

STUDENT REVIEW

JANUARY, 1934

TEN CENTS

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National Student League Plan of Action

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Associate Editor: Theodore Draper

Literary Editor: Muriel Rukeyser

Business Manager: Morris Levine

Circulation Manager: Alex Shinasi

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Editorial Comment

BECAUSE of the former stress on city-wide or national conferences, it did not occur to many of us that a conference of students in a single university or college could be a highly successful undertaking. The fact is, however, that a conference of students in one school has the advantage of being able to secure the direct participation of the great majority of students.

The Columbia University Conference Against War initiated what has become a nation-wide movement. Despite the wide representation at the conference, however, and despite the fact that some excellent resolutions for immediate activity against militarism were adopted, including one patterned along the lines of the Oxford students' pledge not to support the government in time of war, an extremely grave mistake was made by the National Student League members. When one of the fraternity men introduced a resolution pledging opposition to all wars, the N.S.L. voted as a group in support of that resolution in order to preserve the "united front." Obviously such a united front violates one of the fundamental principles of the N.S.L. program. The National Student League fights against *imperialist* war, and supports the struggles of oppressed peoples against imperialism. We are not pacifists. The above resolution is in reality a break with the policy of united front and robs the struggle against war of any real meaning.

SHOWING its ability to learn from the mistakes of the Columbia N.S.L., the chapter at New York University conducted a splendid campaign in connection with the anti-war convention at the University. Three anti-war meetings were held each week in preparation for the convention. Delegates were elected from clubs, classrooms, and by the signing of petitions. When delegates were elected from the classrooms, those periods were converted into forums for the discussion of the war problem. Although the representation at the conference was very

wide, with students of all shades of opinion and from all organizations present, the resolutions which were adopted were in consonance with the program of the National Student League and offered an adequate basis for all, except the R.O.T.C. officers, in the united front. Resolutions were adopted which protested the expulsion of the students and clubs at City College for their anti-war activity. A determined struggle against the R.O.T.C. was initiated and a pledge similar to the one at Columbia was adopted: "We pledge never to support or cooperate with the government of the United States in any war it may conduct."

Although the National Student League *as such* was not felt sufficiently on the floor of the conference, the prestige of the N.S.L. was so enhanced as a result of a policy which was firm and realistic and yet unsectarian, that the membership of the chapter increased by 70 during and immediately after the convention.

TAKING their cue from Columbia and N.Y.U., the N.S.L.ers at Brooklyn Colledge and City Colledge are at this writing in the midst of preparations for anti-war conferences. We are, it seems, threatened with an epidemic of school anti-war conferences. The disease is luckily a useful one. The conference at City College can well become that spark which will again kindle the flame of the fight to secure the reinstatement of the expelled students.

IN order to coordinate the activity of the groups in all the metropolitan colleges it will prove advisable to set up a method for the meeting together of all the continuations committees of the conferences. Joint action on the City College case and on other issues can and should be undertaken. At the N.Y.U. convention a motion was passed to conduct a demonstration against war on April 6th, the date of the entrance of the United States into the last war. Such a decision should be passed at all the conferences. The possibilities for converting April 6th, 1934, into a national day of struggle against the danger of war and for the abolition of the R.O.T.C. will become ever greater. The importance of cooperating with the American League Against War and Fascism was pointed out at the N.Y.U. conference. Students cannot isolate their anti-war movement. They must seek allies and particularly the working class which will eventually prove the decisive class in the struggle against war and the system which makes for wars.

ANOTHER phase of the Scottsboro trial has ended. Another judge has condemned two of the seven boys in swift, hurried trials. Judge Callahan was more candid than his predecessors. He allotted exactly three days for each trial, disregarding the amount of possible testimony and the time it might take to present it. He ignored the protest raised by the defense at the forgery of the jury rolls in order to cover up the exclusion of Negro jurors, and rigorously and systematically refused to admit any

of the technical and medical testimony concerning the rape of Victoria Price. With infallible instinct, Judge Callahan excluded whatever defense testimony was really pertinent and important. In fitting conclusion to the trial of Haywood Patterson, the judge forgot to instruct the jury how they might acquit the defendant. More incisive than any word of ours could possibly be, is the comment of actual events. For at almost exactly the same time that the judge was mumbling his formulas, a lynch wave was sweeping the country. The smiling and congenial governor of California condoned the lynching of two white kidnapers. The lynchers of the South grasped his meaning. In Missouri a young Negro was burned alive by the mob. In Princess Anne, Maryland, 300 Negroes were driven out of the town. And, in Decatur, Judge Callahan was weaving judicial garlands for the throats of seven Negro boys. He has found his niche in history. He will be known as Judge Lynch and his trial as a lynch trial.

THE sixteen-year-old who boasts of having led the lynching at San Jose denied that it was instigated by students. He recruited the crowd from the speak-easies. Students may have been involved, he admitted, but only as subordinates. In any events, let us consider the possibility of student participation as a horrible warning.

In other countries, students have been in the vanguard of militant reaction. In Roumania and in Poland, they lead anti-Semitic pogroms. In Germany, the most desperate sections of the Storm Troops are jobless college graduates. College students helped burn the books. If the bankers and industrialists have been the economic backbone of Fascism, then students have been part of its flesh and blood, of its human tissue. We say this to make more apparent the responsibility of American students in fighting every trace, every symptom of Fascism.

One point is well worth emphasizing. There is a drift towards Fascism inherent in our own New Deal. The New Deal also coordinates workers and capitalists under codes written and administered solely by the latter. The New Deal also acknowledges the collapse of liberal, competitive capitalism in favor of a capitalism wherein the machinery of the state becomes an integral factor. If we do not have Fascism yet it is not for timidity or lack of design on the part of our financial overlords, but for lack of a situation desperate enough to make more persuasive, naked class rule imperative. Fascism may change the form, but not the direction of capitalist development.

But even when the choice of Fascist reaction instead of traditional disguises presents itself, one factor, as yet largely lacking, will still be necessary. That factor will be some sort of mass movement, wielded by demagogues with a sufficiently ambiguous and eclectic program—especially in its early stages—to embrace elements having nothing in common but despair.

It is precisely here that any widespread lynching orgy becomes dangerous, especially any episode openly sup-

ported by state authorities. Governor Rolph has done his part, and the potentialities of his position are vast beyond what are probably his understanding of them. With every ounce of energy, with every resource at our command, no time is to be lost pushing forward every movement and ideal which will save the American student from going the way of most of his European prototypes.

Plan of Action*

THE Third National Convention of the N.S.L. takes place Christmas in Washington, D. C. At the first convention the problems that faced us were in the main problems of organization in its most elementary sense. We had the job of bringing together all of those scattered students who were interested in building a revolutionary student movement. It was primarily a pioneering job. At the second national convention and at the subsequent plenum last summer we were preoccupied with problems of program. We had to hammer out a common understanding of what the N.S.L. was and what it had to do. Today we are in a position where we can lead large groups of students. The problem that faces us now is that of utilizing program and organization as a machinery in the leadership of student struggles and activities.

The National Office has functioned very loosely. It is not sufficiently in touch with the groups throughout the country. Frequently groups have sprung up and activities have been conducted without our even knowing it. In order to bring our far-flung groups closer together the National Convention will have to provide for sending out several field organizers. More important, however, is the fact that the National Office has not functioned as the leading force in the N.S.L. Most of the time it has communicated with its groups for the purpose of collecting money or to instruct them to sell publications. It has not furnished sufficient guidance and direction. This is due, at least in part, to our very nature as a student organization. Our leaders are not in a position where they can wholly devote themselves to the work of the organization. There has been a very high turnover because of increased duties at school. Obviously the problem that faces us is that of establishing broad collective leadership, is that of constantly developing new people and new forces. In order to do this the National Office must be in close contact with its membership. Instead, we have usually functioned as an isolated group without contact with the chapters from which our members come.

Many of our problems result from an inadequate understanding of our program. Some of our difficulties can be traced to our first program published in the *Student Review*, May, 1932, which was based on a general left

(Continued on page 18)

*This plan of activity for the next year was proposed by the National Executive Committee as the basis for discussion at the Washington Convention.

Yale on the Picket Line

THE medieval cloisters of Yale were strangely stirred during the second week of December. Students forgot for a while their Gothic surroundings and allowed themselves to be precipitated quite willingly into the midst of a struggle which is decidedly contemporary. But it was not the cause of labor against capital that stimulated the ultra-conservative and entirely reactionary student body into action; it was rather the students' sense of bourgeois "justice" which provided the stimulus as they saw "civil liberties" and "constitutional rights" denied their fellow students.

It is not an every-day occurrence for Yale students to participate in mass delegations to the Chief of Police and the Mayor of the city to protest police brutality to strike pickets, and to demand the immediate release, without trial, of those arrested in a strike-breaking maneuver. Nor does it often happen that Yale students return three times, 200 strong, in zero weather in order to attend a trial in which the International Labor Defense is acting for the defendants. Even the *Yale News* abandoned its long-standing tradition of apathy towards affairs of the day and came out strongly in its editorial columns in defense of the pickets. A large number of professors also sent letters of protest to the Chief of Police and the Mayor, gave liberally to the defense fund, and supported the students in every way. Yale was faced squarely with an issue of burning importance and reacted favorably, owing to the initiative provided by the members of the National Student League.

The events leading up to this singular interest on the part of one of the most unsympathetic of student bodies were briefly as follows. Eight weeks ago the molders of Kirschner's foundry in New Haven, members of the Steel and Metal Workers' Industrial Union, struck against miserable conditions and starvation wages. Denied even the right to know for what piece-work rates they were working, the molders, who had once received as high as \$30 for a 40-hour week, were now averaging less than \$14 for full time under terrific speed-up. Their demands included piece-work rates as of 1929, recognition of the shop committee and of the union, and cessation of helpers' work. When all other means failed to break the determination of the strikers to hold out until they should win their demands, the boss resorted to sending scabs out to beat up the pickets. This happened Wednesday, December 6.

The National Student League was one of the many organizations that responded to the appeal of the strikers for mass picketing on the following day to prevent a recurrence of the terror, and to show the boss and scabs that the spirit of the strike was unbroken. Four N.S.L. men were on the picket line at 6 o'clock Thursday morning and back again at 3:30 the same afternoon. Permission was obtained from Chief of Police Smith to hold a street corner meeting opposite the foundry just at the time that the scabs were scheduled to come out. They came out just at 4 o'clock, with lead pipe and bottles in

their hands. Rae Masler and several others spoke to them, urging them to attend the meeting on the corner, held in order to present to them the strikers' point of view. Immediately Rae Masler was pointed out by the boss, who assisted Patrolman Enright in roughly seizing her and dragging her into the office of the foundry. The pickets protested and demanded her freedom, but still they maintained order and kept their ranks. Next Larry Hill was indicated by the boss, and the cop, seeing four other officers running up the block to his assistance, with a sudden burst of courage clubbed Larry brutally over the head. Larry was stunned and sank almost to the sidewalk; nevertheless he was charged with "resisting arrest" in addition to "general breach of the peace" and "obstructing a sidewalk." When the other cops came up, Larry was surrounded and received a cruel beating in the stomach and on the shins.

