

John Reed in Czarist Russia

GRANVILLE HICKS

The preceding chapters described Reed's experiences on the Western Front and his impressions of New York in February and March, 1915. Forbidden to return to France, he decided to go to the Eastern Front, accompanied by Boardman Robinson, whom The Metropolitan Magazine employed to illustrate his articles. In the following chapter the account of Reed's and Robinson's difficulties in Russia has been somewhat condensed and two or three purely personal episodes have been eliminated.—G. H.

ON MARCH 24, 1915, John Reed and Boardman Robinson sailed for Naples. They expected to witness Italy's entrance into the war, but they grew impatient at the delay and went to Salonika. Here, where men talked twenty languages, they spoke with British agents, Armenian merchants and Greek boot-blacks from America. Sitting at a table in the Place de la Liberté, they watched Greek, French, English, Russian and Serbian officers, Greek priests, Muselman hadjis, Jewish rabbis, porters, fishermen and beggars. In the Street of the Silver-smiths, bearded old men squatted on high benches and pounded lumps of raw silver. The markets were what Reed had dreamed of when he tramped New York's East Side: in the little booths, gold, blue and silver fish lay on green leaves, among baskets of eggs and piles of vegetables, and the voices of the bargainners rose above the cackling of hens and the squealing of pigs.

All day long refugees poured into the city. Everywhere Reed and Robinson met the pitiful processions of men, women and children, with bloody feet, limping beside broken-down wagons. The fighting in Turkey and the rumors of war in Bulgaria, Rumania and Greece filled the city with all the different peoples of the Near East. One night Reed and Robinson found their way into a little cafe, where



they were welcomed by seven refugees, Greeks, French, Italians, all of them carpenters and all engaged in celebrating the strange coincidence that had brought seven carpenters together in a Salonika inn. The two Americans celebrated with them, singing "John Brown's Body" to match the songs of Turkey and Arabia, Italy and Greece.

But the news from Constantinople promised no excitement, and they turned towards Serbia, "the country of the typhus—abdominal typhus, recurrent fever and the mysterious and violent spotted fever, which kills fifty percent of its victims." The epidemic was ending: "Now there were only a hundred thousand sick in all Serbia, and only a thousand deaths a day." But an American from the Standard Oil office, who came to see them off, asked solicitously, "Do you want the remains shipped home, or shall we have you buried up there?"

They crawled slowly up between barren hills along the yellow torrent of the Vardar, while a lieutenant in the British Medical Mission described the plague as it had been at its height. The gorge of the Vardar broadened out into a wide valley rimmed with stony hills, beyond which lay high mountains. In the valley, crossed by irrigation ditches, every foot was under cultivation, and on the bare slopes of the hills bearded peasants watched sheep and goats. They came to a typhus cemetery beside the railroad, with thousands and thousands of crosses, and at last they arrived at Nish, war-capital of Serbia.

Nish was a city of mud, appalling stench, sickness and death. Everywhere there were soldiers, in filthy tatters, their feet bound with rags, some staggering on crutches, many still blue and shaking from the typhus. Austrian prisoners worked as servants or manual laborers or loitered desolately about the streets. In the typhus hospital, so crowded that cots touched each other, men writhed under dirty blankets or lay apathetically awaiting death. Reed and Robinson passed through fetid ward

after fetid ward, until their stomachs could stand no more.

As they left Nish to go to the front, they heard again and again the story of the Serbian victory of December: how the Austrians had twice invaded the country and twice been hurled back, and how, as they came the third time, with twice as many men as the Serbs, they had steadily advanced beyond Belgrade and then, suddenly, had been repulsed and slaughtered, until the Serbian general could proudly announce, "There remain no Austrian soldiers on Serbian soil except prisoners." Reed admired the courage of the Serbian people and their savage independence, and he could almost make himself believe they were as romantic as the followers of Villa, but, after all that he had seen, their nationalism, so arrogant in its claims, so pervasive in its influence, seemed to him both objectionable and absurd.

