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WESTERN WRITERS' CONGRESS

PACIFIC WEEKLY

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PACIFIC WEEKLY

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NUMBER 19

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Made up by Union Labor

NOTES AND COMMENT

THIS issue combines the three features of Fall Book Number, pre-convention issue for the Western Writers' Congress, the first such gathering ever held in the West, and a memorial number to Lincoln Steffens, who contributed a regular column to the magazine from its beginning and was for a brief period (June to August 1936) its editor. Many people had asked for such an issue. It was felt that Lincoln

Steffens would have appreciated an issue devoted to other, young writers whom he loved to encourage and bring out rather than one devoted to appreciations of himself alone. We are most grateful to the many writers who sent in manuscripts, poems, essays and stories for this issue and must apologize to the forty or more authors for whose work no room could be found. We hope to publish some of these in later issues, if it is found practicable to continue *PACIFIC WEEKLY*.

We tender our thanks to all who helped in producing this number and to the advertisers who made it possible.

NEWSPAPERS OF THE WEEK: The election overshadowing all else, local news sought the inside pages. . . The Salinas strike was ended with complete victory (temporarily) for the growers, no provision for non-discrimination or preferential hiring, and retention of strikebreakers at the employers' desire. Edward Vandeleur, president of the State Federation of Labor, recommended this action. Many lettuce workers have left the Salinas Valley for other crops. . . The waterfront situation is dealt with in a special article. . . Four new federal migratory camps are to be undertaken very shortly, so strikingly successful have the two already in operation been. . . And Carmel voted Democratic for the first time in its history!

A SHORT while ago *PACIFIC WEEKLY* carried an editorial line about the "Auxiliary Police Force" that Chief of Police James Davis has organized in Los Angeles. At the time this notice appeared, we stated that the number of individuals enrolled in this extra-legal army was unknown. We are now informed, by a reliable authority, that Chief Davis has recently boasted that he had enrolled 9,000 men in the force. The number is larger than we had estimated. Once again we ask: what are the liberals and progressives of Los Angeles going to do about this highly menacing, and thoroughly illegal, manifestation of fascism?

UNDER the guise of supporting President Roosevelt for re-election, *The News-Letter and Wasp* of San Francisco is indulging in some astonishing red-baiting. For some weeks past, the last page of each issue has been devoted to hysterical demands for the deportation of Harry Bridges. It should be well known by this time that Mr. Bridges is legally in the United States and that he cannot be deported. Under these circumstances, the continued demand for his deportation can only be characterized as mendacious and stupid. A fair specimen of the general intellectual tone of this curious sheet is the serious statement, in its issue of October 17th, 1936, that the late Louis T. McFadden, of Pennsylvania, was "one of the greatest statesmen and patriots of modern days." Perhaps, Mr. John LeBerthon, editor of *The News-Letter*, who occasionally engages in rhetorical denunciations of anti-semitism and Nazism, does not yet know that the late Congressman McFadden was one of the most unprincipled anti-semites and vicious pro-fascists that liberal America has had to expose. Other editorial inconsistencies might be pointed out. There is, for example, the denunciation of a certain political leader in the Bay District, with much rhetoric about honesty in gov-

ernment, coupled with an amazing defense of the almost laughable corruption of the San Francisco police department. Nor will readers of *The News-Letter* soon forget the indefensible attacks made in that journal against a well-known California pianist when the latter was on trial in San Mateo County.

THE ELECTION

THIS IS written on the morning following election day, when the minds and emotions of most of us are undergoing an unusual fermentation. Most of us are glad that the election went the way it did; today we feel happy and hopeful and confident. But, dare one carry thinking a little further, into tomorrow and beyond? What, really, may be the significance of this election in the light of those tomorrows?

The Democrats have won, overwhelmingly, and in some ways democracy itself may be said to have won, for we have come pretty clearly to see that this was no contest between men or parties merely. Neither the forces nor their symbols were clearly distinguishable in this election; yet we at least understand that the powers and influences which backed Mr. Landon are, all of them, the enemies of democracy.

Has democracy then defeated its enemies in this election? In this country, when a majority has expressed its will, is that popular desire then assured of the social and political power to make itself effective? Jean Jacques Rousseau and Adam Smith taught Europe and ourselves that the only morally valid criterion of political and social power must be "The General Will" and "The good of the greatest number." We hold to that. We also by our votes assert our belief. Well and good: but if the will of the majority is expressed in votes, does that insure that social and political power, power which alone makes active and meaningful the general will, must surely follow the counting of ballots?

Let's face the fact. It does not! Recent history alone, in Europe, should have taught us that the democracies of Europe which failed of their aims failed for the same reasons: the ours must do so unless we act to prevent failure. Fascism and Nazism arose in spite of the ballot, not because of it. In the struggle for power in which every capitalist nation is engaged at the present time, Fascism, the admitted enemy of democracy, has succeeded only where it was first to learn that power must be won by force, and maintained by force. And who in this country appear as not only the enemies of democracy, but the most likely Fascists, the possessors of power and force? The same people and factions who opposed Roosevelt and supported Landon.

We voted against them: their "defeat" at the polls therefore taught them finally the lesson of the Fascists, that to secure their power and privilege they must now resort to force. How can one doubt that William Randolph Hearst, whose newspapers were supposed to "control" twenty million votes, has learned now that this tremendous advantage, furthered by every deceit, lie, slander, trick, can fail him in a crisis and make this try for power laughable? Not only Hearst but his whole class will today turn from America and democracy irrevocably toward Italy and Germany and Spain, and the lessons on the struggle for power which Fascism offers. Even the liberal Mr. Chester Rowell, editor of the *San Francisco Chronicle*, already on election night expressed the hope that the President will turn right.

These things we who love democracy must, for our pur-

poses, also learn. Re-electing Mr. Roosevelt is not enough. Electing no man is enough, if we do no more than that. Mr. Roosevelt we hope will now turn "left," because that is the only road democracy in this day can travel. But he will have to go far enough left to bring into existence the power and organization capable of creating and preserving genuine democracy, and that is to go a good deal farther than he has at this date. Someone expressed the difference between Roosevelt and Landon in this way: "In case of a nationwide general strike," he said, "Landon would call out the militia in one week. Roosevelt would wait two or possibly three weeks—but the difference in time might tilt the balance toward success of the workers to achieve their aims!"

Yes, even so little a difference is vital to Americans in their struggle against reaction and Fascism, but that struggle can be assured success only by our insistence that whatever man or party we elect to office will actively encourage and give every assistance to all democratic forces attempting to organize a united front against Fascism, and will not merely "permit" such organization. On his past record Mr. Roosevelt may be said to have done this second thing: the all important question is whether he will in the next four years do the first.

Organization: that is the one method, the only way at this time to acquire the power, the force, which will avert an otherwise inevitable Fascist seizure of power. If President Roosevelt does not permit and encourage the latent forces of democracy in this country to organize themselves for battle we can (if the next four years do not move too far toward the right) at the end of that time still vote a genuine "united front" party into political office to do the job. We must be ready, even in these post-election days, to make such a change if it is necessary. Our hopes can ride high, now. We can feel confidence in the nation and in ourselves, now. Let us only have the foresight which history offers to us as well as to our economic masters, to see that nothing can avert the coming struggle for power; and, then, let us be alert and ready to take any steps which will insure that sufficient power energizes the hands of the men who can save us.

Eternal vigilance is the price of more than liberty. It is in our time the price of civilization.

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SEVEN CALIFORNIA POETS

SAN FRANCISCO STREET SONGS:

NEWSBOY

Observe the flaccid gash: called mouth; the twist
Of lips on headlined murder. Observe
The windows of the soul reflect a leer.
The crowd, unconscious,
Flowing
In the rain.

Paper, Lady? Big murder.
Five cents. Boy kills girl.
'Xam'ner-Chronic-Newspapy. Paper?
He killed her because he loved her.
Paper, Sir?
He hung her to a tree.
Read all about it.
Oh, read indeed (not print, but flesh) read: murder.
Read,

Whose murder, boy? (The other,
Never headlined):
Two murders for the price of one.

Observe:

The stance invertebrate: fool's hands
Clumsy as wood, the current blocked
Between hands and the brain. Observe:
Grey putty-flesh, caved chest, curved back; the
Poor idiot leer etched on the faceless face:

He killed her because he loved her.
He hung her to a tree.

Observe

Carefully: the murdered crying murder.

Not poison, nor the light-reflecting blade,
Not cleanly bullet to the brain. A blight
That works in sperm and ovary: starvation,
Sapping the vital cells, paling the blood,
Draining the drained-white poor, the poor. This death
Nothing that wakes the executioner.
Murder that smiles from limousiness, the smiler
Death-grip on the steering-wheel: no brakes.

He killed her because he loved her.
Paper, Lady? Five cents.
He hung her to a tree.
Paper, Sir? Big murder. Read all about it.

We love our brother man, we love,
Oh, love
The newsboy selling murder in the rain,
Dramatic under neon crying murder
To crowds unconscious flowing
From amusements
But who (and when)
Meeting a full-length mirror
Will hardly recognize the murderer.

ELSA GIDLOW

FOR THE LIVING

Dear, now let fall these sad mantles, forgetting
Grief, which is time-bound, and will breed
Only in us and in our contriving.
As well, cast from your throat these gems and emeralds,
Which are joy, and so returns
Only the shine of our contriving.
Go lightly under the nine moons,
Naked of joy and cumbered of no tears;
Knowing this warm enigma,
This quick interrogation passionately wrought
In blood, requires of us no pride, no fear.
Bear it unpassionately then, hardly our own increase.
For not to me, indeed, was your fierce yielding.
Truly my proud, hot mastery lay frail
To a third colder Will;
On whose austere, blind errand
Go lightly under the nine moons
Securely nominate—moving not now our frustrate paths—
Moving the one clear way,
Fraught with this drop from the dark cloud
To the dark river that falls underground.

JAMES R. CALDWELL

SINVERGUENZA

They snarl over Spain like cur-dogs over a bone, then look at
each other and shamelessly
Lie out of the sides of their mouths.
Brag, threat and lie, these are diplomacy; wolf-fierce, cobra-
deadly and monkey-shameless,
These are the masters of powerful nations.
I wonder is it any satisfaction to Spaniards to see that their
blood is only
The first drops of a forming rain-storm.

ROBINSON JEFFERS

SUPREME COURT

Old men, presumably wise, in theory just,
Exalted Rhadamanthus in nine parts,
Who have (so we've been taught) ourselves in trust,
We do not blaze a pathway to your hearts,
But simply, even naively, without guile,
O super-august arbiters, we say:
What, in the sunset years, can be worth while
That you must sign a people's rights away?

What do the aged want, when blood grows cold
And eyes are dim? We know the vested few
Have paved the way to power with their gold.
Surely there's nothing gold can buy for you . . .
Of course we don't expect the sky to fall
Or you to change. We ruminate, that's all.

ETHEL TURNER

WE DEFY

I

EARTH'S DEFIANCE

What does the sweet earth do when bitter water,
 With legions massed behind a tidal trench,
 Assails her, heavy with the cycled future?—
 Threatens her solid, her immobile shores?
 How has the granite under soft sand taught her
 To fend this fluent rising up in wars?
 Created for the quietness of nurture,
 Earth can not rise an inch. She can not wrench
 And pile her mountains, rocks and trees to meet
 Vast height with height. She can not mobilize
 Her lions and her elephants. Retreat
 Is not for her who neither runs or flies.

Fear not. Is brave, maternal earth less cunning
 Than her brood-rearing partridge, or less sure?
 Braced on her elemental bones she waits
 The roaring crash. Still trembling from attack,
 Resilient mass repulses and, secure,
 She sees defeated legions running . . . running
 In full retreat—abjectly running back.
 Though, often rallied, they restore her gates,
 Her quiet and solidity endure.

II

SOUL'S DEFIANCE

What part of us to dark belongs,
 To darkness rightly goes.
 A residue that burns in songs
 And crater protest against wrongs,
 That kneels before the rose,
 Belongs to light that will not share
 By estimation of a hair.

Not all of soul escapes from clay
 The instant death commands,
 But, flame by flame, day after day,
 Harbinger portions break away
 From their corporeal bands;
 Or else, the soul transformed to stone,
 Is claimed by darkness as its own.

III

SONG'S DEFIANCE

From the womb
 With a cry;
 To the tomb
 With a sigh!

Wail to sough,
 Never long;
 Room enough
 Between for song:

Song to chasten,
 Song to sting,
 Songs to hasten
 Rebel spring!

Sing, then, stronger,
 For mayhap
 Song is longer
 Than its gap.

SARA BARD FIELD

THERE IS NO SPRING IN CALIFORNIA

I acknowledge your spring. In New England
 I saw the buds leap out between a night and a morning.
 But before I saw them, I had been there long, and hungry
 For our spring that begins softly with the solstice,
 That begins in the short days, in the small sunlight.
 I had been hungry for the joke of blossoms, the danger
 Of blossoms in a grey stormy season,
 The heat on a cold bough, the certainty under a not assuring
 sky.

Our spring comes as slowly as the sun heightens:
 The day lengthens; the flower is on the almond;
 The day is not long and the oak is bare.
 Never say we have no spring because spring here
 Grows as gradually as the light of days.

You walk here in April lonely for the flowers our spring
 spent earlier.

You miss joy: the sudden bursting of the whole earth from ice.
 I walked in your country earlier, and longed for
 The gentle thawing, the flower on the almond early,
 The leaf late on the oak, and equal joy.

MARIE DE L. WELCH

ONE HEART WITH DAYBREAK

Do you feel men weeping in the purple night
 And fear's dry ripples suck over us like snakes,
 And the far thud of stars beating in bleakness
 Counts nothing for us, and nothing times nothing?
 How many years, a good grave is a full one?
 Feel, can you feel sip and trickle of water,
 Not brooks where birds their brittle ankles dip,
 But tears seep in and out of sorrow, faces
 Glazed wan with weeping quietly, so lonely?
 Feel, feel, feel the cringer, sneaker and the lost,
 The great desperate, the pale poised multitude?
 Who are you and whoever, with your hands
 Subtle among the loose, cool hours of leisure,
 Or thick and throbbing on the hot machinery,
 Or cropping flowers, flowers with tapered sides, or
 Hands flattened upon flesh to feel all of it,
 Or, hands, eyes, brains, blood whirling in confoundment,
 Whoever, or inching under the black west
 Crying, but there is morning, and it will, you are
 One, I say, one heart with daybreak in one breast.

HILDEGARDE FLANNER

THE VOICE OF THE LIVING

HAAKON M. CHEVALIER

LINCOLN STEFFENS SPEAKING. (Harcourt, Brace and Company, New York.) \$2.50

IN "Penguin Island" Anatole France puts into the mouth of Virgil the phrase: "The dead have no life save such as the living lend them." This last volume, to which he wrote the moving foreword just the day before he died, refreshes for those of us who knew him—and how many there were!—the sense that Lincoln Steffens will continue for a long time to live that life beyond life which is reserved for those who are endowed with more energy and warmth than they need for their own persons, more than they can consume in their own lifetime. Lincoln Steffens, if he had gone on living, would have gone on growing and learning. And it was his youthful eagerness to grow and to learn that endeared him to those who knew him and that will endear him to those who will know him only through his books.

Americans—at least until the depression—have been universally reputed for their optimism. The effete heirs of an older culture across the seas have been inclined to eye us somewhat askance for this trait, as though it were a mark of ill-breeding, and even some of our own most cultivated countrymen, our Henry Jameses and Henry Adamses, and the majority of our writers of the twenties, have been conspicuous of it only with some embarrassment. It is true that our optimism has not always been of a very good or very sound quality. But at its best—as in Walt Whitman—it is the very stuff of life. It is an expression of youth, of health, of faith in man, in his power to grow and to shape his life. The quality of Lincoln Steffens' optimism was of the best. It was not sentimental Polyanna gladness, it was not complacency, it was not mysticism. Simply a confident awareness of life, of the potentialities of the human mind. In an age when so many prophets preached universal disintegration and the decay of civilization, Lincoln Steffens' faith in the forces of life never faltered in the face of the forces of barbarism and death.

The title to this last volume aptly suggests the quality of Steffens' style. These pieces are spoken rather than written. They have a terse, direct, unencumbered pace. In those compact, hand-hewn sentences is compressed a remarkable range of mood and feeling. Beneath a certain brusqueness of manner—as when he spoke—there is an unexpected delicacy, an almost cat-like daintiness. This characteristic is due, I think, to the fact that Steffens never talked for the pleasure of hearing himself talk, was as little conscious as it is possible to be of the sound of his own voice, of the rhythm of his own thought. He talked in order to stir other minds to activity, and what he listened for was the reverberations of other thoughts and feelings than his own.

"I have always had the suspicion that no man since Socrates ever asked more probing, unveiling and devastating questions than did Lincoln Steffens. He was a great teacher. Not because of any wisdom that fell from his own lips—though it fell in abundance—but because he had an uncanny aptitude for making wisdom fall from the lips of those he questioned. He had an enormous respect for ordinary people. I believe no man or woman or child went away from a conversation with him without an odd feeling that his own stature had somehow increased, and this feeling was at the same time accom-

panied by a real humility. He had the great gift of revealing to his hearers—usually by mere questions—resources of perception, character and courage which they had not suspected in themselves.

Truth was not simple for Steffens. Thoughts to him were not the large, luminous abstractions that one finds in textbooks and catechisms: they were gnarled and knotty, they were flesh and blood, ganglia, nerves and fibres. He was not interested in Truth. He was interested in the thoughts and feelings of people, individually and in groups, in the concrete things that happened.

Steffens is speaking, in this volume, of a great variety of things, and, oddly enough, he speaks from a variety of points of view. He was more interested in taking things apart than in putting them together. Our institutions, conventions, ideas, moral habits and prejudices form such a dense and tangled mass of valuable, valueless and downright harmful elements that there is still a great need for minds specializing in the art of what Remy de Gourmont called the "dissociation of ideas." Perhaps a greater need at this fateful period of history is a synthesis capable of crystallizing men's wills and energies, and Steffens was acutely conscious of this need. "Now is not the time for the open mind," he says. "Now is the age of decision, as all young minds see and feel. We should not sit, now, on fences. Let's build fences for a while to straddle later." But his was essentially an analytical mind, one that could scrutinize complex ideas and reduce them to their elements and reveal the source of their often monstrous union: a union like vigilantism and patriotism, for instance, or justice and the conviction of innocent men.