Potenza was not even on the picket line. A molder in another foundry and an active member of the Steel and Metal Workers' Industrial Union, he had heard of the street corner meeting and decided to attend. He was astounded to hear Hancock, the boss, screaming to Enright, "Officer, officer, get that man with the red tie! That Bolshevik there! He called me a son of a bitch! No, don't chase him away! Arrest him for breach of the peace!"

Immediately mobilization in the city and in the University was begun. The next morning, in spite of the fact that it was expected that a continuance would be obtained, the court room was filled with students and workers. The International Labor Defense secured the services of Jacob Belford of New Haven and at once launched a campaign to bring mass pressure to bear for the release of the three pickets. The trial was set for Friday, December 15.

On Saturday, December 9, a delegation of fourteen students representing the membership of the National Student League went to Chief Smith and Mayor Murphy, where they protested the police brutality and demanded the immediate unconditional release of Hill, Masler, and Potenza. The Mayor refused to see him, and it was decided that the N.S.L. should summon a mass student delegation for Tuesday afternoon. Before dispersing, the students visited the city editor of the *New Haven Register*, demanded that he print their statement of the case and refrain from publishing the lies invented by the bosses and police to discredit the pickets and break the strike. The statement appeared in full in the afternoon *Register*.

N.S.L. members and sympathizers got busy securing statements of protest from professors and prominent students. On Monday a favorable, if politically weak, editorial appeared in the *Yale News*. By Tuesday the student body was up in arms over the question and a delegation of fifty students left Phelps Gateway at 2 o'clock for the office of Chief Smith. There the student protest was once more registered and the statements of

the professors and students were read aloud. At the Mayor's office the delegation was met by twelve husky plainclothes men who announced that the Mayor would see three students. Al Lovejoy, president of Dwight Hall, Student Christian Association, Bill Stafford, member of the Yale Socialist Club, and Bill Gordon, membership secretary of the N.S.L., were the three who went in to listen to a 30-minute tirade against Communism and Communist unions which "did not apply for admission into the A. F. of L." The three objected that they had not come to discuss these matters and that their silence did not indicate that they agreed with him. They had come, they said, to protest and to demand the release of the three pickets.

On Monday, the day before the mass delegation, Larry Hill and Bill Gordon were on the scene of Larry's arrest attempting to secure impartial witnesses for the defense. As they were questioning a watchman of a shop across the street from the foundry, a policeman came up to them and threatened to "clip them on the side of the head" unless they kept out of the neighborhood. The two lodged a complaint with Chief Smith, who assured them that they were within their rights in securing evidence and questioning witnesses and that they would be unmolested if they conducted their business in an orderly manner. He inquired for the number of the cop and the students promised to get this for him the following day.

On Tuesday after the delegation Gordon went back with Dave Alperowitz, another N.S.L. member. Seeing the cop across the street, Gordon walked up to him, from a distance of six feet looked at his badge, and without addressing a word to him, turned and started to walk back across the street. The cop seized him and arrested him for "general breach of the peace"! Gordon told him he was making a mistake, and the cop said: "Listen, I'm going to give you a break. You stay the hell out of this neighborhood and keep the students away, and I'll let you go." Gordon told him that it was necessary for him to help get witnesses for the trials coming up Friday, and mentioned that he had lodged a complaint against the cop with the chief. "Oh, so you lodged a complaint against me, did you? Then I'm going to lock you up!"

Having the mistaken illusion that he could win the case on its merits alone, Gordon decided to act as his own attorney and to go through with the case the following morning. Again students and workers came in large numbers to the court room. To the students it was an eye-opener, for the entire system of ruling class justice was exposed to them. Gordon was so obviously innocent that they were completely amazed when they heard the judge pass sentence: \$25 or 25 days and costs. It was obvious that Gordon was convicted not for any breach of the peace committed Tuesday, for there was nothing even in the evidence introduced by the prosecution which indicated a breach of the peace; he was convicted for participating in the picketing Thursday when Larry Hill was arrested, for aligning himself with the workers in their struggle for better living conditions. It is significant that no testimony was admitted concerning the events of Thursday that led up to the arrest on Tuesday. Even Larry Hill was not permitted to testify as to the threats

of the cop on Monday, the complaint to the chief of police, and the promise to the chief to secure the number of the cop's badge; Hill was not present at Gordon's arrest on Tuesday and therefore his entire testimony was inadmissible, it was claimed. Gordon also was not permitted to examine his own witnesses as to his purpose in crossing the street before looking at the badge; nor was he allowed to cross-examine the cop on why he had been seized in the first place, since even the cop admitted that he had a right to look at the badge or even ask for the number. This question was claimed irrelevant and the objection of the city attorney was sustained by the judge.

Larry Hill, Rae Masler, and Theodore Potenza came up before the same judge Friday morning, December 15. At 9 o'clock on the coldest day of the year, 100 students and workers braved a blinding sleet storm and crowded into the court room. The case was not mentioned until 9:55, when it was announced that it would be postponed until 11:45. By these tactics it was hoped to discourage the spectators, because it would have been poor policy to have too many persons witness the railroading which finally took place. But the spectators came back in full force and had increased their number by half again as many by 11:45. This time the judge did not even show up, and the spectators were informed that the trial would take place at 2 o'clock and that only witnesses would be admitted.

It would have been interesting for an outsider to observe the many bourgeois illusions of "fair trial," "free country," etc., vanishing as the incensed students realized what was being done. A spontaneous demonstration with its central point one of the University professors, was staged outside the courtroom and delegations were immediately sent to the Mayor and the judge demanding the right to have spectators at the trial. It was pretended that there had never been any other idea. "The police are not running my court," said the judge. At 2 o'clock the crowd had again increased by half its number, and the police, claiming that they knew nothing about the permission of the judge and the Mayor, started to break it up. It would have been illuminating at this time to have circulated among the students and professors copies of the first four lines of the Declaration of Independence.

Finally another protest registered with the judge brought the announcement that there would be an open trial. Claiming, however, that the large court room was in use, proceedings were removed to a tiny one that would hold only twenty-five persons. The others were finally driven from the court.

Having no idea on this occasion that justice would be done and an acquittal obtained, the International Labor Defense anticipated the result and took immediate steps to expose the verdict. Eight members of an unofficial citizens' jury organized just before the trial won admittance to the court. The number was increased to twelve from the other spectators. The composition of the jury was four professors, two wives of professors, three students, and three members of workers' organizations. After the trial the jury, passing upon the evidence introduced by the prosecution and the defense, rendered an

unofficial unanimous verdict of "innocent on all counts" for each of the defendants. But by the court they were found guilty; Potenza was given \$10 or 10 days and costs for breach of the peace; Masler got \$25 and costs or 25 days; and Larry Hill was found guilty of all three charges laid against him and given an aggregate of \$60 and costs or 60 days.

It is interesting to note that the witnesses called for the prosecution were four cops, the boss, and two scabs. The defense on the other hand in addition to the defendants, called one student and four strictly impartial witnesses, two workers from a factory across the street from the foundry, and two persons living in a house which was also opposite the foundry.

Of course the three defendants, as well as Bill Gordon, all filed appeals to the Court of Common Pleas and expect to fight their cases early in January. It is expected that there will be a large student mobilization at the trials which will probably provide the basis for the development of a much stronger student movement than exists at Yale today. Up to the present, it may be said that

**TELEGRAM RECEIVED BY THE YALE
CHAPTER OF THE N.S.L.**

Dec. 14, 1933—Congratulations on being found guilty of helping American workers to secure a decent existence and on coming out of your college study to share concretely their struggles with them. There are many Harvard men always ready to aid and abet Yale men in the performance of such high crimes and misdemeanors.

CORLISS LAMONT,
Harvard, '24

I Heckled Luther

HANS LUTHER, the German Ambassador to the United States, has a pink, beery face beneath a highly waxed bald pate. He is a short, plumpish man, soft and loose around the jowls. As his two aides-de-camp escorted him across the platform of Horace Mann Auditorium at Columbia University, they rose and fell in continuous genuflexion on each side of his pompous paunch. Here he was at last—the exponent of Hitler "culture," the man whom Dr. Butler had invited to address the Columbia Institute of Arts and Sciences!

Originally the meeting had been scheduled for some time in November, to be held in the Macmillan Theatre, one of the largest halls at Columbia. Telegrams, protest resolutions and plans for a student demonstration against fascism had met the announcement of such a meeting, and the meeting was postponed.

But Dr. Butler was valiant in the "defense" of academic freedom. Dr. Nicholas Murray Butler, who had

the students and the faculty reacted in a splendid manner to the call for their support. There was practically no administration opposition, although Dean Mendell stated to the press that Yale College could not officially be brought into the struggle as either condoning or rebuking the students for their participation in the strike; he personally thought that they were meddling in something they knew nothing about, but he showed sympathy when the case was laid before him in an hour and a quarter conference with Hill and Gordon.

Three times before within our knowledge Yale students have taken an active part in an important local strike. The first was during a teamsters' strike of many years ago. This time the students acted as scabs for an entire day, but a delegation of teamsters of the then very militant A. F. of L. Teamsters' Union persuaded the President of the University to call off the students. Within the last seven years students have taken part in two important strikes in the neckwear industry; on these occasions, however, they were on the other side of the fence and participated actively in the picketing.

Yale students have been aroused over the events recounted in this article. Students throughout the country have been aroused over similar events. Often they have been more genuinely in sympathy with the working class movement than the Yale men, who were interested mainly because their fellow students were involved. A tremendous effort should be made on a national scale to maintain student interest in these matters between the various dramatic incidents which are bound to occur from time to time. The National Student League must take the leadership in this and point out in every action it takes the fundamental unity between students and workers. The more students that can at the present time be induced to take an active interest in the cause of the working class, the less there will be to join the fascist ranks when these are recruited from among the American student body.

WILLIAM GORDON, JR.

