

PACIFIC WEEKLY

A WESTERN JOURNAL OF FACT AND OPINION

JUNE 7, 1935



UNITED FRONT

BY LINCOLN STEFFENS

THE TERROR GOES ON

BY HARRY CONOVER

SHOES

BY PETER QUINCE

PROFESSOR SPEAKS OUT

BY HARRY C. STEINMETZ

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PACIFIC WEEKLY

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NOTES AND COMMENT

SHEER NONSENSE

PRONOUNCED unconstitutionality of the NRA by the Supreme Court only goes farther to prove that the Constitution is an instrument justifiably prized by the capitalists of the country and a document protective of the capitalist system. Naturally, as such, it would have the defense of the San Francisco Chronicle. Naturally, as such, it has. In a front page editorial Sunday the Chronicle comes out with a rally-round-the-constitution-boys editorial which is just as vapid, just as specious, as rally-round-the-constitution-boys editorials generally are.

The Chronicle endeavors to put some meat into it; tries actually to find something beyond sentiment on which to base its contention that the basic document must remain inviolate. It falls back on the semi-autonomy of the states. It says of the Constitution:

It is the very substance of the form of government which has stood the test which no other form could have met.

It has been possible for this Nation to expand to a continental domain without breaking up, because it is a federation of States, in which the local concerns of a far-flung people are handled by the States, and the general ones by the Federal government; because it is a government of limited powers, defined in a written Constitution, with a Supreme Court to safeguard them; and because its purpose is to preserve the liberties of the people.

This is the best the Chronicle can do—base the sanctity of the Constitution on the threadbare principle of states' rights. "It is the very substance of the form of government which has stood the test which no other form could have met," says the Chronicle. Stood what test? It hasn't stood the test of making people any happier, any safer against the ravages of a capitalist-engineered depression because they lived in Kansas or New York or California instead of the District of Columbia, Alaska or Hawaii. The fact that Kansans and New Yorkers and Californians are blest with states' rights hasn't guaranteed them any more certainty of comfort than District of Columbians, Alaskans or residents of Hawaii have been assured of,

living under the "un-American" conditions of almost complete control by the federal government.

The truth is that the Chronicle's palaver about the sanctity of the Constitution is sheer nonsense. The truth is that whether a thing is constitutional or unconstitutional has no bearing on its value, its merit or its virtue. The truth is that capitalism in the United States and the defenders of the system of big business whereby the worker is at the mercy of the employer are offering up thanks to the United States supreme court for throwing out a program whose virtue, if its only one, had been the terse command to business that it not only do what is right and fair, but continue to do it even when it becomes monotonous and ceases to be patriotic. In other words, Big Business is hilarious over the fact that Mr. Hughes and his court have told it that it can continue to do as it pleases without interference from the government; that all it has to combat is the now-unaided opposition of its employees; that no longer may labor stand within the protective arm of Washington.

The NRA may not have been perfect, but it was a gesture of justice, and as a gesture it was offensive to capital and, consequently, quite as offensive to the San Francisco Chronicle.

FIRST AMERICAN WRITERS' CONGRESS

THE first Congress of Creative Writers ever to be held in America took place in New York April 26-28. California writers were represented by Harry Carlisle, author of *Darkness at Noon* and Tillie Lerner who is a contributor to PACIFIC WEEKLY. The first open meeting at Mecca Temple was jammed to aisles and window-sills and hundreds were turned away, thus proving that there is life and interest and vitality among the left-wing writers not to be found in bourgeois groups today. That this was so was brought out clearly by journals such as the *Nation*, *New Republic* and *Baltimore Sun*, which devoted special articles to the congress; while even John Chamberlain, daily book reviewer for the *New York Times*, wrote of the congress in the very conservative *Saturday Review of Literature*: "The first American Writers' Congress held recently in New York City was a very agreeable surprise."

The Congress divided into many groups and serious discussions were held by dramatists, poets, novelists, short story writers separately, relating to the problems of their crafts and their relation to the working class and the revolutionary movement. It has frequently been commented that most of the younger and more gifted writers today turn to the revolutionary movement.

Among those who read papers that were greeted with acclaim were Malcolm Cowley, literary editor of the *New Republic*, who dealt with the need of struggle in defense of culture, that is, the organization of writers in the fight against fascism and reaction; Waldo Frank, Josephine Herbst, Michael Gold, Granville Hicks, Kenneth Burke, and Earl Browder, general secretary of the Communist Party. Friedrich Wolf, author of *Sailors of Cattaro*, successful play now running on Broadway, brought greetings from Germany and described the lot of writers in Germany under fascism today; he also told what the writers were doing to struggle against it. His

address was greeted with deep emotion, for the greatest writers in Germany have been tortured, some to death (recently Erich Muehsam was found hanged in a toilet in a concentration camp), beaten, imprisoned, exiled. No self-respecting artist remains in Nazi Germany.

Kenneth Burke, whose *Permanence and Change* is just being reviewed in the press, wrote of the Congress in the *Nation*:

"Particularly to those of us who had been taught to think of a literary renaissance as about six men assembled in the back room of a saloon to discuss the need of a magazine, it was a revolution in itself to behold 4,000 people packing the pit, balcony, gallery and stage of Mecca Temple to consider the problems of literature."

The *Baltimore Sun* had this to say in a special editorial on the Writers' Congress:

"The meeting was not simply an aimless gathering, nor was it one designed to bring together all kinds of writers to discuss 'art' abstractly as it was once discussed when literary people met among themselves. . . More strictly, these writers are men and women who have come to think of their work as being related, one way or another, to 'the revolutionary labor movement in America'. They represent the whole movement toward a proletarian literature, a 'revolutionary' literature, a literature of the left which, in fairness one had to concede, whether he likes it or not, approves of it or not, thinks it lasting or merely fashionable, has quite surely become a marked, significant and perhaps the dominant tendency in contemporary American writing. . . Their meeting together to discuss the problems of which they have been made aware by the depression, their decision (in some cases quite clear, in others no doubt vague but sincere) to align themselves at least in spirit with the working class, is a happening of very real importance, however else one judges it, something new in the cultural life of the country, something that thoughtful people must recognize and understand."

About 225 delegates attended this Congress, 64 of them coming from 24 other states. The original call had been signed by 70 writers. After the first open meeting, sessions were open only to delegates and invited guests. There were 36 women writers, 31 Negro writers, four from Mexico and two Cuban delegates. A series of cables of greeting were received from the Soviet Union, France and China. No such Congress has ever been held anywhere except in the Soviet Union. Next month a similar one is to be held in France.

Writers and artists have begun to realize with deep emotion and a willingness to act, that they can, they must, do something to combat the Barbarian Invasion of the twentieth century, the onslaught on culture and all cultural values implied in Fascism and its twin brother, War.

FIRST EPIC CONVENTION

THE first EPIC Convention since last November's election was held in Los Angeles last month. Reported as a lively performance by the daily papers these nevertheless missed its real significance. While Upton Sinclair "ran" it, not allowing crucial issues to come to a vote, there was a lot going on in the body of the hall.

A left-wing body was formed inside the Epic movement which has now some eighty delegates participating. At the start of the Convention the left-wing movement had 37 delegates—the largest single group. Congressman Shoemaker, of

the Farmer-Labor Party, was next with 26 delegates, and Huey Long had 5. At the end of the Convention the latter two groups had entirely disappeared. "In fact," writes one of the delegates, "Huey Long's movement hardly got under way at all. The left-wing movement gained strength considerably and Sinclair's apparent retaining control was a hollow victory. Actually, he lost considerable strength at the Convention."

