thus easier to deny the enormous achievements in industrialization of the Soviet regime. Quite obviously he enters a field not well explored by him when he attempts to explain how the creation of great industrial concerns in large cities "affected the political life, how the cities filled by millions of peasants . . . discontented and detached from the wholesome soil . . . formed a regular hotbed for revolutionary activities . . ." (pp. 194-5). In his lyrical description of the beginning of "the troubles" he reaches the apogee of naivete when he writes: "At the same time a new middle class composed of industrialists, bankers and merchants, mostly liberal minded and in sympathy with the radical intelligentsia, came more and more to the forefront" (p. 195). We cannot refrain from asking the Prince whether he was in earnest or joking? Such an idyll!—bankers and merchants in sympathy with the radicals!

Of course it is an exaggeration to assert, as the author does (pp. 257-8) that the Siberian population "fought bitterly against Communism," without the intervention of the Allies. Probably there would be practically no fighting at all outside of the impotent attempts of the upper classes to enlist the masses of Siberia in the anti-Bolshevik cause. The intervention, of which Lobanov himself writes: "Russians will certainly have no reason to keep happy memory of their doings . . ." (p. 259).

Of course he is wrong when, following many others, he declares that the Soviet Government and the Third International are one and the same (p. 281) or when he repeats the story that the "Turksib railway had already been planned and a part of the preliminary work accomplished . . ." (p. 277) which is, of course, not entirely true, to say it very mildly.

An entirely erroneous impression may be produced on the majority of the foreign readers by his closing sentence of Chapter XI (p. 256), when the author, after having quoted the ambitious project of General Kuropatkin written in 1916, to settle the problem of the Asiatic borders of Russia, states: "This program has been partly carried out by the Soviet Government." Even "partly" it never was carried out by the Soviets for the simple reason that they are not and never were imperialistic, and Kuropatkin's plan prescribed annexation by Russia of a good part of Northern Persia, parts of Turkey and Afghanistan, and was especially generous in carving a large piece of Chinese territory.

Apropos imperialism there is another lapse in Lobanov's book where he applies the term imperialism to define the advance and conquests of Russia in Asia in the XVIIth Century (p. 50). There was aggression, natural expansion of a growing country occupying the neighboring free lands, but this hardly can be called imperialism even by those who do not accept the orthodox Leninist definition of that term.

Quite properly he gives due credit to the Soviets in creating a better understanding between the various nationalities inhabiting the Soviet Union and especially their policy in the Central Asiatic republics (pp. 270-273) which he considers "an important factor with regard to the increase of Soviet influence . . . amongst the Asiatic nations . . ." (p. 282), but after having admitted the cultural and economic results of this, he insinuates that the Five Year Plan "was conceived . . . as making the component parts of the Union so interdependent as to kill their economic life if they segregate themselves from the greater body politic" (p. 276).

But all these rather minor points are easily excusable in view of the honest attempt of the author to fight "the lack of understanding between Western Europe and Russia resulting in a flood of derogatory literature and erroneous conceptions" which "is still today one of the main causes of the present unrest and uneasiness in the world" (p. 24), and his fairness in appraising most of the activities of the Soviets in different fields, and his interesting summary and conclusions, with many of which we can heartily agree.

In discussing the so-called return of Russia to Asia as a result of the Revolution, he writes: "The Soviet regime has aimed at and succeeded in stamping out the Byzantine elements which formed the foundation of old Russia. The two most im-

portant pillars, namely autocracy and orthodoxy have either disappeared or been badly shattered. Byzantine being the first source of the Eastern influences in Russia, it would appear therefore that the process is developing in the opposite direction. More plausible would seem the hypothesis that the Soviet Revolution is the last stage of the revolutionary process initiated by Peter the Great. Indeed, just as Peter introduced Western culture to the top layer of Russian society by spreading technical knowledge, so to-day the Soviet regime, after having destroyed these higher strata is introducing technical education in the lower classes. The object is the same: teaching self-help and building up efficiency. It is only the number of people affected and the classes affected that the experiment differs."