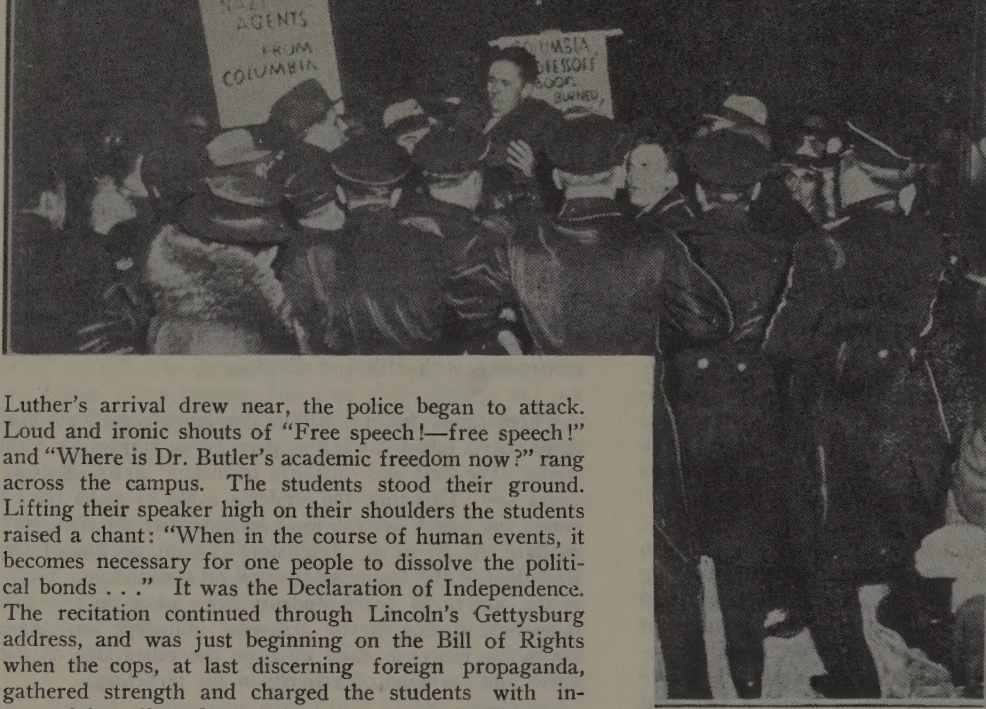
expelled such eminent men as Beard, Catell, Dana, Henderson, and with them the free expression of ideas, considered himself highly honored to have at the college the most outstanding representative in this country of that regime which has burned the books of Columbia professors.

Finally at a much later date, at a much smaller hall, Hans Luther arrived. But he did not succeed in evading the demonstration.

Hundreds of students turned out from the New York colleges at the call of the National Student League and the Committee to Aid Victims of German Fascism, in protest against Nazi propaganda at the University.

The pickets marched back and forth in the extreme cold, passing their placards along as their fingers grew numb. A large and militant demonstration gathered around the Horace Mann Auditorium.

As our numbers grew ever larger and the time for



Luther's arrival drew near, the police began to attack. Loud and ironic shouts of "Free speech!—free speech!" and "Where is Dr. Butler's academic freedom now?" rang across the campus. The students stood their ground. Lifting their speaker high on their shoulders the students raised a chant: "When in the course of human events, it becomes necessary for one people to dissolve the political bonds . . ." It was the Declaration of Independence. The recitation continued through Lincoln's Gettysburg address, and was just beginning on the Bill of Rights when the cops, at last discerning foreign propaganda, gathered strength and charged the students with increased brutality. One student was arrested. The demonstrators, more determined than ever, reassembled across the street.

Inside the hall was slowly filling. Police crowded the corridors and surrounded the outer doors. Police sentinels stood watch at every entrance and exit. Police filtered through the aisles and "dicks" sat in the audience. I found a place well near the center in a section near two elderly women and an elderly gentleman. They were greatly perturbed. "Horace Mann is such a tiny auditorium, why wasn't the meeting held at the Macmillan Theatre, which is such a large place." The question was asked time and again. How well I knew why! And had they seen the size of the demonstration outside they would have answered their own question.

Luther was to speak at 8:00 o'clock—at 8:30 he was sneaked into the hall. Those of us who had expected President Butler to be there were mistaken. Our telegrams had had some effect—President Butler had a very important engagement that night. He was at an athletic banquet!

Dr. Luther faced the group before him and began an unctuous phrase on the glorious liberty which now dwelt in Germany. In as loud a voice as I could muster, I interrupted:

"Why has every dissenting professor been exiled from Germany? . . . Why have the books of Boaz and other Columbia professors been burned in German universities? . . . This is no place for Nazi agents or Nazi propaganda . . . Why—"

By now three police had rushed down the aisle, had pushed by my gaping neighbors and were escorting me out.

"Why are there quotas for Jewish students in German universities . . . and the persecution is so great that even these quotas have not been filled!"

Now I had reached the auditorium door but as they were slow in closing it behind me I continued, "American students protest against the spreading of Nazi propa-

ganda . . . in American universities . . ." The last phrase was added outside in the cold as the doors of Horace Mann shut behind me.

No sooner, however, was the auditorium quiet and Herr Luther had resumed with "I shall begin again," when another voice rose:

"The National Student League protests against the spreading of Nazi propaganda—," the cry was cut short as the second student was pushed from her seat, a heavy hand over her mouth, and the police hurried her quickly through a side door.

Luther by this time was greatly disturbed but he tried again—"I wish to say . . ."

"Down with Hitler! Down with Fascism!! . . ." The cry rang clear, through the corridors, down the steps, and into the cold—"Down with Hitler! Oust the Nazis!"

The last was a German instructor at Columbia University.

We had succeeded in demonstrating against Fascism inside the hall and outside on the street. Once outside, the three of us joined the corner meeting.

Stamping up and down to keep warm we listened to speaker after speaker denouncing fascism; exposing President Butler's stand on "academic freedom."

The demonstration did not end in the street. Luther had finished speaking and had been whisked out of the hall. Our own audience had grown to include many whom he had bored for little more than an hour. And then, for the last half-hour, our speakers called every one present to the court. One of the girls distributing leaflets had been arrested for "littering the streets," "inciting to riot" and "obstructing traffic." Our demonstration ended in court when she was acquitted in a room packed with the audience from the demonstration three miles away.

RUTH RUBIN.

A German Exile Testifies

THE transformation of a Germany of great cultural eminence into what may aptly be described as a cross between a house of correction and a military training camp has, in consequence, completely altered the character of the German universities. At one time, these were, in intention at least, centers of independent scientific research and of free, unbiased instruction, where already in the youngest student could be detected the future scientific investigator. And although this ideal was not always realized in practice, academic freedom was ever a cherished reality: freedom of study, of instruction, and of independent scholarship gave to the German university its distinctive stamp—on this academic freedom has rested for many decades the glory and renown of the German scientific institution.

The times have changed. "The age of intellectualism is no more," proclaimed Goebbels, Minister of Propaganda, from the balcony of the University of Berlin which once gloried in a Mommsen and a Helmholtz. And on that day a barbarian holocaust consumed the proud cultural tradition of Germany—it was the Day of the Burning of the Books.

"It is my opinion that the Vandals are closer to us by ties of blood than are the Greeks," declared the new Prussian Minister of Culture upon taking office.

And on May 7 in the *Berliner Lokalanzeiger* the pen of the noted publicist Husseng yielded the following: "We are not and do not want to be the land of Goethe and Einstein. Not by any means!"

These few quotations, gleaned from countless others of a similar nature, are indicative of what has, to a considerable degree, already been done with the German university, and what may be its future. Science, learning—everything intellectual—has been adjudged superfluous and despicable. The universities are at best centers of culture for the officialdom; but that is comparatively unimportant. Of primary importance is their role in the militarization of youth. The student upon completion of his course in the Gymnasium, is first sent for some time to a work-camp, the sole purpose of which is military training. During the term, the students are compelled even at the cost of their education and, what in the Germany of the Dritte Reich is to be expected, to the complete detriment of their personal freedom, to participate several times a week in military maneuvers. In the disciplining of students in that barbarism which is permitted in Germany alone today, considerable value is attached to these maneuvers. All opposition to the National Socialist ideology is rendered impossible, the students being whipped into such a patriotic frenzy that they become the ready instruments of a tyranny having no historical precedent.

"You shall not think, you shall not question—you shall believe and obey," wrote a student refugee in a German emigre newspaper as characteristic of conditions in Germany, and, though neither Marxist nor Jew, he added, "It is impossible to endure life there."

A knowledge of military language and formations plays a decisive part in the final examinations. Reports have it that a law student failing in this subject was returned to a work-camp to complete his "education." In these camps, the students are subjected to a rigorous "character" test designed to determine whether they are well-grounded in the tenets of National Socialism, whether they have absorbed and assimilated the fulminations of "Der Fuehrer," and to what extent they are devoted to the cause of insane, provocative nationalism. Again and again, the students are sermonized in an infinite series of decrees and proclamations—they are destined to lead the German people, they are the "people's officers." This insistent stream of propaganda, augmented by compulsory military drill, forms an integral link in the systematic preparations for a new war, and gives evidence of the gradually crystallizing dangers facing the whole world.

This so-called university education is not even accessible to the entire youth of Germany. Expressly barred from the universities are pacifists, Communists and Marxists in general. In the category of Marxists and anti-nationalist elements are included all those "who by word of mouth or in writing or by a negative position, oppose the nationalist movement, and those who have revolted against the leaders of this movement or have sought to persecute students of a nationalistic penchant."

The last point is upon the whole incomprehensible, since a legal terror was never instigated against the movement of Herr Hitler. The two other points, however, open the road to an enormous menace, if we fail to perceive the conscious purpose motivating them. If signs of Marxism are exhibited in a given case, the decision is determined by a commission comprising three students of strong National-Socialist persuasion; in addition, the "suspected" may retain no legal defense. These facts leave no doubt in our minds as to the unimpeachable objectivity of the jury.

Anyone having a personal enemy can hold him up to the suspicion of being an adherent of Marxism; he merely has to recall some chance remarks made years ago by the accused. For the principle recognized by all civilized justice, that an act must be formally prohibited by law before it can be punishable, is, like everything else which is coterminous with civilization, abrogated in the Germany of Hitler. We are told that the accusation is sometimes made even before the informer is in possession of the evidence. First comes the denunciation, then follows the gathering of evidence.

This method of convicting "undesirables" of the heresy of "Marxism" indicates the path by which the Jewish student is disposed of. Although the pursuit of their respective professions is made impossible for lawyers, doctors and other professional men of Jewish extraction, although there are in after-university life no prospects for economic existence through the utilization of their academic training, Jews have not been completely barred from study. At least, up to the time of this writing, no

general rules have been promulgated for all German institutions of learning. We have it on good authority, for instance, that no Jewish student in the Medical College of Berlin is to be expelled for racial reasons. Against this, the medical colleges of three Bavarian universities have introduced a *numerus clausus* of five per cent. Such a restriction for Jews is also to be found in other colleges and universities; for the most part, however, it is rarely adhered to—that is to say, fewer students are enrolled than would be admitted in accordance with the *numerus clausus*. But a law for all Germany does not exist. My friends in Germany expect such a legal ruling to be instituted this fall. However, we would be in no way surprised should this ruling be deferred; for the possibility presents itself to the rulers of present-day Germany of incriminating one Jewish student after another with the charge of “Marxism,” thereby disposing of these “subversive” elements without incurring world-wide hostility at this renewed persecution. Such a procedure promises, in general, the customary practices throughout Germany. There is no established law to contest; on the contrary, a confused legal situation has been created, enabling those in power to manipulate the judiciary as they see fit. But for this immolation of justice to tyranny, there would still remain the possibility of appealing to justice; but for this, some guarantee of right would still remain to the accused.