Watching the world from his retreat in Carmel, through print, and through the personalities and minds of many of the actors in the drama who flocked to see him—politicians, businessmen, writers, scientists, artists, youngsters, plain people—Steffens spun out his thin, tough web of commentary. Now acid, now mellow, prosaic at times and at others rising to a kind of contained eloquence, these miscellaneous pieces afford a broad, if somewhat fragmentary, view of the contemporary scene. Steffens had an eye for both the big and the little things, and his comments and reflections on homely details of everyday life and on the quirks of human character have a charm that matches the caustic, brave, confident wisdom of many of his observations on momentous matters.

The book opens with a delightful chapter on Fatherhood, and ends with two strong things on John Reed. Two themes: physical birth and spiritual birth. And between is the random record of ten years of life, a life of relative retirement, but of great inner activity. It was in those years, I gather, that Steffens really grew to maturity, and he reached a maturity that few Americans, from the European point of view at least (which may be a peculiar one), achieve. Steffens remained in the central current of his time, and this book is valuable as a record of the time. But it is of course his personality that stands out, and the processes of his mind—curious, circuitous, gnomic, paradoxical, hostile to every dogma.

I have referred to a certain variety in points of view to be found in these pieces. Perhaps it is better to say that Steffens' mind, like his life, was not one solid block. It was diverse,

and some of its component elements were of better quality than others. Steffens made mistakes, he was sometimes wrong about people and events, and he did not steer a straight, undeviating course. In this, as in everything, he was very human. When he was wrong it was to the credit of his feelings, if not of his judgment. But he constantly grew, he learned by his mistakes, and he generously acknowledged them. His late coming to maturity coincided—but this was the completion of a circle which his thinking had long anticipated—with what is commonly called a “conversion” to a rather advanced socialistic point of view. This point of view was not a conclusion logically arrived at. It was something that grew

out of the whole rich experience of a lifetime. There was no choice, no torment, no sacrifice involved in this evolution. It imposed itself upon his mind as naturally as the features of a landscape do upon seeing eyes.

And just so the personality of Lincoln Steffens imposes itself upon us. In the American scene he is, and will remain, a landmark. Like his features—grave, benign, with always a warm twinkle that betrays the ironic perception of the two-sidedness of every truth: the human and the cosmic—his career and his writings will arrest the sympathetic attention of those who want to understand the inner life of America during this troubled period.

THE ADMIRAL AT SEA

ROBERT HOLMES

ADAMIRAL HARRY HAMLET who spent his boyhood in San Francisco returned home several weeks ago as representative of the new Maritime Commission to bring peace to the city's troubled waterfront. For years, Hamlet had seen service with the Coast Guard. There his record was studded with exploits and he was known as a man of decisive and effective action. He was the logical person to handle the nasty West Coast situation, thought his Washington compatriots.

And so the Admiral was rushed post haste to “the city that knows how” after the threatened break of September 30 between shipowners and workers had been temporarily averted. The Admiral's coming was much heralded; he was a Messiah come to bring peace to his warring and fractious children, at least to judge from shipowners' statements. The shipowners had taken advantage of the Commission's request that existing agreements be renewed for one year to concede acquiescence and then dexterously slip responsibility for the West Coast Maritime situation into the Commission's hands.

Longshoremen and maritime workers were not so certain of the Admiral's role. They demanded guarantees. Their fundamental demands (see PACIFIC WEEKLY, October 26) would be met by October 28, or they would strike. The Admiral held long, pleading conferences with shipowners and employers. The employers were satisfied; the Commission had promised them fat subsidies; privately, they told their friends, “The Admiral is wonderful. He has promised to fix everything up for us.”

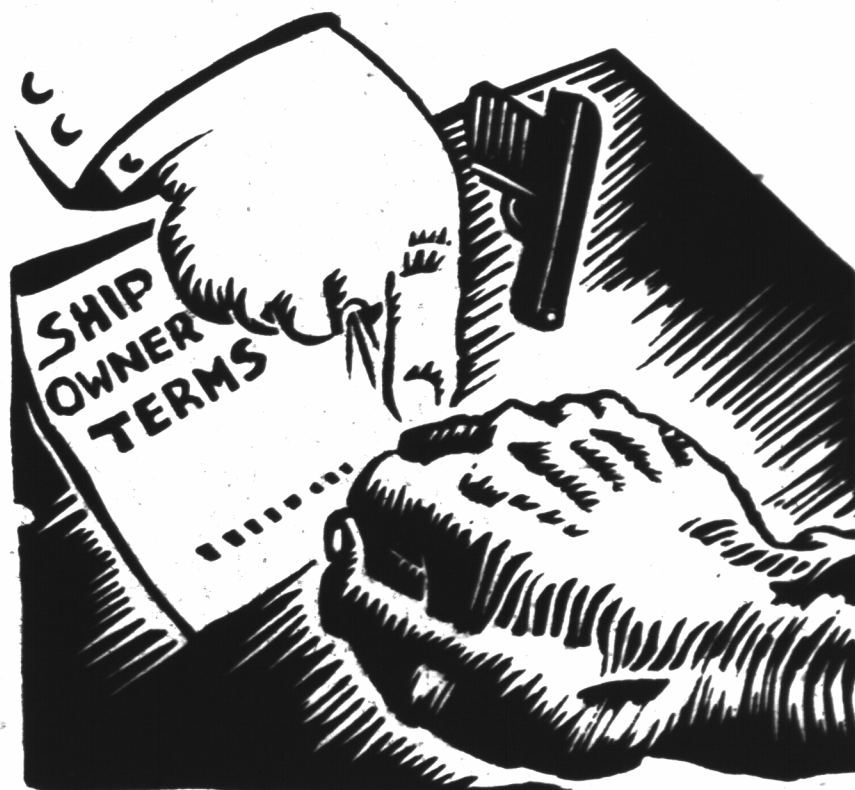
But something went wrong, because the Admiral did not fix things up. The strike of October 29, originally scheduled for the day before, occurred when the workers' demands remained unsatisfied. The Admiral had never encountered a situation as complex and bitter as this. He could not keep the men at work when he failed to induce the shipowners to grant the concessions they asked. He was not dealing with enlisted men now. The Admiral floundered.

The strike call went out shortly before midnight October 29. In a tumultuous, uproarious meeting on the night before, the Maritime Federation Joint Negotiating Committee had voted to extend the peace for twenty-four hours in a last effort to reach a settlement. The following hours of negotiations produced no results. Next night the Joint Committee met again. In contrast to the earlier gathering, this one was quiet and dignified. Every delegate knew why he was present and what he was doing. The strike vote, authorized by a referendum

of more than 95 per cent of the workers, was unanimous.

Quickly the word was flashed up and down the coast and broadcast over Pacific waters. Immediately all shipping activity came to a standstill. 39,000 longshoremen and marine workers were on strike, to protect the gains they had won in 1934, and to win certain new minimum conditions. More than one hundred and fifty ships rest at anchor in Western ports as this is written and daily more ships are being tied up as they arrive in port. From Honolulu to Seattle to San Diego, labor's last resort has again demonstrated the power of organized labor.

Already this strike is stronger than the very effective walk-out of 1934. The strikers are better organized than they were then. Port strike committees have been created in all ports, having as a nucleus the local organizations of the Maritime Federation into which the seven striking unions are joined. A coastwise Joint Strike Committee, lacking in 1934, has been set up. Relief and food kitchens are operating. Legal defense has been unified and centralized, and all strikers are assured defense. The unions, penniless in 1934, have more than a quarter of a million dollars in the strike chest. Two years of active, driving organizational work has knit these unions into a solid, efficient body that will see this strike through without



wavering. The fight that these unions have made for labor and liberalism has gathered behind them progressive, labor, and professional groups.

Dramatic in this strike is the way every worker has joined it. In 1934, men were still coming off the boats after the strike was sixty or more days old. Now the first day of the strike saw every longshoreman and marine worker on strike. The "aristocracy" of maritime labor, the licensed deck officers and engineers, have joined hands with the unlicensed seafaring workers to win their mutual battle.

There is no activity along the Embarcadero. The huge, corrugated iron doors of the pier sheds are rolled down. Behind them, all goods still remaining on the docks is "hot cargo"—since last Monday when teamsters abandoned the waterfront. Small, scattered groups of pickets patrol, the front watched by some 200 police who have been assigned to the strike area.

The shipowners may be preparing for a showdown, but as yet they have made no efforts to import strikebreakers. Although they were apparently willing to delay the battle for a year when they gave up their projected lockout of September 30, they may decide to wage their war now to destroy the unions. They admit that such is their intention sooner or later, and since the break has come this may be the time to fight. If this strike is not settled within ten days, it will develop into a battle that will far overshadow the struggle of 1934.

Mayor Angelo Rossi, so friendly to Herbert Fleishhacker, has tipped the hand of the die-hard reactionaries. The Mayor has declared that a "state of emergency" exists, an action entirely unnecessary and uncalled for. He has appointed Florence McAuliffe who collaborated with John Francis Neylan, Hearst's attorney, in the red scare of the General Strike, to stand watch over the "public interests," that fictitious bugaboo behind which the shipowners and the fascist elements hide. The Mayor's actions have met quick and biting criticism from the unions.

The weak spot in the strike situation if the walkout is prolonged will be San Pedro, as it was in 1934. Red-baiting Chief of Police Davis of Los Angeles has already dispatched 600 police to the harbor area. A waterfront many miles long makes picketing difficult. Los Angeles is teeming with scabs, recruited by the Merchants and Manufacturers Association. Shipowners will try to land cargo at Los Angeles; but one bright hope stands out there. The teamsters are organized and on sympathy strike, which was not the case in 1934.

There is help for the strikes in other directions. The timber and sawmill workers of the Northwest are organized into an A. F. of L. union whose formation was aided by longshoremen

and sailors. These workers are not available as strikebreakers, and furthermore are ready to throw their support behind the strike by a sympathy walkout. In San Francisco, the warehousemen are out on strike. This group is affiliated with the I. L. A. and has joined the strike to obtain certain of their own demands after months of negotiations with employers which yielded no result. All wholesale grocery plants and cold storage houses are closed. With the teamsters staying away from the docks, the strikers have tied up the city effectively enough to win their demands.

As this is written, an early settlement seems possible. The East coast and foreign lines have offered to settle with the longshoremen, the only employees they hire on this coast. The longshoremen refused to settle until all the employers met the demands of all the unions. The steam schooner operators (coastwise lumber boats) are near agreements with the unions. The major obstacle to a settlement is the Western offshore group composed of the "die-hard" companies: Dollar, led by Stanley Dollar and Herbert Fleishhacker, Matson, with Hugh Gallagher in the foreground, and American-Hawaiian, where T. G. Plant directs the goose-step. These companies hate the unions and they hate Harry Bridges with an unrelenting, uncompromising hatred. These are the companies who will profit most from the subsidies, but even present profits cannot quench their reckless desire to destroy the unions and get rid of Bridges by whatever means are handy. Apparently they do not see that to remove the unions will be only a temporary victory. 1916 and 1921 saw the unions banished from the 'front, and today the longshoremen and maritime workers are banded together in the strongest workers' organization of shipping history.

The workers are holding out for preferential employment for licensed deck officers and engineers; all seafaring workers to be hired through union hiring halls; cash payment for overtime instead of time off; an eight hour day for cooks and stewards; and the present hiring hall with union dispatcher for longshoremen. Most of these demands represent conditions already possessed by the men, but the small minority of shipowners which sees the red menace everywhere is unwilling to concede these things in agreements.

Last Monday, Admiral Hamlet called a meeting of shipowners and workers. Supposedly a fact finding inquiry, the Admiral permitted Gregory Harrison, employers' attorney, to inject controversial issues into the hearing. The unions' representatives charged that such action was beyond the province of the Maritime Commission and walked out of the meeting amid the Admiral's pleas, "Stop, stop!" It was sheer tragedy for this unhappy man whose actions have been frustrated at almost every turn. It was tragedy in which he can find solace only in the experience of his illustrious namesake, the sad prince of Denmark.

A determined effort is now being made to achieve federal intervention, but Miss Perkins is reported to have counseled the President firmly against the opening of Federal hiring halls now as she was afraid that operation of strike bound vessels at the present time "might lead to violence."

The situation is not without its amusing highlights. In New York the president of the International Mercantile Marine has asked special prosecutor Thomas E. Dewey to investigate the left-wing "sit-down" strike on the waterfront as a "racket." Strikers filled the hiring hall and when "replacement workers" sought to gain entrance they couldn't.

Meanwhile, the waterfront is being cleared for action. Tear gas and riot guns and militia and vigilantes may be in the offing, but the final victory belongs to the marine workers.



SOLE MIO

JOHN WOODBURN

THE attendant paused before the panelled door, her hand lightly on the woman's elbow.

"Stand here a moment with me, Mrs. Malloy," she said. "They're not quite ready for us yet."

The woman in the faded blue dress began to tremble.

"Please," she said. "Please no. No hydro. I'm fine now, really I am."

The attendant slid her hand down the woman's arm as far as the wrist.

"Now, now," she said. "Don't you worry, Mrs. Malloy. We're not going to have any hydro. We're just going in here for a few minutes and let the doctors see you, see how you're getting along." She smiled at the woman with spurious animation. "You'll see Doctor Dashiell," she said in a soothing sing-song. "You know Doctor Dashiell. Don't you remember Doctor Dashiell, Mrs. Malloy?"

"Dashiell?" The woman repeated the name slowly, wrinkling her brow. "Dashiell?" She smiled. "I don't know. There are so many doctors." Her eyes clouded and she lifted her hand to her forehead. "Dashiell." She lowered her hand and shook her head as though to clear it.

"I really don't think I better go in there now," she said. "I don't seem to be able to remember things."

"You'll be all right in a minute or two," the attendant said. "Just don't try to remember now."

The woman turned her head and stared down the polished corridor and out the barred window at the green lawns bright with sunlight. She had ceased to tremble and her face was relaxed and wistful as she stood there quietly, staring at the bright lawns outside.

"The sun," she said suddenly. "The sun is everything. Everything there is. Yes—" she nodded her head sagely. "That is the great truth. The sun is everything." She paused. "Leonard was the sun."

The attendant glanced at her obliquely.

"Now, Mrs. Malloy," she said. "Let's not get ourselves all upset this morning. Let's go in there and show Doctor Dashiell and all of them how much improvement we've made."

The woman gave no sign of hearing her. She thrust one hand out toward the sunny square of window and began to make little stroking motions, infinitely tender, upon the air.

"Leonard," she whispered. "You were the sun, Leonard. The great sun, burning with yellow light."

The attendant reached over and caught the woman's extended hand.

"There, now, Mrs. Malloy. That'll do."

The woman turned toward her with a sad smile.

"Don't you see the way it was? It's all so clear. Leonard was the sun. And I—" she threw back her head and laughed stridently. "I was Icarus. I was little Icarus. I flew—" she drew her hand quickly from the attendant's and raised both arms above her head. She lifted her face to the ceiling and closed her eyes. "I flew to the sun, to Leonard, and I shrivelled in ecstasy, in his fire."

"That will do now," the attendant said sharply.

The woman's hands fell to her sides. Her eyes were glassy with tears.

"Only a phoenix could have survived his fire," she said. "A phoenix to rise from the flame." She stared down the corridor again, her mouth working. "Some day he will wrap

me in his flame again and I shall be purified."

A buzzer sounded suddenly above the panelled door and the attendant took a firm grip on the woman's arm.

"Come, Mrs. Malloy," she said, and opened the door.

The room was bright with clear daylight and the woman paused, blinking at the turning faces. A man sat at a long oak table, tapping lightly with a yellow pencil on a pile of bulging manila folders. He peered at a small square of paper on the table before him through rimless glasses with thick, convex lenses.

"Next we would like to see Mr. Garcia," he said.

The attendant's manner became crisply professional.

"Yes, Doctor," she said. She went out, closing the door behind her with elaborate care.

The man stopped tapping the pencil.

"Just take that chair, will you, Mrs. Malloy."



The woman sat down quietly in the stiff office chair, her hands clasped loosely in her lap.

"Well, and how do you feel this morning, Mrs. Malloy?"

She looked beyond the man and out the window, at a poplar tree trembling delicately in the wind.

"I asked you how you were feeling."

"I feel quite well most of the time. Sometimes I—" her voice trailed off.

"Sometimes—what, Mrs. Malloy?"

"Sometimes I feel rather—depressed."

"Do you know where you are, Mrs. Malloy?"

She bowed her head, her hands over her eyes.

"Tell me, do you know where you are?"

When she answered her voice was so low that the man and the others in the room leaned forward a little to hear.

"I don't want to talk about it. Please don't ask me any more questions."

"But you do know where you are, don't you, Mrs. Malloy?"

She let her hands fall limply in her lap. Above her eyebrows the nails had left three angry little half-moons.

"I try to tell myself that I am in the shadow. Just in the shadow for a while. That someday there will be sunlight again."

She wrinkled her forehead as though some memory eluded her. "Sunlight again," she said distinctly.

The man tipped his chair back until it thudded gently against the wall.

"You know that you are in a hospital, don't you, Mrs. Malloy? That you have been sick?"

She brought both hands swiftly to her face again, covering her eyes.

"This is not a hospital," she said angrily through her fingers. "This is a madhouse. This is bedlam. Bedlam."

"What day is today, Mrs. Malloy? Can you tell us what day of the week it is?"

The woman uncovered her face and stared vacantly out of the window.

The man continued in his gentle, persistent voice. "Is it Friday, Mrs. Malloy? Or is it Tuesday, or Sunday?"

The woman's hands fluttered in her lap.

"Sun-day," she said. "Sun-day."

The man glanced significantly at the others in the room.

"Do you hear voices, Mrs. Malloy?"

She moved restlessly in her chair.

"I don't know what you mean."

"I mean the voices that say things to you."

"I don't know what you mean. Please don't keep asking me questions. There is something I am trying to remember."

"Are you hearing the voices now?"

She looked down at her hands sullenly.

"I hear your voice."

