PACIFIC WEEKLY

A WESTERN JOURNAL OF FACT AND OPINION

JULY 8, 1935

OAKLAND TRIES FASCIST TERRORISM

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EXAMINER "KILLS" FAKE STORY

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PACIFIC WEEKLY

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NEXT WEEK

EPIC AND REVOLUTION, an article by Earl du Freyne French.

A SHORT STORY by Peter Quince.

ANOTHER CAMEO by Tom Kromer.

BOOK REVIEWS by Dorothy Erskine, Aileen Strong, and others.

TWENTY-EIGHT YEARS IN A NEWS ROOM, by W. K. Bassett will be continued.

PACIFIC WEEKLY
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NOTES AND COMMENT

LONGSHOREMEN: LIFE STOOD STILL AND STARED

FRIDAY the longshoremen of San Francisco stopped work to remember and honor their dead. It was on July 5, last year, that two longshoremen were killed by San Francisco police. The shots were fired by a police officer who stepped from a patrol car and fired wildly into a crowd of strikers with a new type of murderous bullet. The longshoremen of San Francisco held a mass funeral for their brothers, a funeral procession several miles long; a funeral which took San Francisco by such surprise that the San Francisco *Chronicle* reported: "Life stood still and stared." Seven other men in other ports were killed by police or troops in that marine strike. The holiday of July 5 was to remember them all. It was the killing of the men, the violence and troops that led to the general strike.

Today the waterfronts of the Pacific Coast are again seething; employers, their press and their propaganda, are doing their utmost to break the solidarity of the marine workers, to turn laboring men against laboring men, by bribery, threats, cajolery; to create distrust and hate among men who have stuck together and whose organizations have grown into strength. Militant leaders of the men are doing their best to show labor that its only weapon, to preserve standards of living, to keep dignity and freedom alive, is solidarity.

One might say again today, all America "stands still and stares" at the picture of such unity in American labor; and many hundreds of thousands are deeply encouraged.

MEANWHILE Harry Bridges, courageous and honest president of the San Francisco local of the International Longshoremen's Association, was elected San Francisco delegate to the international convention, to be held in New York July 8, by 1,759 to 129 votes.

COURAGE AND PEACE

HEARST San Francisco newspapers got a taste of candor and courage virtually thrown in their teeth some few days back.

You remember PACIFIC WEEKLY published an article by Winthrop Rutlege on the sinister efforts being made to "kill" the anti-war play, *Peace On Earth*, presented by the San Francisco Theater Union. The Hearst papers smelled a story in this, one of those stories to bolster their fascist propaganda. They put their worthy reporter, William Losh, on the job of interviewing sponsors of the play, including Mrs. Warren Gregory, Albert Bender, Mrs. John Galen Howard, Dr. Charles A. Hogan, Noël Sullivan and Bishop Parsons. It was intended to show with great éclat that these well-meaning, but gullible citizens had been led astray by honeyed words and that they little knew the poison, the degradation contained in this theatrical production; that, in fact, there were communists among the actors.

But no story appeared by the hand and typewriter of Mr. Losh and the sponsors of *Peace On Earth* are still telling with chuckles over tea, coffee and liqueurs the answers they made to the Hearst reporter:

Oh yes, one and all knew *Peace On Earth* was an anti-war play; one and all believed it important to spread anti-war propaganda now; no, none was interested in the politics of the actors, believing that all that is required of an actor is that he should be able to act. Noël Sullivan had the temerity to add that he thought what *Peace On Earth* had to offer almost as ethical, educational and important as the "sentimentality and filth" of most Hollywood movies.

After a few replies like that it dawned on the Hearst reporter that while this might be a good story it was precisely not the story wanted by his newspaper. He didn't write it.

Liberals and others may learn from this something they might have known long ago, something proved politically in our own time with such overwhelming force by Angelo Herndon, by Negro sharecroppers joining unions, by Gregory Dmitroff who faced the Nazi courts of Germany and laughed—and was freed—that a little courage goes a long way—and a lot of courage might—*win*.

CANTOR WARNS AGAINST FASCISM

EDDIE CANTOR, millionaire film comedian, addressing 1,000 delegates at a convention of American Jews in Los Angeles, pled with them to "unite in protection against the same thing that exists in Europe today".

"You are living in precarious times," said Cantor. "You know the situation in Europe as far as Jews are concerned, but I doubt if many of you know how close to the same situation we are here in America . . . For the first time in my life I am afraid."

If members of all minority races and nationalities—Negroes, Filipinos, Japanese, Mexicans, as well as Jews—and holders of minority opinions, liberals, pacifists, EPICs, Socialists, Utopians, social creditors, as well as workers, would realize this danger, would realize that what has happened in other fascist countries can and will happen to America under Fascism, they might be more willing to join together in anti-fascist action now. Everyone should read *Brains Behind Barbed Wire* (an acount of the treatment of scholars, scientists, artists and intellectuals in Nazi Germany) and Louis Adamic's little pamphlet *Struggle*, to visualize with greater keenness how fascists treat their political adversaries—the ghastly, indescribably inhuman physical tortures they visit upon the living flesh and blood of their prisoners. That could be prevented in America—but only by anti-fascist action—organization—action—now.

HEARST "VICTIMIZED"

MONDAY the Hearst papers came out with their newest Soviet atrocity, "Six Terrible Years Spent in Russia", by one John Slivkoff. He was once a rancher near Dixon, Cal. There was a large and clear photograph of him.

He told how he was starved, and pretty thoroughly starved, apparently, because six weeks after leaving the Russian borders, having passed through China, friendly Japan, and four weeks of ocean, he was still "ragged", "unkempt" and in Hollywood ate "ravenously" at Lodijensky's cafe. He told how on arrival in Russia Soviet soldiers, for no apparent reason whatsoever, instead of calmly inspecting his passport, as they do that of most Americans, hit him, yelled, hit him again, swung their rifle butts at him, till he "didn't remember any more for a long time".

Well, well. Two Russians, religious men who left the Soviet Union years ago and who had been reading Hearst, believing what they read till July 1st, saw this photograph. They stared. Then they reported to an official: "We know this man. Why, he lives in San Francisco; we've known him for years; and he's never been in the Soviet Union. He was in Czarist Russia! Those are tales of Czarist Russia! We're sending a protest to Mr. Hearst at once. We recognized him by his photograph! Why, if all the Hearst stories about Russia are like *that*, maybe none of them are true!"

The next day there was no more Mr. Slivkoff in the Hearst papers.

OAKLAND POLICE SILENCE FREE SPEECH

THE assistant prosecutor of Alameda county is making his appeal to the jury. In almost every respect the scene in Oakland Police Judge Fox's court is similar to the courtroom in the Sacramento Criminal Syndicalism case. The prosecutor has the same generous 200-pound proportions as Neil McAllister, the same paunch, the same broad flabby politician's face. The jury, like that at Sacramento, is wholly middle class—mostly retired *rentiers* and housewives. Of the twenty-five persons questioned for jury service there was not a single manual worker. The jury is, in fact, composed of "professional" jurors, who, once they have proved that they will turn in the right kind of a verdict, are called in again and again for service.

"This case is quite simple," says the prosecutor. "You are living under a democracy, under a system where laws are made and enforced by your representatives, the representatives of the people. Our society has made certain laws for its protection, among others, this ordinance which requires that anyone selling newspapers must have a permit. I have proved that the defendant, Miss Annette Morrow, sold *Western Workers* without a permit. Her conduct is anti-social, just as much as though she were a thief. We must maintain law and order. I ask you, gentlemen of the jury, to do your duty and find her guilty."

The jury did its duty in less than half an hour. Annette Morrow, U. C. student, was sentenced to fifty dollars fine or 25 days in jail.

