

BASEMENT

PACIFIC WEEKLY

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A WESTERN JOURNAL OF FACT AND OPINION

OCTOBER 7, 1935



Oct 25 '35

**THE TRUTH ABOUT
THE HOP FIELDS**

**A CLERGYMAN REPLIES.
TO THE PRESIDENT**

THE WATERFRONT SITUATION

'UNION LABOR PARTY' FAKE

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MENTION PACIFIC WEEKLY

PACIFIC WEEKLY

A Western Journal of Fact and Opinion

VOLUME III

MONDAY, OCTOBER 7, 1935

NUMBER 14

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NOTES AND COMMENT

HEIL MERRIAM!

OUR Governor, Frank F. Merriam, that intellectual giant whom the most vicious and contemptible campaign in the history of the State elected to office last November, does actually on occasion do California proud. For instance, he appeared before that body of fascist veterans, the American Legion, in St. Louis the other day and pled for the selection of Los Angeles as the Legion convention city for 1936. He didn't win the convention, but he said one true thing. He said that it is in California today "where radicalism hopes to accomplish its best results".

We compliment and thank the governor for that. He is dead right. That radicalism, which means getting at the core of things and rearing out the festers, does hope to accomplish its best results in California. It has a great deal to work on, too, probably more than in any other state in the Union.

The governor was also humorous at the St. Louis convention. He declared that in San Francisco recently he had seen "subversive agitation . . . plotting destruction under an alien leader, witnessed the boldness of its movements as it assumed control of a great city. Its grasp was only broken when martial law was threatened and 6,000 soldiers were in the city to protect life and property."

And we'll wager that the Legionnaires who heard him really believe that those 6,000 soldiers were in San Francisco "to protect life and property".

What a man Frank F. Merriam is; what timber for the presidency of the United States!

WHY WE HAVE NO 'UNION LABEL'

PACIFIC WEEKLY, decidedly pro-labor in its policies and determinedly supporting the waterfront workers and the United Labor Ticket in San Francisco, does not carry the "Union Label", emblem of the Allied Printing Trades Council, indicating that a publication is type-set, printed and pre-

pared for mailing by unionized workers.

It does not, because PACIFIC WEEKLY is almost entirely produced, editorially and mechanically, by volunteer labor, by men and women, boys and girls, who regard their work as a "labor of love", who get their remuneration through believing that they are making a distinct contribution to social and economic betterment. There is, however, one man who receives pay for the mechanical work he does on PACIFIC WEEKLY, and he is a member of the Typographical Union, in good standing.

PACIFIC WEEKLY has been able to live through the first year of its existence, with its financial storms and other afflictions, only because of the cooperative and volunteer services that have been rendered it in every department.

THE WATERFRONT SITUATION

THE "hot cargo" issue which threatened to cause another major shipping strike on the West Coast last week has been temporarily settled. It arose in part from the Barge-men's strike which has been in progress since July. The cargo of rice and canned goods brought from Sacramento by the River Lines steamboat "Sutter", manned by company officials, and dumped in little parcels on a large number of docks, was to create the issue and perhaps the showdown which a number of the "blood and thunder" shipowners, as one of their number called them—the die-hards—seemed to want.

For several months a number of the shipowners have been calling for this showdown. A more liberal element does not want it. The shipowners are badly split; some lines, notably the Grace and Pacific Steamship, having borrowed money from the Government, sign no Waterfront Employers' ultimata; other, smaller companies, could not afford a strike and do not wish to be forced out of work. The major companies—Dollar, Matson, American-Hawaiian—would probably not be so very averse to seeing their smaller competitors squeezed out. They believe in rugged individualism for themselves, not the other fellow. Then there is the competition of southern and northern ports: Los Angeles and San Pedro, where open shop conditions have long persisted, and Portland have not had to face such militant, honest and dogged organizations of union men as have faced San Francisco ship-owners. These ports have not minded San Francisco ship-owners' troubles so much. They got some business out of it.

The showdown seemingly desired now was called for at a good time for the owners; big movements of freight—sugar, fruit and vegetables—are largely over for this season. Many ships could be laid up without much loss. It might even suit the owners to have them laid up and then blame the maritime unions exclusively. The coastal boats have already employed these tactics. Labor costs were one factor that caused the Pacific Steamships to stop service; but only one of many.

Meanwhile, as Harry Bridges has repeatedly said, the long-shoremen wanted no strike, and certainly "the public" wanted no strike. The ship-owners had maneuvered themselves into a position last week where none but they wanted and were fomenting, the strike. Even their reports of Darcy's speech in

Moscow, when the true reports came through, were found to have been garbled, as this magazine pointed out. He had said then, as all truthful observers have stated since, that if the owners persisted in trying to break the marine solidarity of the West Coast, there would be a strike.

The issue selected by the employers was not a good one; the very term "hot cargo" was a workers' term and the most ignorant member of the public could feel that no one should be asked to be disloyal to his own—his pals, his union, his co-workers. There are no "internal contradictions" amongst labor as there are among capitalists that call for disloyalty, stabbing in the back, cut-throat antagonisms to solve basic economic problems. The public reaction in San Francisco last week was unmistakably with the men. Even the ship-owners' press had a hard time to make their case seem credible. And the return of the men to work, to move the cargo, indeed took the waterfront employers by surprise as the *Examiner* reported. They had not fully realized that good leaders, with an honest and good cause, can afford to tell the truth to their workers and make it clear that to give in to an unfair demand unfairly presented cannot weaken them in any way but only strengthen their already strong position both with workers everywhere and with all fairminded men and women. The owners in San Francisco are isolating themselves, and they feel it.

FAIR WHEN IT ISN'T COSTLY

SAN FRANCISCO, generally in the midst of something, is just now in the midst of its annual charity drive. Funds are being sought to carry on the work of social service. It is to be hoped that the returns will be large and sufficient, and it is also to be hoped that they shall come almost entirely from those who in the main are responsible for the need.

The *Chronicle* spread over its editorial page last Tuesday little stories of human travail, as an impetus to the charity drive. It is significant that in almost every case the basis of need was poverty, or the desperate and unsuccessful attempt to make an income meet the requirements of a family. In almost every case willing and calloused hands were unable to earn enough to provide necessary food and comfort. In almost every case the victims of adversity were the victims of the profit system, of Big Business, of the capitalist throttle hold of which the San Francisco *Chronicle* is, and has always been, the staunch defender.

Lincoln Steffens seems to see indications that the *Chronicle* has "seen the light"; that suddenly it has scoured off its spots and stands as a pure brown-tinted leopard before the face of man. The *Chronicle*, as always, will not scour, but cover up its spots, if the camouflage means business, means success, means growth in circulation and advertising. The *Chronicle* is today no whit nobler, no whit more honest as far as suffering humanity is concerned than it was when Charlie and Mike DeYoung started it and continued it as a brazen blackmailing sheet. The *Chronicle's* news columns are honest when there is no issue involved. When they may be distorted to serve an editorial purpose, distortion will be there. Witness this:

"Obviously stunned by the adverse 'hot cargo' ruling of Referee M. C. Sloss, longshoremen last night in an apparent maneuver for time applied to him for a rehearing."