Belgrade, which the Serbs had tried to make into a modern European city, showed the effect of the bombardment. The university was in ruins; a shell had exploded within the walls of the military college; the interior of the royal palace had been gutted; the two top floors of a five-story office-building had been blown off; everywhere there were private houses without a single pane of glass. The city was still within the range of the Austrian guns and there had been a bombardment within the past few days. From the hills behind the town, French, English, Russian and Serbian batteries fired sporadically over the heads of the inhabitants.

They went up the Save by boat, under fire from an Austrian cannon, and then pushed on towards the front by wagon. In every village they heard stories of Austrian atrocities and saw reports, affidavits, photographs. At Lechnitza a hundred women and children were chained together and their heads struck off. At Prnjavor Reed saw the ruins of a house; into that house the inhabitants of the village had been crowded, those



for whom there was no room being tied on the outside and the building had been burned. Five undefended towns were razed to the ground and forty-two villages were sacked and most of their inhabitants massacred.

On the top of Goutchevo Mountain Reed saw what he regarded as the most ghastly spectacle of the war. There was an open space, where, scarcely twenty yards apart, were the Austrian and Serbian trenches. Along the trenches were occasional deep pits, the results of successful undermining and dynamiting. Between the trenches were little mounds, from which protruded pieces of uniform, skulls with dragged hair, white bones with rotting hands at the end, bloody bones sticking from boots. For six miles along the top of Goutchevo the dead were piled. Reed and Robinson walked on the dead and sometimes their feet sank through into pits of rotting flesh and crunching bones, and sometimes little holes opened and showed swarms of gray maggots.

At Obrenovatz they tried to forget the valley of the dead in the jovial company of the colonel and his staff. Over the cognac, Reed expressed a desire to talk with a Serbian Socialist and they took him to see the captain of one of the batteries. This man, who had been a lawyer in private life and a leader of the Socialist Party, had difficulty in recalling what, as a Socialist, he had believed. "You have no idea," he said, "how strange it is to be talking like this again!" Finally he said, "I have forgotten my arguments and I have lost my faith. For four years now I have been fighting in the Serbian army. At first I hated it, wanted to stop, was oppressed by the unreasonableness of it all. Now it is my job, my life. I spend all day thinking of those guns! I lie awake at night worrying about the battery. These things and my food, my bed, the weather—that is life to me. When I go home on leave to visit my wife and children, their existence seems so tame, so removed from realities. I get bored very soon and am relieved when the time comes to return to my friends here, my work—my guns. That is the horrible thing." Reed could agree; it was more horrible than even Goutchevo Mountain.



ON their return to Belgrade, Reed was suddenly attacked by an acute pain in his back, which was subsequently diagnosed as an infection of the kidney. After a fortnight the attacks became less frequent and less severe, though they bothered him sporadically throughout the remainder of his stay on the Eastern Front. Resting in Belgrade, Reed and Robinson had a chance to become better acquainted with both the Serbs and their allies. Serbian officers told them frankly that the government had known of the plan for the assassination of the Archduke Ferdinand at Sarejevo and there were many references to Russian complicity. A British colonel explained that England had maneuvered to make Germany invade Belgium and would have sent its own army through Belgium if the maneuver had failed. In the face of the growing evidence of international greed and intrigue, Reed's phrase, "This traders' war," seemed the expression of innocent blindness; and yet he knew that, in America, the myth of Allied purity and German depravity daily gained new adherents.

By the end of May, it seemed clear that Serbia was going to provide as little action as they had seen in Italy or Salonika and they began to think of Russia. The Russian army had retreated more than two hundred miles; they would go and report the retreat. The Russian ambassador at Bucharest told them they would have to go to Petrograd for passes, but they had learned from returning correspondents that no passes were being issued. The American legation gave Reed a list of American citizens in Bucovina and Galicia and, since the list did not seem quite long enough, Reed added, for his own amusement, the names of Sonya Levien of The Metropolitan staff, Fanny Hurst and Walter Lippmann. The claim that they were investigating the situation of these Americans would, they hoped, satisfy any suspicious officials. They went to Dorohoi, the northern terminus of the Rumanian railway and the chief of police took them across the border to Novo Sielitza. They had got into Russia by the back door.

