

PACIFIC WEEKLY

A WESTERN JOURNAL OF FACT AND OPINION

NOVEMBER 11, 1935

THE CHRONICLE
AND THE SHIPOWNERS
AN EDITORIAL



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BY JOHN PONIARD



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A Western Journal of Fact and Opinion

VOLUME III

MONDAY, NOVEMBER 11, 1935

NUMBER 19

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NOTES AND COMMENT

THE SAN FRANCISCO ELECTION

OF COURSE, Mayor Angelo Rossi of San Francisco was re-elected. But that is not the important thing that developed in the municipal election. The important thing is the 14,267 votes received by Redfern Mason, candidate of what the daily newspapers, coming out of their conspiracy of silence, term the "left-wing and radical group". The important thing is that, and the 10,000-average vote of the candidates for supervisor, whose names were not printed in the daily newspapers until the day of the election; the surprisingly big vote for William Riesener and George Andersen.

If people with determination and a fine purpose can gather 15,000 voters to their cause in the face of the most detestable example of journalistic perfidy in the history of the city, then there is hope. A healthy, fertile egg was laid in San Francisco in this municipal campaign. It will come to be hatched in due time and evolution in San Francisco politics may come before the revolt.

TO COUNTERACT JINGOISM

AS ARMISTICE DAY approaches California branches of the American League Against War and Fascism have most fittingly decided that the season is ripe for counteraction against the American Legion's military display which has come to be the order of the day.

The East Bay committee is planning for an Anti-War mass meeting in the Oakland Auditorium Theater Sunday evening, November 10, and the San Francisco committee has arranged for a Peace Demonstration to be held in the Scottish Rite Auditorium on the night of November 11.

The meetings should be crowded with American citizens who are determined that this country shall not enter the European muddle no matter how many drums may be beaten, flags waved and bugles blown by the senseless patriots who seem to

see devotion to their country only in terms of a gun and a uniform. The meetings should be jammed by those who are determined that the even stronger forces of Big Business shall not force another war for profits on us.

Even those who permit their boys to march with Legionnaires to the martial strains of army and navy bands in Armistice Day parades should join with the American League Against War and Fascism in the effort to stem a tide that would carry those boys from the delight of military gestures to the horror and torture and actuality of the trenches.

The East Bay Committee on October 30 addressed the following letter to Dr. A. F. Bernstein, commander of Oakland Post, No. 5, American Legion:

Dear Sir:

The American League Against War and Fascism, representing more than two and one-half millions of American citizens, asks for the privilege of sending a delegation to march with you on Armistice Day in the parade celebrating peace. The executive committee of the East Bay Committee of the League feels that if you extend this courtesy you will do much to destroy the feeling that is growing in many quarters that the Legion is being used to subvert the traditions of American freedom and to destroy democracy.

The League is opposed to all imperialist wars and to the use of American lives for the safe-guarding of investments and business enterprises that prove profitable only to a few. It is opposed to fascism in any form. It is against any curtailment of the rights of the plain people to determine, by the free exercise of public discussion of all controversial questions, the policies the American government shall follow. It stands for the freedom of the common workman to strike for the improvement of the lot of all workers, and through the strike and mass protest to bring pressure to bear upon government in the interests of the masses.

Your permission for its delegates to march with you on Armistice Day will advertise to all the world that the Legion is in fact what it purports to be, an organization of American men ready to cooperate with all citizens for keeping America a country where the common man has an unabridged right to participate in the formulation of his country's policies.

Awaiting an early and favorable reply, I am

Respectfully yours,

Chas. A. Roberts, Secretary

No reply had been received by the afternoon of November 5.

SOMETHING RADICAL IN SAN DIEGO

SOMETHING militantly interesting and interestingly militant appears to motivate this Federated Trades and Labor Council down in San Diego. The members of this organization appear to have unusually radical ideas and, which is a great deal more to their credit, they believe in voicing them. Here's an example of their lucid thinking—or is it temerity?—this resolution sent to the executive committee of the

annual Conference of City Superintendents of Schools:

Whereas, Organized Labor was one of the earliest and strongest promoters of free public education in the United States, and the American Federation of Labor for sixty years has steadfastly sought to nourish and protect free public education and educators in this country, and

Whereas, The rank and file of educators are coming belatedly to realize that they are primarily workers with problems similar to those of union members, and that the objectives of education can best be served through increase in mass purchasing power and social security, and

Whereas, The American Federation of Labor and its Councils and Unions are becoming increasingly active in educational work and concerned with the uncertain future of American youth, and

Whereas, The 1935 program of the annual conference of California County, District, and City Superintendents of Schools reveals that the only non-educator given time during the conference was A. I. Stewart, Director of Public Relations for the Safeway Stores of Los Angeles; therefore be it

Resolved, By the San Diego County Federated Trades and Labor Council, in regular weekly meeting assembled, that:

1. We respectfully request that the new executive committee of superintendents provide for a Labor speaker representing the A. F. of L. during the 1936 conference.
2. The school superintendents of California attempt to establish closer cooperation between the public schools and the Labor Councils and Union within their districts, and
3. The California Federation of Labor be, and is hereby requested to concur in this resolution and to aid in the consummation of its objectives.

RATHER DISGUSTING

RECENTLY the San Francisco *News Letter*, to which title is appended *The Wasp*, heretofore a harmless little social gossip sheet, was bought by a Mr. LeBerthon. To inaugurate the new ownership this gentleman dedicated on October 26 an editorial to Harry Bridges. It had Mr. John R. Pickett of the *Pacific Rural Press* beat hollow. The charmingly American, gentlemanly, sensitive and imaginative suggestion in the editorial was that Bridges and all his friends, including those in "colleges, political parties and labor organizations", in fact, anyone who had more intelligence, liberality and sensitiveness than Mr. LeBerthon, be treated as in a "mirthful procedure of Signor Mussolini" and dosed with castor oil. The editor and owner of the *News Letter* thinks this would contribute to the "uproarious delight of the populace".

"What marvelous joy would fill the nation," he apostrophizes. "What nation-rocking laughter!"

We wish such Nazi-minded sadists might have seen the gray-bearded old liberal we saw in a Florence park once after Mussolini's fascists had finished with him. He had been a great orator, vivid, vital, with a fine, flashing intelligence. He sat on a bench now, his tongue hanging out, drooling, his eyes vacant, his hair and beard matted. His wit, fineness, grace, his human attributes, were gone. A monument to fascism, the fascism of Mr. LeBerthon!

A "good dose" for Mr. LeBerthon might be to read his own editorial twenty-five times a day, especially at meal-times.

And at bedtime for him to have to look into the mirror and say: "I wrote it."

TRUE TO FORM

WE READ the first stories of the dynamite bombings in Milwaukee with growing astonishment. There was no mention of Communists—not even in the Hearst papers! They must be learning to be pretty efficient and identity-effacing termites, we thought.

However, we weren't doomed to wonder long. But we must say that Hearst reporters, whether because the most intelligent men have been fired by now, or because of lowered wages and longer hours, aren't doing as good a job as usual. Reporting hunches isn't good newspaper work. The San Francisco *Examiner* of November 4 concluded its front page story with: "The authorities said they had found what they believed to be the fragments of two bodies." Of one of the fragments the paper then said: "His Communistic affiliations, if any, were not learned at once."

On November 5, however, the Milwaukee probation officer, Charles Mayer, is reported as saying he was sure, though he couldn't trace actual membership in the Communist Party, that the fragment had at one time or other listened to soap-box orators and that explained the bombing of five public buildings.

The *Examiner*, through its Universal Service, further chipped in with this:

Boston, Nov. 4.—Communist leaders were being trailed today by detectives and plain clothes officers were assigned to guard important buildings as a result of the Milwaukee bombings, authorities fearing the midwestern outbreak a forerunner of a nationwide plot.

On November 6 someone became aware that Hearst papers hadn't done their job. So the front page of section 2 of the *Examiner* came out with photographs of the ruined garage, house and little girl who was killed, and one of the fragment, who by now had become a Red Terrorist. The bomb was a "communist bomb" and the havoc was wrought by radicals and red terrorism. The Milwaukee Universal Service correspondent opined that all this would lead to the next election being fought on the issue of violence, the opposing sides

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being vigilantes and the present Socialist Mayor. (Of course, he didn't call them that.)

If it interests the Hearst papers, the Communist Party expressly forbids acts of individual violence and terror of any kind, anywhere, at any time.



THE CHRONICLE AND THE SHIPOWNERS

CAN the Leopard Change Its Spots is a question agitating San Francisco with regard to the controversy between the San Francisco *Chronicle* and a section of the shipowners. On November 2 *Chronicle* readers were startled to find a front-page story headed: S. F. SHIPPING MEN DISCUSS CHRONICLE BOYCOTT AT MEETING. The *Chronicle* said that "taking umbrage at the *Chronicle's* policy of printing news without bias or prejudice, a group of steamship company executives yesterday discussed the advisability of launching an advertising and circulation boycott against the *Chronicle*". And there was a boxed editorial on the Freedom of the Press in which the paper stated that while it didn't and wouldn't support the aims or methods of "the more radical leadership" on the waterfront, it would report what this element did and said because that was news. And the paper would not be intimidated by threats of economic pressure. This standpoint was reiterated on following days.