Huey Long boasted that if he merely showed his nose in California he could take Sinclair's movement away from him. This does not seem to have happened. The left-wing movement will work for the Labor Party.

In San Francisco the Epic movement has already announced that they are planning to unite with the Communists on a united labor ticket in the Fall elections.

On another page in this issue Lincoln Steffens, departing from his usual column, gives his ideas on the importance of such united action now.

FREEDOM FROM THE PRESS

THE San Francisco *Examiner* has an article, written more in sorrow than in anger, but perhaps more in astonished wonder than either, reporting that Dr. George Counts is going to attend the Anglo-American division of the Summer Session of Moscow University this summer. A number of other American educators are going with him.

It is most surprising. Did not the Hearst papers devote a number of editorials, complete with caps, black-face, italics and exclamation marks, telling the world of the iniquities of these educators who were going to the Land of Poison to imbibe Poison which they would then return and distil into the Veins of Innocent American School-children and Students? Yes, they did.

But the educators took no notice! The editorials didn't frighten them into staying at home!! They braved the wrath of William Randolph, the sneers of his caps, the venom of his exclamation marks, remained true, American, undaunted citizens with the pioneer virtue of Courage, and they are going all the same.

SOMETHING MUST BE DONE.

NO, YOU DON'T MEAN IT!

THE New York *World-Telegram* has a pleasing little editorial on the dismissal of two instructors and three technicians at the Columbia University Medical Center for protesting against official opposition to anti-war activities (May 27). Fourteen students are to be refused readmittance next semester for similar peace activities. Says the paper:

Such activities indicated no incompetence in the healing art but rather a proper professional distress at butchery and destruction. But no other explanation has been given why they are losing their jobs.

And then it goes on:

The incident would seem to be a timely warning to Dr. Nicholas Murray Butler himself. Besides being president of the university, he has busied himself enormously for ten years as president of the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace. He has gone so far as to accept the Nobel Prize for Peace. If he keeps up his peace activities he may find himself dismissed along with these members of the anti-war committee.

This is where the *World-Telegram* becomes semi-humorous.

Dr. Butler need not fear dismissal. It's all right to talk peace. All you mustn't do is work for peace, actively fight for peace. You can say it all you want; but you mustn't mean it.

EVERY PASSER-BY A POLITICIAN

THERE is a boycott on of the Standard Oil Company which does not permit its members to unionize. The company has been listed in labor papers as "Unfair to Labor" and the boycott was determined on some three months ago. Now the Shell Oil Stations report that their sales of gasoline have doubled in the last three months and Associated Oil Stations have sold 18,000 gallons more this month than the previous month in San Francisco alone. The filling station attendants now proudly display their green union badges; they, too, are making something out of the boycott of Standard Oil.

And the consumer? The consumer has the proud distinction, the pleasant feeling of committing a political act each time he passes by a Standard Oil Station and doesn't stop there for his gas. Standard Oil was reported to have contributed two million dollars to break the longshoremen's strike and one million to help beat Sinclair. Thus there are plenty of union men, EPIC men, workers and consumers generally to take pride in continuing the boycott.

+

CARR STRIKES!

BY RIP

UNDER the Hoover regime union labor had become so complacent that some kind of ginger, or a pretence of it, had to be shot into N. R. A. to stir men towards an attempt to get back their lost standard of living. And San Francisco, the spearpoint of unionism in this our land, recently showed the southern metropolis just how to go about doing it, for it later turned out that victory gained in the North was an incitement to some small effort in the South. But that isn't the way Harry Carr, the Lancer columnist of the Los Angeles Times, saw it.

No, Mr. Carr doesn't like car strikes: he doesn't like any kind of strikes, nor yet the people who indulge in them, although he does like San Francisco, (when he writes his books), even going so far as to call the northern town a "He-town" when comparing it to the femininity of Los Angeles. He tells us that "Everything in the psychology of Los Angeles is feminine, from the movies to the beautiful shops. San Francisco lives in today. No other city in America knows so well how to do things with delicacy and charm. Los Angeles eats and San Francisco dines." (*West is Still West*).

But if Mr. Carr knew as much about the history of the white people in this state as he does about the Mexicans and Indians he would know that whatever delicacy and charm San Francisco has is due principally to the activities of laboring men, "He-men", if that phrase means anything, who, as early as the year 1857, were organizing their crafts into unions in order to ensure themselves a white man's existence; a regime of status and not of stew.

Yes, in his Time (s) Mr. Carr has "seen a lot of car strikes, and never one that did not end with enraged citizens turning out with shotguns". The tragedy of which, alas, is only too

correct. Moose-paper men do have the unhappy faculty of instructing and stimulating others to do their "duty". Especially is this the case when these "feminine" towns are made up of "conservative middle-class people . . . from the Middle West with a little money they had saved up: bought homes and automobiles and became almost passionate Californians". So much is this so that Mr. Carr also doubts "if there is any other city in the world which so fiercely resents outside interference". (*Times*, Nov. 29, '34)

But alongside the "Middle-Class" Mr. Carr also recognizes another class which is also a "selective group that had the enterprise to pick up and come to California". Further, "their moderate wages (sic) bring them opportunities to enjoy life that do not come to people of vastly greater incomes in other countries".

When the principle of unionism was laid in San Francisco, as early as the year 1857, it really took a little "enterprise" to reach this west coast, but who can use such a term today in buying a ticket for a Pullman and eating in a diner? One need hardly go as far as R. L. Stevenson to show that it is never the "enterprising" people who come to California in these days of plush seas. On the contrary, it's the weak and unadapted, men and women who seek to escape the rigors of competition in their own bailiwick. It is these who have filled up California in the last thirty years. All of which, incidentally, would account for the greater proportion of suicides to any other state: the greater number of cranks and religious maniacs, and the lunatic fringe in politics. Thinking that California is a synonym for Nirvana they quickly give up when they cannot return to the womb's satisfactions, or else become Utopians or Technocrats. The only reservation to this broad statement would be people who were out working in pictures, that is, temporarily, or who had come out because the industry was here and they were needed. However, it's a nice point that cannot be settled by speaking of the "enterprise" of wage-cutting scabs.

But San Francisco wasn't built up on such unstable chromosomes. Its citizens are descended from the early pioneers, while those who came later usually worked their way. And when they work today they demand, and get, real money, while in Los Angeles the workers seem to be quite satisfied with an existence their "moderate wages" bring them. The

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status of one craft alone, one that anyone can walk into a meat-market and verify any day, will suffice to point this up. Butchers in the South work twelve hours a day for twelve dollars a week (if they are lucky). In the North they work eight hours a day for thirty-seven (minimum) a week. So Mr. Carr is quite wrong when he says: "Families can live better and have more free enjoyment in Southern California than anywhere else on the map." ("free enjoyment" is very, very good).

And Mr. Carr should know that it was not "peripatetic racketeers" who brought this change about, this differential between North and South, it was just a steady demand through the years of San Francisco's trade unionists, with an imitation "general strike" when the Fat Lads needed a little jogging about their ethics—getting the police to shoot down men instead of honest toe-to-toe bargaining.

And yet, sociologist Carr thinks the "general strike was due to foreign agitators". Indeed he tells us that "he was in San Francisco when the unions called the general strike in support of the dock workers. The men who actually worked in the unions (sic) did not want to strike. Had there been a secret ballot there would have been no strike. A foreign agitator named Bridges called for the 'aye' votes to strike: then snarled 'and if there's any — — — who has the nerve to vote "no" let him dare to stand up!' The Hall was packed with his

thugs; no one stood up." (Times, Nov. 28, '35)

All of which is journalistic tripe.

