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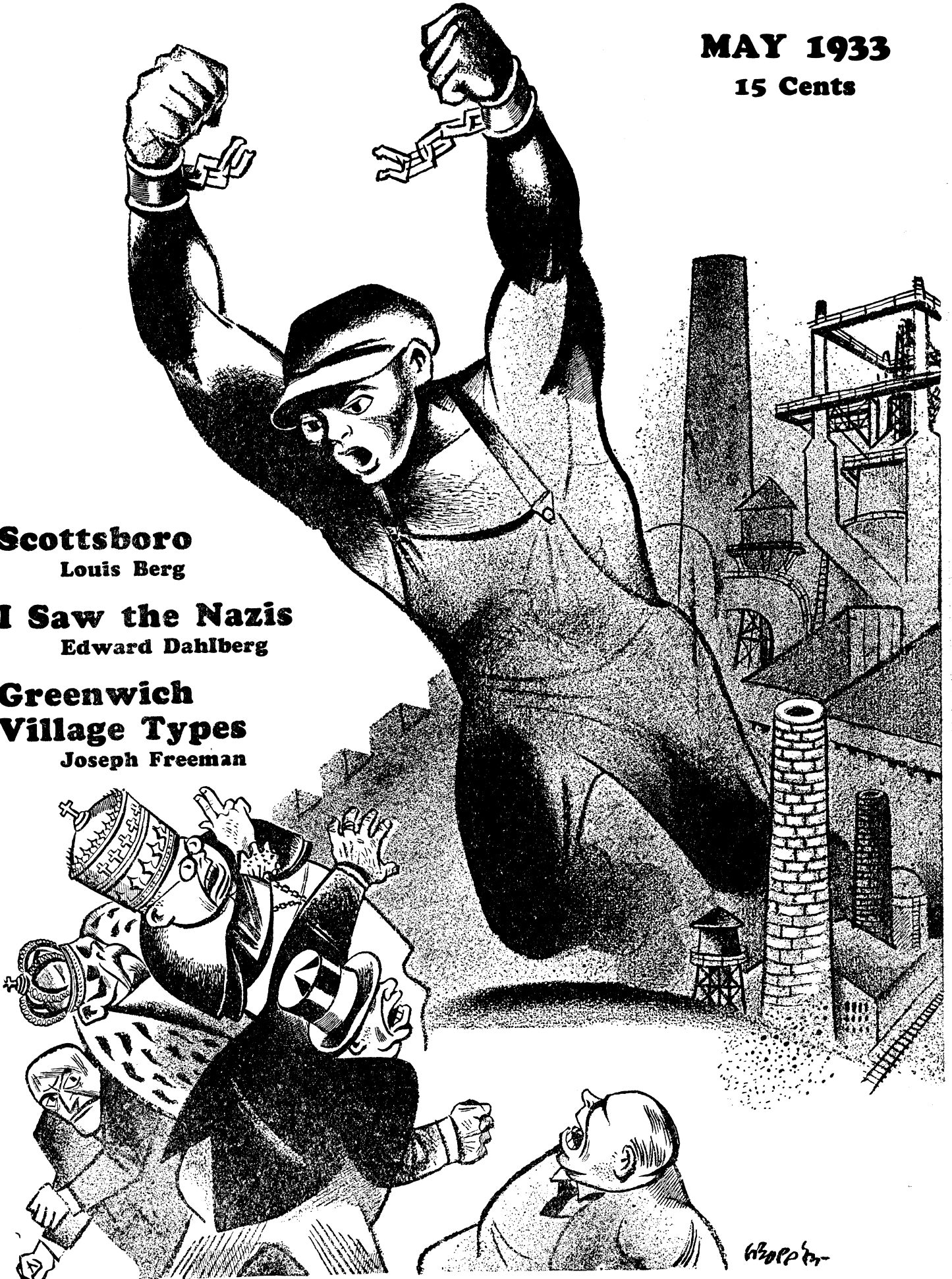
I Saw the Nazis

Edward Dahlberg

Greenwich

Village Types

Joseph Freeman



Walter

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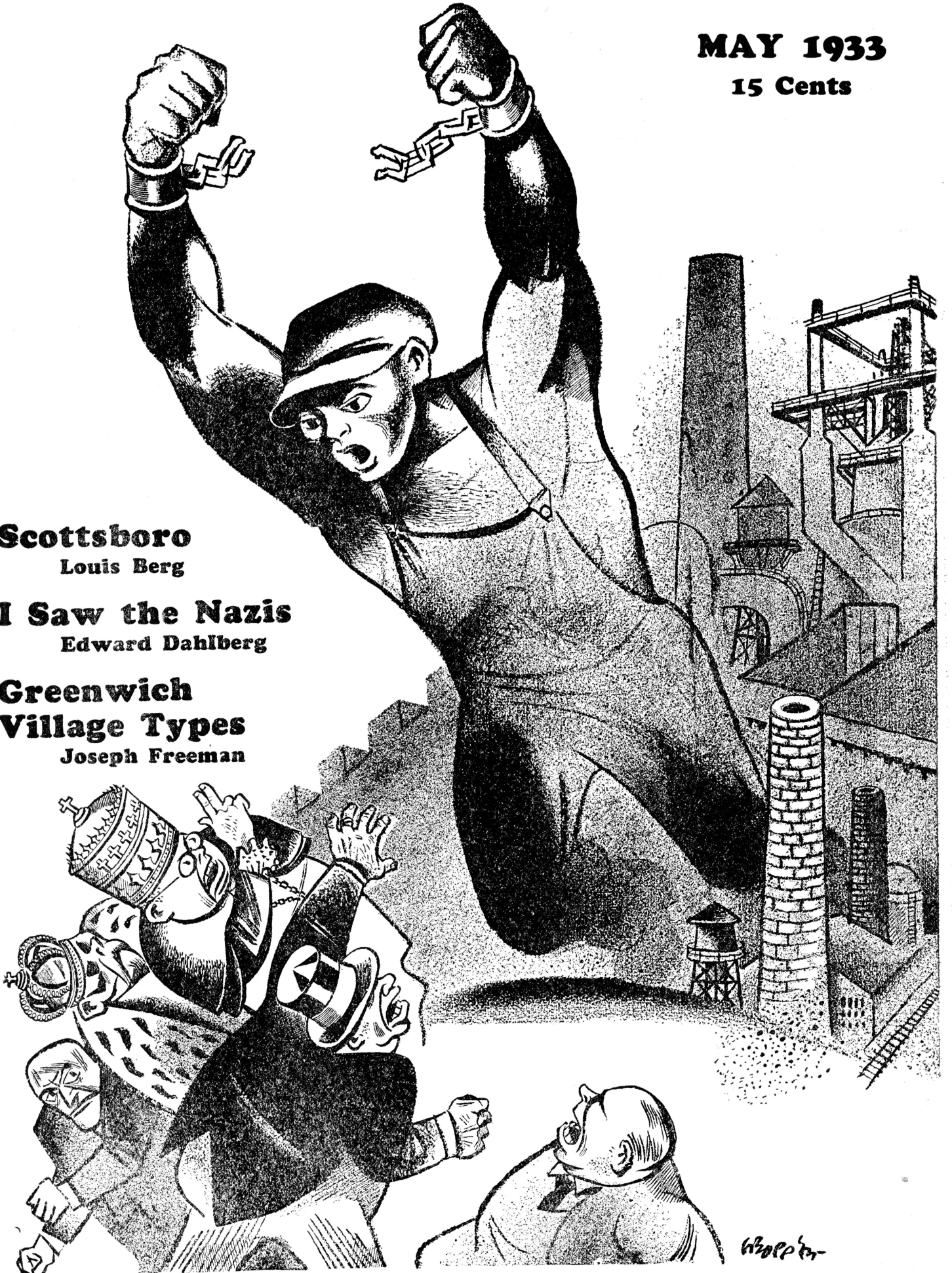
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257

All Quiet in Morgan County

Louis Berg

The town of Scottsboro does not take kindly to the presence of strangers from New York. The alien is made to feel a hostile ring being drawn around him, tighter and tighter. The townspeople form in small groups to discuss him; the air is charged with threats. Glowering eyes follow him everywhere, catlike moving as he moves. To walk down the main street is an ordeal.

I was there with two camera men, one to take movies and the other to shoot stills. All eyes following me, I entered the courthouse, and sought to interview the sheriff. I thought maybe, too, he could be kidded into posing for the camera—a picture of himself standing in front of the Scottsboro jail.

The Sheriff's office is dark and bare—a desk, a single swivel chair, the customary spittoons, and nothing else. The sheriff is there with two of his deputies. He is lean and menacing, cruel and shifty in appearance—the meanest looking man, I say to myself, I have ever laid eyes on. I certainly wanted his picture. Somewhat nervously I introduced myself and asked his permission.

"If you take any pictures around here, I'll throw you in jail," he said, without any hesitation whatsoever.

I try to argue with him, but he does not relent worth a cent.

"Are you one of these here reds?"

God forbid! I go into long explanations of Southern birth and antecedents; I put on my broadest Southern accent. From Old Dominion, the land of the Cavaliers. A friend; a brother.

"If you're a Southerner at heart," he says, "you feel the same way about it we do down here."

But the pictures?

"No! You better not let me catch you taking pictures. The reds have threatened to blow up my jail and this courthouse. I don't want no pictures taken around here. I had to escort some fellow out of jail to keep the people around here from laying hands on him. He was taking some pictures. If you know what's good for you, you'll clear out of here fast. People have been coming here from up North and spreading all kinds of lies about us. We don't like it. You better get out of here fast."

I stall weakly for time. While I am talking, the camera man is undoubtedly shooting pictures outside. But when I finally emerge my companions are nowhere in sight. I inquire and finally, greatly to my relief, I find them, in the office of a local attorney, Wimberly by name,—the same who was originally

assigned to defend the Scottsboro boys, but who pleaded that he had a case in Federal Court. Wimberly, I learn later, interrupted the taking of pictures and put the camera men through a third degree, alternately threatening and cajoling. He is on the friendly tack when I arrive; expansive on every subject save the Scottsboro case. When I complain that we were not permitted to take pictures, he offers to call up the sheriff and get permission. He picks up the receiver and makes a call.

"Hello," he says. "Come over here right away. We've got three Reds over in our office." And he looks over at us to see how we take it. Apparently we pass the test, for he turns back to the phone.

"Never mind. I was only kidding."

We press him about the pictures, but he smilingly dismisses the subject. Later on, he begins to open up a bit on the subject of the Scottsboro boys.

"Well," he says leering, "we've had those niggers in Kilby prison for more than a year now, and we got them fattened up in fine shape—you know what I mean?"

We did.

"We resent all this lying propaganda about us, making out like we're a lot of backwoodsmen, a bunch of illiterates. You'll find just as many cultured people here as in any part of New York this size. We get books and magazines here. I subscribe to Literary Digest . . . I'm graduate of the University of Alabama . . . played on the football team . . . you ever see any of the games up in New York, with New York University . . . Well, you seen some games, I bet . . . No sir, this ain't no backward state, and people got no business lying about us."

No member of an unwashed mob here in the person of Wimberly; no illiterate and uncouth backwoodsman, no cracker, but a member of the cultured class of the South, a man with a university degree, and a certificate on the wall testifying that he was a member of the Hole-in-One Club. "Yes sir, I'd like to tell you about that . . . it was on the seventh hole, and I just drew back and swung . . ."

"Yes sir, we've been fattening up these niggers, and they're just about right now . . . you know what I mean."

We were glad to get out of Scottsboro. The townspeople were clustered in small groups; we were encompassed by the enemy; watched on every side. Behind an automobile the sheriff



SUPERIOR PEOPLE:—“HIS GRANDMOTHER WAS JEWISH!”

and two other men were lurking, peering out at us. I waved my hand. “We’re leaving, sheriff.” The sheriff said nothing. When we were started, he got in his car, and followed us a way up the road. . .

After Scottsboro, Decatur seems a safe and friendly place. A huge sign at the entrance to the town: “Decatur Welcomes You.” No cracker county seat, but a city of 17,000, with railroad shops—closed down—and stores and factories. The broad streets are lined with shade trees, full blossomed, and the lawns are wide and green. We filled up the car at a gas station in town: the garage man was friendly. No, there was no excitement in town. “Them niggers could be freed by a jury tomorrow, and walk right out of the courthouse, and not a soul would lay a hand on them.” The shopkeepers were friendly. We stopped at a restaurant for lunch—a young fellow rushed out to open the door for us. “Come right in, yes sir, come right in.”

No threats, no disturbances, no crowds around the courthouse, as everyone was eager to point out to us. The prevailing attitude: “Now we are going to give these niggers a fair trial, to show the people up North that there is justice in Alabama, and then, of course, the niggers will be taken away and electrocuted.” No doubt as to ultimate result of the trial.

Just an honest and stricken community. “We didn’t ask for this trial; we had nothing to do with it. We wish to God they had moved it to Birmingham. But since it was wished on us, we’re going to do our duty. Mob violence? No sir, not around here. Why most people ain’t even interested in the case at all. Don’t care about it one way or the other.”

This pretense lasts about two days, until the defense begins to score points in court, until prosecution witnesses break down under shrewd cross-examination, until the whole shoddy case begins to rip and tear apart. And then the town begins to writhe and seethe. People begin to glower at us, the same as they did in Scottsboro. They begin to grumble that it is taking a lot of time and money to kill a few niggers. Hints are dropped, and rumors spread—later they are confirmed as fact—of mobs gathering, of meetings held in town, of burning crosses. Newspaper men are afraid to walk the streets at night. Horton makes his speech in court, warning solemnly against mob vio-

lence. Decatur is beginning to fear that it will be cheated out of its prey.

“They ought to lynch ever one of them . . . ever last God damn New Yorker down here . . . We think more of them niggers in jail than we do of the defense people . . . I’d like to have my hand on a rope around that Jew’s neck (referring to Leibowitz) . . . I’d like to plant my fist between his eyes . . . Ought to do what they did in Oklahoma . . . Take an airplane and drop gasoline over all the houses in niggertown, and then set fire to them . . . Burn the niggers out.”

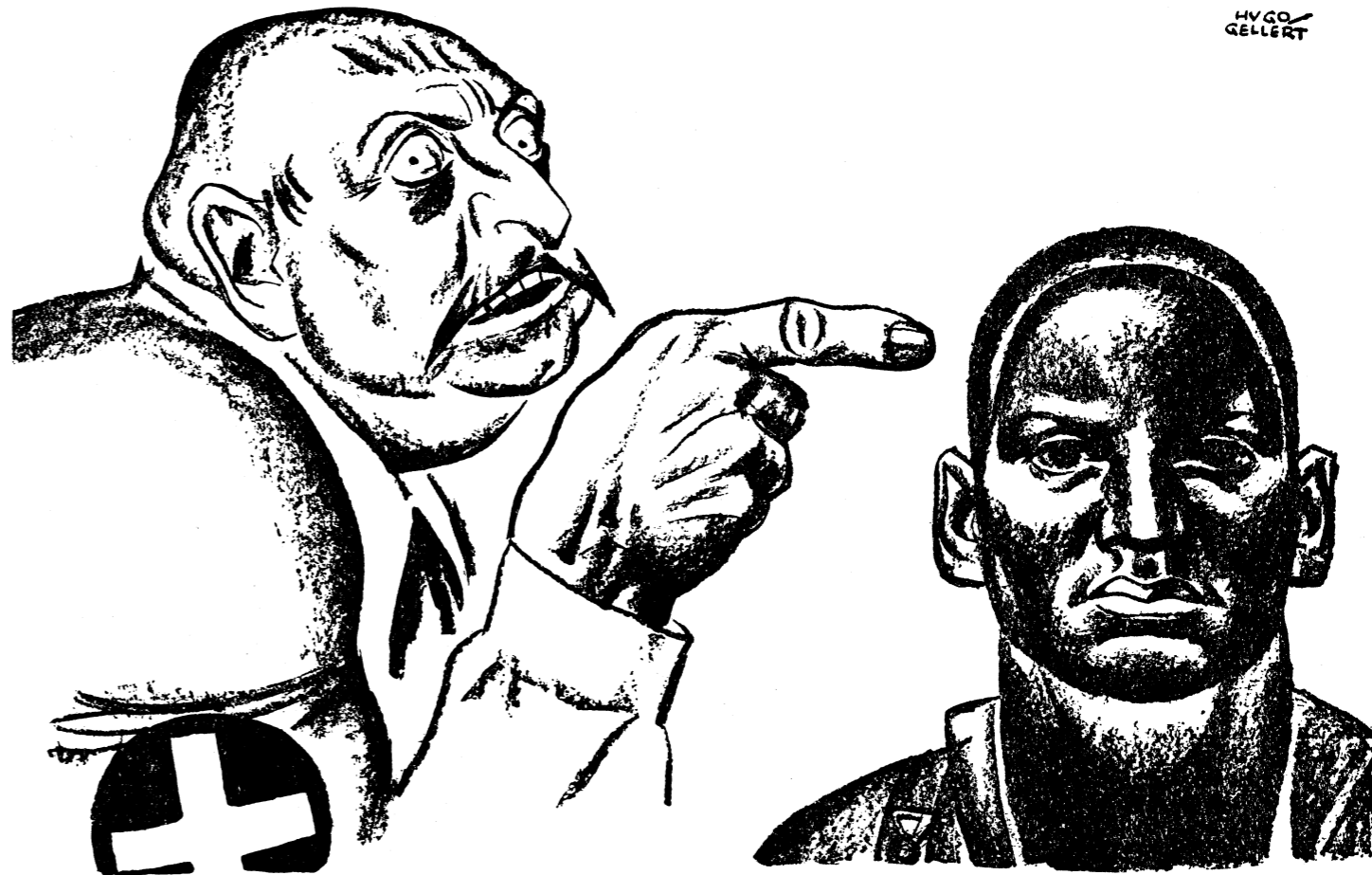
The respectable people stayed away from court; the respectable people behaved respectably. And the jury, after all, was composed largely of the better-class element—a draftsman, a banker, a teacher. These would not be swayed by mob passions; these could be trusted to decide fairly, on the law and on the evidence. A fair-minded judge and the militia stood between the mob and the boys on trial, ready to protect them with their lives if necessary. Of course.

But the mob was a catspaw, the mob was a mask behind which the better-class people, the respectable people, could hide their hysteria, their fear that some day the oppressed Negro might stand up and assert his rights—his rights against them, and not against the poor cracker, as miserably downtrodden, as wretched, as dangerous to the ruling classes as any Negro in the State of Alabama. Behind the mob a venomous press, systematically excluding from its columns any bit of evidence favorable to the defense, building up hatred, subtly stirring up race feeling, creating the mob.

* * *

We stayed at a tourist home in Decatur, in a house owned by a local druggist, a good-natured, slow-speaking, courteous Southerner. He opined there would be no trouble in town, but of course, he said, there were a lot of mean people in town, but same as everywhere. “A lot of people around here think Leibowitz is the smartest man they ever see in their lives, but just the same they think he out to be strung up on the nearest telephone pole.”