Good heavens, it looked as if someone on the capitalist side, and in the sacred precincts of newspaperdom itself, might mean what they said! There was someone who might be taking all this stuff they'd been ramming down the public's throat about freedom of the press seriously. Gracious! Where was the United Front for Hypocrisy?

The controversy illustrates a conception the Marxians talk about: a useful conception one can't really do without these days, and which we must call by its scientific name: the internal contradictions of capitalism. Newspapers are commodities which obey the laws of a profit economy. The buyers must want the product. If they don't, sales and profits fall off.

Well, in common with other capitalist newspapers, the sales of the *Chronicle* were falling off woefully; the paper was losing circulation and money. What to do? Someone hit on a bright idea. Why not copy Ford, turn out a product the potential buyers might want: a newspaper? This meant—a paper that printed news. It was no secret that no San Francisco paper printed all the news, impartially, especially not since the marine strike and the newspaper combine that came into being at that time. The combine had acted together several times during the year; members agreed not to mention the July 5 marine parade beforehand; they evidently agreed not to mention the United Labor Ticket. They agreed apparently to give more, and more favorable, publicity to the A. F. of L. unions than to the powerful left-wing unions. Vigilantism in San Francisco, too, could be winked at. Raids on radical headquarters were never mentioned. Fascist action by legionnaires, for instance, was not called by that name. The Crusaders, the Committee of One Thousand, were to get publicity and commendation where all reference to the

American Civil Liberties Union or the I. L. D.—really fighting for the American rights the fascist committees hypocritically claimed they were—was omitted. (To this last the San Francisco *News* was an honorable exception.)

Readers turned more and more from these papers: more, and more honest, labor papers sprang up which reported labor news, militant union news, and the doings of liberals and anti-fascists. Their circulation increased. The last year has seen four new radical newspapers in San Francisco, and an increased circulation for the *Western Worker*.

The *Chronicle* decided it must try and get some of these readers. So it swung around in its policy of red-baiting the waterfront unions, of calling names and omitting or coloring all militant union news. It reported Bridges and his actions and words as if he were a militant union leader. It ceased calling him alien, rat, termite, communist; it called his comrades "lieutenants", not "henchmen". Above all, it interviewed Bridges, and it printed his statements.

The shipowners were nonplussed—and scared. The public on whose "education" (meaning propaganda for their point of view) they had spent hundreds of thousands of dollars were to be let in on the truth! Unbelievable. They had never faced that possibility.

There is a bad split among the shipowners which is well known. John Francis Neylan came up against it when he tried to "settle" the 1934 strike. There are die-hard, open-shop, kill-the-union, outright fascist shipowners (American-Hawaiian, Matson, Dollar, Swayne and Hoyt, and Pacific Steamship being the chief ones), and there are more liberal ones. It is the die-hards who are causing much of the trouble; they have the economic and banking power and can make the lesser companies and other ports fall into step. They have exercised this power, without becoming the more popular for it. The Industrial Association, the Waterfront Employers' Union and the State Chamber of Commerce are their mouth-pieces.

Even from these shipowners' point of view it was not good business to be losing as readers the very members of the public they were trying to "educate". But they didn't see that. American business men aren't half as efficient as the Satevepost tales would have you believe. It is hard for them to picture other points of view than their own. They don't come up against them much—they don't travel by street car or train, they meet their same little crowd at club and dinner, opera and party, cocktail-bar and in the office, at tennis and on vacation. They don't read liberal and radical papers (they leave that chore to their research departments). So they were bowled over to find that there had grown a considerable revolt against their iron irreconcilability, and the *Chronicle* was, for a moment, in one instance, on the revolting side.

Of course, the *Chronicle* is still a capitalist newspaper. Of course, it still distorts, suppresses, selects, colors news aplenty. In a crisis it will, of course, behave as it behaved during the strike—like a hysterical woman, with as little relation to a newspaper as a Victorian drawing room has to the violent ward in a lunatic asylum. (This is an accurate description of San Francisco papers during the marine strike). But for the moment someone on the *Chronicle* is trying to be wiser than its die-hard shipowner supporters, is trying to tell them that if you want to fight an enemy you must at least know what you're fighting, is trying to make it pay. Also the *Examiner* was losing so much circulation by its false reporting, violent red-baiting and fascist propaganda that there was room for some other morning newspaper. If the die-hards want to

own the *Chronicle*, why not buy it and pay the losses? But so much honesty they don't want either. They want, need, must have, at this period, hypocrisy, till they have open, outright unmasked fascism. And during this period they will have to put up with the godly irony (and the ungodly humor) of this little internal contradiction of capitalism. It's too bad about Karl Marx, who foresaw all this right down to tomorrow. Didn't advocate it, mind you; foresaw it.

—ELLA WINTER

LINCOLN STEFFENS SPEAKING--

SINCLAIR LEWIS' new novel, probably one of these here best-sellers, is out with one of them there impudent, pat titles: *It Can't Happen Here*. It's an account of the coming of Fascism, not to Carmel, of course, but to America, to these United States. It's so true that it will make you laugh. I've a grouch agin it; it puts me by name in a group not worth killing, but I can leave that to my neighbors to deny and my neighbors are on the preferred list, though not by name. Too bad, too. Some of my dearest neighbors won't recognize themselves under the names Lewis has given them. His invented names are often as descriptive as Dickens's and no neighbor will pick up and put on a Dickens name; I wouldn't myself. But anybody that speaks that mean can see who is meant. Better read the darn thing in secret. Anybody that can say out loud and believe it, every dub that says that "It can't happen here", would better buy the damn book and sneak off to read it in private. Some of the respectable planners of that San Francisco "lock-out" that is to be mistaken for a strike might well read this novel even though they don't care for fiction. Sinclair Lewis, between you and me, is more of a reporter than a novelist; we call him a novelist because he's a prophet and habitually beats the news and gets it wrong in detail, like now.

STANLEY BALDWIN is not only the prime minister, he is the boss of Old England and therefore a Tory. His son, Oliver, is standing for parliament on the Labor Ticket. He is against the battleships his father favors and against the government his father stands for. Fathers have a hard time these days. In England. Not so bad here. William Randolph Hearst knows and rejoices that he has a son whose views he, the father, can be proud of, whose speeches he can run as editorials; in brief, a successor. Not like poor Stanley Baldwin, not like many English aristocrats, whose children are disappointments, going off following the times which are so out of joint. William Randolph Hearst, Jr., says the way to keep out of war is to keep out of Europe. Not very profound, not always possible or effective but popular, superficial and—so Hearstian.

THE CHRONICLE is beginning to print the news. To do so, that fine old conservative newspaper has had to break away from the united front formed by the Hearst *Examiner*, and the Industrial Association, and the business union led by the shipowners is protesting. Of course. How can they fight labor and rule the waterfront if both sides are published, if

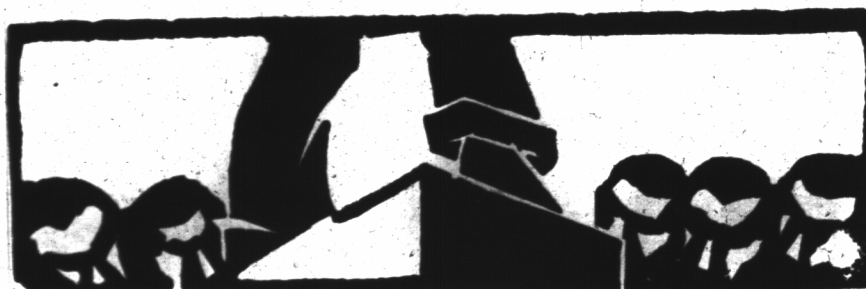
the public also gets the news and one capitalist newspaper tells the truth? These business men want to sail their ships as a business but they can't do it if the *Chronicle* also runs its presses as a business. And that's what's up. For the *Chronicle* has to meet a demand for the news from thousands of readers, a majority of citizens who have to vote and govern the city. Public opinion counts in strikes. Counts like the police and the militia. If the naturally selfish business men can't manage the public with the press, they can't put down a strike, not even with the police and the army. They hate to use force; they greatly prefer propaganda and bribery. Pacifism.