Yet the case was not quite so simple. When application was made for a permit, the answer was, "We don't give permits to Communists." The complaining witness, Mrs. Stewart, testified, "I called up the police department and asked if Communists had the right to go around selling their newspapers, and the police said, 'Certainly not!' "

Shortly after the arrest of Annette Morrow, the three Ross children were taken in custody, and kept incommunicado, for the same offense. The twins, girls, are twelve, and the little boy is ten. The father, a crippled worker, has ten to support on the meagre relief given him by the SERA. The children had been able to pick up a little money on a *Western Worker* route. For their offense they are facing trial with closed hearings, in the juvenile court, with the prospect of being made wards of the court, or sent to reform school. The parents may be indicted for "contributing to the delinquency of minors".

Louis Mazer, a member of the Young Peoples' Socialist League, was picked up by the Oakland police for distributing leaflets to the Oakland Technical High School graduating class, charged with distributing without a permit, and released only after posting $200 bail. When the police were shown the permit number, clearly marked on the leaflet, they answered, "We don't care about that; the charge stands."

A delegation of young people, including two ordained ministers, representing 21 East Bay youth organizations, affiliated to the American Youth Congress, sought a permit from the Oakland police chief, to hold an anti-war demonstration in Chabot Park on July 4.

"I understand that the Young Communist League is one of the organizations represented. Well, there are going to be no subversive meetings in Oakland if I can help it. Most of your organizations are probably subversive . . ."

"Can you give us a definition of subversive?" asked the representative of the Students' Rights Association.

"Is opposition to war subversive?" queried the student from the Unitarian School for the Ministry.

"Is opposition to capitalism subversive?" inquired the representative of the Berkeley Young Epic League. "Is there any law or ordinance forbidding us from peaceably assembling?"

Chief of Police Bodie Wallman glared. "This is my own personal decision. You can't have a permit. That's final. Get out."

Are all of these abrogations of civil rights, occurring within a fortnight of each other, merely a coincidence? Is this to be the consistent policy of the Oakland police department in the future? Is this suppression of free speech merely the preparatory step to a concentrated drive by the Industrial Association to break the waterfront unions? Answer to these questions should be forthcoming before the end of the summer.

THE HONEYMOON IS OVER

BY KARL LONG

THERE was a time, we remember, when it was only necessary to be a writer, and then to announce one's self a communist, to be received everywhere with excitement. This was the golden age of Sherwood Anderson. We remember the three of them, Dos Passos, Anderson, and Dreiser, appearing everywhere together, rather like the Dionne babies. There was also a Mr. Charles Yale Harrison, of whom nothing has been heard of late, and the firm of Gold and Freeman, who did not count (they were real communists). This was before the election of Roosevelt, and before the Communist Party moved west.

A fair bargain was struck: the Party needed an opening foothold in the intellectual life of the country, and the "intellectuals" needed excitement. Dreiser went to Kentucky. Sinclair Lewis was going to write a labor novel. The attic studios of New York hummed with enthusiasm. The beginning of the honeymoon; it was not yet dangerous to be a communist. And, of course, sex was a subject of more immediate application. It was still Mencken's hour.

Then, in 1932, the League of Professional Groups for Foster and Ford. The election of the social-democratic Roosevelt. The liberal intellectuals immediately fell into line; the socialists were undone by the superior radicalism of Harry Hopkins. The communists began to dig their trenches in Michigan, Kentucky, California. Relief demonstrations mounted. Strikes began to grow. Hunger appeared; with hunger came the communists and the vigilantes. Caught in the cross-fire, the intellectuals trembled.

At the same time, new writers showed themselves, from Pennsylvania, Illinois, Georgia, Washington, California. Not yet the communist generation, now beginning here and there to demand attention; but men and women still young enough to shape their minds to the years of struggle, with a new solidity had seriousness in sharp contrast to the Hemingways of the previous decade. Erskine Caldwell, Josephine Herbst, Robert Cantwell, Waldo Frank, James Farrell in the novel; Kenneth Burke, Granville Hicks, Malcolm Cowley in criticism; John Howard Lawson, John Wexley in the drama; Genevieve Taggard, Horace Gregory, Isidore Schneider in poetry. Literature took a deep breath. Gradually New York's horizon widened to include mountains, deserts, wheat fields and sea-coasts.

This was the golden afternoon of the honeymoon. The Party grew; A. F. of L. unions marched in the May Day parade. The writers marched with them. Increasing numbers began to call themselves communists; who yet, however, clung fondly to the old American "tradition" of individualism. It was more comfortable to discuss Marx amid the tinkling glasses. The Party said little: welcoming, perhaps distrustfully, the support it would know how to dispense with. It was not strange that New York intellectuals did not please the new breed of Party men, the organizers from Wisconsin and New Mexico, the former wobblies from Oregon, the seamen and the steel workers. They needed men, and not writers of cynical poems.

The year 1933, and with the Rooseveltian hope, passed into history. San Francisco, Toledo and Minneapolis began to prepare for 1934. The terror broke out; many men were killed, in strikes, in relief demonstrations, in parades. Gradually the "intellectuals" disappeared; the artists took their place. The Party sent John Howard Lawson to Alabama, in the heart of the Klan country; Langston Hughes and Josephine Herbst visited Cuba. Writers functioned as *Daily Worker* correspondents in the great textile strike, in Detroit, in California, New Mexico, Michigan—wherever trouble broke out. Finally the recent American Writers Congress, the first such meeting in any capitalist country, prepared the ground for the organization of American culture around the structure of the Communist Party.

While the basic question still remains (that is, the question of the precise relationship between the artist and the Party) the situation has been clarified to the extent that—to put it brutally—the nuts have dropped out. A controversy between such writers as Edwin Seaver and Horace Gregory is more fruitful (and more responsible) than one between Max Eastman and V. F. Calverton. At the same time, the rapid development of the class struggle has buried many once important problems. Literature once more becomes a social weapon, forged not in the library but quite simply in the day-to-day fight against hunger and reaction. The honeymoon is not a stable condition; it ends in one of two ways—in a happy and creative union, or in divorce.

What is necessary, I think, to further the development of American literature is to organize the cultural life of the West more or less in opposition to New York; not on the narrow basis of "sectionalism", but on the ground that here the important struggles are taking place, the true awakening begins. It is no bad thing for the Western artist to take his "tone" from longshoremen rather than from garment workers; or to substitute the true American vigor of the Washington sea-coast for the vapid air of Greenwich Village. These things are important. But even more important is the fact that the Western writer naturally takes his place as the articulate organ of Western militancy; in few cases does there arise that conflict between his duties as "artist" and his duties as citizen which is apparently troubling the literary circles of New York. Not, at any rate, in California!

There is nothing like a general strike for solving literary problems.

LINCOLN STEFFENS SPEAKING--

PEOPLE RETURNING flushed from the country report that nature hereabouts has never been more beautiful. Winter rains poured life into everything for the sun to inspire to song. Even the village gardens join in the chorus of colors.

OUR PLUTOGOGUES are developing heroes to match the demagogues who are always with us. Take Representative George Huddleston, for example; straight from Alabam' where orators grow like hair on the chest. He dares to stand right up in broad daylight for the Public Utilities Holding Companies against his and our President who has seen how they suck the blood (earnings) of the "held" companies; which hold and rob, and nothing else. Huddleston of Alabam' says the President would abolish holding companies which, I say, would welcome and laugh at the regulation the orator is for. Heroically the brave plutogogue stands up and declares openly—and the other plutogogues, who don't quite dare to go with the lobby, cheer on the noble orator.

The President is as right as Mr. Huddleston is courageous; he would save the middle-class from being abolished and their wealth from over-concentration. But I am for Huddleston and the big fellows; I was in our recent fight here over the same issue in our water-bond election. Let New York have it all. That will help on the Great Change. It will be too long, painful and uneducative to correct our thousands of wrongs one by one. Like the Rich and their plutogogues I am against the demagogues and their "evolution". The President is for us little people all right, but I rejoice with the evidence the Hearst papers report first page that the Big Men won't permit the gradual process. They will pile up the incentive of small losses for The Revolution till it busts into flame.

