

# PACIFIC WEEKLY

A WESTERN JOURNAL OF FACT AND OPINION

DECEMBER 14, 1936

**TO GREEN,  
WITHOUT ENVY**

Stephen Seley

•

**SHIPOWNERS  
SIT DOWN**

Robert Holmes

•

**PARIS, NOVEMBER  
23, 1936**

Bertha McCord Knisely

•

**NOTES FROM  
TAMPA**

•

**SUICIDE BRIDGE**

Carey McWilliams



\$3 A YEAR

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# PACIFIC WEEKLY

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Made up by Union Labor

## NOTES AND COMMENT

"**A**s a prisoner for the cause of freedom I would serve the struggle for peace better than as a free man outside of Germany."

This expression of anti-Fascist idealism would be noteworthy no matter who said it, but it means even more when it comes from Carl von Ossietzky, prisoner in Nazi-land since February, 1933, according to a statement issued by the American League Against War and Fascism.

A few days ago von Ossietzky, still in a prison-hospital in Berlin, was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize. Hitler and his cohorts were enraged that this honor should have been accorded to one whom they describe as a "traitor who had been condemned by the supreme tribunal of his land." It is a significant commentary on the cultural and political level of the German Nazis that they characterize him a "traitor" for exactly the same reasons that made him a candidate for the highest distinction in the modern world. The New York Post writes that "peace prizes established by repentant munitions makers are tawdry beside" such a man.

Who is this man whom the Nazis hate and fear and who is honored wherever civilized people are gathered?

As editor of "Die Weltbühne" Carl von Ossietzky upheld the common interests of all nations and fought for general disarmament as the surest way to permanent peace. He also demanded that the munitions industries should be taken over by the States.

In 1931 his attacks upon the development of a German military air force brought him imprisonment from which he was released shortly before Hitler came into power. Immediately after the incendiary burning of the Reichstag he was re-arrested and since that time has remained in various concentration camps. The significance of such imprisonment is well known.

He declined the suggestion made to him to flee before he was imprisoned, because he considered it unworthy to speak from a safe retreat without opportunity of being heard. He answered with indignation the question put to him by an English friend whether, if liberated, he would lend his pen to the Hitler party.

He was general secretary of the German League for Peace, in which position he championed constructive and militant anti-war actions. He expressed his contempt of the statesmen of Europe whose pens, he declared, never ceased to sign peace treaties while they ignored the growing rearmament race among their respective nations. He called for immediate disarmament, public ownership of munitions factories and their control and supervision by the people. He was among the first victims of the Hitler government when it came to power in 1933.

Carl von Ossietzky saw clearly the implication of the turn that events were taking as early as May 16, 1931, when he said: "The reactionary Fascist period lies ahead of us like an evil forest populated by horrible beasts and secret traps. Nothing can be done about it. We must find our way through. In years to come Benjamin Franklin's prophecy will be applicable—'We must all hang together or assuredly we shall all hang separately.'"

**B**ACK in New York after a six week speaking tour of the West Coast, Gifford A. Cochran, secretary of the National Committee for the Defense of Political Prisoners said: "Everywhere I went I was impressed by the growing opposition of the people against the threat of reaction in this country and I am more than ever convinced of the vital necessity for a powerful, nation-wide movement in defense of the victims of this struggle against reaction, our political prisoners."

In visits to San Quentin, Tehachapi and other Western penitentiaries, Cochran met Tom Mooney and some 26 other long term political prisoners serving sentences there. In Portland, Oregon, Cochran met Dirk De Jonge, now out on bail awaiting appeal of a seven year sentence against him on a charge of violating the Oregon Criminal Syndicalism law. De Jonge was sentenced on the sole charge that he spoke at a radical meeting. Edward Denny, who acted as chairman at the meeting, was sentenced to two years on the same charge. The appeal in De Jonge's case is scheduled to be heard December 7th with Osmond K. Fraenkel, New York attorney, representing the convicted men.

**T**HE U. S. Supreme Court announced November 24 that it will review the case of Angelo Herndon, young Negro organizer of the unemployed sentenced to 18 to 20 years on the Georgia chain-gang. The appeal is being taken by Whitney North Seymour, retained by the International Labor Defense in the Herndon case.

On two previous occasions the Supreme Court has refused to make a decision in the case. On the first appeal it refused



by a majority decision to pronounce any judgment at all. A second time it refused to rehear argument.

More than a million people in some 500 cities throughout the United States took part in Herndon meetings on November 30, National Herndon day, it was estimated by the International Labor Defense.

**P**AUL D. PEACHER, the town marshal of Earle, Arkansas, who arrested eight Negroes on a vagrancy charge and forced them to work on his farm, has been convicted by a Federal court jury for holding the men in slavery. Judge John E. Martineau, who sentenced Peacher to serve two years in prison and imposed a fine of \$3500, said, "This is not a lone case in Arkansas. It occurs frequently and it ought to be stopped."

The judge is right. The Peacher case is not a lone case in Arkansas, nor, for that matter, in the other forty-seven states. It is to be hoped that the Government's vigorous prosecution of the case in Arkansas is the beginning of a concerted drive on all fascist-minded officials who, on the vague charge of "vagrancy," violate every principle of American liberty and justice.

**M**AJOR RAMON FRANCO, brother of the generalissimo of the Fascist rebel forces in Spain and until recently Spanish military attache in Washington, began to hire American aviators and bombing planes for service with the Spanish insurrectionists while he was still on American soil, according to Louis Sobol, columnist for Hearst's New York Journal.

A group of American adventurers are now fighting against the legitimate government of Spain under the command of a Capt. William B. White, and the present contact man in the United States is a Major X. According to Sobol (who, apparently, enjoys the confidence of Fascist Franco's associates) Capt. White was in command of a fleet of 10 bombing planes and 15 pursuit planes before a recent air scrimmage in which an unknown number of men and planes were lost.

**T**HE announcement by the Nazi government that Lawrence Simpson is to be released this month is conclusive evidence of the effectiveness of organized mass action. Since Simpson's arrest American liberals and radicals have waged an unrelenting campaign for the young Oregon sailor's freedom. The success of this great protest was achieved with little aid from the State Department. The fact that Hitler was forced to recognize this unofficial demand of millions of American citizens should be an encouragement to these same millions to keep up the fight on every front against the forces of reaction, foreign and domestic.

**H**ITLER's condemnation is good business, says Emil Ludwig. Since he "voluntarily" exiled himself, and Hitler burned his books in Berlin, the biographer says his sales took a big jump in all other countries. The Westdeutscher Beobachter, official Nazi organ, has asserted the writings of Sigrid Undset, Danish novelist and Nobel Prize winner, should "disappear from the columns of German newspapers, from German

libraries, and book stores." The following writers and their works are barred from Germany: Feuchtwanger, Heine, Ludwig, Mann, Mehring, Remarque, Toller, Wasserman, Werfel, Schnitzler, O'Flaherty, Undset, Vandervelde, Doblin, Roth, Hemingway, London, Sinclair Bernard, Dos Passos, Helen Keller, Graves.

**T**HE extent to which organized religion has been drafted into the ugly business of breaking the maritime strike is, indeed, remarkable. "Strikes" remarks the very Rev. Dr. A. H. Wurtele, of St. Thomas' Episcopal Church in Los Angeles, "frequently are caused by foreign leadership among foreign elements in our population and therefore are not a true expression of American psychology..."

"The difficulty with the striker is that he is a narrow-minded with no vision of the whole aspect of business, but only with the thought of his own selfish interest." While in San Francisco, the Church Federation at the "request of the Shipping Merchants' Association" on November 21st, repeated this prayer throughout the city: "Dear Brethren—prayer has not yet been tried, in any definite and united effort, toward the solution of the waterfront conflict. Many other means are being tried without success. Let us try whether God can use our united prayer as at least a part of His program toward justice and peace." In Los Angeles, again, the Times induced Dr. Carl Sumner Knopf, of the University of Southern California, Department of Religion, to dig into the archives and produce paragraphs illustrating how Rome dealt with strikers, the implication being that the Pacific Coast authorities should do likewise. "Upsetting a city was serious business in Roman days," warns Dr. Knopf, "Workers could unite, bargain, protest or strike—but, sedition, rioting, intimidation and endangering public welfare were a bid for prompt official action." Inasmuch as this piece was written expressly for the Times, and in connection with the maritime strike, the inference is inescapable that Dr. Knopf charges the waterfront unions with seditious and riotous agitation. It is, indeed, marvelous that even a professor of religious history could be so mendacious.

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## FIRE AND BACKFIRE

From Hearst's San Francisco *Examiner* of December 5, 1936:

ONE of the State's big guns, a purported confession by Frank J. Conner, was leveled at defendants in the Oakland ship murder trial yesterday—and backfired.

As a result, the defense gained a strategic opportunity to try the Alameda County District Attorney's office on an informal charge of kidnapping and mistreating a prisoner.

The "Big Gun" District Attorney Earl Warren, he who would be governor, tried on December 4 to have one of the legal secretaries from his office, Mrs. Doris Bristol, read a stenographic report of a "confession" made by Frank J. Conner, one of four members of the Marine Firemen's Union on trial in Oakland before Superior Judge Frank M. Ogden.

But the law allows, in such cases, that the defendant's attorney may establish if he can that the confession was not made willingly. So Herbert Resner, Conner's attorney, went to work.

The backfire: Dr. Theodore E. Schwartz, assistant superintendent of the Alameda county hospital, was put on the stand. He testified:

That Conner was brought to the hospital about 10 p. m. on the night of September 3 (the night the "confession" was made). That Conner had a temperature of 101 degrees, a bad cold, and a severe nervous tremor. That Conner still had the nervous tremor the next morning.

Warren himself was called. He testified:

That Conner, arrested in Seattle on September 1, was not booked until after the "confession." That Conner asked for an attorney, but didn't get one. That various members of the district attorney's staff "questioned" Conner.

Then Inspector George Hard of the district attorney's office, gray-haired, took the stand. He made the jury gasp audibly. He testified:

That seven men from the district attorney's office "questioned" Conner from 9 p. m. September 2 until after 2 in the morning, Conner denying flatly that he had anything to do with the murder of George W. Alberts. The two stenographers took down part of the questions and answers.

