

BASEMENT

PACIFIC WEEKLY

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A WESTERN JOURNAL OF FACT AND OPINION

JULY 22, 1935



THE LONG ROAD
SHOWING THE SHAME OF SACRAMENTO

THE EUREKA "RIOT"
BY ERNEST BESIG

SWEET MUSIC
A STORY BY PETER QUINCE

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VOLUME III

MONDAY, JULY 22, 1935

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NOTES AND COMMENT

NOT OLD ENOUGH

MUSSOLINI reviewed his legion of youngsters before he departed for the incipient war front in Africa. They ranged in age from three years up to adolescence. It's a typical fascist error. He has started them too young. Children get sick of a thing so easily. They'll be sick of war long before he can use them.

UN-AMERICAN JOURNALISM

TOTAL membership in the Communist Party in San Francisco must be tremendous. Communists are here, there and everywhere, day and night, week in and week out. They are slugging people right and left. They are fomenting strikes from one end of the city to the other. Wherever two or three are gathered together in anybody's name nine (stet) of them are Communists. In fact, the only non-members of the Communist Party in San Francisco—that is, the only non-active members—are the editor of the San Francisco *Chronicle*, the publisher of the *Examiner*, Paul Scharrenberg, Mayor Rossi and, possibly, Mort and Herb Fleishhacker.

During the World War our billboards were plastered with posters depicting the German people as one big gorilla about to crush the nude figure of a woman in its hairy arms, or as a huge sword pinning a baby to a wall. The public print told us of hundreds of Belgian babies having their hands cut off by the "Huns". There was no story too abhorrent in detail, but that its central figure could very well be a German. And we were so religiously consistent about it. Bricks were thrown through windows of German bakeries, statues of German musicians and scientists were dethroned, restaurants with German names were compelled to re-paint their sign-boards, hamburger became liberty steak and German-fried potatoes were down on the menus as American. Not until twenty-four hours after the war was over did we again speak to the German family on our block, or deign to tell the time by a cuckoo clock which might have had its origin in the black forests of the Rhineland. Not for a whole week after the war did the United States government admit that no Belgian babies were actually known to have their hands cut off, and it was fully two weeks before the German flag was again greeted in

our ports and we put Oberammergau postcards back onto the library table. Not for six months did we read *Three Soldiers* and *Now It Can Be Told*.

We are weakening. The old American spirit of consistency and fair play is losing its backbone. The newspapers are betraying us.

Take the *Chronicle*, for instance. It is from the *Chronicle*, unprejudiced, unbiased as we know it is, that we accept our census of Reds and Communists in San Francisco. They are legion, as we have pointed out, and their crimes and misdemeanors are being perpetrated on every wharf, through every street and in the sanctity of every home. Innocent and conservative presidents of Ferryboatmen's Unions are getting their shins kicked at every step. These representatives of Red, Communist Russia are "boring from within" and lambasting from without in a manner which shows us just what a bloody shambles that Soviet nation over there across the Atlantic must be like.

But the *Chronicle* betrays us. Last Sunday it dished up to our satisfaction a front-page story with a one-column head: "Communists' Plan to Force Strike Bared." We were prepared to lay the paper aside for the nonce, content that the ubiquitous Communists of San Francisco, who are trying to sell us by gun and bludgeon the social and economic chaos of Russia, were blocked for the day, at least; shown up for what they are.

But our eye wandered to the left and there, in a three-column head, we were compelled to read: "Russia, U. S. Conclude Trade Pact to Increase Purchases 150 Per Cent". "American Imports (by Russia) for Year Expected to Total 30 Millions". "Officials of Soviet Express Their Satisfaction". Down in this shameful Associated Press story we read: "Observers thought it likely there would be a heavy investment in American railway equipment. Locomotives and other rolling stock are among the most urgent needs of the Soviet Union".

We are highly incensed at the *Chronicle*. What earthly good does it do us in our battle against these murderers, cut-throats, thugs and rioters to tell us in one column what scum of the earth they are and in the next give us this absurd story about our government coming to a dignified agreement with their country? How can they be planning to purchase locomotives and other railroad equipment when all they use are pistols, knives and clubs?

Ridiculous!

TOO LATE, PERHAPS

THERE APPEARED in a San Francisco newspaper on July 17 an advertisement signed by "Citizens and Business Firms of San Francisco Vitrally Interested in Its Future Prosperity and Peace", which is all about Radicalism on the Waterfront. It attempts to warn "real" labor and its leaders (the A. F. of L. conservatives) against the "radical bloc" whose objective is "chaos". This ad cites, with approval, Joseph P. Ryan. They are apparently carrying out the recent advice of Chester Rowell who said that the employers had better make their peace with conservative leaders lest worse befall them. In New York at the I. L. A. convention who appeared to boost Joseph P. Ryan's position? None other than General Hugh Johnson, who called striking longshoremen in the marine

strike last year "rats" and told labor to exterminate them.

These facts point fairly clearly to the alliance between conservative labor leaders and employers, and show the necessity for the rank and file to continue their efforts to get democratic representation and democratic procedure in their unions. Maybe Chester Rowell's warning to employers to use these conservative leaders has come too late. The rank and file is on to them.

MR. HEARST EXPLOITED

AS FAST as Mr. Hearst gets men to expose the dreadful conditions in the Soviet Union his reporters are exposed not only as liars, but worse. John Slivkoff, who reported to Ivan Lebedeff of Hollywood and Universal Service how Soviet soldiers beat him up, and who showed his blind eye and crooked nose as proof, was found to be a guy called Popoff, alias Dickson, never to have been to the Soviet Union, to be a skid-road artist and, worst of all, to have come by his dreadfully crippled face through a police third-degreering in San Francisco twelve years ago. He gets a small pension from the police for this reason.

Thomas Walker, who reported a few months ago on the Ukraine famine and published horrible famine pictures in Sunday editions, has just been apprehended by G-Men in New York. He was an ex-convict, forger and drunkard. He was to have been arrested in England, but Scotland Yard got word to "go easy" and he was deported to America. He was sent to Colorado Penitentiary for eight years for forgery in 1919 and later escaped. So far Mr. Hearst has not been able to get him out of the federal penitentiary in New York.

Why is it, if there is anything in these Soviet stories, that good Hearst money cannot buy creditable reporters?

LINCOLN STEFFENS SPEAKING--

"SOAK THE THRIFTY" is a great improvement upon the first slogan, "soak the rich". More virtuous, less just.

A HEADLINE squeals: "Judge-ships offered Congressmen" and the news story reports that judicial appointments were promised as bribes. Very old, and not so bad as it sounds. Wouldn't you rather be tried by a judge with a sense of guilt than by one of these superior self-righteous holys who are not as other men?

THE ETHIOPIANS have provided a pretext for war. They beat up an Italian official. They seem to have enjoyed this violence; they put their hearts into it as we do into a lynching. But it was an indiscretion just the same.

LET'S NOTE for future historians that the tide turned against the president, not when he spent those billions, but when he began to tax us to pay for them. It took actual pain to touch us up.

THE REPORTERS out East seem to have settled upon "fiery" as the descriptive word for Bridges. Not a harmful adjective for this quietly determined representative of the fiery majority of the longshoremen, but where did they get it? They might have asked Odd McIntyre for the right word. He

would have given it them at sight. And we need it out here THE CHILD used the word "prints-feet" where "foot-prints" would have fitted.

THE WITS of eastern, especially New York, journalism and the critics are hailing Robert Forsythe, a columnist on the *New Masses*, as a wit, as the best of them all. Robert Briffault agrees and explains that Forsythe's supremacy is traceable to the sobriety and sophistication of his philosophy. He is not in doubt about the why and the whither of our civilization as the other humorists are; he knows and he dares express himself on the red masses. John Chamberlain, the book critic on the *New York Times*, points out that on the other weeklies where Forsythe makes his living, he is not so superb, no better than the ordinary wits that have to live.