Considering the antipathy manifested towards Communism by the entire western world, this method of persecuting the Jews under the cloak of “Marxism” is a cunning one indeed. It is our duty to expose this subterfuge in order to combat it openly. The definition of Marxism quoted above can be used against every person who endeavors to maintain his independence or who resists, in the terminology of the Nazis, “standardization,” or who, for some reason, has been informed against; the informer is by no means a rarity in the Germany of Fascism.

The few Jewish students who remain in the German universities are in the main those who are about to complete their studies; these are compelled to wage a heroic fight in the face of continuous abuse and maltreatment. In one university clinic, Jewish students are not permitted to take their seats until all of the “Aryan” students are seated; and even then, they must content themselves with seats in the extreme rear of the lecture-hall. In order to determine the racial origin of every student, detailed questionnaires have been prepared, in which the students’ lineage up to the fourth generation is inquired into. All statements must be confirmed by official documents, the procuring of which entails a tedious correspondence with civil record-halls throughout the German Empire. Whole days are wasted on this meaningless scribbling. More meaningless is this expenditure of energy if the documents must be submitted by those Jewish students and non-Aryans (those whose grandfathers were Jewish) who were permitted to matriculate during the summer. In such cases, the stipulation is made that their stay at the university is temporary, another instance of maltreatment and discrimination calculated to instill a feeling of uncertainty in these students. That which is most difficult to endure is the abuse from their hitlerized “colleagues.”

There are many instances where Jewish students have been set upon with blackjacks and canes, and driven from their class-rooms. Women, too, have received the same treatment. Many of these victims are laid up, internally injured for weeks and months. Many who but yesterday were in perfect health, have been crippled for life. Many have been killed. It now becomes quite apparent why Jewish students do not come to the universities even in numbers large enough to fill the small quota set by the *numerus clausus*. For the Jew in Germany the academic path is fraught with too many dangers to his life and limb.

Of great interest is the attitude of the professors. It is generally known that a large number of Jewish professors and those who are partly of Jewish extraction, were given a permanent leave of absence. This has led to a strange paradox. If the father had married a Jewess, he was permitted to stay. But the son, also a professor, was expelled, because he is the child of a Jewish mother. There are fathers who, even under these circumstances, remained at the universities. Several professors of unquestionably Aryan descent have been expelled for expressing opinions discordant with Hitlerism. To the credit of some of the non-Jewish professors, it must be said that a larger number of them have voluntarily left their posts than was anticipated. As the German papers are not allowed to report these resignations, it is very difficult to determine their number. One professor, whose name must be withheld since he still retains his chair, and who was notoriously apathetic to politics prior to the ascendancy of Hitler, recently published a letter in an emigré periodical which has a terrifying effect on all those who read it; this letter eloquently recalls the motto of Zola: “I cannot be silent, for I refuse to be one of the guilty.”

Apart from these few eminent exceptions, the conduct of the German professors is little less than scandalous. They have resigned themselves; they have accepted National Socialism; they have permitted themselves to be victimized by the Nazi students. In their lectures, they hail the movement as a national awakening and assert that they have always favored and supported it. Even those who owe their academic advancement to Social-Democratic ministers mouth the same servile phrases.

A number of these professors owe their success to the influence of their Jewish teachers. It cannot be denied that Jewish scholars have been the pioneers in every field of science and that they have exerted a profound influence on the intellectual development of their disciples. But now the disciples have cowardly forsaken their teachers. No word of protest at this racial discrimination has emanated from their ranks. For them, the primitive feeling of thankfulness does not exist.

This is but one other example of their moral degradation. Under the liberal tradition, which though never a strong political force in Germany, nevertheless greatly influenced the German populace, science flourished. There was a time when Mommsen, Helmholtz, Virehov, Willamowitz-Moellendorf, Diehls, Stumpf and many others were the pride of the University of Berlin and the distinguished leaders of the Prussian Academy of Science. Today the universities are dominated by characterless creatures. It is evident that in this atmosphere where

lackeys and spineless fawners now flourish, science is doomed to degeneration and certain decline. In view of the revulsion which has swept the rest of Europe, the National-Socialist regime may cause a permanent break with civilization.

The world is witnessing today a general exodus of the scholars of Germany, the heirs of those glorious traditions and values which have raised the German university to an exalted position among world educational institutions. These scholars come to foreign countries seeking protection and an opportunity to continue their intellectual pursuits. But they do not come with empty hands. They bring with them those scientific traditions for which

the Dritte Reich has no place—these they offer to the nations which will provide shelter for them. Upon these nations devolves the duty of taking up and preserving these great traditions and of ensuring their scholarly bearers a new life and a new, unrestricted laboratory of scholarship.

WERNER HOLTZ.

TRANSLATOR'S NOTE: *Werner Holtz is the pseudonym of a young instructor in Philosophy, of Jewish race and German nationality, who was forced to leave his post in one of the large German universities and flee to Paris as a result of the persecution of the Jews.*—Sol Becker.

Soft Soap In Chicago

ALMOST every high school in Chicago has its R.O.T.C., its periodic nationalistic assemblies and pep-meetings, its glorification of the War to End Wars. In line with these policies has been the strict exclusion of anti-war activity in the schools, the arbitrary suspension and expulsion of dissenters. "Get out or shut up!" is the order of the day.

All this has been felt at Manley High School during the last few months. As head of the school's division of the Chicago Provisional Youth Committee Against War, I had approached Principal Thomas J. Crofts on previous occasions, asking for permission to conduct the election of delegates from the classrooms for the Chicago Anti-War Congress. "The question of war," soft-soaps Crofts, "is very controversial, and it is just those questions that must be kept out of the schools. Also, yours is an outside organization, and, of course, if you attempt to spread the propaganda of an outside organization here, you are not a good Manley citizen, and must take the consequences."

However, there was no hesitancy on the part of the school board when the American Legion declared the week of December 10-16 as Americanization Week. Every school in the city was instructed to hold patriotic assemblies. Of course, there was no idea of instilling the war spirit—this was just to put the ideals of Americanism into our hearts! But what happened when I asked for a few minutes on the program to discuss the struggle against war? Again the evasions, the pussy-footing of our patriotic principal.

We were ready for him this time. "Mr. Crofts, you don't want war, do you? The teachers don't, the students don't. Where is the controversy?" "I'm sorry, but I can't give you any more of my time. You'll have to excuse me. Goodbye."

Hearing the students' little themes on the Constitution, on free speech, freedom of thought, all the blessings of our noble land, written in preparation for the assembly, determined me to take a militant stand against the forcing of war propaganda on the student body. I had to attend the assembly, but I would refuse to take an active part in it.

Therefore, the singing of the "Star-Spangled Banner" and the Pledge of Allegiance found me firmly intrenched in my seat, refusing to rise. It wasn't long before I was reported to Mr. Crofts. I was called from my next class to be informed of my suspension for one month. That is the most a principal can do, but he was getting in touch with the Superintendent of Schools to have me expelled. "Was I going to get any hearing at all—would I be given any opportunity to defend myself?" I asked.

"Such impertinence! Get out!"

The forces of protest were set in motion within ten minutes. I immediately called up Sam Lissitz, city executive chairman of the National Student League, who secured the aid of the Civil Liberties Union. The Committee Against War and its parent bodies; the American and World Leagues Against War and Fascism, were ready to place their facilities at our disposal. All the N.S.L. chapters were instructed to send telegrams and delegations to the school.

Manley students walking to school the next morning were met with a leaflet and chalked-up streets. "Reinstate Max Shain—immediately and unconditionally! Fight for Free Speech, Against Militarism, and for Academic Freedom!"

It wasn't long before Principal Crofts hoisted the white flag. He telephoned me at about nine o'clock to come to school. And his story was a masterpiece. The Superintendent of Schools had already received his letter, and had ordered my reinstatement! And "Baron Munchausen" Crofts filled out an admit slip for me.

The next day, however, he changed his mind. I was taken out of the journalism class, and the "privilege" of attending further assemblies was taken away. Next time, others might follow my example!

It must be remembered that my exclusion from extra-curricular activities is still a direct blow at academic freedom. The struggle must go on until my complete reinstatement demonstrates to the war-mongers in our schools the power of militant student organization.

MAX SHAIN.

STUDENTS MOBIL

Columbia University

SEVERAL days after the conclusion of the American Congress Against War and Fascism, the Columbia Social Problems Club, chapter of the N.S.L., issued an appeal to all student societies on the campus to join in a University Conference Against War. Delegates from clubs and classrooms were to convene to formulate a united front program of action against university war preparations. Among other student organizations, the Social Problems Club approached the Student Board, a conservative body elected by the students. The Student Board refused to join in the united anti-war movement but subsequently came out with an appeal of its own and organized the Columbia Conference Against War, which met in John Jay Hall on the evenings of October 30 and November 1. The S.P.C. was asked to cooperate and accepted the invitation regardless of the petty politics played by the Student Board.

Approximately 250 delegates, representing 10,000 students in the University, assembled at the Conference. Speakers representing various points of view on the question of war including Earl Browder, secretary of the Communist Party, and J. B. Matthews of the United States Congress Against War and Fascism, addressed the gathering. The delegates included representatives from the fraternities, independents, Socialist Club members, Social Problems Club members, and students with no definite political attitudes.

The Resolutions Committee of nine was elected during the first evening and contained six members of the N.S.L. The voting strength of the S.P.C. proved to be stronger than most people had anticipated, for the very good reason that from the very inception of the plan for a University Anti-War Conference, the S.P.C., as an N.S.L. chapter with a definite and well conceived program on war, took the campaign so seriously and worked so effectively that their leadership in the movement was acknowledged by all who were in any way interested in setting up an anti-war organization.

At the meeting of the Resolutions Committee the program of the S.P.C. was brought forward and adopted unanimously with minor changes. Because this program has been criticized unfavorably in many quarters, it is essential to point out the intentions of the club that drew it up and to consider the basic function of an anti-war program in a body of a social composition such as exists on the Columbia campus.

A resolution of any student anti-war conference must necessarily be a guide for action within the sphere of student life and interests. The well-known role of Columbia University in the last war, when practically each

department was organized and drafted into war service besides supplying the trenches with student cannon fodder, forms a natural guide to the direction and mode of operation of a campus anti-war movement.

This role played by the University in war-time, and the fact that modern scientific war depends on technical aid from students and professionals, puts the student body and the staff in a position of concrete value to any anti-war movement. The S.P.C. realized the futility of passing pious and sentimental resolutions for peace or resolutions based on abstract generalities. In accordance with its N.S.L. program it elaborated a plan based on mass action within each department of a kind that must necessarily lead to effective opposition to war.

It is clear that no amount of action is of any lasting value in an anti-war movement unless it is part of a well-understood perspective which includes the causes of war, the meaning of imperialism, the role of the working class in fighting against war, the U.S.S.R. and peace, our own government as an imperialist power and the present trend in crisis-ridden capitalism which makes war imminent in the near future. Obviously any united front program should point out as clearly as possible the real meaning of the anti-war movement and its relation to the fundamental basis of capitalist society.