In the first place Harry Bridges, President of the Longshoremen's Union, is an American citizen, born in Australia. Secondly, it was the Teamsters' Union that made the strike possible, and Mr. Bridges wasn't allowed in their meeting while the balloting (which was secret) went on. Further, when the "strategy committee" was formed he wasn't part of it, and all the unions (177) voted separately on the question of whether to join the strike or not. It was the Teamsters and the Street-car men who helped make the strike the success it was. But more than all it was the impressive funeral march, a few days before, of thousands of workers behind the bodies of two men whom the police killed that set the jaws of the descendants of the pioneers in labor agitation and turned the psychology of the majority of San Francisco's citizens in their favor.

And if the "feminine" town of Ellay can learn anything from a "He" town, it's fair enough. But the "Middle Class" from Ioway who have suddenly become "passionate Californians" will, if they are wise, leave their shotguns at home; there is nothing that stirs up the workers quicker, and, more important, consolidates them better, than a good-sized funeral of one of their own. It might lead to what Jack London called "The Dream of Gene Debs".



UNITED FRONT

BY LINCOLN STEFFENS

WE ARE hearing a good deal about the United Front in Left circles these days but we are not seeing much, and seeing is believing, not hearing. And the United Front is very important just now; that is what liberalism has always been for—action. Not knowingly, of course. Liberals have thought, I think, the open mind is a condition, a philosophic attitude of scientific receptivity which was "right" thinking. Thus could man see the truth. But historically we can see that the hospitality to news and ideas was in fact a result of indecision in a period when we thought we had security, when there was no hurry, when action was not necessary. Men could think and differ in thought. Gradually the notion that liberalism was permanent brought our various, pleasant thinking to the crystallization of a creed. And we liberals did have a creed. To put it in political phraseology, we had a platform; in some countries we had a Liberal Party.

All through that easy period economic forces were at work, which finally called upon us free thinkers to draw our free thinking to a conclusion, a decision. Our security went to smash, leaving millions of men without food and without any planned resources whether for work or for thought. The ruling groups of business and political government were dazed and helpless. It was a new world that faced them. Their old world ran up against our old acts, policies, plans and philosophies, and we had no sure premises for our busted logic. Just now our government and its enemies are in collision with the

Constitution which we regard and which we teach our children is the surest thing we have got.

President Roosevelt talks about changing it, and the Fascists, the men who are going to abolish it, are appealing to it against the President. We and they are all mixed up; everybody is off-side; all saying words that they will have to eat. Watch Hearst and the Chamber of Commerce throw up the constitution they are swallowing now.

But, not only our leaders, our government and our Business, we, the people and we, the liberals and radicals, are all up in the air in this dust storm. We are thinking along old lines upon the basis of old liberal assumptions. We can't distribute an abundance under a system founded upon a philosophy of scarcity. We kill pigs not to feed the multitude, as we think, but to continue the profits of the minority. We prepare for the war we all dread. All, I say, even the munitions makers. And we don't know what is the matter with us; we see—no, we refuse to see a way out. And the point to make for the liberal thinkers of the past period of liberalism is that, with all our free thinking in our security, we are not ready with a saving thought, with a social plan, with a united, uniting decision.

And that's what is called for in the cry for a United Front and that's why we haven't yet got a United Front. This is no grafters', familiar demand to get together on the graft; that is easy enough. This is a world-wish to find and apply a plan and a philosophy that will enable us to deal with a plenty

that was developed out of an age-long condition of scarcity. It should not be hard to handle and continue and increase a—plenty. Indeed it is being done. It is being done in Soviet Russia.

The Russians have found a way, not only to overthrow a scarcity civilization, take on an abundance system, but to live under the new system—happily and universally. They are striving now for more abundance; it does not frighten them; they can all—all work that way. There is an alternative. Germany and Italy are continuing the scarcity system, but they find they have to have wars and foreign markets, and graft and tyrannies and suppressions. They have not solved the economic problem that the Russians seem so certainly to be solving. I have been three times to Soviet Russia since their Revolution and I am so sure that they have found the way that I use that observation in our politics, our American politics. I say that Communism fits us and our conditions like an old hat. It fits us better than it fitted the Russians. They have had to labor and sacrifice to get the machinery and the mass production methods and abundance we have.

Anyway, it is this experience of the Russians and their communism which takes me into the United Front. Since we have to get together, I am for a United Front over here, if the Communists will lead it. I don't want the Republicans or the Democrats or us Liberals or Upton Sinclair or myself to lead it. I won't have anything to do with a United Front or even a strike that the Communist Party does not lead. And I can tell you why. We all will stop a revolution as we do a reform, as we always have stopped everything when WE have got enough. And we already have so much graft, property, privileges—what you like—that we will get enough too soon, before we have got enough for all, before we have got ALL. In

every revolution in history men have cried enough, when they got enough. This time we must go on until we have all, all the resources of all the wealth there is in all the world.

Well, I think that if we nice people, who have something, are out of the leadership, and the people who have nothing and need everything, are running the United Front and the Revolution, then they—and I—will get—all. Therefore I say that I am for the United Front if the Communists are at the Front of it; they haven't a blessed thing in the world AND they have studied and they know exactly how it should be, how it has been done.

In a word, my reasoning about this acute subject, is exactly the opposite from that of the people whom you hear but do not see in the United Front.

Once upon a time I was addressing a student body in the Northwest and the very living audience asked me questions. I put them off to a subsequent informal session in the University club. There they wanted to know what to do and I told them that I could not advise them; I would only tell them what I was doing. I was not a Communist because that implied leadership and no ex-liberal was fit to lead people today. A gentleman in church garb over on my right objected or hesitated:

"But aren't the Communists—er—aren't the Communists rather—er—aren't they—"

"Yes," I answered, "they are, but do you tell me why it is that of such were the first disciples of Jesus, of such were the first followers of all the prophets. They never were nice, respectable, polite, possessing people. They were the dispossessed, the discontented—"

He sat down without a word.



THE TERROR GOES ON

BY HARRY CONOVER

VIGILANTE terror which followed upon the General Strike in San Francisco has not ended. The fusion of many liberals and radicals in the defense of civil liberties has irritated desperate middle-class people more than ever. Today lawless mobs of vigilantes are reorganizing their forces in preparation for more brutal assaults on labor and its sympathizers, but they do not idly bide their time. In the last two weeks, they have struck three times with the same inarticulate motives.

ONE

In the pea fields of southern Alameda county the workers live in a state of peonage. As in the case of other agricultural workers, their wages have barely sufficed to keep them alive. The depression cut wages to eleven and twelve cents an hour, and living conditions became more miserable and unsanitary than ever. Into this setting came the Cannery and Agricultural Workers' Industrial Union, a militant, newly-organized left-wing union which had won several successful agricultural strikes. The pea pickers flocked to it, and soon it could make

demands of the farmers for wage increases. Ninety per cent of "farming" in California is carried on by men who are section bosses for the banks.

The history of the C. & A. W. I. Union's struggle for wage increases in the face of police and vigilante terror can be secured from any of the union leaders, now in Tehachapi or San Quentin. With the arrest of these leaders, the union temporarily disintegrated and the gains made in the pea fields have been partially lost. Wages now average fifteen cents an hour, and what amounts to forced labor camps, with barbed wire enclosures, have been instituted. Many of the workers are held on the ranches under armed guards and are denied permission to leave or to receive visitors. SERA workers have been cut off relief and forced to go to work in the pea fields so that the mortgagees may be assured of "an honest return on their investment".