AT VLADIVOSTOCK one evening I ran across a company of amateur actors who played together in a small, obscure loft where there was no room—no provision whatever for spectators. None was expected. The players were playing for their own fun, and they were not merely rehearsing. They were acting plays they loved to represent. It was odd to me, who had never before heard of a theater without an audience. I put it down to the Russian revolution.

But the other night I went to the house of Mildred Wright down in the gulch and there I saw and heard a lot of musicians playing together just like the amateur actors of Vladivostock, without an audience, all for themselves and a couple of us neighbors. And how they did play! And how they could play! Sascha Jacobinoff was there and Mrs. Wright's old friend Antonia Brico; Jacobinoff with his violin, Miss Brico at the piano. They "tried" whatever each player wished, and the concert was all music the players loved. An evening to live for.

At the end of this amateur-professional music Antonia Brico told us the story of the organization of her women's symphony orchestra. She is not a feminist; when she has beaten down the prejudice against something new and has discovered and demonstrated the idea that sex is not the point in music, she proposes to organize mixed orchestras chosen all and only for musicianship. She has played her women in Berlin, New York—all over the world, except San Francisco. The boss of music there is a woman who won't have it. Not yet. But

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watching the strength in Antonia Brico's face (and fingers) one felt that there was hope.

A THUNDERSTORM, with rain, happened Sunday morning, and there was great, still heat before and after this miracle of July 14.

ANOTHER GREAT event on that momentous day was the third postponement of fascism in Paris, France. It was Bastille Day and the Fascists came out in force; but the Communists and the Socialists came out in greater force so the fascists went back in. It begins to look as if those intelligent French would avoid the fate spreading over all Europe. They are doing the trick by what they call a "common front" of Socialists and Communists. Our phrase is "united front". If that comes, fascism won't, as the French are telling the world, the experienced, clear-headed French.

HARRY BRIDGES was not elected president of his union, in place of John D. Ryan, and one reason was that that proud eminence was not what he and the West Coasters were after. The West Coasters went east to begin to start a movement among organized Labor, A. F. of L., to restore rank and file control of all unions. Democracy is what that would be called in politics.

Once, upon a time, I knew a young labor leader who, when we contemplated together the corruption ahead of him, asked me what he could do NOW to beat himself in his disloyal future and he did then what we agreed was the thing to do.

The San Francisco *Chronicle* rejoices, quite properly in a conservative newspaper, in the "defeat" of Bridges by labor and advises our western workers to remain true to the old, conservative, "tried and true" A. F. of L. officers. And it would have the Pacific Coast dockers and seamen clean out the Bridges and the Reds. That is right from the business point of view, quite right. But from the point of view of Labor the workers should go on and purge out all the old officers

of the A. F. of L. and take back to themselves all power. Meanwhile the *Chronicle* might go ahead themselves and find out just who and what caused the hundred and sixty or so strikes that have happened since the settlement of the general strike and so gave ground for the paper's conclusion that the so-called left unions can't be trusted to keep an agreement. I think it will be found that the unions, controlled by the workers are used by the workers as their tools, not the employers'. The employers have on their side now the state, the police, the press, public opinion and the Chamber of Commerce, they really should not have the labor organizations, too. That is too much and, among others, Harry Bridges and his crowd are against it. They want the unions to represent Labor; not the Labor politicians, not the A. F. of L. machine officials, but the rank and file of the workers. Let the *Chronicle* watch them get it knowing that THAT is what they are after.

JUST AS in states and cities some party machine used to get and sell out political control to Business, so in organized labor the A. F. of L. gathered up labor control and sold out strikes and the workers to Business. The same process we reformers used to watch in one city after another, one state after another, till it dawned on us that the process was universal in politics. Now we have discovered on the Pacific Coast that it happens in Labor, too, and, by test, we have discovered that a remedy is for the rank and file to take back the control they gave away to their one-time friends, their officers, who are more friendly to the employers. Harry Bridges was chosen for the unpleasant task of taking this idea to the unions out East and go with it up against the solid machine of corrupted Labor. He may be defeated and killed, but the movement has to go on to triumph. It must, because labor must live. Labor must live, even though Bridges is laid low. Some little things I have heard suggest to me that Harry Bridges, the "alien", knows this; he knows his fate and is so loyal that he goes on anyhow. Labor has such men.

+

THE LONG ROAD

BY ELVAR WAYNE

FROM the dome of the State Capitol one may see to the North and West of Sacramento a large territory inhabited by depression victims. Within this area are a dozen or more "Hooverilles" ("Roosevelt Roosts", if you prefer) housing nearly two thousand of the dispossessed, declassed elements from Sacramento and other California communities. Almost ninety per cent are legal residents of the county.

To visit these depression settlements is not an esthetic experience. They can't be matched for squalor and miserable accommodations. Built in the vicinity of stagnant, foul-smelling sloughs and near city dumps, these ramshackle huts are a picture of the ultimate despair, misery and filth as only a predatory economy can produce.

There are hungry children with rickets. Disease thrives.

Old men and women scavenge the dumps for food and clothing. Recently a baby was born in a one-room shack containing a family of twelve. The floor is of mud and straw, and one corner is submerged in a stagnant pond.

But no social problem exists that cannot be solved by the home guard of Sacramento County. Did it not crush Communism forever by sending agricultural labor leaders to San Quentin for organizing exploited workers? Hooverilles, too, will be obliterated.

"The squalid colony of tin and pasteboard will soon be another ghost city," reported the *Sacramento Bee*. "And within a short time the shanties of Hooverville, Skunk Hollow and Russell's Camp will be burned on the orders of county health authorities. Already there is a noticeable exodus from the

camp. Some are packing their meagre belongings and are heading for other communities."

Out of sight, out of mind.

* * *

The first time I saw Old Man Thorpe was also the first time I set foot in Rotten Egg Gulch. That was on a hot May morning when the boss sent me out to get a "human interest" story from one of the inhabitants of the numerous Hooverville areas that lie on the north side of the railroad tracks.

I crossed the tracks and ambled down a narrow, rutted road along the foot of a levee. Warm and thirsty, I welcomed the sight of the beautiful green grove at the end of the road. Here at least was shade, and also I had visions of cool, running water.

Three hundred yards more and the road dropped into the thickly-wooded area. "Anyway," I thought, as I walked in the shade, "these people couldn't have picked a better spot to squat in." The road made an abrupt turn, and I found myself on the outskirts of the shack colony. A nose-wrenching stench seeped through the trees; the first whiff told me why the area got its name. Ahead, at the foot of the levee, was a long narrow pond of stagnant water blanketed with green scum. But this, I soon discovered, was not the only source of the sickening odor, so thick it seemed to cling to the trees like pitch.

On the eastern border of the settlement was a city garbage dump, and about twenty men were poking sticks around in a recently arrived truckload of broken bottles, junk and rotting garbage. "What are those guys doing on the dump?" I asked a young Negro who was staring at me. At my question she turned her head to glance at the men. "Them? Gettin' their dinner, I guess." She got up from her seat on an empty crate and ambled into the shack.

I watched her disappear and let my attention rest a moment on her "house". It was rather typical of most of those I could see—a patchwork of lumber scraps, tin, cardboard and rags used to stuff up holes. Roof poles protruded unevenly. A rusty stove pipe teetered on top of the shack. On the side nearest to me was a broken window covered with paper. A piece of burlap served for a door. The shack was about twelve feet square, and behind it was a pile of boxes, old tires, rusty cans, junk of all descriptions. Before me I could see over fifty of these matchbox dwellings, some of them not much larger than a packing crate. A few were just three-sided lean-tos with burlap sides and tin roofs. Around all of them were collections of junk.