Shortly after 2 a. m., said Hard, Conner was put to bed. His left arm was stretched out over the side of the bed, and his wrist manacled to a chair.

Resner asked if Hard thought Conner was comfortable in such a position.

"Oh," answered Hard, "if he wanted to turn over, he could have lifted the chair to the other side of the bed."

"Why didn't you take him to jail?" Resner queried.

"Well," said Hard, "Wendelin and I were worn out." (Wendelin being another of the officers working on Conner.)

"Mr. Conner was worn out, too, wasn't he?" Resner persisted.

"No, sir!" Hard responded solemnly.

At 7 a. m., said Hard, Conner was allowed to get up. Oddly enough, he didn't want any breakfast. All that day, he was questioned in the district attorney's office. Then, at about 6 p. m., Warren was informed that Conner "wanted to confess."

On cross-examination, Hard said the chair weighed only about four or five pounds. This, one assumes, is the extenuating circumstance.

Warren contended Conner's nervous tremor was the result of a long spree on which Conner had been before his arrest. But one of the stenographers present during the "questioning" testified that Conner was "very composed" and not at all nervous on that first evening.

The stenographers read in court the portions of the conversation taken down during the long night in the White-cotton hotel. But it seems there is no written record of what happened to Conner between his "sleep" in that bed and the time Warren was called to listen to a "confession."

This, the highlight of the first week of trial of Earl King, Pacific Coast head of the Firemen, Ernest G. Ramsay, Conner and George Wallace, was duly recorded by Bay Region newspapers. It is to be hoped that it was noted by the jurors.

JOHN CHESTER

## TO GREEN, WITHOUT ENVY

IF we are to believe Walter Lippmann and other mouth-pieces of reaction, the current split in the American labor movement resolves itself down to a bitter personal fight between John L. Lewis and William Green. According to these seers and prophets (who, incidentally, predicted the election of Alfalfa Alf) John L. Lewis is motivated entirely by personal ambition and William Green is unselfishly striving to maintain peace in the ranks of labor. Of course, if, as they claim, Lewis is ambitious and that this is a personal feud between Green and Lewis, then it must logically follow that William Green is also an ambitious man. We are willing to concede the fact that both men are ambitious, but we would indeed be blind if we granted that the war between the Committee for Industrial Organization and the American Federation of Labor is a dispute between two men. Mr. Lippmann and Mr. Sullivan and the rest forget 1919. They forget that it was the vacillating craft-unionism of Samuel Gompers that caused the collapse of the great steel strike that year and made it all the easier for the "back to normalcy" boys to give what may have been useful lessons to Hitler and Mussolini. They forget that the normalcy which they took us back to, took us a long way back—all the way to Ulysses Simpson Grant. They forget that it was this same craft-union policy that caused the defeat of the workers in countless other strikes. They forget that, under the chauvinistic leadership of Gompers and Green, such blood-letting of American workers as occurred in Rockefeller's massacre of women and children in Ludlow, Colorado, has been the necessary accompaniment to all labor agitation in the United States since the days of the Knights of Labor.

If Ogden Mills and his cousin Ogden Reid think that through their adopted son, Walter, they can dismiss the C. I. O. by calling its leader an ambitious man, they are showing as amazing a capacity for hindsight as they displayed, though with more subtlety than Mr. Hearst, during the recent presidential campaign. John L. Lewis is an ambitious man, but so is Franklin D. Roosevelt. Roosevelt's ambitions were, at least, in line with the prevailing sentiment to stop fascism. Lewis' ambitions are, also, in line with the prevailing sentiment in the American labor movement for "one big union." If Lewis is ambitious he at least speaks for the rank and file, and not for a high-salaried bureaucracy.

STEPHEN SELEY



# SHIPOWNERS SIT DOWN

ROBERT HOLMES

**A**N employers' sitdown is something rather novel in the field of industrial disputes. However, that is precisely what the shipowners' present actions in the West Coast maritime strike amount to as they refuse practically all efforts to effect a settlement with forty thousand longshoremen and marine workers. Peace is blocked by the "Big Three" Western deep-sea operators, Dollar, Matson and American-Hawaiian whose plan it is not only to resist the new medium demands of the workers, but also to take away the 1934 gains and lay a basis for smashing the unions.

The employers' planned sitdown seems very likely to boomerang right back at them. They had thought that if they sat tight and did nothing, a program they believed they could keep in operation for three or four months, they could force the onus of the strike on the workers, thus turning public opinion against the unions and driving them back to work on the operators' own terms. They expected co-operation in this plan from all business houses. A barrage of publicity was to make their campaign of "passive resistance" successful.

So far the shipowners' strategy has failed. The Shipping Merchants' Association whose membership gives the shipping companies ninety-five per cent of their business resents this interruption of their profits which are the greatest in years, and for the first time is learning that the operators are mainly responsible for the waterfront strikers. It has been one of the most curious phenomena in this strike, which has so many unique aspects, to witness business being sabotaged by business. The shipowners in this strike are refusing to make peace with the workers, in part, at least, because they want other businesses to suffer what they think they have endured at the hands of labor in the past two years. But instead of teaching these other businesses a lesson which would rally them to the shipowners' support, the latter's action has caused the Shipping Merchants to set themselves up as the "injured third party" and demand that the operators as well as the unions come to terms. In time, naturally, the class interest of the Shipping Merchants will compel them to align themselves with the shipowners in a common fight against labor. But the unions, led by shrewd Harry Bridges, realize that they must force a settlement quickly while the strike is at its peak and the advantage theirs. The present division in the ranks of business which benefits the strikers will thus not be allowed to heal. The workers have invited the Shipping Merchants to sit in on the negotiations where they can see the bull-headed refusals of the shipowners to make peace. The "injury" to their pocketbooks is not calculated to bring the Shipping Merchants rushing to the support of the shipowners as expected by these would-be lesson-teachers . . . at least not yet.

The daily press is still managing to publish a good portion of the truth about the situation (an important exception will be considered further on), with reporters carrying Guild cards accurately and sympathetically reporting the strike—in sharp contrast to 1934. The employers' broadsides against Bridges and the waterfront militants have been completely without effect. Scurrilous leaflets screaming that "Bridges Lies," and "Bridges Is A Rat," bearing the tell-tale hand of C. Lyn Fox, hired publicist for the Waterfront Employers and assistant to Tom "Tear Gas" Plant, have resulted only in once more demonstrating the stupidity and viciousness of the

shipowners. On the other hand, the strikers, with just and fair demands, have capably explained their side of the story by radio programs, speakers, pamphlets, and bulletins. Due to the inactivity of the waterfront, pickets have been dispatched throughout San Francisco to publicize the workers' case. The public has thereby been kept as neutral as possible and the shipowners' sitdown has so far failed to realize its purpose in the slightest degree.

The strike is five weeks old and the ranks of the workers are as strong as the day the walkout was declared. Picket lines are formed along the entire length of San Francisco's Embarcadero. Wooden huts on the waterfront bearing the painted captions "I. L. A. Camp" and flying American flags house the pickets these cold nights as they stand their eight hour watches. Similar picket lines are on duty up and down the coast. Maritime Federation Police patrol the waterfront maintaining discipline among the workers. Port strike committees direct the entire strike. Legal defense has been centralized, although no arrests have been made as yet since no overt actions have been taken by the employers to break the strike. Several incidents of vigilantism have occurred, as when employers' thugs visited the Dollar Line piers a few nights ago and pickets were beaten. However, most of the two hundred odd gunmen the shipowners are supposed to have in the city are being kept under cover until the shipowners decide that "public opinion requires them to open the port."

Pickets are fed in the food kitchen specially set up and known as the "Maritime Palace" where meals are prepared by chefs from the round-the-world "luxury" liners. Five thousand dollars in donations by various unions to the maritime strike was announced at the San Francisco Labor Council last Friday night, and promises of additional support were made for the duration of the strike. The waterfront movement has captured the imagination of the entire organized labor movement to such an extent that even the conservative labor leaders and unions have been swept along by the resistless tide which marks the longshoremen and marine workers as the spearhead of labor activity on the West Coast. Not an American vessel stirs in Pacific ports. One hundred per cent unionized, the maritime workers have made it practically impossible for the shipowners' strikebreakers. They can't get them. All the finks and scabs were driven from the waterfront and the sea following the 1934 strike. The unions control the jobs, and as a result better conditions prevail in Pacific than in other American ports.

However, conditions are still far from what they should be. This is particularly true of the unlicensed seafaring groups: the sailors, marine firemen, and marine cooks and stewards who came out of the 1934 strike with relatively poorer conditions than the longshoremen. The awards which followed that strike did not establish shipping halls for these workers similar to the longshoremen's hiring hall. The seafaring workers thereupon undertook to set up their own halls through which men were dispatched to work on various vessels. It is the express recognition of these halls that is the main demand and central issue of the present fight.

The opposition of the employers to the shipping halls is the same as it was to the hiring halls. They complain that they have "lost their right to hire and fire" which they assert they must absolutely have if they are to safely operate their ships



for which they are "responsible." The facts expose their position as false and untenable. Until the shipping halls were created by the workers, anyone who could get a letter from a steamship official could work as a seaman. These land-lubbers and also workaways on the ships took jobs away from bona fide seamen and drove down wages. Safety was no consideration as the operators proclaim. The Morro Castle and Vestris disasters were directly traceable to improperly staffed vessels. The shipping hall from which the unions dispatch trained seamen remedies these evils. Safety of vessels is assured, not jeopardized, by experienced personnel. And from the standpoint of the workers, employment is divided among them by rotation, petty graft as the price of a job is eliminated, and blacklisting which is what the shipowners mean by their "right to hire and fire" is made impossible. For all these reasons, the unions are insisting on express recognition of the shipping hall.