One of the bailiffs in the courtroom thus characterized the defense attorneys. “Leibowitz is just a smart Jew, making



“HE’S GUILTY BECAUSE HE’S BLACK!”

plenty of money out of this. Brodsky is a gangster lawyer; he was the one that defended Al Capone. Chamlee”—a pause at Chtamlee’s name.—“Chamlee’s a dope fiend.”

Our relations with our host were perfectly friendly until the third day of the trial, at the conclusion of which we ventured the opinion that the defense has scored rather heavily. Our good-natured druggist became immediately sullen, and he walked out of the room. He spoke no more to us during our stay there.

His wife was friendly to the end of our stay—a lovable and gentle lady. She explained her liberalism by the fact that she was half Jewish. “I guess that makes me less fanatic than a lot of people. I’m glad for my Jewish blood.” With the best intentions in the world, she introduced us to a friend paying her a visit; the wife of a college professor, and, hence, one of the cultural lights of Decatur.

We bowed with utmost politeness to the college professor’s wife, but that lady would have none of our manners. She grumbled a while under her breath, and then lashed out at us.

“Don’t see why all this fuss over a few niggers. Who asked you to come down and spread all these lies about us? Everybody connected with the defense ought to be lynched, you hear me! Ought to be hung! We’re not going to stand for any interference down here. You go back and tell that to the people that sent you here. Go back and tell them that!”

One thing more about the restrained, calm, sane portion of Decatur’s population. It came to us—and the story has its own logic—that the jury was mad to a boiling point because they had been chosen; sore as all Hell at the local lawyer who had helped the defense pick them out. Not troubled over the heavy responsibility of deciding upon the tangled evidence; not disturbed over the possibility of condemning innocent boys to the electric chair, but sore that a local lawyer should have recommended them to the defense as being people who might conceivably let the “niggers” go free. Sore over being branded as liberals, “nigger-lovers.”

“That lawyer will never hold his head up in this town again,” a bailiff told me. “He’s done for around here. Everybody’s sore at him, and the jury especially.”

The jury vindicated itself in the eyes of Decatur and Morgan

County. No one will say now that they were of the type that might have set the boys free. Banker, teacher, draftsman, business man, solemnly deliberated for about fifteen minutes over the complications of evidence and then condemned Heywood Patterson to the electric chair, on testimony that would not hang a dog.

And Decatur breathed freely again. No need for a mob. The court could be depended upon to do the work as neatly and completely as any mob. Law and order was vindicated. The good name of Decatur was vindicated. The State of Alabama was vindicated. The Negroes, fattened for the frying, could go to their fore-ordained doom, and nobody could complain. They had a fair trial, didn’t they. Jesus Christ! It took weeks, and thousands of dollars, to send one “nigger” to the chair.

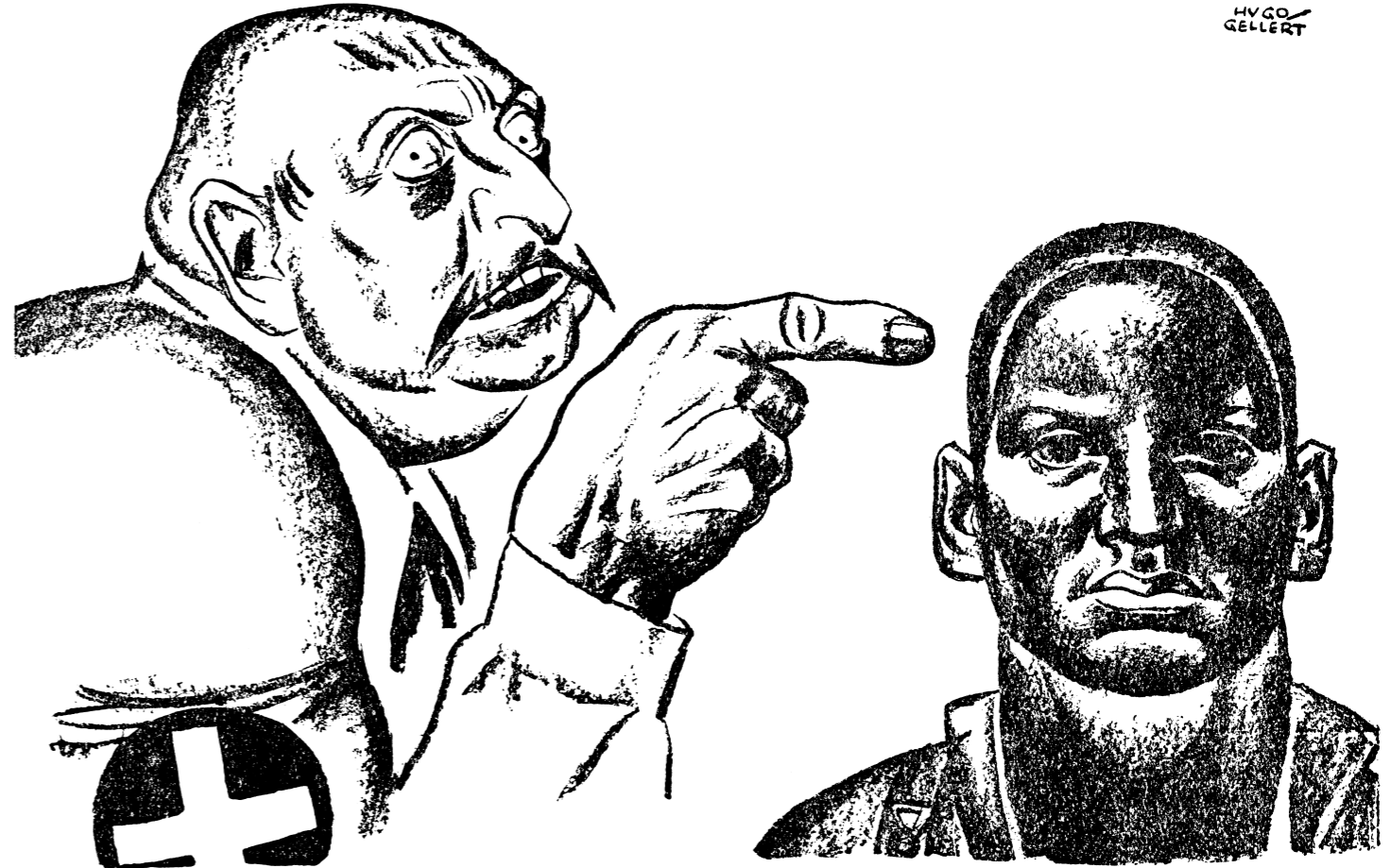
But next time, the people of Jackson County and Morgan County, the good, the respectable elements of Jackson and Morgan Counties, will know better. The mob will do the dirty work for them the next time—you can bet your bottom dollar on that. Law and order is an expensive method of oppression. The mob, easily frightened and easily inflamed, will do the job cheaper and with less trouble. The upper classes, the courts, the legal institutions, the rulers of the State of Alabama will be in no way involved—the brutal passions of illiterate crackers will be entirely to blame. There will be no comeback, no retrial, no censure by the highest court of the land. Dead men tell no tales. We wash our hands—we had nothing to do with it. . . .

That, I maintain, is and will be the attitude of the upper classes in the South when a new Scottsboro case arises, as it must and will arise in Alabama, or Georgia or Mississippi, or anywhere in the South where the Negroes are so badly treated that the white rulers are fearful, and can solve the danger of an oppressed class rising in protest—can solve this problem only by more oppression.

Until such time as the poor, oppressed white workers of the South realize that they too have been cheated and misled, and join with the Negroes in a common cause—to end all oppression; to end all human slavery.



SUPERIOR PEOPLE:—"HIS GRANDMOTHER WAS JEWI SH!"



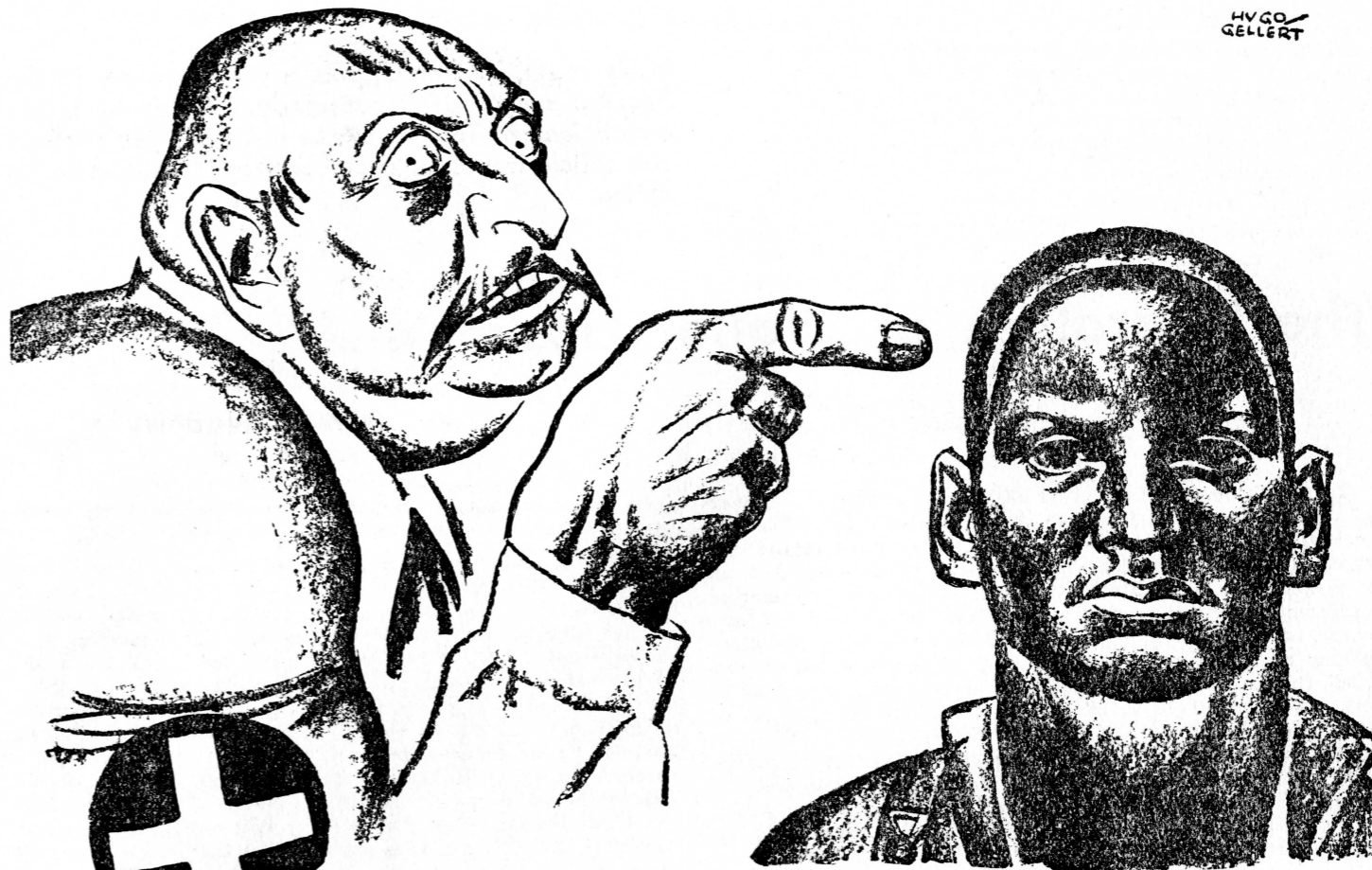
HUGO
GELLERT

"HE'S GUILTY BECAUSE HE'S BLACK!"

Hugo Gellert



SUPERIOR PEOPLE:—"HIS GRANDMOTHER WAS JEWISH!"



HUGO
GELLERT

"HE'S GUILTY BECAUSE HE'S BLACK!"

Hugo Gellert

In his youth, Walter Lippmann was secretary to the Socialist mayor of Schenectady. Today he is the mouthpiece of Thomas W. Lamont, Morgan partner. This article traces his evolution from liberalism to reaction.

The Liberalism of Walter Lippmann

Harold Meadows

Twentieth Century Liberalism has been an effective barometer of the shifting social forces in the American scene. The victorious march of American capitalism is inscribed in the epitaphs of American liberals who have fallen by the wayside from Armageddon to Wall Street. Without the sustaining armor of program or principle, sceptical of the righteousness of any cause, of even their own, pursuing with slow, hesitant and staggering steps the muddle-headed road of short-sighted empiricism, they have found in expediency the sole principle of political survival and have veered more and more to the right under the cumulative pressure of a broken middle-class, a World War, and a triumphant but now rudely shaken monopolist-capitalism. Their epitaphs are mute landmarks to the devastating sweep of social forces, forces which they could neither stem nor understand. They have illustrated once again that wisdom is not for those who would gape at society with empty heads.

The case of Walter Lippmann is classic. More resourceful than his liberal colleagues, he has been able to ride the crest of two decades of liberalism, his loves never more than tepid, his accommodations to the changing social scene that of the chameleon, until now he is accepted as an authoritarian in a creed that disclaims authority. Blind to the logic that underlies the flux of temporal phenomena, he has been swept along by the logic of events; an early dupe of the psychology fad, his intellectual pleasantries have mirrored an enduring quest for the grail of certainty, a pilgrimage that has led him from the honest albeit unrealistic faith in the "creative will" to the mysteries of "high religion." The pre-war Lippmann, the Lippmann of *A Preface To Politics* and *Drift And Mastery*, is far removed from the post-war Lippmann of *A Preface To Morals* and *Interpretations*. In formal approach alone are they one: the mystery to the solution of the social problem is concealed in the human psychology. It is this formal thread that gives his thought whatever coherence it possesses. But this is all. For the early Lippmann, psychology is a provocative to action; for the older Lippmann, a sedative for reaction. In the one, reason is made an instrument of the will; in the other, the will an instrument of reason. The dying embers of the pre-war radicalism of the deed made way for the post-war conservatism of spiritism. This, in short, is the Odyssey of the high priest of American liberalism.

Now it seems of the utmost social import that Lippmann should seek out social truths in the soft soil of individual psychology. Are not man's speech, prejudices, thoughts, manner of living, yes, his very life, social products? Then why search for social truths *within* him? Look to that complex of social relations into which he is born, under which he lives, and from which he dies. But that is precisely what Lippmann has never done. And for good reason. A child of modernity, he accepts the laws of physics, the laws of chemistry, the laws of biology—but the laws of society, of capitalist society? There are none. The cultural pattern of which he is a part has never provided an adequate interpretation of social life. Men may reduce the complexities of existence to some orderly system of so-called social truth, but they are at best systems of rationalizations. Social reasoning is but the instrument of the wills, the purposes, the desires of men. It is an interest-infected area whose

close ties on the human sympathy prevent the objectivity necessary to science. We are men first, and then philosophers.

This cult of unreason is by no means idiosyncratic to Walter Lippmann. It is universal, receiving social impetus in the clash of two cultures, bourgeois and proletarian, and social sanction in the inability of diverse groups to identify themselves with the orthodox dogma of the one, of which they know too much, or the heterodox teachings of the other, of which they know too little. And so, say they, it is irrational to talk of a scientific social theory. Lippmann voices this viewpoint in the following manner: "Your doctrine, in short, depends on your purpose: a theory by itself is neither moral nor immoral, its value is conditioned by the purpose it serves . . . No creed possesses a final sanction. Human beings have desires that are far more important than the tools and toys and churches they make to satisfy them. It is more penetrating, in my opinion, to ask of a creed whether it served than whether it was 'true.'" Again, "The important social philosophies are consciously or otherwise the servants of men's purposes." Social truth, independent of the human will is an irrational prejudice. "Marx saw what he wanted to do long before he wrote three volumes to justify it." As for the conservatives who oppose the minimum wage, "The phrase 'economic law' . . . is nothing more than sheer buncombe which conceals a prejudice." Now as for bourgeois economic theory, I hold no brief. Much of what Lippmann says is true enough. But I object strenuously to a comment on the Marxian theory from a man who has made no attempt to investigate it, a comment founded on the illegitimate assumption that what is true of so much bourgeois economics is likewise true of the Marxian theory. In my opinion it discredits Lippmann as a social thinker worthy of serious consideration. "The Marxian paraphenalia crowds three heavy volumes, so elaborate and difficult that socialists rarely read them. I have known one socialist who lived leisurely on his country estate and claimed to have 'looked' at every page of Marx. Most socialists, including the leaders, study selected passages and let it go at that. This is a wise economy based on a good instinct. For all the parade of learning and dialectic is an after-thought—an accident from the fact that the prophetic genius of Marx appeared in Germany under the incubus of Hegel. Marx saw what he wanted to do long before he wrote three volumes to justify it." As if any great piece of scientific research had not its origin in a problem to be solved, a purpose to be attained. Lippmann's belief is like that of the old professor who warned his student, "Beware, my son, lest you discover what you are in search of." In such wise does Lippmann attempt to give rationality to his own irrationality.

But this cult of unreason is socially significant in another respect. The soft marsh-lands of psychology are dangerous moorings for whatever program or principles one may have. The past two decades have convincingly brought home to all but the most naive how these programs and principles have been sacrificed to the changes in the popular temper brought on by the storms of social change. With a tolerance born of skepticism and a caution lest his own beliefs become dogma, the liberal has found the happy faculty, without any noticeable qualm of conscience, of repudiating here and compromising there, until



WILLIAM SIEGEL

"THERE YOU ARE, COLONEL!"

William Siegel

his liberalism of yesterday is too often the conservatism of today. Walter Lippmann is a case in point. He has been swept by the winds of social change from pre-war reform to post-war reaction, from the will-to-do to the will-to-be, from reason the instrument of will to will the instrument of reason. His career is therefore worthy of study.

The early Lippmann belonged to the tail-end struggle of the American middle-class against the political and economic domination of big business. In this he aligned himself with certain demands of the working class. Convinced, as we have seen, that a social philosophy is "consciously or otherwise the servant of men's purposes," that "a theory by itself is neither moral nor immoral," and that "no creed possesses any final sanction," he felt that we ought to recognize the "hard truth" that issues are never met until they develop into a crisis, problems are not met until they become acute, and that as a result "no honest student of politics can plead that social movements should confine themselves to argument and debate, abandoning the militancy of the strike, the insurrection, the strategy of social conflict." "Does anyone seriously believe that the business leaders, the makers of opinion and the politicians will, on their own initiative, bring social questions to a solution? If they do it will be for the first time in history . . . No, paternalism is not dependable, granting that it is desirable . . . Those who today bear the brunt of our evils dare not throw themselves upon the mercy of their masters, not though there are bread and circuses as a reward. From the groups upon whom the pressure is most direct must come the power to deal with it."