Down the path I passed a Mexican asleep beneath a bush. Scores of flies rested on his clothes, his face and his twitching hands. Each time he snored a few startled flies took wing, buzzed around and then settled down again on his face or body. Nearby a small girl played with her baby brother. She walked unsteadily on thin legs. I looked at her closely, and she stopped to return my scrutiny through eyelids half shut and granulated. One cheek was swollen out of shape and on the other was a half dollar size sore. Syphilis. I walked on and she wobbled over to her brother who was pulling hair out of a quiescent, mangy sheep dog.

On the door of one shack was posted an old movie sign, "Buried Alive". No one seemed to pay any attention to me as I continued on through this village of depression victims. I cut through a clearing to a small clump of trees, in back of which I could see the outlines of a hut. As I drew up I saw an old man beside the hovel sitting on an empty box. With a hammer he was methodically hitting something on the crude

table before him.

"Hello," I said, approaching. "Where can you get a drink of water around here?"

"Over in that bucket," he said, pointing to one sitting near the door of his shack. "But if you want fresh water, you'll have to hike back across the tracks—a good four hundred yards."

"Does everyone have to walk that far?"

"You do unless you want to drink that scummy slough water."

I decided to wait for my drink and stepped closer to watch his work with the hammer. He was cracking black walnuts on top of a flat stone resting on the table. A careful blow broke the shell, then deftly with a small pick he pried out the halves and dropped them into a jar. There were two other jars, one containing large broken halves, the other holding smaller pieces and crumbs. When the operation was completed, he picked up a whisk broom and brushed off the shells.

"What do you do, eat them?" I asked.

He looked up. Then he said, "Not unless there's nothing else to eat. I sell 'em."

"Sell them? Where?"

"Oh, to bakeries, ice cream plants and candy stores when I can," he answered, continuing his task.

"Do you make anything?"

"Bout four bits a day, if I'm lucky."

"How long do you have to work a day to make that much?"

"Bout ten hours. But I can't work that long no more. My back's so lame I can't sit up long at a stretch. Three, four hours a day is all I can do this work."

I learned from the old man—he was about seventy-five—that many inhabitants of Rotten Egg Gulch make their living by cracking walnuts. They gather them in the Fall, enough to last several months, and spend their time at this monotonous occupation. Others gather junk from the city dumps, and what they can't use for household equipment they sell, making from ten to fifteen dollars a month. Out of their pitiful incomes, the inhabitants must pay on the average of a dollar a month ground rent to prominent Sacramentans who own the land.

I learned how the old man happened to be in his present situation. His case is typical. An American citizen—as are 80% of the Hooverville inhabitants; the rest are largely Mexicans imported to be exploited in California's agricultural fields—and a long-time resident of the community, he was evicted from his home in 1932 after his wife died. After selling all of his personal possessions except a blanket roll and a few tools, he moved out to Rotten Egg and built his shack under the trees, rather than go to the poor farm.

Around the hovel he had cleared a space which he called his yard. Under a large oak stood a dirty white, moth-eaten stuffed swan which he had salvaged from the dump. In the center of the yard was a bird bath, a coffee can on top of a three-foot pole. Off in one corner a small onion bed was cultivated, and along one side of the shack were a few struggling nasturtiums. Many of the inhabitants, I had noticed, made heroic attempts to beautify their dismal dwellings by planting a flower here and there.

Old Man Thorpe—I learned his name from a sign on the door—told me about his neighbors. One man wove baskets with reeds and palm leaves. Another made flower stands out of palm branches and peddled them in the city, sometimes making as much as four dollars a week! Another modeled clay dolls. The man next door spent most of his time building rab-

bit hatches, but he couldn't get any rabbits. The water supply problem would soon be solved, said Thorpe, when Tim O'Brien finished digging his well.

"But he don't dig long enough at a stretch. I guess he gets discouraged. Every now and then he and Jesus Martinez get hold of some wine and stay drunk for days at a time. Then old Tim gets mean. He curses everybody and threatens to shoot 'em with that shotgun he has. Someday he will shoot somebody. He's always tellin' us that all of us ought to get guns and go up town to get something to eat." The old man shook his long white hair and cracked another walnut.

"This place ain't like it used to be," he continued. "When I first moved out here it was just a hobo jungle. Then old fellows like me started moving in, and pretty soon families started coming because they got evicted like I did. Mexicans, Negroes and Indians moved in with all us white folks."

"Can't they get relief?"

"No. Some do, but most of the people in this district followed the crops and they weren't in the county long enough to get help, except maybe they were given a meal or two and told to move on."

"Have you tried to get help?"

"I did once. When my back got lame I couldn't work, and my money was all gone. I didn't eat for two days, and then I went to the Salvation Army. Before I could get any food there I had to split wood. A man my age with a lame back can't split wood, but I tried. I was so weak and hungry I keeled over on the woodpile. Then they gave me a plate of beans and bread crusts which I couldn't chew on account of no teeth. I was laid up for five days. I ain't been back since. It beats me how them fellows sell the wood we have to chop before we can eat, when they are given money to feed us." He got up, shuffled over to the water bucket and took a long pull.

I walked over with him and looked through the open door. In one corner was a rusty, pot-bellied stove. The floor was covered with cardboard and canvas, and along one wall was built a bunk. A broken mirror, a calendar and an old photograph of a bridal couple hung on the wall over the bunk. A decrepit chair and a table completed the furnishings. On the table was a bible, a tattered magazine and a candle stuck in a bottle.

Before I left I offered him a cigarette. "Thanks," he said. "It helps keep away the hunger." As I departed he tottered over to a battered automobile seat, sat down and lighted the smoke.

* * *

It was another month before I saw Old Man Thorpe. The Hoovervilles had been condemned by county authorities. Vague promises had been given by city and county welfare agencies that the nine hundred dispossessed dwellers would somehow be provided for—how or where was not clearly expressed.

One morning the SERA wrecking crew, directed by the District Attorney, moved in. Reporters and photographers were on hand to witness the heroic social service work supervised by the D. A.

I got there soon after the wreckers started to work. A pregnant woman, nearly hysterical, with three small children, was the first victim. She had been scarcely allowed to gather a handful of belongings before she was ousted and her shack fired. Other inhabitants, who had been assured that they wouldn't be molested until more suitable dwellings were found for them, gathered like terrified cattle. Their terror crystallized into something more menacing, hatred and anger. A quick thinking leader could have precipitated a riot in short order.

As I pushed through the crowd I saw Old Man Thorpe's hut going up in flames. The little garden was scorched and the nasturtiums around his place were wilted and black. Only the stuffed swan looked undamaged by the heat. The old man was not in sight. Some one told me that he had gone off toward the road. Hurrying in that direction I soon caught up with him. He was tottering down the road, pushing a wheelbarrow containing a few pitiful possessions.

"Where are you going?" I asked.

He stopped and let down the wheelbarrow. He looked toward the northern horizon, nodded his head in that direction and said, "Over there somewheres, I guess. No one wants an old man."

I could only stand and watch him as he picked up his vehicle and started trudging slowly down the long road to the north.

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THE EUREKA "RIOT"

BY ERNEST BESIG

FIFTY persons face an aggregate of 100 years in jail in Eureka, California—heart of the redwood lumber industry—in consequence of a "riot" that occurred on the picket line in front of the Holmes Eureka lumber mill on June 21. Police Judge Tom Fraser decided that the "People" had established *prima facie* cases against 50 of the 75 who received preliminary hearings on charges of riot, and bound them over for trial in the Superior Court. Seven others who await preliminary hearings face similar prospects. Eureka's attempted mass production of "criminals" has started.