They say every question has two sides, every strike ditto and they are sincere, really. But also they are dumb. They want "their" papers to print their side, only, and mostly their papers do print their side, only. I'm an old newspaperman and I know. So do they. Even in the old San Francisco graft prosecution I was able to get a beat on the true story, because the crooks in business suppressed the news in the San Francisco papers. I had the same experience in New York, Philadelphia, St. Louis, Boston and other cities and states. The desire of Organized Business in San Francisco, California, to save their crooked business from being reported by the business-like *Chronicle* is typical. Business is at the bottom of all the graft I ever muck-raked. Business is not business in journalism as the *Chronicle* is once more finding out. Watch and see. Don't believe me. I am prejudiced. I don't think there are two sides to any public question.

In the last waterfront strike, the shipowners had the police, the state and the state militia, the courts and Business, and they got Hearst's Mr. Neylan to get and unite the press in an organization all against the strikers. Do you know that? The national press learned and reported it. Now Neylan had to do that; no use suppressing news and otherwise taking orders in the *Examiner* alone if the *Chronicle*, *News* and other papers printed the news that would give Hearst away and spoil the whole game. You can't do business, practical business, with the whole town looking on. So the Hearst crowd got together with the shipowners and the freight shippers and they formed the block that the *Chronicle* seems to be threatening. And I don't want to hurt that good old paper—but it's a business fact that the public noticed that some news was being printed; not all, mind you, not all; but some was getting by, and the circulation went up farther than the *Examiner* went down. And that's pretty far. Now these business men threaten to hit the *Chronicle* advertising. Watch, I say again.

Notice that the *Chronicle*, even when reforming itself in the way of business, stood with the other papers in suppressing all news of the Labor Ticket in the election. It was fairer only on the waterfront labor angle. Bridges knows that, and I assume that he knows that when the shipowners get the strike they are planning, the *Chronicle* is apt to report for the owners and against the men—all on one side again. But for that, too, I would say an apology: in a class-struggle the class interest comes first.

And, generally, like some worms under a stone, there are business men who cannot live in the light of day.



PAGE SPENCER DEAN!

BY R. H. JAMIESON

SHADES of Philo Vance, Sherlock Holmes and Pat Muldoon, if Crime isn't with us again!

New York's Governor Lehman had to appoint a Crime Clinic of eminent criminologists, sociologists and other sundry "ists" to find out just that—no more—no less. Even the Wickersham "circus" of 1931 turned in a more comprehensive report on August 16 of that year. The big "circus" did manage to stumble over the fact that "the foreign-born commit fewer crimes than the native-born American, in proportion to their numbers". And to prove their courage exceeded their reverence for Willie Hearst, they further found that: "In crimes committed for gain alone, such as arson, stock-juggling, swindles, fraud, embezzlement, and fake bankruptcies, the native-born American was just exactly 400 per cent more proficient than the alien."

But when the Wickersham Report concluded by admitting to failure in placing the finger on causes of crime in the U. S.—well—just another precedent, that's all; for here four years later, the Lehman Clinic meets in solemn conclave, chews up a few gross of State-paid-for pencils, issues a few bromides for the eager press, draws their expense account, and with silly grins on their dead pans proceed to turn in a nit-wit report and silently depart, back to where they came from!

Neither of these two burlesques of "crime investigation" dared look the social-economic system of capitalist America in the face. "Crime" to them was "just one of those things"—a sort of dispensation of the Devil—or did they blame it onto God surreptitiously? Anyway, Hearst denied them a front page spread for the results of their labors because of their dumbness in not blaming all crime onto the Reds and have done with it.

The Lehman "Crime Doctors" wasted the taxpayer's coin trying to formulate a cure for an ailment of the social system without first making a positive diagnosis. Just the old Navy treatment of C. C. pills and iodine for all hands!

A marked peculiarity prominent in all such studies of crime in America is the failure of the august bodies in reaching some basic and definite conclusion as to the cause of crime. Also, it is apparent that the economic aspects of the costs of crime only interest them in the single phase, i. e. cost of crime "prevention" and cost of the criminal's upkeep by the State. The losses suffered by the public directly from criminal activities are evidently of no great concern to the stuffed-shirts who sit on these so-called Crime Commissions!

With the idea in mind of peeking behind the scenes at some authentic statistics on crime costs let's dig around and see just what crimes cost the people of the U. S. the most money each year—and also surmise a bit as to just who some of our bigger and better criminals are, and where one could expect to find them à la Spencer Dean.

***STOCK FRAUDS—\$500,000,000 yearly loss to the public!** This includes some dollars that the big-hearted public utilities are "taking care of" for the widows and orphans of America. No low-browed thug or stick-up man gets in on that haul so it must be that there are thieves operating on the stock exchanges after all! O woe is me, to think that such

would be true, after all these years. Why, Thomas Jefferson said . . .

MERCHANDISE FRAUDS—\$500,000,000 each and every year! No common ordinary yegg can open up a store and sell the goods obtained on credit and then leave for Florida. Could it be that there are merchants—those rugged individualists of history—that would defraud a creditor? Dear, dear, what things go on in the world since that first amendment to the Constitution!

CREDIT FRAUDS—\$265,000,000 annually! Charlie Chan, Walter Winchell, and General Johnson himself couldn't blame these losses to the lower classes—the people who work! To get "credit" in the first place—commercial credit—one must have connections in either the Chamber of Commerce, the Elks, or at least appear to be on speaking terms with Jesus. So it looks like there are shysters among the lambs also—or is it all a mistake?

INSURANCE FRAUDS—\$200,000,000 a year! An old American custom—Arson! In fact, an American institution. The good old stand-by of America's merchant princes if bankruptcies are unfashionable at the time. Over 49 per cent of ALL fires occurring in places of business in the United States are "touch-offs".

How'm I doin', Mr. Editor? Stand a few more figures?

EMBEZZLEMENT—\$125,000,000 yearly. Huh, gotta have some "front" to get close enough to that much dough before embezzlement can even enter a person's mind—so that lets out all working stiffs and narrows down to public officials, and executives of simon-pure business concerns—on which rest the fate of the Nation. Nertz!

FORGERY—Another \$100,000,000 a year! Forgery not only includes the small-fry checks passed upon blind bank tellers but is most profitable when used in connection with illegal conversion of stocks, bonds and deeds. Some of America's ace financiers are not above using this method to tide them over a crisis . . . in fact, it's not exactly rated as a crime in America—just an art!

REAL ESTATE FRAUDS—\$100,000,000 a year! This item is grossly under-estimated. As she stands it accounts for only the sums dished out to realtors and speculators for practically non-existent—or submerged land! Added to this figure should be the gross "take" of subdividers, real-estate promoters, oil-land swindlers, gold mine developers, and the general run of "good thing" Johnnies of the Rotary and Chamber of Commerce. (350 to 600 millions yearly. National Land Tax League of N. Y. Bul. 16—1930)

And now the crimes for which over 86 per cent of America's prison population are serving sentences:

BURGLARY, ROBBERY, THEFT, HOLD-UP (combined) \$250,000,000 yearly.

And so from the figures it appears that the most profitable thievery is carried on by the members in good standing of some of our outstanding organizations and classes—namely; business, fraternal and religious groups!

Regardless of the many social implications passed up by the Lehman "Crime Clinic" as too "hot" for them to touch, we can readily see by the following statistics on criminals in confinement, that there exists a formidable problem that is not

* Yearly crime costs, p 297 World Almanac 1930.

being solved by rationalizing everything to "psychology". What is needed in future studies is a grasp of the realities of the problem starting at the very beginning—the social-economic order under which the criminal obtained both his "individual psychology" and his more important psychology—that of his "class".

**In 1923 U. S. prisons had an average population for the year of 84,761 persons.

In 1932 the number had increased to 158,947.

Only a very small percentage of the perpetrators of the crimes analyzed as to cost in this article are in prison . . . except, of course, those held for Burglary, Robbery, Theft, and Hold-up.

** Prison population, p 279 World Almanac 1935.



I GET SPELLS

BY L. E. CLAYPOOL

THIS is not a memoir, or an autobiography. It's not even an opinionation or an exercise in pessimism for which Schopenhauer can be blamed. Indeed, if anyone other than myself can be blamed it would be Corliss Lamont, whose *Illusion of Immortality* I am now digesting. But that won't do, for my mind was about made up about immortality and I was even writing monographs about it before Corliss had found out about the alphabet.

In fact, I believe it's one of those spells editors get. I have been an editor or some kind of a newspaper factor for nearly thirty years now and along with most of my fellowcraftsmen I get these spells.

I went to a psychiatrist once, but the best he could do was join me at the nearest bar in a gin fizz. When Freud was the rage I sought out psychoanalysis. No solace from that source. It seems that psychoanalysts and psychiatrists have one thing in common with each other and with newspaper men, namely: when in doubt, they have a drink.

Right now I have one of those spells. I know well enough that next Tuesday or even next Monday night I shall be over it. I met up with an Englishman in Hong Kong once who insisted it was my liver and he made the brash suggestion, horrifying to most Britons, that I use lemon in my tea instead of cream. Aside from the fact that I also learned from a low, but most intriguing Portuguese to put rum in it there is no real significance to this and I doubt that it interests you.