The man's voice was lightly brushed with irritation.

"I mean do you hear voices, voices out of the air, saying things to you that trouble you?"

Her face lost its sullen look and became alert.

"Why no, Doctor, of course not. Should I?"

"You know I am a doctor, the, you know who I am?"

As he leaned forward across the table a shaft of sunlight struck full upon the lenses of his glasses, turning them suddenly to bright fire. The woman's eyes widened until the white showed between eyelid and pupil and gradually her face became suffused with a great tenderness and joy. Again, as in

the corridor, she thrust one hand out before her, caressing the air.

"Oh beautiful, beautiful, beautiful," she crooned. "I thought you would never come." She looked at the man with tender reproach. "I saw you shining out on the lawn, but you wouldn't come in, you wouldn't come in the window." She began to sway slowly in the chair.

The man peered at her intently. The thick lenses shot splinters of sunlight about his face.

"Who am I, Mrs. Malloy? Don't you know who I am?"

The woman laughed a low, bubbling laugh, deep in her throat.

"Of course I know you, my dear, my darling," she said.

"Of course I know. But I won't tell." She laughed again.

"Why won't you tell me?"

"Because they would take me away from you again."

The man glanced at the others in the room, nodded, and pressed a buzzer beneath the edge of the table.

The door opened with a subdued click and the attendant came in and put her hand on the woman's shoulder.

"Come, Mrs. Malloy," she said.

The woman's eyes rolled in terror. She grasped the arms of the chair and began to tremble.

"Let go of me," she said loudly. "Let go of me."

"Now, now," said the attendant.

The woman's voice filled the room.

"Oh, Leonard," she yelled. "Oh, Leonard, Leonard, Leonard! Don't let them take me away from you. Don't let them take me back to the shadow." She ducked her head and fought savagely, a grotesque and resistant figure, half in and half out of the chair.

"Let me go. I'm not going with you. I'm not going back to the shadow. I'm going to the sun! Oh, please—oh—please—no hydro—no hydro..."

When she felt the attendant's arm tighten about her waist she began screaming.

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CHRIST LAUGHS

INCENSE; Smoke. Prayer; Breath. Christianity.
 Ha—ha—ha! Christianity.
 Ha—ha—ha—Ha—ha—ha—
 I want to laugh, but O, it hurts.
 Some good kind Christian put his arms about me;
 Some kindly Christian or a pitying Jew.
 O, let some man of pity
 Wrap me in his arms
 And hold my aching side.
 My God, it hurts—My God! My Father!—
 I have a right to call on him.
 I did you know, the other day,
 On Calvary—Golgotha—Place of Skulls—
 Place of death and hate—of hate and death.
 I see the upturned faces now—A field of faces:
 Laughing—jeering—scoffing—weeping—wondering,
 And I the Spectacle. O, what a Spectacle
 To haunt the world. A barren tree
 Fruited with hate and death.
 The Roman Guard—statues of bronze: Magnificent tall
 fellows.
 'Twas nothing much to them—
 Conquerors of the Earth—Rulers of the world—
 Nor to me. But O, the world:
 The world of hate;
 And the sword-blossoming unto Death.
 Rome. Rome. Eternal City—Mistress of the World:
 Where my vice-regent, like a Roman Pontiff, sits
 Upon a throne of gold, proclaiming beautifully, in stiff
 brocades:
 "Peace on Earth—Good Will toward Men."
 Ha—ha—ha—O, I must laugh—Ha—ha!
 Peace—Peace on Earth. Good Will—Good Will toward—
 O, O,—my side—my spear-torn side—
 There—where the Roman spear went through
 The spear that ruled the world—that rules the world.
 Christianity!—Father, I want to laugh,
 Yet I could weep.
 Blood dripped, dripped, dripped—and still it drips—
 The blood of Christ—rubies—rubies—
 My tears were salty in my mouth—
 Diamonds—diamonds.
 My cross, which then was wood, is now of gold:
 That heavy stuff. But mine was heavy;
 More than I could bear;
 A beggar carried it for me,
 The soldier laid it on his back;
 He staggered—Staggered on up Calvary;
 Golgotha—Place of Skulls—of death.
 Rubies—Diamonds—Gold—Gold—Gold.
 Spears—Hate—Salt tears—Salt blood:
 Greed—Blood—Salt Tears and Hate.
 Look—Feel—Feel. See how terrible the gash
 That slew Peace on—That slew—
 Slew Peace and Brotherhood—slew Peace—
 Slew Peace on Earth—Good Will toward Men—
 Ha—ha—ha—Ha—ha—ha—Ha—ha—ha—
 O—O—Christianity—Ha—ha—ha—
 I was so tired that day. It was so hot—
 My sweat smarted my eyes—I could not see.

CHARLES ERSKINE SCOTT WOOD

I heard, like baying hounds—
 "Crucify him"—"Crucify him!"—
 It nothing meant to me—
 I thought of them—
 I said—they know not what they do. They do not know.
 A Roman soldier gave me vinegar and gall to drink.
 It tasted good, for it was done
 In pity, but 'tis bitter now. —Pitiless. Pitiless.
 'Tis bitter now.
 They do not know,
 They do not know—
 As I drooped limp beneath the cold, indifferent stars,
 Hyenas came—they love the smell of death—
 They quarreled for the carrion feast—
 I hear them now—I smell it now—
 They howled a mocking word of me—"CHRIST-ianity."
 Dying I watched the slowly-sliding stars—
 Dying I dreamed a dream—
 Babylon and Alexander—Caesar—Rome and Charlemagne—
 And the squat Corsican:—They builded—High—High—
 Swords for trowels, and for mortar, blood:
 Blood-brotherhood—Ha—ha—ha—Ha—ha—ha!
 Blood—Hate—Blood—Blood—and Hate!
 Where is their haughty building now?
 Where are the towers, the battlements, the moon-lit temples?
 Reaped with the Sword, flooded with Blood.
 Where are the festering moats in which were heaped
 The naked bodies of dead slaves?
 Buried beneath the ashes of Hate.
 And still I hear the heavy tread of armored men.
 The rush of the winged stallions that snort for battle.
 And still the conquerors come who shall be conquered;
 And lie quiet—questioning not—indifferent.
 Death. Death.
 Peace on Earth—Good Will toward Men. Ha—ha—ha!
 Peace—And Brotherhood—Ha—ha—ha—Ha—ha—ha!
 Ha—ha—ha—Ha—ha—ha—Ha—ha—ha!
 For Christ's sake, someone hold my side!
 Father—My Father—God—My God—
 It hurts—It hurts—
 It hurts—(very softly)



BREAKFAST

JOHN STEINBECK

THIS THING fills me with pleasure. I don't know why. I can see it in the smallest detail. I find myself recalling it again and again, each time bringing more detail out of a sunken memory, remembering brings the curious warm pleasure.

It was very early in the morning. The Eastern mountains were black-blue, but behind them the light stood up faintly colored at the mountain rims with a washed red and growing colder, greyer and darker as it went up and overhead until, at a place near the West, it merged with pure night.

And it was cold, not painfully so, but cold enough so that I rubbed my hands and shoved them deep into my pockets, and I hunched my shoulders up and scuffed my feet on the ground. Down in the valley where I was, the earth was that lavender grey of dawn. I walked along a country road and ahead of me I saw a tent that was only a little lighter grey than the ground. Beside the tent there was a flash of orange fire seeping out of the cracks of an old rusty iron stove. Grey smoke spurted up out of the stubby stove pipe, spurted up a long way before it spread out and dissipated.

I saw a young woman beside the stove, really a girl. She was dressed in a faded cotton skirt and waist. As I came close I saw that she carried a baby in a crooked arm and the baby was nursing, its head up under her waist out of the cold. The mother moved about, poking the fire, shifting the rusty lids of the stove to make a greater draft, opening the oven door; and all the time the baby was nursing, but that didn't interfere with the mother's work, nor with a light quick gracefulness of her movements. There was something very precise and practiced in her movements. The orange fire licked out of the cracks in the stove and threw dancing reflections on the tent.

I was close now and I could smell frying bacon and baking bread, the warmest pleasantest odors I know. From the East the light grew swiftly. I came near to the stove and stretched my hands out to it and shivered all over when the warmth struck me. Then the tent flap jerked up and a young man came out and an older man followed him. They were dressed in new blue dungarees and in new dungaree coats with the brass buttons shining. They were sharp faced men, and they looked much alike.

The younger had a dark stubble beard and the older had a grey stubble beard. Their heads and faces were wet, their hair dripped with water, and water stood out on their stiff beards and their cheeks shone with water. Together they stood looking quietly at the lightening East, they yawned together and looked at the light on the hill rims. They turned and saw me.

"Morning," said the older man. His face was neither friendly nor unfriendly.

"Morning, sir," I said.

"Morning," said the young man.

The water was slowly drying on their faces. They came to the stove and warmed their hands to it.

The girl kept to her work, her face averted and her eyes on what she was doing. Her hair was tied back out of her

eyes with a string and it hung down her back and swayed as she worked. She set tin cups on a big packing box, set tin plates and knives and forks out too. Then she scooped fried bacon out of the deep grease and laid it on a big tin platter, and the bacon cricked and rustled as it grew crisp. She opened the rusty oven door and took out a square pan full of high big biscuits.

When the smell of that hot bread came out, both of the men inhaled deeply. The young man said softly, "Keerist!"

The older man turned to me, "Had your breakfast?"

"No."

"Well sit down with us, then."

That was the signal. We went to the packing case and squatted on the ground about it. The young man asked, "Picking cotton?"

"No."

"We had twelve days work so far," the young man said.

The girl spoke from the stove. They even got new clothes."

The two men looked down at their new dungarees and they both smiled a little.

The girl set out the platter of bacon and the brown high biscuits and a bowl of bacon gravy and a pot of coffee and then she squatted down by the box too. The baby was still nursing, its head up under her waist out of the cold. I could hear the sucking noises it made.

We washed our plates, poured bacon gravy over our biscuits and sugared our coffee. The older man filled his mouth full and he chewed and chewed and swallowed. Then he said, "God-allmighty it's good," and he filled his mouth again.

The young man said, "We been eating good for twelve days."

We all ate quickly, almost frantically and refilled our plates and ate quickly again until we were full and warm. The hot bitter coffee scalded our throats. We threw the last little bit with the grounds in it on the earth and refilled our cups.

There was color in the light now, and a reddish gleam in the light that made the air seem colder. The two men faced the East and their faces were lighted by the dawn and, I looked up for a moment and saw the image of the mountain and the light coming over it reflected in the older man's eyes.

And then the two men threw the grounds from their cups on the earth and they stood up together. "Got to get going," the older man said.

The younger turned to me, "Fyou want to pick cotton, we could maybe get you on."

"No. I got to go along. Thanks for breakfast."

The older man waved his hand in a negative. "O. K. Glad to have you." They walked away together. The air was blazing with light at the Eastern skyline. And I walked away down the country road.

That's all. I know of course some of the reasons why it was pleasant. But there was some element of great beauty there that makes the rush of warmth when I think of it.

PITTSBURGH

LOUIS ADAMIC

I OFTEN go to Pittsburgh. Sometimes for no specific reason. Just to see the place. But I don't stay long. Two days. Three at the most. I could never get to love Pittsburgh as I love, say, Cleveland or San Francisco, to mention two very unlike towns but which both have something very important in common: charm. Pittsburgh has no charm. But it impresses. More—it hits one in the face, smears one's clean shirt-collar in no time . . . and sends one's imagination soaring into America's future.

I get a deep thrill driving into Pittsburgh. Especially if I happen to come in toward evening or at night. Especially now that the mills are working again nearly full blast. Every few minutes the great furnaces along the Allegheny and the Monongahela rivers blaze up indescribably. The fires are reflected in water. And one hears a dull roar. Then a gasp . . . Pittsburgh is weirdly beautiful then. That is the essence, the soul of Pittsburgh, those blazing mills on the river banks. The darkness does away for one's eyes the non-essentials and incidentals of Pittsburgh, its complex trappings and appendages.

In the daytime Pittsburgh is ugly. Perhaps the ugliest big city in America. But its ugliness has a sort of grandeur about it. That's the word—grandeur. Here and there, as you go about under the smoke-obscured sky, with great sausages of smoke rolling out of tall funnels, which stand along the river like the pipes of great organs, ugliness suddenly becomes beauty. When you are about to freeze to death, you feel hot in spots: and it is something of that sort with Pittsburgh's ugliness.

The beauty that is in its ugliness is terrible and wonderful to contemplate. It is ultra-dynamic. Full of prophecy. Packed with the future. Intensely American. American in the current sense, which has scant connection with the past—with the nervous, blowsy, introvert Americanism represented by the Sons and the Daughters of the American Revolution; in the sense which is so current, so 1936, that its elements are simultaneously of today and of tomorrow, even of the day after tomorrow: of 1936 and 1938 . . . and 1940.

Of course, I suppose the population of Pittsburgh includes Sons and Daughters of the American Revolution who are living, or pretending to live, in the past and tremble fascistically before the future. But the great body of people in Pittsburgh are sons and daughters of the industrial revolution, which is still going on. Unlike the D. A. R.'s and the Steel Institute and the Mellon interests, they are not yet organized. Most of them, as yet, don't even dream what it is all about. What Pittsburgh is all about. What America is all about. They are confused. They dart and stumble about under the smoke-lined sky, with the sun a red ball of fire hung up on it, and they don't see the future. Partly, perhaps, because they are too close to it. They are in it. They are it.

But the future is beginning to crystallize itself in Pittsburgh—in America.

The Grant Building, right in the heart of midtown, is the grandest office-building in the city. It is one of the newest and tallest. Streamlined. Modern. It is the home of the most important steel companies in the country. The elevators take you up soundlessly. You take the express: zipp! and in no

time you are on the top or 36th floor—which is the headquarters of the SWOC. Which is short for Steel Workers Organizing Committee. Which is a branch of the CIO—Committee for Industrial Organization.

You step out. Here is a pretty girl: the receptionist. Whom do you wish to see? Mr. So-and-So; or Mr. Phil Murray, the chairman of the SWOC; or Mr. McDonald, the treasurer who has a quarter of a million dollars to spend; or Mr. Lee Pressman, head of the legal department; or Mr. Golden, the directors; or Mr. Ruttenberg, the research director; or—Well, their names are neatly lettered on the doors along the long corridor. You can't miss him, whomever you come to see. It's just like in, say, the Weirton Steel Company's office below, where Mr. Weir the great steel magnate has his headquarters. Only better. Everything new. Streamlined. Talk about class! You glimpse the big conference-room with the huge, heavy table. You say to yourself: boy, this must of cost a couple of hundred dollars! You mean the table. It's the best table you ever saw. You are willing to bet the President's cabinet in Washington doesn't sit down at a classier table. And then Mr. McDonald or Mr. Ruttenberg tells you that the furniture in the place cost SWOC thirty-nine hundred dollars.

And it was worth it. The best furniture in the world. Nothing too good for SWOC. The whole lay-out inspires confidence. It suggests that SWOC means business. Workers come up dubious and go down confident.

Then whoever you came to see takes you around, from one side to the other, and you discover that SWOC has the whole floor and a view of the entire town—of both rivers, of downtown, of steel mills, of the slums on the hillsides. From its home it surveys everything it challenges.

The sons and daughters of the industrial revolutions are about to begin organizing.



LINCOLN STEFFENS

ROBERT FORSYTHE

MY FIRST meeting with Steff came in Alfred Harcourt's office and had to do with ghost-writing a book for a friend of Steff's. With my constitutional inability to say no, I said I would think it over, but I knew that Steff knew that I would never write the book, and with that settled we got on to more important matters. I have a bad habit of baiting strangers upon first meeting them and I'm afraid I was a bit rough with him, but he didn't mind and shortly had me on the defensive with that peculiar way of speaking he had. He spoke in paradoxes and with that half rapid, half mumbled insistent voice and there were the moments when he stopped as if to ask what idea I had about it but I could never find an idea and I soon realized that his method of drawing me out was getting more from me than my baiting did from him. I'll confess I thought him too illusive at times and had a desire to say, "Look, Mr. Steffens; what is it you really want; I don't get you," but by that time the pattern would begin to unfold and I'd see that he was trying to turn me inside out and make me part with something inside myself that needed fresh air.

I suppose this is what they call Steff's elliptical style of talking. He never seemed to be asking questions for information but to get the witness started on his own tack. Whether it was that day or next, I fixed up a luncheon for Steff and John Strachey, who had not met at that time and were very anxious to arrange it. In his less serious moments Strachey can be as bumptious as I can and we ragged Steff quite a little that day (with some shame, I admit it) on his liberal views. But you really couldn't rag Steff because he'd have one of those mysterious statements ready and by the time you got done thinking over the possible angles of it, he had you stopped. We didn't get much out of that luncheon but a lot of fun and then we went up to the Commodore where Steff was staying with Edward A. Filene. He wanted Strachey to meet Filene and I went along on the pretext that I still wanted to discuss that ghost-writing thing and Filene was the man it was to be about.

Steff's old friend, Stuart Chase, was there with Filene and if we had been riding Steff hard at luncheon, he got it back now at Chase. It was then that I realized Steff used that way of speaking with some artistry, for he had a sense of timing like Will Rogers. Just said flatly, the words would have no significance, but when they came in that initial mumbled rush and then there was a pause and then the finish, they could be explosive. When the introductions were over, Steff was wandering about the room when he said casually to Chase: "How've you been progressing, Chase? Still with the party . . . (pause and then very casually and easily) . . . The Republican party, I mean." I didn't know that Steff and Chase were such friends that it couldn't be anything but a good gag and so I didn't do justice to the moment. Strachey, being less inhibited, roared. It sounds rather biting, told in this way, but it was a grand moment and Chase laughed as loudly as Strachey and not out of one side of his face.

I don't remember what they talked about because I always kept edging away from Filene for fear he'd bring up the matter of that book. I know that Strachey was telling Chase that he had found a certain magazine article of his the best

argument of all about the workings of the A.A.A., and that pleased the author side of Chase, even if he must have had qualms about Strachey making radical capital out of his compromises. Chase was then in the middle of that period of his in which he was showing Capital how, if it were only sweet and co-operating, it could take over the best features of Socialism and everything would be dandy. I was as certain then as I am now and I think I deserve some sort of award for keeping my hoots to myself, but perhaps I was not so much courageous as overawed by the company.