Two circumstances were responsible for the S.P.C.'s decision to be satisfied with a program which did not lay down definite resolutions concerning these fundamental political directives. First, the social composition of the student body and the staff of Columbia University and, second, the short time available for the conference. The University is composed essentially of middle class elements of a low level of political orientation. What they need at the present moment is education which should make use of the effects of the depression upon their present economic status and upon the dwindling chances of future occupation. That can hardly be done by means of a resolution to people who are steeped in capitalist thought and leanings. Only by continuous enlightenment during the process of their day to day activities against war can all the necessary politicalization of the anti-war struggle be brought out. Their activities are so designed as to lead logically in that direction. The necessary steps have already been taken. Each anti-war committee has organized a study group on the causes of war, on imperialism, on present trends, etc.

The short time intervening between the call to a conference and the date of the conference allowed little time to lay the foundation for an enlightened understanding of the issues involved. It was realized that only

ZE AGAINST WAR

through continuous anti-war activity can the necessary theoretical lesson be driven home and have meaning not as phrases but as guides to action and political orientation.

Attempts are made in the preamble to outline briefly the causes of war and the meaning of imperialism. Special resolutions were passed condemning intervention in Cuba, demanding the repeal of the Platt Amendment and the recall of all United States warships from Cuban waters. A resolution demanding the utilization of war funds for unemployment relief and education was also passed. A pacifist resolution condemning all forms of war was also passed and received the support even of the S.P.C., on the illusive grounds that it was meaningless and that it applied to forms of war conducted by our own government which would make them necessarily imperialist in nature. This attitude has been justly criticized.

The work of the Anti-War Committee elected at the Congress is proceeding at a rapid rate, committees have

been established in most departments, the role of the university in war is being exposed and the results are being issued in a publication. Discussion groups have been set up in each departmental committee and their tasks are to investigate the causes of war, the meaning of imperialism, why the present economic situation makes war imminent, why fascism means war, why strictly pacifist movements lead to failure, and the role of the American Congress Against War and Fascism. An educational committee has been established which will direct these discussions and also present a series of anti-war films on the campus, such as "All Quiet on the Western Front," "The End of St. Petersburg," "The Patriots," etc. In accordance with its program the Anti-War Committee sent a protest to the University authorities on the occasion of Hans Luther's appearance on the campus, because he represents a government whose very philosophy and foreign policy endanger world peace.

MARK GRAUBART.

New York University

Washington Square in New York is famous for the youthful men and women of a generation about to be overwhelmed and transformed by a world of war. Arrived from their colleges, they found in the dimly lighted attics with their chintz curtains the unique surroundings in which to express their emotions. The Square itself is fringed by two-story red brick houses with iron gates and characteristic flat roofs, behind whose jammed shutters are said to rest the forlorn glories and heirlooms of a generation of Wanamakers and such like, whose descendants now inhabit more fashionable terrain in Westchester or Long Island.

Below the Square, in the Italian quarter, are the hootch joints and hotcha cafes that maintain their precarious livelihood. To the east are carton and dye factories, shopping stations in front of which pot-bellied motor trucks take on cargo at all times of the day. To the east, too, is that unique factory, the Washington Square Center of New York University. Tall, stolid, well-lit buildings, excellent elevator service, inhabited from early to late by a clientele well worth examining more closely.

N.Y.U. downtown includes a large School of Commerce, Physical Education, a Music and Fine Arts School, the well-known Law School and the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences. Young men and women, sons and daughters of Bronx tailors and Brooklyn boss painters; scions of the cloak and suit industry seeking education and marriage. They find congenial atmosphere here where several worlds and traditions sniff at one another with mutual distrust. Young men and women of the New York petit bourgeoisie, almost oblivious to the peculiar meaning

of Washington Square, its haunting buildings, its triumphal arch, and its unemployed filling the park benches.

Through these, the N.S.L. has been able to gather together an energetic group of students who have hewn their way through the walls of philistine indifference and pseudo-bohemianism to a healthy understanding of the necessity of building a revolutionary student movement.

One action in particular, of this semester, conceived in the boldest non-sectarianism, and carried out in a thorough united front fashion, stands out as the greatest single achievement of the N.S.L. at the college. That action was the N.Y.U. Conference Against War, held November 24 and 25. Five hundred and thirty-eight delegates attended. Of these, about 300 were elected in classrooms, 60 from clubs and school organizations and the remainder by petition. This was made possible after several weeks of the boldest agitation in the school newspapers and clubs. Engaging the regard of every type of student, transcending professional or departmental interest and organization, enlisting the support of the Chancellor and several prominent faculty members, the Conference demonstrated the potentialities of enthusiasm and action that are latent in every student, shaken by intellectual and economic crisis.

The Conference convened on a Friday night and heard representatives of the Socialist and Communist Parties, the Women's Peace Society, and the American League Against War and Fascism outline their positions in the struggle against war.

Early in the evening the problem of the united front arose in a peculiar form. The N.S.L. proposed a candidate for chairman from its ranks, in addition to a block

of four candidates for the Resolutions Committee, representing the four major divisions of the University. These were opposed by a variety of embittered factionalists, professional oppositionists, an occasional red baiter, not more than the normal gang whose presence (if only by the laws of chance) was to be expected at such a large gathering. At one moment, the entire opposition to the united front coalition was dignified by the action of Prof. Sidney Hook in personally endorsing the anti-N.S.L. candidate.

Either through the momentary illusion of influencing the course of the anti-war movement (recall Marx that "philosophers have hitherto interpreted the world, the thing to do is to change it") or the sway of a vindictiveness against the N.S.L. (excusable were it not becoming chronic), Dr. Hook bargained with pragmatic skill for the chairmanship, and was not sobered until the Conference voted by an overwhelming majority the endorsement of Emil Greenberg, the N.S.L. candidate.

The following day, Saturday, found the Conference addressed by Prof. John Wheelwright, of the Philosophy Department. He summed up his pithy advice to the Conference by emphasizing that the problem of combatting war inevitably involved the setting up of ideals that men will fight for against the present sham of nationalism and patriotism behind which lurk the well-known features of capitalism.

The Conference proceeded to four study groups, each presided over by a student and a faculty member. The problems discussed were "Educational Institutions and War," "Nationalism and War," "International Relations and War," and "Labor and War." These discussions re-

sulted in the formulation of resolutions which were edited and presented to the conference in the evening.

The resolutions and preamble were presented by a unanimous committee. Only one problem evoked real discussion. The committee had emphasized that the "working class," in a strategic industrial position, was the obvious backbone and bulwark of any effective anti-war movement. The resolution proposed unconditional support of the working class and unity with it in the fight against war. This formulation was opposed by a small group of diehards, who wished to phrase the question as "unity of all classes fighting war, middle class, intellectuals, etc.," with no particular stress on the workers. In spite of the advice of many student leaders, and of Dr. Hook, who seemed overnight to have reversed his attitude towards the N.S.L., the Conference was persuaded to amend the preamble.

The Conference adjourned, with the enthusiastic adoption of a real united front program, each delegate pledged to report back to his organization or classroom.

The aftermath of the Conference presents many problems to the New York University chapter of the N.S.L. The first flush of enthusiasm is giving way to an indifference among the students, which only concrete anti-war actions can dispel. The need for action is imperative. Besides adding a real voice to the growing anti-war movement, it will greatly aid the development of similar movements in other schools, and possibly give new energies to the C.C.N.Y. struggle against war. Such actions, too, will isolate the pseudo-leaders and campus politicians, many of whom have catered to the anti-war movement, realizing its broad scope.

JOSEPH STAROBIN.

Armistice Day at Northampton

ARMISTICE Day in Northampton, Mass., annually gives the American Legion some show of reason for existence. The patriotic boys with the patriotic bellies strut a military shuffle. But on this year's occasion, the newspapers all over the country carried stories of a very different demonstration, the tone of which was indicated by the clean-minded Northampton cops who felt so grieved at a placard crying *N.R.A. Means Nationalism and War* that only its utter destruction would make them happy. What had happened?

As originally planned, the National Student League chapters at Smith, Mt. Holyoke and Amherst—all in the vicinity—planned to initiate a broadly representative anti-war demonstration counter to the American Legion & Co.'s annual military circus. The Legion, however, had decided to join in a parade in another town twenty-five miles away, so the Northampton found itself with the alarming prospect of having no Armistice Day celebration. The National Student League corrected that situation. We gave the city a show that was the talk of the City Council ten days after it was all over.

Two and a half weeks before *The Day*, a committee of fifteen—representing and consisting largely of N. S. L. members in the three colleges—discussed the plans for the demonstration that was to fill such a deeply-felt want. At that meeting, sub-committees were formed to take care

of the details, legal arrangements, placards, and above all, to make contacts with any other groups in the Connecticut Valley that would unite for the demonstration.

Realizing that in a city of Northampton's gravity it would be absolutely essential to procure a parade permit, the sub-committee interviewed leading members of the city's clergy. Rev. Penner, pastor of the church where the late Calvin Coolidge used to attend, was enthusiastic in his support of the "Inter-Collegiate Committee Against War"; Rev. Freeman, head of the pastor's association, having been assured that "this is a thoroughly respectable affair, Sir", gave us his backing. Supported by these two gentlemen, the committee had little further trouble in securing a permit from the Mayor, although the latter did reserve opinion until he had conferred with an official from the Veterans of Foreign Wars. The committee was forced to give him assurance that the placards would deal only with the subject of war—after all, war is a pretty broad and far-reaching subject.

In the meantime, the general committee was holding meetings and urging united front co-operation from all types of groups in the city and neighboring communities. The united front was so spacious that it almost overwhelmed the National Student League at the general committee meetings. The county missionary of one of the church groups was there; a representative of the Boy

Scouts was around for a while, but backed out; a reserve army captain, by no means a pacifist, offered support. And then there were representatives from the Young People's Socialist League and Hi-Y's. For a time it looked as though any militancy which the student groups might show would be lost in a sea of sober "respectability." On the other hand, we could only congratulate ourselves on our fine company.

However, nothing more persuasive than clean logic and hard work was necessary to push the National Student League position forward. The presiding officer at the committee meetings was an N.S.L. member. The most important work of the large committee was to approve of our motion to stage a mass meeting at the conclusion of the parade. Again, a minister of God was delegated to get the Mayor's permission for the mass meeting. We got the permit.

The parade turned out to be a surpassing success. The streets were lined with onlookers. About three hundred and fifty people marched, while others rode in auto-

mobiles and floats. The placards were more militant than had been expected, and, as previously noted, led to the destruction of a number of them. With reporters and photographers on hand to give the widest publicity whenever the police got tough or sensitive, the police can almost have said to have co-operated, perhaps for the first time, with the National Student League. Speakers at the mass meeting represented all shades of opinion. They included a local minister; Professor Harlow of Smith College, former Socialist congressional candidate; Frank Palmer, head of the Federated Press; Stella Chess, a leading member of the National Student League at Smith College; and Adam Lapin, editor of the *Student Review*.

Well, the results have been just as satisfactory. Public interest throughout the Connecticut Valley was definitely aroused, and focussed on an exceptionally important day. And the National Student League did not suffer, either. Far from it: our chapters in the three colleges have experienced a pleasant increase in membership.

