

ing to Jimmy, that she was in charge of all the cooking, and had noticed a serious shortage developing over the past few days, especially in the meats. Some vegetables were still coming in, but she and the other two cooks were having a hard time making the huge pots of stew that had become the main dish of the relief kitchen.

The problem was serious, so I said to the cooks:

"Can't we use the vegetables for soup, adding what little meat we got?"

One of the Greeks answered: "Need fresh meat make good soup for strikers," and he slapped his dirty aproned belly to indicate his contempt for anything that didn't have strong meat in it.

The Italian woman and the other cook nodded in agreement. Then I suddenly thought of Solidarity, and I asked them, in a surprised manner, why they didn't use her for stew. They looked at each other and back at me very solemnly, but they didn't answer my question. Jimmy acted as though he was busy trying to decipher the trade-mark on a box of macaroni and didn't hear my question. I repeated my inquiry. Then Jimmy kicks the box of macaroni as if it was responsible for our predicament and tells me: "We thought of slaughtering her this morning when the meat ran out..."

"Haven't we got anybody among the strikers who can do the butchering... why don't we do it?" I asked him.

The cooks just had nothing to say all this time. I knew there was something peculiar in the whole situation. So I persisted. Finally Jimmy blurts out: "Well, y'see we kinda got to like Solidarity around the shanty here... and the kids have a great time with her..." He put the thing rather lamely.

"She's a cow even if she is named Solidarity, and we need meat." I spoke sharply.

"Oh, that ain't all," Jimmy says. "We've been using Solidarity as sort of a way of showing the bosses we got so much relief we don't need her... and the strikers feel better, knowing we got a whole cow we don't need."

"Yes, but we need her now... she's got to be butchered before tomorrow morning. That will give us enough meat to hold us over until we get more in."

I stood up to dismiss the matter when I said this, and Jimmy shook his head slowly, in agreement. The cooks looked at Jimmy and he nodded to them. They walked back to the rear of the kitchen and started to work again. Then Jimmy and I walked out of the shanty.

I saw Solidarity over in the field and walked over to look at her. She was plenty thin and her ribs looked like a piece of hide stretched over some barrel hoops. But she would do for a few days and would make a lot of stew. She didn't seem aware that I had just passed death sentence on her, and kept right on munching in a little spot of grass.

Well, today, I went up to the kitchen real early in the morning and sure enough you could smell the stew all around the place. Solidarity, or part of her at least, was in the pot. Jimmy came along at the same time, and we sat down to eat. We always ate early in the mornings with the cooks, so that we could avoid the rush a little later and be back at strike headquarters, getting things ready for the day.

Gigli's wife brought a big dish of stew out of the shanty and put it down on the plank table. She started back to get more, but Jimmy called to her in Italian before she went into the shanty. In a minute she came out with a pot of coffee and a chunk of salami. Under her arm she had a loaf of old rye bread. She put these on the table for Jimmy. I looked at him and at the salami: "No stew? Salami's not good for you six o'clock in the morning."

"Not hungry," Jimmy informs me.

"You always had a good appetite before in the mornings."

"Aw, lay off, will you, Johnny?" he barks. "I ain't hungry, that's all."

The two cooks came to the shanty door and bade us good morning. I waved a fork at them, with a chunk of Solidarity on the end and said: "Ain't you going to eat with us?"... "We eat already!" they answered, and went back into the shack to get ready for the crowd that would soon be coming for the stew.

## Witness at Leipzig

EDWIN ROLFE

*Under torture and other pressure in a Nazi concentration camp, two Communists renounced their views and signed a statement implicating the Communist Party in the Reichstag fire. They were brought to the trial by the Nazis as witnesses for the prosecution. On the witness stand, however, knowing that their testimony would mean life or death for them, they declared they had been tortured into signing the statement and, reaffirming their positions as Communists, they turned their testimony into a valiant and crushing attack upon the Nazi prosecution.*

NEWS ITEM.

I am glad I am here; I have said  
what my heart not my lips have uttered  
always, in dungeons under lash and where  
to mutter under the breath meant death.

I have come through forested distances  
over bloody highways where the dead  
have trod; have killed words in me, shed  
the thousandth skin of my soul—and all

my blood which flows too fast remembers  
cries, mad laughter of wracked friends,  
comrades lost to the living, wedded  
to God! the swastika stitched on.

Yet I am proud I have come have spoken here:  
this stand before you, justice, is my guillotine  
surely as truth is on my lips today  
which all but burst the heart these many months.

Dimitroff speaks this truth; his sentences  
resound beyond the rafters of this room.  
Hear Nazi judge, at you! and you, brown prosecutor,  
his words like doom are aimed.