The Public Works and Unemployed Union exists to help those on relief protest against such examples of exploitation. Local branches of this union at Hayward and Oakland, hear-

ing these charges, decided to send a committee to investigate. On the 15th of May, four members—Ludwick, Heathershaw, Noftz and Hoffman—from Oakland and two—Ortiz and Moffett—from Hayward set out in two cars from the latter town to ask for work and if possible to snap some pictures of the camps and guards. As they were approaching Decoto, they were spotted and followed in a car by two sheriff's deputies to Niles, where a second official sheriff's car joined the procession. Noftz and Hoffman continued south in their car, pursued almost to the city limits of San José.

The second car, containing the four workers, stopped at the Santa Inez Lodge, a ranch on U. S. Highway 101 about three miles north of Warm Springs, where one of the largest pea pickers' camps is located. Ludwick and Heathershaw got out and started up the side road toward the ranch. Meanwhile the two deputies had driven up and proceeded to order Moffett and Ortiz from the car in which they were sitting. Ortiz obeyed, but Moffett did not move fast enough to suit them and for this he was beaten with a pipe-like weapon as he sat in the car. Ortiz was similarly clubbed as he stood on the pavement. When respect for law and order had been sufficiently drubbed into them, they were ordered back into their car and told to "get the hell out of here", which they did.

Ludwick and Heathershaw had gotten several paces up the side road when, according to the latter's account, "suddenly a high speeding car slammed on its brakes right behind us, coming within six inches of hitting our legs. Two deputized aides of the law jumped from the car waving clubs. We were subjected to a thorough search, during which we were continually punched in the stomach. We were then thrust into their car and driven until we met three carloads of vigilantes who were told to 'look 'em over and don't forget 'em'. We were taken over back roads to No. 17 State Highway, a distance of about five miles farther away from Oakland, and told to start walking and not to try to catch a ride. After they had followed us for five miles, they decided to photograph us. The pictures, they told us, were to be for the Criminal Syndicalism records." After walking sixteen more miles, they were finally picked up by a passing farmer and brought back to Hayward.

On the following morning, the chambers of the county Supervisors were filled with angry workers and East Bay members of the P. W. U. U. who insisted upon an open meeting and a full report of the affair from the Sheriff. Ortiz and Moffett, peculiarly, did not come to this meeting and everyone remarked about it. It was later learned that shortly after the two men had left their Hayward home to come to Oakland in the morning, their car was forced to the curb and they were taken to Niles by the same two deputies who had the day before beaten them up. Here they were questioned for several hours and held on "suspicion of Criminal Syndicalism". They were released at 5 P. M., when word of the mass protest at the Supervisors' meeting in Oakland was conveyed by a deputy of the District Attorney.

A delegation accompanied Ortiz on May 17 to the District Attorney's office to ask that the deputies be arrested for kidnaping. Clarence Rust, attorney from the American Civil Liberties Union, counsel for Ortiz, was refused admission to the office and when he insisted on entering the room, he was thrown out bodily. After a two hour session, the District Attorney refused to issue warrants for the kidnaping on the grounds that "there is not sufficient evidence". Immediately afterwards, Ortiz was taken to the hospital.

TWO

"Till the Day I Die", a play by Clifford Odets, ran in New

York several months. It shows the tortures visited upon those who oppose the Fascist regime in Germany today. In the face of numerous threatening letters and on one occasion the explosion of a stench bomb, it is being performed at the Hollywood Playhouse. William Ghare, the play director, was accosted by three men on the night of May 27 as he was walking home. He was seized, thrown into an automobile, and beaten unmercifully. After kicking him about the head and stomach, they took \$3 from him as a "refund" for their purchase of seats at the play, and left him stranded in the Hollywood Hills. Ghare managed to call police who took him to a hospital. Physicians said they believe he is suffering from internal injuries.

THREE

Despite the increases in profits obtained by the gold mining companies as a result of the Roosevelt monetary policy, the reign of vigilante and police terror in Amador County against the starving, striking miners has for more than nine months continued unabated. On May 12, a delegation of sympathetic labor people from the East Bay area joined the picket line of the strikers. Vigilantes emerged from the mine property where they had been hiding while the picket lines formed and launched an attack with the assistance of the State Highway Patrol upon the workers and those who came to bring food and to show their solidarity with the strikers. A number of workers were beaten, gassed and several arrested on framed charges. The vigilantes continue to parade about the town, armed with tear gas, clubs, blackjacks and guns.

FOUR

The Committee on Judiciary of the State Assembly was flooded for months with protests against the proposed "anti-red" bills aimed to end civil liberties in California. Every effort to have this committee pass upon these bills was arrested by mass delegations and authors of the bills seemed hopelessly squelched. Quietly, however, without any newspaper notice, the most suppressive, Assembly Bill 20, was detoured into the Committee on Crime Prevention. It was favorably voted upon and sent to the Assembly with a "do-pass" recommendation. Under this bill, all organizations opposed to capitalism and attempting to change it, either by overthrow or reform, would be outlawed. The teaching of the theories of Marx would be a criminal offense, punishable by one to fourteen years in State Prison. To be present or remain at a meeting where the overthrow of capitalism "by the use of force or violence, or other unlawful means" is advocated would subject one to a fine of \$500 to \$1,000 or prison sentence of six months to a year, or both. Anyone who owns, rents, leases or loans the premises where such statement is made would be guilty of a misdemeanor.

FIVE

The Sacramento Bee was recently awarded the Pulitzer prize for journalism for "the most disinterested and meritorious service by an American newspaper". Readers of this notorious red-baiting sheet during the Criminal Syndicalism trial may smile at the "naivete" of the Pulitzer committee. At any rate, this is the kind of "disinterested and meritorious service" Mr. C. K. McClatchey, publisher of the paper, renders. In his column, "Merely Some Private Thoughts", April 15, he thus speaks his mind:

"A great many patriotic and law-abiding citizens are beginning to believe the only remedy lies in recourse to lynch law. The day is not far distant when every community will have its vigilante committee . . . while the weapons of Justice will be

stout oak trees and good hempen ropes . . . Consider if a thorough lynch system, wherein the accused are given the fairest of fair trials . . . would't be an improvement over the present system."

Robert Cantwell in a recent article in the *New Republic* and Robert Whitaker, in the PACIFIC WEEKLY, congratulated California liberals on the new spirit among the defenders of

civil liberties in this state. But the events described in this article, chosen at random from many such, show that the fascists are still and continuously on the offensive. Mr. Hearst and, indeed, many liberals, believe fascism will only come as an answer to communism. These events tend to show that it isn't, as the popular cliché has it, communism which breeds fascism, but fascism which breeds communism.

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SHOES

BY PETER QUINCE

ONE noon, as I prepared to leave, Mrs. Pritchert came into my office. "Miss Holcomb," she said, surveying me with wavering eyes, "I wonder if you could—they're twins. I'm afraid they may be sick. They've been absent three days and I thought perhaps with your car you might . . ."

"Of course," I said. I am a city nurse attached to the grammar school system. "What are their names?"

"Philip and Tessa Norval."

I found them living in a small single-room, paperboard shack on the edge of the city dump. In the squalid interior a little girl sat on the floor, building a structure out of blocks. Her brother stood over her, his face flushed and his voice eager with excitement, pointing out where the fierce dragon guarded the sleeping princess, and through what entrance the rescuing prince must soon enter. When he became aware of me the boy said gravely; "She's here, Tessa."

Tessa jumped to her feet. Her eyes never left me, but she spoke to Philip. "Is she the good fairy?" Philip did not answer. They merely stared, Philip gravely and his sister with unconcealed fascination, the blood rising in her cheeks.

"Why, yes," I said at length, falling into their game. And then: "Where is your father?"