The point, if any, is that it is my thesis that such gloom as accompanies these spells is not due to internal stimuli at all. None of the glands of my internal secretion, nor the Isles of Langerhans, nor the spleen nor any of those messy organs, useful or vestigial, are to blame. There is a condition peculiar to journalism which I would name *angina editorialis* until I can check with my Latin grammar to make certain of the declension.

Anyhow, the stimulus arises outside the organism. Of that I am certain. Just to prove it I spent the week before last in Los Angeles. Like the ancient apothecary's customer I didn't get what I went for, which was rest, but I got something just as good. In this case I got an opportunity to sit in on some of

the classes at the University of Southern California's school of journalism. To be exact, I didn't get to sit in all of the time. I had to do a bit of talking.

In visiting the school I learned to my amazement that not everybody believes everything in the newspapers any more. That was much more than amazing. It was shocking no end. In this case three of the professors emulated the psychiatrist and the psychoanalyst and we all had a drink. When a man asks you why newspapers lie about what is going on in the world, what else is there to do but have a drink?

Somehow these students have got the notion that William Randolph Hearst is a liar. I know those are harsh words. But take into consideration my state of mind—and the students'. These are tough, yea troublous times. Editors who don't go out and look around occasionally, or who go only to the Pacific Union Club or to the Bohemian Club (God save the ancient mark of Bret Harte), can't be expected to know of the dangers and turmoil that beset their reporters and the common run.

Before we got through the session I was pretty much convinced that college students distrust newspapers and that newspapers do not understand college students. This much one newspaper editor learned about them. They discriminate as between newspapers. They feel, for example—I use the word "feel" advisedly—there is a difference between such newspapers as the Hearst group and the Scripps-Howard group and the difference is decidedly in favor of the latter. But they are becoming impatient of even liberalism. They regard a Liberal as one who leaves the room when the fight starts, as Heywood Brown puts it. But the difference exists and they give it credit.

There is a distinction, too, between, say, the San Francisco *Examiner* and the San Francisco *Chronicle*. The two *Examiners*, one in Los Angeles and one in San Francisco, are regarded as papers that print manufactured lies whereas the *Times* in Los Angeles and the *Chronicle* in San Francisco are regarded by some of the students I contacted in Los Angeles as being papers that print only what is agreeable to their economic health and suppress what isn't.

I shall never forget the definition which the late Senator Bill Stone of Missouri gave me of the three papers then being published in Kansas City. He said that one of them was a kept woman, one was a prostitute and one was a street walker. Those are pretty much the distinctions to-day and it is not difficult for one gifted in judging daily publications to tell one from the other.

In the light of Journalism as I find it in Los Angeles there is little wonder that I get spells. Manchester Boddy is making a fair to middling fight in Los Angeles against great odds with his *Illustrated Daily News* and his afternoon *Post-Record*, but the combination hasn't a tenth the circulation of the *Examiner* and the *Times*. There is a great yearning in California for a reliable press. Fortunately for me I work on one of the few newspapers in the state that tries to print the truth and my editor, an exceptionally good one, encourages his staff in the reporting of it. But alas, the field is mostly desert.

Maybe I should stay away from Los Angeles. Anyhow, I did see the planetarium in Griffith Park. I wish all journalists, especially all editorial writers, could see that. If it taught them nothing it would at least make them ashamed of themselves. The astronomers certainly have it on us.

The next time I get one of my spells I'm going to visit San Quentin. They won't annoy me there with insolent comments about the press, I hope.

THE COMMUNITY CHEST HOOPLA

BY JOHN PONIARD

THE Community Chest campaign is on again with a bang in Los Angeles. The newspapers once again tell us that "the need is great" just when we had read the opinions of several great men of the nation who said the depression was over and all was well again throughout the land.

The Chest goal is just a few paltry thousands short of the three-million dollar mark and many have noted the astute merchandising psychology in this figure, knowing that people will bite at wares marked \$2.95 when they won't at \$3.00.

Almost every lamp post and shop window in the city is adorned with a placard on which is inscribed, "Don't Forget 211,000 Children."

"Tell us," we asked of a capitalist-minded friend, "are these poverty-clutched little ones in the United States or in Soviet Russia?"

"Why," he replied, "they're right here in Los Angeles."

"You will pardon our ignorance," we said, "but when we first came to Los Angeles, not so awfully long ago, the entire population was less than 200,000 and it alarms us to learn that now more than that number of children alone are dependent on alms—what do you make of it?"

Our friend looked with compassion upon us and then went into a long dissertation about it being one of those insoluble problems of the ages and clinched his argument with that devastating quotation: "The poor we have always with us."

We were almost slain by this unanswerable logic but quickly recovered our wits as we recalled that a thousand had once been laid low in Biblical days by the jawbone of an ass, and we finally won the joust, we fancied, with the cutting remark, "Well, anyway, the kids do have the C. C. C. camps to look forward to a little later, and that's something."

This remark convinced our friend of our complete hopelessness.

But each year the Community Chest hoopla intrigues us more. We notice that it becomes more like a holy war each season. Dignified business men become whirling dervishes for a short spell and attack the infidel, Poverty, with great vigor only to find him more alive again than ever the following year.

Members of the Rotary, Kiwanis, Lions, etc. (those stalwart knights of the luncheon table), solemnly knit their brows, appoint captains and crews for their crusade and then go forth with a hurrah to one another's bazaars to gather one another's money for the cause.

Of course, this Alice in Wonderland yearly festival of adult juveniles cannot be hampered by rude economic argument, nor has it been thus far. We, too, at one time were strong for the Community Chest until it suddenly dawned on us that it was a pretty scheme devised by clever men of means to dodge some of their responsibility by having the poor carry the poor as long as they would.

It needs no skilled mathematician to discover that if the entire Chest fund were given to the needy children in the Los Angeles area, each child would receive in cash, goods, or services, less than fifteen dollars. But the fund is not for needy children alone.

It is apportioned among many institutions and some of these, such as children's clinics and hospitals, maternity hospitals, are necessary and very excellent, even though they are

most inadequate to meet the growing needs of the poverty-stricken in every community. And it is a dismal commentary on our present social system that such necessary and worthy institutions should be in any way dependent on charity.

But there are many other institutions receiving large sums from the Chest which would be automatically abolished by an intelligent social order. At the top of this list we would find "flop houses" and soup and "gospel" missions.

These institutions do gather up a part, but only a small part, of the human debris made by the present vicious social order, but it is noticeable that these institutions maintain a discreet silence about abolishing the weird system that grinds their clients into the gutter. And perhaps there is a good reason for this silent attitude of those who operate such institutions. In late years, in particular, these organizations have become "legitimate" business enterprises, and as the present crisis deepens, their "business" is the one business that gets better and better.

The great bulk of the Chest fund is made up from firms employing large numbers, the telephone and street car companies, department stores, municipal employees, police and firemen. The Chest officials can and do estimate to within a few dollars just how much money can be obtained from any given group by the number in the group. Thus a "quota" is determined and the official at the head of the group seldom fails to collect the amount set as the sum to be subscribed.

The first to make his quota this year was none other than that renowned scholar, lecturer and authority on subversive influences in America, James E. Davis, chief of police of Los Angeles. And as he handed to a Chest official the check for the amount which was subscribed by the police force, the resplendent scene was duly photographed and appeared in all our local newspapers.

Nor did Tom May of the huge May Company department store overlook the advertising possibilities afforded by the Chest. He, too, had his picture taken as he gave the check from his employees and this impressive scene also appeared in the newspapers.

The methods used in collecting the money for the Chest are persuasive but also very effective, for it is not healthy to grumble aloud about giving. And it is safe to say that the vast majority of givers are not "cheerful givers". Many of the "contributors" not only have a difficult time making ends meet on inadequate wages and rising prices, but must help less fortunate relatives. And it is not unreasonable that they should prefer to give direct with their own hands to those whom they know to be in need, and who they know will use the money properly, rather than give to the Chest without knowing if their donation will reach a worthy person.

Judging from the expressions heard lately against giving to the Chest, it would seem that while these dissenters may not fully realize that their giving really prolongs the agony of a diseased social order, and cannot possibly remedy it, none the less, this rebellious spirit portends increasing difficulty for future Chests. We have been told that each year it becomes more difficult to raise the fund. As economic conditions grow more severe this difficulty is not hard to understand.

If there is graft, as many people claim, attached to the handling of the huge Chest fund, the newspapers have not

said anything about it. They could hardly be expected to add any fuel to the flames of public opposition already glowing. Conceived and maintained by Big Business for the purpose only of salving the sores caused by the incurable organic disorder inherent in their social system, the business men in charge of the Chest do not intend to deal with the cause of social disease but only to treat it as long as they may.

There is considerable truth in the claims of the patriots and usurers that the "Reds" intend to pull down American "institutions". Indeed, the Reds will in due time, and among the institutions laid low future historians will find such grotesque relics of a dead social epoch as flop houses, soup and gospel missions and—THE COMMUNITY CHEST.