"Contrary to accepted ideas, Russia has never been in such a favorable position for closer relationship with Europe as since the Great War. This is, of course, disregarding the exclusion of Russia from the community of nations . . ." (pp. 509-310).

"Indeed, examining Russia's position as a result of the War, we find that the great Empires along her Western and Southern borders, which in the past could block or check her intercourse with Western Europe have either been weakened like Germany, or destroyed and reduced to the status of second-rate powers like Austria and Turkey . . ." Thus the problem faced by Peter the Great . . . has been solved in favor of Russia and this is worth the loss of Russian territory as a result of the World War." (p. 310).

"The second factor to be considered is that at no time has Russian cultural influence in Europe been so strong as to-day . . ." Further, the author expresses his opinion that Russia will not care in the future to bother with Europe, in his opinion: "Russia will turn more and more eastward, whereas Europe represents for her something of the past, something outworn, in which she has no more interests . . ." (p. 311). This sounds like the teachings of the "Eurasians," though Lobanov adds to the interest of New Russia besides Asia the countries beyond the Pacific Ocean "were new great civilizations have arisen, more adapted to her needs than is Europe" (p. 311).

Considering the new balance of power in Asia, he writes: "Territorially Russia cannot expand further, and her problem is now to keep and develop what she already has. This can be achieved only by the invigorating results of building up a new culture. Mere brute force applied as in the days of European Imperialism will not safeguard Russia's Asiatic possessions against a probable new onslaught from Asia: at present Japan, in the future possibly China. Only if Russia has a new word to say in Asia acceptable to the Asiatic nations, will her position be secure . . ."

"Thus the new culture Russia will have to develop will necessarily be adapted essentially to the needs of the White race alone . . ." (p. 312).

His closing sentences sound quite reasonable: ". . . just as in the past centuries the main efforts of the Russian nation were directed towards expansion, so now they must be bent to the new task of development and of creating a new civilization . . ."

". . . such an internal preoccupation promises peace with other nations; at the same time, in order to survive, Russians will have to blend and fertilize their cultural soil with both European and Asiatic ingredients. Thus this new culture will powerfully influence Asia as well, and since the role that Asia is playing in world affairs is rapidly increasing in importance, it will possibly be through her influence in Asia that Russia will affect world destinies."

V. RYTOV

Farrell's Progress

GAS-HOUSE MCGINTY, by James T. Farrell. New York: The Vanguard Press. \$2.50.

Over all the young American writers of fiction whose works are concerned with present-day life, James T. Farrell has the advantage of a rich proletarian background and a deep understanding, born of experience, of the persons whose lives he

portrays. In his second novel, *Gas-House McGinty*, he describes a section of the adult workers of Chicago just as, in *Young Lonigan* he treated the youngsters growing through adolescence into a lop-sidedly precocious maturity. The scene of most of the pithy conversatious by means of which the author presents his penetrating picture of the stunted lives of his characters is the office of the wagon-call department of the Continental Express Company, where Farrell himself worked for two years. It is mainly through the relationships of the workers in this office (although the sketches which punctuate the direct narrative play an important part in giving the novel the limited, but none the less skillful, unity which it possesses) that Farrell succeeds in imparting to the reader the dominating motif of his work: the cruel, inhuman influence that workers' sources of livelihood exerts, under capitalism, upon their entire lives. Intense hatred of their jobs, which regulate and prescribe their minutest thoughts and activities, is juxtaposed to their slavery and the coexistent fear of losing their jobs, which to them are the thin threads that tie them to their last shreds of self-respect as human beings, of life itself.