Now Lippmann's talk about "strike . . . insurrection, the strategy of social conflict" sounds a good deal more radical than it actually is. These weapons of labor were never associated in his mind with the larger aims of the proletariat. Captivated by the romantic illusions of the syndicalist Sorel, which adapted themselves so neatly to his belief in psychology the motivator of reason, Lippmann conceived of the "Social Myth," i.e., the General Strike and insurrection, as an illusion around which great numbers of workers, cold to the logic of Marx, would rally, to obtain, if not their utopian dreams, at least their immediate demands. As if the realities of capitalism required the aid of some fantastic myth to inspire the proletariat to resistance! But that is the naiveté of the liberal always cropping out. Lippmann felt, however, though valor was the better part of discretion as far as the workers were concerned, for capitalists discretion was the better part of valor, and so he counseled them "to meet the crisis before it had become acute . . . Our choice, it seems to me, lies between a blind push and a deliberate leadership, between thwarting movements until they master us, and domesticating them until they are answered." That, in brief, is the pre-war Lippmann.

Safe for American Capitalism

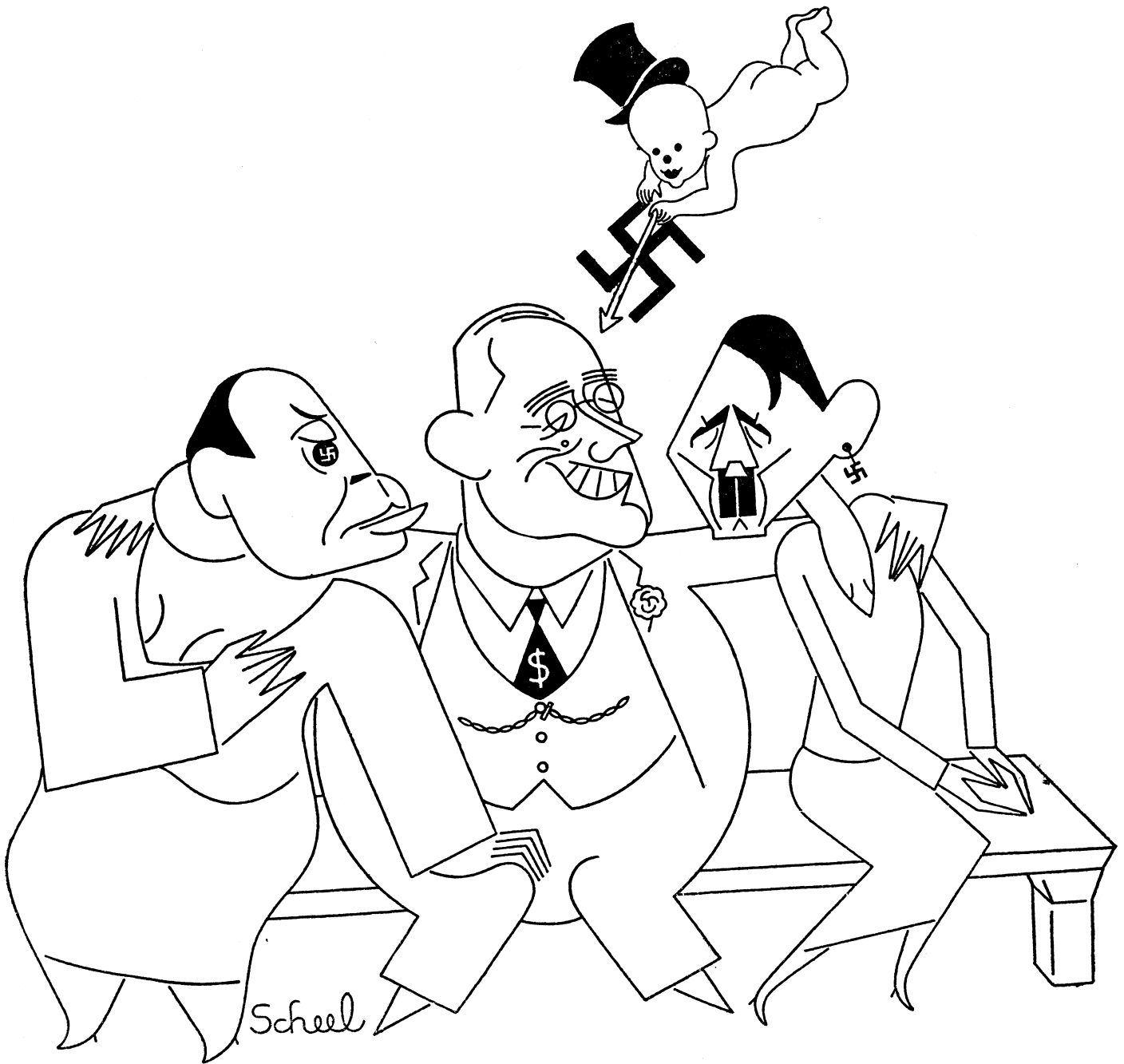
And then came the war. Pacifists in principle became patriots in action, the last of the trust-busters were busted by the trusts. Liberalism had only one meaning now: To Make the World Safe for American Capitalism. I need not recount the gruesome details. I simply wish to show how well Lippmann reflected the reactionary's attitude toward the Russian and German Revolutions. Reporting in Europe, Lippmann pleaded that the United States retain her army there. To do otherwise would "be the signal for a European revolution . . . The imminence of that revolution is the dominating thought of all men everywhere. Lenin and Liebknecht sit in the Council at Paris, and their voices are heard in every discussion. It is with them that the world is negotiating to-day for its own preservation. But cutting across this basic negotiation are a thousand strands of special claim and ambition to interrupt and entangle. Some one wants a piece of land, some one else wants to make money, another wants to work a little intrigue . . . The reason why Lenin may succeed is that the victors do not take seriously enough what he represents. They are frightened to be sure, they are even panicky, but they are not serious enough about the menace to be willing to subordinate every other consideration to the creation of a Europe which will be sterile to Bolshevism. They want to fight Lenin with one hand and use the other for their own purposes. They are repeating the error of those who wanted to win the war and at the same time continue to do

business as usual." Shades of the Social Myth! How sweet are the uses of liberalism!

With the close of the war, the vitality of liberalism was sapped, economically and politically. The energetic resistance which the farmer and lower middle-class were able to exert in pre-war days against the economic and political domination of industrial capitalism had long been the material back-bone of the progressive movement. But now their influence had ceased to be. The emergence of America as the standard bearer of world capitalism, the bulwark of conservatism, the creditor of the world, had reduced to impotency the class that had given virility to liberalism, and those that now hung on were a lifeless, disillusioned, sometimes cynical group, a group that had gracefully passed from youth to old age but knew not how to die. Death stalks their pages. Like Boethius the old pagan, they too seek the consolation of philosophy. With Lippmann it is the mysteries of "high religion." His *Preface To Morals*, more than anything else, is a credo of resignation to things as they are. The good life is for him who understands the nature of things. "He can then no longer hope that the world will be adjusted to his wishes, and he is compelled by a long and difficult process of learning and training to adjust his wishes to the world. If he succeeds he is mature. If he is mature, he is once again harmonious with the nature of things. He has virtue. And he is happy." Yes, these are the words of the high priest of American liberalism. "What modernity requires of the moralist is that he should see with an innocent eye how men must reform their wants in a world which is not concerned to make them happy . . . They have . . . to reeducate their wants by an understanding of their own relation to a world which is unconcerned with their hopes and fears." "For it is immature and unregenerate desire which creates the disorders and the frustrations that confound us . . . The preoccupation of high religion is with the regeneration of the passions that create the disorders and the frustrations." And so revolution is ruled out by the nature of things.

An Eloquent Reactionary

This credo of reaction has been implemented in *Interpretations*, a compilation of Lippmann's editorials in the *Herald-Tribune* during 1931-2. A discussion of the social significance of these articles is superfluous. They constitute an eloquent and sustained statement of the reactionary's view-point in the solution of those problems that beset American capitalism today. The following excerpts should indicate where Lippmann now stands. *Relief To Unemployed*, p. 143: "The problem has not really been faced by the localities and it would be a great mistake to relieve them of the necessity of facing it by passing the burden to Congress." *Public Works To Relieve Distress*, p. 80: ". . . that an inquiry be instituted to determine what socially useful projects could be started which would be self-supporting, which would not be destructively competitive with existing enterprises, which could be constructed at low costs, which would create a demand for labor and materials." *Bonus To Veterans*, p. 61: "But there is nothing 'fixed' about a thousand million dollars for the veterans . . . These thousands are 'fixed' only by political fear, not by the real and undeniable needs of the veterans." In the same paragraph he admits, however, that the interest on the public debt represents a legitimate 'fixed' charge, ignoring the benefit which would come from reconversion at a lower rate of interest. But then, what would the capitalists say to that? *Maintenance Of Wages*, pp. 70-1: "It never was the business of a President to determine wage and price policies . . . The time has come, therefore, for the Administration to acknowledge that the policy of standing pat at the 1929 level, which it adopted two years ago, is no longer feasible and that, therefore, its moral and political resistance to the deflation is no longer justified . . . the Administration should return to a position of neutrality." *Taxation*, p. 100: "But even if the rich would stand still and let themselves be taxed to the limit, they do not have in times like these a taxable income sufficient to meet the deficits of federal, state, and local governments. Their total income is small in comparison with the total income of the mass of the people. As a result, every official who has honestly studied the problem, be he socialist or conservative, ends by realizing that if the



Theodore Scheel

money is to be raised, it must be raised out of the small contributions of the many. *Stock And Bond Scandals*, pp. 53, 57: "There is, consequently, a wide and sharp feeling in the community that, in addition to defending the Exchange against vindictive and destructive attack, the reputable interests which Mr. Whitney (President of The New York Stock Exchange) represents need fairly soon to demonstrate that they appreciate the evils of the recent past and that they intend to protect the Stock Exchange by internal reform and self-discipline." In the following words, Lippmann refers to those high-powered peddlers of defaulted securities: "Many bankers, utterly inexperienced in these matters and without sound banking traditions, rushed forward to supply the demand." *Planning*, p. 40 "The Russians have accepted coercion as inherent in planning and are proceeding under a dictatorship with the most gigantic experiment in centralized control in all human history. The question for us is whether the advantages of planning can be had without paying too terrible a price for them. In considering the question we may, I think, confidently take the Swope plan as an illustration of the irreducible minimum of surrender re-

quired to inaugurate a stable and socially (?) responsible industrial order on the foundations of capitalism and democracy."

We might as well leave off here. To continue is simply to pile up further injury to the insult of our imagination. There can be no doubt as to where Walter Lippmann stands. Nor can there be doubt, as the crisis of capitalism deepens, of his eventual end in fascism. He is but one step removed now. There is no inconsistency, no irony, no paradox, but the respect which comes from a kindred spirit, that moved Thomas Lamont, the Morgan partner, to offer a resolution to Lippmann in gratitude "for the service he had rendered to our public and as an expression of our confidence that greater service lies before him, as well as an expression of the great affection we bear him." The liberalism for which he stood died with the war. Its wraith lives on to haunt those who always mistake the shadow for the substance. But it is gone never to return, for the class which gave it life has ceased to be a vital force in American life. Progressivism died because it had nothing progressive to offer. Its eyes were always glued to the past; a past of small farmers, of trades-people. The tasks of mankind are always historic. That is why the future belongs to Communism.

Prosperity Money

John Beecher

Poor Maybelle has no clothes at all all she's bought this year is just that dress you saw her in at the Little Theatre that she wore in Lady Windermere's Fan and one more that's all she's bought this year the poor thing and when you think how everything she wore used to come from Paris the poor thing has no clothes at all and everybody in her house is smoking Wings the ten cent cigarettes Maybelle must smoke three packs a day she's so nervous she's had such losses such dreadful losses and when you think they used to be the richest people in Birmingham but they still serve cocktails

Mix up another round
mix another round
I'm smoking Hoover dust
I've stopped putting anything in my whiskey a man's got to economize somehow

Did you say 10¢?

YES

I said

mix em up

Gimme 10¢ whitefolks a man ain't a goat to eat his greens withouten no seasonin if we oney had salt and sody we'd make some biscuits outa the government flour we ain't got a speck o lard in the house look in any of them cans whitefolks we ain't got nothin but this little bit of flour

they done shut off my water

We ain't had no lights fo mo than a year

I doan know where he's at he jes up an lef me with these two chillen makes a year nex September said maybe he could fine some work in Meridian Mississippi but I ain't heard nothin fum him since he left outa here left outa here jes done left out

if we were to close up this relief office tomorrow these people would all manage to get along

that Red Cross is sure a wonderful organization

you can't make a living croppin on shares JESUS BLESS OUR HOME Cocacola girl in the fireplace sips healthful and refreshing through a straw walls papered with newsprint they pulled my stove when I got somethin to cook I goes nex do' yessuh they come in an pulled my stove

he said he just had to foreclose

She drove the 1929 Chevrolet into the garage and said she couldn't buy the gas to run it out of there and what would they give her for it the man said \$25 and she took the money and walked across the street to the grocery store

I ain't givin em no more credit the Mount Olive grocer said I got \$1200 out now I ain't never agoin to get but they keep askin they'd ask a man for his head them people'd ask a man for his head if they thought they could use it

but that Two-handed Engine at the door they used to be 41 switch engines working the Frisco yards the switchman stated I swanee if a man could believe they'd be down to ten think of it ten switch engines when they used to work 41 by jingoes what's a man goin to do what's this country comin to anyway

What's a man goin to do?

Goin to do?

Some natural tears he dropped, but wiped them soon;

The World was all before him, where to choose
wonderful organization

Gentlemen, the New Deal! We have a wonderful president. He never stops smiling. Prosperity is around the corner again! But how do the workers live?

how many times have I got to ask you people not to crowd around that door it makes me hot to look at you you make yourselves hot you make us all hot move away from that door I said MOVE AWAY FROM THAT DOOR stands ready to smite once and smite no more

The L & N section hand hadn't made a shift in more than six months not one shift and he was at the end of his rope and the other section hands couldn't help him no longer so he walked twelve miles from Black Creek into Birmingham to the Red Cross and waited three hours in the office and then they told him they would have to investigate his case and a case-worker would be out to see him and he walked back twelve miles to Black Creek and got in late at night and picked his way around the kids sleeping on pallets on the floor of the room where ten people sleep every night and got in bed with his wife who ain't got nary tooth in her mouth and's so thin the baby in her belly makes her look like a snake that's swallowed a rabbit last time it was twins and when the caseworker hadn't got around to them two weeks later the section hand would have gone into Birmingham again but they was 200 people in the Red Cross office the day he was there so he knew they was pretty busy and he might could hold out a little longer the section hand said it was a hard time for a poor man

with so many desperat people on the roads I never pick up a hitchhiker any more it isn't safe they ought to enforce the law against them

sitting on his small roped-up trunk by the roadside thumbing zoop thumbing zoop maybe the next one zoop here's a feller all by himself in a big sedan zoop if I could jes make it to my sister's in Hantsville zoop somebody'd pick me up if it wasn't for this trunk it'd go in the back easy enough I can't leave everything I got in the world zoop a single man's got to shift for himself a single man's got to zoop zoop with so many desperat people on the roads

the fans whiz in the steel Pullmans while the train stops and the porters put down their footstools and men in overalls stuff ice through roofs of cars so the gentleman on the observation platform coming back from the Kiwanis convention in Seattle may have a cool drink when he gets through telling about the little telephone girl he met in the Olympic Hotel out there and how she cried when he left

We should appreciate the following information in regard to:

Ed Tomkins

Present address: *Coke Row, Camp No. 4*

Color: *Black*

Age: 56

who we understand has been in your employ from 1908 to 1931

Other names used: *None*

Correct dates of beginning and leaving job: *2-12-08 to 6-15-31*

Reason for leaving: *Not needed*

Kind of work: *Coal mining*

Were employee's services satisfactory? *Yes*

Is he eligible for re-employment? *No. Too old.*

and the bathhouse man was the only one with a this year's license tag so on Saturday the neighbors down at Vinesville scraped together and bought him a gallon of gas for his rattly old Reo and sent him into Ensley commissary for all their groceries

She made two shifts at the cotton mill last week and her pay check was \$1.27 but all she made was 85¢ because it cost 42¢ carfare going out there to Boyles two days to work and then on Saturday to get her money. When she works she leaves the house before five o'clock in the morning and doesn't get back until after seven at night. The water was cut off in their house for a while and that old man she married to take care of her children while she was working got some water out of a bad spring or something and caught typhoid but he pulled through it somehow. He's a nice old fellow and takes good care of the children. He says he's mighty partial to em even if they ain't his. Their father died last year. He wasn't hardly over thirty. She isn't either. The old man sure is a sight to look at with three or four dirty yellow snags of teeth and old raggedy country hat and all but she had to have somebody to take care of those kids.

He couldn't prove in Court it was that piece of iron falling on his foot that caused the ruptured blood vessel and his having to have the whole leg cut off and there was something about not having notified the Court within ninety days so he got no compensation and the pipe company pays no pensions either. All he had was a rusty old Ford truck in the world and he swopped that for a rundown log cabin with an acre of land in Sample's Hollow near Warrior and took his family out there to live. The old pipeshop worker with the stump leg sits waving his hat over his grandchild asleep on the swing in the noon heat sits swishing off the flies from the kid's bare butt and the old woman hoes the corn on the slope and Willard goes off mumbling to the spring sometimes he runs off and hides in the woods a whole day he worked a long time around the hot iron where they cast the pipe and seems like it cooked his brain but some days he's all right and Texie is fussing with the baby in the cabin the old woman was in to the store this morning asking them to let her have one bar of Octagon soap on credit but they told her no too poor to buy soap to wash what rags they got left of clothes what will they do if they have to spend the winter in that cabin that hasn't got no door and only wooden shutters for winders and the walls tumbling down why it ain't fittin fer a mule to stay in

theesa peoples is the sufferinest peoples what is in all Wylam an ainta nobody adoin nothing for em

sixteen years in the hot hole at the rail mill grabbing the red-hot crop ends at the shears in his tongs wheeling and heaving the bright chunks up to arch and drop clanging in a gondola on the track the shoulders those negroes get on them nothing but that one wheeling heaving motion minutes hours days nights for sixteen years and then drawn blinds in the bare house and the muddy water in the tar ditch to look at flowing by in front a tin can comes floating he watches it out of sight

the mule jes laid down an died in the field I got the prettiest patch of sorghum growin you ever see but how am I goin to grind it without no mule to turn the mill an the corn needs a second plowin.

now them Commūnists has got some good ideas after all that fuss in the office over milk for her baby what do you suppose she did when we finally let her have it? well she stood off and threw it hard as she could at the wall and the bottle hit high up as the ceiling of this room and splattered all down and that agitator that puts them up to everything just clapped his hands and laughed Miz Brock said she never heard of such a thing and before the woman gets another drop of milk to make her come into the head office and apologize to the Executive Secretary but we think Mr. Turner the storekeeper's already given her another bottle although he says he doesn't remember but just imagine anybody doing such a thing these people out here haven't got any gratitude they get so they expect you to do everything for them and if you don't do it just the way they want you to

MOUNTAIN BROOK ESTATES

This beautiful country estate of 55 acres has been purchased by Mr. Eugene P. King (who deducts two cents from every paycheck he issues to make his employees bear the government tax).

This beautiful country estate of 37 acres has been purchased

by Mr. Yancey Beasley (from whose mine Ed Tomkins, 56, was discharged after twenty-three years of satisfactory service for being too old).