OPEN ASSIGNMENT

1--HELP WANTED

BY JOHN WOODBURN

BEFORE the door stands a scattered group of shabby men. In age they range from twenty to fifty, but in their worn clothing, in the set, embattled look upon their faces, they present a monotone. A second glance reveals the invisible label which each of them wears: UNEMPLOYED. They stand listlessly about, puffing cigarets, talking in low voices: the fan-tail of a human serpent which extends through the doorway and on up the stairs.

I climb to the second floor, past a seemingly static line of people ranged upward along the wall. There are women here, perhaps one to every four or five men: a pert girl with plucked eyebrows and too much rouge beneath a jaunty beret; a stout woman with a peasant look about her holds a pale fair-haired weanling in her arms. As I pass she clucks to the child and its vacant face lights with a sudden smile. A step above, an old woman in a knitted cap and a man's stained topcoat stares dully into space. She is old and tired, and has learned patience. Sooner or later the serpent will crawl upward another step, and she will move with it. There will be people at the top who will listen, and ask questions, and try to help. Just beyond her a middle-aged man unconcernedly reads a newspaper. Halfway up I pause to ask for a match. The man who gives it to me is young, not more than twenty-three or four, hawk-faced, with hard blue eyes and a bitter mouth. His grey tweed suit is well-cut and only beginning to show wear. He still carries an air of campus nonchalance about him, although beneath it one senses resentment and a stubborn pride. It has cost him something to come here to ask the State for help.

"Been waiting long?" I ask.

"Oh, we do about a dozen steps an hour, I guess." He looks at me with a faint flicker of interest. "Are you looking for some alphabetical charity, too?"

"No," I tell him. "I'm just looking."

"Well, take a good look." He gives me a swift, antagonistic glance, shrugs his shoulders, and crushes the stub of his cigaret beneath his foot.

The room at the head of the stairs bustles with an ant-hill activity. Typewriters clack a staccato overtone to many voices merged into a wordless hum. At a low railing stands

the head of the serpent, in the slow process of decapitation. A young man with rumpled hair sits at a desk marked "INFORMATION" and patiently answers a barrage of questions: "No, not until you receive a card . . . Yes, he will see you as soon as he is free . . . Have you been certified? Then please get in line and await your turn . . ." The room, once the loft of a garage, is crowded with desks. Girls bend above rat-tatting typewriters, or scurry about, burrowing into files. The desks at which the typists sit are of roughly-finished wood, painted a light chocolate. They are prison-made, and each bears a brass label with a number. At the larger desks sit the men and women, experienced social workers for the most part, who interview those who have made that slow march up the stairs. There are lengthy histories to be taken, and budgets to be made out; a reasonable minimum must be found, of bread, of rent, of coal and clothing. There is a faint embarrassment, a hesitancy about these people who face the interviewers. The questions they must answer are direct, probing, realistic; questions that make short shrift of the little prides and pretences in which most of us clothe our daily lives. I lean against the railing and catch a phrase here and there that rises above the low hum of voices: ". . . just enough to pay the rent, ma'am . . . I know that if I could just get a chance . . . four dependents, sir . . ."

I turn and go down the stairs again. The young man in the tweeds is smoking another cigaret. The old woman in the topcoat still stands, relaxed and waiting, staring at the blue-serge back of the man ahead. The pallid baby is asleep, its head sagging on its mother's shoulder. The pert girl in the beret is making up her mouth. The line, as far as I can tell, has not moved an inch.

Fifteen minutes later I am in the lobby of a famous hotel, waiting for a friend who is to lunch with me. There is an atmosphere of rich foods, of thick carpets, of suave, well-insulated living. Through the curtained doorway of the dining room I watch a cat-footed waiter deftly uncover a shining tureen. I think of the young man with the wry mouth, of the old woman in the topcoat, staring into space, waiting for the line to move another step upward. Behind me, a woman's petulant voice provides a final touch of irony: "I'm furious with Stanley. Simply furious. He's kept me waiting here nearly a quarter of an hour . . ."

THE THEATER

MIMES AND MIMEOGRAPHS

BY WINTHROP RUTLEGE

THE purpose of this little screed, good friends, is to tell what is going on nowadays in the New Theater of San Francisco, and to indicate how badly what is going on there is needed by the lads who pilot fleets of taxicabs through this town's streets.

Up on Bush Street, in one of the oddest settings you ever saw for drama with something to say and the guts to say it,

they're doing Clifford Odets' lusty and lyric *Waiting for Lefty*. It's at what used to be the Kamokila Theater—a place with a purple history and all the plush trappings of a polite bordello. In the half-basement below the saxophones moan, sidecars are mixed, and insurance salesmen go on the make for gals who'd be insulted if they didn't—it's a joint called the Royal Hawaiian Club.

The premises and everything about them, my friends, are elegantly phoney, phoney as herring and whipped cream, phoney as the doddering, lecherous, epileptic old capitalist system. Did I say everything? Wait a minute. There's one thing there that isn't phoney. There's one thing that's as hard as nails, as sure as the Bambino leaning on one for the right field fence, relentless as young Joe Louis after he's measured the distance to Maxie Baer's chin. That's right; it's *Waiting for Lefty*.

The play begins at a strike meeting of the New York hackmen. The committee sits on the stage; the audience is the general membership. Smooth-tongued Harry Fatt, the president, is talking, pleading against the proposed strike. Harry, you see, has a soft job with the union; he doesn't want anything to happen which might strangle the source of his income. Lefty is chairman of the strike committee and he hasn't arrived. They're waiting for Lefty. Fatt doesn't want to wait; Lefty is a rank and filer. We don't need to wait for Lefty, says Fatt; we'd better just call it off, boys. This is no time for a strike.

Then the flashbacks begin and we see the various committee men in the environments that sent them to the meeting hall bent for a strike. Edna lays the law down to Joe: she's skimmed and tried to make his wages do the impossible long enough. If he hasn't got the guts to stand up and demand the right to live like a decent human being, she's washed up. If he keeps on listening to Harry Fatt she's going back to her old boy-friend where life will be less respectable but more comfortable.

Then we see Sid and Florrie. They want to get married, but Sid can't ever get enough cash ahead to pay the first month's rent on a decent apartment. Florrie's brother doesn't intend to let her marry a failure. And there you are. Sid and Florrie turn on the radio, dance a bit, want each other to beat hell and know they're licked.

And so on, until you understand the needs and the cravings and the drives that make strikes. Back to the committee scene with the speaker "with strike experience in Philly" telling the boys that it's all futile, that the time isn't ripe—and then being exposed by his own blood brother as a stool pigeon. Then the news that Lefty has been found dead with a bullet in his brain, and Agate's burning call for solidarity and the strike for the right to live.

It's terrific stuff, and even the small audience which attended on that first rainy night got up and yelled at the finish. It became a part of the play; the barrier of the proscenium was bridged. Here is theater as it first started out to be, theater as it will be tomorrow. And Odets' lines sing. They have a vital and robust lyricism about them that I haven't found in any contemporary drama. The play flings its actors out among the audience, it pulls the audience to the stage. It makes the theater a communal rite, a mass expression. It gets you.

The New Theater group acts it up to the hilt. Sincerity, fervor and something-on-the-chest cover a multitude of little shortcomings in the crafts of acting and staging. As the group moves on these shortcomings will be ironed out. The

group will learn to develop and train its talent. It will realize the importance of fundamentals in craftsmanship, the value of finger exercises. It has made a worthy start.

Now I'm wondering how they're going to get San Francisco's cab drivers in to see *Waiting for Lefty*—which brings me to my second point. I have before me a handsome job of mimeographing. It's too handsome and professional to have been done by a taxi drivers' union. It's a little too oily and sleek. It made its appearance shortly after *The Taxi Worker*, a genuine rank-and-file sheet got into the hands of the cab drivers. Each driver for the Yellow Cab Company found one in his locker one day after he had finished his shift.

The only title it bears is the announcement, WE ARE HEADING IN THE RIGHT DIRECTION, and when it says right it doesn't mean left. It blazes away at the reds with the fervor of that holy trinity, the *Examiner*, the *Vandeleur Federationist* and the *Call-Bulletin*, but you'll have to have better glasses than mine to find in it anywhere a line about improving conditions for San Francisco's cabmen.

It takes wallops at the United Labor Ticket, Harry Bridges, Stalin, Earl Browder and the editors of *The Taxi Worker*. Drooling like a scoutmaster or a Y. M. C. A. secretary it pats the boys on the back and gives them the old whangdoodle about "partners, working for a common interest".

The crowning piece of vicious knavery in the brochure is an article giving a minute description, omitting only the name, of a certain member of the union supposed to be a rank-and-filer. "Let's get together," says the sheet, "and get this man out of our local."