HARRY FLEISHER

The N. R. A. Gives Jobs

IT was a motley crowd that coiled in never-ending line around the grim contours of the 13th Regiment Armory. Laborers in rough, weather-worn boots and overalls, white-collar workers in the frayed remains of once respectable office attire, college men redolent of their academic past—black and white, young and old, they presented a cross-section of American life such as would delight the experienced eye of the psychologist in quest of laboratory material.

It was bitter cold. For hours, this stamping, bobbing line of eight hundred men and more had been patiently awaiting the opening of the armory gates. Some had come during the night to capture the first places. From three in the morning to ten, the line had spun interminably along the armory block and around the corner, being increasingly augmented by ever-arriving hundreds. At frequent intervals, knots of men were huddled about fires started from papers and rubbish gathered from the garbage cans of the neighboring houses. The unfortunate ones who could not reach the fire jogged about and swung their arms to keep off the cold. Feet were appendages of ice, and hands, unfeeling. It was bitter cold.

Only yesterday, metropolitan newspapers had proudly trumpeted the news that the Civil Works Administration was to distribute more jobs. Twenty-four registration agencies were to be opened to provide for the jobless. There would be work for all, including the hitherto neglected white-collar men. The 13th Regiment Armory had been mentioned as one of the appointed agencies. Soon the gates would open and the N.R.A. would embrace all with the warmth of economic security—laborers, office workers, intellectuals, Negro and white, young and old.

I started at the head of the line and, proceeding slowly towards the rear, tried to catch the conversation of the men.

"That Roosevelt guy—he's pushin' things all right. This here country'll see prosperity in three months. . . ."

"See that fellow near the fire? He's a brilliant mathematician. . . . Klayman's his name . . . graduated from Fordham last term . . . funny seeing him here . . . surprised he didn't land a teaching appointment!"

"Got a family of seven and my wife—she needs an operation on appendicitis . . . no one's workin' . . . gotta get a job. . . ."

"I'll take anything . . . even dig ditches."

"Read the *Daily Worker* . . . forced labor . . . no union . . . government fixes wages and hours. . . ."

"No got job tree years . . . make big money . . . brick-layer . . . now got seex chil'n . . . no eat . . . no rent. . . ."

"It's no use, fellows. There ain't no jobs, I'm tellin' you. You're wastin' your time standin' in the cold. The armory won't open today."

These devastating words came from a red-faced cop as he strode along the line.

Mingled cries of dismay and disbelief.

"The son of a bitch is lyin'."

"He wants us to go home . . . the line's too long. . . ."

"Does he really mean it?"

"He must be jokin'."

"I'm tellin' you guys you'd better beat it. No jobs. Where did you hear anythin' 'bout jobs around here?" The cop was evidently in earnest.

"He thinks we read it in the *Daily Worker*. Say, officer, all the papers said so . . . the *American*, the *Journal* . . ."

"Well, there's no jobs, I'm tellin' you. You better go home."

The line began to break up into little bands of angry, gesticulating men. A mighty roar of protest swelled over the crowd, punctuated by frequent excited epithets. "Bastards!" "Goddam liars!" "We ought to show them

(Continued on page 19)

The Sectionalist Fallacy

THE most significant interpretative framework towards an understanding of American history has been the sectional hypothesis. In one form or another, the doctrine that sectional differences are the key to American development has captivated those who have traced it.

Strangely, the theory has met relatively little criticism. The peace has certainly not been due to lack of pretensions; Frederick Jackson Turner himself can hardly be accused of caution or prudence. His frequent cataloguing of the problems resolved by the frontier or sectional theories leaves hardly anything unaccounted for. Criticism naturally centers around the writings of Turner himself, for the criticism of Turner's papers collected under the title *The Significance of Sections in American History* is the criticism of the sectional doctrine. Generally, this criticism turns, first, on the excessively careless claims made for the theory, and then, to a lesser degree, on just what is to be understood by it.

No one seriously questions Turner's single-handed achievement. He might have boasted with justice that he had emancipated historians from an uncritical acceptance of the political map. The strands of economic interest, of geographic similarity, of racial and cultural homogeneity, straddle state boundaries. In search of these sectional bonds Turner emphasized as hardly none before him the impact of the material conditions under which men make their living, and the attitudes arising therefrom. What brings him, in another sense, close to the historical materialists is his underlining of the overshadowing importance of conflicts—sectional, not class.

These very general elements of similarity are not entirely accidental because there is a logic implicit in the doctrine of sectionalism which, consistently drawn, leads beyond the theory of sectional differences to the theory of class struggle.

Consider Turner's account of the relation between frontier and settled East. The frontier is not so much a place as a condition of society, the outpost of civilization, the region bordering on wilderness. It is a "migratory" section, east of the Alleghenies in the seventeenth century, west of the Rockies two hundred years later. Whereas the stratification of American society on the coastal plain was soon well along its way, wherever the frontier happened to be men still had to come at grips with more or less primitive conditions. The material compulsions of frontier life thus made for an independent and democratic yeomanry. The economic basis was cheap land—when it was not free. Obviously, after the passing of time, between such disparate societies as a commercial and fast industrializing East, a plantation and slave South, and the yeomen on the moving western frontier, "sectional" conflicts may be pre-supposed.

Examination of this account must surely start with the underlying causes for conflict apart from any initial pre-supposition. Turner believed that "this 'West,' wherever found at different years . . . needed capital; it was a debtor region, while the East had the capital and was a creditor section." Unquestionably, here is one of the roots

of antagonism. What are we to understand by this creditor-debtor conflict? It certainly cannot be said that the West contained the whole debtor class. That the creditor interests were strictly limited to the East is much nearer the truth. If Turner is correct when he instructs us that state boundaries are sources of confusion whenever we can establish areas similar in need and interest, the same holds true for any collection of states—the section. Is there not the alternative of labeling this debtor-creditor clash a class conflict instead of a sectional conflict? What is there to choose between them?

The sectionalists have taught—when arguing against a history in terms of states—that what we must realize is that the boundaries of states are fortuitous, whereas sections are, in some sense, socially integrated. They make their appeal to genuine instead of chance categories. On their own position, what shall we do with a social integration that does not coincide with contiguous state boundaries? What shall we do with an identity of need and interest—a debtor interest, a creditor interest—that leaps states? To label a debtor-creditor division between East and West a class conflict is to capture the continuity between this and similar conflicts irrespective of local habitation and a name. Sectionalism blurs the issue when avowedly behind the section lies an already ascertainable clash of fundamental material interests. Eastern debtors were hardly agitated about Western obligations to Eastern creditors. The sectional aspects of a debtor-creditor relationship are of derivative and secondary importance.

This distinction is of the utmost moment. Whereas there may be debtor sections, there are no genuine creditor sections. There are only creditor groups, interests, classes.

The point appears again from another angle. In one of his earliest and most fruitful papers, *Problems in American History*, Turner maintained that "we need studies designed to show what have been and are the natural, social and economic divisions in the United States." And then he indicates what he is looking for by noting that "the domestic history of the South is for many years the history of a contest between these eastern and western sections," that is, a contest between a region of slave labor on plantations devoted to staples on the coastal plain and a region of free labor on small farms devoted to diversified agriculture on the early inland frontier. There is no question about the fact. Yet the notion is misleading.

"When the cotton belt, with slavery as its labor element, spread across this Piedmont region, the region became assimilated to the seaboard. The small farmers, raising crops by the labor of their own families, were compelled either to adjust themselves to the plantation economy, or migrate." The up-country farmers migrated, of course. That was the upshot of these "sectional differences." But this is precisely what happened, this conquest, to the small farmers in the tidewater too, on the Atlantic plain itself. The plantation is not native to the South in point of historical development. The seventeenth century is a century of struggle between tidewater planter

and tidewater yeoman, and only after that contest ended in favor of the planters did the conquest of the Piedmont begin, almost a century later. What happened was that the planters first expropriated the yeomen on the coastal plain and then, with the profitable introduction of cotton, expropriated the yeomen in the uplands.

Again, a clearer statement of the facts is that a plantation slave economy, under the effective drive of its dominant class, expanded. The sectional aspect is incidental, derivative, secondary.

Part of the trouble lies in Turner's disproportionate dependence on physical geography for the basis of his sectionalism. "Geographic conditions and the stocks from which the people sprang are the most fundamental factors in shaping sectionalism" he stated in discussing *Is Sectionalism in America Dying Away* in 1907. This is no isolated remark; it is reiterated again and again, though the most amazing claim is that: "There is and always has been a sectional geography in America based fundamentally upon geographic regions. There is a geography of political habit, a geography of opinion, of material interests, of racial stocks, of physical fitness, of social traits, of literature, of the distribution of men of ability, even of religious denominations." This was said in 1925 in *The Significance of the Section in American History*. No wonder a recent critic, Benjamin Wright, Jr., in the September *New England Quarterly* has only too tenderly suggested that "in the use of these terms 'frontier' and 'section' there is less of clarity than one could wish for . . ." Apart from considerations of meaning, is not Turner internally inconsistent again?

On the one hand, geography establishes sections but on the other, its creations are so temporary that they can go through numerous transformations, such as from farm to plantation to factory. Sections clash, and the victor remakes the vanquished in its own image. Now, geography is a relatively static factor, perhaps the most static of all historical factors. Certainly, the geography of New York, or Virginia, or Greece for that matter, is very much the same today as in the seventeenth century, or when Alexander walked the earth. None, however, will deny the enormous social developments since then. Something is internally wrong with a theory that accounts for a changing society in terms of a relatively changeless factor. Where does the solution lie? Not in denying all importance to geography but in making it contributory to some factor or complex of factors that will more closely approximate what we know to be the case. Geography is significant to the extent that it conditions a type of economy, but since many factors enter into the equation, the geographic factor may even become progressively unimportant especially as the economy becomes increasingly industrial, and men learn to harness natural forces. Once more, what Turner emphasized as primary is contributory and secondary.

Does it follow that sectional clashes are coextensive with class struggles? If such is the case, then a section would evidently be a euphemistic and blurred equivalent of a class. But not even this can be said for the theory, at least not without serious modifications.

Let us consider a problem which Turner himself held was crucial to an understanding of our history: the conflicts over the Western lands. In the beginning, the dis-

position of the conflicting claims had become acute by about 1781-2. Virginia, at this stage, seems to have been the chief recalcitrant. Due to causes purely political, the problem of the Western lands was linked with the controversy over the admission of Vermont to the Confederacy. Recently published letters by Madison to Pendleton and Randolph in the sixth volume of *Letters of Members of the Continental Congress* make plain just what "sectionalism" means in terms of this problem. Madison reports that the independence and admission of Vermont was supported by almost all the Eastern states, first, because of the speculative interest of certain of their citizens in lands granted by Vermont and, secondarily, because the Northern bloc would thus gain another vote in Congress. The Southern states from Virginia to Georgia were a stubborn opposition primarily because of the anticipated and feared opposition by Vermont to their Western claims and, to a lesser degree, because it furnished an example for the dismemberment of other states besides New York, including presumably themselves. The effective drive on both sides were the land speculators. "The radical impediment (to admission) however," writes Madison to Pendleton (p. 337), "is the influence of the land companies." And in a paper written a week later, he observed that, on the other side, "N. J., Penn'a, Delaware and Maryland are influenced . . . principally by the intrigues of their citizens who are interested in the claims of the land companies" (p. 341).