Tessa pointed a little finger to the couch in the far corner. "He's been sleepin' for, oh," she caught her breath and opened wide her eyes, "ever so long."

I went to the couch. Half a dozen pint whiskey bottles lay strewn over the floor. I put my hand on his body to shake it into wakefulness, then jumped back with a little exclamation. The handle of a kitchen knife protruded from between his shoulder blades.

"Is he dead?" Philip asked gravely.

I threw a quick glance at his face. The eyes were large and untroubled. "He'll—have to go away. For a long time, perhaps," I added.

"I've got to know," said Philip.

"Is it about shoes?" asked Tessa. She fell into a coughing fit. Philip watched her with a drawn, pale face. When the paroxysm subsided he wiped her lips with the edge of her sleeve.

"It's about the shoes," he said. She smiled happily and thrust her hand into his.

Involuntarily I began to shiver. "We've got to get out of

here," I said quickly. My voice was strained taut.

They asked no questions. They sat down on the floor and removed the rags wound about their feet. Philip fetched their shoes, sizes too large for them, and we stumbled outside. In a few moments we were at the police station. Two detectives were dispatched to investigate my report when, "I'm hungry," Tessa appealed to Philip. He looked at me.

"May I take them out to the restaurant?" I asked the desk officer. "Sure," he said. "Bring 'em back in half an hour."

When they had finished the simple meal I had ordered and had started on the pastry I had not the heart to refuse them, it struck me with a suddenness that almost hurt that they were such darlings, these two. Their faces were pale and peaked, and the eyes in them large and wistful, and it was sweet to see the affection they had for each other. There was much whispering between them, and laughter from Tessa.

"How old are you?" I asked.

"Twelve," said the boy. "We're twins."

"Where's your mother?" There was no answer. "Do you ever hear from her?"

"Well, how could we?" asked Tessa in surprise. "The dragon's guarding her. She's the sleeping princess, you know."

"Of course," I said slowly. "Have you been eating regularly? I mean beside the dinner the school gives you?"

"Mostly," said Philip. "We always take some of the dinner home. Then sometimes our dad would bring us something."

"Did he drink much?"

"Of course," said the boy as though the question were absurd.

"Did he ever beat you?" Again no answer. "How long has he been lying on the couch—that way?"

"Three days. Is he dead?"

Tessa had been gazing eagerly at a phenomenon near by. Someone placed a glass against a metal base. As if by magic water squirted from a nozzle. A particularly clever person filled two glasses with one motion.

"Yes," I answered the boy. "He's dead."

Quietly he nodded his head. "Then we're orphans, I guess."

"Yes," I said.

Tessa slid out of her chair, moving cautiously toward the water fountain. The boy's eyes went down to her feet, her

small feet encased in the large, misshapen shoes. He said nothing.

DREAM CHILDREN TO TESTIFY

The headline was prompted by the enterprise of a clever reporter who had wandered into the coroner's chambers during the inquest. Philip sat in the witness chair. Tessa had insisted on standing at his side. The coroner asked the boy a question. There was the flash of a photographer's bulb. Tessa's frightened eyes gazed in that direction. Her lips were parted a little, moist with surprise. Philip's arm went protectingly around her shoulder. He stared defiantly. Another flash. The girl fainted. A doctor examined her hastily. When he rose he said to the coroner: "Excitement. They're half starved, both of them!" The boy stood trembling. There were tears in his eyes, but he made no sound. And the inquest was postponed.

The reporter's story was featured on the front pages of the nation's newspapers. It told touchingly of a brother and sister, twins, who lived in the land of beautiful dreams. To this land their mother had been taken to be made captive by a fierce dragon. She lay sleeping, a lovely princess, awaiting a rescuer. On an evil night a ruffian had forced entrance into the little house in which the twins lived with their father. The one thought of Mr. Norval had been the protection of his children. A desperate battle took place, which the twins watched from their bed with frightened eyes, their arms entwined about each other. Suddenly there was a cry. The ruffian broke away and disappeared. The father staggered to the bed. He fell upon it and lay quiet. For three days, until discovered by a visiting nurse, the dream children had watched over him. They did not know that he had donned his shining armor and gone away to rescue a beautiful princess, captive of a fierce dragon.

What had been left out of the reporter's story was to be found in the photographer's picture. Their piquant faces, the girl's fright, the boy's fearlessness, caught at the heart of the nation's newsreaders. Story followed on the heels of story. Photographs were taken of the children at the hospital. They were snapped and posed. They were shown eating, sleeping, bathing, playing their dream games. When the inquest was resumed the coroner's quarters were crowded. A newsreel camera had been set up. Feature writers, columnists, society matrons and lesser luminaries were present.

The detectives and the doctor who had been sent to the scene of the murder testified. Yes, he had been dead approximately seventy hours. No, there was no evidence to indicate that a struggle had taken place. Well, anyways, not a desperate struggle. Yes, I said, the children appeared to live in what the papers termed a "dream world". A few more routine questions and I was asked to step down.

"When are you going to put the 'Dream Children' on the stand?" a bespectacled newswoman asked.

The coroner cleared his throat nervously. "Well, I hadn't thought it was necessary to do it again. The doctors—"

"We want to get a picture of you questioning them," the newsreel cameraman boomed.

Again Philip was put on the stand and again Tessa stood at his side. The cameras flashed and ground away, pencils scribbled as the coroner, prompted by the writers, proceeded to put Alice-in-Wonderland questions to the children. Instinctively the twins at once resented the questions. When they answered at all it was in monosyllables. The boy's jaw

was edged with hostility. His underlip was thrust forward in vexation. The assembled newspapermen and photographers found it all quite engaging. The "Dream Children" had courage. They were offended by intrusion into their dream world. Good for the twins!

At a particularly vicious question, which asked him to describe a struggle between his father and a giant negro, the boy balked. He slid off his chair, facing the coroner. "Are we gonna go to the orphanage?" he asked petulantly.

There was a silence. "No," the coroner said. "Certainly—not." He swallowed hard.

Philip's voice broke. "You mean," he asked in a pitch two notes higher than his natural voice, "we ain't gonna have new shoes?"

Everyone's eyes went down to their feet. They still wore the discarded shoes of adults. "I don't understand," the coroner said. "Do you want to go to the orphanage?"

"Sure," said Philip.

"Of course," Tessa chimed in. The twins looked at the coroner with amazement. "A lot of the orphan boys and girls go to our school," Tessa explained. "They all have shoes that fit. Some of them are new, too."

There was a hush in the room so complete as to be almost unreal.

All this occurred about three months ago. Last week I went to the orphanage to visit the twins. I had to know. I kept telling myself that even if it was true—but it couldn't be!—the fault could not be placed at their feet. That out of a society a thing like this could grow! I had lain awake too many nights asking of the walls the question that the coroner and the newspapermen had failed to ask.

The twins came into the hall. They were still a little bewildered with the orthodoxy and discipline of the orphanage. But they had themselves and the new pairs of shoes that a million other little boys and girls who lived on the wrong side of the tracks that ran straight through the heart of Wall Street did not have.

I stayed only a few moments. When I left I had not put the question to them. I was afraid it would drive me mad.

+

JUTE MILL

THE man who sells us our precious grains
Is most fastidious about the class
Of sacks he uses to hold this loot. Stains
Of our blood upon them he will not pass
Back to us. Blood is eloquent, and men
Sometimes are curious. If we should ask
Whence these stains?—oh, he could tell us then
Of hands and lungs worn away at their task.
Yet with our golden hours he proudly
Purchases the hearts of dead kings and moans
Over statues of bleeding Christs, loudly
Shouts of Beauty. Still jute-mill undertones . . .
And the bleeding stumps of the prisoned brute
Are shredding his power along with the jute.