I didn't see Steff again in New York, and shortly after he started for the Coast and had his first bad attack in Chicago. When I saw him in Carmel last winter, he was spending most of his time in bed but he was being as active as ever. He had a clairvoyant way of knowing what was bothering you and before I had a chance to tell him that I was dissatisfied with the way I was writing, he was asking me questions about it and allowing me to expose myself. What had always interested me about his "Autobiography" was how he got the big crooks to tell more about themselves than all the detectives in the world could find out. That was his method, I'm sure. He simply made it easy for them to talk. There was no father confessor nonsense about it. You very definitely had the idea that he would still be your friend if you suddenly told him that you had hacked your grandmother to bits with an axe. He was a great reporter but he wasn't either a judge or the Avenging Angel.

What I started out to do was review Steff's last book,* the collection of essays and paragraphs from this magazine and other articles, but that would be a waste of time for people who have been following the pieces from week to week. The mere fact of being a writer has never impressed me and I really don't know what the critics are talking about when they refer to a man's style. Steff's style was Steff and that is probably true of most writers. He wrote at times as if there were gaps in his thinking but that was only his old trick of making people think for themselves. He had the sense to know that as a life-long liberal he couldn't suddenly become somebody else and that used to worry people, but like any man of intelligence he understood how to make his limitations a virtue. Steff could do certain things better than anybody in the world and he stuck to them. There are some writers who are builders and some who are destroyers. Steff was a bit of both but he made no pretense of speaking like an Engels when what he was in reality was the great American Steffens, the finest reporter America has ever had and a liberal with common sense views who could talk directly to the country because he understood it.

That is what is to be found in these articles. They are so American that they fairly scream the Star Spangled Banner and so fine and profound and right that they constitute a body of American radical thought unexcelled in effectiveness and insight. As has been said by others, they offer an addenda to his "Autobiography," bringing him up to date with himself and showing what the lessons of American political and

*LINCOLN STEFFENS SPEAKING. (Harcourt Brace & Co.) \$2.50

economic life had finally taught him. He knew at last that there was something to be done about the Crime of the Cities and the disgrace of the nation, and week by week he was

bringing the news to his friends and readers. His loss—well, I don't like to talk about it because I am a hard-boiled fellow who must never surrender to sentiment.

TWO YEARS OF STEFFENS

LESLIE T. WHITE

GREAT minds often become defied after they have left us, legends spring up with the passage of time until eventually the essentially human characteristics of the individual are obscured.

That may happen to Lincoln Steffens. As a teacher, thinker, leader, he had hundreds of disciples who even when he lived, wanted to place him on a pedestal—much to his amusement. But Steffens had many facet qualities apart from muck-raking, from "reforming," from the searcher after sociological truths. His name will probably be used to prove this and that theory, to uphold this or that belief, until the millions who never knew the man will forget that he existed in the flesh. I would like to say something about this grand little man I knew as "Steff" during the last two years of his life.

Now you cannot write objectively about Lincoln Steffens, not if you knew him intimately. Edward A. Filene, the famous philanthropist, supplied the reason for this in a facetious remark he made when Steff introduced us.

"So, he rebuilt you to his specifications as well, eh?" Filene chuckled. "Well, he did the same thing to me over thirty years ago. He's never satisfied to accept his friends as they are—no, he has to remake them to his own plans."

Steff perked up, the ghost of a smile toying with the corners of his mouth. "And why not? Neither of you were worth knowing until I woke up your intelligences, such as they are. You were too dull."

That was undoubtedly true—at least in my case, but Steff's methods were more subtle than his words. The transformation was not a form of mental surgery, rather it was an evolutionary development. He altered his friends by logic—which he loved to call illogic—transfusing the bloodstream of his own rich experiences into the anaemic experiences of others.

Unlike the majority of intellectuals I have met, Steff didn't confine his circle of friends to the hermit-thinkers; at his Carmel home you were likely to meet anyone from ex-convicts, pugilists and cops to poets, Republicans, and sculptors. As a writer of detective stories and pulp thrillers after ten years as a criminal investigator, and not yet grey-headed, there didn't seem to be much about me to interest Steffens. But we clicked from the start.

And it was logical. Steff, for all his mental accomplishments, was basically an adventurer; of all his experiences, his police reporting days among the tough New York harness bulls remained his favorite topic; it had been his first real introduction to the "grim realities of life" and paved the way for his later understanding of people. Few of the people who surrounded him in his last years knew about that phase of his life; fortunately for me I did. We used to sit and trace corruption from a beat patrolman up through the devious political channels to State capitals, sometimes to Washington.

His tolerance was well known, but I believe it was his sense of humor that made that vast tolerance possible. You had to

be constantly on guard lest he start "ribbing" you into a pointless argument.

During his last year, Steff was confined to bed a good deal of the time. But whenever he could, he liked to go out riding. The week before he died, we drove over to the picturesque old city of Monterey. A fishermen's strike was in progress and we took a casual turn around the waterfront, but the most of our time was spent searching for—you'd never guess—Tortilla Flat, the locale of Steinbeck's novel.

In Carmel, as in nearly every small community, there were a group of gentry who wanted to play "vigilante," the 1936 version of "cowboys and Indians," perhaps I should say the "adult" version. Steff found their antics highly amusing; he'd laugh until that little gray Van Dyke would arc straight out in front of him. Yet, strangely, he didn't dislike these people as individuals; to him it was just funny.

Now it would be impossible to compress the fruits of a two year friendship into "a short article; everything that Steff said was so meaty, so epigrammatic, that it would take a book to even hit the highlights. Even to quote him in brief is dangerous because sometimes he spoke in fragments, in shorthand, so that it would take a familiarity with previous conversations and with his whole philosophy to understand his point, like piecing a puzzle together. Yet some of his remarks are so complete in themselves they could be used for wall mottoes—God forbid!

I commented to him on one occasion that the liberal views he had taught me were causing an isolation among a certain conservative clique. Steff nodded his understanding.

"People will forgive you for anything else—you can commit a crime, break any rule of etiquette, violate any custom, but they will never, never forgive you for using your head, for thinking."

He knew the end was not far away, and he didn't mind discussing it. On the question of dying in the good old American tradition—with your boots on, he observed:

"A man should not die in action if he can help it. He should take time off before he dies to digest into wisdom the knowledge he has gained from his own peculiar experiences in life. Too many Americans die with their boots on and leave behind nothing from which others can learn. I think a man should take about twenty years over this business of dying and so build up a philosophy during the period."

Lincoln Steffens did just that; he built a philosophy that will live, not only in his writings and in the memories of men, but in the lives of others. He changed his friends "to his own specifications" and they unanimously admit to profit by it. No score of men had the effect on my life as did Lincoln Steffens, the teacher. I am thankful to him for it. But when in memory I picture him, it isn't the genius and the thinker, but the scrappy little police reporter with whom I liked to argue and search for such goofy things as Tortilla Flat; a friend who in any man's language was—a "regular guy."

TRIBUTE

What can one say most of those that die
In the chill winter time of age?

That they had once been young and strong or great
or brave.

That they had once done thus and so; had thought
fine thoughts,

Dreamed dreams, adventured in the world, inspired
love,

Led men, been kind and just, exposed the fraudulent.

This is the sort of thing one says of those that die

In the chill winter time of life. "He WAS" one says,

Or "I have heard or read he WAS a while ago

Before infirmity and disillusion of

The soul had blurred the portrait to a memory."

But this man grew beyond the growing years; grew
through

The blossoming Spring, the ripening Summer time;

Grew on into the Fall when most things die; and in

The Winter of his life, when frost was in the ground,

Still grew in gentle wisdom and in kindliness,

And in that rare capacity to be a friend.

The truth is that he grew until his heart had stopped

And so the zenith of his life came at its end.

One cannot say of him, "He WAS." One says,

"He IS."

August 10, 1936

MARTIN FLAVIN

LETTERS OF LINCOLN STEFFENS

(A volume of letters of Lincoln Steffens are to be published when collected. Below are excerpts from a few. Where not otherwise stated they were written to his family.)

To John Reed.
My dear Reed:

Riverside, Conn.
October 8, 1909

... The way to go at your job is to sit down together, you and your crowd, and together perceive what the *Harvard Monthly* should be. I think its function is to express Harvard, and all that Harvard stands for in the world—to the world. That's a large order, and I submit it in all its might, not because I think you can achieve it in one year, but because with that end in view, you will begin to clear your minds. For example, you don't have to create. If you express what wants to be expressed, you will perform a service. And if you get well expressed what Harvard must have to say; what it feels and what it guesses at, you will force the world to read the *Harvard Monthly*.

Magazine editors commonly err at this point. They try to "make" a magazine. They think up what will be a good article or story; then they set about getting some writer to write it up. Some of that has to be done, of course, and sometimes a writer will do pretty well with an order like that. But we all hate it. We all do our best work when we are permitted to write that which it is in our minds and hearts to tell. And as an editor I found that was the way to work from that side. I used to go about seeing men who

could write or who had shown symptoms of some power. They also were in the magazine habit of mind; they tried to find out what I wanted, and would please me, and it was hard very often to make the man understand that what I wanted was what he cared most to say. But when the right man once got that into his head something good came out of it...

Hence my general idea that the *Monthly* editors should simply, in the main, offer a medium for and so encourage expression. And the mechanics of it are easy and interesting. You make a list of the men who can write, in college and out. Then you divide them up among you; see them; don't tell them what you are up to; but draw them out. Everybody has some pet thought or theme or feeling. When you have found out what it is, consider whether it would be suitable for the *Monthly*, and if it is—order it. And anything is suitable for the *Monthly* that is interesting to the world; and each editor is to regard himself as the whole world: whatever will interest him, involuntarily (not as an editor, but as a human being) will interest the rest of us human beings. That's S. S. McClure's rule for his manuscript readers, and it is founded on sound psychology...

Yours to command,
Lincoln Steffens

Paris, April 8, 1919

... Hoover had made to House a proposition to feed the Russians... The problem was to take all the blooming philanthropy out of the thing and make it a simple proposition to stop fighting on both sides and begin to trade. The in-

invitation to lunch with Hoover was a chance for me to prepare his mind to give up his charity and come to business. I do not yet know what his purpose was with me. I must ask Baker. But the meal began badly. We had never met before, and he was evidently prejudiced against me or the Bolsheviks. He was not friendly at all. He asked wild and angry questions and I, surprised, answered patiently for a few minutes, then he flashed: "Well, but can those Communists make a go of their fool system?" Baker looked troubled at me, and I guess I was pretty warm, but I held on. I said I was there to report facts, not to prophesy, but if he wished to look ahead into the unknown, I would like to get his criterion of what a "go" was. And I rammed into him this question: "Suppose that after two or three hundred years of the communist system, the world should break out into a world war, kill off twelve millions of men and then come to a peace conference as incompetent, sordid, and warlike as this, would you say that Bolshevism was a go?" He seemed to get that, completely, and after it we talked well together, down to an agreement to work unitedly for what Bullitt and I were working. Hoover sees things pretty much as A.'s other engineering friends see them—as trees walking. There is more vision, there is more idealism and also more realism at Moscow than there is at Paris. I wish I could tell you all about it. A book is forming in me: the end of an era. This is the apotheosis of Righteousness, the most tragical comedy of all history. It is the end, not the beginning of something. But something is beginning also, and that also I have seen and I want to see more of it . . .

Paris, April 13, 1919

. . . But all that Paris means today may be summed up in the observation that it shows a world of wants brought face to face with its ancient, bunk ideals. After Moscow I can see this very plainly. There is the same conflict there. That is the reason so many socialists and radicals cannot go along with the Soviets. Communism is not what they expected; the Labor Dictatorship is not their idea of Democracy. Nor is it mine either. But I learned long ago the lesson so many are suffering the tragedy of learning now. Things are not what they seem. The Messiah may be a carpenter instead of a King. Heaven is paved with shell holes, not with gold, as they said.

We are going to have a League of Nations, weak, wrong, capable of great abuse; and we shall get a peace also, full of dynamite which will burst into war—unless—there is something else in sight. The rulers of the world have sat here with the problem of human living before them, laid out on their table by the tragedy of war. That should have opened their minds and hearts too and led them to tackle the job in some new, big way. They wanted to. There was good will here. But their old bad habits of mind, their fixed attention upon things they do not really want, their age, their education—these have made it impossible for them to do their work. Even Wilson couldn't. Even he did not have knowledge enough, and of the right kind, to proceed to the removal of the causes of our troubles. So they have failed. They have the appearance of success, but—they have failed. And it does not matter. The problem will be solved. Other, newer men, with a fresher culture—the men I have seen lately—they will have their turn now. And they are on the job. Their minds are clear of all the trash which blinds these Paris Conferees. They know that liberty, democracy, fraternity—all these lovely old desires can come only after men have made sure that there is food enough to eat, safety for them-

selves and their children, warmth, shelter, work and full pay. And these are the things they are after. They know what the price may be: sickness, death, civil war. How we have been working for the past two weeks to break the line of that civil war! Well, we haven't done it. We still may. But I begin to doubt it. I think now that the stupid war is inevitable all over Europe. But also I am content to let Nature take her course. I am sure of the future, and I realize now what a very low stage of development Man has arrived at. It does not matter much what happens to us now. We are not worth worrying about. They see it so in Moscow. Everything there is for the children—all the best food, all the heat, all the art, theatres and education, because the world is to be for them. The adults have had their day. They have wasted it. They have taught themselves rotten lies. We are all crooked and of no value. Nature is to scourge us off the earth to make way for the children who are not to be good or rich or educated, but merely natural, busy, joyous. After what I saw there, this all seems foolish, incredible, worthless. Let it go the way it wants to go . . .

The Getaway, Carmel
September 28, 1933

To Edward A. Filene

Dear E. A.

. . . As to my ideas on mass-production and profits, what I said must have been satire. I see all the dumb employers and business men around here, opposing the NRA secretly, because they have their hungry eyes on cash, not only profits, but cash profits. Not an inch of foresight.

If you'd read my old book, "Moses in Red," you see that God moved the Children of Israel around over the desert till all the old people had died; then, and not till then, he let the younger generation go on into the Land of Promise. Not one, not even Moses, that had been slaves in Egypt, was allowed to cross over in.

And you'll see that Soviet Russia will bloom only after all the old Revolutionists who lived under the Czar are dead. I might make an essay of that . . .

Yours affectionately,
L. Steffens

The Getaway, Carmel
May 5, 1934

Dear E. A.

. . . The President is trying to induce these business men to work (together) in their own long range interest, voluntarily. I don't see how he can do it. They are formed by their experience under the Old Deal. That did not work. It's over. But they are not minds; they are habits, and they can't see that that old experience did not work. Their instinct is to repeat . . .

Hence, I think that Roosevelt, who can learn, will have to drop his experience in voluntary co-operation under capitalism and proceed to apply force—to them. And that is Fascism! Which is hell. But it is inevitable under our old set-up. For we won't, we can't step over into the only system in existence that can manage abundance . . .

Affectionately,
Steff.

The Getaway, Carmel
May 9, 1934

Dear E. A.

. . . As I watch him (the President) here from my bed, and you, it seems to me that you are trying to persuade a lot of hogs to eat decently out of the trough, with their

snouts, without getting in with all their four feet. And you can't seem to put it over on them. The Chamber of Commerce doesn't know what you're talking about, either of you. Of course not. They have always been in the habit of getting their food in a certain way and they don't understand how otherwise to get it.

Let's put it this way: The President has devised a plan to save them from themselves and proceed to do business in their long range interests. Voluntarily. He wants them to do it of themselves. He has said that if they cannot do it thus voluntarily of themselves he may have to apply compulsion. Their conduct is such that, viewing it from here, one would think that they wanted him to use force. . .

I think your job is to understand this very sympathetically but with a very wide open mind which never should forget that the President himself calls it experimenting. So go ahead and experiment but don't let the failure of an experiment break your funny heart. And do not be impatient with us radicals because we hold up the real test of the experiment. We do know, better than you, the power of old business in the executive, legislative, the judicial, the police and the social department of the real government. I, for example, don't believe you can make the old system work at all. But I'm very sympathetic with your experiments, your attempts to make it go.

What amuses me most however is the dramatic situation: The President is trying also to maneuver a revival of business. Every time business gets a little better I observe that businessmen become a little more cocky and impossible. Every time, in other words, you put a little more feed in the trough, they try to get a few more of their pig's feet into it.

Yours affectionately,
Lincoln Steffens

September 10, 1935

Joseph R. Boldt, Jr.
Dear Mr. Boldt:

. . . I had come to regard the New Capitalism as an experiment till 1929, when the whole thing went over the top and slid down to an utter collapse. That was clear to all. I went to New York to hear the semi-scientific captains of industry say in words and facial expressions that they did not know what had happened or what was to be done about it. They did not understand their own experiment. Then—not till then—did I give up—and turned to see what else there was. Well, I had been to Soviet Russia and, as I looked us and the Russians over, I saw this that appealed to me:

The Russian Revolution had abolished all those privileges which, in this country, balked all reforms. Gone! All gone.

So I said out loud and to myself, the Russians have it. And that, in a word is about all I have to say today. The Russians have it—to get, and they can get it all, because they have got rid of the obstacles. No private banks, no railroads run for profit, no business ditto.

I am not a Communist, but I am a follower of the Labor movement into that party and into the revolution which the capitalists are making . . .

. . . Our old culture is finished, we all have got to turn to welcome the new culture, which covers everything—the arts, science, business, life."

Yours sincerely,
Lincoln Steffens

APPRECIATIONS

(The following letter was sent to Harcourt, Brace and Co., Steffens' publishers on the publication of the Autobiography.)

San Quentin Prison
June 2, 1931

Gentlemen:

The middle of April I received the "Autobiography of Lincoln Steffens" in two volumes. On the flyleaf of volume one was written: "To my friends J. B. and Matt., from their friend, Lincoln Steffens, New York, April, 1931."

I have paid a tremendous price to be called a friend of Lincoln Steffens—denied twenty years of freedom—and though the Christians and the Gods of finance and industry decree that it be twenty more I consider the price dirt cheap.