This is the *Chronicle's* method of announcing in a news story the decision of Judge Sloss and the longshoremen's reaction. The truth is that the longshoremen were just about

as much stunned by Judge Sloss's decision as they would be stunned at a public announcement from Archbishop Hanna that he believed in the doctrine of original sin.

This is just an instance of that so-called "fair" reporting in the *Chronicle* when an editorial policy is to be upheld. It is only one instance of hundreds that have appeared constantly during the past year in relation to news about the battle of the I. L. A. to hold the waterfront employers to their agreements and to protect brother workers in other Pacific Coast ports from exploitation by employers.

Of course, the *Chronicle* is today profiting by the growing boycott of Hearst newspapers. The *Chronicle* is profiting by the fact that one can't read Hearst without suffering a loss of self-respect. But the *Chronicle*, as far as human welfare is concerned, is not much better. Verily San Francisco is in dire need of a morning newspaper.



THE "UNION LABOR PARTY"

BY WILLIAM MILLIS

WHEN Senator George Norris was running for re-election in Nebraska some years ago the reactionaries attempted, unsuccessfully, to confuse the voters and defeat him by running as candidate for the same office a small-bore politician with the same name. In 1930, when C. C. Young was running for re-election as governor of California, the same stunt was pulled again. (That time, though, the fight was between two conservatives.) Today business elements and conservative labor officials (you can't very well call them leaders) are trying the same trick in San Francisco, in an effort to whip the United Labor Party and its candidate for mayor, Redfern Mason.

Late in September San Francisco newspapers, including the "liberal" and "independent" *News*, began to eliminate the few stories they were running about the United Labor Party, and began a boom of the Union Labor Party. In this case the confusion will be attempted, unsuccessfully, we hope, by running a second "Labor Party" under a name similar to that of the original, united front organization.

The heads of the "new" Labor Party are Daniel C. Murphy and John A. O'Connell, both of them high officials in the San Francisco and State A. F. of L. These officials, working hand in hand with Paul ("We Need a War") Scharrenberg and Edward Vandeleur, have built a skeleton party, a party without any mass-backing whatsoever.

And what is the platform of this Union Labor Party? Would it work for the freedom of Mooney, Billings, and the Sacramento prisoners; and for the elimination of the anti-labor Criminal Syndicalism act? Is it for militant unionization of employed and unemployed workers in San Francisco? Is it for the elimination of police, national guard, and vigilante terrorism and protection of strike-breakers? Does it even so much as mention any of these vital issues? NO!

Here is the innocuous program of the Union Labor Party, as reported in the *Chronicle*: "Unification of the street railway system under municipal ownership (no mention of the

fight against the one-man cars) and retention of the five-cent fare, civil service for all city employees, and speeding the bringing in of Hetch-Hetchy Water and improved distribution system."

The pitiful "last straw" about this bureaucrat's party is their relationship with the various employers' organizations in San Francisco, which today are making every effort by "arbitration" and "blacklisting" to destroy the waterfront unions and to return to open-shop, pre-strike conditions. When it was first organized, the Union Labor Party, almost unbelievably, issued this statement: *We are looking for two upstanding young business men who will run on our ticket.* The Junior Chamber of Commerce and the Order of Cincinnati, both nearly-fascist organizations, are expected to "get together" with the Union Labor Party.

The Union Labor Party is quite clearly an attempt to sabotage and destroy the rank and file United Labor Party. The answer to this treachery is in strengthening the United Front by bringing in more A. F. of L. unions and other political organizations. In particular, the Socialist Party (which in this state boasts of its "militancy" and its support of the United Front) should discard its sectarian policy and join the United Labor Party. Socialist contacts with the garment workers (Samuel White, an S. P. member, is head of the San Francisco I. L. G. W. U.) would add greatly to the strength of the real Labor Party. Also, the members of the Socialist Labor Party and the Proletarian Party might well put their theoretical discussions into action by coming to the support of the United Labor Party.

The United Labor Party must prepare to fight a wave of capitalist calumny similar to that used in the Sinclair campaign just a year ago. *It needs your support!*

LINCOLN STEFFENS SPEAKING--

THE BABOONS in Africa who have been watching from their trees the drilling of the Ethiopian troops are learning. They are far from civilization yet; about as far as our kids are who can play soldiers. The monkeys studied the barefoot soldiers for days, then came down to earth, picked up sticks and—drilled. They might imitate a peace conference next. With sanctions.

"HOT CARGO" is a worker's expression for a load he doesn't like to touch. Workers can say it all right, when they want to. We call their flashes slang, but they are often poetic genius. "Glad hand" for a bribed hand, for instance. Hot cargo for a scab-laden load.

ARTHUR BRISBANE quotes the Japanese Admiral Take-shita, who commanded the Japanese fleet, as saying the battleship will soon be obsolete, and asks why nations continue to build them. His answer is "habit". Mine would be that business men who have large plants to build ships have a pull.

OUR CORRESPONDENT in London, who also tips departments at Washington, says Mussolini has told English inquirers that he means to break the British hold on Malta and on

Egypt. He must agree that Great Britain is about dead, as Briffault says.

September 27.

BIG BUSINESS wants a strike in San Francisco this fall and Labor does not. We can remember that if the port is closed. We'll be disputing about it, but there is no doubt of it now. It's a risk business is taking. A dock strike might well become a general strike. And a general strike might loose a revolution. Yes, a revolution! I am not using language lightly now; too dangerous. Let Business play with words. A newspaper man cannot. I think the hired scribes and brains of the commercial brain trusters are sure of things that are not sure. They underestimate the power of the red end of Organized Labor. They think that the reluctance of Bridges' party in the A. F. of L. to act is a sign of weakness; it's the opposite. The rank and file of Labor is gradually moving left; and labor moves slowly, naturally; labor is as conservative naturally as employers. But start the war, and you'll see the mass gather and go where the proved loyal leadership is, the able, militant, understanding leaders are. And there's a bunch of them, remember. No use killing Bridges; there are others, hotter, cooler, more experienced, less experienced, just as militant. A city of business men about to do what They are planning to in San Francisco should have a better spy system and know at least as much as I do.

The business men have been advised that the unloading of small parcels of "hot cargo" will raise a point to fight on. Judge Sloss has decided legally that it is. The union men, under the settlement, must handle such freight or let themselves be ousted to make way for scabs. Technically that is right, but if they do—if the union men let scabs do it; if organized labor lets non-union men gathered and prepared by the employers, take the jobs and move the freight—they might as well give up their unions—everywhere. They may hate to, but they MUST fight ultimately.

All Labor must fight; all. And Labor will not fall for the labor leaders Business has openly accepted as theirs. I am pretty sure fighting labor will turn to fighting leaders, the very ones who, we see, are reluctant to join issue now—because they realize what it may lead to. There are lots of labor leaders around who read history and know that a revolution is just around the corner. It might result in Fascism now, but the willing fascists have to note that the dictatorship of Capital—which Fascism is—has to have torture, terror and war before it comes to peace and order.

It's a risk business is taking. Would that some one or three captains of industry would show that he knows it.

September 30.