This beautiful country estate of 24 acres has been purchased by Mr. Chalmers Goss (who, unhappily will never occupy it, since he, distraught by financial worries, on a pleasure trip drove his Lincoln sport brougham down to the ferry landing, out into deep water, and deliberately drowned at the wheel).

This beautiful country estate of 40 acres has been purchased by Frank Walker (who would be in jail for defrauding his depositors, largely of the working class, had he not retained Hennings, the smartest lawyer in the Southern States).

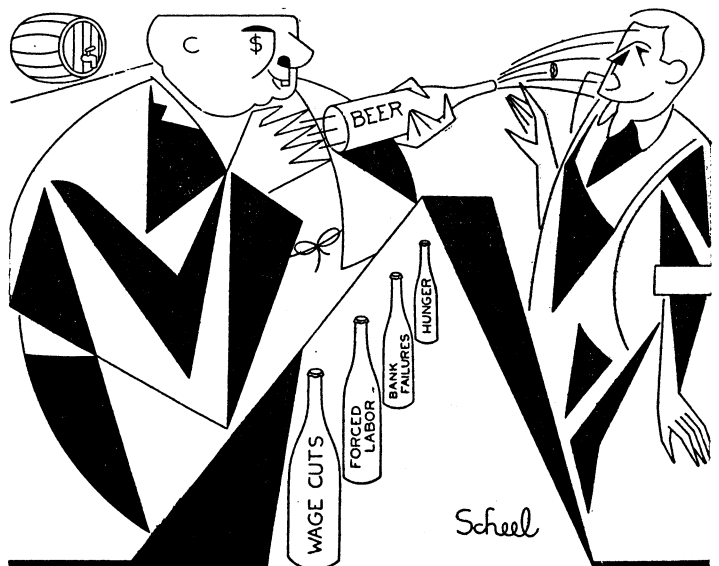
This beautiful country estate of 12 acres has been purchased by Mrs. Maybelle Ryerson (who has no clothes at all).

we's all barefeeted nekkid and hongry in our house poor Maybelle

dyou like to know how we made the child that dress maam? we taken flour sacks an bleached em good and stitched em into a dress and then we had an ole red sweater an we washed it and then we soaked it till the dye run out in the water and we put the dress in that water an dyed it thataway you wouldn guess it was jes flour sackin now would you?

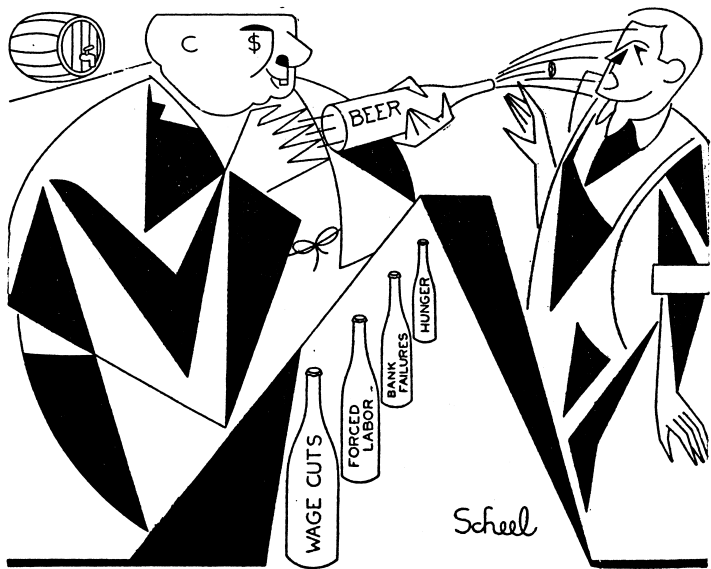
his teeth pains him so at night after workin barefooted in the field all day

Goodeveningfolks this is station WAPI Birmingham broadcasting yawl must heard about WAPI's scheme for chasin this ole depression away WAPI'S Prosperity Money good at WAPI's radio auctions obtainable from the following merchants free of charge with every purchase free of charge absolutely freefromthefollowingmerchants Sheba Beauty Shop 227 17th Avenue South Steel City Pressing Company 1604 Gary Avenue OUR FATHER WHO ART IN HEAVEN Cinderella Bootery I GOT THEM ST. JAMES'S INFIRMARY BLUES squeece PROSPERITY MONEY get yourselves some of this prosperity money folks FOUR WATER BALLS offered by the Colonial Tire Shop four WAWTA balls GET yourselves some of this prosperity money folks and bid in at WAPI's radio auction every night GIVE US THIS DAY OUR DAILY BREAD winner of the Boston bullpup is Mister Jack Ingram 718 Lula Avenue Fair Park LAY NOT UP FOR YOURSELVES TREASURES UPON THE EARTH have some WAWTA sports with one of these WAWTA balls whahwk JEESUS SAID oomptyoomp IT WAS DOWN IN OLD JOE'S BAR ROOM prosperity moneyfolksprosperitymoneygetyoursfromthefollowingmerchants AWLMIGHTY GAWD



THE FIRST ONE IS ON THE HOUSE

Theodore Scheel



THE FIRST ONE IS ON THE HOUSE

Theodore Scheel

Should Critics Know Anything?

Current literary discussions reveal a peculiar backwardness on the part of certain American critics. The manner in which some reviewers hailed the appearance of one or two "sociologic" or "Marxian" critics makes one wonder how seriously these columnists and reviewers take their profession.

This is sometimes true even of more conscientious critics. The same men who will plough through shelves of books unearthing the slightest detail that may help them to understand Proust or Tristan Tzara will not take the trouble to read even such material as is available in English about sociology, let alone Marxian literary criticism.

Several years ago, three members of the leftwing literary and artistic movement in this country went to the trouble of compiling a book containing, among other things, quotations from Marxist discussions about art and literature. Not once in all the articles on this subject that have appeared in the liberal press has this book been referred to; yet had the liberal critics done so they would have spared themselves a great deal of nonsense about the facts of the case, though no doubt their views would remain unaltered.

But one need not consider the discussions of Marxism in order to realize that a certain type of literary critic neglects the elementary duty of familiarizing himself with the material of his presumably chosen field. We have been accustomed for many years to see the philistine content himself with reading second-hand "interpretations" of Marx and Lenin, no matter how hostile and ignorant the "interpreter" may be, rather than read Marx and Lenin themselves.

What is more surprising, is their apparent ignorance even of the history of *liberal* literary criticism.

Some time ago a young American critic wrote a sociologic "interpretation" of literature. In order to keep the point rather than the person in mind, let us call him Benton. The leftwing press recognized in this book a mess of vulgarizations of certain old ideas, and dismissed it in brief reviews. The bourgeois, particularly the liberal press hailed the book as a pioneer work and the idea as a new idea, going so far as calling it "Bentonism."

Have our liberal critics never heard of Taine? Have they never heard of Georg Brandes, who wrote four volumes of social-political interpretation of the main currents of nineteenth century literature?

If they have, they hid their light under a bushel. Their national pride may have been touched by the fact that a native-born critic had become a sociologic "interpreter," but it seems to us that the same national pride would have prevented them from betraying the much more significant fact that so many American reviewers are ignorant of the history of literature.

That a Benton writes tripe is a matter of minor importance; but that so many writers and critics accept this tripe as a revolutionary contribution to thought is a sign of the abysmal depths to which liberal criticism has fallen.

To those who are familiar with European literary discussions of the nineteenth century, the current arguments in the American press must sound quaint. The battle over art for art's sake versus social art is an old one; and if some of the critics who spend years trying to decipher Joyce's *Work in Progress* would devote half as much time catching up with this battle, decades old, we could go on from the present state of knowledge in literature instead of rehashing the pioneer efforts of nineteenth century critics.

Books on prewar Russian literature, for example, are available in English; and anyone who is interested can discover for himself that seventy years ago critics like Chernishevsky, Pisa-

rev and Dobroliubov developed sociologic theories on art and that more than thirty years ago Plekhanov applied Marxist principles to art and literature.

Incidentally, some of our critics might discover the sources of the type of vulgarization manufactured on a mass scale by our Bentons. They might acquire some historical perspective, which, by and large, does no harm to literary criticism.

"1931"

Too Revolutionary for Broadway!

When "1931" was produced two years ago on Broadway it was hailed as an outstanding artistic success and an outstanding commercial failure. A middle-class audience, blinded to the deepest problems of society by twinkling choruses and oedipus complexes, found this play's portrayal of the effects of the crisis too bitter for its delicate stomach.

The Theater Collective is now giving "1931" the production it deserves. No sugar will coat its bitterness. It has been rewritten by the authors, Paul and Claire Sifton, with even greater intensity. Limited by no diffusion in sympathy, Theater Collective is able to present "1931" with its latent militancy and power, offering no concession of the profit motives of Broadway producers or the prejudices of Broadway audiences. Theatre Collective will produce "1931" for a worker audience at prices within the reach of a worker.

See "1931" and Help the New Masses

The *New Masses* will share in the box-office proceeds with Theater Collective on the performance of Tuesday, May 23rd. Come that evening and you will help the *New Masses* pay its printing bill, a bill that already threatens its existence.

The *New Masses* has now unusual possibilities of growth. Hundreds of young writers and artists with revolutionary leanings throughout the country flood our office with material. Unfortunately, though our work is expanding and improving, the magazine is mortally hampered by lack of funds. Outside of sending us a thousand dollars, there is no better way of helping the *New Masses* right now than by coming to see "1931".

Remember—Tuesday, May 23rd, 8:30 P. M.!

FIFTH AVENUE THEATRE
28th Street and Broadway, N. Y. C.

ADMISSION PRICES: 20c, 40c, 60c.

Tickets available at:

New Masses, 31 East 27th Street
Worker's Bookshop, 50 East 13th Street
Theatre Collective, 131 West 21st Street

Insist on tickets for TUESDAY MAY 23rd.

The author of this article is a well-known American novelist who was beaten up on the streets of Berlin by Nazis. He describes Germany under Hitler's reign of terror.

I Saw the Nazis

Edward Dahlberg

The average American reader of the daily newspapers knows more about actual conditions in the Reich today than most of the Germans do. In the main, the German population may be compared to civilians behind the lines who have no way of ascertaining what is happening at the front. The Germans are being virtually held incommunicado in their own country.

To say that the German press is muzzled is inaccurate. With the exception of *The Red Flag*, and possibly two or three other Communist organs, which are circulating underground, there is no opposition press. Catholic, Jewish, Liberal, Social Democratic newspapers no longer exist. Printing presses have been sabotaged, buildings demolished and in some instances the editors have been murdered. Mosse, the little Hearst of Germany, sold the *Vossische Zeitung*, *Berliner Volkszeitung* and *Berliner Tageblatt*, three of the most important dailies to the Hitler Government.

People are even afraid to gather together in their own houses. Everyone is on-guard. Telephone conversations are completely non-political. Many have had their telephones disconnected. Since no one knows in these times whether or not the next man is a Nazi or an agent provocateur, there is not even any criticism of the present regime made by word of mouth. Dr. Curtius, a conservative and a member of the Bruening Cabinet, and one who has always treaded on political rubber heels, sent a statement to the press that he could grant no interviews.

Many of the cafes and coffee houses, where radicals and the Berlin literati used to go, now seem drained. Or else for a time they are patronized by groups of uniformed Nazis who go there in order to drive away other patrons.

The Alexanderplatz, the workers' district, and formerly the nerve center of radical activity in Berlin, today seems subdued and deserted. Before the elections even the missions were flying the red flag, but now the Swastika banner has been hoisted up everywhere in its stead.

Publishing, too, is at a stand-still, for most of the larger houses are left. Publishers of proletarian literature have closed their doors and fled the country. Translation of foreign books has in the main, been discontinued, for the Hitler Government wishes to discourage the taste and palate for cosmopolitan ideas. Literature, with political or social implications is taboo. Apart from Nazi romances, novels whose purpose it is to increase the nationalistic sentiment of the youth in Germany at present, the publishers do not know what they can print.

It goes without saying, that if Hitler succeeds in nothing else, he will at least succeed in becoming the pallbearer of German culture. For as most of the important writers are either Communists or almost invariably anti-Hitlerite and therefore out of the country, who is there left to carry on the intellectual and artistic life of the people. Briefly, nobody with the exception of Dr. Paul Joseph Goebbels, Minister of Popular Enlightenment, whose propaganda is neither popular and certainly not enlightenment. There are of course the psychopathic and highly sadistic speeches of Captain Goering.

Hitler's power evidently does not rest in political insight nor in his program, an economic philosophy for *Dienstmadchens*, but in his army of Brown Shirts. With more than a million and a half of these Nazis, and not a half pint of Jewish blood to go around, at his beck and call, Chancellor Hitler has Ger-

many under martial law. These Nazis, ranging in ages from fifteen to twenty-one, who look like undersized and malnourished post-war children, are indeed a pathetic example of Nordic superiority. Declassé workers, starved peasants, the squeezed petit-bourgeoisie, they in many ways resemble the ragtag and bobtail of the B. E. F. Many of them have bought their own brown uniforms on the instalment plan, using their dole cards, seven marks a week, for money. The students also comprise a large element of the National Socialists. Eighty percent of the students are Nazis. Wanting the return of caste and class prerogatives which the republic took away from them, they have zealously espoused Hitlerism. The position of the Nazi students has been stated by Baron Borries Von Munchausen (a very likely name) at the University of Gottingen: "The difficult economic situation has compelled many of them (that is, the students) to work together with factory workers, miners and farmhands and their experiences have shown them plainly how unclear and impractical are the ideals of the workers." . . . "All this has changed since the students have learned to know the laboring classes better and especially since these classes have carried on a bitter fight against the students, whose income is far below that of their opponents." (Italics mine. E. D.)

How long Adolf Hitler, a protege of the Duce and something of an operatic Attila in his own right, will remain in power, it is difficult at this moment to predict. There is already an undercurrent of dissension between the Steel Helmets and the Brown Shirts. The Steel Helmets, who make up the soldiery of the Nationalist Party at whose head is Hugenberg, are suspect in the eyes of the Nazis who look upon these War Veterans as defeatists. Besides, the Brown Shirts believe there are some Marxist taint within the rank and file of the *Stahlhelm*. This psychological interplay between the Nazis, those who were too young to have been in the World War, and the Steel Helmets, those who were in the war, has been interestingly set forth in Remarque's *The Road Back*.

However, a struggle between the *Stahlhelm* and the Brown Shirts would be most unequal, and unless the former go over to the workers, very little can be expected from this quarter.

Hitler is also receiving some support from the Junkers and heavy industry, but here the connection is much more vague and peripheral. To begin with, the Junker at present is a Hitlerite through fear rather than through conviction. Nevertheless, the Junkers, who committed themselves to support a government of lunacy rather than hazard the return of the Communists, hope to entrench themselves again and to reassume their former military prestige on the slogan: "We did not lose the War." There is no longer any talk in the Reich about the injustices of the Versailles Treaty. That is passé and synonymous with internationalism and defeatism. In this nationalistic sentiment rests the hopes of big industry, for it is inextricably bound up with large steel, coal, chemical and armament contracts.

The respectable people in Germany believe that Paul von Hindenburg may yet exhume the Weimar Constitution and that he has the power to dismiss "his" chancellor, if he wishes to. However, the story of the octagenarian president nodding

his head in his sleep and Hitler taking the nod for yes pretty well exposes his position.

Hindenburg is a papier maché president. His statesmanship may be said to be static rather than kinetic. Members of the Women's Club and the reformist A. P. A. adore telling visitors how the statesque president stood in front of an open window while the Nazis and Stahlhelm passed in complete and reverent silence below him. There he stood, erect and immobile, in his tightly-clad and suffocating uniform, performing his august duty to his fatherland and refusing to move, although the hot air from the radiator caused him extreme discomfort.

A Junker to the core, neither age nor sentimentalism explains his acceptance of Hitler and his dismissal of Bruening. Hindenburg would doubtless have acted as he did at sixty five. He acted with his eyes open, for he knew that even Bruening was contemplating some sort of legislative processes for the nationalization of industry and the expropriation of the big estates owned by the absentee landlords, the Junkers.

Although the Communists and Social Democrats are either in jail, or out of the country, or in the concentration camps for the duration of the war, as it were, the workers may be able to call a general mass strike and in this way at least put the brakes on the Hitler movement. Certainly, there doesn't seem any other source from which counter-revolution can come. There is another factor, namely, the possibilities of a rift within the rank and file of the Nazis. Whether Hitler will last out or not will depend upon his ability to feed and shelter the Brown

Shirts and also upon the mount of state "socialism" he will attempt to inject into his program. Although the Nazis hate the taboo word, *Marxismus*, they are not averse to certain kinds of plagiarized and garbled backstairs socialism for demagogic purposes. And it may be that the Brown Shirts are literal-minded and may have taken too seriously the Chancellor's radio hemorrhages on Brot, Freiheit and socialism.

Meanwhile, the workers, whose trade unions have been sabotaged, whose meeting places have been engulfed with Nazis, are carrying on some underground activity. Some are inside of the Hitler ranks. A commentary upon the workers tactics and position in Germany today may be deducted from the way they cast their ballots at the last election in one district. Two fifths of the workers voted the Communist ticket, two fifths the Social Democratic one, and the remaining fifth which voted for the Nazis are known to be either Communists or Social Democrats. Sometimes through fear, more often as a matter of tactics to enable them to remain in Berlin and fight against Hitler. Only one third of the workers have supported the Catholic Centrist Party, the other two thirds going over almost, en bloc, to the Communists and Social Democrats.

Although it must be admitted that the Hitlerites have completely terrorized the German population, and that they have given the screw an extra turn, for they are taking no chances with Communist agitators, Hitler and his sanatorium Cabinet may yet blow up the works themselves.

Nineteen Thirty-Three

Kenneth Fearing

YOU heard the gentleman, with automatic precision, speak the truth. Cheers. Triumph.

And then mechanically it followed the gentleman lied. Deafening applause. Flashlights, cameras, microphones. Floral tribute. Cheers.

Down Mrs. Hogan's alley, your hand with others reaching among the ashes, cinders, scrapiron, garbage, you found the rib of sirloin wrapped in papal documents. Snatched it. Yours by right, the title clear.

Looked up. Saw lips twitch in the smiling head projected from the bedroom window. "A new deal."

And ran. Escaped. You returned the million dollars. You restored the lady's virginity.

You were decorated 46 times in rapid succession by the King of Italy. Took a Nobel prize. Evicted again, you went downtown, slept at the movies, stood in the bread-line, voted yourself a limousine.

Rage seized the Jewish Veterans of Foreign Wars. In footnotes, capitals, Latin, italics, the bard of the Sunday supplements voiced steamheated grief. The RFC expressed surprise.

And the news, at the Fuller Brush hour, leaked out. Shouts. Cheers. Stamping of feet. Blizzard of confetti. Thunderous applause.

But the stocks were stolen. The pearls of the actress, stolen again. The bonds embezzled.

Inexorably. The thief pursued. Captured inexorably. Tried. Inexorably acquitted.

And again you heard the gentleman, with automatic precision, speak the truth.

Saw, once more, the lady's virginity restored.