Steffens has ordinary horse sense. I am very sorry I cannot say this about the brains of the country. I would only lower the morals and standards of the poor old horse, and there are only a few left. Steffens is endowed with an abundance of vision. He not only thinks; he sees. Vision is life.

Every serious-minded student and all the producers who produce the necessities of life can improve their cholored minds in reading the two volumes by Lincoln Steffens. He has the All-American slant of things, and is a genuine friend of all mankind.

Detained,
(signed) J. B. MacNamara, 25314

(And this is the most recent letter received.)

Miranda, California
October 1, 1936

"Reading the 'Autobiography of Lincoln Steffens' almost four years ago was an adventure that has colored all my life and thinking since. It held the excitement of mind-opening discovery, led by the golden thread of growth which strings together the rich and varied incidents of his career. The feeling of warmth and charm was there too, as if one's friend were revealing Truth, and its discovery, in an unusual human life. I am nearly fifty, but the panorama of that book seems to me to hold, above all, hope and inspiration for youth.

To the alert and candid, searching mind of youth, it seems to me, three things are sought most earnestly—facts, human sympathy, or goodness, and the ways of growth. So Lincoln Steffens has been and will be the prophet of youth. He faced facts, saw into them keenly, and interpreted them fearlessly as he saw them at the time. And his way was one of ever learning. Fear of inconsistency was too petty a thing for him, as it is for honest youth.

Then his portrayal of people was the very opposite of the cataloguing of a narrow, set mind. He felt and saw into the background for motives and reasons. Good and bad were certainly not fixed terms in his ledger . . . He gives a sense of reality and hope to the reader. This is happiness for the normal young person who, also, likes all kinds of people, or at least wants to understand them truly.

And all this spells growth—the ability to keep on growing! What few later articles of Steffens' I've been able to see, were not at all surprising in their increasingly hopeful tone, inspirational to the young. So I feel that as long as the history of his day and ours lives—and far into the future, Lincoln Steffens will be a force for truth and progress—he will surely carry on in the attitudes and the work of our young people everywhere. One prophet has been honored in the innermost circle of his own country . . ."

(Mrs.) Beulah Whipple Smith

GOD LOOKS AFTER HIS OWN

MIRIAM ALLEN DEFORD

LIKE I always said, if you have faith in the Lord, He will get you by. Like that time I was busted in Seattle. All I had left was a two dollar bill, and I went into a cafe for coffee and, and I'll be darned if the cashier didn't give me change for a twenty. They ain't so used to bills up there, you know; use mostly silver. You can bet I beat it out of there in a hurry; didn't dare go near the place for a week. It was all right, though. Next time I looked in, they had a different cashier. Every way, the Lord takes care of you, if you believe in Him.

Another time, I didn't know which way to turn. It was after I got fired from Woodyard's because that louse Freddie Leonard saw me borrowing some paper and stuff from the stockroom. He ran sneaking to the boss, and I was thrown out on my ear. I needed some dough quick till I found another job, and I needed to get Freddie Leonard if it was the last thing I did. I couldn't figure it out myself, so I did what every good Christian ought to do with his problems—I took it to the Lord in prayer. "Oh God," I prayed, "help me to avenge Thine enemies." And He did. Simplest thing you ever heard of. I just wrote a letter to Freddie's wife. I told her I had some information it was her duty to know, about her husband and somebody else, but I was a poor man and if it was worth fifty dollars to her I'd spill it. I'd known for years about Freddie and the Warren girl—he'd told me about it when we used to be friends, used to come up to my room and tear his hair and tell me how he couldn't break loose and how he'd die if his wife ever heard about it—and I knew she had the fifty, too, for their kid was supposed to have an operation and she'd borrowed the money from her father. It was an awful unpleasant interview, with her crying all over me and then calling me names, irresponsible like; but as a religious man I couldn't condone adultery, could I?

There were three good consequences to that little move: first the Warren girl got a black eye when Mrs. Leonard landed on her, second Freddie's wife left him for good, and third and most important, I got the fifty. The kid died, but it probably would have cashed in under the operation anyway. Any of these atheists tell you there's nothing in prayer, you send them to me. I know.

So now the other day, when I was flat broke again and not a dime in sight, I didn't worry for one minute. I knew the Lord would find me a way out. And sure enough He did—just worked out the plan for me and put it right in my lap.

This Communist fellow had the room right next to mine ever since I moved here, over two years ago. At first he used to try to pass me some of their filthy propaganda, and ask me to go down and listen to them spiel, and all that kind of thing, but I never took a tumble to him. I was born a God-fearing, patriotic American, and please God I'll die one. If they don't like things in the land of liberty, let them go on back to Russia or wherever they come from, and see how they like that. I heard this fellow Carveth Wells talk once on the radio, and believe me, some of those loud-mouthed boys would get an awful jolt if they once went back to see what's become of the old home. My Uncle Sam is good enough for me. If we've got to have any change, I believe in sharing the wealth. It's a dirty shame Huey Long was bumped off—

he was the man for me, every time. "Every man a king" sounds a darned sight better to me than having to call myself a protarian or whatever the word is they have for it.

Well, to get back to this present situation, I'd often thought of turning this guy Lufe Kennedy in to the cops. But I couldn't see what there was in it for me except the bother, and you couldn't scare him with jails or third degrees anyway—he'd been in and out of half a dozen jails, in strikes and whatever. A regular criminal, him and all his crew. So I let him rave, and just took it out by going into his room sometimes when he was out—the same key fits them both—and looking things over for future reference and picking up any loose change that was lying around in his bureau drawers or anywhere so it wouldn't be used to further any of his nefarious schemes.

So, getting back to brass tacks, here I was needing some money bad. And then the Lord handed me my chance right on a silver plate. One afternoon last week I'm sitting in my room, waiting for the fool landlady to go out, because she kept pestering me about a measly few months' back rent, when all of a sudden there's a knock on the door. I laid low, thinking maybe it was her again, when a strange woman's voice says, kind of breathless, "Comrade Kennedy!"

I opened the door then, and there stood a dame holding out an envelope to me. Like a school teacher she looked—nothing you'd want to be seen out with, and forty if she was a day. "Is this Comrade Kennedy?" she says, kind of doubtful. "Sure is, sis—I mean comrade," I pipes back. "Here," she says, sticking the envelope right in my fist. "This is for the Herndon appeal fund. I read your editorial, and I just couldn't stand it. I've been saving to get a set of teeth, but I've got a job and I can wait a while. He can't."

"Why," I begins, wondering if I was supposed to say thank you. But she breaks right in.

"I wanted to hand it to you personally," she goes on, sort of flushing up. "I never met you, but I always read every word you write in the paper. They gave me your address at headquarters. The woman downstairs told me second room down the hall, so I knew you must be here."

And with that she beats it like somebody was after her. The damned fool—she was so flustered she couldn't even count! My room's the third door down—the first is the bathroom.

Well, sir, I looked in that envelope the minute I'd locked my door, and what do you think was in it? Eighty-seven dollars and fifty cents!

And here's a kick—do you know who this Herndon is, that she gave up her store teeth for? A nigger down South—believe it or not a nigger!

She never even told me her name, and if she ever met Kennedy anywhere and talked to him about it, and he said anything to me, all I got to do is tell him they're both crazy and I'll hand him in to the cops if he don't let me alone. Who'd take a Communist's word against mine, anyway?

I give thirty dollars to the landlady on account and I'm sitting pretty on the rest. Yes, sir, place your faith in the living God. He always looks after His own.

WHY A WRITERS' CONGRESS

MICHAEL GOLD

IN the past two years, there have been congresses of writers such as the one about to open in San Francisco. They are a sign of the times; this perilous, chaotic period of change, when a great decision must be made by the world: for progress or for eternal reaction. Everywhere the writers, the men who must handle ideas, the men who formulate truths and announce decisions, are demonstrating their faith in progress by means of these congresses.

What does such a congress do? Waldo Frank and I were the American delegates to the International Writers' Congress in Paris last Spring. There I saw what such a congress can do.

Meeting in a city that seemed to be on the eve of a fascist revolt such as that which is now decimating the Spanish people, a great seriousness hung over the sessions. The shadow of the barricades fell across the speakers' platform. Especially among the French writers, men like Henri Barbusse, Andre Gide, Andre Malraux, Louis Aragon, Jean Guehenno, and even the old Platonist, Julien Benda, one felt the high momentousness of the hour.

Their speeches were no idle exercises in rhetoric. They were the speeches of men making their intellectual testament before the world. These men were casting in their lot with the French people. If a French Hitler arose, they would not and could not surrender to him.

There were delegates from many lands. The German delegation included such writers as Henrich Mann, Ernst Toller, Lion Feuchtwanger, Egon Erwin Kisch, Anna Seghers, and Johannes R. Becher. Among the British delegates were John Strachey, Aldous Huxley, E. M. Forster and James Hanley. There was a large Russian delegation, among whom one might name Alexei Tolstoy, Michael Koltzov, Vsevolod Ivanov, Boris Pasternak, Ilya Ehrenbourg, and the great Persian poet-laureate of the peoples of the Near East, Lahuti. Writers also came from China, Australia, Czecho-Slovakia.

There was utter freedom of discussion. Here were men and women of every creed—Catholic writers like Lenormand, mystic Zionists like Max Brod, Socialists, Communists, God-seekers and atheists, pragmatists, Platonists, and materialists—anarchists and democrats.

Diversity of land and creed and temperament—many differences were revealed and debated at the congress. On one thing all this many-hued assemblage found unity—and that was, fascism. From a hundred different angles, each testified to his fear that fascism would destroy what was most sacred in the philosophy of the different writers.

And this was the first lesson of such a congress: it is no steam-rollered affair, it is not an attempt to change the beliefs of any writer. No, it is an honest attempt to achieve a united front of all who hold the liberty of the creative spirit dear, and who have better hopes for the human race than the medieval darkness and war of the Hitlers and Hearsts.

A partisan congress, yes—but one that is spiritually partisan, that is united to defend all the cultural values that come down to us in the great line of the Renaissance. The modern intellect realizing it is in danger of destruction from a bloody tide of the new barbarism—fascism.

Another thing accomplished by such a congress is that it clarifies the mind of many of its participants. They come in a skeptical vein, as did Aldous Huxley; and they leave, under-

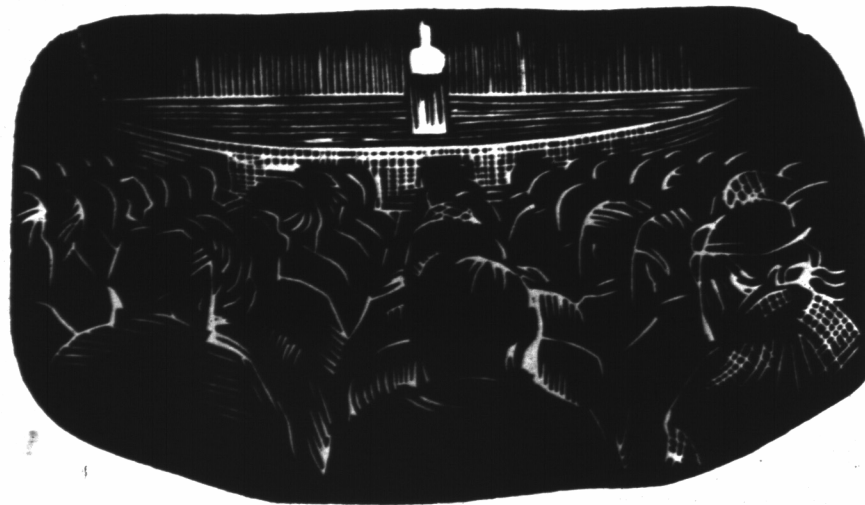
standing at last, however vaguely, that their party is not that of the fascists. Mr. Huxley delivered a rather frigid and academic paper at the Paris congress; but he returned to London to help organize a British Writers' Congress, the one from which H. G. Wells took his "walk," (Mr. Wells has always been his own writers' congress, and will never break the habit, one fears.)

At such a congress, the writer groping with the confusing technical problem of how to handle the raw, bewildering life that changes so violently around our ears from moment to moment, finds strength and clarity in discussion with other writers in like difficulties. Yes, I believe a congress like this will help any writer to write—learning that others face the same problems, he learns that his own individual complex is a universal one. He understands himself better and his place in the modern world.

And lastly: such congresses have a great political importance. Writers have a position in every community far beyond their own estimate. They shape opinion. Each writer influence hundreds of other minds—he is a key man in modern society. And the majority of the best writers in every land are gathering in the camp of anti-fascism. This is one of the heartening facts of the modern struggle that was made apparent at the Paris and London congresses; and the one in New York.

Now the Western writers are meeting to join the great company of those who will not submit to a bloody dictator and his insanities. Surely it is the camp where Western writers, inheritors of the great democratic tradition of Mark Twain and Jack London, undoubtedly belong.

I am living again on the Pacific Coast. Around 1924 I worked for two years on San Francisco and Oakland newspapers. I wrote some local poetry then and was even included in an anthology of California poetry. I am a Western writer only by adoption, I suppose, but I can feel the high beauty and terror and epic power of this region. I wish I could be present at this congress, but at the Paris congress I met a young Frenchwoman and married her. Now at the time of the San Francisco congress she is having a baby. This child, whose career opens between two writers' congresses, may be born, as Ella Winter threatened, with a pen in his (or her) hand. May it be an anti-fascist pen! And may the spirit of brotherhood, courage and faith in the American people hover over the writers' congress in November, and make it another milestone in the world battle of creativeness against negation, freedom against fascism.



WESTERN WRITERS' CONGRESS

THE WRITERS' CONGRESS which opens in San Francisco next week will be a timely clearing house for all the practical and some technical problems which face the writer today. Sara Bard Field touches on some of these in her book review in this issue. This beloved California poet, devoted all her life to liberalism and freedom, in art as in life, will deliver the opening address to the congress at Scottish Rite Auditorium on November 13th at 8:15 p. m. and will also lead off the round table discussion on Poetry at the California Club on Saturday night. Most of the poets represented in this issue, and many others, will take part in this seminar. Upton Sinclair, with a vast experience of his subject both from the literary and political angle, will deliver the keynote speech of the congress at Scottish Rite, on "The Writer Against Reaction."

A new and unexpected feature of the Congress will be a collective paper on screen writing, composed of ideas of a number of Hollywood writers including Robert Tasker, author of "Grimhaven," Sam Ornitz, author among other works, of "Haunch Paunch and Jowl," Gordon Kahn and others. This paper will be read by John Bright who wrote "Public Enemy" and has been long a successful scenarist. "Movie" papers will also be read in round table discussions by Guy Endore, author of "Babouk," on "Hollywood and Fascism" by Nathanael West, author of "Miss Lonelyhearts," on "Makers of Mass Neuroses," Bud Schulberg, editor of the Dartmouth College paper, on "Motion Pictures and the Left Critics," Viola Brothers Shore, novelist and playwright on the "Rise and Fall of the Screen-writers' Guild," Lucita Squier on "Soviet Movies." Many of these will also take part in other group discussions of the novel, play writing, radio writing, the social sciences, journalism, etc.

The journalism round table is expected to be extremely to the point in the urgent dilemma of today: representatives of many papers will be present, including Max Knepper and Upton Sinclair of the *Epic News*, Rob Wagner of *Script*, Paul C. Smith of the *San Francisco Chronicle*, Miriam Allen deFord of the *Federated Press*, Paul Jordan-Smith of the *Los Angeles Times*, George P. West, Arthur Caylor, John D. Barry and others of the *San Francisco News*, L. E. Claypool, columnist of the *San Diego Sun*, Dolph Winebrenner and Gilbert Brown of the *Los Angeles Illustrated News*, Oliver Thornton of the *United Progressive News*, journalists from Seattle, the staff of *Pacific Weekly*, and others.

Professors who will deal with writing and the social sciences will include Harold Chapman Brown and Harold Hand from Stanford, Paul Radin, Max Radin, Professor Whipple and others; we may hope to get guidance on how to make the sciences clear to the lay reader without indulging in "jargon" and without appealing to prejudice. John D. Barry has threatened to read a paper on simple writing.

One paper expected to excite attention will be read by a man who has just returned from ten years in San Quentin where he became friends with political prisoners: his paper will deal with "Literature and the Criminal."

PROGRAM OF WRITERS' SESSIONS

Registration begins at 9 a. m. Sessions opened at 9:30 by Col. Charles Erskine Scott Wood.

SATURDAY MORNING:

Session One: THE WRITER IN A CHANGING WORLD

New Frontiers in Literature; Democracy, Fascism and the

Writer; Writer's Place in Society. Papers by Upton Sinclair, Haakon Chevalier, Harry Carlisle. Discussion.

Session Two: CENSORSHIP. SUPPRESSION. FASCIST TRENDS
Civil Rights and Literature; Censorship; Fascism and Text Books; News Suppression; Racial Problems. Papers by Carey McWilliams, Holland D. Roberts, R. L. Burgess, Loren Miller, others. Discussion.

SATURDAY AFTERNOON:

Session Three: ECONOMICS OF WRITING PROFESSION

Writers Projects; Academy of Arts and Letters; World Encyclopaedia; Soviet Writer; Endowments and Prizes; Papers by Writers' Project spokesmen, Alexander Kaun, Harold Salemsen, others. Discussion.

Session Four: ECONOMICS OF WRITING PROFESSION (cont.)

Publishing World and Western writer; Magazines; Pulp writing; Newspapers; Labor Press. Papers by Miriam Allen deFord, George Shaftel, Jake Zeitlin, Gilbert Brown, others. Discussion.

SUNDAY MORNING:

Session Five: CREATIVE PROBLEMS AND CRITICISM

Social and Economic themes in fiction; Popular Writing; Young Writers' Problems; Sentimentality in Writing; Source Material, etc. Papers by Charles Bonner, John Steinbeck, Margaret Shedd, William Saroyan, John D. Barry, others. Discussion.

Session Six: "Writing and Propaganda"

Literature of Social Protest; War and Fascism: Poetry and the Social Scene; Pulp and Popular magazines and Propaganda. Michael Gold, Humphrey Cobb, David Raffelock, Kenneth Rexroth, others. "Collective Papers on Motion Pictures" read by John Bright. Discussion.