HOLDING COMPANIES will prove to be a convenience to the Reds when the time comes.

DID YOU see *Another Heavenly Discourse* in this paper last week? It was propaganda. And it was literature. Charles Erskine Scott Wood is a poet, so indignation as he smiles it is beautiful. Wouldn't it be wise and thrifty to hold all our *** *** *** emotions down till we could speak them like poems?

THE CHRONICLE announces the promotion of their financial editor, Paul C. Smith, to the executive editorship of the paper. A sunny young man who carries a light in his hair, eyes and comment, he has been down here often enough to show me that the paper that has to play opposite Hearst in the plays ahead of us on the program wants to know and means to find out what is going on. Smith is an inquisitive Youth who goes around reporting as an editor should but does not, usually.

ANTI-HEARST DAY must have hurt. The Communists, who established it as a high point in their defensive war against the Fascists' papers, are certainly making a dent and showing what readers can do in journalism. And there are other papers and other things to do.

THE MOST shocking event in last year's general strike was never fully reported. It was Harry Bridges' dramatic refusal of a bribe. Commentators on the concentrated hatred of this "unreasonable", "alien" labor leader do not seem to realize how frightened Business was when they found by experimentation that he really could not be bought. What can you do with a man who will not respond to what all men respond to? It was a fair bribe, a big one, so big that the bribers considered well and debated long whether to offer so much. And then to have it refused! No wonder the employers thought the republic was about to be overthrown and passed the word that the foundations of our civilization were being undermined. We should always remember that Bridges' fault is that he is by test loyal to labor. If money, that gets us all, can't get a labor leader, why, let's rely on our good old A. F. of L. who have been tried, tested and found wanting what we want.

AN ENGLISH correspondent quotes a common complaint that the Communists "are all alike". Not in my experience. I know a great variety of individuals among them. And I do not find that they have "one aim, mischief". They usually have all one aim and they do want us all to have one aim. That's what they mean by the united front. The communists demand a union on some issue or several issues that will lead us on to the fundamental fault in our civilization, like war, for instance, or fascism, or both. The communists can see, and the liberals, etc., can't, that we can't beat war without beating imperialism and graft and—and the profit system. The important thing is to agree upon evils that are right in the middle of the road which leads out of the morass. When they stand for a united front on a direction, the result is "mischief", but they don't make it, we do.

AN AMERICAN visitor to Soviet Russia returned here yesterday and used a descriptive word that is new to me in this connection: Dull. Soviet Russia has got everything going so well, the struggle is so nearly over that life there became a bore. America is much more exciting.

THE HEAT of the rich over what they call the "soak-the-rich" taxation shows that we are too late; the rich have got it and it is theirs. It were better to see that they never got it. Single taxers always said that. Take it from the land, not from the land-owner.

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CONFUSED LIBERAL

BY MARIE DE L. WELCH

POETRY EDITOR OF PACIFIC WEEKLY

I THINK many things, and I know a few things. One of the few things I know is that I am confused. I know that I don't know exactly what should be done about everything. Not knowing exactly what should be done about everything is now called Liberalism. It is very unpopular with Reactionaries and Revolutionaries. They are perfectly clear about everything, including Liberals. Liberals are confused. And out of their confusion, and their serious interest in the words of Reactionaries and Revolutionaries, they are beginning to wonder if being confused, and knowing that you are confused, is not perhaps a very useful thing.

Anybody can see—it isn't a matter of right or wrong, or love or hate, or having or not having; it is just a matter of fact—that this social system of ours has got to be changed, and it is going to be changed.

It might for a while just change from bad to worse, from a pretended "Democracy" (really controlled by a few owners of public property), to an open, formal Fascist Dictatorship, as in Italy and Germany. Fascism is a general, final marshaling of all the forces of the state to protect the powers of the state. The powers that be. The Status Quo. It makes reactionism legal. It says, "We can't work this Democracy Bunk any more." Separate, illegal suppression of attempts at change of the Status Quo (even attempts to get a better living wage) have always been a part of our system. The town where a strike breaks out has its rulers, who bring violence against the strikers, smash up their meetings, shoot their pickets, terrorize their sympathizers. Capitalism has a ruling class, (Capitalism is a ruling class), which brings violence against its enemies. Under Capitalism violence is necessary, and is becoming increasingly necessary.

Only violence can prevent the expression of discontent, of a wish for change, in a system where the need for change has become as pressing and obvious as in ours. Even violence cannot long prevent this discontent, this wish, and this change. What violence can do is to increase the violence with which this change will be accomplished. The longer you sit on the safety valve, the more steam you pile up, and the higher you will blow.

Many Revolutionaries believe that Capitalism is blowing itself up, and that they, the Revolutionaries, are the steam it is building for the blow-up. These Revolutionaries don't "believe" in violence—they don't want it—but they are just sure that they will have to have it. There will be a Capitalist Dictatorship, which will lead to a Dictatorship of the Proletariat. And only after all that can there be socialism, sensible distribution of the goods of the world, freedom.

The Capitalists will make the revolution. They will blow themselves up. The confused Liberal wonders if this "Will" might not, if sufficiently considered, turn out to be merely a "Would". That the Reactionaries, the real Capitalists, and those who think they are Capitalists, *would* prevent anything but violent change is pretty clear. Their long struggle against labor unions, their present rage at the New Deal, and specific instances, such as the bringing of an injunction by Business against the TVA shows how little disposed are Capitalists towards the most gradual of socialization. They would stop it. But can they? Can the Reactionaries make the complete mess of everything that they and the Revolutionaries think they must make?

Maybe not. Very maybe not. Revolutionaries and Reactionaries are equally furious with the New Deal. The Revolutionaries see the New Deal as a delaying of the natural process of Capitalist self-destruction. A safeguard of the Status Quo. The Reactionaries see the New Deal as the entering wedge of change. A protection of revolution. And they are both right. It is both.

It is a confused, not effective effort towards bringing about change without bringing about hell first. It did not go far enough in its planning, and it did not execute even so little as it planned. We have got to have something an awful lot better. But the fact that the New Deal could get even a break in this most capitalist of capitalist countries is a sort of sign that maybe we don't have to wait until hell breaks loose to change things.

Maybe violence, bloodshed, rule-of-iron, Dictatorship of one kind and then another, are inevitable. Clear-minded Reactionaries say that without them humanity couldn't even stay where it is, much less go ahead. Clear-minded Revolutionaries say that humanity never has got ahead without them, and why should it now? Confused Liberals say, "Why not now?" Confused Liberals see that humanity, whether it got ahead or not, has changed rather by following its new desires than by relying on its old precedents.

The desire to do things peacefully, collectively, in the way called "Democratic" (not yet extensively tried) is a new desire. All precedents say that it is impossible.

The Reactionaries, the Red-baiters, are old. They follow old precedents. And that is excusable, because they are trying to preserve an old thing. But the Revolutionaries are old who rely on these oldsters to kick them into power—into a power which they believe must be founded on the same old precedents. They are clear-minded. They see how it went. And as it went, clearly, it must go. I respect them.

But I trust those confused people who say it has been going too long in the way it went and must go, and who are interested in the way it can go.