In case you don't grasp the full significance of this let me slip you the low-down, which is that the employers, through the Harry Fatts in the local union, are telling the membership to throw out a chap who too naively believes in the American principle of freedom of speech. And throwing him out means depriving him of his means of making a living. I wonder if the cabmen will stand for such goings-on while they're waiting for Lefty.

My! How chilly these autumn days are getting!

"TRANSATLANTIC TUNNEL"

BY JAMES BURR

THE showing of *Transatlantic Tunnel* calls for the display of storm warning in all ports. This very dull production by British Gaumont lures the pixies from their sylvan dells to attack the problems of engineering, economics and international politics. The result is a dramatic plea for an Anglo-American Alliance at some hazy date after nineteen hundred and forty.

At some time during the first half of this mysterious movie we are told that the American people have lost faith in the dollar (probably in their ability to get one). C. Aubrey Smith, a grizzled old millionaire, comes to believe that the answer to all the world's problems is to build a tunnel between New York and London. He first inundates a group of his fellow capitalists with a tidal wave of Beethoven before selling them on the engineering dream of a young engineer, Richard Dix. They generously invest their millions, oh, not for profit, but to save the faith of the American people and the world from another war. This time, instead of a fascist dictatorship, the forces of capitalist decay and imperialism are to be evaporated like the morning dew by a group of mere

tunnel diggers equipped with a sub-oceanic mole or "radium drill".

After years and years of boring our brave heroes pierce a subterranean volcano. This international crisis calls for a meeting of Congress linked to a meeting of Parliament by television, while Walter Huston as President and George Arliss as Prime Minister expound on the necessity of completing the bore in order "to save our glorious English-speaking civilization from a sinister Eastern Alliance".

This picture gives final proof that our economists and sociologists should turn tunnel diggers. However, I shrink to think of the consequences if they should get off their course to come out in one of those countries of the Eastern Alliance instead of jolly old England.

Madge Evans, Helen Vinson and a host of others wander in and out for no good reason. A discussion of the dramatic and artistic merits of the picture is precluded by their absence. One can almost give three cheers for Hollywood after an evening with the British.

BOOKS

BEAUTY DEDICATED TO REACTION

BY SARA BARD FIELD

ALTHOUGH in his foreword to *Solstice and Other Poems**, or rather to the drama with which the volume opens, Robinson Jeffers disclaims prophetic speech, those elements of prophecy, philosophy and poetry which have always combined to form the irregular granite range of his verse are here present in finely balanced proportions. Often his work has lacked this balance. The philosopher outspoke the prophet or the moralizing prophet outspoke the philosopher or both drowned the voice of the poet. The result while always impressive was something less than the high artistry of *Solstice*.

This is not strange. It takes years for the poet with a message—the poet who is also prophet and philosopher—to fuse prismatic gifts into the perfect proportions that result in white light. Despite Jeffers' deprecation of the intellect, he is one of the most intellectual poets of English literature. He is also one of the most intensely emotional and he is ridden by a need as deep, though alien in form, as was Jonathan Edwards or Cotton Mather to cleanse humanity of sin—in Jeffers' case not "original sin" but acquired sin—the sin of being too civilized—too human to the exclusion of all else. Where Edwards and Mather and their kind called humanity to a cleansing scarlet bath in "the blood of the Lamb", Jeffers calls them to the crystal bath from Nature's arteries. This son of a preacher can no more escape his call to preach than his father could and so we have a multi-urge, a many-voiced cry. The miracle is that the result has ever been poetry of the high kind one finds in this volume, especially in the short poems of the last section.

The Note preceding the drama, *At The Birth Of An Age*, explains the source and motivity of its action. Here, as in former tales, Gudrun exists not only as a person but as a

symbol, unlike Tamar not a symbol of racial incest but of conflict. The wild struggle between revenge and love is never resolved. She cannot take a stand with either Caesar or Christ and while she shifts from the call of her Western blood to the call of the Eastern ethic, the tender, the innocent and the beloved are destroyed cruelly along with the fierce, the guilty and the unloved and Gudrun, self-destroyed, turns "to explore the shadow and the dust".

Perhaps it is the identity of every living soul with similar conflicts that makes Gudrun so intensely alive. Perhaps it is because Jeffers' increased mastery over his art makes him aware of the danger every symbolist meets—of making mechanical dolls out of ideas. Certainly many of his characters in other works, however hotly they act and speak, seem to belong to an alien world—to an obscure no man's land, a limbo for impassioned shadows where there is no joy or aspiration, no awareness of beauty, no laughter or singing unless it be drunken, no unpolluted sex or disciplined emotion. They lack some unnamable human proportions. In this drama the beautiful and the good jostle against the ugly and the evil. Gudrun is a concentrated mixture of both. Carling (though Gudrun calls him a fool) brings us into contact with the freshness, the poetry, the innocent daring, the lyric living of disillusioned youth. One wishes the poet had concluded the drama with Attila's brutal farewell speech to Gudrun's dead body, ending "Farewell, Harlot-gold". All that follows is beside the action of the drama and smothers it. Rich as it is in poetry and a revelation of the poet's concepts, it ought not to be lost but should be wrought into a separate if sequential work. The drama up to Gudrun's death exists for itself. What follows exists as a vehicle for the poet's convictions.

The title poem *Solstice* is a narrative of Amazonian proportions, swift, terrible, intense. In no other poem has Jeffers expressed his hatred of city civilization as grimly, as uncompromisingly as in this. A human lioness at bay murders her children to keep them

From lives much worse than death, decaying to an average, growing to be like

All the other insects that fill the cities and defile the country;

That listen to imbecile songs and love

To breathe each other, and eat and drink and make love in common, swarming for pleasure; and from time to time

A war or revolution rakes them up like dry straws in a stack and burns them, they hurrah with joy.

Better the babies died than such lives for them—

better to murder them and lay them away in the austere earth to become again a part of its large, ceaseless beauty.

Again and again this favorite theme of the author is touched upon in the short poems some of which form peaks in the long range of Jeffers' massive creation. Under the stern flesh of tragic drama and narrative, under the gentler flesh of short meditative lyrics all the bony structure of Jeffers' philosophy is apparent. It is like fine modeling in sculpture. He is so at home now with his long cherished ideas, his passionately felt prejudices and loves, that they appear and reappear easily and often in unforgettable lines. All who read Jeffers know the rosary he fingers—Power is God or so much of God as the human mind can grasp. God expresses himself in things forever dying in beauty to be reborn in beauty. Mankind is sick with too much feeding on himself. He must look to Nature for healing—he "must lean on the silent rock, make his veins cold, look at the silent stars". The destiny of all things including man is ultimate darkness.

The presence of rhyme in this book will probably surprise readers. It appears in portions of the long drama but its intent there seems to be one of semi-mockery with an implication of triviality. Absurd rhymes are used, such as *vineyards* and *inwards*. The rhymes seem to be making sport of them-

**SOLSTICE and Other Poems*, by Robinson Jeffers. (Random House) \$2.50

selves in tune with the sardonic sport of the sweeper of rubbish who employs them. In the shorter poems rhyme is handled with earnest beauty. Because of the long lines and the lack of exact recurrence the rhymes fall softly, subtly, like snowflakes.

It has been said that Jeffers opposes publication of his short poems apart from the main poem or thesis to which he feels they are inseparable corollaries. One can understand this attitude in regard to the miscellaneous poems of other volumes but not in regard to those in the volume under review. Such poems as *Rock and Hawk*, *Love The Wild Swan*, *Sign-Post*, *Where I?* and *Return* (to mention only the most haunting) are capable of complete upstanding isolation. They rank with his poem *Night*. They are built of enduring stuff. Their combined influence is one of sad disturbing, unsatisfied beauty. Even his belief that "things are the God" walls off such pregnant speculation as Alexis Carrell's in *Man the Unknown*: "by the exercise of the normal activities of his consciousness, man may endeavor to reach an invisible reality both imminent in and transcending the material world". Nor is the ultimate darkness that is to overwhelm all things lighted for Jeffers by the hope of a triumphant humanity which Sir James Jeans prophesies in *The Universe Around Us*. Before our sun is shrunk beyond the power to sustain planetary life, Jeans sees the human race making "a world fit for mankind to live in". Jeffers sees it only as a poor doll which suffers by comparison with the hawk. Not even great personalities are beautiful but only "the disastrous rhythm, the heavy and mobile masses, the dance of the dream-masses down the dark mountain".