The seafaring workers have other demands. They are asking for preference of employment, for cash payment for overtime instead of time off, and for certain improved working and living conditions aboard ship. The longshoremen are standing firmly behind the seafaring workers in the latter's demands. Although longshoremen were offered a separate peace granting them better conditions than they now enjoy, they correctly saw in the offer an effort by the shipowners to divide the ranks of the unions and therefore refused to settle until the demands of all the unions are met by all the employers at the same time. The lesson of unity so painfully learned in the strikes of 1916, 1919, 1921 and 1934 will not be quickly forgotten.

Various devices have been employed by the shipowners to disrupt the strike. First the employers sought to make an issue of the unions' refusal to remove perishable cargo from strikebound vessels. The workers were about to grant this request when a federal court in Los Angeles issued an injunction directing the United States Marshal to remove a cargo of bananas from the S. S. California. As soon as this happened, the unions refused to unload perishable cargo. They properly saw in the court's action an effort to break the strike by legal means. The federal court was compelled to dissolve its order when the Marshal reported his inability to execute it. The strength of the unions forced this result and successfully beat down this effort by the employers to use the law as a strikebreaker.

As is their general custom in strikes of this kind, the shipowners have raised the food shortage scare. In San Francisco it has collapsed because warehousemen, affiliated with the I. L. A., have secured as a result of their own strike agreements granting all their demands of the grocery warehouses, thereby opening those firms for business and releasing the city's food supply. The Alaska food scare was cut short when the unions entered into an agreement with Colonel Otto F. Ohlson, acting for the United States government, for the sailing of ships to Alaska. This agreement gave the unions better conditions than they are asking of the private shipowners, proving once again that the strikers' demands are reasonable and possible.

The shipowners have received unexpected support in this strike from the supposedly pro-labor San Francisco News. Roy Howard's brain child to end the strike is the setting up of port committees to supervise hiring and firing of workers, and determination of penalties against workers for violations of agreements. Thereby, the News and Mr. Howard betrayed a lack of knowledge of the waterfront struggle and an unconscious acceptance of the shipowners' plans to destroy the

unions. In the first place, port committees for the settlement of disputes under the agreements in force the past two years existed in the form of the labor relations committees. And next, the matter of penalties cannot even be considered under these agreements, because they required the workers "to work as directed by the employer." These agreements provided no standards of work. Under the News plan an employee could be compelled to work under the worst conditions (speed-up, unsafe loads, unsafe gear) and be subject to penalties if he refused. These penalties can amount to ultimate banishment from waterfront work and open the way to smash the unions. Obviously, the unions cannot agree to penalties until some kind of fair working standards are established. The News which supported Mr. Roosevelt should recall his campaign statement, "We will continue to seek to improve conditions for the workers of America."

As usual, the unions are having to fight the reactionary union officials. Joe Ryan, who promised Bridges support of the strike, is collaborating with the Olander-Hunter-Grange-Pryor clique in the I. S. U. to scab on the East Coast seamen's strike being led by Joe Curran. Curran's group is fighting against great odds, and although their situation looks bad, they may still emerge from the strike with definite gains. The job awaiting the rank-and-file when this strike is over is to drive out the racketeers from the unions.

Mayor Rossi's request that the strike be arbitrated, in which he dutifully parroted the shipowners' official position, has been cleverly turned aside by the unions. They have succeeded in driving home to the general public's satisfaction that matters like the hiring hall, which involve the unions' very existence, cannot be arbitrated. Even Secretary Ed McGrady has been dumbfounded by the employers' position, which has been to submit their own conditions and then demand that these be arbitrated.

The first break for peace came more than a week ago when the coastal steam schooner operators, through the Shipowners Association of the Pacific, resumed negotiations with the unions and agreed to practically all the demands of the Cooks and Stewards including preference of employment with the union to supply the men needed, which amounted to recognition of the shipping hall. Average wage increases of \$10 a month were granted, and improved working and living conditions agreed upon. Even the eight hour day, one of this union's fundamental demands, was recognized. But next day, the same group deadlocked with the Masters, Mates and Pilots. Overnight, the "Big Three" had undoubtedly brought pressure to bear on the small, coastal operators who have always been ready to settle with the unions. The labor-hating but powerful Fleishhacker interests are determined that there shall be no peace except on their own terms.



The Eastern and foreign lines, headed by E. T. Ford of Grace Lines, are still willing to settle on the basis they offered before the strike which grants the workers more than they are now asking. The influence of this group, the lesser pressure of the Western coastal operators, and the demands of the shippers may whip the recalcitrant "Big Three" into lines, particularly in view of the fact that so far the sitdown strategy has failed. Moreover, there is a fair chance that Tom Plant will be removed as spokesman for the employers. The word is around that he is "punch drunk and useless for further dealings with the unions." His personal hatred and

that of the group he represents for Harry Bridges is largely the reason for their inability to make concessions which any smart business man would readily grant.

What the "Big Three" must learn is what the Eastern and foreign lines learned more than thirty years ago: that the employers had better bargain with them. If it comes to a prolonged sitdown, the strikers with the labor and public support they are getting can hold out indefinitely. And if it comes to force on the shipowners' part to open the port, men who faced machine gun fire in 1934 will not be found less brave today.

## PARIS, NOVEMBER 23, 1936

BERTHA McCORD KNISELY

**L**IBERTY of the press, France's unique boast, is about to be curtailed by new libel and slander laws, following the death of Roger Salengro, late minister of labor. Salengro, according to his written statement, was driven by the calumnies of the reactionary press in Paris. Sunday afternoon at the hour of the Salengro funeral in Lille, five hundred thousand Popular Front supporters marched in the mammoth demonstration against the barbarous methods of fascist papers, of which Gringoire and Candide have been the most malevolent. The language of these papers from day to day, has been so vile that an American could only wonder that publication was possible. "Freedom of the press" was the only explanation. But now France is ready to sacrifice—and rightly—that proud slogan. French Fascism, in its desperation, knows no boundary of indecency and the Press, its chief weapon, has been perverted to the most disgusting and degraded use of language known to the civilized world. The language of Gringoire, to say nothing of its slanderous content, is enough to shatter the sensibilities of anyone capable of sensibilities. In that respect one might say that it works against the cause which it attempts to support, and a good socialist might say: "Let it go on!" But French chivalry has been too deeply wounded and the people of France have been too deeply grieved by the assassination of Roger Salengro to permit a continuance of a libertine press. So Sunday's demonstration was an orderly procession of workers, industrial and intellectual, carrying banners with anti-fascist devices and voicing protests—"Abas Gringoire!" "Au feu, Gringoire!" etc. The parade started at the Bastille and marched to the Place de la Nation, a distance of about a mile; the time required was four hours. It was an inspiring sight—a real review of the Front Populaire, with its diverse elements clearly shown in the various banners indicating the different organizations represented. All along the line, throughout the afternoon the strains of the Internationale constituted the marching rhythm. And if, for a moment the marchers were silent the crowd on the sidewalk took it up. "C'est la lutte finale" was constantly on the lips of that great peaceful army, carrying on from the Bastille the idea planted there a century-and-a-half-ago.

Sunday's parade was also the occasion of a demonstration against the French government's false neutrality in the Spanish situation. "Blum-a l'action!" and "Abas les blocus!" were voiced all along the line. The flag of the Spanish republic was carried by one group and thousands of marchers and spectators wore an emblem, displaying the Spanish and French

flags with the words "Solidarite pour the Republique Espagnole." The tension increased, hour to hour, with meetings of socialist and communist groups, nightly, protesting the blockade and collecting large sums for the purchase of supplies for the Spanish loyalists. Last Wednesday there was a magnificent demonstration by the Jeunesse group—three thousand or more, crowding Magic City, a great dance hall on the left bank. At this meeting the youth of Paris voiced its ardent sympathy with the fight for freedom in Spain and demanded the abandonment of the French blockade. There were speakers from many French sections and guest speakers from London and Brussels, also an Italian exile. The workers of France want to help Spain. How long Blum can last with his non-intervention ideas is a delicate question.

As for me, an American, driven from the island of Mallorca by the Fascist occupation there, I can only say that it is an agonizing experience to sit by and see the fine republican institutions in Spain, won by such intelligent and heroic effort, put to such a terrific test by alien powers—both by active, armed opposition and passive acquiescence. It is only Europe's attempt to spare its own skin that blunts all moral obligation in the Spanish situation. France and England are determined to keep out of war—at least, until the world exposition in Paris and the Coronation in London are over. That is about the way it appears to me. Anyhow, some such selfish interest is back of this false neutrality. Germany and Italy can wipe out the Spanish republic if Russia isn't strong enough to prevent it and the several republics of the world stand by, washing their hands of all responsibility.

After twenty months in Spain, in which I visited cities and villages from Santander to Malaga, from Malaga to Barcelona, from Barcelona through Catalonia, Navarre and Aragon to the Pyrenees, I feel somewhat acquainted with the people of Spain. Then there was a long sojourn in Mallorca—in the country and in Palma, where I associated closely with the people and knew something of their hearts. Mallorca is backward, together with the other Balearic islands, probably, the least changed of all Spanish provinces, owing to its insularity. But Mallorca rallied at the February elections and even registered a left victory in one of the important pueblos. In all the villages (I made a tour of the island, on foot, last Spring) the left-republicans increased like magic after the election. I wish I had counted the number of young men who told me they would have voted left if they had not been afraid of losing their jobs. The finca (ranch) owners and small manufacturers intimidated their employees, and it is



very easy to know in those villages just how a man votes. But after the election, when the villages heard of Spain's overwhelming swing to the left, a great many young people became bolder and proclaimed their belief in the new order. Alas for them! Many of them—I would say the majority—have now ceased to exist, for the military-fascist regime in Mallorca condemned to death hundreds of workers whose only offense was membership in a labor organization. They were not given benefit of trial but were snatched from their work or taken from their homes at night, ignominiously shot (in the back, usually) and their bodies thrown into the woods or left at a street corner.