What Farrell lacks in social insight (or, more accurately, what he loses in his failure to apply as fully as he is able the social awareness and understanding that he possesses) he makes up for with the depth of his familiarity with proletarian life. Aside from the central theme of the relation of the workers to their jobs, his present novel is an expected extension, a broadening-out, of the basic theme which he employed in *Young Lonigan*: the lives of Catholic-dogma-drugged Irish proletarians of Chicago, their relations and frictions within their own group and with fellow-workers of other nationalities. Farrell's characters are ignorant, intensely and blindly prejudiced, ideologically stunted; they comprise a most backward section of the American working class. However, the author clearly indicates the economic and environmental causes and character of this backwardness. Anger and dissatisfaction with their lot are clearly revealed, as are their potentialities for revolt. But there is also a vagueness, a lack of direction in these workers, reactions which—even though the action of the novel takes place more than ten years ago—seems unreal in the year 1933.

It is to be hoped that Farrell will undertake a training in artistic self-discipline that will somehow synthesize the many aspects of his talent and equipment. Although both *Young Lonigan* and *Gas-House McGinty* are definite and praiseworthy achievements, it is not amiss to point out that his work thus far has merely scratched the surface of the material which it is in his power to develop to a point far beyond his present accomplishment.

EDWIN ROLFE.

Farmers and Soldiers

THINKING OF RUSSIA, by H. H. Lewis. 25 cents. B. C. Hagglund, Publisher, Holt, Minnesota.

THE UNKNOWN SOLDIER SPEAKS, by George Jarrboe. 25 cents. B. C. Hagglund, Publisher, Holt, Minnesota.

Lewis' book will no doubt shock the aesthetic sensibilities of cultured readers. Anticipating this contingency, he has offered an *apologia*:

Indigenous, Yet Thinking of Russia.
 "Here I am
 Hunkered over the cow-donick,
 Earning my one dollar per
 And realizing,
 With the goo upon overalls,
 How environment works up a feller's pants-legs to govern his
 thought."

No other poet has captured so faithfully the dialect and the acidulous, pertinent wit of the Missouri gumbo farmer and infused it with revolutionary fire. Not all of Lewis' verse is in dialect, and some of it may be condemned as backhouse humor of the sort chalked up in latrines. He is a diligent student

of onomatopoeia, and his love for word-sounds often leads him into absurdity. But his eyes are clear and his interests range far afield from the yellow-clay hillsides upon which he toils for "a dollar a day and keep." He peers into lice-infested flophouses, into oil scandals, and tilts up the Capitol dome. Particularly and incessantly he thinks of Russia:

"I put ear to the dirt and sense a mighty
rhythmical throbbing:

Mother Earth cohabitating with Bolshevism,
Shaking it up for the Five Year Plan.

Among the cowdobs of the barn, then out here
in the field, away out here in the Menckenshevik scorn-
dom, I, what a speck individuality, *The Man With The Hoe*,
think up Hesiodian chants on a theme more epic than
Homer's,—

On what matters,

Something to go 'crazy' about;

Russia, Russia, Russia, Russia, Russia, RUSSIA RUSSIA!"

If Lewis' poetry is rude, so is the farmer these days. As a Soviet critic has aptly put it in a recent review: "The emphasis of the strait of the diminutive American farmer determines Lewis' sound radical position. In his poems he bursts forth not as a proletarian poet but as a representative spokesman for the small disorganized farmer who belongs to the proletarian class." Knowing this to be true, we understand why William Rose Benet in the *Saturday Review of Literature* haughtily dismissed Lewis' booklet as "very bad", without bothering to analyze or define the phenomena that connote the "badness." "State Fair" is the *vade mecum* for farm literature among the pink-whiskered aesthetes who believe that poetry must be written about the phallus and the "soul" but never about the vulgar belly. But such "bad" young fellows as Lewis are going to be heard from more frequently and more loudly henceforth.

Jarrboe possesses something of the lyric quality of Sassoon, with the difference that the poems in "The Unknown Soldier Speaks" are written by an ex-sailor who not only knows that he was duped in the Imperialist War of 1914 but who proposes never to be duped again and who will fight only when "The Soviet Banner lifts..." These verses have appeared in the *New Masses*, *The Daily Worker*, *The Rebel Poet*, and other revolutionary publications. The title poem has been translated into Russian and has appeared in a recent Soviet anthology. Jarrboe deals overmuch with sex, but at his best he achieves some memorable and stirring lines.