JANICE BROOKE

CAMEO

BY TOM KROMER

RUTHIE had dark hair and Jim had dark hair which was kind of funny for you'd expect unlike to attract each other, but there's no getting around the fact that they were crazy about each other, and when you stay crazy about a man when he hasn't had a steady job in three years, you sure must be crazy about him. The baby sort of took after Jim, had his eyes, blue eyes grey eyes, but Ruthie hadn't minded that for the baby was a boy, and you kind of expect a boy to take after his father. They got a couple of dollars from the County Relief every week, and paid a dollar a week to live in the stuffy attic room with no light and all the light they ever had was when they had enough over to blow on a candle sometimes. They got along pretty good on carrots and beets and lettuce that you could pick up for a penny a bunch in the market and sometimes Jim got a job mowing a lawn, and then they'd blow themselves to a piece of meat, but that was only sometimes and not very often. Whenever Jim saw an ad in the paper he answered it, and he'd been doing that for three years, but he'd never got run over and killed by a truck before like he did this time. When this reporter got hold of this, he wrote an awfully sweet story of how Jim had been out of work for three years and can you believe it, poor Jim was killed while he was starting to work for the first time after he'd been out of work for three years. Everyone said it sure was tough to get knocked off just when you were getting off the County Relief rolls, and they said it sure was a tough break for poor Ruthie and the baby but nobody brought anything to eat for you just don't feel like eating when you are facing tragedy like that and anyway a lot of people are awfully proud and you can't tell if they're going to be touchy or not when you bring them something to eat and the only safe way is not to take a chance.

THE THEATER

BY ELLA WINTER

TOBACCO ROAD, by Jack Kirkland. Based on the novel by Erskine Caldwell. Curran Theater, San Francisco.

THE San Francisco stage can register a strange phenomenon. There are twice as many left-wing plays on the boards at present as bourgeois plays. To wit: two left-wing plays.

Tobacco Road is a harrowing presentation of the misery and degradation of the Southern "po' white trash" under its present economic conditions, but relieved by what the German calls *Galgen Humor*—humor of the gallows. The lines are witty and racy, which makes the play bearable; otherwise one could not sit through it. There is another defence, of course, and one indulged in by a number of the audience. They plain disbelieved that such things could be. (They should read Erskine Caldwell's pamphlet *Tenant Farmer* just published by the Phalanx Press. Caldwell says even the people who see those conditions don't believe them.)

The acting was uneven, Henry Hull as Jeeter Lester, of

course bearing off the honors. But the half-witted son (Donald Barry) and deformed daughter (Pauline Drake) also played difficult parts well, and Ada Lester (Mary Servoss) conveyed the lassitude the heat and general hopelessness and despair the country and conditions seem to generate, very effectively. Sister Bessie Rice (Bonita Des Londes), evangelist who marries the half-wit Dude, was too obvious and Lov Bensey (Leon Ames) somehow also did not sufficiently convey his inarticulate love. Perhaps by the side of the talkative but more degenerate Jeeter the job was too difficult. But the feel of the place and the people was conveyed, and whatever their defence, the audience felt it.

PEACE ON EARTH, by George Sklar and Albert Maltz. Neighborhood Playhouse, 1749 Clay St., San Francisco.

NEWLY organized, the San Francisco Theatre Union should congratulate itself heartily on its first effort. The play managed to attain a remarkable fusion of what is known as "propaganda" (sentiments not usually expressed in a capitalist-guided world) with the individual fate of the main characters, known as "art". More than that; it managed to dramatize those conditions which are the necessary background of any revolutionary or left-wing play. These conditions have to be brought consciously before the mind of a "bourgeois" audience because such an audience does not know them or else does not believe they exist. You do not have to explain sexual hate or love or jealousy in a play because those emotions are known, accepted, familiar. But the wrath of a striker against a scab, or the indignation of a university professor when he sees an honorary degree conferred on an industrialist of whom he knows that he is shipping munitions of war that will kill the students of the very university which is honoring him—these emotions, though just as genuine and legitimate and deep, have still to be documented for the mass of theater-goers. As the left-wing audience develops, it will supply the understanding, and plays will be able to dispense with such explanations.

Early revolutionary plays frequently did this explaining by straight statement, which was then labeled "soapboxing" or "propaganda". And it did make a disagreeable impression, as for instance in Elmer Rice's plays. The art of integrating social emotion into the lives and fate of the characters is not easy to achieve.

Peace On Earth is a notable advance in this technique. Its particular contribution is the individualizing and personalizing of the "background" economic, social and psychological conditions, the newspaper headlines, if you will. Piscator in Germany achieved it by alternating movie scenes with stage sets. *Peace On Earth* does it by having telegraph clerks tear over the stage shouting prices of commodities as war is on the eve of being declared. These personalize such captions as STOCKS SOAR UPWARD.

The story is of a university professor who hardly can believe how and why wars are made, and certainly does not believe in any struggle to fight them. In successive scenes he is stopped from reading the Declaration of Independence, sees his friends arrested, his best friend shot in the back at a demonstration on the wharf, sees troops called out, student vigilantes attempt in drunken goodfellowship to lynch him as a "dirty red", sees the University faculty, including a bishop, scared of opposing war actively and is himself brought to condemned row on a frame-up of murder when one of the stu-

dent vigilantes is killed by a policeman.

But the drama is kept to the "mass". You actually care less about the fate of Professor Peter Owens or his wife or the reporter than you do about the longshoremen, the mill strikers, the active opponents of war. In this play the individuals illustrate the drama of the mass rather than the other way around. It is a signal achievement. And the first night audience felt it, and was moved. The acting was uneven, but jarred only when the individuals fell from the level of dramatic tension developed in the mass scenes. The mass scenes never failed in their effect. The scene-designing, simple and terse, fitted its purpose admirably. The action was carried out by both professional actors and actual workers. The mass chants "STOP MUNITION SHIPMENTS" and "FIGHT WITH US, FIGHT AGAINST WAR" were so effective that had there been people signing up for membership in the League Against War and Fascism at the door, it is probable a considerable part of the audience would have signed up.

An enthusiastic longshoreman stepped up after the performance. "There's three ILA members here and six ISU men!" he whispered. Maybe art is a weapon as the Russians say and Max Eastman denies. At any rate the San Francisco Theatre Union has nothing to fear if it goes on like this. At least, nothing from the art world. What the vigilantes will do is another matter.

BOOKS

A PROFESSOR SPEAKS OUT

BY HARRY C. STEINMETZ

THE professor of philosophy at Indiana University obviously sees nothing ironical in his title*. This indicates a distressing naivete to the reviewer, another professor of philosophy, who, running on a municipal ownership platform, has just been defeated in his race for mayor of San Diego.

Between the covers of *Political Ethics* I have sought in vain for consolation in my defeat, and for enlightenment concerning the ethical implications to the outcome of an election. The two who topped me in the primary, and thus ran it off in the general election, were the editor of a weekly scandal sheet allied with the liquor interests and a reactionary undertaker who has deliberately ridden the Townsend racket. In the election of the latter I detect a symbol of more than local significance, but no ethical advance over conditions described in *The Autobiography of Lincoln Steffens*.

Professor Robinson cannot defend this implied criticism by claiming that in his book for college students he cannot encompass sufficient history or specific information relating to internal conditions. It is exactly because his work enters an academic gap (without filling it) and is likely to be used in college classes that I contend that he should cope with moral realities.

I am reminded of a remark attributed on good authority to the retired president of one of the country's largest banks, "The trouble is that Americans have not learned to face economic realities, but," he added, "I hope they never learn to."