In the sewers of Berlin, the directors prepared, the room dark for the seance, she a simple Baroness, you a lowly millionaire, came face to face with John D. Christ.

Shook hands. His knife at your back, your knife at his. Sat down.

Saw issue from his throat the ectoplasm of Pius VIII. "A test of the people's faith." You said amen, voted to endorse but warned against default, and observed the astral form of Nicholas II. "Sacred union of all." Saw little "Safe for democracy" Nell. Listened to Adolph "Safety of France and society" Thiers.

And beheld the faith, the union of rags, blackened hands, stacked carrion, breached barricades in flame, no default, credit restored, Union Carbide 94 3/8, call money 10%, disarm, steel five points up, rails rise, Dupont up, and heard again,

ghost out of ghost out of ghost out of ghost,

the voice of the senators reverberate through all the morgues of all the world, echo again for liberty in the catacombs of Rome, again sound through the sweatshops, ghettos, factories, mines, hunger again repealed, circle the London cenotaph once more annulling death, saw ten million dead returned to life, shot down again, again restored,

heard once more the gentleman speak, with automatic precision, the final truth,

once more beheld the lady's virginity, the lady's decency, the lady's purity, the lady's innocence, paid for, certified, and restored.

Crawled amorously into bed. Felt among the maggots for the mouldering lips. The crumbled arms. Found them.

Tumult of cheers. Music and prayer by the YMCA. Horns, rockets. Spotlight.

The child was nursed on government bonds. Cut its teeth on a hand grenade. Grew fat on shrapnel. Bullets. Barbed wire. Chlorine gas. Laughed at the bayonet through its heart.

These are the things you saw and heard, these are the things you did, this is your record.

you.

According to Broadway, Negroes sing nothing but spirituals and sexy torchsongs. But most negroes are oppressed workers. They sing songs of labor and protest. Here are some of them.

Negro Songs of Protest

Lawrence Gellert

Despite a rigid censorship the Negro throughout the South keeps well posted on fresh developments in the Scottsboro case. A grapevine telegraph such as operated during the old slave regime carries the news. Hundreds of miles removed from the source in Georgia, South Carolina—way over in Mississippi and Louisiana even, over back yard fences in city slums, on isolated farms out in the sticks everywhere in fact out of earshot of the Whites, they're buzzing with the Alabama case. Nothing has so agitated the Black Belt since post-civil war reconstruction days. Scottsboro and Tallapoosa, already by-words, are rapidly passing into the fabric of Negro folk-lore. Songs are cropping up the length and breadth of the Southland. The members of the race who participated in the events are extolled amongst the first rank of racial heroes with John Henry, Steel Driving Sam, Long Gone John Stagle, Casey Jones, strong men—half legend—half real, who dare stand toe to toe with the Oppressors of the Race—and win—or die fighting.

These new songs of the Negro differ from the well-known spirituals. Whereas the latter as a group are prayer songs—a racial heritage, part of the old, dead past—grooved and set, and now sung practically without variation throughout the Black Belt, these new songs are secular—reflecting the contemporary racial environment—the peonage, poverty and degradation. The savage brutality of the Law and lynching mobs, and the new attitudes towards all that exemplified by the two major "fronts" of the American Negro today. And they're still in the process. Never sung twice quite in the same way. New verses constantly added. In these songs we catch the Negro for the first time with his mask off. The mask he has for generations been constrained to assume in order to pick up the crumbs from the white man's table in peace. The mask of which the Negro wood-chopper at Fort Mills, S. C., sang for me:

Boss man call me nigger, ah jes' laugh
He kick de seat ob mah pants, an' dat ain' half
You don' know, you don' know mah min'
When you see me laughin' jes' laughin' to keep f'om cryin'

One min' fo' de white folks to see
One min' dat say what nigger lak fo' to be
You don' know, you don' know mah min'
When you thinks you's way 'head o' me, jes' leavin' you behin'

This is the mask which present economic conditions render no longer efficacious and which the leadership now in desperation abandons to risk death in the field rather than starve.

Here's a song I picked up at Rock Hill, S. C. The place is fully four hundred miles from Tallapoosa County, Ala. Yet the text is unmistakably inspired by the events that transpired there. It is sung to an excellent work tune. When whites are about, other lines—mere doggerel, are substituted:

Rooster git de worm, bring it to de den
Squirrel fin' him hick'ry nut, to take back to his den
Wa'cher gwine do nigger, when yo' pantry all gi' out
Keep suckin' on yo' milk tooth, 'til dey falls out of yo' mouff

Ev'y livin' creacher mus' has somewheres where to crawl
Out ob de rain, out ob de snow, no dif'rence how long it fall
Wha'cher gwine do nigger, when on yo' do' dey nails a sign
Git packin' de ol' grip sack an' leave yo' place behin'

White folks git yo' money, craps f'om offen yo' fahm
He take mos' ov'thin' you has, 'cept de power dats in yo' ahm
What you gwine do nigger, wit' de power dat's in yo' ahm
Git wipin' yo eye tear, 'till de strenff is dead an' gone

Bowed down on yo' knees, askin' Lawd please gi' mah due
Sho' keep you on yo' knees, 'til turkey buzzard git through wit'
you

Wa'cher gwine do nigger, ain' nothin' lak what ah said
Do lak Alabamy boys an' win or be foun' dead

In Tallapoosa County, a Negro cropper attributed all the trouble there to ducks. Oh they didn't eat it exactly, he allowed. Not the way they eat fish. But they got his "crap" just the same. It was \$15.00 'ducks fo' seed. \$15.00 'ducks fo' fer-lizer. \$10 'ducks fo' dis. \$5.00 'ducks fo' dat. "An' by time 'ducks git all t'rough wit' mah crap, ah owes Boss-man what ah runs dis fahm wit' on shares money. And this song I picked up in Villa Rica, Ga., while not directly identifiable with the Tallapoosa shooting, evidently is inspired by the same brand of 'ducks, responsible for the trouble there. The tune too, is fittingly martial :

You take mah labor
An' steal mah time
Gi' me ol' dish pan
An' a lousy dime
'Cause ahm a nigger dat's why

Ah grow de cawn
Has nothin' to eat
And buil' big houses
Go sleep in de street
'Cause ahm a nigger dat's why

White man, white man
Set in de shade
In dis meltin' sun
Ah sweat wit' mah spade
'Cause ahm a nigger dat's why

Worm git turnin'
Cat hug a lion
Mah hell git risin'
Care nothin' 'bout dyin'
'Cause ahm a nigger dat's why

Ah feels it comin'
See you in Goddamn
Git pick an' shovel
Bury you in Debil's lan'
'Cause ahm a nigger dat's why

And here's one from Meridian, Miss. Its about the Scottsboro case. It embodies the usual Negro slant on the white capitalist brand of justice dispensed there, encountered wherever one finds a Negro not afraid to talk about the case. While "Blues" is mentioned in the text, the song may in no sense be classed one. It is simply a work song. The tempo and swing depends upon the class of work performed. The required motion of the implement used. And the time of day. Towards evening it is apt to be very slow, the men exhausted from the long day's work performed:

Paper come out
Strewed de news
(repeat)
Seben po' niggers
Moanin' deat' house blues

Seben nappy heads
Wit' big shiny eye
All boan' in jail
An' framed to die

Messin' white woman
Snake lyin' tale
Dat hang an' burn
An' jail wit' no bail

Worse ol' crime
In dis damn lan'
Black skin' acoverin'
Po' workin' man

Jerge an' Jury
All in de stan'
Lawd biggity name
Fo' same lynchin' han'

White folks asetin'
In great Court House
Lak cat down cellar
Wit' no-hole mouse

Seben nappy heads
With big shiny eyes
All boan' in jail
An' framed to die

And here's a contribution by an urban Negro. In one of the back alleys in Atlanta, Ga. A one room shack he lived in, no ventilation, built of rotten old lumber, dismal, unpainted, squalid in the extreme—even as "Nigger" shacks go. A dumping ground just outside his door didn't enhance the neighborhood any. And the smell!

The singer was out of work—his former menial odd-job work "nigger jobs" they called them, now filled by white men. A mournful lay this—in keeping with the extremity to which the boy was reduced:

Ef you cotch me stealin'
Don' blame me none
Don' blame me none
You put a mark on mah pepole
An' it mus' be carried on

Ruther git me a job
An' ah's tellin' you true
Tromp roun' all day
Say nigger nothin' fo' you

Gonna try one moah time
Won' try no moah
Load box o' balls
In mah fo'ty fo'

Tellin' you white folks
Lak de chinaman tol' de jew
Ef you care nothin' 'bout nigger man
Cinch ah cares noth' 'bout you

These songs from plantation, chain gang, lumber camp and jail are of inestimable value if they do nothing more than show that not all Negroes continue shouting spirituals, dancing to the Blues,—and as a race remain unruffled by the economic crisis. Many of them are tired of being poor, and hungry. Desperately and bitterly tired. And seething with unrest.





W.S.

Landing at Havana

V. Mayakovsky

THE steamboat approached, whinnied, blew—
 And was chained like an escaped convict.
 On board, 700 people—
 The others were Negroes.
 A little cutter steamed up from one side.
 Running up the stairs, the lame doctor
 In horn-rimmed spectacles made his inspection.
 "Who has trachoma?"
 Having powdered their pimples and washed their good-looks,
 Dragging themselves along, coquettishly,
 The first class passengers passed the smiling doctor.
 The blue smoke from his doubled barreled nostrils
 Wound into a single ring.
 The first to pass in a diamond dawn was
 The pig-king, Smith.
 His pipe stinks a yard away.
 Try to touch such a person—
 Under the silk of his drawers, under the sheer cambric,
 Try to make out his sickness.
 "This island gives promise of abstinence. Order a halt!"
 The captain saluted, and Smith, syphilitic, disembarked.
 After the first class, the second followed.
 Inspecting this class,
 The doctor wondered why nostrils have holes.
 He invaded ears and eyes.
 The doctor looked and made a face,
 And wrinkled his nose under his spectacles.
 The doctor sent to quarantine
 Three people from the second class congregation.
 After the second, the third class approached like a storm,
 Black with niggers.
 The doctor looked:

three o'clock.

Cocktail time.
 Drive them back into the hold, into the bottom.
 Sick—you can see that.
 Their dirty appearance. And in general—
 Besides, they are not vaccinated.

The temples of the Negro are throbbing throbbing.
 Tom is stretched out in the hold.
 Tomorrow Tom will be vaccinated,
 And Tom will go home.
 Ashore Tom has a wife,
 Her hair thick as oil,
 Her skin black and oily,
 Like BLACK LION polish.
 Meanwhile Tom was bumming around on jobs—
 But Cuba is no fool.
 His wife was driven away from the plantation
 Because she wasn't easy.

The moon threw coins into the ocean:
 You could run up the bank and dive in after them!
 Weeks, no bread, no meat.
 Weeks, only pineapples.

Now, again the steamboat screwed itself to a stop.
 The next would come in several weeks.
 How could she wait with a hungry mouth?
 Tom forgot to love her. Tom left.
 He divides his straw mat with the white girls.
 She cannot earn anything. She cannot steal.
 Everywhere, policemen under their umbrellas.
 But Mr. Smith's waning passion is kindled by this exotic.
 His body becomes sweaty under his underwear—

From black flesh.
 He pushes dollars into her hands,
 Into her face, into the hungry months.
 At grips, the stomach empty so long,
 And the heavy load of faithfulness, fight.
 She decides definitely, "No,"
 And murmurs, "Yes."
 Already the decaying Mr. Smith
 Is pushing the door with his shoulder.
 And the obliging elevator winds them up into a room.

Tom appeared in two days,
 Slept with her for a week without awakening,
 And was glad there was bread and money,
 And he would not have the small-pox.
 But the day came when on his dark skin
 The incomprehensible pattern spread.
 His children in mother's womb were dumb and blind.
 With breaking knuckles, day to day,
 The pages of the calendar years were marked.
 Somebody took their half-bodies
 And stretched their hands for alms.
 Attention to Negroes became special.
 When the flock was gathering, the lean priest
 Pointed out this most obvious handbook of morals:
 God punishes him and her, that she invited guests.
 And the rottenness of black flesh fell from rotting Negro bones.

I did not intend to enter politics with this.
 I intended simply to make a little picture.
 Some call it—

civilization.

Others—

colonial policy.

Trans. from the Russian by Langston Hughes

Nazis Kill a Communist

Blunt thumbs
 gouged out his eyes,
 snuffed out the lights of his brain.
 (Slowly the light came
 Years, years
 The broad vision
 The wonder)

They have gouged out his eyes
 Darkness descends

Little loyalties
 Little hates
 Shopkeepers' paradise

Turn back the wheel
 Verfluchte Franzosen
 Schwarz-Weiss-Rot
 The goose-step bristles
 Vaterland, Tod!
 Shrieks in black ghettos
 (The wheel spins fast)
 Death to the K. P. D.
 Darkness at last

They have snuffed out his life,
 Fools, can they hold back the sun?

—ANNE BROMBERGER

Life in Greenwich Village was a transition period for those who had broken with an old culture and had not yet found a new one. This article discusses the evolution of bohemian writers and artists.

Greenwich Village Types

Joseph Freeman

I came to Greenwich Village late in 1921 with a specific purpose. I wanted to know Max Eastman, Floyd Dell, Robert Minor and the other editors of the *Liberator*. That magazine represented something I was seeking. I was then trying to coordinate an interest in poetry, burdened by years of training in the classic and romantic traditions, with an interest in the revolution, given intense and specific form by October. The *Liberator* was the organ of the one group in America in which art and revolution seemed to meet. The suppression of most leftwing publications during the war had made the *Liberator* one of the few sources where one could get authentic news about the Bolshevik revolution; the struggles in Germany, Hungary, Italy and Mexico; the revolutionary movement in the United States. At the same time it published fiction, poetry and drawings which were often revolutionary in content if not in form.

Now, in retrospect, we can all be wise; we can explain, with that clarity which comes long after the event, the *Liberator's* shortcomings in developing a genuine revolutionary art and literature. Yet the fact remains that in its time this publication performed a unique historic task. It gathered together and developed such revolutionary writers and artists as the prevailing conditions made possible.

Chiefly the *Liberator* expressed the "revolt" of certain types of intellectuals against bourgeois convention. The "revolt" was, on the whole, individualistic. Against the pressure of business ideals in work and puritan standards in personal conduct, sensitive individuals, mostly from the middle classes, demanded the right to pursue art, to experiment sexually, and to absorb political ideas which came to them partly from books, and partly from such influence as the revolutionary movement exercised on its literary fellow travellers.

Such "free" spirits congregated in Greenwich Village, where rent was cheap and the bohemian tradition glittered. As an editor of the *Liberator* and later of the *New Masses*, since 1922, I have had occasion to meet most of these "free" spirits at one time or another. No two of them were alike. The majority, it may be said, came to bohemia because it was a border country stretching between two worlds. It combined a post-graduate school, a playground and a clinic for those who had broken with an old culture and had not yet found a new one, or had not yet discovered and accepted the fact that they were irrevocably committed to the old.

I speak of this bohemia in the past tense because the Village I knew is dead. If another has arisen in its place I do not know it. The old one affected American literature and art. Its history is worth writing; and when I had finished reading the introduction to Albert Parry's *Garrets and Pretenders*,* I thought he had done it. This introduction speaks of the Marxian writers as the "only ones to approach and discuss Bohemianism not in a vaguely sentimental or grossly abusive way but more or less dispassionately, almost scientifically." The author attempts to formulate the Marxian viewpoint on bohemianism; he cites Marxian writers on the subject. From this I was led to expect if not a Marxian interpretation of bohemia at least an attempt to explain its social role in some plausible terms. I was disappointed. There are over three hundred pages of

names, episodes, gossip, quotations, many of them entertaining; but hardly anything which shows the serious side of the Village.

And the Village did indeed have a serious side. It may be said that this serious side was its essence. The fact that its inhabitants drank, made love, wrote poems, stayed up late at parties and occasionally committed suicide is unimportant unless it is related to what these people were seeking.

Their quest now seems to us trivial. We live in a period of great historic events; we see an entire civilization falling to pieces, and another rising to take its place. The violent struggle of social classes, the breakdown of the economic structure of capitalism, the drilling of armies for a new war make the glamors and despairs of bohemia seem infantile. Yet a good history of the Village would show that its "wild" and "free" life was not unconnected with the disintegration of capitalist society.

"The generation to which Waldo Frank and I belong," Floyd Dell wrote in 1920, "is a peculiar and unhappy generation, and I don't wonder that the older generation looks at it askance. It is a generation of individuals who throughout the long years of their youth felt themselves in solitary conflict with a hostile environment. There was a boy in Chicago, and a boy in Oshkosh, and a boy in Steubenville, Indiana, and so on—one here and there, and all very lonely and unhappy . . . They were idealists and lovers of beauty and aspirants toward freedom; and it seemed to them that the whole world was in a gigantic conspiracy to thwart ideals and trample beauty under foot and make life merely a kind of life-imprisonment. So it was that these youths came to hate and despise the kindly and excellent people who happened to be their elders, and who were merely hard at work at the necessary task of exploiting the vast raw continent which Christopher Columbus had not very long before discovered. This generation had to make, painfully enough, two important discoveries. It has had, in the first place, to discover its own corporate existence, to merge its individual existences together, and get the confidence and courage that can come only from the sense of mass thought and mass action. But the trouble is that each one of us, in our loneliness, has become a little odd, a little peculiar, and more than a little suspicious . . . Individualism is the very fabric of our lives, we who have brooded too long apart to become without pain a part of the social group to which we belong."

Brooding and oddities lead to poses, to that theatricalism and pretence which Mr. Parry implies in his title and examples of which crowd his work. But pretence itself requires explanation. The declassed intellectual, uprooted from his original social environment and not yet rooted in a new one, suffers from acute internal discord. Until that discord is resolved in terms of reality, he attempts to resolve it in symbols. He pretends to be what he hopes to become, or at least that which will protect him from what he fears to become.

What he most fears in the early stages of his bohemian existence is a return to the bourgeois world from which he has just fled. That return has been the fate of most Bohemian. For the Villagers of the twenties, however, it did not entail any special hardships. The "compromise" had its agreeable side. They were no longer odd, peculiar or unhappy. The bourgeois world over-

* *Garrets and Pretenders: A History of Bohemianism in America*. By Albert Parry. (Covici-Friede. \$3.50.)

took and surpassed them; it absorbed their talents and expropriated their poses. Bohemian pretences were transferred from the garret to the suburban home or the Gramercy Park studio. During the boom period ending in the debacle of 1929, the prosperous middle classes went bohemian on a large scale. The speakeasy lifted to a "higher level" the drinking, the sexual experiments and the wit of the Pirates Den. The manners and morals of the Village became the morals and manners of sections of the middle and even the upper classes. Expanding business converted the "vagabond" poets of the Village into editors, ad writers, publicity agents, columnists, and novelists; the "vagabond" artists into magazine illustrators, commercial designers, portrait painters, and department store decorators. And these ex-bohemians, through the medium of the press and the movies, brought to the middle classes some of the "free" thought and "free" conduct of the Village. A balance was struck. The prosperous middle classes needed a little bohemianism to spend their money in ways not sanctioned by the puritan tradition; the bohemians needed a little puritanism to go with their newly acquired money.