THERE IS peace on the waterfront. Thanks to Labor. Both capital and labor, both the newspapers and the clubs of gentlemen; and the various chambers of commerce, and the public—they all wanted peace—all. But they didn't all make the peace. Some of them couldn't afford to make peace, some of them only said somebody else must make a sacrifice to achieve the peace that we all needed. Well, Labor made the sacrifice. Labor made the peace for all. We are all grateful to Labor. Not to Capital. Labor will carry the "hot cargo"—peace and self-sacrifice and all. Not the chambers of commerce, not the industrial association and the "gentlemen's" clubs. No. Labor'll do it. Labor, which always has done it, will pick up the burden and bear it—once more.

Reminds us that it is Red Russia that keeps the peace in

Asia and Europe and Africa, not Capitalist Japan, not proud Nippon; nor Mussolini or England or France. The Japs, like our Big Business men take a hunk of China or a railroad owned by Russia, and Russian human nature protests and is tempted, but Soviet Russia—to avoid the war that might spread a general war all mankind dreads, Red Russia, to keep the peace that all men pray for, the Labor government that is against war and for peace, really, eats dirt and keeps the peace. So here, on our waterfront, it is the business fakers who said we must have peace; it is the well-dressed ship-owners who arrange the dirty trick called "hot cargo" and it is tough, unreasonable, troublesome, left Labor that eats dirt, the dirty trick, and shoulders the hot load. Once more.

I'd like to whisper to the astute Business brains, as I would to the gentlemen of Japan, that now is the time to pile it on, add something to the load we've got Organized Labor to bear for us. We've won, let's rub it in. Maybe Bridges will let Labor take it once more; once more. Once.

Labor expects to lose all battles except the last.

THE PRESIDENT of the United States is coming here at the right time. I wonder if he can get the news, I wonder if he has a secret service that can uncover for him the situation that is starting on the Pacific Coast. It is a big part of the national situation. It is very much his business, the business of the United States, the business of the people of the United States.

THE SAN FRANCISCO *Chronicle* is covering the facts, well. Of course, that old conservative newspaper is on the employer side, but editorially; the news is straight or straightening. Business men are reading it, I hear; the circulation is going up. As Hearst is going down. Labor is appreciating a "square deal" even in a partisan organ, no doubt. No doubt. No wonder about that at all! The *Chronicle* is gathering a power it can abuse, and some labor leaders see and say so, but they need the fair picture they are getting, as the business men do. But what I rejoice in is the journalism. I doubt that

the business community will appreciate the service; the crooks in business must deplore it; they have been so long used to crooked newspapers that they can't turn around in a day, but they also need a straight paper and they can learn to fight on the facts. They can fight better. Let the young students of journalism watch the *Chronicle*, circulation and ads. And the reporting of the news.

THERE IS one sign that we here on this coast are not getting the news. A stream of Eastern writers flows west. I know because they call on me, and they all want to hear about our fruit and vegetable pickers, our dock workers and, generally, labor conditions. Well, we tell them. They seem to be slowed up by our reports, but we tell them where they can hear other reports that their editors will like better. And we know that, too. I know facts no editor would grab at; I don't offer them myself. But you can tell even the star reporters what is what and then watch what they do with it, if anything. I would like to have our citizens of California see themselves as they are and the conditions that make them so. It is much more difficult to write than it used to be in my fair day.



POLITICAL PRISONERS IN SAN QUENTIN

BY BEATRICE KINKEAD

JACK CRANE, one of the five men serving one to fourteen years in San Quentin on the charge of Criminal Syndicalism, convicted last summer at Sacramento, is ill. He has ulcers of the stomach. During the trial last summer he became so ill in jail that, since his exorbitant bail could not be raised, the authorities let him go on his own recognizance. They did not want him to die in the jail from neglect. Scrupulously he appeared every day at the trial. His health improved immediately when he was able to get the proper diet on the outside.

Now he is serving out his sentence in San Quentin. A steady diet of beans, frankfurters, potatoes and bread has aggravated his condition. He has asked that he be allowed fresh milk. The International Labor Defense has provided the money to buy this milk, fresh milk. But Jack is getting canned milk which does not suit his stomach.

Dr. Stanley, the skeleton-thin, bloodless, steely-eyed prison doctor, with aspirations to be its next warden, is the one person who can obtain fresh milk for Crane. Our delegation, on September 20, asked to see Dr. Stanley. After keeping us, six men and women representing the International Labor Defense, National Committee for Defense of Political Prisoners, Utopian and Epic Groups, Maritime Federation and the Communist Party, waiting for an hour, Dr. Stanley came in.

We stated our case.

"Crane should be operated and he refuses," said Stanley.

We had known all about this and explained that the patient did not wish to be operated. Especially he is unwilling to be operated at the suggestion and by the hands of this prison doctor, who makes no pretence of concealing his cynical

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May we ask that San Francisco Bay district subscribers who do not receive PACIFIC WEEKLY by Saturday afternoon please notify us.

brutality towards the prisoners nor his rude insolence to their friends.

"Can he have fresh milk?" we urged, wanting a definite answer.

"He will be taken care of as we see fit. I will say nothing more." And without excusing himself, without a word of leave-taking the thin-faced, cold-eyed doctor left us standing—we had waited an hour to see him—he gave less than two minutes of his time and pointblank refused to discuss the case with us.

At the warden's office, the substitutes for absent Warden Holohan both stated that if Dr. Stanley ordered fresh milk for any prisoner he would get it. So the responsibility for this rests squarely on the doctor.

Jack Crane is an accomplished musician. The leader of the prison orchestra wants him in the orchestra. If he were allowed to become a regular member of the orchestra this would be his prison work and he would not have to do physical labor for which his physical condition obviously unfits him. At present his work is to lift hundred-pound loads of jute bags steadily for eight hours a day. When the leader of the orchestra asked to have Crane as one of his musicians he was told:

"You can't have him. He's one of the C. S. prisoners."

Dr. Schuler, director of the prison school, asked to have Crane as one of the teachers—another job for which his education and training fit him. He also was told: "You can't have him. He's one of the C. S. prisoners."

These men, all of them, crave books which the warden arbitrarily denies them. They are Communists. They want the literature of scientific socialism, both the classics and the current literature: the works of Marx, Engels, Lenin, Stalin and such publications as the *Communist*, the *Daily Worker* and the *New Masses*. Mohammedans would not be deprived of literature on their religion if it were sent them from the publishers, according to prison regulations; nor Christian Scientists of their books and pamphlets. This is open discrimination against these political prisoners, has no justification in law, is done on the arbitrary decision of Warden Holohan, who sets himself above all law in San Quentin and openly proclaims the savage doctrine that: "When a man comes in here he has forfeited all his rights. He hasn't a right even to a name. Anything he receives is merely a favor granted him and he should be grateful for anything he gets."

"But," we said, "in America we do not have autocratic rulers. There must be some one over the warden to whom we can appeal."

The warden's substitutes seemed to think this doubtful but said if we felt inclined we might try appealing to the Board of Prison Directors but they felt sure the board would not interfere with the warden's decisions on all such matters.