That is why I could not bear to stay in Mallorca—powerless, a tortured witness to daily atrocities—or to the results of atrocities. And all the time the word went out that everything was calm in Palma. There were the air-raids, of course, by government planes from the mainland, evoking furious artillery fire in the streets, more dangerous to civilians than the light bombs dropped from the planes. The bombs in those days were hardly more than threats accompanied by leaflets which urged the soldiers to revolt against their officers and

remain true to their oath of allegiance to the Republic. Those leaflets were untouchable under penalty of death. During a raid dozens of automobiles filled with armed fascists (boys of fifteen, eighteen, twenty) scattered in all directions to pick up the leaflets.

It would take a long time and much space to go into the many phases of the Spanish situation as I see it. The church and its political activities would have to be considered at length. However, I will say this much: many of the best republicans I knew were also good Catholics, so I cannot respect the opinion of those who maintain that the civil war in Spain is anti-religious. It could easily be anti-church where the church became an active anti-republican agency, even to the extent of harboring arms for the insurgents.

By the time this reaches California the situation in Europe may have changed to such an extent that my observations would seem archaic, but I hope they may contribute, however modestly, to an understanding of the Spanish republic, and, perhaps, to a keener realization in the U. S. A. that Fascism is the common enemy of all the republics.

## NOTES FROM TAMPA

**W**HY Tampa was chosen is a mystery. There is the obvious reason that it is a fine place for a vacation. It was suggested by one delegate that the Executive committee of the A. F. of L. wanted to be as far as possible from any industrial center. They couldn't have picked a further place.

The first night Green was here he went to a restaurant listed in all the labor papers as unfair. The executive committee has been meeting here for more than a week, planning the convention. One gets a decided impression that it has been well planned, for all the business runs smoothly, with an air of careful arrangement. Mixing with the crowd at the Floridan Hotel, the headquarters, one is struck with the age of the majority of the delegates. Most of these men have received their ideas and attitudes before 1900, and to judge by their actions, not many since. There are few young faces—age seems to be in the saddle. Old timers at reporting conventions say that this is the most spiritless convention they have witnessed—none of the usual fraternizing, good fellowship. Instead, a damp heaviness.

Morning of the opening. Many formalities, welcoming speeches, etc., then a great peroration from William Green. The remarkable thing about this speech was that any part of it could be contradicted by some other. He insisted that labor be flexible in policy, he demanded that it be inflexible. He lauded conservatism, and praised liberalism. He called for war on the C. I. O., later pleaded for peace. In short, he showed those notable characteristics which Drew Pearson and Robert S. Allen describe in their Washington Merry-Go-Round of November 16: "by playing safe, remaining neutral while rivals cut one another's throats, Green has wormed his way step by step to the top, while far abler men fell by the wayside . . ."

"We substitute judgement for feeling. Every question will be settled on a basis of fact and argument." A great flow comes forth: "American labor stands at the threshold of a new day, etc." Up, down, round and round—much growling,

roaring and waving fists. A "better life" in his mind seems to be restricted to higher wages. The same old danger of "economism." The labor movement in this country till recently has been conspicuous by its not being a labor movement for the most part, but completely bourgeois in attitude. Interesting at the hotels is the striking evidence of the petty bourgeois hunger to achieve status, in the clothes of the wives of the delegates. The general tone, worse in the women, of "see where we have gotten to"—little trace of creative social attitude or activity. The only groups that seem to be aware that our society is not what it was fifty years ago are the Teachers' Union, the Cannery and Ag. Workers' Union locals, the Typographical Union, and a few scattered individuals.

Green goes on: "That economic philosophy was sound forty years ago—(dramatic Pause); it was sound thirty years ago (same again); it was good yesterday (crouching for the final thrust); and it is good today." Dignified applause. "We do not want to depart from the tried and solid foundation, into untried experimentation." They seem incapable of change as well as unwilling. What applied forty years ago by no conceivable logic applies of necessity to the problems of today.

Solidarity is mentioned. "Woe be to he (yes, he) who divides the labor movement, rifts it asunder." The question comes to mind as to who is doing the rifting. Green and his Executive Committee fail to realize that they are the obstructers, a weakness in the labor movement, the rigid shell which in the process of social evolution the new growth must break. The fact that less than 10 per cent of the working class is within the A. F. of L. is sufficient indication of its relation to the labor movement. "Is any issue more important which in the process of social evolution the new growth must begin as a minority, as any organism must first be a single cell. That Lewis represents a numerical minority within the upper crust of labor is not the point—that he does represent the future growth and organization of the present unorganized millions in America is the significant fact that Green will not



or cannot see. Industrial unionism is the future of the American labor movement—a potential and rapidly actualizing majority, to watch the gains of the C. I. O. Craft unionism has stifled the general advance of the American labor movement for fifty-six years, while entrenching in a new kind of special privilege our skilled labor in a few specialized trades. Many of the unions supposedly represented here have not had national conventions for years, as the carpenters. It is not the democratic vote of two million suppressing a minority of one million, but a bureaucratic minority, without a philosophy of labor or the cause of labor at heart, backward looking, a rigid shell, cramping the growth of 35 million and more unorganized.

Green is full of great, resonant phrases which reflect neither his purposes nor the realities of the American labor movement. His thoughts seem to be a sort of after-image, a take-me-back-to-my-childhood dream—a set of symbols lingering on in these minds after the world of reality has advanced. Only to these self-styled aristocrats does craft-unionism represent intelligent, realistic policy.

Green is talking about democracy within the A. F. of L. with the pathos commonly used in discussing the departed. "Can policies be determined by a ruthless minority?" What of the voice of 35,000,000 unorganized, and the strong rank and file movement within the unions which cannot speak through the reactionary bureaucracy? "Can we tolerate rule by a minority?" Just the point, Lewis could well answer—with less than 10 per cent within the A. F. of L., industrial unions would be far more democratic, as well as being more democratic within themselves by their mass nature. Like the Old Man of the Sea who became the burden of Sindbad, the present leadership of the A. F. of L., which is not a leadership but an oligarchy, must be cast off, if the labor movement is to grow, gain strength and direction toward the prevention of Fascism, and the ordered building of a society based on intelligence rather than fear and hatred.

The Resolutions Committee, key operator behind the scenes, is composed of the worst reactionaries. It will be difficult to work any progressive measures through them. Early one morning in the Convention hall, Matthew Woll read a resolution outlawing the Seamen's strike. Green rattled off—"Is there any discussion on this resolution if there is no discussion all those in favor will please say aye." Three men jumped up, shouting "Mr. Chairman," but Green never took a breath between his sentences.

The vital question came up for action Monday when the Resolutions Committee set the time for the opening of the question of the suspension of the ten unions affiliated with the Committee for Industrial Organization for three o'clock. Matthew Woll led off on the debate with a long, very carefully prepared report of the Resolutions Committee on this question. After a subtle but strong and unmistakable innuendo upon the Jewish nature of these unions which have been suspended, and a suggestion of the Jewish nature of radical philosophies, long ramblings on the sincerity of the desire of all for unity, he read the three proposals of his Committee. (1) that the suspension be continued, (2) that efforts toward peace be continued; (3) that the executive committee be empowered to call a special convention to suspend these unions if necessary.

Max Zaritsky, of the United Hatters, Cap, and Millinery Workers, spoke against the action of the Executive Committee. He showed how they had clearly usurped their power in suspending the unions affiliated with the C. I. O. He stated that "the supreme power rests in the hands of the con-

vention, not in the Executive Committee. An organization can be suspended or its charter revoked only by a two-thirds vote of the Convention. I have not a legalistic mind—and it appears to me that there is very little difference between suspension and expulsion." Then Zaritsky with a brilliant attack, censored Woll for dragging in a Jewish question. "Why did you have to go out of your way to brand the Jews?" and later, "I am not speaking as a representative of the C. I. O. but as a rank and filer of the A. F. of L. We must change our policies—the labor movement has been held up badly by petty jurisdictional squabbles. Let us bring them back as a bona fide organization, seat them again in our councils . . ." It was the best speech of the evening.

Many spoke, and interest heightened. J. C. Lewis, a miner, but representing a central trade union council, called the action of the Executive Committee economic sabotage of the organization of the mass production industries. Jonathan Eddy, of the Newspaper Guild pointed out that the Convention must not consider only past precedent but the present situation. John P. Frey, of the Executive Council asked to take the reference to the Jews out of the record "lest there be any misunderstanding by the newspapers." Matthew Woll tried to shift and squirm out of his uncomfortable defensive, by attacking Zaritsky, saying that he, Zaritsky had brought up the Jewish question. Frey spoke on the insurrectionist nature of the C. I. O. and dual unionism. He closed by the branding the leaders of the C. I. O. as "inconsistent and insincere," and directly suggested that they were revolutionary in nature, subversive, Communists directed from Moscow. That herring is slightly stale—and produced little effect. Jerome Davis, of the Teacher's Union made a splendid plea for real unity and the forgetting of personal spite. An amendment to the resolution of the committee was proposed by Friedrichs from Wisconsin, to revoke the suspension, but it was ruled out on a point of order.

Green made the final speech before closing debate. He cried with tears in his voice "I have pleaded with them, 'come back,' I have done all that is humanly possible to restore peace. No issue transcends solidarity—there is no sacrifice that I would not make to preserve unity. I have humbled myself—I swear I could do no more." Green hypnotizes himself until he is scarlet with the great effort he is making toward peace. The roll-call vote begins, with a sudden hush as delegates take out their printed list of unions and delegates and begin to check

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the ayes and noes. The result is overwhelmingly in favor of the action of the Executive Council by more than 21,000 votes to 2,043. A majority of the delegates from state and local trade union bodies voted against the resolution to continue the suspension. The issues have been well obscured, and the labor movement is split over personalities and jurisdictional squabbles. The fault has been on both sides—but there is certainly little labor philosophy here.

Perhaps it is better to remove the dead wood, even with the temporary slowing up of the labor movement. It is improbable that either side will make drastic moves for some months at least, depending upon the success of the drive to organize the mass production industries and especially steel. If this is the only way to continue the drive to reach the masses of the unorganized, then it is best that it has happened.

In the way of loss of prestige it is a setback to the labor movement to have it split—but in another way it is not, for the organization of the mass production industries might be more hampered by remaining within the A. F. of L. and the continual delay of jurisdictional disputes, than by clearing out and working independently. The die is cast. The C. I. O. must and will continue in the building of a vigorous and intelligent labor movement.