MOSCOW, THE SOVIET CAPITAL

BY ROBERT MERRIMAN

This is the first of a series of "bulletins", written in Russia by Robert Merriman of the Department of Economics of the University of California. They were NOT WRITTEN with the intent or thought that they were to be published, but are merely "bulletins", as Mr. Merriman calls them, accompanying letters to friends of himself and Mrs. Merriman in the San Francisco bay district. Mr. Merriman, who is in Russia on a Guggenheim fellowship, and Mrs. Merriman, are remaining in the Soviet Republic for two years. It is through the belief of Mr. Merriman's friends that what he is observing and noting in Soviet Russia would be interesting to Americans generally that PACIFIC WEEKLY *has the rare privilege of publishing these articles. They are not being, and will not be edited in any way unless deletion in deference to space requirements is found necessary. Whenever this is done the deletion will be noted and an epitome of the absent part given.—Ed.*

WE HAVE seen enough of Moscow to attempt at least a superficial description of some of its characteristics. Every day we find parts of the city which we have not seen before and so naturally this will not be a complete description.

The city is the type which sprawls over a large area. It is possible to trace its growth for the last four hundred years. At that time the whole city was within the walls of what is now the Kremlin. This is well situated on the banks of the Moscow River and at one time was completely surrounded by a moat. From the very first the fact is evident that the consideration of defense was foremost in the minds of those who constructed the new additions. After the area within the Kremlin walls was insufficient they extended the city to what is now known as the A circle. This is a complete circle which at one time was surrounded by another wall. This wall was called the Chinese Wall, not because of its resemblance to the one in China but because the type of bricks used were known as Chinese bricks. The last remains of this wall were removed recently in order to widen the streets and to help the traffic problem.

The next step after this was the erection of a third circle now called the B circle, within which is included all of the downtown section of the city. Another circle extended outside of this, but due to the expansion which has taken place on the outskirts of the city this last one is no longer visible. The whole city then radiates out from the Kremlin in a series of circles. The result is that the streets run every which way and square blocks are almost unheard of. The A and B circles are now used as arteries and each one has a car line which runs completely around the city and will bring you back where you started from.

Moscow consists of two cities. You can see the old and the new in such contrast that you seem to be in a different city when you have gone only a few blocks. The new is pushing out the old. The old buildings are drab and the new ones lend color to the city. It reminds me of the spring when new plants push old leaves and sticks to one side in order that they may exist. The old buildings were ornate, and the merchants' and middle-class houses are noticeable because their owners tried to outdo each other in fancy trimmings done by hand labor and representing a huge expenditure in a wasteful manner.

The new buildings are made of brick while the old were usually made of wood. The new buildings are built on simple, good-looking lines with every effort made to build them for use. The old living quarters are close to the ground and grouped closely together. The new buildings used for living quarters are built on the edge of the city where plenty of fresh air is available. Each building is usually of from five to ten stories and is built in such a way that each apartment gets air and light on at least two sides. They have every convenience while the old buildings have no water or plumbing. It is quite a common sight today to see people who live in the old houses going to the corner water tap with buckets in order to get their day's supply of water. Destruction and construction are parts of the same process here. One day you will see a building and the next day you see that they have commenced to tear it down. In its place construction immediately begins. The new is destroying the old and replacing it with finer and better planned construction.

In the world of planning the Soviet Union naturally leads. The whole plan for future Moscow is laid out. Each time a new structure is built it fits into the plan. At first glance the new building may seem to be out of line or stuck off in some queer place but soon you will see old worthless houses torn down and new streets will appear which jibe exactly with the surroundings.

The buildings are located where they are needed the most. There is no need to build in unsatisfactory locations because of the refusal of some owner to part with his land. The best example of the directness of a socialist construction was noticeable in the subway. In many ways you notice shortcuts in the original planning and final construction which would have delayed the thing for years if the builders had to bicker concerning the right of way, the stations (many of which are located in downtown buildings) and the problem of whether to use the tunnel construction or the open trench construction, both of which were used here depending upon the conditions.

At first the city reminded me something of London. There are many cobble-stoned streets. The buildings are not very tall. Horses are used to a great extent in transportation of freight. The old buildings give the city a somber grey look much similar to London. As one watches the transformation take place, however, he realizes that London is static while Moscow is a live changing city. Many people who return here after being away two years do not recognize whole portions of the city and are unable to find their way around the new streets.

The new buildings are large in floor space even though they are not skyscrapers. In fact, the largest apartment we have seen houses about four thousand people. The system gives a flexibility which is not present elsewhere. For instance, when the first section of the subway was completed they were able by the use of more machinery to dispense with the services of forty thousand men. Within two days time every one of these released workers was absorbed into industry.

Stores are built near the factories and living quarters so that it is not necessary to go to the crowded shopping centers unless it is for something unusual. In each living district there are hundreds of little shops which often resemble a large hot dog stand in America. Here you are able to get the small things you want without going more than a block or so. While many people do not like the looks of these little wooden stands, they are very convenient and easily changed if need be. The larger living quarters have their own dining quarters where meals can be obtained at a very cheap price. Almost every organization has its own kitchen and dining room where its workers eat one or two meals a day at a price which is almost nothing.

There are, of course, many things which need to be improved and no one is aware of this as much as the government itself. At the present time a special campaign for the construction of seventy-two new schools is being hurried along. The newspapers are constantly investigating all phases of Moscow life and if things are not going along in a satisfactory manner they will devote columns to criticism which has no regard for a man's party affiliations or anything else. They get results.

The street cars are more than crowded and transportation in the city of Moscow is slow and difficult despite the fact that electric trains, motor busses, trolley busses and street cars are used. It will not be solved until the entire subway is completed, which will take some time. At the present the section which is to open on May 1 is only one-eighth of the total subway to be built.

Living conditions are crowded and despite the construction of several hundred new buildings they could use three times as many. The same is true in the production of goods, every place which could be used for a store is used as such and they are all filled with goods. Their daily sales are very large and yet there is not enough for everybody. Of food there is plenty but of the little luxuries which everyone would like to have, they are unable to produce enough. Things of this type are phonographs, radios, bicycles, cameras and many other such things.

No one claims that everything is perfect here, the officials themselves do not. The other day I read about the 200 per cent increase in the production of some article. They were very pleased about it naturally but at the end of the article it said that even with this increase of 200 per cent they were not able to supply 2 per cent of the demand.

No one tries to make the people believe that they are well off; in fact, at one of the recent meetings Molotov said "we are not a rich country at the present time but our expansion, which is greater than that made by any other country in history, will soon make us a rich country". The construction of basic industries naturally means that energy is temporarily taken away from industries which produce consumers' goods. The people know this and realize that they are being called upon to make a sacrifice at the present for the future. And by the looks of the new goods which are appearing in the stores it will not be long until the results of their former sacrifice will appear in improved conditions to the extent they have never even considered.

One thing which is noticeable in Moscow is the church buildings. Between the place where we live and the center of town there is a church for every two blocks of the way. They are unusual churches with onion-shaped spires which are top-heavy. They are built so that they stood out above all other structures in the neighborhood. They were expensive buildings and there is no question that there was a decided relation between the elaborateness of the priests and their churches and the extreme poverty of the people who lived in the wretched buildings which surrounded them.

It is remarkable how well the mass of workers get along without the aid of priests. The churches have not all been closed, however, and it is possible to attend church services if one desires. We have visited one or two churches which while looking rather dilapidated from the outside possess interiors which are as richly overdone as they were in pre-revolutionary Russia. However, even though it is possible to attend church, very few people do. Some of the buildings which possessed no special beauty and which were left deserted by their former congregations have been torn down. Wherever there is one which portrays some fine bit of unusual construction or art, it is preserved and usually used as a museum.

The museums are thick in Moscow and heavily attended. It is not unusual to see a long line of people waiting for one to open. They are crowded all the time. There is no question that the workers here are taught to appreciate art in all forms to a greater extent than the people in any other country. They not only see but they discuss such things among themselves and many of the conversations about literature, painting and music would arouse the envy of many of our people in America who think they are experts in these fields. The theatres are crowded and most of them present stage plays although there are many motion pictures shown on the outskirts of the city. The operas, ballets, dramatic productions and comedies are extremely fine.