Both Lewis' and Jarrboe's booklets have been translated into Japanese and will be published in Japan soon.

JACK CONROY.

Rural Adult Education

RURAL ADULT EDUCATION, by Benson Y. Landis and John D. Willard. Macmillan, \$1.75.

This book is a survey of the "variety of agencies and of methods in use in helping rural people to continue their education beyond the days of schooling." In separate chapters it considers the extent and activities of libraries, public schools, extension services, churches, and farm organizations that make "purposeful and sustained efforts . . . to increase knowledge, skill, or appreciation" amongst the adults of America's rural population. Its significant conclusions are that "there is no coherent movement of rural adult education in the United States" and that the crisis makes the total rural situation "less favorable" for the development of one. The "largest adult education organization in the country," the Agricultural Extension Service, besides facing the threat of reduced government appropriations, is reminded daily of the contradiction between its program of improving farming technique and the program of the Federal Farm Board for the disposition of surpluses and the discouragement of heavy production.

The authors of this book, like most American educators, suffer from *academic cretinism*. Under the influence of this disease

(very much like the parliamentary cretinism which Marx analyzed) they can combine a sewing-and-literary-circle conception of culture with the naive view that Education will solve the problems of the world. The note of optimism with which the book closes is therefore no surprise.

Academic cretinism results from the common view of the school as "standing above society and serving all," (second-cousin to the social-democratic theory of the state). It is therefore accompanied by the tip-toe "impartiality" of the bourgeois scientist who can say with a straight face: "most educators and social scientists who have given thought to the matter seem to be of the opinion that rural and urban life both have advantages and disadvantages." This hollow impartiality, though merely funny in the preceding quotation, ceases to be funny when, for example, it distorts the fact of increasing farm tenantry and hides the implied mass impoverishment with the statement that "tenantry is not a social evil, *per se*. It is frequently a step in the agricultural ladder from the status of farm laborer to farm owner."

The impartial authors are so far "above" society that they didn't see as "Social and Economic Factors Influencing Adult Education" the mortgage foreclosures and the rising tide of militant action in the countryside. As long as they remain on their high academic perch they will be left behind by the *real* adult education movement embodied in the militant organizations of workers and farmers who "learn by doing" in their struggle for a new economy and culture.

JAMES GARNET

Money In Elections

MONEY IN ELECTIONS, by Louise Overcracker, Macmillan Co. \$3.50.

Taken by themselves, the facts presented in this book are not new to readers of the revolutionary press. Gathered together between two covers as they have been here, they will prove of use to workers in their agitation. Thus the author reports that \$23,000,000 was spent by the two capitalist parties in the 1928 elections; that public utility interests alone paid out a quarter of a million dollars in the 1926 Illinois senatorial primaries for the Republican, Frank L. Smith; that nearly \$2,000,000 was expended in the 1920 pre-convention campaign to secure the nomination of General Leonard Wood; that some capitalists, notably Insull, have contributed to candidates of both parties in the same election.

The author has cited facts which are in the public record. How many more millions of dollars which were given and not recorded remains unknown. The Du Ponts, Woodins, Raskobs, Mellons, Rockefellers, etc., are named together with their contributions. An analysis of *classified* economic groups who contributed to the Republican national committee in 1928, for instance, reveals that at least 70% of the money came from bankers, manufacturers and other capitalistic interests; and at least 58% of the Democratic national committee receipts were from similar groups.

To the class conscious what would these facts mean? That the periodic show staged by the capitalist class is merely a scheme to bamboozle the masses and for the perpetuation of the capitalist system. Not so the author of this book. Although she recognizes that money in elections cannot be isolated from "many economic and social problems," she does not state that these problems are none other than those of the capitalist system. Failure to see the class struggle, the battle between exploiters and exploited, results in her laying down a program leading into the narrow channels of parliamentarism. Her way out, i. e., until voters become an "honest lot", is regulation! As if the blame rested with the masses of voters and not with the capitalists who dominate the press, radio and other propaganda organs.

—HY KRAVIV

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