I tell this too—may't damn the court  
before dawn rises on my severed head!—  
to you, gentlemen: these close walls  
have ears and tentacles that reach

beyond all prisons and above all time  
that you conceive. I say our Party  
knew nothing of the fire but foretold your death  
who now claim mine. I know this stand's

my last, this room the final room  
where I shall walk alive and speak  
to enemy or friend. Yet I am strangely  
proudly glad that this is so.

# Correspondence

## Organizing Department Stores

TO THE NEW MASSES:

It may be interesting to those who are not intimately connected with department store work and particularly to those who are working in department stores to know that the number of union groups functioning in the various department stores of the city has grown tremendously. Whereas two years ago we had a small union nucleus active only in Macy's, there are today, nuclei in Gimbel's, Namm's, Bloomingdale's, Lerner's, Martin's, Wanamaker's, etc.

In carrying on organizational work in department stores, we encounter the same difficulties that have to be met in unionizing other branches of white collar workers. That the barrier is being gradually broken down there can be no doubt.

The store as the customer sees it is not the same institution for which a department store employee must work. The N.R.A. Code has provided for a minimum wage which is lower than the pre-N.R.A. wage-scale. This minimum, as in other industries, has become the maximum wage. Besides working under terrific speed-up because of undermanned staffs, the workers are in constant fear of losing their jobs. This uncertainty is based on their experience in seeing older workers (those earning more than the N.R.A. minimum) fired, to be replaced by new people who receive the N.R.A. minimum wage.

Department stores today are ripe with possibilities for concerted mass action. Witness the recent Wanamaker action. Seven workers were fired for union activity. Immediately a picket line was whipped together, formed by workers of the Department Store Section of the Office Workers Union letting customers know why these employees were fired. Indignant customers and organizations protested that workers' right to organize should be so flouted by the management. As telegrams poured in, and customers closed their charge accounts, Wanamaker's had to give in. They reinstated five of the seven workers. By the collaboration of all workers of the Department Store Section on behalf of the fired workers, we were able to win their reinstatement. Struggles for organization in other department stores are no different from those of Wanamaker's. Other successes have been scored by workers in Macy's led by the militant Macy Group.

Our victories, however, have only begun. They imply a task of struggle the importance of which no department store worker can afford to underestimate. Because of its comparatively short existence, there are probably numbers of people who are unacquainted with the organization. We therefore urge all department store workers reading these columns to publicize it among their fellow-workers and to get in touch with the Department Store Section of the Office Workers Union, 114 West Fourteenth Street, New York.

PAULINE LEWIS,  
Executive Committee of D.S.S. of O.W.U.

## One We Missed

TO THE NEW MASSES:

In the issue of August 14 your movie reviewer, I.L., speaks about the "red with foreign accent, bushy beard, unruly hair, baggy pants with a bomb in his hand . . . which is now a regular prop in current films."

He forgot to add to his list *The Merry Frinks* with Allen Jenkins (normally associated with Lee Tracy and Frank McHugh as a fellow newspaperman or gangster) in the role of a red herring.

This man Jenkins, whose every intention has a striking effect upon the funny bone of most moviegoers, takes the part of a wild-eyed, loud-mouthed capitalist denouncing labor lawyer, whose main case, it seems, is the defense of the two heavily

bearded and accented comedians, disguised as reds, who are always coming in from the outside and calling one another comrades and their enemies, bourgeois rats.

If you have seen Jenkins as a reporter or a gangster you can imagine how ridiculous a caper he can cut in the role of a labor defense lawyer; while the three of them together, conducting themselves in the best manner of Hearst's anti-labor cartoons, make up a team that is hard to beat for downright and malicious nitwittiness. Some of the props in the film include a large, familiar picture of Stalin ushered in at the beginning of the film, to quickly identify the political affiliation of the lawyer, for the audience; numerous posters urging workers not to "bend their knees to the bosses"; and a supporting cast including Stinky Frink and a long lost relative from New Zealand whose recipe for rice waffles provides the only tolerable comedy in the picture.

Towards the end of the evening Jenkins manages to lose the case for his comrades; as result of which he is given a terrific pummeling by the red beards, which conveniently enables him to conclude that the capitalist system is perhaps the best after all! *Merry Frinks* like *Friends of Mr. Sweeney* is a Warner Bros. production.

DAVID PLATT.