Most of the first day's court proceedings were conducted in a star chamber atmosphere. When special officer Horrell testified that although he was hired by the City of Eureka he was paid by the Holmes Eureka Lumber Company, a snicker went through the audience. Without any warning or admonition to the spectators to be quiet, the Judge cleared the crowded courtroom and the right of the accused to have a public hearing was denied. The San Francisco Chronicle next day reported that the courtroom was cleared by the judge because the spectators cheered when the first defendant took the stand.

Needless to say, with no witnesses to report his acts, the Judge conducted himself with less restraint than he did at subsequent hearings when the courtroom bulged with spectators.

All it needed to make *prima facie* cases against the accused was evidence that a riot had taken place and that the defendants were present. While several of the witnesses called by the prosecution reasonably enough each identified two or three persons. "Camera Eye" Elmer Robinson, a police officer, performed the superhuman task of identifying 42. His identifications were the more remarkable because of his limited intelligence and poor memory. Except for a few of the accused, he could only remember that he saw them milling about the crowd. Their dress and the exact time and place he saw each one in relation to events was not fixed in his mind. And small wonder, for many of the accused were far away from the scene of the conflict when it occurred.

Among those held at the preliminary hearings was one man who was seen at a brewery, 200 yards from the riot scene, and another who was arrested at the brewery during the riot while seated on his motorcycle. The latter had not been seen among the rioters except to pass by on his motorcycle. The district attorney also sought to hold two men who were seen fully 500 yards from the scene of the riot, but the Judge finally exercising the discretion that was forgotten throughout the rest of the preliminary hearings, dismissed the complaints against them. One man was held although he was seen walking away from the battle ground before any trouble started, and no one testified that he returned.

Originally, 200 persons were rounded up by the police, deputies and "G-Men" (Eureka's romantic title for gun thugs). The entire county was scoured for strikers. J. B. Williford, president of the striking union, was charged with riot and held on \$4,000 bail, although the police admitted he was nowhere near the scene of the riot. No attempt was made to identify him at his preliminary hearing and his case was dismissed.

Twenty miles away at Kneeland, strikers working on an SERA job were arrested and taken off to jail. One man, who was subsequently released, reported that a squad of "G-Men" roused him out of bed, stuck a machine gun in his ribs and marched him off to jail without explanation. Another striker was visited at his home three times by police and each time ordered back to work. Upon his third refusal, he was arrested and taken off to jail.

In the course of the general round-up, raids were made upon the strikers' soup kitchens, and they were ordered closed. A raid upon a Finnish hall netted stage properties in the form of wooden knives and antique guns which the papers characterized as a "Baby Arsenal" seized at a Communist headquarters. Costumes and literature were also seized. Concerning this raid, the Humboldt Times of June 22 makes the following statement:

Proving that reds are working in this locality, a box full of weapons and literature was found in a local hall yesterday afternoon. Arriving at the building where reds are said to have held their meetings a secret door in a panel was located and entrance was made into a room filled with old clothes, supposedly for needy radicals who come to the city. In a closet of the room a box of weapons was discovered. There were pistols of many makes, daggers, knives, billy clubs and communistic literature.

The jails became so congested with riot prisoners that seventy men were jammed into one tank containing sleeping accommodations for eight. The supply of blankets was so limited that most of the men slept on the concrete floor or just

stood up. Though 200 men were said to be deputized, nevertheless the Sheriff's office held most of the prisoners incommunicado, on the excuse that there weren't enough deputies to handle visiting relatives. Before long, however, the Sheriff was glad to get rid of the prisoners rather than feed them.

The usual third degree methods are reported to have been used against prisoners who refused to answer questions put to them by police. Their arms and noses were twisted, their faces slapped; they were pushed, elbowed and kicked around. Of course, though the crime with which they are charged is not felony, all were "mugged" and finger-printed.

Efforts to secure local counsel to represent the accused at the preliminary hearings which started five days after the riot ended in failure. One attorney is reported to have asked the prohibitive fee of \$100 per case or a total of \$8300; while another said he wouldn't represent anyone who threw stones, and the police claimed all the pickets were throwing stones. One attorney named Scott finally agreed to appear but withdrew one hour before the hearings started, indicating that the Humboldt County bar association had advised him to steer clear of the cases.

The International Labor Defense, through its attorneys Leo Gallagher and George Anderson, appeared on the scene two days after the riot. It is asserted by some that when the I. L. D. entered the picture local attorneys were scared out by the fear of being classed as reds if they cooperated with that organization. Others claim that the lumber interests brought the pressure that brought no lawyers.

The Northern California office of the American Civil Liberties Union sent its acting director, Ernest Besig, member of the New York bar, to Eureka to do anything that the circumstances warranted. He arrived two hours before the first preliminary hearing and then because of the absence of local counsel, he was granted permission to appear as *amicus curiae*, or "friend of the court" at the first day's proceedings. Leo Gallagher appeared for the defendants at the first hearing. At subsequent hearings, however, the court, apparently doubting Mr. Besig's friendship for it, terminated the previous relationship and thereafter he appeared alone for certain defendants and jointly with I. L. D. attorneys for others. Of the 50 accused who were held to answer, the Civil Liberties Union represented 9 outright and 23 jointly with the I. L. D. Two of the 50 declined to take any of the attorneys offered.

The Civil Liberties Union made itself available to the arrested strikers in an emergency. Ten days after the riot, however, the Federated Trades Council of Eureka, a representative body of all local trades unions, engaged the services of Blaine McGowan, prominent local criminal attorney, who has handled labor cases. Since the defendants were now ably represented either by the attorney for the Federated Trades Council or the I. L. D., the Civil Liberties Union withdrew, although it is prepared again to enter the cases if another emergency arises and may start civil suits against those who interfered with workers' civil liberties.

The outstanding evidence at the preliminary hearings was that the pickets were unarmed while the police and deputies were fully armed. Not content with tear gas, guns and side arms with which to subdue unarmed men and women, a MACHINE GUN was also brought into play. Instead of being assigned to someone with mature and balanced judgment, it was turned over to Ernest James Watkins, a boy reported to be 18 years of age but now said to be 24, who was scabbing at the lumber yard. Deputized by Chief Littlefield at the height of the riot, Watkins turned the machine gun upon the

strikers and sought to fire it, but it jammed. Deputy District Attorney Bradford supported the boy's testimony by adding, "Unfortunately the gun jammed!" When counsel expressed amazement at the District Attorney's ruthless remark he responded, "That's what I said, 'Unfortunately!'"

Fortunately the gun did jam, for without that two pickets were killed and eight others wounded, while none of the officers suffered sufficient injuries to compel them to remain at the hospital. Among the wounded strikers is one who has lost the sight of one eye and another who had to have a leg amputated.

That there was a riot cannot be denied, but it is a fair question to ask who started the riot. Officers have testified that the pickets started the riot when they built a barricade of four three-inch planks before the entrance to the Holmes Eureka mill. They have also testified that four automobiles bound for the mill were turned back on the highway and that when they arrived they were greeted with a barrage of stones which they answered with tear gas and gunfire.

But the facts lend themselves to a more startling conclusion. Up to the time of the riot, the strike had been relatively peaceful. The lumber barons insisted that the police were too peaceful and made demands upon the Chief of Police and the Mayor that the picketing of mills cease. The day before the riot strange, bulky men were seen in Eureka and though they sought to pass themselves off as insurance men when they looked for a rooming house, someone spread the story that the federal "G-Men" had come to take a hand in the strike. Now it is reported, these "G-Men" were nothing less than Pinkerton thugs from San Francisco. One witness claims he was accosted by a man claiming to be a federal officer and asked to stir up trouble among the pickets.

The vigilantes, who claim a membership of 750 persons, met at a secret meeting in the High School the night before the riot. Police and public officials are rumored to have been present at that meeting.