The peasants have certain markets in each district where they bring their surplus products. Most of these peasants belong to a collective farm which does business for the whole group. In addition to this each peasant is allowed to raise vegetables or other things which he may take into the cities to sell. They sell milk, eggs, potatoes, hand-made baskets, linens, clothes, etc. The markets are very colorful because they represent the place where the city workers meet the peasants. Each of these markets is large. Besides the place for the sale of goods which they bring, the peasants are able to buy manufactured goods from the branch stores which are located at these places for the convenience of the peasants. The peasants are a particular type and the women usually wear shawls which are dark-colored in winter and lighter in summer. Often one sees some worker from the far off provinces who is arrayed in bright colors. After a time it is possible to tell the national republic from which they come by observing their style and color of dress.

The city is full of trees and many of the boulevards have long parks running down the centers. These parks have wide walks and benches, statues, etc. There are several parks of rest and culture which are the centers of winter sports, in the cold season having ice skating rinks, ski jumps, sled runs, etc. In summer they are great playgrounds for young and old. Many fine stage plays are given in open air theatres located in these parks in the summer. We are here just at the beginning of spring. The repairs are being made for the summer months, the dirt left from the snow and ice is being removed, windows washed and new paint is brightening up the whole place. The seasons are very definite here and I can already see that Moscow is going to be very beautiful in the summer.

Moscow is inhabited by people who have a definite purpose, that of building socialism. Many realize that their condition is not what it should be but the fact that everything is improving month by month makes them realize that their government is actually doing things and going places. There is more construction in the Soviet Union than in all the rest of the world combined. Their conditions are improving and they are receiving more and more privileges during the period in which the workers of other countries are receiving less and less wages and less freedom.

Many of the people have conveyed this idea, that their government makes mistakes and admits them, but what they have promised they are doing and for this reason they have a greater real support from the people than any other government in the world because they have proved definitely that they are honest.

April, 1935.

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TECHNICS

THE parts are interchangeable, machined
Precisely to a thousandth of an inch.
Each duplicates the rest, so it's a cinch
To make replacements any time. We cleaned
Up the production system, made it so
It didn't matter when a part would blow.

The parts are interchangeable, machined
By competition, by the tightened pinch
Of fear, the lathe of hunger. It's a cinch
To get replacements any time. We've cleaned
Up the production system, made it so
It doesn't matter when a man may go.

—BUHL EDMOND

TWENTY-EIGHT YEARS IN A NEWS ROOM

BY W. K. BASSETT

CHAPTER SEVEN

ONE day Louis Splendorini (that wasn't his name) called me out of the press room in the Oakland City Hall to inform me that the city commissioner of public health and safety was getting a wad of graft from the Chinese lotteries. Louis, who was doing city hall duty for all the papers I wasn't serving, had unobserved overheard a conversation between Little Ernest, king of the Chinese lottery operators, and a brother of the commissioner. He had learned that Little Ernest was paying over a goodly sum every month to the commissioner and his brother for protection of the Chinese lottery houses of which there were about fifty in the downtown district of Oakland.

In my opinion there was nothing very diabolical about the Chinese lotteries. The cost of their tickets was small and when they paid they paid well. Taken over a year a man couldn't lose a great deal through them and there were occasions when a man won considerable. To me they were a department of the illegal racket that demanded no special consideration in the protection of people who legally expended thousands of dollars with palm readers, spiritualists and the like. And as far as news was concerned I could see nothing in an occasional raid of a Chinese lottery which did not happen to have paid its protection money. And I was entirely too busy covering the spontaneous news of the day to turn my mind to the laborious task of getting sufficient concrete evidence on the police commissioner to break a sensation.

I listened to Louis and he had a good proposition. It was simple, too. Why not go to Little Ernest and acquaint him with the fact that we were in possession of the information that he was contributing to the police commissioner's material welfare and, apparently, not disturbing the commissioner's peace of mind. Why not suggest that *our* peace of mind would not be disturbed? Louis decided to do it. He did. One evening he suggested to me that we go down to Seventh and Broadway and get a drink. We walked casually into the saloon and stood at the bar. Shortly I observed Little Ernest enter, but ignored him. Soon Louis left me and walked out the side door. Little Ernest followed him. I stayed with my beer and waited. In five minutes Louis returned. We drank another beer and departed. A block away he pushed a roll of bills into my hand. As I remember it now there was fifty dollars in it. It seemed that he agreed with Little Ernest that two dollars a lottery joint a month was sufficient for us. I believe we met Little Ernest with like results every month for the next six months—until another veteran reporter returned from playing around in the navy and began to nose about in what was interpreted by Louis and myself as a suspicious manner. However, during the six months of graft we never did anything for it. There were no Chinese lottery raids to suppress in the news; there was no ripple, in fact, on the Chinese lottery sea of operations. We merely took what we got in the simple hope that perhaps that amount, at least, was being deducted from what the police commissioner was getting. All it cost us was a bit of self-consciousness whenever we stood before the commissioner in quest of news. He probably had a little self-consciousness of his own on these occasions.

The veteran reporter who had been playing around in the navy stopped another source of income for us when he returned and began snooping about. A week or two after the first successful conference with Little Ernest, Louis asked me if I knew a certain party whom he named. I admitted knowing him, but only by name, as a gambler whose operations I had little personal knowledge of. It appeared that he was operating a pretty slick and considerably remunerative gambling establishment of the de luxe variety in a suite at one of our first-class hotels. I didn't know this, but Louis informed me that it would be a bright idea for me that very noon to go up to the saloon of that hotel and sit down at one of the tables. I did. The gambler came in, looked around and then sat down at my table. He ordered drinks and then asked me my name, how long I had been on the police beat, what papers I represented there, and so on. He was merely identifying me to his personal satisfaction. Then he motioned me to follow him and went into the lavatory. We were alone there, as it happened, and he pressed a bill in my hand and departed. Well outside the hotel and on my way back to the police beat I identified the bill as of the $100 variety. This was mine for at least three months—until that ubiquitous and snooping ex-navy bird came back to the beat.

Probably the most questionable operation in my short career of graft, the operation that ended it, I swear, for all time, was the hold-up of the wine shop owner whose life-long desire to be president of a hospital cost him three hundred dollars of which my share was half.

We'll call him White and he had a very black wine shop down on Broadway near Seventh street in Oakland. It was what was called in those days a family liquor store. There was a counter at the front where purchases could be made by the "family" while those who wanted to do their drinking by the glass were protected from prying eyes by barrels of wine which hid the bar in the rear from the front. This place was frequented by what were known as "winoes". They could get at White's a long glass of a sort of wine for five cents and they were principally beggars who rushed back to White's whenever they acquired a nickel. It happened, but I could never understand why, that the principal custom there was colored. I first discovered this several years before the date of my present narrative when one of my city editors, a periodical drunkard, disappeared and I was sent to find him. White's was suggested as a possible place to look. There I found Steve standing on top of a wine barrel reciting Hamlet's soliloquy to a circle of entranced and besotten Negroes.

Louis knew White very well indeed and he it was who discovered that the wine shop owner was at last on the verge of realizing the ambition of years to become president of the hospital in San Francisco which was devoted exclusively to the care of the people of his Latin race. Louis must have been mulling over in his mind for some time the chances of capitalizing on this ambition of Mr. White. He saw the chance when

Police Judge George Samuels, in sentencing a wino to jail made the casual remark that "some of those wine joints down there on Broadway ought to be put out of business".

Then Louis and I cooked up a story, elaborating on Judge Samuels' statement and using it as a lead for a yarn to the effect that a clean-up was imminent, and naming the wine shops that were destined to get the hook. As with our friend Abou, Mr. White's name led all the rest. We made a carbon of this.