SUNDAY AFTERNOON:

Session Seven: ROUND TABLE GROUPS (according to canvas of writers).

Novel, Poetry, Short Story, Pulp writing, Social Science, Prose Non-Fiction and Journalism.

Participating: Myron Brinig, Nathanael West, Marie de L. Welch, Lawrence Clark Powell, Elsa Gidlow, Clarkson Crane, Fulmer Mood, Harold Hand, Harold Chapman Brown, Clara Weatherwax, Helen Hoyt, John Bright, Robert Tasker, Charles Bradford, Charles Bonner, William Saroyan, Miriam Allen deFord, Redfern Mason, A. E. Anderson, Ella Winter, Hildegard Flanner, Janet Lewis, Robin Lampson, David Grokowsky, Peter Quince, Michael Quin, Lloyd Thompson, Edward Radenzel, Giuseppe Facci, Leslie T. White, George West, Lucita Squier, Paul Jordan Smith, Paul C. Smith, H. L. Davis, Viola Brothers Shore, Harry Carlisle, Tess Slesinger, Irwin Shaw, others.

Session Eight: ORGANIZATIONAL QUESTIONS

Reports from Writers' organizations. Discussion. Final Business of Congress. Closing Address: "Defense of Western Culture and Progress."

Adjourn 6 p. m.

REGISTRATION—RESERVATIONS

REGISTRATION OF WRITERS: \$1.50 for entire congress exclusive of dinner. Also includes reservation in special section for the Friday night meeting, and Saturday night symposium (if registration is made before Friday, November 13th) entertainment and dance. Western Writers' Congress, Room 214-604 Montgomery Street, San Francisco. Checks and money orders payable to Western Writers' Congress. Telephone EXbrook 4479.

CAMPAIGNING FOR BROWDER

Impressions of an Apostle to the Middle Classes

GRANVILLE HICKS

IN New York City it is not difficult to believe that America is on the verge of going Communist. If your life is organized that way, you can live in a Communist neighborhood, shop at stores that are staffed or even owned by Communists, have a Communist doctor and dentist, buy the *Daily Worker* in the subways, work in an office or a factory with Communists—and go to a Communist meeting every night in the week. If you lean towards literature, you can find discussions of Communism going on at the most esoteric cocktail parties and in the editorial sanctums of the most respectable publishing houses. And if you lean towards religion, it is perfectly possible to listen to a sermon by a Party member.

It is not so easy to deceive yourself 160 miles North of Manhattan. The very small town in which I live is only ten miles from the Massachusetts line and about fifteen miles from Vermont, and it is much like rural New England. Political campaigns are conducted around the stove in the village store, and the participants are all on one side—all for Landon. There will certainly be some votes for Roosevelt cast in the town on election day, and, if this year is like 1932, there will be a few votes for Thomas and Browder. But the Democrats are silent, and the Socialists and Communists are so far underground that, although my politics are well known, I cannot find them. I have a neighbor who, in what he probably regards as reckless moment, told me he had voted Socialist in every presidential election since 1904. I think he is going to vote Socialist this year, but he has a picture of Landon pasted up in his window. He and the other left-wingers of Grafton confine their radicalism to the secrecy of the voting booth.

Why the Republicans have such a majority—and so effectively silence the minority—I do not know. Republicanism, in this far from prosperous community, seems chiefly a disease of stagnation. Although I cannot understand it, I am glad that I have to confront it, for we might as well examine the disease in its most advanced stages. These people owe very little loyalty to the existing social system, and yet they defend all the dogmas of special privilege. Grafton and all the little upstate communities will come out strong for Landon on election day, and their votes may be decisive in a decisive state. Why people so belligerently vote against their own interests is a mystery, and one that we shall have to solve.

It is different, of course, in Troy. Troy, only fifteen miles from here, is a run-down industrial community, which entered upon its decline long before the depression. Politically it is Democratic, controlled by a remarkably efficient machine. But it is not merely the machine that carries Troy; the majority of the working people genuinely believe in Roosevelt. When a news-reel is shown in a forty cent theatre, there is considerable applause for Landon; in a twenty-five or fifteen cent house it is all for Roosevelt.

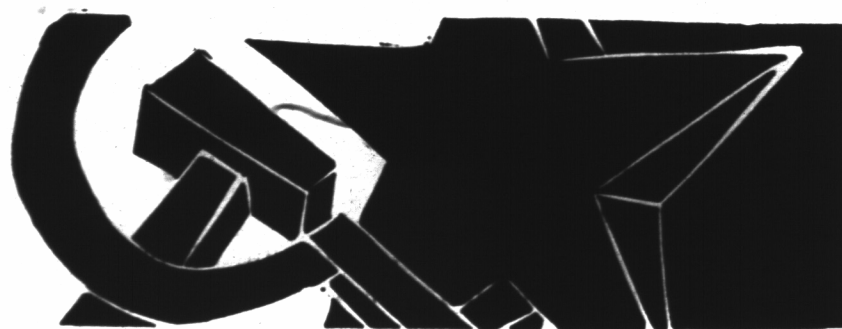
The working-class belief in Roosevelt is, certainly, an aberration, but it is easier to understand than the farmers' devotion to Republicanism. If the little clothing factories of Troy are organized today, it is largely because of the impetus given by the NRA. This awareness of the importance of the government's role in organization may lead these workers be-

fore very long to realize that they have to have a party of their own. In the meantime they are standing fast for Roosevelt, and I doubt if one of a hundred was frightened by the notice about the Social Security Act they all found in their pay envelopes this week.

What they think about Communism is difficult to tell. For weeks the Communist Party has been distributing literature at the gates of the collar shops, and, though we notice that the leaflets are not thrown away, we cannot tell what effect they have. Most of the factories have been organized within the past two years by the Amalgamated Clothing Workers Union, but the largest, Cluett Peabody's, is an open shop. Yesterday noon we brought our campaign to a close with a street meeting at the corner of the Cluett factory. At first there were only a handful of listeners, but the section organizer, who was the first speaker, has a magnificent voice and a fine sense of humor, and soon he had fifty or a hundred in his audience. But it was an audience that preferred to stand inconspicuously in distant doorways, where factory superintendents could not see, and my own attempt to reach these long-distance listeners was a failure.

My work has to be done indoors, and as a rule, apparently, with people of the middle class as audience. This Fall I have been holding a class in Troy on the principles of Communism, and, thanks to the publicity Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute gave me by firing me, there has been an average attendance of from sixty to seventy. Perhaps a third of these are workers, more or less radicalized. The others are professional people, small shopkeepers, and students. They almost never take part in the discussion, though they like to ask questions if they can get me alone. They are unsure of themselves, and very troubled. It seems to me that the lower middle class is an extraordinary sensitive barometer. It is not a class that can be counted on to make a revolution, but it responds sharply to revolutionary conditions. If we do not win over these bewildered people, or at least neutralize them, as the phrase goes, Fascism will get them.

Albany, just across the river, is more of a middle-class city than Troy. A large proportion of its inhabitants work for the state, and they are just secure enough not to want to risk anything. Tonight I am speaking at a Communist Party rally, and I predict that the attendance will be small. I hear rumors that state employees often get together and discuss Communism, but they are not likely to appear at a Communist meeting. If Troy suggests the possibilities of work with the middle class, Albany indicates that those possibilities are limited. It may be harder, under present circumstances, to interest the factory workers, but, once they are won over,



they are more militant and more dependable. Yet, even in Albany, one feels that so much more can be done with the white-collar people than we are doing.

This feeling was intensified last evening when I spoke in Hudson, forty miles down the river. Although it is an industrial city, my audience was again made up of middle-class people. After the meeting, for example, I was introduced to three lawyers, two newspapermen, and a clergyman, fair representatives, I think, of the one hundred and fifty persons who came to the rally. The advertising had stressed my respectability, and respectable people had come, rather timidly, to see if they could safely find out what it was all about. As I spoke, it seemed a lethargic and uninspiring audience, but the questions were intelligent, and almost all of them were fundamental questions about Communism or about the capitalist system.

That is what the middle class is interested in. A fortnight ago I spoke for the Young Communist League at Cornell, not on politics but on literature, and four hundred students and teachers came to the meeting. Not a word was said about Browder, but Marxism is an integrated world-view, and, wherever one starts, one reaches the center. After I had talked for an hour on contemporary American literature, the questions largely concerned the nature of Marxism, not only in its literary but also in its philosophical and finally in its political implications.

In Syracuse, where I spoke the next night, a concert by Fritz Kreisler offered formidable competition, and relatively few students and teachers attended the meeting, but during the day I had a chance to talk with several groups of students in their fraternity houses. Here I found the Landonite majority, and discovered that they wanted to discuss, not the campaign but the simple root ideas of Communism. There was the student who brightly said that, if all property were divided equally, in ten years wealth would be in the hands of the able few. There was the student who repudiated Hearst's statistics on starvation in Russia, but knew somebody who knew somebody who had been to the U.S.S.R. and what he could tell! There was the student who knew, because his contractor father had told him, that all union organizers were racketeers. And there was the student who closed the discussion by saying, "Well, if all Communists were like you—"

One thing I have learned by speaking in a dozen communities, and that is that this presidential campaign has been, from the educational point of view, a tremendous success. Everywhere I went people spoke with marked respect of Browder's broadcasts. Communism has long been something for middle-class people to discuss, but most of them have shied away from the Party. The last few weeks have, I believe, made a great difference in that attitude. I do not mean that many of them are ready to join the Party, but in a little while they may be willing to work with it. And we are not merely breaking down prejudices against the Communist Party: we are destroying the terribly dangerous barriers between the lower middle class and the working class. Today, for example, in Troy, where restaurant owners are bitterly resisting the efforts of their employees to form a union, I know at least a score of middle-class persons who, instead of being indifferent or hostile as they would have been six months ago, are giving the union valuable support. It must be very satisfying to be a working-class organizer, and to know that one is in the very forefront of the struggle, but our marginal skirmishes may contribute to the final victory.

SONGS BEFORE SIXTY

UPTON SINCLAIR

WAR NEWS

Mercy dangles from a tree,
Pity from a wire;
Truth is sunk beneath the sea,
Love is set afire.

See hyenas horrified
In their jungly den;
Hydras all their heads do hide
From the deeds of men.

LAMENT

Of trouble I have had my share,
Sorrow is as free as air;
But wisdom flows a sluggish spring,
And men repeat their blundering.

FOR CHILDREN

The crocodile upon the Nile
Eats his dinner without style.

And the bum in the slum
Takes his victuals as they come.

See the man with the pan
Digging in the garbage can.

All is well, God's in hell,
Ding dong devil, toll the bell.

REAL ESTATE NOTE

(February in Pasadena)

O the Spring is here
So early in the year;
Do come and see
What a Garden can be!
How the loquat leaves
Are thick as sheaves,
And the jasmine hedge
Is a golden wedge;
And the sturdy shoots
Of the bamboo roots
All work their way
To the light of day;
And every twig
Of the mission fig
Is a bright green candle
With a long grey handle;
O come and see
Nature's usury—
The interest rate
On our real estate!

CONVERSATION

CLARA WEATHERWAX AND GERALD STRANG

CLARA: Gerry, why don't we have more singable songs? It can't be because composers aren't interested in making them. And yet for singing, look what we've got to choose from: either popular stuff with little or no meaning, or complicated modern things that stump even a highly trained singer. There are just a few modern songs that are simple and memorable. Why don't we have more?

GERRY: Well, for one thing, a song has to have words, and we only find a suitable text once in a blue moon. A song is a sort of accidental collaboration between poet and composer. Because it is accidental, the texts worth setting to music are usually so complicated that the music has to be complicated, too.

CLARA: But there's lots of poetry that doesn't seem complicated. What's the matter with it?

GERRY: Plenty. What is simple for the poet may be complex for the composer. If poets had a general idea of our problems, and observed a few simple restrictions, what they wrote wouldn't make such obstacles for us.

CLARA: The root of the matter is that because of its lack of a conceptual vocabulary, music needs more extension to express an idea than poetry does.

CLARA: In plain English, you mean . . .

GERRY: Exactly! The poet can express an idea in a few words. The musician has to suggest it with sounds having no specific meaning. Naturally, he needs more scope if he wants to be understandable.

CLARA: Then if I have an idea, say, that "a storm is coming," I can show it in four words; but if you're making a song out of it, I'll have to repeat myself to give you time enough to build up your musical storm.

GERRY: Not necessarily. If you write a whole poem about a storm, I'll have a whole song to express storminess in. But if you change the subject or mood two or three times in a short poem, I won't be able to keep up with you.

CLARA: You'll have to have such changes in a long poem though.

GERRY: Yes, but they ought to take place in symmetrical sections, if possible, since the musical form has to be rather simple. Of course, in the art song anything can be done, but we're talking about simple singable songs. To be widely understandable, the music has to be formally simple, and to use a good deal of repetition.

CLARA: Poets can certainly handle subject and mood to fit those requirements. Now how about the kind of mood, and its degree of intensity?

GERRY: Naturally, the broader and simpler, the better. Music can justify a good deal of melodrama! And as to intensity, you can't make strong music for a weak feeling. Emotionally moving material permits the degree of extension the composer needs.

GERRY: It does. The best material has short lines—three to four accented syllables per line.

CLARA: What about unaccented syllables? They can vary, I hope.

GERRY: Sure. They offer no difficulty at all. In fact, you can take much more liberty in this respect than most poets

ever allow themselves. But if various verses are to be set to the same melody, they ought to be fairly similar.

CLARA: Sounds like commonsense to me. All the lines don't have to have an equal number of stresses, obviously, but they ought to have some pattern.

GERRY: Right. Alternating four and three stress lines have been used for centuries in ballads. They're easy and natural for a composer to handle.

CLARA: But look! I like hearing ballads sung, only it seems funny to think of making them nowadays. They don't fit in with our times particularly. Strict ballad-meter isn't natural to our modern way of talking. Just think over the way we speak. Our American language is more nervous and irregularly stressed than the English of the old ballads.

GERRY: I know it. That's one reason poets write as they do. And for similar reasons, musicians don't write the simple periods of the folk music and early classical music. But we do need to write as understandably as they did in those days. That's why we need to search for simple forms suited to our ways of thinking and feeling. They may be as syncopated as we like, but they must be understandable.

CLARA: Now we're getting down to fundamentals! How are we going to make our things understandable? We ought to use subjects close to everyday life. We—

GERRY: Sure. And form is just as important. A musician's best way of being understandable is to repeat ~~perhaps~~ varying the repetition to sustain interest.

CLARA: Well, the most obvious way for the poet to repeat is by the use of a recurring verse, a chorus. But repetition isn't so necessary in the words. We can vary them, and repeat the form.

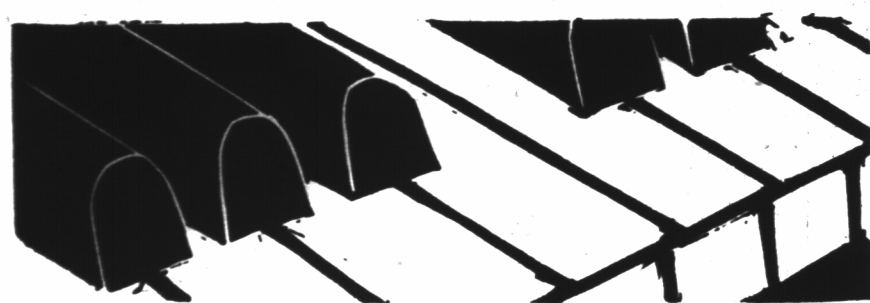
GERRY: Exactly. That gives the musician a chance to repeat, especially if the poet can sustain a mood through several verses. In a longer work, there can be a recurrence of mood and form after a change has been made.

CLARA: Isn't it strange how hard it is to see the obvious? No wonder it's an accident when poetry fits these specifications.

GERRY: Most of the poets seem more interested in being poetic than in being understood. They've been writing for a small select audience, without realizing until now that there is a sensitive, eager, intelligent audience running into the millions for them to win.

CLARA: And this wide audience could be extended through songs, which can reach thousands who might never read a poem.

GERRY: Plenty of composers could write fine music of this type if they had sufficient impetus. Hanns Eisler's work with Bert Brecht suggests the possibilities.



THE HELL IT CAN'T

WINTHROP RUTLEGE

● THEATRE

WITH its production of "It Can't Happen Here," the Federal Theater has reached the zenith—at least in the West—of its efforts at socially significant achievement. The stage adaptation of Sinclair Lewis' novel may—and does—have its faults, but under W. E. Watts' knowing direction at the Columbia it drove home a message which should sear its way into the consciousness of every American who still retains any fragment of the work of the founding fathers of the republic.

Forgetting its faults for a moment, one realizes that the rich value of "It Can't Happen Here" lies in the fact that it Americanizes fascism. That is to say it translates the book-burning, browbeating, castor-oil-dosing spirit of the vilest of the European dictatorships into the unmistakable idiom and custom of America. Buzz Windrip historically is Hitler and Mussolini but in atmosphere he is Huey Long plus a Hearst editorial plus the folksy viciousness of the now sainted Annie Laurie. And Doremus Jessup is the breathing spirit of America's peace-loving middle class which craves books and firesides and picnics and all the other quiet and decent joys of life, but which, while revering the spirit of the founders of the nation, forgets Jefferson's warning that the tree of liberty needs periodic refreshing by the blood of patriots and tyrants.

The result is that Windrip hypnotizes a hungry populace with platitudes and promises, gets himself elected and turns the country over to his riffraff army called the Corpus. Jessup, at first amused, then outraged, becomes an "undesirable" citizen and then an underground conspirator in the cause of the resurrection of democracy. It is a tragic situation, and one that would be too fantastic even for the theater if it were not such a threatening probability.

One of the play's biggest faults is its confusion as to the class character of fascism. It shows you worker, bourgeois and industrialist alike as the victims, thus conveying the notion that the Corpus are a class apart—a mushroom growth without historical background. This is indeed too bad, for it needs to be shown that fascism can only come into power when a desperate capitalism chooses it as the last alternative to rule by the people. This, perhaps, was a fault of the book as much as of the play, but it seems to me the stage version made another error which was an unfortunate excursion away from the meaning of the novel. Doremus Jessup is pictured as standing on the platform while Windrip speaks, and is seen wavering in his allegiances through nearly one third of the drama. In the book nothing of the sort occurred. Jessup opposed Windrip from the start, and only when the demagogic windbag's election became a certainty did he halt his attacks in a sort of vain and wishful hope that the new president might not be quite so bad as he sounded on the platform.