The strikers also met the night before the riot and planned to picket the Holmes Eureka mill. They intended, however, to stand shoulder to shoulder before the entrance to the mill and if the police interfered merely to give passive resistance, on the theory that if they were arrested the jails couldn't hold them all. But strangers were seen on the picket line the morning of the riot. No one knows who built the barricade; and no one knows who started throwing the stones. My own opinion is that provocateurs started the trouble.

The officers arrived with gas guns leveled at the crowd and immediately starting firing. One officer was so nervous that the first gas shell exploded inside the car. One steel-jacketed projectile struck a woman a glancing blow near the base of the spine. She was spun around like a top and fell screaming to the pavement. The retreat stopped as the pickets yelled to one another that a woman had been shot. Then the rocks began to fly in earnest. The Chief drove up with another officer and immediately started firing, and other officers followed suit.

The pickets retreated before the bullets. One man fell to the ground as though to escape the bullets, but the next instant a stream of blood was gushing from his neck. A woman running right behind him wheeled around and throwing her hands above her head implored the police to stop shooting. But another volley followed the retreating pickets.

William Kaarte and Harold Edlund were dead. The strikers turned to the radio to present their side of the conflict to

the public. Alexander McKay broadcast over Station KIEM on behalf of the Lumber & Sawmill Workers' union No. 2563 on June 26. He told about the "G-Men", the denial of the workers' civil rights, the attempted massacre of the strikers by machine gun fire, and the statements of an inhuman Assistant District Attorney. These and other facts were presented. The Union had entered into a contract for nine more broadcasts, but two hours before the second broadcast the station canceled the contract on the ground of "unusual circumstances". The only unusual circumstances we were able to uncover was pressure from some powerful source, for when the station manager was asked whether pressure hadn't been exerted to have him cancel the broadcasts, he finally answered in a quaking voice, "I'm not saying they did, and I'm not saying they didn't."

The K. of C. hall was obtained for the following evening for a memorial mass meeting for Kaarte and Edlund. The morning of the meeting day, however, the priest who granted the use of the hall regretfully advised the committee that he didn't have as much control over the hall as he thought he did, so he would have to deny the promised use to the Union. The strikers nevertheless did get their message to the public. The audience that appeared at the K. of C. hall was re-directed to the Labor Temple where an enthusiastic overflow meeting was held.

Certainly, a demand of 75¢ an hour and recognition of the Union are but minimum demands if the workers are to have a decent standard of living. In the meantime, the men find themselves blacklisted and forced on the SERA. Their big job, in addition to defense, is to keep the Union together. With the support of the Federated Trades Council that task may be accomplished despite the effort to make criminals out of a good part of the Union's membership.



HARVEST WHEEL

WHEELS grind on a white hoof-powdered grade,
Green oak leaves scratch road-dusty hay,
Team drivers lean beneath wild shade
Of a branch too thick to bend away.

Up banks red acorns fade in grass,
Twigs float below the river-stone;
On the rocky slope cloud-shadows pass,
Or slip from the roadway darkly thrown.

Tree-shallow blaze, wind burns down-stream,
Earth smokes in hillside pit and scar,
Crag lizards dart in the rusty seam
Of a crumbling ledge that cart-wheels jar.

—LINCOLN FITZELL

SWEET MUSIC

BY PETER QUINCE

EVEN her hands were sleepy. They went slowly up to her provocative lips to brush away an approaching yawn. Her shoulders hunched towards each other for a luxurious moment, then squared as a customer slid into a stool before the counter. With an automatic half-smile she took his order. After serving him she began to polish the counter. Her arms, bared to the elbow, slid rhythmically over the marble slabs. Her arms were white and deliciously cool, and they ran to a pliant body, the youth of which was evident beneath the green and gold smock that covered her from the deep V at the throat to the required number of inches above the ankles. The hair on her was like bobbed smoke. Her lips were pink and unrouged against her pale, sleep-hungry face.

When the clock struck a quarter-to-seven she went to the little radio perched above the cash register and turned the dials, capturing a light, sweet tune. Lee listened as she worked. Her hands, of necessity, threw off their drowsiness, and assumed an adroitness born of long experience. In their small palms a dozen dishes stacked themselves with amazing precision and were borne lightly through the swinging doors to the kitchen. When she returned to the counter three customers were seated. And thereafter, until two o'clock, the struggle against time became a confused blur. There was no hesitation, no dreaming now. Every stool was filled, people stood waiting. Lee had no time to see faces. Right to the cash register meant roast beef—gravy. End stool, ham on rye. Chicken pie for two just off center. And a penny sales tax. I'm sorry, I'm only working here. Thank you. Order please? Measured smile. And the radio's sweet music. As she worked beads of perspiration gathered on her forehead, and in her throat little vexations collected to well up into a scream never to be released . . .

When the boss came in the rush was over. After checking the cash he looked about. Everywhere his eyes were met by a symphony of green and white. Stools, counters, dishes, even the girl. He beckoned to Lee. "You'd better start on the deviled egg."

"I was just going to," said Lee. "Oh, Mr. Blackthorn," she bit her lip.

"Yes?"

"I think you'll need another girl. I mean maybe just for the rush. It's so busy . . ."

"I see," said Mr. Blackthorn gravely. He stroked his clean chin. "I watched you for some time. The customers seemed to be—adequately—taken care of and, eh," he cleared his throat, "as you become more efficient . . ." His voice trailed off.

"Do you mean," she held her strained voice to an exasperated whisper, "that—"

"I mean that if we took on another girl your wages would have to be cut."

"But I'm only making twelve dollars."

"Most of our girls are getting ten." He hesitated. "Miss Roan," he said impulsively, "you must realize that I'm only manager of two of these shops. They're spread all over the Coast. In my way," he smiled wryly, "I experience speed-up too. I don't give orders. I relay them." His voice made tangent with cool bitterness. "The music," he indicated the radio. "No blaring. Soft, sweet. Conducive to good digestion. You

read the notice sent all our shops by our West Coast General Manager, Mr. Elliot? A homelike touch. Sweet music." He strode briskly into the kitchen to confer with the cook.

At lunch time Silly came in. It was the name that immediately flashed into Lee's mind the first time she saw him. And it was the name that remained in her mind. Silly was about her age. Every day at 12:05 sharp he came in, ordered a deviled egg sandwich and milk. Every day, as he sat down, his eyes questioned hers anxiously. Then they averted themselves, and the shy smile on his lips turned to something that hurt. He nibbled slowly at his sandwich, his eyes bashfully following her wherever she went. A counter-girl from the five-and-ten just up the street, who ate here daily, could not help noticing Silly's open, if shy, adoration, and smiled knowingly at Lee. Soon all the regular customers were aware of it. All but Silly, who stammered when he gave an order, who was so often hurt without a word. At first Lee had been amused, then sorry; afterwards she became irritated.

She dropped a dish. The fragments slithered under her feet. Most of the customers eyed her sympathetically as Mr. Blackthorn stooped to pick up the pieces. Lee's fingers bunched themselves into fists. My God, she thought, why did he keep staring? Why didn't he say something, anything? The silly idiot! As she turned a fierce face toward him Silly, his cheeks pale and lips trembling, slid off his stool, and with a hunched walk, went quickly out. The five-and-ten girl, who had missed nothing, pecked moodily at her piece of pie. Lee confiscated the fragments of the dish from Mr. Blackthorn and took them out into the kitchen. She leaned against the wall for a moment. She could not forget Silly's god-damned face. In another moment she'd be crying. She hurried back to her work.

It was three p. m. At five the shop would close. This section of town would remain deserted until the next morning. Lee sat against the counter, slowly sipping her coffee. Elinore came in and sat down alongside of her. They had had a talking acquaintance for the past week.

"Gee," said Lee, seeing her gray complexion, "you look sick, kid."