CAPTAIN MADJI, commandant of Novo Sielitza, welcomed them with Gargantuan hospitality and introduced them to his extraordinary household. About ten o'clock at night Captain Madji's wife began to get dinner. To sharpen the appetite, there were plates of sardines, smoked and raw herrings, tunny, caviar, sausage, shirred eggs and pickles, served with seven different kinds of liquor. Afterwards came great platters of corn-meal polenta and then chunks of pork and potatoes. It was midnight when the seven liquors were served again and they settled down to drink tea. Half-a-dozen officers told stories of the retreat, and Madji protested when, at one o'clock, Reed and Robinson spoke of going to their quarters.

They stayed in a Jewish home. There were Jews everywhere in Novo Sielitza,



bowed, thin men in rusty derbies and greasy long coats, with desperate eyes, cringing from police, soldiers and priests. Reed remembered the proclamation the Czar had issued soon after the beginning of the war, informing the Jews that all discrimination against them was to cease, that the highest rank of the army, the government and the nobility would be open to them. He thought of this in Novo Sielitza and asked a lieutenant in a Cossack regiment if the decree had been enforced. The lieutenant laughed and said, "Of course not. All Jews are traitors."

From Novo Sielitza they went to Zalezschick, where certain of the persons were supposed to live whose names had been given them by the Bucharest legation. Captain Madji secured a horse, wagon and driver for them and persuaded General Baikov to give them a pass. All day long they drove beside the river Pruta, behind the Russian batteries. Zalezschick, they learned, had been captured by the Russians, taken from them by the Hungarians and then recaptured. Each time the Jews had been persecuted and many of them massacred. The Americans on Reed's list who actually had lived in Zalezschick had apparently been among the victims of either the bombardments or the pogroms. Both the debris in the streets and the expression of terror and despair on the faces of most of the people bore witness to the horrors the city had seen.

The colonel in charge of Zalezschick received Reed and Robinson pleasantly and they spent the evening discussing politics, in fragmentary German, with him and his staff. He would not permit them to go to the front, but he arranged for them to see the general at Tarnapol. They slept that night on the train and woke stiff and cramped from the benches of the third-class car. An officer who knew French began to talk with them and told them that all Russia was supporting the war. The peasants, for example, were in favor of it because they realized they could get rid of poverty and oppression if they beat the Germans. "If the peasants are going to beat anyone," Robinson said to Reed, "why don't they begin at home?"

At Tarnapol they discovered that their presence in Russia was so astounding that the staff officer who interviewed them could

scarcely convince himself that they were really there. General Lichinsky was friendly but insisted that they go to Lemberg to see the governor-general of Galicia. They were arrested four times in the course of the day but each time the staff released them. General Lichinsky had them cared for while they were in the city and sent them fare-free to Lemberg.

At Lemberg Prince Troubetskoi promised to do all he could for them and introduced them to the governor-general's first adjutant, who was very encouraging. They asked Troubetskoi if they could visit Przemyśl. "I'm so sorry," he said regretfully, "but the Austrians entered Przemyśl this morning." Finally they learned that the governor-general would do nothing for them; they could either go to Petrograd or try to get the permission of General Ivanov at Cholm to visit the front. They hated to leave the front without a glimpse of the fighting and they chose to go to Cholm.

It took them two days to get there, traveling third-class or on hospital trains, sleeping on wooden benches, eating badly or not at all and waiting for hours in obscure railway stations. One of the stops was at Rovno and it was there that Reed learned what the Pale was like. They were arrested several times, but always released. On the last stretch they found a Russian officer who spoke English and who told them tales of Russian inefficiency. The regiment in which he served had arrived in Poland after three nights with almost no sleep and two days with almost no food. The general had immediately ordered them into action and they were in the trenches for four days. They were so exhausted that they could not resist the German attack and twelve hundred of them went to the hospital. "But the amusing thing about it," he concluded, "was that all the time we were being butchered out there, there were six fresh regiments being held in reserve two miles away! What on earth do you suppose the general was thinking of?"