We are going to appeal to the Prison Board. We are going to appeal to the Governor and to Attorney General Webb. But first and foremost we are going to appeal to those by whose mandate these gentlemen hold office—the citizens of California.

We ask everyone who reads these lines to wire, write or see in person:

Warden Holohan, San Quentin Prison
Dr. Stanley, San Quentin Prison
Board of Directors, San Quentin Prison
Governor Merriam, Sacramento
Attorney General Webb, Sacramento

Demand that discrimination against political prisoners shall

cease. If, for reasons of their own, they have decided to lock these men away, every one of them falsely charged with criminal syndicalism when their only "crime" was that they led workers in their demand for a living wage and decent living conditions for American workers, we can at least force them to cease this illegal persecution at the hands of prison officials, contemptible autocrats in their hideous Kingdom of Despair, sadists who find there a large and safe field for the indulgence of their abnormal cravings.

We insist that political prisoners be given the literature they wish to read. Pulpwood magazines by the score, detective stories and erotic tales of the "True Story" type are allowed ad lib. There is neither sense nor decency in denying the literature of scientific socialism to those prisoners who want it. There is no law which will protect the warden in this arbitrary decree. We can force him to withdraw it. He has no legal ground to stand on.

This you can do, today, this hour—write or wire Warden Holohan that this petty persecution of political prisoners must cease.



MOTIF

THEY burned Joan,
They crucified another.
They've mutilated books
That everyone has read.
They've killed one another
Over men they've never seen.
They lynched Negroes
Because their mothers were black,
And tortured Galileo
For thinking.
They prisoned Mooney
For something he didn't do
And kept him there
Because they said he
Ought to be there anyway.

All these they said
Were mad—
Menacing humanity.

But once I knew
A free woman
Who spent her life
Kissing the paint off the holy saints
When she wasn't chaperoning
Young and eager girls she hated.

And the reason
For the indented eyeballs
On statues
Is that the Romans
Couldn't bear the vacant staring
Of those they'd looted from Greece.

—JANICE BROOKE

A CLERGYMAN REPLIES

THE PRESIDENT of the United States
The White House
Washington, D. C.

Dear Mr. President:

I think I know one reason for your seeking the counsel of the clergy in your letter of last week: it is that, in many particulars, your situation is identical with ours. Like us you are charged with leadership of an institution whose members represent many varying backgrounds, interests, points of view. As in our organization, so in yours, the desires and predilections of the powerful differ from those of the majority. As we purpose to serve all of our people "without respect of person", so I believe you intend sincerely to seek the welfare of the whole nation. And as members of our Vestries and Official Boards frequently dislike our policies to the point of threatening our dismissal, so you now face the prospect of defeat in 1936 at the hands of special interests which object to your procedure to date.

For these reasons we sympathize with you, welcome your friendly letter, and are glad to talk things over with our fellow-sufferer. But some of us feel, too, that your position offers some notable advantages over our own; let me mention only three of them. First of all, you are free to use your appointing power to strengthen your hands and carry out your policies, while most of us inherit "cabinets" created under another administration, and removable either not at all or only by invoking most unusual procedures. In the second place, you are not subject to immediate dismissal, whatever vituperation your critics may heap upon you; and not many pastors have assurance of anything like a four-year term. Thirdly, you are guaranteed the right of direct appeal to the people at large, whereas few of our churches are so constituted that the general membership has any significant voice in policy-making.

It is, then, on the basis of these several advantages that I humbly offer my suggestions to you. The first provides the possibility that, of all the citizens of the nation, you may obtain the direct assistance of the most clear-headed and far-seeing, by the simple process of asking for it. At that point you have unquestionably done better than did many of your predecessors; but the very fact that you have appealed to some real economists, enlisted the service of some genuinely social-minded officials, committed some enterprises to the care of those who actually care for their success, makes it the more difficult for us to be enthusiastic about the entrusting of the Department of State to a courteous gentleman from Tennessee who is wholly lacking in international experience or information, the formulation of anti-war legislation by an outstanding industrialist and financier, or the political direction of your affairs (including almost all local appointments) to a Tammany politician of the broadest and tawniest stripe. Hitherto, if I may say so, your course has been comparable to that of a clergyman who would try to conduct church affairs to the joint and simultaneous satisfaction of the local Socialist theoretician, the president of the local bank, and the operator of the local dog-race track. In such a multitude (and miscellany) of counselors there is no hope: why not limit yourself to those whose quality really satisfies your own best impulses?

Most of your second point of vantage, that of relative permanence in office, now has faded away with the near

approach of the election; and I suspect you need not be informed that you failed notably to take full advantage of it while it existed. Though you have made so much trouble for the money-changers that they are determined to get you out of the temple, you have been so gentle with them that their strength is practically undiminished. Essentially, Mr. President, I think you have not been sufficiently certain that they had no right at all within the sacred precincts; either that, or else not sufficiently vigorous to carry out your ideals in any significant proportions to their own dimensions. You had it in your power, in the first week of your administration, to abolish their dominion once and for all. For better or for worse, you failed to do it; and so now you face a genuine threat from the alliance of the American Liberty League, the United States Chamber of Commerce, the Grand Old Party, and the united reactionary press.

Your only recourse lies in using the third of the advantages of which I have spoken—that of the direct appeal to the people. Face it frankly, Mr. President: your board of deacons will never rehire you now, no matter how many "breathing spell" letters you send to them. If you believe that you can serve your parishioners by remaining in office, you can do it only by appealing to the parish over the heads of its self-appointed leaders and spokesmen.

Specifically, I submit that you have the issue in the relationship of the Constitution of 1789 to the necessities of 1936. There you made an excellent start in your "horse-and-buggy" remarks; but I haven't noticed your following it up to any significant extent. You know, and have already said, that the Constitution as it stands will not permit the legislation that is vitally necessary for the public good. There is your campaign issue: amend the Constitution for the sake of the country.

Remind the constitution-howlers that, in the very beginning the sacred paragraphs were drafted by men of property, eager to safeguard and to increase their own property. Publicize the financial interests of the Founding Fathers—you'll find them excellently detailed in Charles Beard's *An Economic Interpretation of the Constitution of the United States*. Publicize no less the financial interests of your major opponents of today. Sharpen the point of controversy—that between people and profit, between selfish advantage and the common good. Specify an amendment such as that written by the late Morris Hillquit, committing to Congress the right to legislate in matters of wages, hours and conditions of labor, and to take over property and enterprises to be operated by the people and for the people. Take your project to the people: and the people will understand, if you speak with the honesty and fearlessness of which you are so capable.

A clerical friend of mine, voted out of his position by a wealthy and conservatively-minded Board, still holds his post because the mass of the laity revolted against that sort of minority control. I fully believe that you can achieve the same result. But even if you can't, I dare to think that you'd rather go out of office fighting for what you know to be right, than to go out execrated both by your natural foes and by those of us who would like to be your friends.

Aside from any question of idealism, I submit that your only chance of re-election lies in following the course I have suggested: that of outright opposition to special privilege, of open adherence to the welfare of the common man. If you

follow that course, many of us will find it possible to support you with enthusiasm; if you fail to do so, we shall oppose you with equal *verve*: with the indubitable result—anathema both to you and to us—that neither you nor our third-party candidate, but a Republican, will be elected. But if the worst comes to worst, we might prefer to have in the White House the devil himself than what you sometimes have seemed to be—

a Tomlinson disqualified for, and rejected by, both Heaven and Hell.