The next day Louis walked into the White shop and had a drink. He chatted with Mr. White and then, just as he was about to depart, remarked with sudden concern, that he had heard that Bassett knew about a story his paper was going to run which might make trouble for Mr. White. Mr. White was much concerned and Louis told him a few more details of what he had "heard". It was arranged that I was to be taken to the wine shop the next day by Louis.

I was, and White asked for a "word" with me. He wanted to know the details of the story and I told him. But I explained that I couldn't do anything about it as it had been written by a man in the San Francisco office and I merely had the carbon in order to check on names and addresses. Could he see the carbon? Perhaps. I had it in my pocket, but thought it better to put him off for a day.

I took it in the next day and I never have seen a man so stricken with personal concern. Was there anything to be done to stop the story? I doubted it, but I could see the man who wrote it and find out. I'd let him know the next day.

The next day I had a story that the man was a hard one to deal with and I thought, much to my horror, I explained, that he probably was in the market to be "paid off". White leaped at this. He would pay, but how much? I didn't know but I would find out, and I put him off until the next day.

The next day I had the price. I was shocked as I told him that the man who wrote the story wanted $300 to suppress it. Mr. White was not prepared for this. It was more than he expected. I suggested that he collect it pro rata from the score or more wine shops mentioned with his. He considered this and said he would try. I was to see him next day. I did, and he was still excited, but was afraid he couldn't raise that much. I had a feeling that we were going to lose Mr. White. I conferred with Louis and the next afternoon I telephoned to Mr. White. I said the San Francisco man was leaving the city that evening to go to Sacramento; that he was taking the story with him to be mailed back from Sacramento, but he would see me and would leave it with me and his office would never know about it if the payment he demanded was met. White told me to get the story, the original, and bring it to him when the man came.

That evening I made my last trip to White's wine joint. I had the original story. He motioned me to the front of the store and behind a wine barrel he passed me a roll of bills and I slipped him the story. As I turned away I faced the penetrating stare of a policeman who had just emerged from the rear of the place. My heart jumped and perspiration all but melted the currency in my hand. The policeman said "Hello", walked past me and out into the night. I followed him at a discreet distance and two blocks away ran the rest of the distance to the Albany bar where I divided the money with Louis.

That was our last graft or, at least, it was *my* last graft. I have had opportunities since, one of them of an amount that is staggering when I think of it now, but with the exception of that year 1918, my record has been clean as far as is concerned the making of illicit money through my position as a newspaper reporter or editor. I have told about it here because there must be no quibbling about this story. I can prove my sincerity only by granting myself no immunity.

(To be continued)

THE THEATER

GENIUS AND JUDAS

BY WINTHROP RUTLEGE

ONCE in a blue moon, or thereabouts, one discovers an individual screen performance of such sheer warmth and splendor that it completely transcends the subject matter and the general production of its vehicle. Such a performance is that of Elizabeth Bergner in *Escape Me Never* at the United Artists. In it one finds justification for the lavish praise the critics have given her efforts on the London stage.

Escape Me Never, clipped from the Margaret Kennedy sequel to *The Constant Nymph*, is an ordinary picture save for Miss Bergner's performance. It is merely another of Miss Kennedy's discourses on the irresponsibility of genius, charming in its amiable madness, caustic in its commentary on the comfortable and conventional world, but signifying not a great deal of anything.

Her genius is a young composer with a modern ballet in his system. He alternates between starving and living on his more provident brother and while in Italy picks up a strange wild waif whom he finds lugging a mysteriously-conceived baby. After dragging her through the Alps on a ridiculous hiking trip he takes her to London and marries her, thereafter to subject her to all the pain and indignity which only the self-absorbed artist ego can radiate. But she stands by faithfully, knowing, as no conventional wife could know, that his cruelty is unintentional and that his seeming heartlessness is not sadistic but rather one of the barriers of the sanctuary in which he must sit snugly in order to create.

Miss Bergner's creation of the character of the waif, Gemma, seems to me one of the masterpieces of screen portrayal. She gives to her vixen a fullness of imagination, an inborn impishness of nature and a devastating flavor of the tragic. She understands her genius as a mother might understand; she knows his weaknesses and perfidies and she accepts them as part of him. She is splendid with impish coquetry in the playful scenes, and in those wherein her baby dies while her husband refuses to leave the rehearsal he is conducting, she achieves a tragic magnificence.

The film is ably directed and it is photographed with a canny eye both to pictorial beauty and dramatic effectiveness. The shifts back and forth from the ballet rehearsal to the hospital are powerful mood builders, and Miss Bergner's walk down the hospital steps after she has heard that her child is dead is as eloquently dolorous a gesture as has been brought to the screen.

The captivating madness of Miss Kennedy's books has been transferred to the celluloid with deft touches by the film's British makers. In that madness one feels the author's rather confused urge to revolt against a world full of pompous indifference to anything but monetary success and equally pompous contempt of monetary failure. One cannot help but wonder what she might write if she understood her world's underlying motives better—and what kind of a picture might be made from it. But Miss Bergner, nevertheless, is a great artist and *Escape Me Never* a picture to be seen.

In browsing about the off-Market-street film parlors, I came across *The Informer* and I must record the praise which has been bestowed upon it as a little too exuberant. It is another of those pictures exemplifying the Second Great Hollywood Weakness, the first being the necessity to make life seem other than what it is.

This film does what so many American films do: it begins with a mood which it does not sustain. The first five minutes give promise of great things; dialogue is reduced to a word or two here and there while camera and sound effects build a telling atmosphere. But soon everybody begins to talk at a rate which makes one wonder if someone has offered a prize for the film containing the record-high number of spoken words. But something worse than this happens, too; in the last fifteen minutes the film goes completely Hollywood and the stool pigeon who betrayed the Irish rebels is put on the spot in the approved cinemagang war fashion.

The picture is roughly adapted from Liam O'Flaherty's story and chronicles the downfall of Gypo Nolan who betrays a rebel friend to the British for 20 pounds Sterling, with which he hopes to take his light o' love to America. Instead, he gets uproariously drunk, his slow wits play him false and he is dispatched by the Republican Army's secret tribunal.

The psychological picture of a man in the throes of conscience and fear is rather sketchily drawn, the director having become too enamored of some of the roistering scenes and flashes of Erinwood humor. Even so, it is a gripping picture until the final stretch, wherein Gypo Nolan becomes a sort of unkillable Frankensteinian monster, dying only after he has staggered into a church to confess and be forgiven by the mother whose boy he betrayed.

Victor McLaglen's performance is so superior to those in his many versions of "What Price Glory" that the grateful spectators have been inclined to mistake it for a work of art. There are nice performances by Preston Foster, Donald Meek, Heather Angel and Wallace Ford. Many of the players forget their brogues here and there and sometimes the straining for grisley comedy is a bit painful, And at the end, alas, it's just another case of Erin go Blah.

The July Dramatic Festival to be given at the Greek Theater in Berkeley promises to be an ambitious affair. Peggy Wood has come from London and Broadway via Hollywood to play Katharina in *The Taming of the Shrew* on July 9. Rollo Peters, who has lain a bit fallow in his Shakespeare since he was Romeo to Jane Cowl's Juliet, will be Petrucchio. On July 19 the festival production will be Sean O'Casey's *Within the Gates* (which was stopped by the sensitive Boston police, but which should go undisturbed among the classic Berkeley Eucalyptus trees) will be presented. Peters will have the role of the poet and Peggy Converse, who agonized for six months as the heroine of *The Drunkard* will have the part designated on the program as that of "the young harlot".

A THEATER OF MEANING IN HOLLYWOOD

BY SIDNEY ROGER

RIGHT in the midst of Hollywood, a revitalizing theater movement has emerged at last in the form of the Contemporary Theater, The Hollywood Players, and the Film and Photo League. There are also other entertainment-propaganda groups that are equally effective on a smaller scale. These organizations have recognized the potentialities of working-class entertainment. Their purpose is primarily to combat the growing anti-labor or escapist theater and cinema, and replace them with the powerful artistry of class-conscious drama.