I fear that Robinson has not thought through the ethical implications of such a remark in a growing class society, and will therefore not aid college students to face political reality.

The individuation of ethics, which has come down from religious emphasis upon free will and moral responsibility, does not fit present knowledge of social influences upon personality. Robinson recognizes this sufficiently to socialize ethics but not to humanize it, and his discussion is totally inadequate on the psychological foundations of ethics which it should be the primary function of his state to establish.

The professor's belief in democracy, irrespective of economic system, seems to arise from the Pollyannish assumption that "in spite of the fact that custom plays a large role in the lives of the highly civilized peoples, generally speaking their morality is reflective". This is unbelievable from a man who recognizes and dwells upon the Latin derivation of the word *moral*. If there were more truth to the assumption there would be less need for unctuous elaboration of the obvious in morals even for college students.

Professor Robinson was a chaplain in the navy during the war, and he views that sorry event as a climax and a beginning rather than a symptom and a prediction. "Civilization . . . may be disintegrating under the strain of post-war conditions" exaggerates the significance of the war, as such, and minimizes the occasion for it. The disintegration of civilization requires definition and location.

Similarly "the excessive departmentalizing of knowledge in higher institutions . . . has led to a sharp separation of philosophy and ethics just at this period" tends to isolate an era and to obscure a trend of civilization toward specialization due in part to scientific advances and in part to the astuteness of such bankers as quoted above. It is true that in most countries there has been an unfortunate and sharp separation of ethics from politics since Hegel, but this is not an accidental by-product of academic organization.

Robinson's chapter on the Soviet State is grossly unfair even though "objective". His students may differ with him on the basis of reading among his own references, although they are none too recent. Certainly it may be questioned if the U. S. S. R. is failing to take adequate steps to change competitive into non-competitive activities; Harry F. Ward's *In Place of Profit* appeared a couple of years ago. Certainly one need not even be radical to deny that fascism is primarily political rather than economic; John Strachey was writing convincingly some time before the appearance of the book under review. The ex-naval chaplain should shop around a bit, see the play "Tobacco Road", and become acquainted with R. Palme Dutt's *Fascism and Social Revolution*.

The long and short of it is that the cumbersome and arbitrary postulates of idealism are insubstantial hooks on which to hang judgments of public morality. The public order, private order, and cultural order are not energized by schematic idealism; struggle has a general democratic end that cannot be supported or blocked by pointless pacifism. Representatives of the "free peoples" of Great Britain, France, and the United States can no more settle the fate of minorities while they sit in Geneva than senators in Washington can curb the political and economic menace of the utilities in San Diego or some other holding company suburb. Capitalism provides no basis for political ethics, as any inductive approach would prove.

At this point in my writing I have hesitated a long time, tempted bitterly to sample the confused and hopeless world of the lesser employed and the unemployed, the facts of economic fascism which the events of political fascism will fol-

low. (A statement of Dutt's rings in my ears as if I had heard it, "The essence of fascism is the organization of social decay.") But there is little use in appending one's observations to comment on a work in political ethics that cites in its index none of these: Thorstein Veblen, Harry F. Ward, Matthew Josephson, T. Swann Harding, Lincoln Steffens, Henry Pratt Fairchild, and John Strachey and the editors of our leading liberal journals.

In the face of national and international neuroticism, only pedagogical incompetence can account for the Christian Science devotion of scholarship to abstract idealism in these days. Perhaps the incompetence is predetermined by the same motive which scholarship under capitalism entirely neglects in its analysis of the social scene. Under capitalism the private order conditions the public disorder, and deductive theorizing simply serves to distract the mind of youth from pragmatic sources of social control.

The Robinsons of my academic world will compromise with reality until their doom. Little can be done with those past forty who have not foreseen the coming struggle and chosen their side. Insulated and shunted away from the economic current, they are conditioned to delay, indifference, abstraction and institutionalism.

In short, I believe that the only political ethics that is relevant today is the political ethics of empirio-criticism, that the only ethical attitude that a teacher can take is of loyalty to those to whom the cost of his employment is always passed, and that only so can the feudal period before the renaissance be abbreviated.

*POLITICAL ETHICS, by Daniel Sommer Robinson.
(Thomas Y. Crowell Co.) \$2

MIKHELSON VS. HISTORY

I CAME OUT ALIVE, by Andre Mikhelson. (Little, Brown & Co.) \$2.50

(Reviewed by Barbara Chevalier)

ONE need not doubt the authenticity of the horror tales which Mikhelson realistically describes for the gratification of the enemies of the Soviet Union. The story of a population so wracked with hunger, cold, filth and disease that thousands, losing all ordinary sense of values, turn to thievery, arson, rape, torture and murder is not a new one. It is not necessary to turn to anti-Soviet books to read these tales. But Mikhelson is silent as to the causes of the breakdown of economic and moral life in Russia. He assumes that communism was the cause since he, as a member of the wealthy and privileged aristocracy, did not suffer personally before the Revolution.

A completely confused picture of the Revolution emerges from this autobiography. The large issues, the objectives and basic conflicts, the crucial events, the shifts in policy and popular sentiment, even the chronology—all this is so vague and shoddy in the mind of the author himself, one gathers, that the reader is unable to appraise the events on the basis of the material presented. One knows merely that the protagonist was unfortunate—doubly unfortunate in that he understood neither what was happening to him nor around him. Left at the age of fifteen to shift for himself shortly after the October seizure of power, he faces a world in turmoil without any principles or convictions other than the prejudices of his class and a sense of outrage at the course of events—a course which robs him of his privileges and the expectations in which he had

been nurtured. His mother dies—from shock, we are told—shortly after the October events, and his father escapes to Switzerland. His home and other possessions are confiscated. He is completely uprooted. Under the influence of a communist girl-cousin, Lyoff (Mikhelson) joins the communist group of a Moscow gymnasium. But he soon turns against a revolution which has deprived him personally of everything and gives him nothing in return. Incapable of perceiving the Bolshevik spirit of self-sacrifice for ultimate gains, Lyoff, very understandably, disintegrates completely, turning thief, speculator, murderer. Much of the book is concerned with his attempts to escape from Russia. He leaves Moscow with the semi-prostitute Olga, who is supposedly delegated by his father to conduct him out of the country. After many months of waiting in towns of the south during which time Olga makes no attempt to cross the border, he decides to cross alone. By joining the ranks of the Red Army, he hopes to escape over to the Whites and then across the frontier. Unsuccessful, he returns to Moscow where he becomes a white-collar worker and attends courses at the Technological University, all the while professing to be a good communist. One realizes that the Bolsheviks' suspicion of the bourgeoisie and the intelligentsia is based not on prejudice but upon much experience with individuals like Lyoff who writes, "I spoke like a communist with all the necessary fervor and logic. But deep in my heart I bitterly made sport of others as well as of myself." Finally Lyoff, by now on the verge of insanity, manages to leave Russia legally through the influence of a certain Miriukoff, friend and disciple of Tolstoi.

This book essentially is the tragedy of a weakling. One can only feel a mingling of pity and contempt for this good-looking young aristocrat who, after a sheltered childhood, was thrown during adolescence into a world of violence and confusion for which he was unfitted both by background and temperament. Thrown back upon himself he becomes the adept of a kind of monstrous, unprincipled individualism. His enemies are not only the communists, but the whole world—his schoolmates, the girls he professes to love, his aunt and uncle, Whites as well as Reds. He becomes an unscrupulous petty schemer, devoid of any sense of decency or allegiance. He adopts a Napoleonic philosophy of contempt for the weak and oppressed, admiration of brute force, and unashamed glorification of his ego. It is precisely the lack of integration which causes Lyoff, and thousands of his kind, to reduce every event to the plane of individual experience that intensifies the horror and lawlessness of revolution. This is a story of disintegration, and for an antidote the reader should turn to Vincent Sheean's *Personal History*, which is a remarkable story of the gradual integration and growth to maturity of a mind that seeks and finds creative value in just the kind of social experience from which Mikhelson frantically flees.