## The Battle of New Orleans

TO THE NEW MASSES:

If the National Guard can be used to break up picket lines, why can't it be used to keep a political machine running smoothly? Huey Long thought that one up and he's putting it into practice. If Huey Long can control the whole state of Louisiana except New Orleans, why shouldn't he control that city too? If Mayor Walmsley uses the city police to collect graft and makes an excellent living out of prostitutes, night clubs, horse-races, etc., why shouldn't the eminent Senator do likewise? It's all very simple. The Federal relief agencies take care of the poor on \$4 a month, and Senator Long will take care of the poor exploited gangsters in New Orleans. The battle of New Orleans is between two mad dogs over a corrupt and diseased bone. The decay of capitalist government has some aspects more revolting than others.

New Orleans.

JACOB ARNOT.

## Mother Mooney

TO THE NEW MASSES:

As the funeral procession bearing his mother neared the steel gates of San Quentin, Tom Mooney strained his eyes to catch a glimpse outside his living tomb. Warden James Holohan kept those high sharp barriers locked that the workers might not bear the body of Mother Mooney inside for her son to pass one last moment with her. As the procession receded from the gray coldness, Tom resumed his peeling of potatoes for Officers' Mess.

When the boat docked at San Francisco on its return from San Quentin, over 1,500 workers filed into a line of march behind the body of Mother Mooney, as it was borne slowly up Market Street. Thousands of other workers formed a solid wall on either side of the procession the entire length of its march to the Civic Auditorium. The Auditorium already nearly filled, the workers who escorted Mother Mooney from San Francisco's Embarcadero marched into the balcony. Solemnly, and with a mighty spirit, the thousands of workers present pledged themselves to carry on the fight where Mother Mary Mooney left off. Her message was carried out of the hall, past those who could see her for the last time, to thousands of other workers listening over the radio to the voices of Leo Gallagher, Robert Whitaker, and Harry Bridges. "Carry on! Carry on!" rang the challenge of the day.

Campbell, Calif.

KARL SAYLOR.

## The Case of William F. Hill

TO THE NEW MASSES:

On August 16, 1885 postal substitutes throughout the country were appointed to fill regular positions, despite the fact that there were 20,000 such vacancies waiting to be filled, according to Postmaster General Farley's own figures in the report of his office for the year 1933. That these few appointments were made only after the National Association of Substitute Post Office Employees had militantly forced the issue (an account of these activities, written by Albert Halper, appeared in the July 31 issue of THE NEW MASSES, is borne out by no other authority than President Roosevelt himself, who, when speaking of the current postal protest to the press on March 22, states that "most of the complaints have come from New York City (then National Headquarters of NASPOE) principally from organizations of substitute clerks and letter carriers."

William F. Hill, a national officer of this union, and President of the St. Louis local, greeted the announcement of these 1885 appointments by writing a letter to his local newspapers, pointing out the relatively small number of vacancies filled, and constructively pointed out that normal service to the public could only be restored by filling the remaining vacancies. W. Rufus Jackson, Acting Postmaster of St. Louis, met the sympathetic response that Hill's letter evoked by preferring utterly groundless charges against Hill for dismissal, charging among other things that the writing of the letter was "an offense involving moral turpitude." The content of his official letter of charges is extremely vague; no attempt is made to refute Hill's statements (which, of course, he cannot possibly do. The facts are too well known.) or to cite specific portions of the only document in the case (the letter which appeared in the Star-Times, August 15), which substantiate in any particular any one of his charges. It is clearly a brazen effort on his part to intimidate and to silence the representatives of the substitutes union from carrying on their fight for the filling of all vacancies, and to prevent them from exposing the true nature of Farley's "balanced budget," which took \$80,000,000 out of the postal worker's pockets and drastically curtailed service to the public.

The National Association of Substitute Post Office Employees is fighting to save Hill's job, and is demanding the retraction of all the charges. They have called upon their locals to give the case the widest possible publicity and to organize a mass campaign of protest to Jackson, and to W. W. Howes, First Assistant Postmaster General, Washington, D. C., under whose jurisdiction the case falls. In its public statements to the press, the union correctly states that "this threat to the author of the letter constitutes an attack upon the organized efforts of postal employees to improve their working conditions. For the strongest weapon all government employees have at their command is public opinion. And public opinion can be marshalled in our support only by organized efforts to acquaint citizens throughout the nation with the facts of the service, and our recommendations for its improvements. For these reasons the case of William F. Hill is of far greater importance than that of any single individual, however wronged. It is a case which is of vital and fundamental significance to every postal worker and to every other Civil Service employee in the United States. If the principle laid down by the charges in this case are generally imposed, all constructive criticism of the government will be smothered; government employees will have no other legal recourse whatever to improve conditions; and we will have little further to go to approximate the Fascist suppression of Hitlerite Germany."

J. A. F.