But these are minor complaints in the face of the facts that "It Can't Happen Here" is a work of vast social significance, that it eloquently disproves the declaration of its title and that it points out the sinister peril of lulling one's self to sleep in the dubious assurance that America is immune to the social ills Europe is heir to.

Watts chose an able cast and directed it well. In lighting, settings and continuity the production rolled off in true pro-

fessional precision. Will H. Vedder did a touching job with the character Jessup and Ruth Saville, as the only assured character in the play, made Lorinda Pike a lovably caustic soul. Helen Cross, remembered for her skilled direction of Raymond Dannenbaum's mass chant in "Bury the Dead," also proved herself a worthy actress as Jessup's daughter-in-law, who dies almost gloriously in the end, after having wiped out a high official of the fascist state. John Grover did handsomely by the character of the worthless Shad Le Due, capturing completely the tawdry soul of the pool-hall loafer who will be bullying civilized folk when—or if—the epidemic of fascism spreads to America. Benjamin Legere's Windrip was a fine reproduction of the hoarse windiness of some future Hearst-inspired Huey Long who may yet catch America unawares and strangle the spirit of freedom. There were other worthy performances, too, by Richard Allen, Master Dion Chesse, (a truly remarkable child actor) Edwin MacDonald, John Cluxton and Edgar Regan.

The production was a world premiere, staged on the same night in nineteen American cities. It deserves to be seen by 19,000,000 people.



THE POET AND PROPAGANDA

SARA BARD FIELD

● BOOKS

THIS challenging book* is unique in its composition as in its subject matter. A swift, autobiographic preface gives the reader the key to the passionate anti-individualism of these highly individual poems. Shorter notes of the purest, most incisive and memorable prose introduce the several sections. A few important poems from former volumes have been included to re-enforce the new poems. One such, called *Revolution*, written in 1919, proves Miss Taggard's present convictions are not of recent birth. She is merely more able, as St. Paul would say, to "give a reason for the faith" that is in her. What she formerly knew, through intuition and sensitive poetic emotion, she now knows with her mind, clarified by her personal history.

For one who has closely followed the earnest work of this important poet, the present volume has a *vale-ave* quality. It turns with finality of last farewell from poetry concerned with the life of the individual, and from the manner in which such poetry was written. It hails, in morning salutation, the group life. It glorifies the integrated many. Where it casts a passing glance at the individual, it is a glance of disdain. It wholly repudiates isolation and introspection. Even *Try Topic*, a completely achieved poem of great beauty, written in a period reacting to intense personal emotion, is here re-introduced as a poem "for sick society." It is as if this poet would like to have the best of her past work read in the light of her present enormous persuasion.

*CALLING WESTERN UNION, by Genevieve Taggard.
(Harpers) \$2.00

These poems are far from being "words for the chisel" as Miss Taggard called a former volume. They are words for the boxing gloves. They are fist thrusts. They are forthright, immediate, alive, inelegant, realistic, dynamic. Sometimes, as in *At Last the Women Are Moving*, they communicate the poet's feeling in a moving manner. What is the reason, then, this strong, yeasty stuff, so often fails as pure poetry? The whole stormy debate about propaganda and poetry is involved in an answer to that question.

Wm. Rose Benét suggests the failure lies in the fact that "you can not write the best poems to order—to anyone's orders." Yet these poems in question are written only under that order which produces all poetry—self-compulsion. Miss Taggard writes of starving people in the midst of plenty, of striking men and class-conscious mothers, of babies dying of malnutrition and of silly, bourgeois sentiments, because the cruelty and inequality of life outrages, the beauty of organized purposeful movement toward social justice excites and impels her pen. If she often fails to achieve poetry of this material, it is, in this reviewer's opinion, not because she is under eager self-orders but because she is too emotionally involved with her compulsion. She is an aching, thrilling part of her subject matter. Her vision is myopic because she holds the beloved object too close. Both the bitterness and the beauty excited by the toilers is still "working" within her. It groans like wine fermenting in the vat.

Therefore she makes poetry where she least (at this period of her creative life) wishes to do so. Her most sympathetic readers may desire to find her highest utterance in the social matter dearest to her (and to them). Yet, suddenly, turning the pages we unexpectedly come upon:

The dandelion is frayed
And puffed on pipe.
Summer is delicately made
And the season ripe.
See the sun on the grass fade
From gold to green stripe.

This is not about dying children, but dying summer. Children are nearer to us, and dearer, than summer, yet the unexplainable reaction is upon us. We feel, not with heads, but with all-being as Emily Dickinson described, that we have touched the elusive essence of Poetry and not "emotive prose." In *Lark*, which concludes the book on a triumphant note soaring above a black hour, we repeat this experience. One such achieved revolutionary poem justifies the unachieved ones. Perhaps the others have a place in the literature of our changing society, somewhere between prose and poetry, a place unnamed, undefined, the peculiar, inevitable literature of rebellion, of transition, the essential war-cries of the Opposition to the fascist foe.

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the facts in this outspoken book

Spain In Revolt

by Harry Gannes and Theodore Repard

"Bound to result in a better understanding of the issues at stake, and to clear up some, at least, of the misapprehensions resulting from the exceedingly untrustworthy and misleading news dispatches published in both English and American newspapers."—*Herschel Brickell, N.Y. Post*. \$2.00

ALFRED A. KNOPF

ONE DETECTIVE WHO "SAW"

ME, DETECTIVE, by Leslie T. White. (Harcourt Brace and Co.) 302 pages. \$2.50

ONE day a few years ago a young man walked into the house wanting to meet Lincoln Steffens. He had been a police investigator, he said; so of course I knew what his purpose was (it was just after the general strike terror and cops meant only one thing those days). But it turned out that Leslie White wasn't particularly interested in politics—at least not national politics. What he wanted to understand was the ethics and meaning of the politics he had come up against in his brief but crowded police career. He had met all of it, in many different guises, and unlike others of his profession, he had tried to understand and integrate his experiences, dovetail them into a comprehensive whole. He couldn't; he was baffled.

For months he would come from Santa Cruz and sit at Steffens' bedside telling these stories of his; and I, who still find it hard to visualize something of which I have not had some personal experience, sat entranced. I had wondered with Robert Forsythe why cops were (if at all), how they could act as I had seen them act, on the waterfront, in our little agricultural strikes; how they reconciled their positions as Representatives of the Law with the crooked and underhanded if not brutal things I had learned they do daily. White couldn't "get" my puzzlement. It was so obvious to him, so everyday. Finally, we told him, he had to write that book; and he did; and here it is.

In one way the book is a disappointment; it states the problem again; it shows how men act in certain circumstances, the copper on the beat, the ward politician, the big boss, the crooked newspaper reporter, the shyster lawyer, the reform district attorney and the "bad" district attorney: but you get here no final answer; rather you get that sense of frustration you get from so much "descriptive" muck-raking. But that's not the author's fault. White in his relatively few years of detective work found out very much what Lincoln Steffens found in cities, states, businesses, Europe, wars, revolutions and peace conferences: that there are "good" and "bad" men, yes, but they aren't what make the wheels go round; and the "bad" men, frequently, like Crawford the political boss, are the decent ones, while the "respected pillars of society" do the dirt. Asa Keyes did a good turn in the interests of J. B. McNamara once; but Keyes had accepted a bribe and so he was "bad"; and he went to San Quentin. You see private business at the bottom of crooked politics, private business ruining personal idealism, honesty, sincerity, whether in cops or their victims. That's why White left police work; he couldn't stand seeing that any more.

White learned the power of money in political (and police) life. "You can't convict a million dollars" he finds, and after a reform house-cleaning: "The revolution was over: it was high time to mollify the really powerful interests."

You are overwhelmed in these stories of celebrated or unknown police cases, from the Doheny and Jake Lingle murders, the Pantages and Love Mart cases, to the unknown murdered prostitute and the little colored boy shot by a policeman while rushing down the street in terror (and for whose murder the cop was acquitted)—you are struck again by the overwhelming immense structure of hypocrisy in our life; and the utter helplessness of the victims. You can't convict a million dollars—and you practically can't acquit the penniless. Careers are wrecked to satisfy the working of the machine; in this book, as in few other yarns, you get the terrible human waste.

White gets it said, all of it; and if you have somewhere to place your facts you have to take them and live with them.

The value of this book is the same as of Paul de Kruif's "Why Keep the Alive?" White, the young idealist, found it

all different than he had been taught—but he found it out for himself. "With this understanding my malignity waned. I came to the conclusion that we hate only the thing we do not understand, and, therefore, fear. It was a very elementary lesson, but finding it out for myself seemed terribly important."

This book is for the reader terribly important, too.

ELLA WINTER

IN SEARCH OF CO-OPERATION

CO-OP, by Upton Sinclair. (Farrar and Rinehart) \$2.50

HIS worst enemy never said Upton Sinclair wasn't a good novelist, and he hasn't lost his touch. Perhaps the explanation is that he has never written a book that didn't embody a social idea. Some of the ideas have been more notable for their author's enthusiasm than for his good sense, and, particularly in times as precarious as the present, confusion can be even more dangerous than open opposition to democracy and civilization. Nevertheless, it has been Upton Sinclair's strength that he believed in human rights and justice and knew how to present his belief dramatically. In this novel he shows that he still has that strength.

The book is the story of how a self-help co-operative began and grew and was likely to perish. It takes eighty-five characters, including the President and Mrs. Roosevelt, to tell it, and it ends with the question unanswered, naturally enough, whether the President will save the country by supporting production for use or let it go to the devils of fascism and revolution. Stated thus baldly the innocence of the thing may seem appalling. Yet along the way there is much that is full of the finest human juices, mixed in with a reasonable amount of romantic nonsense.

Mr. Sinclair assures his readers in a Foreword that everybody and everything in the book actually happened, and I am quite prepared to believe him. I have met the counterparts of many of his characters, even including a fabulous butler by Wodehouse out of Barrie. If Mr. Sinclair's Communists are a little more sectarian than real, the answer may be that his opportunities for knowing them have been a bit curtailed.

The adventures of all these people are so authentic and moving that it is easy to forget that Mr. Sinclair himself has almost no hope to hold out for his honest, human, hard-working, co-op members except the thousand-to-one chance that the President will keep the Relief Administration from wrecking what they have so patiently built up. When such swell people work so hard only to get slapped around, it does seem pertinent to suggest that their magnificent spirit (and Mr. Sinclair's literary gifts) could be better used in a more realistic cause.

EDWARD LIVINGSTON

TIME'S PALIMPSEST AND THE MIND

NEW POEMS, by Frederick Mortimer Clapp. (Harper and Brothers) \$2.00

TWO themes are curiously interlaced in these poems; there is the ceaseless questioning of an acute mind determined to capture by some desperate agility what it foreknows is beyond the mind's orbit, an ultimate solution of the riddle of its being; and there is the Swirl of Dust from all the continents, "wind-sifted into permanence" by all the centuries, drifting indifferently across the pulsating life of our day—

"Burier and patient etcher of thigh-bones
and skulls and anklets of hammered gold
that tinkling whirled on soft ecstatic feet,
your husky whisper has outlived their drums,
their pipes that put a frenzy in the blood."

Even his least bright trinkets have more permanence than the eager breath of man:

"Silence, dust, the silent centuries
passing;
bead after blue glazed bead
dropping in the darkness,
as thread on rotting thread
gave way on their funeral canopies . . ."

Shuttling back and forth through the entanglement of past and present the mind leaps up from "Peering at Pharaohs" in the museum mummy cases to a droning airplane overhead, "the steep spiral climb of that mechanic hawk." It must even plunge into the future as the diorama turns, and watch another Hardy painting "the dismal Dynasts of our time," while the eternal chorus mumbles that our hard case is just another "unreckoned incident of the all-urging will."

Mr. Clapp's long view of the inconsequent repetitions of history might benumb the partisan ardor of a political crusader, but it seems rather to have accelerated his own chosen activities, as traveller, air-man, student of languages and literature, in particular of the Fine Arts, and latterly as the organizing force behind the great Frick Collection in New York City. His keen observation in these varied fields has filled his poems with arresting images, and symbols derived from many cultures and races; only the limits of the reader's own study set a boundary to their evocative implications.

The mood in these poems ranges from the gay exuberance of "Insect Analogies" to the almost unendurable poignancy of the love poems; from the derisive "History" (a wry aside by one well-practiced in nimble annotating) to moments quiveringly aware of the shimmer of broken reflections and the secret muffling of fallen snow, even of the tension of that low stone wall sagging across icy fields. Then on some culminating day of Spring the mind intrudes its question, could not this beauty last forever

"if in my mind the cause

of withered and fallen petals were sifted away?"

The frequent recurrence throughout these poems of the words silence, hushed, soundless, quiet, whispering, and so on, suggests an acute ear outraged by the brazen clangor of a mechanical age, and a mind seeking solitude which it can find only within itself. But the vertiginous solitude of an analytical mind "building slowly on the wild chaos of being" is not a comfortable habitat; this reviewer thinks a bloody brawl in the market-place would be a cozy escape from the realization of the essential separateness of each self, and its unsolvable dilemma. Mr. Clapp has here set down his reactions to this prospect, and our literature is enriched by so lucid a record of a mind exceptionally sensitive, exceptional in discipline and experience. To me this is one of the most interesting books in years.

UNA JEFFERS

ONE DOCTOR AND ECONOMICS

TO RAISE THESE HALT, by Fred Rothermell. (Lee Furman, Inc.) \$2.50

THIS tale depicts the intimate personal and professional life of a general practitioner. Dr. Norman Dour, son of a country doctor in Vermont, takes over his aging father's practice together with his father's ideals of selfless, compassionate service. His wife, Virginia, lacks the doctor's sympathetic tolerance with the country people who often fail to pay their bills. She prevails on her husband to move to the city, after nine years of country practice, during which time he has saved nothing. In New York the financial struggle for a non-commercial-minded man, becomes particularly aggravating; the wife leaves him to marry another physician of less humanitarian ideals but better business acumen.

There are some excellent passages in the book and as a physician I confess to the real pleasure I felt in recognizing certain episodes in the early pages. The author apparently wanted to present the conflict between a physician's ideals and the facts of economic life today. But he gets badly mixed both technically and psychologically when he works out this conflict in the story. My enthusiasm drooped when I found the good doctor treating exophthalmic goitre with thyroid gland; the author apparently received his medical information second hand, and this deficiency becomes more apparent as the tale progresses.

The climax of the story involves a criminal abortion performed by Dr. Dour out of compassion for an unfortunate department store salesgirl who gives hints of suicide rather than face the world with an illegitimate baby. Artificial abortion is a problem which almost daily confronts every physician in general practice. Whatever his moral convictions he knows it is a criminal offense. He runs no risks by refusing—there are plenty if he consents. Money was no temptation to Dr. Dour. He had been in practice many years and had steadfastly refused to let his sympathies prevail over his better judgment—until this one occasion. Just why this occasion differed from the many others the author does not make clear. Having decided to help the girl, Dour proceeds to commit every possible stupidity until the reader loses all sympathy with him. His blunders cannot be excused on the ground of his bewilderment; I suspect that is what the author intended to convey. But the doctor's is not a passive bewilderment; he takes steps to cheat the law by committing perjury, giving fake names, signing a preposterous diagnosis to the death certificate; even making arrangements with the undertaker before the patient dies! All this seems out of character with the Dr. Dour the author has built up; he becomes now

both a coward and a dunce. He gets himself more and more involved; the incidents become less convincing. One gets the impression the author has hooked a fish too large for his tackle and skill, and the effect is not one of pathos. It is a pity because Fred Rothermell had a fine book at the end of his line.

R. A. KOCHER

UNUSUAL JEWISH NOVEL

THE BROTHERS ASHKENAZI, by I. J. Singer. (Alfred A. Knopf) \$3.00

THE Jewish novel, as we in America have come to know it, is usually a long family saga that emphasizes the nobility of the race, its exoticism and beauty. If Jewish characters possess eccentricities they are not too unpleasant and do not veer too far in the direction of the unpleasant. We know the long chronicles composed by G. B. Stern, a good English writer, as also fitting into this category. Gentile readers are always ready to believe the worst about Jewish people, so let us sweeten the pill, so to speak. In other words, Jewish authors usually contrive to make their Jewish characters a little better than they ought to be.

I. J. Singer, the Polish-Jewish author of this new novel published by Alfred Knopf, is disdainful of the old formula. His picture of Jews, poor and wealthy, living in the manufacturing town of Lodz, in Poland, cuts sharply beneath the skin; he shows us how Jews can be avaricious, dirty and cruel as well as idealistic, hygienic and kindly. There is hardly one Jewish character in the book who bears the least resemblance to the characters we have come to know in Lewisohn, Fannie Hurst or G. B. Stern. Mr. Singer sees them clearly, and though he is never contemptuous or condescending, he is always well-balanced and sane in his observations and appraisals. It is a harrowing portrait, or rather, series of portraits he gives us here. Max Ashkenazi, older than his twin brother by a few minutes, is lustful after wealth and power; he subscribes to the Jewish ritual merely as a matter of form in order to realize his great ambition of being the leading manufacturer in Lodz. He is not above thievery and hypocrisy; he deliberately starves his workers and persecutes them when they protest his tyrannies. His brother Yakob, easy-going, good-natured as he is, still is not above marrying for money and then throwing away the wealth he has got from the sweat of workers on prostitutes, good-for-nothings, clothes, champagne, enormous feasts. And even the idealistic Marxians of the novel seem to suffer to no good end—for Mr. Singer sees corruption in revolution as well as in things as they are. All together, characters and situations, build into a book of power and fascinating detail. Mr. Singer is a Jewish novelist who refuses to weep crocodile tears for his characters, and that is a rarity in contemporary Jewish fiction.