THE GREATEST REVOLUTION

THE RUSSIAN REVOLUTION, by William Henry Chamberlin. (Macmillan) 2 vols. \$10

(Reviewed by Alexander Kaun)

MR. CHAMBERLIN covers—by no means exhaustively—just the years 1917-1921, and even so he presents us with two fat volumes of nearly eleven hundred pages. So eventful are those few years, so surcharged with change, tragedy, heroism, that it would be, indeed, an extraordinary feat to write a dull book on the subject. Mr. Chamberlin's account

is vivid, racy, on the whole well documented, and for the most part objective. It is thus far the fullest story of the Russian Revolution in English (Trotsky's three volumes being inevitably, and brilliantly, subjective). The story—not the history. For that Mr. Chamberlin lacks both scholarship and a sense of values. What historian would depend on, and repeatedly quote, such "sources" as Emma Goldman, Grand Duke Alexander, Paul Dukes, Marguerite Harrison (*Marooned in Moscow*), or Isaac Don Levine's *Stalin*?! The ears of the journalist protrude occasionally through the skin of the would-be historian, and wiggle disconcertingly. To be sure, those who assign historical significance to the wart on Cleopatra's nose will find reason and a sense of proportion in Mr. Chamberlin's emphasis on Budenny's moustachios and recurrent ecstasy over General Wrangel's aristocratic stature and booming voice, in his anecdotal gossip and systematic mention of the Jewishness of this or that extremist and assassin.

The story remains fascinating in spite of the numerous errors (especially in the first volume; I counted twenty, and then stopped counting), discrepancies, repetitions, and such grotesques as Chaliapin "impersonating Faust" (Caruso, by the same token, impersonating Mephisto). The books contain, along with dubious and dispensable matter, such a generous amount of authentic documents that they cannot help being absorbingly interesting. I confess to my gluttonous partiality for the appendices—the proclamations, manifestoes, decrees, and other undiluted history. For it is this raw material that suggests to your imagination the scenario for a prodigious drama, in which tragedy and comedy mingle and interweave. Think, for example, of the Mensheviks and Socialist-Revolutionists in the summer of 1917 bashfully declining to assume the authority urged upon them by the Soviet. Milyukov tells us of a workman shaking his fist at Minister Chernov and shouting: "Take power, you son of a bitch, when it is given to you!" Or take another tragic farce, the Intervention, the undeclared war against Soviet Russia. Listen to one of the stage directors of this bloody burlesque, Mr. Winston Churchill:

Were they (the Allies) at war with the Soviet? Certainly not; but they shot Soviet Russians at sight. They armed the enemies of the Soviet Government. They blockaded its ports and sunk its battleships. They earnestly desired and schemed its downfall. But war—shocking! Interference—shame! It was, they repeated, a matter of indifference to them how Russians settled their own internal affairs. They were impartial—Bang! And then at the same time parley and try to trade.

Do you recall the time when Kolchak officers, on their way to Moscow via Siberia, were entertained at the Bohemian Club? I translated some of the toasts to George Sterling. A few months later I was nearly crucified by the patriotic Honorulans, because in my lecture for their University Club I questioned Kolchak as a savior of Russia and civilization. Now read what Kolchak wrote about the American Expeditionary Forces, whose commander, General Graves, insisted on remaining neutral:

The American troops, consisting of the offscourings of the American Army, Jewish emigrants, with a corresponding commanding staff, are only a factor of disintegration and disorders. I consider their removal from Russian territory necessary, because their further presence will lead only to a final discrediting of America and to extremely serious consequences.

To think that General David P. Barrows was one of the staff!

Mr. Chamberlin admits that Kolchak was betrayed by the French General Janin and by the Czechs. His chapter on the Czechs is, however, one-sided and weak, because he used Czech sources uncritically. The Czech episode is still awaiting a historian who would bring to light all its infamy and bloody mercenariness.

One of the merits of the book lies in the comparatively few comments of the author. Those few are quite often unfortunate. In trying to "explain" the triumph of the Bolsheviks against their numerous enemies, Mr. Chamberlin overlooks the main cause: the morale, determination, and unreserved heroism of the militant masses, who fought for their real fatherland, not for a vague abstraction. Instead, he indulges in personalities and incidentals. On the whole, his conclusions might be dispensed with advantageously. The discriminating reader will wade through the books with profit and delight; he will have no difficulty in ignoring the froth.

TOWARD CONTROLLING HISTORY

FORERUNNERS OF AMERICAN FASCISM, by Raymond Gram Swing. (Julian Messner, Inc.) \$1.75
(Reviewed by Ella Winter)

HERE is a book that needed writing and it is good to have it now as a warning. Mr. Swing is one of the keenest political journalists we have; he has been foreign correspondent for a number of years in England, Germany and other countries, and he saw fascism come over there; he can diagnose the symptoms he sees now in his own country.

There are chapters on Father Coughlin, Huey Long, Senator Bilbo of Mississippi, whom Swing calls "the Rabble-Rouser", Dr. Townsend and William Randolph Hearst. These appeared as articles in the *New York Nation* originally, and they tell of the rise and political background of these men, their aims and ambitions and the psychological tricks by which they hope to lead the disillusioned and embittered masses out of the slough of depression into the demagogic paradise of Wealth Shared by All (Long), Social Justice (Coughlin) or just plain Rule by Vigilante Violence under the Guise of Americanism (Hearst).

There is an excellent and clearly expressed first chapter on the Prognosis of Fascism, which everyone should read who cares to understand the realities of politics today. It is a gem of simple but inclusive statement; it shows what fascism means in economic, political and psychological terms, how it rose in Europe and why, under Mussolini and Hitler, what elements of the European picture are present in the American scene, especially in the NRA. This chapter comes nearer to Borodin's "long view" described so excitingly by Vincent Sheean in *Personal History*, than anything in recent political writing in America. Fascism Swing defines as "a reorganization of society to maintain an unequal distribution of economic power by undemocratic means". In a later definition he adds to this: "and a substitution of barbaric values for individualist civilization."

And if I believe Fascism lies ahead for America, writes Mr. Swing, it is because I see there are not enough people who care about economic democracy and individualism, in the government and outside it, to use democratic government to achieve them. And I am convinced that however sincerely the demagogues believe they will achieve

them, if vested with autocratic authority, we will end with Germany and Italy, who voluntarily accepted the chains of dictatorship as the price of economic improvement and a restored morale, and now find themselves doubly chained.

There is no space to describe the book in detail; it must be read. For the American Legion and the vigilantes and their apologists it is required reading. Mr. Swing is no radical; he has always had the reputation of being a sound conservative. His lack of the Marxist key does lead him into one serious error. He says: "Our one safety against fascism may lie in the absence of any formidable communist movement." He thus implies what Hearst said in an editorial, that only communism will bring fascism. But the shoe is on the other foot. Without the intolerable domination of capitalism—of which fascism is only the last, most violent and vicious phase—there would never have been any workers' revolt, communism or the threat of Revolution. It is like saying of a patient who dies of an appendicitis operation: "Without the operation he would never have had appendicitis".

The book is beautifully printed and published, easy to read, understand and recognize. Mr. Swing's thinking is crystal clear and his articulation is definite. If we can control our history, a book such as this should help us materially in doing it.



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