One suffers that so much beauty is dedicated to reaction, mass violence and unnecessary mass suffering. This poet who is akin to Milton in his strength, to Shelley in his passion, is akin to neither in their identification of self with the revolutionary movements of their time. He has a blind spot where the relation of human development to economic change is concerned. He is unable to see that the manifestations of civilization which he so abhors are the products of feudalism in its last stages of decay. The masses headed for destruction are beautiful to him. Those headed for reconstruction are merely the exponents of a dying Christian ethic in a declining age. He confuses the character-building value of capable pain always incident to life—sickness, disillusionment, death and separation with that of avoidable degenerating suffering due to unjust man-made conditions. He cries "backward", not "forward" and all unconsciously throws the strength of his song to those enemies of the very liberty he calls upon the republic to protect. Nevertheless the dark, disturbing song is sung with sustained grandeur. The impassioned prejudices, the unrelieved pessimism are built into peaks of obsidian.

TOO LOUISA ALCOTTISH

SOVIET RUSSIA FIGHTS CRIME, by Lenka Von Koerber. (E. P. Dutton & Co.) \$3

(Reviewed by Leslie T. White)

UNLESS one chooses to believe that crime is entirely fought in prison, the title is ambiguous, for this volume is, to use the author's own words, a "report on the penal system of Soviet Russia". According to the Hearst-gutter formula—that everything fair said about Russia is outright Soviet propaganda—this book has decided Communistic leanings, yet it wasn't the propaganda that spoiled the story for me—it was the author's naivete. She tried to give us a report in almost legal form, then marred it by injecting a sort of Louisa-May-Alcott artlessness; she saw only good in every one and everything—an admirable quality hardly adapted to a résumé of prison life. For instance, in one paragraph she makes the

statement that "the workers (prisoners) did not look up from their machines as we walked past; they were too fascinated with their piece-work." (I quote from memory.) The first half of the statement is evidence; the latter portion a mere opinion, most likely wrong. To sum up: there is little fault to be found with what Lenka Von Koerber tells us—it is what she did not tell us that gives the book an incompleteness.

It is well worth reading, however, for if the Soviet have succeeded just fifty per cent of what this author believes, they have taken long strides in the right direction: it is a report, and as such, merits consideration. It shows, definitely, that the Russians are willing to experiment and try out new ideas, discarding the obsolete methods as fast as they are proven useless. In that they are head and shoulders above our policing system for—with the exception of the Department of Justice—we continue to patch up a weary, threadbare old structure of law enforcement that should long ago have been traded in on a new one.

To read this book and get the most out of it, you must be able to separate the real facts from the author's visionary outlook. The publisher's blurb speaks of the author as a trained student of crime, but students of crime are notorious for missing the real essence of their subject—whether at home or abroad. A decade of intimate association with crime, criminals and prisons has blasted any Pollyanna outlook I may have had. Human nature doesn't change very much and prisoners all know enough to give the visitor, whether a "student of crime" or just a plain, morbid tourist, the hotsytotsy viewpoint. Excuse the cynicism.

The book is salted with choice pieces of information. For instance, in most of the prisons the men and women work together and sexual relations develop naturally and without interference. A good many of our bad prison breaks come from that same hunger—whether you want to admit it or not. She leaves out the actual problem of police work, but touches it indirectly by reference when she speaks about murder in Moscow. In 1922 Moscow enjoyed 368 murders, and only 73 were cleared up. The same city saw, in 1928, 629 murders and 369 convictions. And in 1931 they had 167 murders and 163 convictions. I'm afraid that if I gave you comparative figures of any large American city, Mr. Hearst would tag me a Communist!

Russian prisoners are allowed to go away from the prisons on leave and have all the comforts of a large college; they are still a moving part of the great economic plan, even in prison. Their time is not wasted, for they can serve an apprenticeship to a trade behind prison walls and that time counts on the outside. In other words, Russia is trying, not so much to punish criminals, but to make useful citizens out of them. In that revolutionary attempt they should be studied by the rest of the world, for if they only partially succeed, they will have traveled a long way on the road to a better civilization.

TAKE BAKER OUT

WAR IN THE MODERN WORLD, by Newton D. Baker (Houghton Mifflin) \$1

(Reviewed by William Stuart)

HESITATE to say this, but I do think that you can call Newton D. Baker a "liberal". His name is in Mrs. Dilling's *Red Network*. But after reading his *War In the Modern World*, I suggest that she delete his name from the next edition of her popular handbook.

If any one man knows what war does to modern civilization, that man is Newton Baker, who was one of the managers of our last war. Baker asserts that racial and nationalistic

sentiments are more powerful than economic interests as causes for war, and he thinks that the only way to end war is through international conciliation and arbitration, using the machinery of the World Court and the League of Nations. Nevertheless, he puts in some good words for preparedness and militarism, and says, on page 11:

"It is important to get very clearly in mind the fact that there are worse things than war—injustice is worse and tyranny and submissive decadence."

That reminds me of a cartoon by Fritz in *The Nation* recently. An Italian colonial salutes and says: "I just died for civilization!" A veteran of the Argonne reaches out to shake his hand, saying: "Fine, buddy, I made the world safe for democracy!"

A VOLUME OF GOOD STORIES

SAN FRANCISCO TALES, by Charles Caldwell Dobie.
(D. Appleton-Century) \$2.50

(Reviewed by W. K. Bassett)

HAVING often felt the cold steel of rejection slips it was with some awe and more envy that I listened to the tale of a friend: "He sent it to *Harper's Magazine* and they kept it for three weeks without a word. Then they wrote that although it hit every prohibition they had regarding fiction they just couldn't send it back. Then, two weeks later they wrote that they were accepting it in violation of a time-worn policy."

The story was *Laughter*, by Charles Caldwell Dobie, and the year was 1916. In his book, presumably listing the "best short stories" of the year, Edward O'Brien included *Laughter*, thereby lifting a generally dubious anthology to a high plane.

To-day *Laughter* is included in a volume, *San Francisco Tales*, by Dobie, with an introduction by Katherine Fullerton Gerould. It is an intensely interesting collection of Dobie's best stories, and when I say "stories" I mean "stories". As Mrs. Gerould has so much more accurately and eloquently said, Dobie writes the short story as the short story was supposed to be written, and as it was written before the propagandists attempted to grab it as their own private means of expression.

Besides *Laughter* there are in this volume other stories of Flavio Minetti. And there is *Pietro Galli—Scavenger* which to me is the finest of the lot. *San Francisco Tales* is an excellent collection, the work of an artist of exquisite technique with the rare gift of story telling.

A VIVID AWARENESS

FLOWERING JUDAS and Other Stories, by Katherine Anne Porter. (Harcourt, Brace & Co.) \$2.50

(Reviewed by Anne Nash)

THE short stories in this slight volume leave one with a rich residue of impressions. In simple, beautiful prose is set forth an extraordinarily diversified group of characters; yet the sensitiveness and intuitiveness of the writer has made them all psychologically sound. She makes us vividly aware of them whether they are the primitives with their stark, raw passions, the sophisticates with their stretched and jangling nerves, an ancient dying woman in her last distinct but floating impressions, a mother, poignant in her yearning over her idiot child, or an Irish countrywoman, overflowing with a hearty and wholesome zest for life. Miss Porter's art makes us identify ourselves with all these; and perhaps even more definitely does she make us aware of Mexico itself. Not all the stories are concerned with Mexico, but those that are have imprinted its atmosphere upon us. We feel the pitiless dry

heat, we see strong hard colors vibrating in the noonday sun, we smell the pulque, we are forever conscious of harsh contrasts, of austere beauty side by side with unspeakable filth and squalor. Atmosphere Miss Porter can create as a painter can, and it is atmosphere that makes these stories rare and valuable.

SHORTER NOTICES

THE FOUR HUNDRED MILLION, by Mary A. Nourse.
(Bobbs, Merrill) \$3.50

NOVELS and books of personal experiences in China have enjoyed a great vogue in the past few years, but the majority of readers know nothing of the background against which these writings are set. China is so huge that it almost seems impossible to get a general, comprehensive idea of its history and present condition without more study and research than the average person has time or inclination for.

The Four Hundred Million is a "short history of the Chinese", written in a readable, interesting, lucid fashion. The first chapter is a panoramic glimpse of China that gives you a picture of present-day China as a whole. Then, starting with the mythical beginnings of this vast nation, Miss Nourse takes you down through the different dynasties of its history and gathering into a definite pattern the many multi-colored threads of its romantic past she provides a fine text book for those who are far from desiring to study it in those impressive, scholarly, highly specialized treatises which have heretofore been the only other works available. Miss Nourse lived in the Far East at three different times covering a period of fourteen years. She taught Chinese children in their own language and Chinese young people in English. She is a sister of Alice Tisdale Hobart, author of *River Supreme* and *Oil for the Lamps of China*.

—D.C.

STAR OF THE WEST, by Ethel Hueston. (Bobbs, Merrill)
\$2

A NOVELIZED version of the Lewis and Clark Expedition with the strong pedal on the romance surrounding the Indian maiden Sacagawea. Characters and facts, however, are all authentic, based on journals and historical records. Meriwether Lewis was commissioned by President Jefferson, after the purchase of Louisiana in 1803, to make up a party and follow the Missouri to its source, then find waterways to the coast. In addition, they were to make friends with the Indians en route and bring back scientific data of all kinds, botanical, geological, etc. For those who prefer their history in the form of fiction this is informative as well as interesting reading.