With that heavily theological figure I leave you: yours is the choice.

Believe me, sir, to be

Very sincerely yours

GEORGE HEDLEY



ELSIE AND THE HOPS

BY JOHN WOODBURN

THIS is for all those people who go around saying, "Well, what are you going to do; how are you going to help them if they just won't take the work when it is offered them?" and especially for a Miss Elsie Robinson who writes for the Hearst papers and who had a very gummy article in the San Francisco *Examiner* of September 22, in which she stated that a novice hop picker could with ease make from \$2.50 to \$3 a day, and that \$5 a day was nothing for an experienced picker to write home about, provided, of course, that he had a home to write to.

But the thing that seemed to hurt something fine in Miss Robinson was the fact that some of the SERA workers were being a bit *haut chapeau* about hops and were not taking advantage to become rich over night, even though they could ride all the way to the fields in a truck. And the thing that hurts something fine in me is that the sort of guano with which Miss Robinson decorated that page in the *Examiner* is what makes the people I mentioned a while back go around saying the things they do. And I might add, and will, that the only reason I think I know more about picking hops than Elsie Robinson does is that I went up to the fields and picked them, instead of getting my information from a Hearst editorial conference; which, directly or indirectly, is what Miss Robinson did. I went up to the Sonoma hop fields and this is what it was like:

There were nearly 250 acres of prime, heavy vines on this place, looking very fine with the sunlight coming through them. Before you got within two miles of the place there were signs on fence posts and telephone poles saying that 1,000 pickers were wanted and that the growers would furnish tents, wood and water. The part about the water seemed a little funny to me when I read it, probably because I had lived in the country as a boy. At home when you worked for a farmer you could have a drink of water any time you wanted it and no one thought of it as a particularly gracious gesture. I remember wondering facetiously what sort of arrangements they had made so that the pickers would have sufficient air. I found out later what it meant, though. It meant that water out of a pipe and faucet were available in the places where the tents were clustered and that in the heat of the day a Ford truck with a barrel of cool water on it drove through the fields; two arrangements which were very sound, and not silly at all.

At the office in the ranch house a woman gave me a number

and told me to report to the camp boss. She also told me that they were paying a cent and a quarter a pound with another quarter-cent bonus for remaining until the end of the season, which was then about ten days under way.

And right here, for clarity's sake, I think that I should explain that I was not an SERA worker. I was a freelance hop picker, a complete tyro, and had never seen a hop blossom in my life.

The camp boss told me that they were "fresh out of tents" and suggested a level spot beneath a tree on the hillside where the foliage would keep me from getting moonstruck. I made a fireplace out of two bricks and some plates from a wagon spring I found in a heap of debris and went down to the store. I found out that I could board at the camp restaurant for a dollar a day. I ate one meal there, experimentally, and paid 35 cents for a beef sandwich, a glass of milk, and two doughnuts. I did not eat there again. If you will put a hop blossom on a postal scales and weigh it it will give you an idea of how many of them must be picked at a cent and a quarter a pound to buy a sandwich, milk and doughnuts. The camp restaurant was very poorly patronized and the people who had the concession were a little hurt about it, I was told. There was also a camp grocery and meat market, a stand selling cold beer, candy and ice cream, and a fruit stall. The prices, as a large sign above them stated, were indistinguishable from those in San Francisco. I do not mean chain stores. I mean independent markets. There were also what seemed to me to be an adequate number of two-party outhouses intelligently placed with regard to the water supply. The one nearest my oak tree, and plainly labeled MEN, was given a spice of insecurity by the patronage of three Mexican ladies who were more logical than demure. I realize that the last sentence is without special significance in this article, but I am telling you what it was like up there, and that phase of it was like that.

The SERA men were camped about a quarter of a mile away, down the road, on the sandy edge of the river. Their tents had not arrived as yet when I first went over there, only one or two, and the cots were lined up in rows under the sky. I asked one of the men why he had come up and he said because they told him in San Francisco that he could come up and "pick hops or else". I said, "Else what?" and he said, "Else I go off relief." That man picked 88 pounds of hops the next day, which I was told by experienced pickers was very good for a beginner, which he was, and he received a check

for 11 cents. That represented his earnings, minus three meals. I saw the check. His side-kick received 3 cents. I saw that, too, because it was on the same check. They put them both on the same check, specifying by the camp number which got 3 and which got 11.

Both those men quit the next day, and I think I know why. You will tell me that they were getting fed and board and the dignity of labor and I will admit all that. But there is such a thing as pride and there is such a thing as ego, in varying degrees, and to give a man three cents, or eleven cents, after he's had his supper and tell him to relax and enjoy himself on that gripes him a little. I know he is on SERA and all that and should be grateful *et* all the *ceteras* you like, but don't rub it in. These men weren't sore about it, they were just fed up. One of them wanted to keep the check for a souvenir and the other one said, "My God, and I went to Ann Arbor for this." And that remark of his is another that has no significance, inasmuch as it is just as bad to my mind to give a man who never got beyond the eighth grade three cents plus meals for a day's work in the hop fields as it is to give it to a Ph. D.

But to get back to the hops. The procedure in the fields is this:

Many of the pickers got up at first light and were picking by 5 o'clock. The field boss comes down at 7 and assigns you to a row, but until that time you can clean up the rows which were left unfinished the night before. The baskets are big, belly-high ones like big peach baskets, and full, with the hops not packed down, will hold from 20 to 25 pounds of blossoms, depending upon the size and weight of the hops in the row you're working. The weighers come round every three hours or so, beginning at 9 o'clock. The hops are dumped into a big sack and you are credited with the weight and given scrip to show for it. The first weigh-in of the day entitles you to a white slip, which may be exchanged for cash. The others are good only for merchandise, or for cash if you are quitting. The vines are looped high above your head, ten feet or so, and when you pull them down to get at the blossoms often some of the vine is left on the wire. Then you call for the high-pole man, and he comes with a long pole with a knife on the end of it and cuts it down. The field boss wanders around assigning the pickers to rows and keeping an eye on the baskets to see that the picking is clean. At weighing-in your hops are dumped upside down and if you have dirty hops,

i. e. leaves and stems, you must pick them all over and get all the leaves out.

I believe that a lot of the misinformation concerning the income of a hop picker in 1935 is due to the fact that he is no longer permitted to strip the vines. The blossoms must be picked with reasonable care, from beneath the leaves, and this makes a great difference, both in picking tempo and weight. Old timers have told me that in the good old days, that is, a few years ago, a fast picker could turn in 500 pounds a day, by stripping the vine. Today, 200 pounds is very good. In fact, I knew a Mexican, an experienced picker, deft and very fast, and admired as such by good pickers, who considered 200 pounds cause for extreme alcoholic celebration. That represented \$2.25 earned in one day. As for me, working steadily and going without my lunch, I found that nine hours work had netted me exactly 66 cents.