Today the economic crisis has once more declassed a large part of the intelligentsia. But this time they have not gone bohemian. Bohemianism requires a certain amount of social stability. The bohemian wishes to "shock" the bourgeois. For this purpose the bourgeois must be well entrenched, secure; and the bohemian himself must feel that the road back to the world he is "shocking" is not entirely closed. In the depths of his heart he not only fears but hopes that his eccentricities, which he usually considers a sign of genius, will earn him a fatted calf as the returning prodigal son. It is not capitalism he hates, but the responsibilities which any highly developed social system imposes upon its members. The bohemian who finally accepts law and order in life may graduate to communism if he realizes that it represents a higher law, a superior order; but the bohemian who has no objection to capitalist law and order—provided he is to some extent exempted from their burdens—gladly returns to the fold.

The bohemian intellectuals who matured during the war con-

sidered themselves lonely and unhappy lovers of beauty and aspirants toward freedom. Toward the end of the Coolidge era, when most of them had been absorbed into bourgeois society, a more realistic note crept into their self analysis.

"After a brief enthusiasm," a well known authority on the American intelligentsia wrote in 1926, "the intelligentsia has for the most part become indifferent to the new order in Russia—an indifference which marks a secret temperamental antipathy . . . The reason for such an antipathy lies in the fact that the *Bolsheviks are actually imposing order upon chaos*—an order all too much resembling, in its governmental and industrial paraphernalia, and its rigorous concepts of 'duty', that order against which the intelligentsia is still in hopeless rebellion at home. The introduction of machinery into Russia, and eventually throughout Asia, is not the sort of change to warm our hearts . . . Far from it. The American intelligentsia has a deep sentimental attachment to barbarism and savagery, preferably of a nomadic sort."

These words accurately reflect the temper if not the existence of the American intelligentsia during the boom period. Pessimism and despair was assuaged by a romantic flight from reality. In the minds of many intellectuals the violent reaction against the war became transformed into a general reaction against "civilization." They were disillusioned about liberalism, pacifism, reform and other dreams from which the war had so rudely awakened them. Planning and acting seemed futile. The world was in a hopeless chaos. Anything done to change it was so much wasted effort. In the 'twenties the "tired radicals" were never tired of explaining the futility of political struggle.

Despair in politics was accompanied by primitivism in art and literature. *Main Street* and *Babbitt* sneered at mechanization and standardization; *Emperor Jones* took the intellectual, at least imaginatively, into the jungle; *Anna Christie*, to sea; *The Wasteland*, up to the austere rocks of philosophic hopelessness; *The Bridge of San Luis Rey*, along a pseudo-classical highway to a Peru that never was on land or sea. Branch Cabell manufactured a tinsel world, and the revival of Herman Melville and the white whale restored a dead one. The dark



Herb Kruckman



Herb Kruckman

and bitter poetry of Robinson Jeffers attracted the attention of the intelligentsia, and the cynical *American Mercury* assumed the leadership of an era which, intellectually, spat its beer out upon civilization as a whole. Literary critics discovered that romantic love was dead and all human values corrupted. The intelligentsia which formerly admired Dewey now hailed Spengler. By and large it took little interest in the tremendous social revolution going on in Russia. Few intelligent books were published on the subject; practically none were translated from the Russian; the works of Lenin were unknown; no theatre produced Soviet plays until the end of the decade, and important Soviet films were not shown until 1926. Most of the handful of intellectuals who did go to Russia in the twenties were interested less in the revolution than in those primitive and "picturesque" relics of Czarist days which the revolution was busy destroying.

But things are different now. Never has the American intelligentsia been as interested in Russia as it is today. This includes not merely Greenwich Village poets but engineers, doctors, lawyers, teachers, newspapermen and students. Many intellectuals with and without a bohemian background, are not only sympathetic toward the Soviet Union but support the communist movement in this country as well.

The American intellectual is no longer alarmed by the spread of machinery to Russia and Asia. He does not understand the fear and ignorance of machine civilization which marked the Village a decade ago. He goes to movies of Dnieprostroy where the bohemian used to see Georgia O'Keefe's freudian vegetation. He writes indignant or apologetic articles for the American press when he finds a room in Moscow with candles instead of electric lights, with a bathtub lacking hot water, and a toilet that doesn't flush; in short, a room which resembles the bohemian "studio." It is only in the realm of the imagination that the intellectual has a deep sentimental attachment to "barbarism and savagery, preferably of a nomadic sort." In daily life, doctors, lawyers, and professors gladly avail themselves of that machinery which in imagination they profess to dislike. Even most bohemians I have met do not rebel too strenuously against suburban homes with "all modern improvements," a radio, a roadster, and a little garden. Their "nomadic" urges are easily satisfied by occasional trips from Westport to New York or vice versa. In the Village, the bohemian's "nomadic" existence consists of sleeping in a different house every other night, or, as one writer wittily phrased it, "flitting from breakfast to breakfast." This is a hard life. Eventually it engenders a frantic longing for a home of one's own. When the bohemian acquires such a home he is "nomad" and "vagabond" in fantasy only. He spends the rest of his life in his little Cherry Orchard, never venturing to the metropolis of his dreams.

I mention these matters not to rebuke the bohemians for succumbing to love of comfort. Nothing is more natural. For the most part, bohemians have the good grace not to pretend that they are either heroes or ascetics. On the contrary. Bohemianism is essentially the cult of the sybaritic life. Its problem is to enjoy the aristocrat's leisure and irresponsibility on a pauper's income. Was it not the brightest star in the bohemian firmament who wrote in 1918 that "life is older than liberty; it is greater than revolution; it burns in both camps?" Life, added this poet who was brilliantly defending the October Revolution, "is what I love"; life for all men and women, of course, but "first for myself." That "life" which is "greater than revolution" includes comforts. In the Village the bohemian receives them as a guest; when he graduates to the suburb he dispenses them as a host. In itself that is no crime. But the attitudes of the Village may be carried over to the suburb, and the bohemian state of mind may persist long after the bohemian life has ceased.

The bohemian hates order. As a confused adolescent or frustrated adult he escapes to the Village because he finds the bourgeois order intolerable. But as a rule it is not the economic and political bases of the capitalist order which repel him. In most cases he does not understand them. What makes him feel that life is "a kind of life imprisonment" are the fantastic demands of religious superstition, the rigors of uncomprehending parental authority, the chains of antiquated sexual mores. When these burdens press heavily upon him he begins to generalize; he becomes a literary anarchist; he loathes not merely the specific results of the capitalist order but all order; he cannot distin-

guish between law and capitalist law, just as the Luddites could not distinguish between machinery and the capitalist use of machinery.

In this way the bohemian revolts against certain concepts of capitalist society which in varying forms belong to all organized society and which are carried to a higher level in socialist society. They are the well-known virtues: "such dull matters as honesty, sobriety, responsibility and even a sense of duty."

Bohemia is the realm where one can—for a time, at least—dodge these demands of organized society. When they can no longer be evaded, the bohemian who is not absorbed in the revolutionary movement returns to the bourgeois world. Life presents him with the alternative: comfort in the bourgeois order or struggle for the socialist order. To the average bohemian, saturated with middle class illusions, order is order, whether it is capitalist or socialist. The choice, then, is clear. If—as one writer phrased it—the intellectual has "to make himself over into what is to almost all intents and purposes a good American businessman, he would prefer to enjoy all the American businessman's rewards." That is why so many bohemians went back to the bourgeois world during the boom period. At a time when individuals may shift from class to class, bohemia is extremely fluid. A clerk may become a businessman; a bohemian writer for radical magazines may become publicity man for a big corporation. Both rode the bull market. The prodigal son, returning from the Village, did not receive "all" the American businessman's rewards, but he got enough crumbs to bring some comfort and stability into his life.

Right there is the rub. The economic crash came. American business is no longer able to give handsome "rewards" to intellectuals. Thousands of them have been thrown out of work and expropriated of their Fords and radios. Thousands of new ones have not had a single job since leaving college. Some of them have begun to realize that it is not a choice between order and lack of order, in the abstract, but between capitalist order which is disintegrating and socialist order which is developing. And many of them who have never had a bohemian tradition or have outgrown it know that the order in Soviet Russia resembles the capitalist order only in certain superficial aspects; they realize that in essence it is a new order—an order which for the first time makes eventually possible that freedom to which the intellectual aspires.

The evolution of the bohemian intellectual is no easy matter to describe. Its history ought to be more than a collection of anecdotes. It ought to be a key to sections of our contemporary intelligentsia, to those who have not yet thrown off their bohemian heritage. It might aid some of them in getting rid of this burden by revealing the origin of illusions which they continue to mistake for realities. It would also bring out the creative side of the Village which made it possible for some writers and artists to go beyond bohemianism. And—quite incidentally, of course—it would explain why the *New Masses* cannot follow Albert Parry's advice to recapture the "romantic moods" of the old *Masses*. The period in which we live requires not so much romanticism of mood as firmness of purpose and clarity of thought.



Jacob Burck



Jacob Burck

Breadline

Richard Bransten

He could visualize the expressions on those bastards' faces when they handed him the thick crap that tasted like soap and onions. Three weeks now he had been fed on slop—and after each handout he felt like vomiting all over the street. He'd never imagined that food could taste so vile: just to think about it was to feel the coating of grease on the roof of his mouth, the flat stickiness that gagged him, and later made his guts groan aloud in the labor of digestion.

In the white, late afternoon, the cobbled street shone wetly; the fog swirled about him, and settled in grey beads on the edge of his cap and the shoulders of his coat. He moved his lower jaw viciously against the upper, so that little knots of muscles rippled under the greenish, spotted cheeks, and gave his face the look of smouldering bitterness. He kept his fists deep in his pant's pockets, digging the black nails into his palms that were losing their callouses and peeling in yellow strips to leave his hands soft and tender.

The man next to him coughed—a long spasm that strained the whole frame—and spat thickly on the cobbles. Ahead the line stretched to the black boiler where two men in aprons stood, flanked by blue-coated policemen. The men ladled mechanically, handed filled bowls to outstretched hands as they passed. There was little talk in line. The hungry stood with pocketed hands. Sullenly they waited their turns, tense, resentful.

He shuffled ahead a few steps as the line lurched forward. For three weeks they had fed him on the same slop, with globules of grease floating on top,—handed it to him as if he were a dog, as if they were doing him a favor, as if he should get down on his knees and grovel for their charity. They

kicked him out of the factory, they closed all work to him, and then when they fed him twice a day with their stinking hog-wash he was supposed to be grateful.

He edged forward, gazing at the wrinkled neck of the man ahead. The dampness penetrated to his very core, his knee muscles jumped with fatigue and cold. They thought all they had to do was hand out food and they would earn undying gratitude. People came from their warm houses and stared at the line and felt virtuous that their city was so kind-hearted, and that the taxpayers fed all these men. Clergymen looked with satisfaction at the line that proved Charity still walked the earth. A priest with brown smug eyes and a thin mouth conducted fat women in clean, soft dresses to the boilers; he ladled out the stew for them to taste. They smacked their lips and smiled and nodded. They probably thought it too good for these men who couldn't earn their own food. They did not stand in line day after day, and live on the same muck, the same brown grease without change, endlessly. They took a mouthful and went away complacent in the knowledge that the men were well cared for. Cared for! When every nerve, every fibre revolted at the slop, when they were treated like dogs.

Four men separated him from the boiler. The line moved more quickly as they approached. After an hour they would hand him a bowl full of stew. Now two men were left, and he could smell the pungent odor of food. His stomach strained, and he ground his jaws tighter together. He saw the hand of the man ahead of him tremble as it reached for the bowl. Now his own hand was outstretched, and he felt the warmth of the bowl on his fingers, and saw the brown mass bubbling in the boiler.

"Keep moving, you! Get going."

The aproned man reached over and prodded him. Suddenly, blindly, he drew back his arm and hurled the stew and the bowl at the man.

"Keep it!" he screamed. "Keep your goddamned, stinking muck. I want decent food, something diff—"

A bulky, blue uniform approached him. Wildly he whirled to meet the onslaught. He caught up a bowl and threw it at the policeman. With fists upraised he charged: then he heard rather than felt the heavy thud of wood on his head, and the world turned black and still.



Certain critics, who see no difference between fascism and communism, have been conducting a campaign of slander against revolutionary writers whom they accuse of sterility. This article refutes some of these slanders.

Sterile Writers and Proletarian Religions

Edwin Seaver

Not so long ago, in the columns of one of our literary editors, I came across a statement to the effect that our younger writers, grown sterile, had gone in for proletarian religions. This comment was offered free of charge, apropos of really nothing at all, but if it did not increase our admiration of the editor's powers of logic, it at least showed us what it was that was bothering him.

Now if the observation I have quoted were the unique property of the particular editor I speak of, it need not concern us further, and we should be entitled to dismiss it as merely one of those curiously sour items that daily litter our literary columns. But in this case the observation was not unique. The same report has come to us in a number of variations from a number of sources. Our conservative, our reactionary critics—that is to say, our liberal critics—are pretty well agreed that there must be a catch somewhere in this business of a new revolutionary orientation among the intellectual crowd. After all, human nature, you know; it is only human to attribute to others our own high aims and objectives. And so when our literary editors speak of the younger writers going in for proletarian religions, or, if you prefer, going in for the Communist racket, they doubtless have their own good and sufficient reasons for saying so. Once you are accustomed to think in such broad cultural terms as rackets, you can see through anything. Did not some of these same editors have the innocence to suggest, when Theodore Dreiser published *Tragic America*, that Dreiser had gone Communist because his vogue as a novelist had worn thin and he had, therefore, been compelled to seek new avenues of publicity? What could be more self-evident, then, that the reason why the younger writers, having suddenly, miraculously grown sterile, were going in for proletarian religions? Defeated in one racket they were trying another, that's all.

I do not propose to dispute this charge. Indeed, I feel incapable of disputing it. You may recall some of the comments in our newspapers at the time of the recent Hunger March. The hunger marchers, said the *Times*, were neither hungry (that is, they were not ready for the ambulance and the morgue, which was evidently a great pity); nor were they marching (that is, they had the audacity to go to Washington in trucks, which was evidently sheer presumption). The *Times*, you see, was merely giving all the news that's fit to print, unbiased by editorial comment. There was no disputing that. Well, the statement I quoted you a few moments ago affects me with somewhat the same sense of futility.

It is precisely this sense of futility, however, that we ought strenuously to avoid. As with almost every falsehood, there may be an element of truth in what our literary editor has said about the younger writers. And it seems to me that it is only by isolating this element of truth and defining it clearly that we can properly show up the shoddy lie that distorts it beyond recognition.

By younger writers we usually mean those who happen to be our own age, and perhaps if we live to be ninety we shall still be referring to our own generation as the younger writers.

Actually, however, I take it that what is meant are those writers who are now in their early thirties, who happened to be born around the turn of the century, who encountered the war to end war before they were old enough to know better, and the counterfeit after-the-war-cynicism before they were old enough to realize that one's cynicism is worth as much, and only as much, as the cold cash of experience one has in reserve for security. Morally, spiritually, politically, socially, aesthetically—this generation was bankrupt by the end of the last decade. Sooner or later it would have to be liquidated and make a new start, for ahead lay only complete inanity and despair, only sterility. The utopia of a chicken in every pot may satisfy a Hoover, it cannot satisfy a normal human being.

So you see, in a way our critic is right when he speaks of the younger writers grown sterile, when he speaks contemptuously about their new revolutionary orientation. Where he is wrong is in not taking the trouble to inquire into the true nature and true cause of this apparent sterility, and whether indeed it be sterility at all. Where he is wrong is in the use of such abominably uncritical jargon as "proletarian religions". Anyone who can use a phrase like that without blushing is incapable of thinking straight.

What I am getting at is this: our critic has put his cart before his horse. The revolutionary orientation of the younger writers is not, as he supposes, a sign of their sterility. It is, on the contrary, a sign of rebirth and rededication of creative energies that were in danger of evaporating completely. It is the repudiation of sterility. And not only this, but it is precisely those writers who will have nothing to do with this revolutionary orientation, who do not understand it and do not wish to understand it, who are themselves in gravest danger of sterility.

I am aware that all this sounds pretty dogmatic. Let me try to explain.

We are living, here, in the United States, today, in a revolutionary decade. No one but an unqualified fool would deny that. Even the professors don't deny it. We are trying to move our heavy machinery over crumbling roads and shaky bridges, they reported not long ago, urging a national planning program to avert immediate crisis. And although our national clown, Mr. Will Rogers, was entirely incorrect when he said of Technocracy that anything you can't spell won't work right, still the new word did not become the current rage for nothing. The soil is ripe. Within the last three years we have seen the last strongholds of the petty bourgeoisie crumbling before our eyes. Entire segments have been cut adrift and submerged to the level of the proletariat, and the proletariat itself, so long robbed of its strength by the inculcation of petty bourgeois psychology, ground down by wage cuts and unemployment to a grim realization of the meaning of class war. We have seen, in our own city, the meaning of finance capitalism and rule by bankers, with wage slashes as the price of an officious and niggardly charity.

In short, within the last three years we have received the beginnings of a radical education in Marxism and Leninism, not in

books, but in hard concrete realities. And if so many of our younger writers, our intellectuals, have become Communist fellow-travellers, it is not so much idealism, it is not even so much racketeering. It is simply because these elements are for the most part themselves members of the submerged petty bourgeoisie; it is because the full meaning of the class war has been brought home to them with a vengeance; it is because they refuse to accept, without protest, the impoverishment of the masses who afford, as Maxim Gorky has said, the soil of all real culture, because they refuse to accept the degradation of rule by bankers and the humiliation of charity offered from money filched from their own pockets; it is because every ounce of common sense in them revolts against the insanity of poverty in the midst of plenty.

A Chicken in Every Pot

Look, then, on this picture and on that. In 1929 you had a wide-open material horizon—a chicken in every pot, two cars in every garage (not in mine, I am sorry to say, but undoubtedly in yours), a bigger and better job, an insufferable boredom and even a nice open air eminently respectable mausoleum reserved in advance—a wide-open material horizon and a spiritual horizon so constricted as to be positively suffocating, fecund with nothing but an ever growing sense of futility and despair. Today you have a spiritual horizon of infinite possibilities for the release of mankind's full creative energies, and a material horizon so constricted as to be painful and even terrifying in its threat of starvation and utter extinction. In 1929 capitalism, on the surface, appeared to be impregnable. Today capitalism is a rotting carcass spreading everywhere pestilence and death. In 1929 the way for the creative writer seemed to be that of disillusion, defeatism and escape. Today the role of the creative writers seems to be the repudiation of the old anti-social individualism, a return to the people and their struggles and an enunciation of revolutionary vision.

In brief, what we have today is the complete reverse of what we had only three years ago; extroversion has displaced introversion; the revolutionary hope has supplanted the defeatist's despair. In three years time, and to the accompaniment of ever growing material distress—after all, the publishing trade, by which writers presumably make their living, has been no more spared than any other trade; it has its own technological unemployment and destitution—our young writers have had to make a complete about face, have had to master new words before they had come to master the old, have come to see an entirely new social vision—and this at a time when, being young writers and therefore insecure in reputation as well as the material things of life, they were bound to suffer more than their older contemporaries.