Manifestly, the Vermont and Western-lands questions became the focal points for the sectional controversy of the period. But this two-sided quarrel was between vested interests over a division of the spoils, vested land interests that happened to fall into geographic or sectional categories. Would the competition have been less bitter had it been between New York and Massachusetts? Not in conflict here are fundamentally conflicting systems of production as in that "sectional" conflict pre-eminent, the Civil War. Sectional differences are thus not of one piece. Some are merely surface irritations within a dominant class, in this case, land interests north and south. It would appear that "sectional" clashes may have but casual historical importance, victory on one side or the other indicating no underlying transformation. Only significant sectional conflicts are class struggles.

There are practical implications to this criticism. If Turner had made class and system of production predominant as an explanatory principle, he would have been less likely to argue that "statesmanship in this nation consists, not only in representing the special interests of the leader's own section, but in finding a formula that will bring the different regions together in common policy." But how? Turner's solution sets some standard or other for unconscious satirization of one's own opinions. His answer is that "in the past we have held our sections together, partly because while the undeveloped West was open there was a safety valve, a region for hopeful restoration. . . ." Apart from the fact that the inference is inevitable that we have been and still are facing a pretty ominous future (where is the safety valve today?), it still remains that peace was achieved only because the discontented had somewhere to flee. There is some similarity between this solution and the project painlessly to exterminate our unemployed and thus "solve the unemployment problem."

If sectional struggles are genuine class struggles—and there are many such—then the resolution of the conflict lies not in peaceful accommodation but in an irresistible struggle for supremacy. The search for the common “formula” is the sectional equivalent of class peace. This is not the only way in which Turner betrays his age and place and class. Mr. Wright notes that “Turner more than any other man, turned the study of America inward. . . . The result was . . . an altogether excessive emphasis upon intra-American, or rather intra-United States, history. It is the scholarly equivalent of splendid isolation. . . .”

The sectionalist school of American history has played a mighty part in our history's coming of age. But the man who wrote as early as 1904:

“If, as I believe, the free lands of the United States have been the most important single factor in explaining our development, there should be increased attention to the land system.”

and

“We need to give a social and economic interpretation to the history of political parties in this country”

did not perceive the logic implicit in his own position. The danger is that Turner's sectional thesis has and will increasingly in the future be utilized as a buffer, a half-way house, against a thorough revolutionary understanding of our country's history.

THEODORE DRAPER.

PLAN OF ACTION

(Continued from page 4)

approach rather than the actual problems of the student body. Many of our groups function as isolated discussion circles for campus radicals. This difficulty exists on many campuses. It is cured only when our groups participate in campus life and lead campus struggles.

Our present program represents our orientation toward the student body. What has unfortunately happened, however, is the complete swinging of the pendulum. Very infrequently have we heard in recent months of many of our groups participating in working-class activities. We seem to have considered it our business as a student organization to separate ourselves from the activities of the workers. It is in place at this time to recall that very much of our original enthusiasm and incentive came from the discovery of common interests between students and workers. It was not an accident that the Kentucky trip was the activity that placed us on our feet as a national organization. Of course our activities center around the campus. But very frequently students arrive at an understanding of their problems through contact with working class activities. Contact with the workers will give even our purely campus activity perspective and direction that they sometimes seem to lack.

Our new program and our new orientation have presented another serious problem. With the discovery of the fact that we are a broad student organization there has frequently come a denial of our character as a revolutionary organization and the very essence of our pro-

gram. At a recent anti-war conference held at Columbia University, New York City, the National Student League Chapter voted for a resolution which condemned *all war*. It requires only a casual reading of the program to show that the N.S.L. is not opposed to all wars; it does not oppose the class war of the workers or colonial uprisings for national liberation. The N.S.L. is and will increasingly become a mass student organization, but not at the price of program and principle. This difficulty will also be solved only by actual student activity and struggle. It is always the job of the N.S.L. to point out the broader implications of such struggles and to emphasize the program of the N.S.L. as an organization opposed to the very structure of capitalist society.

Most of our activities may be characterized by a lack of perspective and plan. Frequently we lead student struggles and then drop them in the middle because we do not know just where we are going. Let us pause for a moment on the occasion of our national convention and on the basis of our program consider the problems that face us. The student body as a whole is confronted with three major offensives. The first of these is the militarist program of the national government as it finds reflection in the colleges. Second is the tendency towards drastic reductions in the budgets of colleges and high schools. Thirdly, to the traditional discrimination against the Negro students the wave of lynch terror that is now sweeping the country adds a new danger, and a new challenge.

The militarization of the country, as a whole, is already finding a definite expression in our educational institutions. An additional million dollars has been appropriated to the R.O.T.C. in the colleges. Cornell University has, in spite of continued protest, maintained R.O.T.C. as a compulsory subject. At Wisconsin, R.O.T.C. has recently been made compulsory. Student activities are being met with ever more violent reprisals. We will, however, underestimate the problems if we view only the collegiate manifestations of the war-makers. Appropriations of the R.O.T.C. are but a minor item in the military budget. Over a quarter of a billion dollars has been appropriated to the Navy. The most impressive items in the public works program of the Roosevelt government are military expenditures. The C.C.C. camps represent the movement to militarize the young men of the country, students and workers alike.

While the national government has found sufficient funds for additional R.O.T.C. appropriations, public higher education has been consistently cut down. Many taxpayers' groups in New York have long clamored for the closing of the city colleges. In private institutions, facilities and teaching staffs are being reduced and tuition fees increased.

Educational expenditures in the South for the Negro have been traditionally inadequate and only the chosen few have been able to attend the meagre Jim-Crow colleges. Today, the precarious routes of his public school and high school education are being undermined. Nor is drastic retrenchment the only problem that faces the Negro student. In even the most liberal white universities, he is debarred from regular educational facilities. After graduation his employment in the respectable pro-

fessions is strictly limited. These are particular and special problems which face the Negro student in addition to the problems which face the student body as a whole. Only when they are recognized and dealt with as such, only when the white student will take the initiative in protest against the barriers that separate him from his Negro colleague will there be attained a real unity of the student body. A campaign against retrenchment is anomalous indeed if its severest victim is excluded. Activities against war are handicapped if they do not reach a significant section of the student body. This essential unity on general issues will come as soon as the white student takes steps to drive forever away from the American campus Jim Crow, his meaning and his memory.

Our purpose at this time should be clear. Out of the welter of issues and problems that face us and the student body as a whole, we have tried to extract the two most important and universal. Such a plan will have to consider the problems of the students in a perspective of larger movements and trends. It will readily appear that the most significant fact in America, as well as the world over, is the continuing economic crisis and the concomitant unrest of the workers. It is clear that the sharpening of student problems is but a part of more universal conflicts and struggles. Unmitigated unemployment and the consequent inability of the workers to buy makes necessary for the ruling class that artificial stimulant of production, that mad scramble for markets—war. It has already been pointed out that preparations for war are part of the accepted policy of the national government.

As the reverse side of the same coin, the N.R.A. in general represents such a tendency with its doctrine of state control over relations between employers and wage-earners, a doctrine which has been the cornerstone of the Fascist state. The forcible suppression of strikes as an organized national policy as well as the setting up of the A. F. of L. as the official recognized labor organization with representation on the recovery machine, also contain the seeds of Fascism. This attempt to unify the country towards a common goal is particularly dangerous as a preparation for war.

But to recognize trends and implications is not sufficient. It will be necessary to translate into action the realization that the working masses are affected in even larger measure by the same problems as the students. By working more closely in the future with the League of Struggle for Negro Rights and the American League Against War and Fascism we will demonstrate this solidarity and at the same time work towards the solution of our problems. These three problems are our central issues. They affect colleges of whatever character in all parts of the country. Our other activities must be placed within this framework in their proper relation to our major campaigns.

Too long have we looked upon academic freedom as a birthright precious in itself. In reality, it is necessary for the carrying on of all our other activities for the defense of student and teacher interests. We will be giving students a much clearer picture if we consider academic freedom as the machinery essential to students

in the clash of conflicting interests in American colleges.

In addition to pointing out the three major conflicts on the American campus, we also understand that in certain colleges and in certain cities these conflicts have particular importance and intensity. We wish to designate New York, Chicago and Washington as centers of concentration. Not that we may neglect work elsewhere, but in order that successful, coordinated work in these three cities will be a spur to the work of the whole organization. Concentration means the closest attention from the National Office, the sending of organizers for extended periods of time and real publicity to all our campus groups on the work carried on there.

The plan will really be our first attempt at genuinely collective leadership. Every group will have the opportunity to contribute to the National Plan as a whole. The plan increases the responsibility of the National Executive Committee as the body that must lead and direct the activities of the organization as well as that of the local groups, without whose aid the plan will remain an interesting but futile document. Our National Convention in Washington must be by far the most significant we have yet had. With a proper understanding of the problems that face the student body and ourselves, the National Student League has even now the facilities to become the leading organization of the American student body.

What do we ask of our local campus groups? We ask from each group a plan of its own. We ask that every group, no matter how small or how large, hold special meetings to consider the nature of its previous work and, more important, its work for the following semester along the lines indicated here. Does this mean that our chapters will have to drop activities which do not fall directly into the outlines of struggles against war and coordinate its activities with the tasks that face the organization as a whole? The National Plan will be only a skeleton outline without meaning or vitality unless every group works out its own plan and sends it to the National Office immediately. The best way to test the correctness or incorrectness of what the National Office suggests as the basis for the plan is to begin working it out now.

What will be the role of the National Office for the carrying out of the plan? It will have the job of working into the body of the National Plan the local plan submitted by every chapter, as well as the regional and city plans. This it will present at the Convention.

THE N.R.A. GIVES JOBS

(Continued from page 15)

bitches!" Illusions shattered, laborers, white-collar workers, college students, Negro and white, young and old, joined voices with similarly disillusioned men throughout the nation in an ominous crescendo of hatred against the lords of society grown fat on their oppression—the prelude perhaps, of what may ultimately eventuate in their cataclysmic downfall.

And graven on the armory entrance, austere and arrogant, was the inscription, *Pro Patria Armamus*, We Bear Arms for our Country.

CARL BRISTEL

Books

The Trial

The South is green with coming spring: revival
flourishes in the fields of Alabama. Spongy with rain,
plantations breath April—carwheels suck
mud in the roads,
the town expands warm in the afternoons.