Hops are unpleasant things to handle; the leaves give off a dark stickiness and tender-skinned pickers are apt to get hop poisoning, which is very like oak poison. If you get hop poison you do not work. And if you do not work you do not get any money. Many pickers wore gloves, but this definitely slows the tempo and knocks pounds off the day's weight. The only way that I could see to make any money from picking hops is to have a large, industrious family, and I should have thought of that before I left home. If a man can do 100 pounds a day, has a wife who is as expert, a stripling son or daughter who can do another hundred, the woman, if she is smart, can feed them all for 75 cents a day and there will be \$3 left over to give to the finance company toward a new eight-cylinder car. Picking hops, in fact, is one of the few occupations in which a wife and family are a definite economic asset.

I haven't mentioned Miss Robinson for some time now, but I have been thinking about her. I want to tell her that if she wants to give her article in the *Examiner* a becoming background of fact, I will give her a free ride in a truck to the hop fields and she can go into the fields as early as she likes, and stay as late as she can see, and I will bring her meals to her so that she won't have to take the time out, and if she picks 200 pounds at a cent and a quarter a pound I will provide a bottle of Pol Roger, 1914, at the end of the day. If she picks 250 pounds I will subscribe to the *Examiner* for one year. And I will read it. Even the things she writes.



THE SOVIET THEATRE

BY FLORENCE BEAN JAMES

WE RECEIVED with amazement the announcement of a Theatre Festival by the U. S. S. R. to be held in Moscow the first ten days in September, 1934. Our amazement was twofold. When in our lives had a government thought it important to present a festival in the theatre, and what kind of a theatre had the U. S. S. R. to present? Had not we been told that art as well as artists had been

liquidated by the Workers' Republic as something too contemptibly bourgeois for the high ideals and developments of a Communist State?

As workers in the theatre we had long been familiar with the unparalleled contribution of old Russia to acting, to the dance and to music. We were sure that this contribution was a fine flowering of a cultivated aristocracy and that large

masses of the people made no contribution to its creation and participated not at all in its results. Pavlowa and the Diaghileff Ballets, the Moscow Art Theatre productions of Chekov, Gorki, Tolstoi, and Baliev's "Chauves Souris" had been ecstatically received in America. But Anna Pavlowa and Diaghileff were dead and their organizations of artists scattered. Baliev had last been heard of selling cheese on the radio in America. Of what we knew only the Moscow Art Theatre survived in Russia.

The Festival announcements, therefore, were intriguing in their inclusion of the familiar names of other theatres which had long flourished in the old regime: Kamerny Theatre, Mali Theatre, Second Moscow Art, formerly the Studio Art Theatre, and the Bolshoi Opera. But more interesting were the new names: Red Army Theatre, Red Presnaya Theatre, Vakhtangov Theatre, Jewish Art Theatre, Theatre Under Soviets, Theatre of the Young Spectator, Moscow Theatre for Children, all indicating by their titles their inception since the revolution. It was productions of these old theatres that had survived revolution and civil war and productions of the theatres that had been born of war and revolution that we were invited to see.

I am constrained at this point to define the word "theatre". A building constructed with a stage, an auditorium and sufficient physical equipment to put on a show is not necessarily a theatre. A theatre is first of all a group of people—artists if you please—composed of musicians, actors, scene and costume designers and a director all dedicated to the purpose of producing honestly and beautifully plays of merit. To what extent do our theatres in the United States conform to this definition?

A producer in America selects a play, not because it is a good play, but for the primary reason that it will make money. He collects a group of actors, people who want jobs, among them a star (preferably a movie actor or actress because in all probability these are better known and therefore have greater box-office appeal), a director who has never seen either actors or play before and whose connection will terminate on the opening night, a scene and costume designer, and finally, during the dress rehearsals, a technician is brought in to light the play. Frequently before it is rehearsed the play is "doctored" by someone not at all familiar with the author or his intentions but who is supposed to know "what Broadway likes".

If such a *melange* achieves an artistic success, it is sheer accident. And success or failure, it is equally hard on the actor. If successful, he goes on and on, night after night, for months or even years, in deadly repetition, often in a part of no particular distinction. Great ability can scarcely survive such a "success", and for young talent it is death. If the play fails, as it often does over night, he is back again going the rounds of offices looking for another job.

The single integrating idea which holds this heterogeneous collection together is the hope of financial return. No common artistic purpose motivates either actors, director or technicians. If, during the course of a reasonably long run, some distinction of style and harmony of purpose is achieved by the group as the result of their association together, these are dissipated at the termination of the engagement. Instead of being conserved as an experienced and efficient unit for the purpose of establishing a true theatre, the workers are scattered in the inevitable search for further employment.

One of the first things we discovered in Moscow was that no such haphazard arrangement could ever be mistaken by the

Russians for a theatre. When we entered a playhouse we were immediately conscious of the intentions, imagination and discipline of the director and his group. Because they are freed from the necessity of looking first to the box-office to gauge the merit of their play, they can devote themselves to its finest interpretation. It is not possible for a play in the Soviet Union to suffer the damning criticism of "no b. o. draw". Nor is it conceivable that a Soviet director should appraise the values of a play in the terms employed by a New York producer who jubilantly described a forthcoming effort as follows: "It has the best sea scene since *Anna Christie*, the god-damnest fallen woman since *Rain*, and it's going to make me a million dollars."

Russian audiences do not go to the theatre for escape but for experience. They passionately accept the portrayal of living issues and applaud enthusiastically the presentation of ideas. One feels an intense bond between audience and actors who, in many instances, have been distinguished by such titles as "Honored Artist of the Republic" or "People's Artist".

The plays start at seven-thirty and last nearly until midnight. The audience enjoys the long intermissions in the buffet or foyer, discussing the play over their food or cigarettes. In most theatres persons connected with the company lectured informally to interested groups on the history of the theatre or some phase of the play being presented, and we were reminded that the theatre in the Soviet Union is education as well as entertainment.

Blocks of tickets are frequently bought by factories and presented to groups of workers. One evening at the Bolshoi Opera House our attention was caught by the occupants of what had formerly been the royal box. It was our first evening in Moscow and we believed the persons enjoying this choice location must be government officials or prominent party members. We questioned the guide, hoping to have some distinguished individuals identified for us. She glanced up at the box and answered casually: "Oh, just workers."

Commenting on the packed houses at every performance we saw, some skeptics in our party insisted that of course the Soviet government would not be so lax in creating a good impression as to bring foreigners to see empty or half filled houses. These audiences were stacked, people compelled to attend at the point of a bayonet or on threat of dire punishment. It so happened that one of the plays I wanted to attend was not on the Festival schedule. Late in the afternoon I obtained tickets for that evening's performance. This house was also packed. I was awe-struck at the efficiency of a government that could fill a theatre on a few hours' notice and highly flattered that it had considered me of sufficient importance to want to impress me in this fashion.

The theatres are under direction of the Commissariat of Education. One of the most interesting experiences of the Festival was our meeting with a Mr. Novitsky, assistant commissar in charge of drama. He outlined for us the field the theatre held in the revolution and answered our questions about censorship, theatre collectives and subsidies.