Little remains to be done, except the passing of resolutions, and the election of new officers—the juggling of power among the different bureaucracies here represented. Members feel that nothing is left of importance and seem in a hurry to get home. Attending the Convention is an education in itself, to see these leaders who are without social consciousness or labor philosophy.

## SUICIDE BRIDGE

CAREY McWILLIAMS

SINCE its construction in 1913, the Arroyo Seco Bridge in Pasadena has been an object of poetic adoration by the Southern Californians. Its graceful arches span a beautiful arroyo. In the distance, below the bridge, one can see the Rose Bowl; on the Pasadena side of the span, a famous luxury hotel hovers on the hillside, while magnificent estates line the arroyo, on both sides, for miles in either direction. The view from the bridge has been generously advertised as one of the "sights" of Southern California, while the bridge itself has been characterized by the *Los Angeles Times* (July 23, 1936), as "the most beautiful bridge in America." But today the bridge, a dramatic embodiment of despair, has become a social problem. The issue of "what to do about the Pasadena bridge" has been widely agitated in Pasadena and Los Angeles for over a year and a great campaign has recently been conducted to restore to the bridge that atmosphere of peace, quiet, and harmony which it seemed, in former years, to symbolize. For today, again in the language of the *Times*, "the noble lines of the bridge are defaced by the splattered blood of seventy-nine human beings."

In going over the record, it is difficult to discover just when the bridge attracted its first suicide. But to date (October 13, 1936) seventy-nine individuals have plunged from the great central span of the bridge to the rocks in the arroyo below—an average of ten persons a year for the last three and a half years. In 1927, four suicides jumped; in 1928, one; in 1929, five; in 1930, four; in 1931, three; in 1932, three; in 1933, nine; in 1934, ten; in 1935, twelve; and, in 1936, six to date.

No one paid much heed when, at the outset, a small item appeared in the local press about "another Pasadena Bridge suicide." As the number of deaths increased, however, the newspapers began to keep a log of the bridge suicides which attracted wide attention. Soon the suicide was elaborated into a regular feature. The effect of this publicity was, of course, to advertise the bridge as a likely place to commit suicide. The bridge had, in fact, a perfect record: no one who had jumped from its central span was known to have survived. But, aside from this practical phase of the matter, the bridge became in the minds of a great number of people a symbol of the despair which had dogged their lives. The potential suicide came to realize that if he shot himself in his

room, his death would merit no more than a line in one of the newspapers. On the other hand, if he jumped from the Pasadena bridge, his death would form a chapter in its celebrated chronicle of suicides. By jumping from the bridge the suicide was assured, not only of success, but that his death would be appropriately registered. In death, he became forever associated with the impressive list of fellow human beings, representing a great diversity in age, sex, race, and condition, who had preceded him over the railing. His death became, in this manner, invested with genuine historic interest. And more: when the total of bridge suicides began to mount, and with the accumulation of tragic testaments left on the railing or found on the mangled bodies in the Arroyo, it became apparent that these deaths, taken together, told a story; that they constituted a powerful collective protest against the society which had produced such agonized frustration. Each bridge suicide was one more protest against that society. Alone, the suicides counted for as little dead as they had living, but, in the totality of their despair, in the comradeship of their misery, they signified something; they were an influence.

And so it worked out. In the first place, the residents of the Arroyo, the lordly individuals who lived in superb mansions perched high above the bridge in the sunlight that floods the hilltops, began to be annoyed by the suicides. Some of them actually witnessed suicides. Imagine the horror of it: standing there in your terraced garden or sun parlor or tennis court, you look down at the bridge, miraculously suspended in a soft veil of early morning mist shot through with sunlight, and see some small anonymous human figure plunge to his death. A sickening sight. Mr. Edward M. Fowler, a resident of the district, the self-announced owner of properties in the immediate vicinity of the bridge valued at \$150,000.00, complained to the civic authorities that, not only was his property depreciating in value because of the suicides, but that on one occasion the body of a suicide landed within two feet of his wife "who escaped serious injury and perhaps death" by a narrow margin. This protest marked the beginning of the reaction. Shortly afterwards various business interests began to be worried and annoyed. Some of the suicides left effective notes. They had been robbed of their savings; they saw no future for their families; there was no



place for them, as individuals, in the world; they were tired of being hungry and despised. All this was not only bad publicity: it was downright un-American. It was not the kind of talk that should be associated with Pasadena, celebrated for its roses, gardens, beautiful homes, and magnificent sunlight. In a quiet and unorganized way the protest movement began to take form.

In the early agitation about the bridge, the solution of the problem which it presented was regarded as a simple matter of police surveillance. But how are you going to patrol a long bridge, open to motor and pedestrian traffic, the major point of entry to a large city? Unless traffic from Los Angeles enters Pasadena from the South, there is really no other entrance than over the bridge. Most of the Hollywood, Glendale, and Los Angeles traffic moves to Pasadena along the Colorado Boulevard and the bridge is a unit of this highway. In fact, the bridge is said to be the second most congested traffic way in Los Angeles County. It was soon discovered that if policemen were stationed at both entrances to the bridge, it was still impossible to prevent suicides. With perverse pleasure, individuals drove onto the bridge in automobiles, stopped midway, got out of their cars, and threw themselves over the railing under the very eyes of policemen. The officers detailed to this curious assignment were not, however, wholly unsuccessful. Occasionally a prospective suicide would hesitate and sometimes the officers would be able to spot a pale and haggard individual walking fatefully toward the center of the bridge. Some suicides were unquestionably prevented by the patrol, but the problem remained. It was not long, moreover, before city officials began to complain of the expense. It cost the city \$20,000.00 a year to watch the bridge, for the police were constantly victimized by false alarms. If, for example, a moody husband left his home threatening self-destruction, his spouse immediately thought of the Pasadena Bridge and called the police. With the bridge having an estimated life of ten years more, city authorities visualized a maintenance cost of \$200,000.00.

About this time, some one discovered that souvenir postcards, with a picture of "Pasadena's Famous Suicide Bridge," were being sold in the East. With this alarming intelligence, the protest movement was promptly organized. Resolutions were passed at civic meetings. The bridge became a political issue. With this development, the Los Angeles *Evening Herald-Express* (the Hearst afternoon paper) launched a vigorous campaign to make the bridge suicide-proof, with other newspapers joining the campaign. In the traditional American manner, a committee of experts was appointed to investigate the bridge. The committee reported that "a fence or grating built along the railing or a net placed near the ground would be practical." The report called attention to the fact that in Australia the authorities had "suicide-proofed" the great bridge in Sydney harbor after only seven persons had leaped to their death. Another group of citizens recommended a fence eight feet high topped with barbed wire, to cost about \$10,000.00. During the consideration of these proposals, another individual leaped to his death from the bridge and the clamor for "suicide prevention" was intensified. It was then suggested that the bridge be entirely torn down and that a modern suicide-proof bridge be constructed at a cost of \$450,000.00. The motive back of these recommendations was a desire, not to prevent suicides, but to divert unwanted publicity from the bridge. This was made clear in the statement of one official who thought that "if suicides found other places there would not be the conspicuousness equal to the bridge." It was even broadly hinted

that the local newspapers should be encouraged to feature other suicide points. The City Manager of Pasadena, in fact, requested the press to refrain from mentioning the bridge.

In the meantime, this preliminary agitation provoked a curious reaction. The residents of Pasadena suddenly became recalcitrant. After all, they reasoned, the bridge is a lovely structure; it has been widely admired; and nothing should be done that would mar its beauty. These same residents pointed out that it would be "bad advertising" and "poor psychology" and "a bonanza to the Florida cartoonists" if a fence were put on the bridge. Think, they said, of the terrible effect on the tourist if, on his first entry into "the city of roses," he were to be ushered across a closely guarded, semi-barricaded, iron-railed bridge. He would not be able to see the hillside mansions except through an ugly fence the sight of which would cause an involuntary revulsion of feeling. No community, moreover, enjoys the experience of being brow-beaten by a large and rival neighbor. An influential Pasadena newspaper catered to this rising local resentment by charging that the whole campaign was a conspiracy between the Hearst newspapers and the Los Angeles undertakers to confine the suicide business to Los Angeles. This sort of propaganda was immediately effective. Suddenly Pasadena residents became lyrical over the re-discovered beauties of the bridge. A writer in the Pasadena Post wrote that "A fine bridge is like a friend; we greet it in the morning when the East is rosy, and the Sierra Madre peaks are misty blue; at nightfall we know its strong arm is stretched across the darkness below and its brilliant lights shine their greeting from afar." Even the Metropolitan Business Men's Association of Pasadena went on record opposing any attempt to impair the pristine loveliness of the bridge.

Infuriated by this opposition, the *Herald-Express* began to turn on the heat. The "ostrich-like attitude of Pasadena" was deplored and its city directors were accused of "seeing no suicides and hearing no suicides." Editorials screamed defiance at the twaddle of a \$120 Pasadena editor (it is reliably reported that his policy can be changed for that amount) who held out against the campaign. Pasadena officials began to feel this pressure and while not yielding, they did increase the bridge patrol. Guards were delegated to watch each entrance to the bridge and a watchman was instructed to camp below in the arroyo. About this time, Albert M. Ashley, thirty years of age, took a taxi cab to the bridge. He dismissed the cab, telling the driver "I am going to meet a girl." The taxi driver immediately notified the police and two officers cruised the length of the bridge without locating Ashley who was hiding on a ledge outside the railing. Seeing Ashley crouched on the ledge, the watchmen shouted at him to go back, to which was: "Go to Hell!" The officers then started racing toward the center span, shouting "Don't jump. We'll help you." But the iron-nerved Ashley bellowed into the darkness: "Stay down there, boys; I'll be down in a minute and you can have what's left."