At night, the black boy
teeters no-handed on a bicycle, whistling the
St. Louis Blues,
blood beating, and hot South. A red brick courthouse
is vicious with men inviting death. Array your judges;
call your jurors;

come,

here is your justice, come out of the crazy jail.
Grass is green now in Alabama; Birmingham dusks
are quiet
relaxed and soft in the parks, stern at the yards:
a hundred boxcars shunted off to sidings, and the hoboes
gathering grains of sleep in forbidden corners.
In all the yards: Atlanta, Chattanooga,
Memphis, and New Orleans, the cars, and no jobs.

Every night the mail-planes burrow the sky
carrying postcards to laughing girls in Texas,
passionate letters to the Charleston virgins,
words through the South—and no reprieve,
no pardon, no release.

A blinded statue stands before the courthouse,
bronze and black men lie on the grass, waiting,
the khaki dapper National Guard leans on its bayonets.
But the air is populous beyond our vision:
all the people's anger finds its vortex here
as the mythic lips of justice open, and speak.
Hammers and sickles are carried in a wave of
strength, fire-tipped,
swinging passionately ninefold to a shore.
Answer the back-thrown Negro face of the lynched,
the flat forehead knitted,
the eyes showing a wild iris, the mouth a welter of blood,
answer the broken shoulder and these twisted arms.
John Brown, Nat Turner, Toussaint stand in this
courtroom,

Dred Scott wrestles for freedom there in the dark corner,
all our celebrated shambles are repeated here: now again
Sacco and Vanzetti walk to a chair, to the straps
and rivets

and the switch spitting death and Massachusetts' will.
Wreaths are brought out of history

here are the well-nourished flowers of France, grown
strong on blood,

Caesar twisting his thin throat toward conquest,
turning north from the Roman laurels,
the Istrian galleys slide again to sea.

How they waded through bloody Godfrey's Jeru-
salem,

How the fires broke through Europe, and the rich
and the tall jails battened on revolution!

The fastidious Louis', cousins to the sun, stamping
those ribboned heels on Calas, on the people;
the lynched five thousand of America.

Tom Mooney from San Quentin, Herndon: here
is an army for audience

all resolved

to a gobbet of tobacco, spat, and the empanelled hundred,
a jury of vengeance, the cheap pressed lips,
the eyes like hardware;

the judge, his eye-sockets and cheeks dark and
immutably secret,

the twisting mouth of the prosecuting attorney.

Nine dark boys spread their breasts against Alabama,
schooled in the cells, fathered by want

Mother—one writes—they treat us bad.

If they send us

back to Kilby jail, I think I shall kill myself.

I think I must hang myself by my overalls.

Alabama and the South are soft with spring:
in the North, the seasons change, sweet April,

December and the air

loaded with snow. There is time for meetings
during the years, they remaining in prison.

In the Square

a crowd listens carrying banners.

overhead, boring through the speaker's voice, a plane
circles with a snoring of motors revolving in the sky
drowning the single voice. It does not touch

the crowd's silence. It circles. The name stands:

Scottsboro Scottsboro Scottsboro

MURIEL RUKEYSER

Men of Today

Karl and the Twentieth Century. By Rudolph Bruun-grabber. Translated by Eden and Cedar Paul. William Morrow and Company. \$2.

The Disinherited. By Jack Conroy. Covici Friede. \$2.

THERE is no better evidence of the changes taking place in the modern world than the shift in novel writing from the purely personal approach, characteristic of the novels of Sherwood Anderson, Dreiser, and E. E. Cummings, to the broad, equally intense examination of the bases of the taken-for-granted environment, the necessary condition of all personal groupings. In *Hunger and Love* Lionel Britton attained this impersonality by holding up his little Arthur Phelps to the blinding facts of chemistry, physics, mathematics, biology, and philosophy so that in the end, despite his hopes, fears, and struggles, Arthur Phelps emerged as a pretty unimportant speck of the universe. Then Klaus Neukrantz in *Barricades in Berlin* provided a thrilling account of the famous 1929 May Day street fighting in Berlin, taking but four days in time and less than 200 pages to tell his story, whereas Britton carried Arthur into young manhood through more than 600 pages. Each in its way is a summation of the working of historical forces, and in these two new books the record is enriched and brought nearer to date.

Bruungrabber's Karl is amazingly mounted; he stands out against the history of the world since 1870. His identity is developed in a method similar to the presentation of a Wagnerian hero, whose voice blends with and reflects the surge of the complicated orchestration, who is a part and at the same time the epitome of the thematic patterns. A sensitive child in Vienna, Karl grows up oblivious of the clangor of history, of the growth of capitalism and imperialism, of the inevitable fight for world markets culminating in the World War; he becomes a soldier, receives a few medals and promotion to Lieutenant, and returns from the battle fields to incur the usual fate of war heroes. Years of struggle for a living in a system that is breaking its last, that draws its final breaths out of the bodies of the Karls, culminates in his complete demoralization and his suicide. Where Britton used the abstract sciences and sciences applied to the study of particular organisms to reflect the complete absence of free will in the life of Arthur Phelps, Bruungrabber makes use of history and economics with a maturity of understanding and ease of expression rarely met with in "the literature of knowledge", and which he turns into commendable "literature of power." The book rolls on; the facts coalesce into an ever-increasing ball which rolls down and away from human victories and eventually meets Karl plodding his way up, and crushes him. The reasons for Karl's downfall, which is the tragedy of the modern man, become increasingly clear without being "propaganda." We are shown Karl and "that is all (we) know on earth, and all (we) need to know." Karl's relation to the historical background is unbroken and illuminating, yet one feels the wish to perceive more of his inner rhythms. But to call this lack a flaw would be to hack at a noble oak with a pen-knife, for *Karl and the*

Twentieth Century remains the most significant novel of the season.

The Disinherited, by Jack Conroy, is about Mid-West coal miners and is written in "the naive style," reminiscent of the sensitive Anderson and epically sincere Dreiser, but away from the narrow subjectivity of the mind as an eager sponge. Conroy illuminates the lives of the miners with a simple directness and an easy knowledge of essentials only partly vitiated by the lack of a formal unity due to an approach to the novel in terms of the short-story form. Larry Donovan is thoroughly believable and thoroughly admirable, but all the others are types. This first novel, while a series of episodes rather than a symmetrical unity, shows a sensitive knowledge of people slammed down by the inexorable stupidity of economic modes; yet they are alive to the possibilities of changing them. Conroy ought to grow, for *The Disinherited* shows talent of a sort that rights itself into graceful equilibrium.

N. H. RUBIN

Heritage

The Great Tradition: Granville Hicks, MacMillan Co. \$2.50.

In *The Great Tradition* Granville Hicks offers us a sound though somewhat limited conception of American literature. His critical analysis is confessedly Marxian, pointing out the necessary relation of art to the social structure, and its necessary nourishment from the substance of industrial progress.

In order to understand completely the force behind Hicks' literary contention, we must understand the dogma of evaluation which he uses in appraising the standard-bearers of our tradition. The thematic essence of the book is Hicks' implicit criterion of an art value wherein it is implied that the only true art is that in which the artist allies his experience and consciousness with a valid objective comprehension of contemporaneity, and writes in terms of the ideas and sensations which ensue from this felicitous union. The fact that Hicks does not present either an esthetic or literary justification for this aphorism does not indicate a flaw in his critical analysis, since in itself it is a truth justifiable by experience.

The phases of the literary tradition are many, becoming more and more real in a social sense as industrial concentration and the workings of the social mechanism come nearer to the individual. At the onset of American Industrialism, our literature had its roots almost entirely in the past of literature in general. Thus we have men like Lowell, Russell, Emerson and Melville dealing with a classical art jargon superimposed on American conditions or seeking the solution to individual problems of Good and Evil and philosophic sufficiency; men as blind to the implications of their period as Hawthorne, "who failed to come to terms with his generation."

As industrial civilization advanced, capitalism entrenched itself more and more firmly in power and its temporal manifestations dictated the limits of literary ex-

pression. In the frontier period which followed, Twain, Harte and Eggleston attempted to keep the idealized sentiments of sectionalism in a holy still, and eluded the incumbent realities of industrial expansion. In the subsequent era of political corruption and graft, attention was centered on the business of politics and industry itself and Howells and Hay wrote vaguely idealistic and Victorianly honest novels about dubious social values.

As our literature advanced, rollicking with the bandwagon of our history, the conscious proximity of the individual to the social order became more and more marked. The author was forced either to deal with contemporaneous and vital problems of life in his own manner, or shy away from them. A definite, dramatic alternative was offered to him.

Henry James ran away to England, to seek a spiritual consummation in an antique leisure class. Edith Wharton, Branch Cabell and Willa Cather turned to the cloister of their quiet and rhythmic contemplations; Robinson Jeffers, Faulkner and Hemingway neurotically debauched in futilitarianism; T. S. Eliot and Thornton Wilder sought for values entombed ages ago. They have failed.

On the other hand, Jack London faced the question honestly, but could not equate his social and esthetic theories. Sinclair Lewis vaguely protested, but could not visualize beyond the stasis of his irony. Dreiser epitomized and builded the social forces in his novels. Anderson caught the spirit of the individual in the midst of the historical flux. The dramatic aspects have intensified. With the evident decay of capitalism, the author must align himself with one force or the other. He must either be a conscious apologist of capitalism or protagonist of a new social order whose only legitimate vanguard is the Communist Party. The war between Fascism and Communism is as real and vital in literature as in society.

Hicks has offered us in a definite form an exceptionally valid criterion of literature. He tells the story of a growing conflict and a sharpening crisis and makes his point clearly. The single possible flaw is that he deals with the conditions of historical events rather than their causes—so that, while he speaks in terms of the manifestations of the class struggle and the capitalist state, he neglects their direct implications.

JEROME COLEMAN

The Play

Peace on Earth—Presented by the Theatre Union at the Civic Repertory Theatre, New York City.

PRIOR to the advent of the Theatre Union as an organization, workers' theatres were dedicated to one task—bringing the theatre to the class struggle. Their job was fundamentally an agitational one, performing in union halls, making flying trips to strike areas, throwing up a temporary platform at factory gates and on street corners, with the drama used definitely as a weapon to bring to the working class the message of unionization and struggle.

The Theatre Union was organized on a principle of reversing this process—of bringing the class struggle to the theatre. In line with this idea they have taken a real theatre, employed professional theatre people, actors, technicians, and offer as their first production a play written by two young playwrights who received their early training on Broadway.

The result is very satisfying. "*Peace on Earth*" is a good play presenting the forces that go to make wars in a vivid and truthful way. We are shown finance capital promoting war as a way out of the economic crisis. The Church is shown as an agent of the money lords, and, what is more important to us as students, the College is exposed in its hypocritical role as recruiting agent and general military press agent for those to whom war does not mean death but profit.

The main character, Peter Owens, a college instructor, is played by Robert Keith, who gives a particularly excellent characterization of a young academician who is shocked out of his ivory tower by the war danger and his acquaintance with a group of striking longshoremen who are doing their part in fighting war by refusing to ship munitions.

The hypocritical role of the liberal position with all the kind old ladies of both sexes raising their voices against the "horrors of war," etc., is admirably handled.

LEONARD DAL NEGRO.

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