The decadence and helplessness of the bourgeois stage finds its antithesis in the Contemporary Theatre and Hollywood Players. The former group launched its career in conjunction with a Negro group in the production of *Stevedore*. This play by Paul Peters sensitively portrays the life and struggles of Negro dock workers in New Orleans. The startling picture of Negro workers, their fear of "stepping out of their places" even in the face of intense exploitation and outright cheating, their growing self-conscious strength, the domination and racial prejudice of white employers and the united front of white and black workers to final victory—came to life with dynamic intensity and sincerity. It was entertainment, and it was also an important object lesson. Although the acting was amateur and spontaneous and the direction a bit confused, the play drove its meaning home.

The next play of this group was *Peace On Earth*, by Sklar and Maltz. This play centers around a professor, whose anti-war sympathies cause him to join with students and longshoremen who are striking to prevent shipment of munitions to a belligerent nation. On the docks, the professor becomes actively involved in the strike when his friend is shot by hired thugs. He openly repudiates a trustee of the university who is a munitions manufacturer. His growing realization of the cause of war motivates his leading of a demonstration during which a policeman is shot. He is arrested, framed up and sentenced to die. In the last act the situation comes to a head. A war is actually provoked with a situation strikingly reminiscent of "the Maine". The great jingoistic-propaganda machinery, in which the university pedagogs, the "timid profession", play their part, comes into action. The liberals betray the professor and in spite of mass protest, the war-hysteria executes him. The performance of the experienced cast, under the expert direction of Jascha Frank, left little to be desired. The audience left with a clear understanding of the forces behind imperialist war and a practical method of combating these forces at their sourse.

The most recent play presented by this group, *Sailors of Catarro*, by Friederich Wolfe, dramatically records the incidents in the revolt of Austrian sailors in the Bay of Catarro. Their lack of revolutionary tactics, their confusion and inability to cope with better-trained forces, cause their downfall. This is an exceptional work of revolutionary self-criticism, but it seemed lost to any but the tutored. Yet it was exciting and dramatic enough to hold the audience in breathless suspense. The poor acting was successfully counterbalanced by the skilful direction of Rappaport, former assistant to Pabst, and an excellent set. The main criticism lies with the play itself and not the production. One fails to sense the seething mass of sailors below decks, and the essential working-class character of the uprising, in the personal revolution of a small group whose symbolism is never sufficiently apparent. Nevertheless, this production can be chalked up as another successful experiment in the building of a theater of meaning in Los Angeles.

The really glorious culmination of the revolutionary theater "season" (the workers' theater can hardly afford to be limited by seasons) was the Hollywood Players' production of Clifford Odets' *Till the Day I Die* and *Waiting for Lefty*. Both plays were under the direction of Will Ghere, who was later brutally beaten by fascists for portraying the Hitler terror. The first play paints a picture of the underground anti-fascist movement in Germany—the tragedy of broken lives—torture —concentration camps—and the undying heroism of the working-class. There was an unnecessary amount of sentimentality, perhaps, to strike a "human-interest" note, and a very depressing ending, but it drove home its alert message. The production limped under the handicap of poor acting and too slow tempo.

Waiting for Lefty more than made up for the faults of *Till the Day I Die* in content, writing and masterful execution. We see a union at which labor-fakers attempt to stall off the taxi-drivers from strike action. This is followed by a series of rapid, cinematic flash-backs into the lives of the drivers and the forces which lead them to strike. Climax follows climax to the final denunciation of the "union leader" by his own "bastard brother". The speeches of the workers who have finally taken the floor, and the announcement that their leader, Lefty, has been murdered, lead to a concerted call for "Strike!" Even the blasé Hollywood audiences were stunned and rose on the final curtain with a roar of approval. The directness of appeal, the expressive dialogue and spirited, natural acting, make this the best revolutionary theater yet seen in Los Angeles.

Paralleling work done by the stage groups, the *Film and Photo League* of Los Angeles has started working on home ground to combat the opiatic propaganda of the "artistic" movie industry. (No more will the workers be forced to live vicariously in palaces of parasites and on "love that passeth all understanding", or to be scared out of all remembrance of their miseries by synthetic Draculas. No more will they become involved in the geometric gyrations of love triangles.) This new film group is bringing to the workers pictures portraying their own lives—pictures emphasizing the struggle for a better life. The healthy class-conscious character of the *Film and Photo League* is the most refreshing and important addition to the American cinema.

The history of this organization dates back three years, when a small group of film workers, realizing its necessity, tried unsuccessfully to form a workers' cinema. After a long-dormant period, its importance in the workers' life was again recognized, and it has re-started with new vitality.

A membership of studio workers, technicians and artists led to the acquisition of a large house, in which a small theater, projection room and laboratories were set up. The League owns its own 16mm camera, accessories and a sound projection machine. Already they have produced thirty-two reels of documentary, news-reel film depicting the strikes, struggles and victories of the California workers on various fronts. They have a fine stock of Russian films on hand, and are constantly kept busy by demands of unions and other working-class organizations. The League shows fine foreign films every Sunday night to the general public. So far they have shown *Potemkin*, *Broken Shoes*, *Deserter* and *A Nous La Liberté*.

The aim of the *Film and Photo League* is three-fold. First: to awaken interest in workers to the cinema as a medium of education. Second: to provide an understanding of the fine art of cinema. Finally: the integration of the above forces of art and propaganda for the production of American class-conscious cinema.

This phenomenal growth has taken place within the short period of nine months! Add to this that the locale maintains the reputation of being the largest bourgeois entertainment-center of the world, and a reactionary stronghold for Chandler and Hearst. Then the record of the workers' theater in Southern California takes on majestic proportions.

BOOKS

WE LACK COMMONSENSE

TOOLS OF TOMORROW, by *Jonathan Norton Leonard*. (Viking Press) $3

(Reviewed by Dorothy Erskine)

WHAT about a "streamline" society?

Why not a "1935" economic system?

We are up to the minute with our machines, but totally unscientific about the society in which they must function. When an engineer explains, as Jonathan Norton Leonard does in *Tools of Tomorrow*, what scientists and technicians have done lately, and are doing now, it seems as if they ought to be backed up by the rest of us, along non-technical social lines. We, somehow, seem to lack commonsense—lack even a garden variety of self-interest. Read this book. Get the feeling it gives of the potential energy lying around for us to use. Of course, we know about coal and oil and damming rivers for power, but have we ever read an explanation of how they harness volcanic power and the tides? This minute the wheels of Oxfordshire and Birmingham could be turned with the world's cheapest electricity, generated by the Atlantic waters

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Entered as second-class matter at the post office at Carmel, Calif., under the Act of March 3, 1879.

flooding up the Bristol Narrows, if the British government had not put the project temporarily into cold storage because of social obstacles.

So much for energy—the food of machines. Apparently energy is inexhaustible and abundant. But the flesh and bones of machines—the metals! What has been done about them? Perhaps the most fascinating part of the book is the description of the alloys developed since 1909, when the X-Ray began to reveal the structure of metal. Aluminum, magnesium, tantalus and tungsten have been combined with the standard metals to make substances with almost any quality industry demands. Every advance along this line has meant a revolution in machines. And this new world is just beginning. Nothing seems impossible. Soon we may be floating gently down out of the sky like a feather in our auto-giros. Only one final step is needed—to perfect the perpendicular ascent—and thus to make these machines the individual air car of the near future. Or we might have luxury automobiles such as we have now, for $100 apiece. Quite possible if we knew enough to demand such things. But we cannot know about ourselves, our own age, or what to do, or what we may expect till we get some key explanation from the engineers.