Elinore nodded her head slowly. "I am, I guess. The boss sent me home."

Lee pushed back Elinore's hair, touching the forehead. "Got a little fever. Do you want to eat anything?"

"I don't know," said Elinore. "I feel nauseated. Been feeling that way all day." Her face gathered sweat. "What do you suggest?"

"How about a salad?"

"No," slowly, "I—" She turned down a dozen offerings. "Guess I'll just have some coffee."

They sat side by side. "What's the matter?" Lee asked.

"I think I'm going to have another baby. I don't want to have one. I've got a kid just a year old. Gee, I can't afford to have another." Her eyes were bright with worry. "I just made the last payment to the agency that got me this job and now maybe I won't be able to hold it."

"Is your husband working?"

Elinore shook her head. "No. God, I just can't have this baby. I don't know what I'll do."

"Why don't you have an abortion?" Lee asked. "Seriously,

it's not so very dangerous, and if you can't afford the baby

"No," she answered nervously. "I couldn't do that. I couldn't."

"Couldn't you borrow the money?"

"It ain't that."

"Oh," said Lee softly. "Religion?"

Elinore nodded. Lee went to serve a customer. When she

looked back at Elinore the girl's pitiful little figure made her want to cry. Made her want to open her mouth and loose the scream struggling in her throat. Instead, she went back to Elinore. She said: "Something's the matter with us." She thought of Silly, even of Mr. Blackthorn. "Something's wrong. We've got to find out what it is. Then maybe we can do something. Do you see?" Elinore began to cry. "You poor kid," said Lee, throwing her arms about her. "You don't see. But you will," she whispered. "God damn it, you must!"



SOVIET COLLECTIVE FARMS

BY ROBERT MERRIMAN

This is the third of a series of "bulletins" being sent from Soviet Russia to his friends by Mr. Merriman of the Department of Economics, University of California.—Ed.

I LOOKED forward eagerly to the visit to collective farms in the western region of Soviet Russia. The area which we planned to visit bordered on the Ukraine on the south side and on White Russia on the north side. At the last moment the only other person in the party who could speak English was unable to go. As a result I went without an interpreter which, while it at first dismayed me, later turned out to be the best thing for me.

I traveled as a member of a brigade which was being sent into the district by the *Peasants' Newspaper* for the purpose of aiding in the sowing which was just then in its final stages. The district was in socialist competition with another just north of it. Our brigade was made up of two people who worked with the older folk, bringing them new ideas on planting and organization of work; one who worked entirely with the Komsomol organizations composed of youth between the ages of 16 and 25; another who worked with the Pioneer organizations which include the children between the ages of 9 and 15. I was the fifth member of the brigade and seemed at first to be nothing but extra baggage with a pair of keen eyes. Later, however, I found that I did as much work as some of the others.

We left here about 4:30 and arrived in Klintsi at 10 o'clock the next morning. From there we went by automobile about 40 miles into the heart of the district. The Russian village is difficult to describe. The first impression strikes one as being exceedingly drab, and some of the villages we passed through on our auto trip seemed almost deserted. While they vary in size, most of them in this district average about 200 houses. As one goes along the road he sees these villages every three or four miles. The houses are, and have been since time immemorial, huddled together on a few road-like streets, scattered at random over the landscape. They are made of logs jointed at the corners and the roofs are always thatched with bundles of straw. After the long winter some of these roofs are the worse for wear and my first impression was that the houses must have been very cold because of this. Even in

old times, before the era of collectivization, the peasants huddled together into villages although their strips of land may have been four or five miles from their homes. The houses are so close together it is practically impossible to do any farming near them. The Russian house is built not only to take care of the human beings, but it is extended beyond the needs of the family to make shelter for the family cow, pigs, chickens and sheep. The tendency now, however, is to build a shelter or a series of shelters farther from the house and often even opposite from the house in such a manner that a fence which joins the house to the small barn completes a square courtyard.

In each village what immediately strikes one's attention is the old large church and the large home in which the landowner of that village formerly lived. These two buildings, by virtue of their being overdone, still afford a striking contrast with the brown, unpainted houses of the peasants themselves.

After returning home and checking notes I recorded from day to day, I found that the notes I had taken the first two or three days of my stay turned out to be decidedly incorrect, and in some cases directly opposite to fact. The notes which I obtained on the last few days flatly contradicted my earlier ones. This is due entirely to the fact that it is difficult for a person coming from America to understand readily the conditions of an agricultural system which has no counterpart in the United States. We neither understood the nature of the Russian village, the Russian peasant nor his frame of mind inherited from the days in which his people were 95 per cent illiterate. When one realizes how many people never have the chance to see the Russian villages, which are, after all, still the economic bases of Russia, one wonders how they have the presumption to print a book about any phase of Russian life. What is even worse, many people obtain only their first impressions which cannot help but be incorrect. Still others, who are intellectually dishonest, prefer to have the false information.

At first glance, then, the village is a colorless collection of mousy houses which hide under their straw hair clinging to the earth as if in shame under the tall austere gaze of the white churches. In the midst of this the well arms seem to be huge traffic signals for streets which never have any traffic. The two or three large windmills whirl their twenty-foot

blades as if beckoning you to come close for a tilt or two. And come close you must, for without peering beneath those thatched roofs and without verbal tilts with the inhabitants you can never expect to understand life in the Russian village.

When the Government decided to encourage the collectivization of farms it was faced with the problem of improving the conditions of the peasants themselves who, because of ignorance and long accustomed inertia, did not want to be helped. The problem of selling a scientific idea to people who scarcely knew the meaning of the word was an extremely difficult job. While it can be truthfully said that the initial impetus was for the purpose of stabilizing the grain supply for the cities, nevertheless, it cannot be denied that it tended to release forces which have given the peasants greater improvements and opportunities than they had ever dreamed possible.

At present in this district there are 70 collective farms. In these collective farms work 85 per cent of the families. Fourteen years ago there had never been a metal plow in this district and now it is extremely difficult to find one of the old wooden type with which they used to scratch the surface of the earth. When I expressed the desire to see an old plow, it took four days to locate one of them.

Today education is compulsory in this district and even in the smallest village which I visited there were seven teachers. In the largest village there were 17. The students vary in number between 125 and 350. In several of the large collective farms there are stores where peasants may buy certain manufactured goods. Twelve years ago everyone wore bark sandals summer and winter, and a pair of leather boots or shoes was a novelty. At present those wearing bark sandals constitute approximately 20 per cent and many of these wear them only while working in the fields. Another thing unknown twelve years ago, but which is very plentiful now, is the bicycle. The constant request of youngsters to try their bicycles provided me with more exercise than I needed.

In this district there are 18 tractors and 15 trucks, four touring cars for general use and much minor machinery. The district is deficient in combines, however, having only one in the whole district. When there is a scarcity of certain types of machines they are kept in the machine tractor station which is centrally located and supplies the collective farms with service. This is further necessitated by the fact that experienced people, who are essential to the operation of the machinery, are connected with the machine tractor stations.

Here is the difference between a collective farm and a village. If the village is a small one, it is the right size for one collective farm. Some central building in the village is used for the office and conference hall. All of the land around the village belongs to the collective farm with the exception of that of those few who do not wish to join, who are given their land in a special section so they will not spoil the possibility of continuous plowing and cultivation. If the village is a large one it may contain two or three collective farms. The collective farm takes precedence over the village and the new buildings benefit only members of the collective farm. An exception to this is, of course, the school, which is open to all. As many members of the family who wish may join the collective farm, men and women alike. The average collective farm in this district covers an area of about 2,000 acres which is a great deal smaller than the size of the collective farms in the Soviet Union as a whole.