To the question: "Have the Russian theatres censorship?" Mr. Novitsky's reply was a pointed, "Assuredly. We are still in the class revolution. You, too, have censorship. We censor for different things. We censor immorality, religion, counter-revolution and mysticism." No classic is censored, and any play which seems to have merit, even though it may contain one or all of the censorable ideas, is first given a production because a play when produced may have other values

which offset the censorable defects.

Such a play was Bulgakov's *Last of the Turbins*, first produced at the Moscow Art Theatre in 1926. In this play the White Army is presented in a sympathetic light, and the Czarist National Anthem was heard in the theatre for the first time since the revolution. This was censorable material, particularly in 1926, but the play also represented the dawning sympathy among the intelligentsia for the growing power of the Bolsheviks. In the last act a group of White Army officers are gathered at the home of the Turbins in the city of Kiev. They have fled from a disastrous engagement with the Petlura troops and have sought refuge in Kiev. It is Christmas Eve. The rat-ta-ta-tat of machine guns and the rumble of gun carriages announce another attack on the city. Above the din is heard the "Internationale". Someone gasps, "The Bolsheviks!" "Well," says another, "why not? Perhaps they have a plan, ideals, sufficient discipline to serve Russia." A young officer still on crutches, swathed in bandages from his recent painful defeat, rises and cries, "Perhaps it's a prologue to a new era." And an older man answers, "Yes. But to some of us—an epilogue."

(This is the first of two articles by Mrs. James on the Soviet Theatre. The second will appear next week.)

BOOKS

DREISER AS A POET

BY JAMES R. CALDWELL

THE exact difference between prose and poetry is probably undefinable. But there is a difference. Reading this book of "moods" makes one certain that there is a very great difference. These verses* have in them much of the stuff that makes Dreiser's prose writing massive and impressive. They are honest verses, not tricky, not pretentious, not facile. There is in them an almost pathetic eagerness of resolve to carry the experience to the reader without resort to anything except the experience itself. And the experiences themselves were evidently worth recording. Dreiser feels deeply about important things. He thinks hard. But he does not often write poetry.

To say of a novel that it trudges and plods is not necessarily to damn it. There is a kind of novel which moves forward like a great parade on May-day, when there are more people than the street can hold, when a part of the mass is always at a stand until the vanguard lumbers ahead, or the rearguard rolls up, when the progress is slow and by little steps. Novels of this kind are often as mighty and as irresistible in progress as a great procession. They move to their conclusions not with few swift strides, but tread the way smooth by weight and multitude of paces.

Dreiser's virtues as a novelist are of this kind. In poetry

*MOODS, PHILOSOPHIC AND EMOTIONAL; Cadenced and Declaimed, by Theodore Dreiser. (Simon & Schuster) \$3

(even in "moods, cadenced and declaimed") these virtues are vices. One cannot lumber in verse; one cannot trust the low key and the cumulative effect; one cannot be in the obvious sense "natural"; above all, one cannot repeat. One cannot make a stab and miss and try again, and then throw in another try for luck and safety.

I tell you
I will never pray again—
Never—
Never—
Never.
He!
He!

Sulamith Ish-Kishor in a sentimental "Introduction" (what is the good of this blather? Fulsome introducers don't help bad poetry, and aren't needed for good.) says that the "apparently needless repetitions" are the only means of sustaining their "high emotional differential". I cannot believe that there is anything gained in the line of emotional differentials by repeating the verse "Old woman." four times in a poem of thirty lines.

The title is disarming. Not poems, but moods; not even verses, but cadences and declamations. Names are of no consequence, of course. But expectations and effects are. When we print in broken lines instead of solid type, we effect pauses of some kind at the end of the line, and we expect pleasure from the unit. We say to the reader: "If you will imagine a pause at these points (the line-ends), sometimes very slight, sometimes scarcely perceptible, but always felt in some degree, you will get an added pleasure in reading these words." We say also, "I've arranged the words between the pauses into patterns, small poems within the larger poem. My arrangement has not been careless or purposeless, nor merely to show that this stuff is to be called 'poetry'. I've arranged these words for beauty and pleasure." This puts a delicate matter crudely, but some such careful purpose is involved in the printing of verse as verse. Now take these lines from *Moods*:

Thought
That is a forest
A stream
A flower
That
Stands erect
....

The intention here is clearly to set out the items (Thought, stream, hill, etc.) as emphatic hammer strokes. That is the way the thing "reads". But what about *That*? It cannot be a hammer stroke. No natural reading would give it the same value and pause the other items have. The effect of making a verse of *That* is only contradiction and confusion. The cause appears to have been whim. There are many of these meaningless, one-word verses in *Moods*. They betray the cobbler's hand at verse-making. One sees them elsewhere only in the arty verse of the small and desperate magazine.

Dreiser is always at grips with fundamentals. His questions are usually simple. "Who and what am I?" "Is there any God?" "What is the meaning of the universe?" In the novels persistence of the questions, and the elementary terms in which they are asked are right enough. Dreiser's characters are strong and human rather than subtle, and they work hard at blind purposes, toward the realization of which they usually achieve little. As for poetry, we no longer expect the poet to prophesy, and tell us the right answers. But we do expect him

to raise these problems in highly personal terms.

Yet I must pray,—
Pray.
And do.
I lift up my hands.
I kneel
I seek in heart
Because I must,—
But of whom?
To whom?
Whom?

The triteness of this verse undignifies the question, makes it seem stale and trivial. Too often it is posed in these chilly terms.

Moods is (are?) not wanting in what we usually call "beauty". There is, for example:

Moonlight in melting radiance
Splintered and powdered silver,
Showering the earth with an infinitesimal rain,
Floating as a pale diaphanous mist . . .

But too often, as here, it is the rather "stock-beauty" arrayed conscientiously and insisted upon a little, with adjectives and other modifiers. Mr. Ish-Kishor refers reverently to the "angel in a tree" in the first poem in the book, an image he finds "Blake-like"; and he speaks of the phrase, "star-enchanted sky" as dazzling, but also "Shelley-like". I should say Keats for this last, rather than Shelley, but should add that either would be equally objectionable, for the simple reason that when one comes across an angel or a sky in a poem, one wants to be reminded of the essential angel and the essential sky, not of other poets—even Blake and Shelley.

The trouble with *Moods: Cadenced and Declaimed* is indicated in the title. Dreiser has attempted to evade the responsibilities of the poet; he will not risk going the whole way; he will write something a little less than verse and more than prose. The trouble is indicated even more clearly in a poem called "The Humanist":

You carved, intaglioed ivories of speech!
You graven and minted words

. . . .
How before your pinnacled altars of phrase and line
Have I not stood agape,
How marvelled at the care,
The pain,
And yet—
And yet—
How before the thinly candled effigies
Of those who have felt
Have I not knelt and prayed!

There it is. *Feeling is the thing*. Intaglioed ivories of speech (itself pretty good carving), and the pain are admirable. But to *feel*! To this good eighteenth-century Rousseauistic-fainting-hero heresy, we can only say once more that while artifice and ivories are not art, neither is *feeling*. Or that when feel-

ing is sufficiently intense, the words will be minted and engraved with the seal of the poet's blood, a coinage of infinite care and pain and of no compromise with perfection—Poetry, not "Moods".