Is it any wonder, then, that there has been an apparent sterility among them—that is, that they have not produced as many new books as might have been expected in what we used to know as the period of normalcy, but which we now see was the period of preparation for the grand debacle? I say apparent sterility, for it is only apparent, and apparent only to such wits as our literary editors. Actually, I believe the last three years have been a period of infinite enrichment for American letters and I am convinced that before the decade is closed my belief will have been more than justified.

In this connection it may be profitable to quote that eminent Bolshevik, Matthew Arnold. "The exercise of the creative power," said Arnold, "in the production of great works of literature or art, however high this exercise of it may rank, is not possible in all epochs and under all conditions; and therefore labor may be vainly spent in attempting it, and may with more fruit be used in preparing for it, in rendering it possible. This creative power works with elements, with materials; what if it has not those materials, those elements, ready for its use? In that case it must surely wait till they are ready."

Yes, the wheel is going around, and those who cannot hang on will be lost. The soil is being turned over, but who knows what new forces will arise from what the critic calls our sterility? And I would say to this critic: take your nose out of your literary gossip columns, walk out of your library, take a day off from your literary teas—and go to the Hoovervilles, to the Hard-Luck-on-the-East Rivers, to the deserted mines and the impoverished fields, to the jungles outside our big cities, to the

flophouses, to the charity dispensaries, to the empty warehouses where the homeless ones gather by stealth until they are chased out by the law—for it is here, and not in the library, that the strongest elements in our new literature are likely to come from. It is here that you may meet our future Gorkys, and not at your literary teas. It is here that you may meet our future poets and dramatists and novelists, not in the ranks of the cultured riff-raff who no longer bother to talk about books.

Yes, and it is here that the new writers will eventually have to find their new audiences, for the old audience is dead—every bookseller's list attests to that. Not the old bourgeois audience of the twenties, who under the stress of the depression no longer have to worry about what books the Joneses are reading because the Joneses aren't reading anything either, but the proletariat and the proletarianized petty-bourgeoisie will provide the mass of readers necessary before any literature can flourish. Even those little Davids among our publishers who a little while ago were out to slay the Goliath of the depression with pleasant books are waking up to this fact.

Now to come back to our literary editor, when he speaks of sterility and proletarian religions, he infers that those writers who have nothing to do with this new racket are by contrast very fecund indeed. And he points, let us say, and with an understandable pride, to such a writer as William Faulkner. Now I am second to none in my admiration for Mr. Faulkner's abilities as a writer and to damn him with faint praise is farthest from my intentions. And yet it seems to me that it is no accident that Hollywood and Mr. Faulkner seem to get on famously together. Both are dedicated to svelt emptiness and violence, both are dedicated to technology all dressed up and nowhere to go. Mr. Faulkner may write, as the late Arnold Bennett said, I believe, like an angel. But his thinking and his motivation and his inspiration are nothing winged, and when you have peeled off the shell of his really remarkable technical gifts, inside you will not find life, but the masquerade of life and Hollywood masquerade at that; inside you will find not the beating warm heart of life, but the whirring wheels of a cunningly devised aesthetic machinery. If this be fecundity, then sterility is a term sadly in need of re-definition.

Recently I read an article in *The New Republic* by one of our poets—and a very good poet, too—Mr. Archibald MacLeish. The article was called "Social Cant" and I have an uncomfortable feeling that Mr. MacLeish would put much of what I have said in this piece, if not all, under his title. However, it is too late to turn back now. There are a number of interesting and remarkable things said in the poet's article. One of them is that "all the histories of the church ever written are footnotes to Dante"—an observation that would astound, I feel sure, even the Pope himself. Another is that our grandchildren will find in "The Waste Land", with its Eastern reference and Elizabethan phrase, the understandable answer to questions that the whole literature of Marxism will not be able to solve—a prophesy somewhat difficult to verify at present. Still another thing said was: "The fact is that both work and leisure are concepts of an earlier time", which—you may count on it—will be of infinite comfort to the millions upon millions of men and women who at present have neither work nor leisure. This statement is, in fact, good enough to come from the White House.

Dante's Dizzy Pinnacle

But what interested me most was that although Mr. MacLeish raises Dante to such a dizzy pinnacle that all the histories of the church are only footnotes to the *Divine Comedy*—and here let us hope Mr. MacLeish never gets around to writing a variorum edition of Dante—he seems to forget that Dante himself took care to reserve good seats in hell for those unable to take sides. And so, when Mr. MacLeish urges upon us the necessity of keeping poetry free from the stigma of social cant, and we recall the religious cant that went into the making of the *Divine Comedy*, and remember that Dante himself was a political exile, we begin to wonder just where Mr. MacLeish gets off.

This is where he gets off: the chief characteristic of modern verse, he says, is that it has restored the sense of human destiny in this earth without which "all the talk of revolution, military or mechanical, is so much melodrama spelled out of a movie

scenario for the glorification of professional adventurers, sentimental intellectuals and gentlemen with an itch for shooting guns." Mr. MacLeish omitted only to mention the racketeers. Now no one could quarrel with Mr. MacLeish if he had said that modern verse *should* restore the sense of human destiny. That it has done so seems to me an extravagant claim. In any event it would seem fairly certain that it is impossible to restore this sense of human destiny at present without in some way resorting to what Mr MacLeish calls social cant. Unless, of course, by destiny you mean the inevitability of all that is taking place in the world today.

What it all boils down to is this: if the poet accepts the world as he finds it today, and even becomes mystical about it, he is restoring the sense of human destiny. But if he revolts against the world as he finds it today, and believes that a better world

is not only desirable but possible then he is merely succumbing to social cant and committing poetic suicide. And so we come back once more to our old friend sterility.

I doubt it. I doubt it on good evidence. Within the last year four of the most significant American novels—I am sorry to have to speak of novels instead of poetry but I have seen, within this same period of time, very little poetry of any significance whatsoever—our four most significant novels, I should say, have been inspired by this very social cant that Mr. MacLeish is so afraid of. They are John Dos Passos' 1919, Grace Lumpkin's *To Make My Bread*, Fielding Burke's *Call Home The Heart*, and Sherwood Anderson's *Beyond Desire*. All four of these novels have come out of the present social crisis, all are burdened with social cant and, each in its own way, all are informed with the Communist vision.

Gabriel Over Roosevelt

Harry Alan Potamkin

The picture *Gabriel Over the White House** was produced by the Hearst wing of Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer and simultaneous with its public exhibition the novel has been serialized in the Hearst press. M-G-M has compiled a newsreel sequence of the life of Franklin Roosevelt. (Universal is issuing *The Fighting President*.) And the Roosevelt literary opus is shedding its title *Looking Forward* onto an M-G-M film originally named *Service*.

Will Hays, juncture between Washington and Hollywood, has always had a tender feelin' for the Metro boys. And Hearst's political essayist, Claude Bowers, himself cordial toward a "benevolent dictator" from his party, is the new Ambassador to Spain. The book *Gabriel* reads much more like a series of political feuilletons by Bowers with a Brisbane flavor than a novel. That's why the film is superior; in a movie at least you can see the people. The latest Roosevelt-Hearst logroll is the newspaper campaign, endorsed by the fascist National Economy League and Fannie Hurst, for a Day consecrated to the President. Hearst is competing with the tabloid that floated a swimming-pool for the White House denizen.

The Hearst footsteps stalk through the novel in several instances not included in the film. The movie omits the chapter "The War in the East" depicting an American solution to strife between Japan, a Hearst phobia, on one side and Russia and China, "now highly communized," on the other. Hearst's anti-French temper is explicit at one point in the novel. These deletions from the film recall a Hearst picture prior to our entrance into the World War. The picture was anti-Jap, anti-Mexican. But Woodrow Wilson, because we were soon to become Japan's ally, asked the removal of the Nipponese flag, and by contiguity, the Mexican flag was lifted out too. Franklin Roosevelt continues the magnanimous tradition of Woodrow Wilson. The peacemaker role of President Hammond in the book *Gabriel*, identifies F. D. Roosevelt with that other demagogue of the same family (1905) and the Wilson of 1918. Of course, this Oriental war is "merely a fantasy" in a book whose events occur in the future. The film is 1933—a "prophecy" if not of ten years, then of 6 months. How very prophetic indeed is President Jud Hammond's liquidation of prohibition, and how even more delphic are the labor concentration-camps and power-projects—cheap labor for the power trust! What we may recognize as a development is the finished-fact of the book: wages are pooled and equalized down to the concentration-camp scale, out of fairness to all. The pool is administered by workmen—a corruption of the Communists unemployment program. Inflation and remission of the gold standard stressed in the novel, have been a pet theme of Arthur Brisbane back in the less "benevolent" days of Herbert Hoover.

In the novel a peace covenant is signed in London, but in the film the covenant is signed, under duress, in America. Peace is made and the debts are paid. Between the completion of the

novel and the completion of the film, Roosevelt decided, with assistance elsewhere, upon the conspiratorial trade conference in Washington. In the London conclave "the Chief Commissar of Russia" is a member of the executive committee; in the American meeting, which is an argument for Roosevelt's aviation program, the Russian is not discernible, no more than he is at the "trade conference." In both cases the moral is "Buy American" in international politics—America "benevolent dictator" of the world!

The film, in several instances, condenses two characters into one. Lindsey, the President's Secretary of Education (Propaganda) and later Secretary of Public Safety, and Beekman, the narrator of the novel and the President's personal male secretary, become Beekman in the film, with the Department of Education omitted. Lindsey is a high-power press-agent. (Gilbert Seldes, son of an anarchist and The Dial's gift to William Randolph Hearst, has recently urged "a better press" for Roosevelt. Does he want to be F. D.'s George Creel?) Lindsey urges the same, becomes a member of the dictator's cabinet. The Hammond buildup resembles the Roosevelt. Television spreads Jud Hammond into the homes and hearts of America; recall Roosevelt's radio *tete-a-tete* with the American citizens on the bank holiday. Lindsley, like W. R. Hearst, is a California newspaper publisher and son of a newspaper publisher, and also a film-producer. Like Hearst he produces a film in support of the President. The Lindsey picture is to glorify the martyrdom of Bronson, the leader of the unemployed who has been killed by the racketeers. "It was," says the narrator, "a simple matter of arranging for the transfer of cash from the President's private account to Peale . . ." "The President was secretly to pay for this monstrous ballyhoo out of his own pockets." Beekman, the narrator, is portrayed as one offended by the "bad taste" of the manoeuvre. This, of course, is a device to disarm to critic. The end justifies the means; says Lindsley: "But you don't understand, Beck. Though this is trivial and appears cheap it is a necessary item in a much bigger scheme." In other words, though *Gabriel over the White House* may be sham, it is for the good of the nation. Beekman found Lindsey's picture "brilliantly done and the acting was above criticism," but I find *Gabriel Over the White House* executed in keeping with its content—in the tradition of Hollywood subterfuge, false-front filming. The film in the book is "A box office success, it did not cost the President a cent." The entire section "Sight and Sound" is the plan for the film *Gabriel*, and is very definite evidence that the perpetrators of it knew too well the fraudulence of their entertainment-as-propaganda. Beekman, sensitive and sympathizing with the public, calls the picture (in scenario) "the most horrible atrocity ever to be inflicted on the patient and docile American cinemagoer." This perfectly characterized the film *Gabriel*. "It appeared to be cheap, tawdry propaganda and absolutely pointless." The picture *Gabriel* is "cheap, tawdry propaganda" but not "pointless."

* *Gabriel Over the White House*. By Gregory la Cava. Hollywood: M.G.M. Cosmopolitan Production.

Mr. Lippmann finds it pandering to the public's wish-fulfillment and therefore reprehensible. Is Mr. Lippmann's "learning to deal with reality" genuine or simply a matter of finesse?

Of course the film panders to the public's desire for an expeditious solution of its plight. Hollywood and pandar are one. But to what end is the audience's desire manipulated? "Dictatorship, American style." Richard Watts, Lippmann's film-colleague on the *Herald-Tribune*, attacks the end, and finds the treacheries of narrative and cinema treatment objectionable. Yet, says Watts in answer to Lippmann's snobbish proscribing of the movie to innocuous themes, the producers are to be commended for venturing into political subject-matter. The producers were forced to make this venture: first, to satisfy a changing public taste; second, to primrose the way to dictatorship. In the palmy days, "topical films" were incidental. The racketeer-picture was a first cycle of headline themes chiefly because it was cosmopolitan variation of the rural gunplay film. The "depression" was on several years before Hollywood recognized, not the "depression" as such, but certain of its noisiest outcries. Watts has himself indicated, in the instance of the "colyumist"-films, that the movie comes in at the tailend of an outcry against some evil phenomenon to whitewash the culprit. In 1932 bank-runs became subject-matter: *American Madness* is an outstanding instance. Its studio, Columbia, youngest member of the Hays political trust, followed with *Washington Merry-Go-Round*, from which *Gabriel* is a development. Walter Wanger, who produced the two Columbia films, is immediately responsible for the production of *Gabriel*. He took Huston, who was the hero in *American Madness* (and had been *Abraham Lincoln*) and made him Jud Hammond. He took Karen Morley for Pendie Malloy, the President's secretary (in the book she is described as having some Jewish blood, revealed by her "acquisitive nose") because she was the Senator's wife in *Washington Masquerade*, another M-G-M political film.

In *Washington Merry-Go-Round* the unemployed are panderers from among whom is distilled a nucleus for a fascist army, which fights the racketeers. In *Gabriel* also the racketeer

is the last enemy of the nation, and a special unit, the Green Jackets, is organized to destroy him. In *Gabriel* the leader of the unemployed (in the novel it is only a statement, in the film it is a radio hook-up) proclaims his army is free of Reds. Bronson, commander of the unemployed, is shot by the racketeers. While the immediate emotional suggestion is ostensibly the martyrdom of Bronson and the humanitarianism of Hammond, a connection is made between the marchers and the bootleggers.

Jud Hammond, the President, is a party-machine president of the Harding ilk who gets bumped on the head and awakens to an angel-voice. Ennobled by heaven, he liberates the American people from Congress (always the butt of comedians and college-professors), red tape and hunger. He is a believer in democracy and therefore is not afraid of the "label" of dictator—because the honest people will understand. Sophisticated fans too hopefully believe that the very supernaturalness of the hokum will show itself up; also that the implication that only a crackbrained president can save the country is a joke the people will see. The book has Hammond recover sanity, revert to type, and die before he betrays the people with democracy, bourgeois style. The *deus ex machina* device is an old ritualistic standby. In this instance it sanctifies the dictator, while it provides the loophole of fiction. The American audience, already duped by the glibest of campaigns, now has an active image of the "benevolent dictator" and "the new deal" (the book calls it "The New Order") which takes on in daily life the physiognomy of F. D. Roosevelt. Meanwhile the movie-campaign is enlarged with pictures glorifying Mussolini. At the showing of one of these, the supporting RKO newsreel started with a display of aviation in support of F. D.'s aero program, followed by a Jap nationalist demonstration against the League, concluding with a Hitler parade, approved by the announcer as stemming the "Red Menace." R.K.O. is a component of RCA whose head is Major-General Harbord, America's leading Nazi. In French venal slang "nazi" is syphilis: a correct picture of the virulent stage of capitalism.

Life Urge

Haakon Chevalier

I HAVE dipped long hours into the nations
Sought
The secret of the force that makes
Men unto men
Lives of millions intertwined
Layers and folds
Wheat, coal and iron
Current of electric air
The scattered cities and the shiny roads
And humming rails that bind them
The daily bread, the toil—and sleep
Hunger, long hours of emptiness—and death
Some for the white days and nights
Of peace and plenty
The many
Under the black smoke
Of factories and fear

Profit, pain and pleasure
The many for the one
And the one for himself
Many come, some go
What grows
Passes through metamorphoses
That stunt the millions
Feed and swell the few
Without, man at the man's throat
Within
Families huddled in homely flats
Boys yearning up the skirts of sallow girls
Men
Shaping between the aching thighs of taut women
Fugitive ecstasies

Shall we run away to a round island in a blue sea
With the tall smooth-barked palms and the dark
Breasts of women seen in snapshots?
Or hide in our garden shutting out today?
Shall we resolve our fears
In prayer and past and darkness
Under a shining cross that loves
The twisted flesh and twisted minds?
Shall we swallow cold steel
Greet the slipped spurt of fire
With a last spasm?

The love of labor
Linking black to white
The love of labor
Umbilical to man
Wheels, shafts and pistons
Dreams, sighs and propositions
make one whole
Man is not I but we
We are the word, we are the time
We are the rule
We are the one that are many

Time is not ended
Throw out the dead
Past that is stifling us
Throw out the dead
Present that crushes us
Throw out the dead
Gather our strength
Draw aside the curtain of tomorrow
Make
Life, love and labor that is ours

We have the substance
Of worlds yet to be built

B O O K S

Barricades in Berlin

BARRICADES IN BERLIN, By Klaus Neukrantz. International Publishers. New York. Reg. \$1.50. Pop. \$0.75.

STORM OVER THE RUHR, By Hans Marchwitza. International Publishers. New York. Reg. \$1.50. Pop. \$0.75.

Barricades in Berlin and *Storm Over the Ruhr* are two highly documented novels dealing with revolutionary insurrections of the German workers. In both instances the outbreaks are against the perfidious Social Democratic regime which came into power after the World War and which was only recently interred by the Nazis in the terroristic elections on March 5, 1933. There is an interval of nine years between these two revolts, that is, the Spartacist uprising in the Red Ruhr in 1920 and the Bloody May Days of 1929 in the Koslinerstrasse, Berlin. These two books, absorbing and stirring pamphlet-like novels, must both be read in order to capture and complete political picture. For the struggle of the Spartacus Movement against the Noske Government (*Storm Over The Ruhr*) historically released the conditions and events which culminated in the shocking carnage of the workers in and around the Alexanderplatz (*Barricades in Berlin*).

From the very outset the "story" of *Barricades in Berlin* moves apace. The workers, cement haulers, laborers, most of whom are party members of the street cell, are gathered together in the *Red Nightingale*, a dark and cramped pub. The Social Democratic Government has just put a ban on the coming May Day demonstration, and the men are vehemently denouncing this nefarious proscription. However, Nolle, a stalwart bricklayer who holds a S.P.D. card, is not willing to believe that the government which he and several million other workers elected will prohibit the May Day parade. He is only persuaded of his error after a futile attempt to call upon the police president, who also holds a S.P.D. card and is a "Socialist comrade" in Nolle's district. The permit to parade, of course, is not granted.

Nevertheless, on May Day, the workers fall into ranks. The hollow gray gaps of the tenement windows are filled with red flags and harassed but courageous women whose faces, "set and colorless, bore the common imprint of years of heavy labor, and daily anxieties: the uniform of the oppressed class."