It is necessary to mention that this is the amount of land which is cultivated, while the amount which exists and is gradually being brought under cultivation as they make a more sci-

entific use of their energies, is much greater. The amount cultivated by all the collective farmers working together is about 305 times greater than the amount they could cultivate working alone. The yield per acre is also higher on collective land than it is on land which is still farmed individually.

The houses which I visited were exceedingly clean. Every one is plastered on the inside. The straw roofs are not the ceilings of the rooms, as I had at first imagined, but merely serve the purpose of shedding rain and cooling the house during the summer. The space between the ceiling and the roof is generally needed for storing. Each house has beds, practically unknown in Tsarist days, tables and other furniture.

One area in which I visited was very close to the Ukraine, and I asked to see the food supplies which were possessed by the members of the collective farms, as individuals. This was a significant request for two reasons; first, because of the deliberate lies circulated by Hearst, and second, because this area before the Revolution had been exceedingly poor, the food actually being exhausted by this time of the year. Skimpy rations and actual starvation were common during the months of May, June and July before the Revolution. My requests amused the peasants who showed me stored foods which were greater than their needs and in some cases they apologized for having so much. It must be remembered that each collective farmer is paid according to the number of work days he has worked. After the seed for next year, the forage and the State tax has been taken care of, the rest of the food is divided among them according to the time which they have put in. They raise about fifteen crops in this district, including wheat, barley, oats, buckwheat, peas, millet, mustard, flax, potatoes, beets, cabbages, cucumbers, honey, strawberries, apples, and others.

Each family receives a share of all crops and in this district last year the share of wheat alone received by each family amounted to a little less than a ton and a half. In addition to the crops raised by the collective farm each family is given its own vegetable plot, has its own cow, sheep, chickens and many pigs, sometimes as many as twelve or fifteen. In the winter, when work in the fields is impossible, the women weave linen to be sold in the summer. The living conditions of the people are much better than I had anticipated.

At a recent Congress of Shock Workers from the best collective farms of the entire Soviet Union, the statement was quite correctly made that it is no longer a question as to whether or not we are going to have collective farms, but merely a question of what kind of collective farms. Although the Congress was held but a short time ago its suggestions are being carried out in every collective farm. In some places as many as five buildings were in the process of construction at one time. The greatest emphasis at the present time is being placed upon cultural life, except in those farms where the cattle barns and storage barns are not sufficiently clean or correctly constructed. Besides new barns for cattle, storage and machinery, which must receive preference, because they form the economic base of the collective farm, each farm is building or has built new schools, new clubs, theatres, public steam baths, medical clinics, stores and even parks.

The schools are being used night and day, since the older people attend night school. Illiteracy in this district has been cut to 10 per cent. Theatres are used for meeting halls, stage productions, (which are being encouraged by professional casts who sponsor the collective theatre movement) and motion pictures which are supplied and shown by six brigades who travel from Kolhoz to Kolhoz with films and hand-gener-

ting machines. Libraries are usually a part of the club. The medical clinics are part of a system which culminates in a large hospital for the whole district. Several villages are completing final plans for the installation of electricity.

I was the first American who had ever visited this area, and was naturally looked upon with great interest since they have become so enamored of America's high technical development. I was treated in much the same manner as visiting royalty in America. While I am able to understand a considerable amount of Russian at the present time, my main difficulty was in answering the questions with which they besieged me. I was unable to go for a short walk without dozens of people following me. They insisted on feeding me so often that even with my famous appetite I couldn't keep up. Plenty of milk, eggs, butter, cream, potatoes, chicken, pork, fish, cookies of all kinds, puddings, blini (Russian pancakes) with sour cream, preserved fruits and tomatoes, salads, delicious wines of all kinds, and the eternal tea. They gave banquets in my honor, and villages which I did not have time to visit, sent in requests for me to visit them—in fact, being the recipient of so much Russian hospitality was almost too much.

The questions which they asked about America showed a lack of understanding of American life, although I believe it is a truer understanding than the average American has of Russian life, since they are eager to find out about America—an attitude which does not prevail in the United States.

Don't think, however, that conditions are perfect here. There is plenty of hard work yet to be done, but the encouraging thing is that progress is so evident.

People who were first attracted to the kolhozes because of the private gain assured by them, have been brought into contact with a new type of cultural life which is leading them to become real builders of socialism. The people who are heading this work have a difficult and tiring job because their fight is that of the new ideas against the old.

(Kolhoz is the Russian for collective farm.—Ed.)

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BOOKS

AN OXFORD EXERCISE

FOX, by Christopher Hobhouse. (Macmillan) \$4

(Reviewed by Matthew Evans)

HISTORY usually has been reserved for the literate members of the leisured classes, probably because anyone capable of writing it has generally preferred to make it instead. Certainly the only histories worth reading, those of the old classic historians, were written by old men in the winter of their days, aged statesmen and great scholars waiting for death. Clarendon wrote his great history of the Puritan Revolution in the last days of exile; Macaulay his story of England in the seventeenth century only after he had played his part in government. Nowadays young men, ignorant alike of politics and human nature, prepare authoritative treatises on every phase of history, secure in the protection of a university department. One could wish sometimes that they were forced to experience

what they write about!

So it is with Mr. Hobhouse, lately (one suspects) of Oxford. His book, which purports to be the story of Charles James Fox, turns instead out to be an exercise in Oxford conservatism. History plays queer tricks; and it would be enjoyable to hear Fox on the subject of his latest biographer. The defender of the French Revolution, the intimate of the Prince of Wales, the greatest gambler and loveliest wit of his generation would not, we are assured, be silent on the young man from Oxford. One can almost hear the golden voice, the rolling tone!

Occasionally Mr. Hobhouse permits himself to recognize facts. He devotes several paragraphs to an analysis of the prolonged struggle between the great landowners—the "Venetian oligarchy"—and the Crown which furnished the basic pattern of English history between the years 1760 and 1784, and which is universally represented in the textbooks as a conflict between liberty and autocracy. This he characterizes correctly as an effort of the nobility to maintain its hereditary power against the revenues of the Throne; but elsewhere in the book the landowners remain on the high (if somewhat arid) level of the philosophies of Edmund Burke and the Galahad-like Marquis of Rockingham.

Inevitably two figures emerge from the richly worked background—Burke and Fox. Burke, a man to whom democracy and change were hateful, began his curious career with lip-service to the revolution of 1688, and ended it in wholehearted support of the terror policy of the younger Pitt; Fox, son of the wealthiest noble in England, and with Stuart blood in his veins, entered politics as the blackest of youthful reactionaries, and died the loved and feared champion of human liberty. The story of his growth from "old Holland's son" into the full stature of Charles James Fox is absorbing and important, and very incompletely told by Mr. Hobhouse; but a bad life of Fox is better than none at all.

AN ARTISTIC NOVEL

NO QUARTER GIVEN, by Paul Horgan. (Harper & Bros.) \$2.50

(Reviewed by Dolph Winebrenner)

THOSE who defend the artist's right to create literature poles apart from the class-struggle can thank Paul Horgan for turning out another novel which ably supports their contention. For in *No Quarter Given* Horgan, author of Harper's prize-winning *The Fault of Angels* a year or two ago, writes a genuinely artistic novel and does full esthetic justice to a story which simply tells how a talented young composer, Edward Abbey, marries a society-made woman, has a love affair with a lovely actress (Maggie Michaelis) and eventually dies of tuberculosis in New Mexico. It would be difficult to find social implications in the theme and Horgan's characters—utter individualists living in their own world—are about as unaffected by economic conflict as men and women can be. Horgan neither accepts nor condemns their mode of living. He simply dramatizes their individualistic emotional and psychological interactions with fine impartiality. It is hard to deny that what he creates is literature, impossible to imagine the theme handled by a proletarian writer. In other words, materials must be utilized by the non-Marxian writer or not at all, which is the best argument the anti-Marxian critics can have.