Ashley's impudence only inflamed still further the editors of the *Herald-Express*, their attitude becoming more truculent than ever. Recourse was had to characteristic Hearst methods. For example, a pro-suicide-proofing statement was attributed to the postmaster of Pasadena, much to the amazement of that official. It was found, upon investigation, that the "statement" had been made in a private letter written four years before the individual in question had become postmaster. In turn, the State Highway Commission, the State Industrial Accident Commission, and the State Board of Public Works were induced to offer beleaguered Pasadena with unsolicited

advice, plans, surveys, and appropriations. Finally an appeal was made to the federal government when it was discovered that Colorado Boulevard was part of U. S. Highway No. 99. The *Herald-Express* coaxed clubwomen to make statements and preyed upon the publicity susceptibilities of half the politicians in Southern California. The seventy-sixth victim was one Rafferty, a veteran, who plunged to his death with the motto "Death Before Dishonor" tattooed on his right arm. The Veterans of Foreign Wars were then induced to pass resolutions demanding that something be done about the bridge "in memory of our brave comrade and buddy." In other words, the veterans wanted the bridge converted into a Rafferty memorial. Various marvelous symposia were conducted on the bridge, with special emphasis upon "what the man in the street thinks about the Pasadena bridge." For some weeks the *Herald-Express* went in for lush anti-suicide, anti-defeatist poetry, such as "Transgression" (August 6th, 1936):

"I shall wait until I am called to go,  
No taking of this life for me.  
God gave it and when he wills it so,  
No power on earth to be  
Can hold me to these earthly ties,  
Nor guide my foot steps ever.  
I know when my time shall come,  
This hold on earth will sever."

Advertisers were quick to seize upon the new topic and tie it in with their copy. A cobbler got out a sign and card reading:

"I will not jump off the Colorado bridge  
To escape from being in the ditch.  
With California's sunshine, mountain view,  
wine and beer,  
The temptation is too great for me to  
live right here.  
I am content and happy without booze  
All I want is to Repair Your Shoes."

A further tactic of the *Herald-Express* was to badger the Pasadena authorities with the threat of litigation on the basis of numerous interviews with publicity-avid lawyers. It suggested that the city was liable in damages to the property owners whose property had depreciated in value because of the ill-fame which the bridge had visited upon the neighborhood. It also suggested that the city might be called upon to respond in damages for the shock or fright suffered by a person walking or riding in the arroyo should a body land within a few feet of the plaintiff. No suggestion was made, of course, that the heirs or personal representatives of a suicide might have a cause of action against the city. Then tourist agencies were interviewed and statements obtained to the effect that "if the work is not done at once on the bridge it will be done before the eyes of tourists from all parts of the world. Naturally they will be curious about the work and they will tell their acquaintances in all parts of the United States about the suicide bridge." In a stern editorial, the *Herald-Express* reminded the city council of Pasadena that "even if they are cold to the ethical and moral factors involved, they must know their city and its lethal bridge are objects of adverse publicity." It even intimated that, if some action were not forthcoming immediately, it would start calling Pasadena "Suicide City."

The *Herald-Express* was particularly incensed with the aesthetes who protested against iron railings on the bridge.

Citizens were sought out who shouted: "But is beauty the important thing in this controversy? Is not safeguarding the lives of crazed human beings more essential than catering to beauty lovers who in the main have the price to seek beauty wherever they wish." Mr. Fowler, the wealthy property owner previously mentioned, denounced "these members of the lunatic fringe who are just one jump behind the bridge jumpers. I wonder how these beauty lovers would survive having their neighborhood turned into a death chamber of the weakminded and despairing." The *Herald-Express* also managed to "prove" by all manner of curious testimony that a nice iron railing or a pretty steel net would actually "blend in with the architecture of the bridge" and "enhance its beauty." Experts were discovered who declared that, after all, it was only the "profile" of the bridge that was beautiful.

At this point in the campaign, a young man was caught walking on the bridge late at night. He had a note in his pocket which read: "I am merely No. 78. I have no relatives or friends. Forget me." The young man, on being questioned, said that the idea of jumping from the bridge had "originated in his mind after reading about the bridge in a Los Angeles newspaper." This disclosure in no wise abated the enthusiasm of the *Herald-Express*. (The young man was, incidentally, given a sixty day sentence as a vagrant. Most unsuccessful suicides are treated as vagrants or committed to institutions for the feeble-minded). The fury of the paper was without bounds when C. W. Koiner, City Manager of Pasadena, pointed out that from fifty New York bridges, all without suicide protection or guards, only three persons had leaped to their death. Not being content with this observation, Mr. Koiner went on to remark, not without malice, that far more individuals had jumped to their death from Los Angeles office buildings than from the Pasadena bridge. It was even pointed out that Los Angeles had the third or fourth highest suicide rate of any city in America. The *Herald-Express*, however, continued the campaign. It managed to get a director of the famous Community Playhouse in Pasadena to make the daring declaration that "suicide is a deplorable phase of our life, but to have our lovely home city victimized is an outrage." A resolution was introduced in the Los Angeles City Council, urging Pasadena to rectify the suicide-attraction afforded by the unfenced bridge—the ground for this amazing intervention being that a majority of the bridge-jumpers had been citizens of Los Angeles. The *Herald-Express*, with extraordinary delicacy of feeling, sternly rebuked all those who indulged in witticisms about the bridge and severely censured an official for saying that Los Angeles should be grateful to Pasadena for providing the suicides a convenient place from which to jump.

The campaign came to a close when the Pasadena City Council voted against accepting financial assistance to rail the bridge. It is now proposed to submit the entire question of what should be done about the bridge to the people of the city in the form of an initiative measure. One city director, when the council voted against the railing, remarked that "I think to show our hospitality we should install a springboard on the bridge." As suddenly as it began, the campaign closed. But there have been echoes. Preparations have already been made to suicide-proof the San Francisco-Oakland Bridge. While in Oakland a retired minister recently announced the organization of the Suicide Prevention Society of America, somewhat after the manner of the Committee for the Study of Suicides, Inc., organized in New York. One purpose of the Oakland association is to inspire ministers all over America to devote one Sunday a year "to suicide prevention sermons."



The work of the association received a severe set-back when, on August 12th, 1936, a man who had signed its anti-suicide pact took his life.

For the time being all is quiet about the bridge. It is likely that the Pasadena officials finally reached the Los Angeles newspapers. But other factors are probably responsible for the abatement of the campaign. For example, new suicide spots have come into prominence. Coit Tower, in San Francisco, with an elevation of 180 feet, is a favorite jumping-off place; and, in San Diego, thirty-three persons have leaped to death from Cabrillo Bridge, which is being boomed locally as a serious rival to the Pasadena Bridge.

In a careful and circumstantial survey of all the voluminous record of the suicide-proofing campaign, including committee and commission reports, and pages of publicity and a wealth of editorial comment, I have been unable to find a single reference to the relation, if any, between economic conditions and the suicide rate. The suicides, however, have left their own record. One note reads: "I am tired of working for \$25 a week. There is no future and there never will be. As soon as things get slack I'll get part time, so what's the use. I'm very sorry, dear, you have tried so hard to make things go right, but with me it is impossible." Richard C. Burnett, 56-year-old attorney, was the seventy-first suicide. "I honked my horn at him," an autoist remarked, "in an effort to stay his leap. But he looked around at me, smiled, waved his hand and then jumped." The seventy-fifth victim was "a thin, sandy-haired 40-year-old man" whose body was never identified. "He had but one tooth in his head—a badly decayed upper. He had six cents in his pocket." Walter Lopez, the seventy-third suicide, left a note: "Everything has been against me during the year. I can't take any more." George R. Morris, the seventy-ninth suicide, was "exhausted in mind and body." And so they read . . . The suicides have had, however, their revenge. They have mortified and confounded their complacent survivors. They have defeated a campaign of the Hearst press. Nothing can now efface the impression they have made.

## THEATRE

### "MULATTO": SAN FRANCISCO WINTHROP RUTLEGE

**T**HE tall mulatto boy stood before his father, the Colonel. The old white man felt the steel of him standing there, like the steel of himself forty years ago. Steel of the Norwoods darkened now by Africa. The old man got up, straight and tall, too, and suddenly shook his fist in the face of the boy.

Thus the poet Langston Hughes gives his readers the *feel* of the climax of his story, "Father and Son." Moving stuff, when read in its turn in the story, but stubborn stuff to translate into stagecraft. It calls for complete mastery of technique and for rare and sensitive understanding in all three branches: writing, directing and acting.

By all this I am preparing to say that the play "The Mulatto" which came to the Curran recently, failed because of shortcomings in at least the first two of the three branches. It was the Hughes story, adapted to the stage, I presume, by Martin Jones, whom the program lists as co-author of the play.

The original story is scarcely a masterpiece; it is not Hughes' best work by far. But it has in it flashes of pity and terror and white rage which, if realized on the stage as they are in reading, would grip the most jaded audience. These, I must reluctantly chronicle, were absent in the Curran exhibit: it was an absence which became painfully conspicuous next day when I checked my memory of the play with Hughes' story.

It then seemed doubtful if anyone should have attempted to make a three-act play of the story. It seemed certain that the attempt should not have been made by anything short of a genius. In the first place the story contains many elements which, if not handled with great care, become mere blood-and-thunder melodrama before the footlights. The adaptor, not content with a murder, a suicide and a lynching, tossed in a rather extraneous rape for good measure.

This was a waste of effort, for the acts of violence taken from the original were not so presented as to make the audience *feel* the fate of the title character as a social problem. And if I am not mistaken the business of the socially conscious theatre is not only to make audiences see its message, but to feel it as well.

The mulatto boy whose white father sent him to college and insulted him when he returned with an education was not a character to win the audience's sympathy. My complaint is not that he was arrogant, but that the play did not with sufficient clarity show why he was arrogant. His rather petulant little gestures of revolt lacked the qualities of symbols of the protest of a race against its enslavement and degradation, realistic though Mr. Hughes may know them to be.

The fault probably is in the expanding of a minor opus into a major one. As a short story "Father and Son" could focus upon so small a facet of America's black-and-white race problems. As a full-length play we may with justification expect a more complete background. We expect it to be understood (as Mr. Hughes surely must understand it) that the problem of the black and the mulatto is also the problem of the poor white at its economic root. But Mr. Hughes doesn't need to be told how race problems have found their key in the solution of class problems in Russia. I have reason to believe he knows.