—D. C.

CONTRIBUTORS TO THIS ISSUE

JOHN WOODBURN, formerly on the staff of *The New Yorker*, is now doing freelance work in San Francisco.

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JAMES BURR is a writer living in Southern California.

LESLIE T. WHITE was criminal investigator in the District Attorney's office in Los Angeles. He is now at work on the story of his life experiences.

R. H. JAMIESON furnishes a different biographical note with each contribution. His present one is: "Just a heckler."

CORRESPONDENCE

PREFERS OPEN ATTACK

Editor, Pacific Weekly

It seems to me that Mr. Earl French, writing in the issue of Oct. 21, has put a lot of half truths and fallacies into his article, "The Masses Are On The Move".

Mr. French wrote a pretty strong defense of EPIC, published in your July 15 number. If that article was sound, this one is full of bugs, and vice versa.

Mr. French may possibly have some revolutionary theories in his mind; but if so, he leaves them to conjecture. In this present article he struggles with so many ideas that he seems unable to cope with any of them.

Frank and open attack upon EPIC would be better appreciated than his oblique innuendos. To take up the many fallacies one by one—those that refer to EPIC and those that do not—would run into space. To answer all the weasel-like insinuations, implications and innuendos would consume as much space as the article.

Assemblyman, 75th Dist.

Paul Richie

SUGGESTED READING

Editor, Pacific Weekly

In 1835, when the American republic was 100 years younger than it is now, Alexis de Tocqueville—an aristocrat born amid the confusions of the French Revolution—wrote a book, "Democracy in America", based on extensive travel and research in the United States.

With such clarity and prescience did he lay bare our virtues and vices, our political strength and weaknesses, that the book quickly became the text of all classes, conservatives and liberals. De Tocqueville was at once classed with Tacitus, Bacon, Machiavelli, and Burke.

Recent inquiries have shown a tragic neglect of this valuable source of impartial information, at this time when the need for displacing emotion with reason, prejudice with fact, is greater than ever before.

We proceed therefore to induce a wider reading of this book, by means of competitive essays, addresses, class work, and correspondence, possibly culminating in a suitable centenary celebration of

national scope to be staged during 1936. To all who have not read the book we would communicate our enthusiasm for it; to those who have read it we extend an invitation to join us in the effort to make its treasures available to all. Address, "The de Tocqueville Society", 255 Hill Street, Los Angeles, California.

Los Angeles, Oct. 26

Thorwald Siegfried

STATEMENT OF THE OWNERSHIP, MANAGEMENT, CIRCULATION, ETC., REQUIRED BY THE ACT OF CONGRESS OF AUGUST 24, 1912

Of **PACIFIC WEEKLY**, published weekly at Carmel, California, for October 1, 1935.
State of California,
County of Monterey—ss.

Before me, a Notary Public, in and for the State and county aforesaid, personally appeared W. K. Bassett, who, having been duly sworn according to law, deposes and says that he is the publisher of the Pacific Weekly, and that the following is, to the best of his knowledge and belief, a true statement of the ownership, management, etc., of the aforesaid publication for the date shown in the above caption, required by the Act of August 24, 1912, embodied in section 411, Postal Laws and Regulations, printed on the reverse of this form, to-wit:

1. That the names and addresses of the publisher, editor, managing editor, and business managers are:

Publisher, W. K. Bassett, Carmel, California.

Editor, W. K. Bassett, Carmel, California.

Managing Editor, none.

Business Manager, Sara E. Reamer, Carmel, California.

2. That the owners are:

W. K. Bassett, Carmel, California.

Dorothea C. Bassett, Carmel, California.

Sara E. Reamer, Carmel, California.

3. That the known bondholders, mortgagees, and other security holders owning or holding 1 per cent or more of total amount of bonds, mortgages, or other securities are: None.

4. That the two paragraphs next above, giving the names of the owners, stockholders, and security holders, if any, contain not only the list of stockholders and security holders as they appear upon the books of the company but also, in cases where the stockholder or security holder appears upon the books of the company as trustee or in any other fiduciary relation, the name of the person or corporation for whom such trustee is acting, is given; also that the said two paragraphs contain statements embracing affiant's full knowledge and belief as to the circumstances and conditions under which stockholders and security holders who do not appear upon the books of the company as trustees, hold stock and securities in a capacity other than that of a bona fide owner; and this affiant has no reason to believe that any other person, association, or corporation has any interest direct or indirect in the said stock, bonds, or other securities than as so stated by him.

W. K. BASSETT.

Sworn to and subscribed before me this 4th day of November, 1935.

(SEAL)

LOUIS S. SLEVIN, Notary Public.

(My commission expires January 10, 1936)

"THEY TELL ME—"

THE "LITTLE" left magazines are getting out of their short pants. Nothing is as noticeable in the radical movement in this country as the growth of its literature and journalism. As Hearst has been trying to make you aware, the country is honeycombed with leftward journals.

What is also noticeable is the slump in the little magazines with no social viewpoint, which write as if we lived in an historical and social vacuum. People are more interested in what fills that vacuum.

One of the first little left magazines of short stories was "The Anvil", edited by radical author Jack Conroy. It published first many authors since become national names. The organ of the John Reed Club of New York, "Partisan Review", has published excellent articles, fiction, poetry and critical reviews for several years. In January 1936 these two magazines will be combined.

"This amalgamation will enable us," writes Alan Calmer for the editorial board, "to get out of the little magazine class and really to play an important role in the development of the revolutionary literature in the United States. In general, we will continue our present policy, except insofar as we can broaden the magazine and make it more flexible. A time like this, when left writers in America are rapidly ridding themselves of the old sectarian notions and dogmatism, is particularly appropriate, we think, for starting a literary monthly."

Some of the authors who will contribute to the enlarged combination magazine are

Josephine Herbst, James T. Farrell, Jack Conroy, Erskine Caldwell, John Dos Passos, André Gide, Ilya Ehrenbourg, Louis Aragon. Offices will be at 430 Sixth Avenue, New York City: single copies of the combined magazine, twenty cents. Special introductory offer: one dollar for eight issues.

* * *

CAROLYN MARX, lively book gossip of the New York World-Telegram, reports that a letter came into Hillman-Curl, publishers of "Diet and Die", asking that a copy be sent to the sender's wife "without a card".

* * *

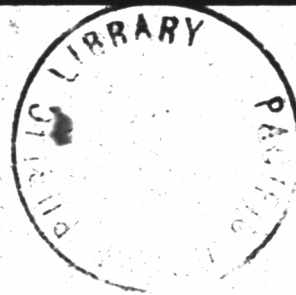
AMONG THE BOOKS refused to J. B. McNamara in San Quentin prison recently were "Farewell to Reform" by John Chamberlain, book critic of the New York "Times". The book was returned to the publisher. So was "The Shadow Before" by William Rollins, Jr. Taken away from McNamara were his carpet slippers, which he made himself, a strip of rug, and a good part of his library, including Darrow's autobiography, "The Autobiography of Lincoln Steffens", Dreiser's "Tragic America", socialist classics, and Edward A. Filene's "Successful Living in the Machine Age". The theory is that in line with the worse treatment accorded all political prisoners McNamara, in San Quentin since 1910, is also beginning to be "pushed around" as he never has been before. Protests to San Quentin's warden are in order. "They can't bayonet ideas."

RECENTLY "New Masses" fell into the same ditch that ensnared "Esquire". A new young author was "discovered" by "Esquire" and chosen for their pick of the month, only to result in an inundation of letters telling them that his picked story was a close plagiarism of an Ambrose Bierce. "New Masses" published by one Clement Greenberg a plagiarism of Marie deL. Welch's "Harvest", published in 1933 in the "Western Worker", Bulletin of the National Committee for Defence of Political Prisoners, "Agricultural Workers' Bulletin", editorial columns of the San Francisco "News" and the "New Republic". One verse was exactly the same as the original: the others vulgarized copies. The plagiarist contended there were psychic forces at work.

* * *

A NUMBER of writers and newspapermen are at work on California's WPA project for writers. Paul Radin, who is in charge, is author of one of the best anthropological monographs on Indians, "Autobiography of a Winnebago Indian", and a number of other books. Ambitious plans are being made to develop the West's contribution to the great "Guide to America", which Henry Alsberg, Federal Director of WPA, has planned. Artists will come into their own on the art projects headed by Joseph Danysh. In fact, culture is sizzling in San Francisco at present, to the consternation of the Hearst newspapers, which have already run attacks on some of the officials.

—ELLA WINTER



GROWING!

"You deserve congratulations for the excellence of your publication.
Its growth is a healthy sign for the Pacific Coast."

This from an enthusiastic subscriber in Los Angeles. And letters in
similar vein come in with every mail.

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month.

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