Originally written in Yiddish, "The Brothers Ashkenazi" has been translated from that bastard tongue into English by Maurice Samuel. It is possible to say sixteen different things in one sentence in Yiddish, and a Jew will understand what you are talking or writing about. But the same sentence in English is full of contradictions and inconsistencies. That is why some of the characters and situations in this long novel are noble in one paragraph and loathsome in the next. Paradoxically enough, these inconsistencies are taken care of within the Yiddish idiom, but Mr. Samuel hasn't been altogether successful with them in English. In the original Yiddish, there is no doubt that the leading characters were both good and bad and yet consistent, all-of-a-piece characters. In English you are often confused; the tone breaks; the characters are inclined to contradict themselves too frequently.

Yet despite this idiomatic difficulty, "The Brothers Ashkenazi" has breadth, sweep and great force. It is certainly

Joseph Henry Jackson

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MYRON BRINIG

SONG OF HUMANITY

THE PEOPLE, YES, by Carl Sandburg. (Harcourt Brace & Co.) \$2.50

CARL SANDBURG has written a poem of 286 book pages that will please no cult or sect and that belongs in no category of form. It will offend the formal mind and it will overwhelm the fastidious. It is a series of psalms to the people, interspersed with anecdotes and folk-sayings, written from the intimate knowledge that is sympathy and love. It is the people made articulate in their own speech and in the songs of a poet. It is a great affirmation of the worth of "people like leaves out of the earth in Spring, like leaves down the Autumn wind," of the millions who hope, dream, blunder, suffer, learn little by little, know in their blood "We have come far and we are going farther yet." It is a poet's answer to the contempt of a Mencken and the scorn of a Jeffers. It is an eloquent arraignment of the congeries of rackets that is present-day business enterprise. It is a lashing judgment on the men and the system that throttle production and keep the people needy, fearful and enslaved. And it is a moving testimony to the courage and endurance of suffering, puzzled, groping men slowly gathering their forces for the moment when they will turn and destroy the cheaters whose lies they no longer believe and whose exactions they can no longer endure.

"what is it now the people are saying
near enough to the ribs of life
and the flowing face of vast waters
so they will go on saying it
in deepening paths of action
running toward a slow dim decree:
'You can do this because
you can do nothing else?'"

Finally it is a mine of Americana, a vast collection of shrewd and salty folk-sayings, tumbled in page after page in defiant disregard of form by a poet who glories in sacrificing the amenities of his craft to his insistence that we shall hear the voices that come direct from farm and work-bench and kitchen and city street, from rooms of death and birth, from wherever courage, laughter, dreams and hope touch the lives of common men and women with glory.

This is the best of Sandburg, distilled from all he has seen and felt and been. The aesthete and painter of still life is here lost in the earlier Sandburg who learned more from Halstead Street and West Washington than he could ever get in the studios of Boston and Chicago's North side.

"The People, Yes" bogs down as poetry in long stretches where Sandburg's zest as a collector of folk-sayings smothers theme as well as form. But even as it bogs down it achieves a cumulative effect that perhaps could be got in no other way. And it testifies touchingly to the humility and depth of Sandburg's love.

Mellow, dubious, patient, the Sandburg of this book is not for those who see the poet as bugler to the revolution. His certainty stops when he has affirmed that the people will find their way, overthrow their oppressors, go on and on to the goal of their bravest dreams. For Sandburg, neither Marx or Stalin has said the last word and Utopia is not around the corner, to be gained by following a certified chart drawn in Russia. There is scorn and indignation aplenty, but the revolution he foresees will be the people's revolution, made in their own time and in their own way, and Sandburg is

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their minstrel and their psalmist, not their gad-fly nor exhorter. He leaves that for younger, hotter-blooded, more exigent men. What he does is to reaffirm and redocument, in a poet's moving terms, the glory of common human life, and to rekindle in his readers that love for humanity in the mass that must give the impetus to action. If Sandburg himself is bemused and philosophical, he provides the reassurance and the inspiration for those who are not.

GEORGE P. WEST

ELEGY FOR LIBERALS?

THE RISE OF LIBERALISM, by Harold J. Laski. (Harper & Bros.) \$3.00

HAROLD LASKI's book traces the rise of liberalism up to the nineteenth century and only touches on its fate since then. Nevertheless, the present retreat of liberalism is foretold by reference to the sources of the liberalist doctrines. Liberalism arose with the coming to power of a new class and a new economic order. When the Middle Class became the dominating one of society, it framed a structure of laws and ethics to replace the authoritarian attitude of feudalism. "It could not," says Laski, "... escape the obligation to erect a particular necessity into a universal creed." By way of justifying unhampered trade and freedom from intervention by church or state, it brought into being democracy and secularism without consciously seeking either. The by now fatal contradiction lay in the circumstance that liberty and tolerance were guaranteed only insofar as they did not conflict with the interests of private property: men were granted political equality but not equality of bargaining power. The rise of the doctrine of liberalism had been secondary to the rise of capitalism itself, and the early traders and industrialists could be lavish with their promises to humanity when they needed the alliance of the propertyless to effect a change in the political order, and when the industrial proletariat did not yet exist in numbers large enough to threaten them from below. In the course of his study Laski points out that the founders of liberalism sometimes suspected the disparity between the interests of private property and the public good. Adam Smith, in whose "Wealth of Nations" liberalism received an almost complete expression, was suspicious of the disharmony between the interests of the business man and society as a whole. Laski continues the earlier work of Jaurès and the Soviet historian, Tiuneniev, in uncovering the remarkable insight of Barnave, a minor participant in the French Revolution, whose "Memoirs" prove that some of the spokesmen of liberalism realized that the needs of the Middle Class were the fundamental issue, and necessarily limited the extent of freedom. For the most part, however, the founders of liberalism did not think it necessary to go beyond the primary demand for unmolested private enterprise: it was assumed that the guarantee of private property would solve all the ills of state and society. It has been said that the eighteenth century, and not an earlier time, deserves to be called The Age of Faith.

It has been too nearly reflexive for us to think of our liberal traditions, and the ways of our minds in accepting and defending these traditions, as natural to the human constitution. Now it becomes apparent that liberalism was the creation, the rationalization, of an economic order that replaced an anti-liberal epoch. When the basic need of that order, the free pursuit of gain, is threatened, the liberal spirit is thrown overboard. Samuel Butler says somewhere that what is taken as a matter of course by others around us, we take as a matter of course ourselves, and save on grave occasion do not stop to consider the origin of our behavior. That we are beginning to question the source of our concepts of liberty and equality is a comment on the gravity of the occasion; whether we

will find a way to guarantee the continuance of these ideas in practical form depends on the ultimate victory of liberalism's earliest rival, socialism.

JOHN HART

IS VERSE TOO PRECIOUS?

POEMS, by Robert Fitzgerald. (Arrow Editions) \$2.00

TOM, by E. E. Cummings. (Arrow Editions) \$3.00

PUBLIC SPEECH, by Archibald MacLeish. (Farrar & Rinehart) \$1.00

FIFTY years ago reading poetry was recognized as a legitimate and perhaps enjoyable pastime by a large number of people. Today that audience has dwindled until it includes chiefly a few aesthetes, the poets themselves and their friends. Literary critics, among them Mr. Edmund Wilson, have conjectured in no humorous tone on the possibility that poetry may completely disappear.

There are many valid reasons for thinking so. Any reviewer or consistent reader of newly published poetry will find these reasons beautifully bound and printed upon his desk. The recently published "Poems" of Robert Fitzgerald are a good example. Mr. Fitzgerald, despite fine technique of imagery and rhythm, gives us poetry so intimate in nature, so peculiarly of that language which exists only among friends, that the thought or emotion behind it is practically not understandable to anyone else. As far as may be discerned we gather that, even though all is pale dust and disillusionment, we must go on, live, suffer—with heads up and a Harvard accent.

More briefly, but with equal obscurantism, E. E. Cummings attempts in "Tom" to shock his reader by furious word-clash-

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HARPERS

ing into an understanding of his own private hell. Our quarrel here is not with the somewhat dubious effort at verbally choreographing "Uncle Tom's Cabin" for a ballet, but with the obscure allegorical symbolism meant to be a philosophy.

The answer to this problem is not simple. Through evolutionary circumstance the poet has been driven further and further into the dangers of writing only of himself. Radio, movie, and the novel have combined to take much of his traditional subject matter (therefore his audience) and have produced it in such manner as to more adequately satisfy the emotional needs of the public—good, bad, or indifferent as that may be. Left to himself, he wrote of himself, with a due and somewhat cancerous regard to the new discoveries of psychology on the real nature of the individual.

The one healthy token of poetry's return to popularity and life is the recognizance by some few poets that it, poetry, must be both social and moral—social in the widest and truest sense of the word, the relationships of people to each other, moral in that it has something to say about the truths of those relationships.

Typical of poetry in this respect is the recent "Public Speech" of Archibald MacLeish, containing subject-matter which in a lesser poet would read very much like an essay or pamphlet. Mr. MacLeish is too fine a poet to fall into such error. It is impossible to deny the moral strength and beauty of the following lines from "Speech to those who say Comrade:"

The brotherhood is not by the blood certainly:
But neither are men brothers by speech—by saying so:
Men are brothers by life lived and are hurt for it:

Realizing that poetry necessarily remains a very personal expression in a very personal idiom, he does not harangue his reader with the slogans and arguments of any theory or organization. He merely points out, moralizes if you like, the truths existing within the relationships of people. Such seems to be the future development of poetry.

But while it is all very well and good to say flatly and distinctly that poetry has reached a crossroads, to read the press is to discover further that anything from the lettuce industry to the situation in Spain has also reached a crossroads, and somebody somewhere better do something about it—quick. We agree. Somebody better.

EDWARD BRUCE RAMSAY

OUR CONTRIBUTORS

ELSA GIDLOW was born in Yorkshire, England, but has lived in the United States most of her life. She has published short stories and verse, and one volume of poetry, "On A Grey Thread." Miss Gidlow has for the last twelve years lived in San Francisco, and at present is working on a novel.

JAMES R. CALDWELL is in the English department at the University of California and has written several studies in English literature.

ROBINSON JEFFERS has long been recognized as one of America's leading poets. His last volume of poetry was "Solstice," his best known, "Roan Stallion," "The Women of Point Sur," and "Cawdor." He lives in Carmel.

ETHEL TURNER is author of "One Way Ticket" a best-selling novel about San Quentin. She is also a poet of distinction, and is now at work on another novel. She lives in San Francisco.

MARIE de L. WELCH, California poet of French-Spanish descent, has published four books of verse and is now collecting material for a fifth. She contributes to many national magazines in this country and in England.

HILDEGARDE FLANNER is a California poet who contributes to many national magazines. She lives in Altadena.

HAARON M. CHEVALIER author of "The Ironie Temper," a study of Anatole France, is in the French department at the University of California. He has translated Malraux' novels and "The Bells of Basel" by Louis Aragon.

CHARLES ERSKINE SCOTT WOOD, ex-West Pointer, poet,

painter, attorney and lover of humanity, is most familiar to readers for his famous satire "Heavenly Discourse," and for his long poem "The Poet in the Desert." He is at present revising a play, "Circe" and working on a sonnet sequence.

JOHN WOODBURN has worked for publishing houses in the East, for an advertising company, for the NBC, and was once newspaper correspondent for a French expedition to the North Pole—"which never got under way." He was on the staff of the "New Yorker" for a time, and now after two working trips at sea is on the strike committee of the Marine Firemen's Union.

JOHN STEINBECK, who gained his most popular recognition with the novels "Tortilla Flat" and "In Dubious Battle," has also published five other novels and numerous short stories here and in England. A new novel, "Of Mice and Men," will appear shortly.

LOUIS ADAMIC who comes of peasant stock in Jugo-Slavia, is well known as the author of "Dynamite," "Native's Return," "The Cradle of Life" and other books and essays.

ROBERT FORSYTHE is the first American Marxian humorist and a constant contributor to the "New Masses."

LESLIE T. WHITE, ex-police investigator, is author of the autobiography "Me, Detective," recently published. He is at present working on a novel.

MIRIAM ALLEN deFORD is a labor journalist of long standing, and Western correspondent for the Federated Press. She covered the recent Mooney trial.

MICHAEL GOLD is well known as novelist, playwright, critic and satirist. His "Jews Without Money" was a national best seller and he is now at work on another novel in Southern California.

GRANVILLE HICKS is author of "The American Tradition," a volume of Marxist literary criticism, and a biography of John Reed, published by Macmillan. He has also edited a collection of John Reed's "reportage." Mr. Hicks is well known as writer, speaker and literary critic.

UPTON SINCLAIR, whose place in American literature was won with his first great book "The Jungle," has written some forty novels, plays, essays, movies, etc. and is one of the most widely read American authors, both here and abroad. He ran for Governor of California in 1934 and now makes his debut as a poet.

CLARA WEATHERWAX wrote the novel "Marching, Marching" which won the John Day-New Masses prize for a proletarian novel. She is married to

GERALD STRANG, composer of modern music and a member of the New Music Society of Los Angeles.

WINTHROP RUTLEGE is a playwright and dramatic critic for "Pacific Weekly."

SARA BARD FIELD is author of a number of volumes of verse including "The Pale Woman," "Barabbas" (awarded the gold medal of the Commonwealth Club of California) and the just published "Darkling Plain." She and her husband Col. C. E. S. Wood have always befriended and encouraged young poets and artists, and taken great interest in their work.

ELLA WINTER born in Australia and educated in England, has lived in California the last ten years; she is a journalist and student of labor problems and author of "Red Virtue: Human Relations in The New Russia."

EDWARD LIVINGSTON is a research worker and literary critic in San Francisco.

UNA JEFFERS is a devoted student of English and Irish literature and has lectured on W. B. Yeats. She is the wife of Robinson Jeffers.

R. A. KOCHER, who is a practising physician in Carmel at present, graduated from John Hopkins and did research work at a number of American medical foundations, and abroad. He was director of the Grace Deere Velie Metabolic Clinic and is now at work on a book on Food and Society.

MYRON BRINIG has written seven novels of which his best known are "Singermann" and "This My Brother." His most recent, "Three Sisters," will be published by Farrar and Rinehart shortly. He is at work on another novel and is spending the winter in Carmel.

GEORGE P. WEST is a well-known San Francisco newspaperman

JOHN HART was graduated from the University of California in 1934. He writes that he is a student of "the not unrelated subjects of Architecture and Political Economy," and works in a banking house in San Francisco.

EDWARD BRUCE RAMSAY won the James D. Phelan Fellowship for 1936-1937 and is working on a narrative poem "Until The Day Break" which, he writes, "is socially conscious in nature."

THEY TELL ME . . .

THE FOLLOWING letter and poem comes from Marie de L. Welch:
"I'm sending you the poem you ask for, because you say that Steffy would like to have it published. I don't feel that it is a very good poem, or in itself worth publishing. But when Steffy, telling of his last visit to McNamara, said with his characteristic half-ironical, half-tender chuckle: "He asked for Pete. It's Pete he wants to see, you know. He knows I'm going pretty soon—he's counting on Pete," I did, as Steffy would have put it, "see" something. I tried to get it into verse; I don't think I succeeded very well. But Steffy liked the poem, and you ask for it, and so here it is . . ."

LIFE SENTENCE

(For Lincoln Steffens and J. B. McNamara)

He wants your son for a friend
Outside, when you are gone.
You who are free will die
Bring him your son.

He who is walled from life
From death is walled;
You who are free will die;
He will not even grow old.

Bring your son for a friend,
Promise your son's son.
Already it is like eternity,—
The time he's done.

THE NEW MAGAZINE "Mid-West" comes to our desk as we go to press. It is a beautifully gotten up journal, 34 pages, with etchings, sketches and photographs. Edgar Lee Masters has a poem, Sherwood Anderson a letter, Meridel Le Sueur, Harry Thornton Moore, Meyer Levin and others contribute articles, movie, art, book, and theater reviews and the center pages reproduce murals from four mid-western mural artists including Joe Jones, under the caption of "Midwest Artists meet the Censor." A magazine not to miss. Address: 650 Gateway Building, Minneapolis, Minn.

FROM A LETTER from an Eastern traveler:

"We had an unusually nice porter. So I said to him: Do you know about the National Negro Congress? Sure, my mother belongs. Did you ever hear of Langston Hughes? Sure, I've seen him, and I know everything he writes. Do you know who Ford is? You mean Jimmie Ford? Well, I said, I guess he'd be Jimmie. His name is James, and he's vice-presidential candidate. Yes, that's Jimmie. His baby was born at my house. We talked about Negroes organizing and he said they are, fast."

VINCENT SHEEAN will translate Eve Curie's biography of her mother, Madame Marie Curie, the woman scientist of radium fame. It will appear first in the "Saturday Evening Post"; then Doubleday Doran will publish it in book form.

CONTINUING THE precedent it set itself with "Waiting for Lefty" and "Bury the Dead," of publishing the first plays of unknown authors, New Theater will carry in its November issue (out Election Day), a one-act play by A. B. Shiffrin, called "Kids Learn Fast." The play deals with young boys in the city streets and will be presented at special performances late in November by the "kid actors" now appearing in Sidney Kingsley's "Dead End."

IRWIN SHAW, author of the grim drama, "Bury the Dead," has turned humorist. His first humorous piece appears in the November Stage. Entitled "Flash in the Pan" it is a light satire on the opening of a proletarian playwright's second opus.

WHAT-NOTS: The Book Union's selection for November will be "The Theory and Practice of Socialism," by John Strachey. . . . Waldo Frank has finished the first draft of his new novel, which may be ready for publication next autumn. He has an article in a recent issue of the "New Republic" called "Terre Haute Hotel," describing his stay in the Terre Haute jail when he went there with Earl Browder. Frank recently also acted as chairman when Ernst Toller spoke at Mecca Temple, New York, on "Hitler—The Promise and the Reality." . . . Sidney Howard has been signed to adapt "Gone with the Wind" for the screen. . . . The League of American Writers Syndicate reports that well over three million people in the United States and Canada read the labor, liberal and left press. Probably another three million read similar periodicals in Great Britain, Ireland, South Africa, Australia, New Zealand and other English-speaking parts of the world. . . . "The Sunday Worker," whose managing editor is now Myra Page wants stories and reportage—1200 to 2200 words, also short stories of 900 words or less. It will pay for contributions; at present only a nominal sum (\$5 a printed page), but this is to increase with circulation.

ELLA WINTER

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