The dialogue of the play was badly written and poorly directed. The cast, headed by James Kirkwood and Mercedes Gilbert attached it with dignity and considerable skill, but they could not recapture the compassion or the anger of the story.

Who was responsible, I don't know, but the "Overture," including such items as "Dixie," "Swanee River," "Turkey in the Straw" and "Old Black Joe" was about as banal, tawdry and inappropriate a musical introduction for the play as any musical reasearch, sworn to achieve the wrong thing, could have concocted.

## WALLY FOR QUEEN!

BY UPTON SINCLAIR

The Private Life of Royalty

The editors tell me this is "unprintable." Nothing indecent; just that a writer may not "kid" the Royal Family. If you want a merry laugh, send 25c for one copy, or \$1.00 for six.

Upton Sinclair, Station A, Pasadena, California

## BOSWELL'S INTREPIDITY OF TALK

HNA JEFFERS

### ● BOOKS

**F**OR a century and a half an enormously important collection of Boswell's manuscripts and letters was known to be tucked away among family papers. His descendants continued to display lofty indifference to the public interest in them until 1927, when Colonel Isham induced Lord Talbot, Boswell's great-great-grandson, to sell the papers. (These have now been published in 18 volumes, at \$900.00 a set.) Three years later the most valuable document of them all was discovered in a cupboard at Malahide Castle—the original journal of Boswell's tour with Dr. Johnson in 1773, the actual pages, now tattered, but legible for the most part, that Boswell wrote and showed to his companion at odd moments, while they were "roving among the Hebrides." Colonel Isham acquired this manuscript also, and here published for the first time is that journal which even in abridged form has delighted readers for 163 years.

Boswell, aware of his own diffuse and dilatory habits, called in Edmund Malone, the Shakespearean scholar, to help edit his diary. The manuscript reveals how often Malone substituted his own 18th century elegance for the racy idiom of Boswell; how often he deleted comments on people, manners and topography; how he attenuated those introspective passages which complete a superb self-delineation. Boswell with an equable hand exposes every antic of his own that impelled the ponderous doctor to an epigram or argument. We see a man with robust gusto for carnal pleasures, self-indulgent but capable of firm purpose and unselfish devotion to his hero; imaginative and religious, and morbidly fascinated by gloomy remains; through all an appealingly innocent gaiety which effervesced at unsuitable moments.

Boswell had a rare genius for seizing the revealing attitude or contrasting object that would sharpen a characterization. Let me quote a few sentences which appear for the first time in this edition:

Landing in Iona: "We are now at this venerable place which I have so long thought that I could visit with you, Mr. Johnson. I could have gone and seen it by myself. But you would not have been with me: and the great thing is to bring objects together."

At Lochbuie: "Our supper was a poor one, a sort of stewed mutton." Boswell drank too much and when Johnson reproved him, "I slunk away from him with a consciousness of my being brutish, and yet a determination to go somewhat deeper." "I still had some squeamishness when I thought of the dirtiness of the lower Highlanders. My immediate fears of the itch were now off, as the pimples had almost disappeared. Mr. Johnson treated the distemper lightly."

At Inch Kenneth Boswell saw an oyster-bed for the first time, "took up one and ate it by way of having proof of how I could live if I were thrown upon a coast where I could get only raw shellfish, and I thought I could do. . . . We gathered little shells. Mr. Johnson lay down and gathered, as he is short-sighted. Gathering shells is a gentle pleasing amusement. . . . Dined cheerfully, and Miss McLean played on the harpsichord." Dr. McLean called Mr. Johnson "a hogshead of sense."

The Laird of Coll showed them an unusually large shin-bone from the family vault, "which is treating an ancestor

\*JOURNAL OF A TOUR TO THE HEBRIDES WITH SAMUEL JOHNSON, LL. D. from the original manuscript. (Viking Press) \$5.00

oddly . . . I dug a little grave in the chapel and buried some loose bones. Mr. Johnson praised me for it, but said he would not do it. He has a horror of dead men's bones."

Mr. Johnson was a well-rounded figure in the first edition; now we see clearly the pair of them, incredible, often ridiculous, tossing amongst the stormy Hebrides: a pair to set beside Quixote and Sancho Panza.

Included in this edition are many facsimile pages of the original diary, with revisions in the handwritings of both Malone and Boswell, there is even a page-long note by Dr. Johnson. The editors have added many enlightening footnotes, notably a synopsis of the Douglas case, the cause of the Duchess of Argyll's puzzling conduct toward Boswell at Inverary. A word of grateful praise must be added for the exceptionally clear and pleasing typography.

### MORE ABOUT JEWS IN GERMANY

THE WAR GOES ON, by Sholem Asch (G. P. Putnam and Sons) \$3.00

**S**HOLEM ASCH has given us a psychological background of the racial prejudices in Germany, treated as a novel. It is too long to follow each family and individual through, to give a synopsis of the kaladoscopic picture that he creates.

His descriptions of racial prejudice through the chaotic period of the inflation and the civil war to the beginning of nationalism is interesting in its revealing sincerity.

The story deals with the childhood of two Jewish families, both of old and long established origin, and carries them through to the time when they were driven out of the Fatherland. The traditions which form the basis of their difference from Christmas is well explained. From an early age they come in contact with the fact that Jews are different from the fair skinned, golden haired people who think themselves the real Aryans.

The sons marry against their religion. It seems to be a great need for some of them to marry fair haired women, who will perhaps make them better fitted to the social standards of Germany. The Christian wives are soon absorbed by the Jewish families which have so much stronger ties and demands. And the Jews have gained little more than wives cut off from their own people.

Interwoven through the lives of the very strong characters that Sholem Asch draws, is the frightful uncertainty of the inflation, when savings, land and personal property vanish. The fantastic story of the inflation profiteers, among them Hugo Stinnes, who through their own gluttony, without doubt started the civil war and the final bitterness of race hatred which was then directed against the Jews.

This book is a most important contribution to those interested in the sociological and psychological problems of the German Jews.

Sholem Asch has given us a real picture of the different types of Jews involved in the racial prejudices of the Nazis. He neither pleads nor defends; he simply explains the whys. Willia and Edwin Muir have contributed greatly in their able translation of such an important book.

KAY AND JOE HOLLISTER

### BIOGRAPHY OF A MILITANT SUFFRAGETTE

THE LIFE OF EMMELINE PANKHURST, by E. Sylvia Pankhurst (Houghton Mifflin Co.) \$2.00

**E.** SYLVIA PANKHURST is the author of "The Life of Emmeline Pankhurst," a biography of her famous mother. The book tells briefly but clearly Mrs. Pankhurst's work for labor and for reform before 1903, then eleven years



of the suffragette movement, and in 1914, her complete reversal of policy that followed the declaration of war.

Emmeline Goulden, born in Manchester, England, 1858, heard echoes in her earliest years of the suffrage movement which began in England in 1867. She led the suffragettes in Great Britain 1903 to 1914, became a voter in 1918, and finally stood as conservative candidate for a seat in parliament in 1928, the year of her death.

Sylvia was one of the four Pankhursts, mother and daughters, whose protests made publicity for votes for women in the newspapers all over the world. Their first heckling was followed by violent treatment by police and by prison officials. The suffragettes invented new acts of violence against property, which were followed by increased personal violence on the part of the government. They hunger-struck in prison and were forcibly fed. The new "cat and mouse act" was used to imprison them again and again. Many were injured permanently. Several suffragettes died from prison treatment.

The public heard most of Mrs. Pankhurst and her oldest daughter, Christabel. After years of co-operation, including prison experiences that are dreadful to remember, Sylvia organized the working women of the East End of London, and there was later separation from her mother and from Christabel. Sylvia has remained loyal to women and to workers. Adela moved to Australia, worked awhile with the labor movement there, and then turned conservative. Mrs. Pankhurst eventually disowned both Sylvia and Adela.

Christabel "ceased to interest herself in public affairs . . . was now looking for a solution of this world's problems by cataclysmic (supernatural) means." By this time the world war was ended and the vote won for women more than 30 years old.

Sylvia pictures Mrs. Pankhurst a constant rebel against the subjection of women and against injustices of all kinds throughout her long life. She is a lenient interpreter of differences of opinion and method.

Readers who remember the press stories of arrests, broken windows and arson, may be surprised to read that as early as 1930 a monument was erected to Mrs. Pankhurst in London near the Houses of Parliament.

Mrs. Pankhurst wrote her own life in 1914. Sylvia has written three books besides the biography. One is a large volume on "The Suffragette Movement." There is also a pamphlet "Writ on cold slate," which contains the poems she wrote in prison.

ALICE PARK

## LAUGHTER ANALYZED

ENJOYMENT OF LAUGHTER, by Max Eastman (Simon and Schuster) \$3.50

THIS book had for me all the fascination of a session with a psychoanalyst, added to pure entertainment. The jokes and stories and pictures with which Mr. Eastman has besprinkled his pages, not only serve to illustrate his theories, but are also richly worthwhile for themselves. Of all emotions, and their accompanying physical reactions, laughter is the most spontaneous, the most perfectly unself-conscious. Tears come on with a generous prickle of warning, we can usually tell by various inner symptoms when we are in danger of a swoon, but laughter overtakes us unawares—it just happens. Max Eastman attempts—and succeeds pretty well, too—in telling why. Most of what he has to say sounds highly plausible to me—particularly when he debunks the sour theory that all laughter is openly or subtly based on cruelty: in the happy sense of superiority aroused in us by seeing somebody else make a fool of himself. It is only when the author begins to consider at length, and with a joyful air of discovery, the humorous sense in infants, that I cease to follow along with him. In putting so much emphasis on the laughter of young children, I do not see that he recognizes the enormous differ-

ence between laughter as a functional and physical reaction (surely the chuckling baby who is tickled or jounced up and down is displaying no more sense of humor than a kitten who purrs when you stroke it) and laughter which is the result of a tickled mind or imagination. The two important divisions in the mainsprings of laughter seem to be the witty, and what I'd like to call by that lovely old-fashioned word—the droll. An appreciation of this second (the least sophisticated of the two) is impossible for a young child who hasn't yet learned enough about the expected and the matter-of-fact to be at all certain what is ridiculous. Or to be clearer, the "surprise" which all psychologists agree is a necessary element in all but a small sub-division of jokes, is lost on an infant whose world is still completely made up of surprises. It is a pretty idea that we are most richly endowed with what Mr. Eastman calls a sense of fun as children, but I think real humor goes more often with the detachment of years.