As they found their way to what was called the English Hotel, though no one spoke English there, they were so confident of winning General Ivanov's permission to go to the front that they argued about the

kind of battle they wanted to see. Robinson hankered for an infantry charge; Reed stuck out for a ride with raiding Cossacks. But the next morning a staff officer very politely told them that he would have to telegraph the Grand Duke. It was only a matter of a few hours, he assured them and they went back to their room. A little later an officer arrived and asked them for their papers. It was a mere formality, he insisted; the Grand Duke had not been heard from, but without doubt he would soon reply and they could proceed to the front. They were not under arrest, the officer told them, but he left three guards outside their door.

Protests were of no avail, but at last an officer explained the situation. They had violated a strict regulation by coming to Cholm. The officers who had sent them on, step by step, would be punished, but that did not excuse them. The Grand Duke had ordered them to be held under guard. They were in an attic room, hot and uncomfortable. The food was bad. They had no opportunity to exercise and nothing to read. They could not leave the room except to go to the toilet and then a Cossack accompanied them. The Cossacks were friendly and there were usually half a dozen of them in the room, talking with the aid of the French-Russian dictionary, marvelling at Robinson's drawings, arguing among themselves—with only mild academic interest—as to whether the captives were German spies or not. There was only one who was at all obnoxious and when Reed threw him downstairs, the others were delighted.

Fourteen days they spent in that hot attic room, with nothing to do but engage in difficult conversation with the Cossack or watch the life of the Jewish section from their window. Reed wrote poems, planned a novel, played double-dummy bridge with Robinson and fretted. They wrote telegrams to the British and American ambassadors and to Hovey, but the officials did not dispatch them. Finally a telegram was delivered to the American ambassador, who replied that he had learned from the Department of Foreign Affairs that they were to be sent to Petrograd. They waited two more days and then, when Reed was fully convinced that he was going to go crazy, a colonel appeared and freed them.

The colonel gave them the impression that they could either return to Bucharest or go on to Petrograd, where they might be able to get passes for the front. Believing their detention to have been due to a misunderstanding and still eager to see the battle, they proceeded to Petrograd. Although they had been assured that they were free, they observed that their compartment was guarded and at each station an inspector made sure that they had not disappeared.

As soon as they reached Petrograd, Reed went to see the ambassador, George T. Marye, who told him that he had been in danger of being court-martialed and shot. Reed naturally assumed that Marye would attempt



to explain matters to the Russian government but the ambassador merely shook his head and said he was helpless. For nearly two weeks, Robinson and Reed were followed everywhere by spies, and still there was no word as to what the Russians intended to do. Apparently the various officers who had let them go as far as Cholm had seriously blundered and now the government was trying to cover up these blunders. Finally word came that they were to leave for Vladivostok within twenty-four hours. Robinson, who had been born in Canada, appealed to the British ambassador and Sir George Buchanan protested so strongly to Sazanov that the order was cancelled and they were permitted to go to Bucharest.

ALL their notes had been taken from them and, as soon as they had reached Bucharest, they set to work to record their impressions. Casting up the balance sheet of his Russian experiences, Reed found much to like. He liked the broad-gauge railways, with the wide, tall cars and long, comfortable berths. They belonged to the amazing countryside through which the trains passed: leagues and leagues of ancient forest; thatched towns hours apart; fields, golden-heavy with wheat, stretching as far as the eye could see. The spirit of the people matched the country. "Russian ideals are the most exhilarating," Reed wrote, "Russian thought the freest, Russian art the most exuberant; Russian food and drink are to me the best, and Russians themselves are, perhaps, the most interesting human beings that exist." The Russian sense of space and time pleased him: "In America we are the possessors of a great empire—but we live as if this were a crowded island like England, where our civilization came from. Our streets are narrow and our cities congested. . . . Russia is also a great empire; but there the people live as if they knew it were one." And he liked the freedom of the Russians from the conventions and traditions of the western world: "Everyone acts just as he feels like acting and says just what he wants to. There are no particular times for getting up or going to bed or eating dinner and there is no conventional way of murdering a man, or of making love."