The novel is written with the same delicacy of style and

character-portrayal that marked his earlier work. Horgan manages to achieve both emotional depths and gentle satire—rare combination in American novelists. He treats the society set ironically but without malice. Toward the closing chapters when Edmund is dying, the book is more deeply emotional than *The Fault of Angels*. Nowhere is it so brilliantly ironic. Horgan's style is somewhat tenuous for so long a novel, but the accumulated richness of feeling does much to make up for it.

10 DAYS FOR 95 CENTS

TEN DAYS THAT SHOOK THE WORLD, by John Reed.
(Modern Library) 95¢

(Reviewed by Harry Conover)

THE Modern Library has added to its list of valuable books this reprint of a sixteen-year-old classic. It is a journalistic description of one of the most significant events in history, an authentic and documented moment-to-moment narrative of the ten days of November, 1917, when the masses of workers, soldiers and peasants under Bolshevik leadership pushed the Russian Revolution to success. Reed was a Harvard graduate, poet and reporter who could see—and understand—what was happening about him. His book is almost a handbook for radicals, if they want to learn how a socialist world has been created and how those who merely mouth "reform" socialism—those who, like Kerensky and the Social Democrats, wanted to rest content before they had gotten all—will act in the face of the dynamic onward drive of the dispossessed. There is no finer tribute to John Reed's insight than the fact that today one may read his book, substituting contemporary American "socialist" parties and leaders for the Russian. We find the same arguments, doubts and even outright counter-revolutionary activity against the Communist party in America.

The following quotation from this book is an illustration (page 187). For the name "Panyin", read that of your favorite intellectual radical in this passage describing the period when the workers already had seized Petrograd, almost bloodlessly, and it will probably explain why Lincoln Steffens, who was also in Russia at the time, can say that "the intellectuals will not do it".

Just at the door of the station stood two soldiers with rifles and bayonets fixed. They were surrounded by about a hundred business men, Government officials and students, who attacked them with passionate argument and epithet. The soldiers were uncomfortable and hurt, like children unjustly scolded.

A tall young man with a supercilious expression, dressed in the uniform of a student, was leading the attack.

"You realize, I presume," he said insolently, "that by taking up arms against your brothers you are making yourselves the tools of murderers and traitors?"

"Now, brother," answered the soldier earnestly, "you don't understand. There are two classes, don't you see, the proletariat and the bourgeoisie. We—"

"You are a fool! Why, my friend, I spent two years in Schlusselburg for revolutionary activity, when you were still shooting revolutionists and singing 'God Save the Tsar!' My name is Vasil Georgevitch Panyin. Didn't you ever hear of me?"

"I'm sorry to say I never did," answered the soldier

with humility. "But then, I am not an educated man. You are probably a great hero."

"I am," said the student with conviction. "And I am opposed to the Bolsheviks, who are destroying our Russia, our free Revolution. Now how do you account for that?"

The soldier scratched his head. "I can't account for it at all," he said, grimacing with the pain of his intellectual processes. "To me it seems perfectly simple—but then, I'm not well educated. It seems like there are only two classes, the proletariat and the bourgeoisie—"

"There you go again with your silly formula!" cried the student.

"—only two classes," went on the soldier, doggedly. "And whoever isn't on one side is on the other."

READ IT AND KNOW

STRUGGLE, by Louis Adamic. (Tomorrow Publishers, 303 Fourth Ave., New York) 15¢

(Reviewed by Sara Reamer)

WHAT do fascists do to their political prisoners? Read *Struggle* and you will know; you will shudder and know. Louis Adamic has written a new introduction to the pamphlet, an explanatory foreword on the present situation in Yugoslavia, his native land. The one story, which is that of many, is harrowing enough to read; but when one stops to realize that what this man has written about has happened and is actually happening, now, every day, the shudder turns into fright or fury. The story is that of the torture treatment inflicted on political suspects, socialists, pacifists, communists—any anti-fascists—by bestial government officials and spies. It is not fiction, it is not propaganda; this is what actually happened and is happening. The pamphlet is short, sharp, vivid—horrible.

There is one story of a man, a seven-foot giant who, while they were inflicting torture on him to sicken the strongest, laughed at them, jeered at them, sneered at their attempts, by sadism, to muzzle the workers' movement. They went into paroxysms of fury at his courage. Fascists have resorted to torture because, morally, spiritually, intellectually, in character, generosity, courage and brains, they are bankrupt. The man jeered till he died.

As you read this story with all the emotion you get out of it you receive the impression again—as you did in Billinger's *Fatherland*—that you cannot kill the communist movement by fascist torture.

THE PICTURE SAYS

GRANDSONS, by Louis Adamic. (Harper & Bros.) \$2.50
(Reviewed by Phil McCann)

AFTER watching for many years the intellectual development of Adamic one must ask, "Why should Adamic write this way when he surely knows better?" His articles and books showed that he had a better knowledge of existing conditions than the average writer. Adamic is not an Ivory Tower writer. He comes from peasant stock, has worked and roamed over this land, and knows much more of the general situation than he has shown in this book. Why then, this "shadow-boxing"?

In the first portion of the book we are treated to an excellent version of the Haymarket Riot in Chicago. Then the pic-

ture sags. Anton Gale was killed in this affair. His Grandson, Peter Gale, digs up all the information on it (from—of all places—*The Brass Check*) and intends to write a book featuring this riot. Peter's brother, Andy (known in police circles as "Miles-Away George Andrews"), has been keeping Peter off the breadlines by donations which he has derived from his booze, gambling and hookshop concessions. Peter takes a job on a newspaper. But it doesn't last long. He is a gassed and wounded veteran of the late war. He cannot perform hard work, nor stay in one place too long. The "shadow-chasing" keeps him continually on the go. He tries college, gets acquainted with an instructor whom he later finds to be a homosexual. Horrified, he pushes the instructor aside and quits college.

Peter, the narrator, tells of his brother Andy. A big-shot hustler, Andy has come to Los Angeles at the insistence of the bankers and business men who want the booze racket organized on a roper basis. Andy, a typical lumpenproletarian, pays off coppers, apportions graft to higher-ups, crushes opposition and uses two cars of torpedoes to follow him about. Making money, taking care of Peter were his only missions in life.

Boyd, the college instructor, had given Peter an education in social forces. Peter saw things more clearly, but his attempts at anything constructive were frustrated by the "shadows". It must be admitted that there are many Boyds, normal or perverted. Unable to tie themselves to any constructive movement for social betterment they flit about, aware of the contradictions of capitalism but unable, or unwilling, to do anything.

Now the third grandson is introduced—Jack Gale, Peter's cousin, a worker. Jack knows what time it is, and why, and he goes after things in the best—and only—manner. When Peter locates him he is in the San Diego jail, awaiting trial on a C. S. charge. Jack is an agitator, organizer, afraid of nothing, a revolutionist, and he doesn't think much of his cousin Peter.

Jack has been down in "Empire" Valley organizing lettuce workers. He has been in strikes, lockouts, riots, demonstrations and enough battles to be a rightful leader. Peter thinks he is O. K. but that's all. Jack gets convicted and imprisoned.

It is still Peter's intention to write a book. Jack is released and returns to "Empire Valley". The Vigilantes take him and another organizer out and murder them. A mass funeral is organized, and Peter is incensed at a speaker who tries to explain to the workers at the grave the methods by which capitalism and its vigilantes force them to live below the starvation level.

The work contains an overdose of "shadows"; there is some reality but it is more of a jigsaw puzzle than a novel. Somehow the notion persists that Adamic is being satirical at the expense of the capitalists, not caring to come out openly for the proletariat. His examination of the American "jitters" and his conclusions do not tie in with the mass misery of today.



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