COMPELLING BIOGRAPHY

BARTOLOME DE LAS CASAS, by Marcel Brion.
(Dutton) \$2.50

(Reviewed by Alan Campbell)

MOST histories of the conquest of the new world have little to say of the Andalusian Dominican, Las Casas. After three hundred years, a French scholar, Marcel Brion, has written a compelling biography of the "Father of the Indians" who, as a courageous champion of humaneness, stands without peer in the annals of the conquest.

Until his dramatic conversion in 1510, Las Casas was a conquistador and slave-owner—but on the isle of Santo Domingo, the voice of a Dominican priest converted him, and his first act was to free his slaves. From that time on he dedicated his life to protecting the Indian race. Although slave-owners, merchants and soldiers did all in their power to misrepresent Las Casas, he won the attention and affection of Charles V, and the book is much concerned with the various documents Las Casas drew up for the King of Spain.

Every effort Las Casas made to put into practice his theories of love and gentleness failed because of the intervention of his enemies. He was an eye-witness to almost all of the atrocities he described in his documents. The chapter, the "Destruction of the Indies", is a harrowing recital of the lust and cruelty of the conquerors.

Invaders always find some excuse for their ruthlessness, but it is farcical that the conquistadors justified their actions under the banner of Christianity. Anyone who imagines the conquest was glamorous or picturesque would do well to read this book.

A JAPANESE AUTOBIOGRAPHY

FACING TWO WAYS, an autobiography of Baroness Shidzue Ishimoto. (Farrar & Rinehart) \$3.50

(Reviewed by Brena Morris)

BARONESS ISHIMOTO, the first Japanese to take up the cause of birth control in her native land, writes her autobiography in the vein of the woman reformer of twenty years ago. The little lady, like so many of these ladies of the decades just past, is of high caste, and a peeress by marriage. She confronted the pitiful situation of the poor Japanese at first hand through the accident of her marriage; (her husband, the Baron, in his youth set out to better the lot of Japanese peasantry and literally plunged his wife into the class war;) yet, up to the writing of this autobiography, at least, the Baroness' deepest amazement seems to be that it happened to her—a daughter of one of the feudal classes of Japan—to take a step forward from her rank in the championing of a cause. "Was this not a daring attempt for me?" she asks repeatedly—not explicitly, of course; but nevertheless, that question, and this is so in large part because of the heritage of the author, is the heart of the book.

Without questioning the sincerity of purpose of the Bar-



ness, one has merely to examine the working concepts of reformers to measure the degree of her fighting strength and the fundamental invalidity of her aims. She observed throughout the world the bad pass of society and at one and the same time the persecution meted out to that group of people truly trying to rejuvenate it; all too acquiescently and unquestioningly she reaches her conclusion: It is much too dangerous to do anything about it. Still, the Baroness was facing two ways; a feudalistic past and a possibly progressive future. Therefore, she took up birth control.

The weakness and inadequacy of the reformer's point of view today is so clear that it may be passed up without discussion. Baroness Ishimoto was not unaware of this inadequacy; here and there in her story a clear statement reveals her insight into the struggle of want with wealth, but her retreat is always quick, and almost as if she had said nothing at all, her narrow predilections again absorb her. The social implications and contingencies of her problem are barren in treatment; all the complexities bearing importantly upon her work, and with which she might have so greatly improved her story, are lacking or treated skimpily.

In part, no doubt, the failure of the book is due to the Baroness' inability to express her ideas fully in a foreign tongue. But this is only part of the trouble. In view of the importance of her country, it is impossible for the reader not to wish that when she was in the thick of her fight she had looked more bravely ahead—and not in two directions.

CORRESPONDENCE

WE'LL BITE. WHY SHOULD YOU?

Editor, Pacific Weekly,

Sir:

I wish to call your attention to the merits of the early *Federalist*, which, as you will recall, was the official organ of the First American Revolution, and carried the views and opinions of the Revolutionary fathers, thereby greatly aiding the task of perfecting the American union. There is crying need today for a new *Federalist* to serve as the medium through which we can iron out our various differences.

In these columns, as you will doubtless remember, I have taken up the cudgel, many think foolishly, against the united front. I have done this, and must do it still, because I can see no hope for union founded upon a retention of "identities", which really means a preservation of differences, of disunion. In theory, it may be well enough for Epics to remain Epics and unite with Communists who remain Communists; though in practice no real union is ever thus effected. Besides, tell me why in the name of heaven Epics should remain Epics, or Utopians Utopians, or Communists Communists? Why, Mr. Editor, should I be anything other than a revolutionary, labels be damned?

Now, I am not against a united front which will unite to put an end to capitalism, doing all those things in the meantime—fighting war and fascism, carrying on propaganda, supporting strikes, etc.—identical to the task: but I am most certainly against all those underhanded, double-crossing practices which for years were carried on under the pretense of united fronts. The Communist, nor the liberal nor the capital-

ist, does not live that I'm afraid to talk to, or debate with if the need be. Any time anyone can show me they have the facts on their side, I am ready to follow them: but, by God, they have to be facts, not fancies! I'm done forever with following misleaders and self-deceivers.

Nor am I alone in making these statements. There is a good crowd of people down here along the border who are seriously studying revolution, who realize it must grow out of the soil of American conditions—mainly younger people who have grown up since the War. Through honest research and study, we believe we have found the way out, we believe we are revolutionists, even though our views differ widely from those of the orthodox radical.

From letters in these columns I know there are other groups in other parts of the state, if not the United States, who are making the same approach. Therefore it is safe to say, I think, that we represent a truly American school of Social Revolution. If this is true, then why not open your columns wide to discussions pro and con? You cannot ignore us. You cannot ignore our stand on the united front. Furthermore, if we are mistaken we should know about it; if we are correct, then others should know about it.

We have absolutely nothing to fear from such treatment, for we are revolutionists. If our position is untenable, it will be so proven and we will give it up. If we do not give it up, when we are proven incorrect, then we should be exposed as a bunch of muddleheaded nitwits; and to neglect to expose us, if we are wrong, must closely approximate sabotage of the revolution. Therefore, I put it up to you: why not trick us into showing the world what fools we are?

San Diego, California.

Earl Du Freyne French

BUT POCATELLO, DOCTOR!

Editor, Pacific Weekly,

Sir:

As one who knows somewhat of episcopal autocracy you will let me correct the statement about the appointment of the Rev. Gross Alexander from Los Angeles to Pocatello. He wasn't exactly railroaded when he left a church of 231 members to take one with 448 and gave up a salary of \$2,000 and house, to take one at \$2,200 and house. Bishop J. C. Baker is anything but an autocrat—he's a Christian Democrat with leanings toward religion.

Oakland, California.

W. J. Sherman

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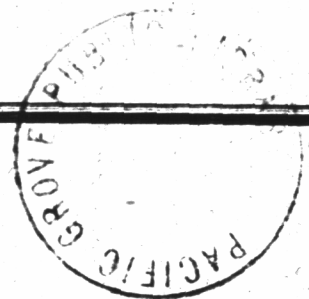
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