No sooner do the steel helmets and bluecoats attack and open fire than the revolutionary leaders realize that they are trapped in the street which is sealed at both ends by police. An unforgettable picture to those who witnessed the Washington Hunger March! The police give no quarter. They baton the heads of women, children and men right and left, and with a psychopathic savagery that has always been common among the police and pinkertons of all the world.

The defenseless workers meet the pistol fire of the police with their fists and with what stones they can pick up and heave at their enemies. The women at the windows scream and also throw stones. Those who are unable to retreat into their houses are ordered to lie down flat on the flagstones. In the meantime, the one thought running through the heads of the workers is, Where can we get arms! And in the hearts of those who have been wounded: "Go on shooting . . . shoot, murder, kill . . . Whom do you think you are killing? Can you shoot our slums . . . our hunger . . . our diseases . . . our unemployment? You murderers of workers! Long live, Long live what you can never kill with revolvers or cannon: Long Live the Victory of the World Revolution."

By this time trouble has broken out in other streets where the May Day parade has been organized. The courage of these unarmed insurrectionists becomes something epic, and the reader is compelled to participate in the struggle. And no matter how

sanguinary the fight becomes the scenes are never lurid or melodramatic. Here both Klaus Neukrantz, the author, and the German proletariat who took part in the Bloody May Days of 1929 (for neither the characters nor the events have been "invented") deserve no end of commendation.

As soon as the police have been ordered to other streets to quell the "putsch," the proletarians turn a wagon over on its side, loosen the flagstones and build a barricade. Then they disappear into their houses and lock their doors. As night approaches the police return with armored cars and mounted machine-guns. The few workers who have pistols keep up a sporadic firing to hold the police at bay. Under the impression that the workers are armed to the teeth and are just biding their time, the police give the barricades a wide berth. Afraid of passing the barricades behind which there is nothing but an empty street, the detachment at one end of the Koslinerstrasse start to attack the police at the other.

At the close of the siege and the book, which is filled with news items apropos of the "rioteers," Neukrantz writes: "Indiscriminately the police arrested all who fell into their hands. Should Berlin be treated to the farce of a handful of proletarians keeping thousands of policemen, equipped with the most modern weapons at bay for three days?"

Storm Over the Ruhr, by Hans Marchwitza, reads like a war despatch. Although not a better written book than *Barricades in Berlin*, it is in many respects a more comprehensive panorama of revolutionary struggle.

The capture of Essen rapidly followed by the disintegration of the proletarian army just as Wesel is about to be seized by the Spartacists is a heartrending spectacle. Moreover, it is an illuminating commentary upon the Social Democrats whose bloodless tactics and overtures to the Noskeites created the spurious rumors of truce which sent many of the workers' regiments home.

After Fadeyev's *The 19*, tangled in a befuddled Chekhovian haze and the sensationalism of Gladhov's *Cement*, *Barricades in Berlin* and *Storm Over the Ruhr* are a genuine relief. In the light of some of our own assortment of quasi-left novels and domestic literary fustian, the hard integrity and political awareness of these two revolutionary German writers are especially pronounced.

Barricades in Berlin and *Storm Over the Ruhr* should spare the reader the trouble of going through *Union Square*, a fake proletarian novel, acclaimed and taken by the Literary Guild which, like the Pulitzer Committee, has the distinction of having been invariably wrong. And for those readers who are familiar with publishers' sleazy methods of advertising books, the multifarious blurbs on the dust-jacket of *Union Square* should be very informative. The names of the enthusiastic endorsers, Fannie Hurst, Ruth Hale (Mrs. Heywood Brown), V. F. Calverton, Alfred Kreymborg, and others, read like a list of co-signers for the Morris Plan.

However, when we note that Klaus Neukrantz, living in a compact little country of 60,000,000 people, only heard about "Socialism" after four and half years in the trenches and only when he was about to join a secret Fascist organization, perhaps there is small wonder that our American critics know as little as they do about proletarian literature. The only reason they don't know less is that they couldn't.

In the meantime, if the critics and the *New York Times* bury *Barricades in Berlin* and *Storm Over the Ruhr* ignorance won't be the only reason.

EDWARD DAHLBERG

The Bonus Army

B. E. F. THE WHOLE STORY OR THE BONUS ARMY. By W. W. Waters as told to William C. White. John Day. \$2.00.

No recent American event has so exhibited the political bankruptcy of Socialist and liberal as their opposition to the veterans' struggle. "The demand for bonus payment is unfair to the unemployed, to the debt-burdened farmers, and to the whole country" declared the *New Leader*. And so—these militant defenders of the masses make a united front with the capitalist class and state against the "unfair" veterans. How, I asked the editor of *The Nation*, did he account for the fact that his National Committee against Prepayment of the Bonus is, except

for himself, composed of bankers and big businessmen. Oswald Garrison Villard answered:

"Your letter embarrasses me a great deal. It cannot be used in *The Nation* in its present form because I joined that committee in my private capacity and not as Editor of *The Nation*. I did not know when I joined it that it was going to be composed of the men who have now joined, nor did I know what literature was going to be put out. I wanted to make it known however, in some clear way how opposed I am to the prepayment of the bonus. . . ."

The Socialist and liberal fall back, then, on the usual Philistine's subjectivism to distinguish their opposition to the veterans from that of the capitalists. From such thinking it is no doubt too much to expect recognition of the *objective* distinction between the capitalist program of flattering the veterans and the present veteran revolt.

Troop-ship riots, revolts in the trenches, the refusal of American soldiers to fight the Bolsheviks, the short-lived but significant Sailors and Soldiers Councils in the Northwest, the pronounced disaffection of the returned soldiers, all this spurred the ruling class to action; the jingo veterans' organizations were formed and by numberless devices, ranging from the seductions of fraternalism to outright coercion by employers, a considerable section of the veterans were corralled. To keep them corralled required a certain amount of governmental favoritism. The veterans got more ballyhoo than actuality. Most of the money listed as the "veterans' racket" goes for service disabilities and the hospitals in which are hidden the dismembered victims of the war. All that the veterans as a whole got was, in 1924, adjusted compensation certificates payable in 1945; these were to partly equalize the differences in pay enjoyed by the civilian in contrast to the servicement; a later law permitted loans at interest of half the face value of the certificates. By 1932 this money, averaging about \$500, had been borrowed by practically all eligible veterans. They now demanded immediate payment of the other half. Their needs, in the third year of the crisis, conflicted with the capitalist class' needs for lowered taxes and government costs. The jingo veteran's associations, of course, stood with the government. In this process, a measure which had been passed in 1924 as a means of regimenting veterans and keeping them loyal had, by 1932, become an incubus to the veteran's organizations and the capitalist class. Here was a splendid opportunity for the working class movement.

The fight for the bonus is waged against the will of the reactionary veterans' organizations: Here is the chance to smash the deliberate separation of veterans from the working class. The least class-conscious veterans put most hope for succor in the bonus: All the more reason to make common cause with them and, as the struggle progresses, tirelessly teach them that unemployment insurance is as necessary to them as the bonus. Transform the bonus demand into mass action, into a march on Washington, and the perspectives grow: Issues inimical to the capitalist class, fought for by mass action, are the road to revolutionary consciousness.

This realistic approach is beyond liberal and socialist: instead, they joined hands with the capitalist enemies of the Bonus March. Battling against such an array of forces, the class-conscious veterans were unable to prevent the imposition on the encampments of a stool-pigeon leadership which, as he has since boasted, was directly controlled by General Glassford.

Walter W. Waters, now blossoming as an "author," was Glassford's choice as commander of the B.E.F. His book is a very poor alibi; he omits, among other things, the fact that he and his staff, in order to prevent an investigation of their racketeering, incorporated the B.E.F., vesting ownership in themselves; that two months after the Bonus March, even a hand-picked convention of the B.E.F. called for a second march, and the B.E.F. and the Khaki Shirts denounced his treachery; and that he wired the governors of the forty-eight states to prevent a second march. But I pass by these minutiae. Elsewhere I have told in detail how General Glassford, Waters & Co. tried to break up the Bonus Army by isolating it from Washington, turning it from mass action, starving and terrorizing it; how the veterans would not be led out of Washington, so that, in the end, the government's offensive had to turn to provocation

and armed troops to drive them out. Here I may add that liberal-socialist opposition to the veterans was supplemented by a whitewash of the leader of the government offensive, General Glassford. The use of troops was but the continuation by new means of the tactics of the previous two months of Glassford. He himself, in a series of articles published throughout the country on the eve of election, articles distinguished for their outright cynicism, told much of the truth. Yet so dull are their political senses, that no liberal or socialist commented on Glassford's true role. His astuteness in separating himself from Hoover's use of troops completely befuddled the liberal-socialist camp. More, not only while Glassford was breaking the march, but again two months after the veterans had been driven out, and after Hoover's War Department, in retaliation for Glassford's side-stepping, had made public Glassford's recommendation of June 3rd for the use of troops, Norman Thomas announced his profound admiration for Glassford and *The Nation's* New Year Honor Roll honored Glassford for his "handling of the bonus army"!

One final comment on the liberal-socialist mentality, so akin to that of Glassford & Waters. Why did Hoover finally use the troops? Waters now admits—since Glassford has revealed it—that for weeks he had been secretly attempting to evacuate the Bonus Army from Washington. Both Glassford and Waters claim that a few more days' work would have done the trick. But Waters' own figures belie him. Despite the disappointment of Congress adjourning on July 16, despite the government's offer of transportation home, Waters' orders for those with homes to go back to them, despite the starving and terrorizing of the veterans—"I kept the chow thin on them," Glassford boasted—more than two thirds of the veterans, 15,000 of them, were still encamped on July 26. And Waters does not mention that new

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groups of veterans were coming in or still on the road the very day the troops were used; nor that the Washington newspapers were reporting large groups of unemployed, inspired by the veterans' march, setting out on the road. In other words, despite all that Glassford, Waters & Co. had done, the veterans were still in Washington with more coming, and the unemployed joining them. The time had arrived when the capitalist class and its government could only smash the Bonus Army by force of arms. Waters, however, claims that Hoover used the troops in order to make political capital! Can one doubt that Hoover knew what damage he was doing to his chances for re-election? Yet not only Waters and Glassford (who need it for their alibi) but the liberal and Socialist comment, spoke of Hoover stupidly using the troops. It was a matter of personal stupidity of viciousness that armed force was used against the most significant mass action of decades! But liberal-socialist refusal to see the use of armed force as itself a measure of the significance of the Bonus March, is a natural corollary of their refusal to recognize the class nature of the state.

FELIX MORROW

An Author Reviews His Own Book

THE NEW BRIDGE, by Meyer Levin; Covici-Friede. \$2.00

The publishers feel that *The New Bridge* is a proletarian novel; the comrades think it is counter-revolutionary. Proletarian, because much of the story tells of the fight to keep Joe Joracek, a laborer, from being evicted from a tenement that he helped build. Counter-revolutionary because much of the story is about Simon Marks, the landlord of the tenements, who is on the point of bankruptcy, and who is presented as a bewildered human being rather than as a louse.

If a proletarian novel must tell of the lives of workers in such a way as to directly urge a revolution that will bring about a dictatorship of the laboring class, then *The New Bridge* is not, and never was intended to be a proletarian novel.

If a counter-revolutionary novel is one that contains any matter that would impede a worker from believing in the necessity for a change, revolutionary or otherwise, in our social-economic or governmental structure, then *The New Bridge* is not a counter-revolutionary novel.

I shall not take refuge in the creative artist's Geneva cloaked under the truism that art can be measured only in terms of beauty. For at present our social structure presses so far in upon the life of the individual as to become a major determinant in his behavior, and therefore no study of human beings can attain the proportions of beauty until it has adjusted within itself the weight of that social argument.

I was trying, in *The New Bridge*, to write an American kind of a proletarian novel. I believe that in America the vast bourgeoisie usually lumped with the capitalists should rather be recognized as a part of the proletariat. I think American society is so constructed that the "masses" are bourgeoisie rather than proletarian in understanding. I think a revolutionary writing patterned after the given definition of proletarian writing would be bad art and bad propaganda here.

That is what my story says. Joracek, the laborer, is about to be evicted for owing three months rent. Joracek's daughter, Marie, a girl of 13, is drawn to Red Feingold, who lives next door. He is a tough guy, and his mother, who runs a newspaper stand, is tougher. They try to get all the neighbors to resist the eviction. Several of the housewives get brooms and baseball bats and block the stairs. The marshall comes, with Al Mullins, a cowardly cop, and Young Harris, a bum. In the fight on the stairs, Al Mullins' gun goes off and kills Red Feingold.

Then Mrs. Joracek takes the gun away from Al Mullins, imprisons him and the marshall and the bum, while the neighbors hold a kind of trial to decide who was responsible for the death of Red Feingold. The bum helps them decide. They feel that Simon Marks, the owner of the building, is guilty. Joe Joracek goes out to kill Simon Marks.

The story then tells about M. Marks. He put all of his money into building those blocks of tenements on the other side of the bridge. He is broke. His wife makes life hell for him. His

son wants to play a mouth-organ in a night club instead of going into the diplomatic service. His daughter is becoming an old maid. When Joracek appears and points the gun at him, Simon Marks is ready to die for having brought so much horror and unhappiness into the world. Joracek loses his nerve and runs away without shooting. Simon Marks runs out to commit suicide.

Joracek, ashamed to return to his wife after this last failure, also goes to jump off the bridge. There, he sees Simon Marks.

There ensues a fantastically real conversation; a groping toward each other by these two men who at first fail to recognize each other. Simon Marks has put his wallet, his cigarette case, the deed for the houses, his watch, every symbol of himself into his derby hat, so that he would have "no identification" on his body. Joracek takes the hat and his gun, and throws them down into the water.

Of course that gesture is unreal. It is the symbol that the author has imposed on the story. The hat containing the deeds, the wallet, the business cards, represents our entire artificial structure of society. If that could be done away with, the author says, in some way we would rid ourselves of our tags and paper measurements, if in some way we could reach a realization of our selves, we could establish a true relationship with each other. But Simon Marks has saved something out of the hat. Two five dollar bills. He gives one to Joracek. They stand there, two sad little men; they have managed to strip themselves of their faith in every fictitious power except that of the five dollar bill. With that, I leave them.

What will happen to them? Have I adroitly constructed a situation that will please everyone? Have I said "write your own ticket" that the communists will feel I am with them, and the capitalists that I am on their side? I knew some such accusation would be brought against me. But I have shown all through the book where my sympathies lie.

"Show a way out" is a common critical demand upon the problem novel. But I am not writing of Utopia! I have shown our situation as it appears to me; I have stated my feelings about the comparative social worth of the characters in the book by measuring them one against the other; multiply that residue by our millions of population, and perhaps a sufficient balance will be found to indicate clearly what I believe will eventually be "the way out." My job is not to advise political action; I simply devise constructions of form, and try my best to have the elements that must balance in the constructed form be of true materials, unfaked weights.

I do not hide the pillars of form. They are stone, not papier-mache. For the shapes, however perfectly arranged, must bear pressure. It is not entirely an accident that my book is called *The New Bridge*; and that its construction may, in many parts, be set up in direct parallel to the construction of Mr. Thornton Wilder's *Bridge of San Luis Rey*. I have no fear of being charged with having borrowed his pattern. I was glad when I saw that I had a story which could honestly be treated as the Wilder story had been treated, for I saw that the two books would make an excellent illustration of the place of form among the other elements of the novel. Very few readers would, without being instructed, detect any similarity between the two books. Yet *The Bridge of San Luis Rey* tells of five people who came onto a bridge, whether by providential impulsion or accident, to meet their death. The author then traces the lives of the five people, seeking for hints as to why they were, at that moment, brought together in death. *The New Bridge* tells of two men who came onto a bridge, to seek their death. The author traces the lives of those two men, showing why they are, at that moment, brought together in want of death.

Shall a writer be aloof, showing us, through his telescope, people on a far shore moving gracefully and rhythmically in a seeming pattern, making us wonder whether their unexplained movements are the imposed measures of a deity-directed pantomime, or whether they are the blind cavortings of sportive chance; or shall the writer be with us among the people as they stumble quarrelsomely through their badly directed and insufficiently understood epic, improvising where the script is bare; or shall the writer leap above the stage, and tell the people exactly how they must perform their dance? And who shall tell him?

MEYER LEVIN.

Gathering Storm

GATHERING STORM, by Myra Page. Illustrated by Juanita Preval. International Publishers. \$1.25.

"Workers down in Birmingham like Myra Page's book, *Gathering Storm*," one of the southern organizers told me. What better compliment to a book that was written about workers for workers to read?

Gathering Storm is like a movie reel of the lives of a group of southern whites and Negroes living in this first generation of the twentieth century. Sometimes, like a movie, the action skips along so fast that the watcher doesn't quite follow the threads connecting the characters. Fortunately one can turn back the pages of a book to trace the thread where one cannot stop the unwinding movie reel.

This effort to include so many of the possible happenings to her Negro and white worker-characters also gives *Gathering Storm* a movie melodramatic effect. But the book's loss in literary polish is made up for by its clear-sightedness on the class issues.

The whole gamut of events—drawing the mountain whites to the mills (told directly), the mill grind, relations of white and Negro mill workers, the assault on the Negro housekeeper, her sweet heart's avenging her death, his lynching, the Chicago packing-house strikes and race riots, the influence of the Wobblies on white and Negro youths from the South, the World War, strike and betrayal by the United Textile Workers, later stretch-out, and strike under revolutionary leadership (based on Gastonia), and vision of the gathering storm of revolution in these United States—these are written of with social understanding. It is the understanding of one who has studied Marxism and Leninism.

The author is the *Daily Worker* correspondent in the Soviet Union, where she went after completing the novel. She is a southerner and knows her South, as well as the world class struggle. She has constructed a brave and ambitious book, one more frank and plainspoken than any of the others which have grown out of the same background of industrializing the South.

But if the southern workers are enjoying it, some others have not found it so easy to read. A northern worker told me that she could not push through half the book. She found the southern dialect too difficult, just as a southern worker would find it hard to read about northern workers if it were written in Yiddish-American dialect. The dialect of *Gathering Storm* is faithfully done, but perhaps there is too much of it for the average reader. Even southern workers complain that stories in dialect are misspelled and misrepresent their speech. They are not conscious that their speech is so different from the accepted "radio-correct." Personally, I think the flavor of dialect can be given by the use of occasional apt words and constructions. Otherwise a glossary is called for, which slows up the reading.

Gathering Storm is one of our first few American novels of and for workers. It is essentially regional in background, which is good. We could use many more, written with as keen understanding, for all the other many regions of the country. The field is rich.

ESTHER LOWELL.

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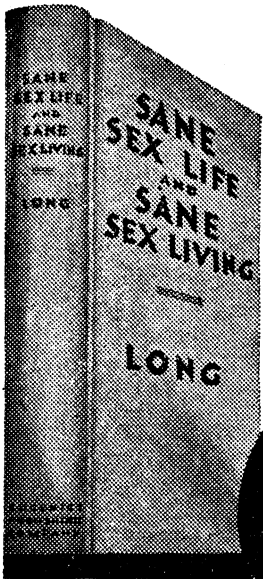
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From the Congressional Record, Page 4922, Issue of February 23, 1933

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