Almost the most provocative thing in the book is a recognition somewhere in the middle of it that humor is definitely undergoing a change. Many of the things we laugh at today would have seemed a generation ago, simply insane. "Modern humor," says Charlie Chaplin, "frightens me a little. It's a soul-destroying thing. The Marx brothers, Thurber, Joe Cook, Benchley—they go in for being crazy. They make insanity a convention." It seems as though humor—like sex—should be fundamental, changeless and timeless. But it isn't. It's changing like everything else. Frightening, maybe, but as good a signpost as any other, of the way we're going.

MONA WILLIAMS

## IT HAS HAPPENED HERE

(A Review of "Material Gathered," Federal Writers Project magazine).

REFUSING to be plowed under, a group of writers on the Federal Writers Project in San Francisco have founded a new magazine, "Material Gathered," the first issue of which is now available. It is as superb a collection of short stories, essays and verse as has ever appeared between the covers of any local publication. Altogether there are twenty seven articles by almost as many authors. Some of the authors are well known as contributors to magazines of national circulation. Others are new. The story, "Thanks For Everything," by Richard Romain, is as humorous a concoction as has ever been published anywhere. In it the ludicrous gyrations of William Bangball Burst, the newspaper publisher, and Claypool Titterflush, the steel magnate, are funnier than the Marx brothers. I recommend it to shipowners, Al Smith, and Father Coughlin.

There are some remarkable poems by Kenneth Rexroth and Dorothy Van Ghent. There are poems by Lawrence Estavan you won't forget. Peter Quince has a story of the sea. Miriam Allen deFord is represented with a short story, "Bombyx" and excerpts from "Shelly," a play in verse. There are excerpts from a novel and a short story, "Forgive Me," by Leon Dorais. A long piece of literary criticism on the state of Western literature is very ably presented by J. Rand Talbot. Altogether it is an event anyone interested in the craft of writing can not afford to miss. John D. Barry, the columnist for the San Francisco News states:

"Collectors ought to be interested. Some day copies will be historic."

"Material Gathered," has long been awaited. It was inevitable that soon or late the vast number of talented writers, for whom no field of expression is provided, would find a voice. The contributions to this magazine have a certain gusto and freedom not found in contemporaries whose stricture on ideas and expression is bound by fear of a loss in circulation or efforts to please an owner to whom certain themes and ideas are taboo.

## GROUPS IN ACTION

### SOLIDARITY FOR SPAIN

There is encouragement both for the struggling Spanish people and for all their sympathizers in reports such as the following, which are simply random examples of the solid front of labor and labor-sympathizing organizations against the forces of Fascism:

New York, N. Y.—Bishop Francis J. McConnell, chairman of the North American Committee to Aid Spanish Democracy, with which the American League Against War and Fascism is co-operating, announced here that a second ship load of clothing, food, and medical supplies will leave at once with a cargo of 3500 tons.

Askov, Minn.—The Farm Holiday Association of Minnesota, in convention here, passed the following resolution against Fascism in the United States after citing the "heroic struggle" now being carried on in Spain:

Whereas the people of Spain are today engaged in a heroic struggle to preserve the democratic government of their own choosing from being destroyed by a brutal Fascist dictatorship, and

Whereas the support which the Fascists of the world, including William Randolph Hearst in America, are giving to the Fascist rebels in Spain that Fascism has become a world wide menace endangering every democratic country in the world,

Therefore this convention of the FHA, Minnesota Division, calls upon all Americans to stamp out every Fascist tendency which may threaten any one of our democratic rights.

Rochester, N. Y.—The Progressive Women's Council of this city which is co-operating with the North American Committee to Aid Spanish Democracy, a few days ago contacted the Central Trades and Labor Council in this city and received \$200 for the current drive to assist the victims of Fascism in Spain. It is also announced that the women are collecting clothes. They have already sent more than a ton of clothes to the national office of the Progressive Women's Council in New York. Another branch of the Women's Council reports that 60 cans of milk were collected in one day, and another that it got three large cases of canned milk in one day.

### A YOUTH ACT FOR CALIFORNIA

A California Youth Act is needed as a stop-gap to tide over the unemployed young people of this state until the government acts nationally. The American Youth Congress has initiated an independent Promotional Committee to sponsor an Assembly, at which every youth organization in Northern California can help draw up a California Youth Act. The Assembly convenes January 9th and 10th, 1937, in the central Y. M. C. A. of San Francisco, at 220 Golden Gate Avenue.

## CORRESPONDENCE

Editor "Pacific Weekly,"

It was a pleasure to attend, even for a short time, the Western Writers Congress. One reason for the pleasure was the apparent general opposition to the anti-syndicalist law which for some 18 years has disgraced the statute-books of our State.

But opposition to the law in question, it may be said, is only the beginning of wisdom. This law can be likened physically to the pustules and boils which indicate a diseased system. Unless severe constitutional treatment be given, the evil sought to be suppressed by the repeal of the anti-syndicalist law will come to the surface through violent and fascist conduct, now checked in some measure because its perpetrators can appeal to the perversions of law we have recently seen. There may be greater illustrations of mob violence than Salinas and the Imperial Valley have yet afforded. The law's repeal may easily intensify them. Why bother to kill a man when you can as now so easily send him to the penitentiary?

Carey McWilliams has recently pointed out in the "Pacific Weekly" that great agricultural landholdings distinguish California from every other State in the Union. They are the great foci of disorder. Their limitation, curtailment and subdivision can be accomplished by the use of the taxing power. This was sought by the recent proposed tax amendment ruled off the ballot by the State Supreme Court, but likely to be renewed in the future. This proposition instead of "sticking in the bark," as the lawyers say, goes to the heart and root of industrial difficulties and not merely one of their manifestations.

Palo Alto, California  
November 15, 1936

Jackson H. Ralston

## THEY TELL ME . . .

"TODAY THE PUBLIC IS TOO VAGUE," says Herbert Agar, Pulitzer prize winner, now on a two months lecture tour. "It makes its requests in general terms, asking for 'prosperity' and 'happiness.' We have got to make up our minds as to what we want in the way of policy. If we cannot do this then someone will do it for us, whether we like it or not." Mr. Agar is now at work on a definitive History of the Democratic Party.

IN ANSWER to the many inquiries that have been received regarding the whereabouts of Nijinsky: Nijinsky has lived for the past seven years in a sanitarium at Kreuglingen, Switzerland. During this period his wife, Romola, is the only member of his family who has visited him. Of these visits Madame Nijinsky has written: "Every time I arrive he receives me with an expression of tenderness and gratitude. His face lights up with a smile, and he seems to lose some of the great passivity of his present behavior. Slowly he becomes more sociable and interested. There are days, too, when Nijinsky is gay, laughs and even allows me to dance a tango or a waltz with him. He even shows an interest then for the new dances and at my last visit I showed him the Rhumba. Sometimes he begins to dance one of his parts and the last time I stayed with him he danced a minuet for me. Seventeen years of illness and suffering disappear in a flash. His lightness, his grace, the incredible beauty of his movements and his supreme art, reveal themselves once more. I only regret that nobody except the nurses and myself can see these magic dances."

MEMBERS OF THE staff at the Vanguard Press tell us that the "New York Times" will not accept advertisements for James Farrell's new book, "A World I Never Made," not because the advertisements are objectionable but because of the frankness of the book.

SIMON AND SCHUSTER have signed a contract with Shepard Stone and Hanson W. Baldwin of the New York "Times" to edit a volume of newspaper chronicles by "Time" correspondents and reporters in all parts of the world. Many contributions will tell "the story behind the story" of outstanding news events, and will interpret and make intelligible the complex background of everyday history. In some chapters the writers—each an authority in his own particular field—will deal with general or autobiographical themes. Frederick T. Birchall, Chief European Correspondent of the "Times," will use troubled Europe as his canvas; Arthur Knock, Washington correspondent, will write of the New Deal and developments in the Nation's capital; Meyey Berger expects to give some closeups of the New York underworld; Louis Stark has the pick of a dozen big stories involving the rights of labor. Others who are expected to contribute include Walter Duranty, Turner Catledge, James Hagerty, John Kieran, Brooks Atkinson, Olin Downes, Frank Nugent, Elliott Bell, Anne O'Hare McCormick, Hugh Bvas, John W. White, Russell Owen, F. Raymond Daniell, Lauren D. Lyman, Harold Denny, and Hanson W. Baldwin. The book is scheduled for Fall, 1937 publications. All of the material will be written especially for this volume.

THE WEEKLY "Presbyterian Banner" recently announced that Toronto's Victoria College had awarded an honorary Doctor of Divinity degree to "Lord Tweed S. Muir, Governor-General of Canada." A few days later said John Buchan (Lord Tweedsmuir) upon receiving an honorary Doctor of Laws from Queen's University at Kingston, Ontario: "We are living in a confused and difficult world . . ."

IN MANY COURSES on writing given by colleges and study groups, Dorothea Brande's "Becoming a Writer" is required reading. It is, in fact, rapidly becoming the beginner's indispensable textbook. Latest word is that Henry James Forman, author of "The Story of Prophecy," not only requires his students at Temple University to read and inwardly digest the book but insists, for the good of their souls, that they own it. Mrs. Brande is at work on a companion volume to "Becoming a Writer," but no announcement concerning it can yet be made.

ON JANUARY 28th Henry Holt and Company will publish William H. Hessler's "Our Ineffective State," a study of the shortcomings of our governmental structure and their remedy. Mr. Hessler is chief editorial writer for the Cincinnati "Enquirer" and is widely known for his weekly review of foreign and domestic affairs.

ELLA WINTER