The research of a trained technician has gone into this book. It is sensational in its matter-of-factness. Mr. Leonard carefully weighs the practical possibilities of the new tools. He cannot help pointing to the manner in which our present social arrangements cancel out the benefits achieved by applied science. He is very careful not to touch upon political ground, but in the last chapter he does tell us what the technicians think about the mess we are in. They are a perplexed and disgusted lot.

"What is the matter with the rest of the outfit?" they ask. "We tell them how to raise all kinds of food and a lot of people start eating garbage. We design a long range plane for an air line, and they start wondering if they can drop bombs on Tokyo. We find some mineral we need in Africa, and Congress slaps a duty on it to protect a little hole-in-the-ground mine in Colorado. We figure out a cheap and easy way to make something and they all jump on us for causing unemployment. Wasn't that what they wanted us to do—save labor?

"Technicians believe they have done their job well. They know it, in fact. But they find themselves hampered at many points by forces beyond their understanding or control. They protest it is not their fault if ten thousand glass blowers starve to death. It only means that somebody else has fallen down on *his* job."

EXPERIMENTS ON LEARNING

ADULT INTERESTS, by *Edward L. Thorndike*. (Macmillan Co.) $3.25

(Reviewed by Herman de Fremery)

IN A fast changing world, the ability of adults to learn new ways of thinking and of doing is of profound importance. For three years Professor Thorndike has been intensively investigating the question of adult learning, with the assistance of the psychologic staff of the Institute of Educational Research of Columbia University. In a previous volume (*Adult Learning*), he reported on changes in the ability to learn up to age 45; subsequent researches by others have dealt with ages 45 to 70. The conclusion is an assurance that adults, that is, persons from ages 21 to 70, can learn most of what they need to learn, and with little or no greater time cost than at age 15. There is now experimental ground for the assertion that the widespread acceptance of new opinions, beliefs and customs need not lag a generation because only the young can acquire them.

It does not follow, however, that because adults can learn that they will learn. Ability must be supplemented by interest. Have adults the necessary interest-capacity? Thorndike's studies show that they have. From the twenties to the fifties he found no decrease in the interests most needed to support adult learinig. Even from the fifties to the sixties the decrease would seem to be too slight to be significant in this connection.

But if an adult is not interested in learning something that it is desirable that he should learn, what then? Can interests be modified? Yes, reports the author, likes and dislikes can be learned by adults as truly as names and dates; within certain limitations set by inherited nature, wants, interests, and attitudes can be sufficiently modified, if suitable motives are applied and suitable methods are used.

The most surprising results came from the experimentation on learning what is intrinsically uninteresting. Lack of intrinsic interest in the thing learned was shown to be but a slight handicap in the task of learning. For adults, at least, extrinsic interests (sense of duty, self-respect as a learner, social advantage and the like) are adequate to produce efficient learning in the absence of any intrinsic values.

The book reports investigations of many other aspects of interests in relation to adult learning. These should all be regarded as preliminary. A great deal of research needs to be done to confirm and especially to qualify in particulars Thorndike's general findings. Nevertheless the author's statements of the problems presented, his ingenious research procedures, and his highly critical sense, make this contribution of value in throwing light on the psychology of the conditions of adult learning. The book is also concerned with the techniques of adult education, about which it has very definite recommendations. Its clear and easy style will be an agreeable surprise to those who have dug their way through Thorndike's technical writings.

The author gives three reasons for a study such as this, which are worth repeating: first, because the world is changing so fast that what one learns from 5 to 20 is often not useful from 35 to 60; second, because men and women have now so much more leisure that they could, if they would, keep up with the changing world; third, because the diffusion of power from the few to the many makes it desirable that the many learn more than they do learn or can learn in childhood.

LEAVE IT AROUND THE HOUSE

BEFORE THE DAWN OF HISTORY, by *Charles R. Knight*. (Whittlesey House, McGraw-Hill Book Co.) $2.50

IF THERE'S one subject that ought to interest everyone it's the story of how the world began, what it was like in the beginning and how we know anything about those far-off days! Not even scientific men realized until comparatively recently the terrific age of this planet and the stupendous changes that have taken place over the countless centuries. Mr. Knight, in vividly lively, understandable prose, describes these strange early times with their weird, nightmarish monsters, and he also tells how modern scientists got their information about it which makes a book such as this possible.

There is a valuable chart of geological time in the front of the volume which shows at a glance the meanings of *Paleozoic, Pliocene, Miocene* and other terms that occasionally crop up even in the most frivolous literature. Mr. Knight is an artist of imagination and skill and in addition to telling the story he has painted nearly fifty beautiful illustrations of primitive man and primitive animals—you know, the ones that have fascinating names like *Tyrannasaurus, Brontosaurus, Titanotheres*, to say nothing of such interesting beasts as the Four-toed Horse, the Woolly Mammoth and even Alice's old friend, the Dodo!

If you have children this is a grand book to leave around the house where they can easily get at it. They'll love the pictures and inevitably want to know more about them. And there could be no better introduction, I should think, to anthropology, geology and whatever other sciences are involved in the study of pre-historic times than a book like this, which is scientifically accurate and at the same time delightfully and entertainingly written. —D. C.

CORRESPONDENCE

HE WAS SUBTLE

Editor, Pacific Weekly,

Sir:

Perhaps I am a bit too subtle for Mr. Conover.

In supplementing my article, "Must We Boycott Japan?" Harry Conover explains various facts I had stated, bringing out parallelisms I preferred to remain subtle about.

True, the workers' status will not be changed under boycott. But, however rank and rotten the workers' conditions are, they will be protected, not eliminated entirely as will be in the future if we continue as of present.

Boycott is not Revolution.

True, the boycott would be a smoke screen behind which the profits of the monopolists would increase at the expense of the workers. But when I stated Japan is capitalizing on our limitations, I assumed intellectuals like Mr. Conover knew our monopolists are our limitations also. Japan has us coming and going, so to speak.

I stated Japan has the world checkmate.

If Mr. Conover will get in touch with me at 2033 Virginia, Berkeley, I shall be glad to show him some facts about the Japanese menace that will not be found by glancing through the *Commerce Yearbook*, and explain why I preferred to remain "Spenglerian' in regard to revolution.

Thank you.

Berkeley, Calif. G. Armistead Kauffman

AL SESSIONS NOT BAD

Editor, Pacific Weekly,

Sir:

I read with much interest the correspondence in your issue of June 21. It is indeed a significant point that Berkeley, a seat of so-called learning, seems also to be a hotbed of communistic ambitions.

Now, really, Al Sessions, isn't a bad sort of guy, and he's really had a lot more experience in efforts at social reform than most people who trouble to express their opinions, and he happens to know, as I do, through efforts at actual demonstration, that the democratic principle, applied as the average advocate would apply it, does not work out in a society of people who have been educated and brought up into a semi-fascist society.

Personally I believe in the principle of the UNITED FRONT—always providing the words mean just what they say and have no deeper significance, but we struggle with the problem of each advocate of United Fronts having a different conception of the ideal to be attained through unison; none are willing to unite to go in the same direction, as did our forefathers; they all wish to unite to go to different places—and therein lies the weakness of so-called democracy.

Even in California efforts have been made to prove the efficacy of democratic rule through establishment of colonies. The effort had to be abandoned, and the successful colony of today exists because the democratic principle has been abandoned beyond the degree which Sinclair advocates.

Perhaps in fifty years of effort the citizens of our country will be ready for real democracy; today it is only a theory. And like most theories can only be put into effect step by step, with educational measures preparing us for the next step as one is taken.

Democracy is indeed desirable; the united front is more desirable; but until our desires become paramount to our selfish interests—which must be replaced by group interests—we will not make much progress in any direction.

Los Angeles. The Visualist