He disliked the constant sense of being spied upon, though the antics of the secret police often amused him. He was staggered by the revelations of graft, so freely talked about by the people he met: seventeen million bushels of wheat that had disappeared; a battleship paid for but never built; a fort that existed only on paper. Foreigners described the elaborate processes of bribery that were a part of every business transaction. Exposures led to the execution of some officials and the exiling of others, but the graft went on. And he was horrified by the treatment of the Jews, the shameless violation of the Czar's pledges, the frank clamor for further persecution and more terrible oppression.

He observed that the middle class was eagerly supporting the war. Through their hold upon the court and the aristocracy, the Germans had made Russia almost a commercial colony and Russian business men were eager to throw off the double burden of German exploitation and imperial corruption. For the moment the workers and even, in a vague way, the peasants were supporting them. But there had been many strikes in the early months of the war and, though they had been cruelly suppressed, there was still talk of further uprisings. The revolutionaries were active, in the face of terror, and even a casual visitor caught a glimpse of what they were doing to prepare the people for the overthrow of the Czar. It was a mysterious country and Reed felt unwilling to prophesy, but he crossed the border with a strong conviction that violent change could not long be postponed in Russia.

He wrote down his impressions in his room in the Athenaeum Palace Hotel, while Robinson worked in the adjoining room at his sketches. At intervals they would examine each other's work. Often Robinson would say, "But it didn't happen this way; it happened that way." Reed would explode. Crying, "What the hell difference does it make?" he would seize one of Robinson's sketches. "She didn't have a bundle as big as that," he would say; or, "He didn't have a full beard." Robinson would explain that he wasn't interested in photographic accuracy; he was trying to give the right impression. "Exactly," Reed would

shout in triumph, "that is just what I am trying to do."

He did not hesitate to alter or even to invent. He might tell as if it had happened to him something that he had learned at second-hand. His deviations from factual accuracy were not, as they might have been with another man, the result of failures of his powers of observations, for his eyes and his memory were almost perfect. His alterations and inventions were the deliberate result of a determination to give the reader precisely the impression he had received. If, in describing his visit to the hospital at Lille, he had said that a soldier threw his iron cross on the floor, whereas actually the man had laid it on his bed, it was because he detected in the soldier's manner a suggestion of contempt that could only be conveyed to the reader in the terms of a more violent gesture. So, as he worked on his stories of Russia, he strove for the fidelity of the artist rather than the accuracy of the statistician and Robinson could testify that the essential veracity of his stories was extraordinary.

When Reed had finished his articles, he started out for Constantinople—alone because Robinson, as a British subject, could not enter Turkey. From Sofia he sent back a postcard, predicting that Bulgaria would enter the war on the side of the Central Powers. There were men of all nations on the Constantinople train as it left Sofia and he noticed how naturally the French and English mingled with the Germans and Austrians, how easily the old habit of international intimacy reasserted itself. But in the morning the English, French and Russians had disappeared, for the train had entered the Turkish Empire and was driving south across flat, bare, sun-baked plains. Late in the afternoon, troop trains appeared, filled with Arabs, and at midnight Reed was in Constantinople.

He awoke the next morning to hear an immense lazy roar, the sound of shuffling slippers, the bellow of peddlers, the barking of dogs, the droning of schoolboys. From the balcony he could see the tangle of wooden houses, the Golden Horn with a few yachts and cruisers and swarms of little boats and Stamboul's seven hills and innumerable



mosques. Before he set out with his guide, the porter informed him that the police had been making inquiries, but Reed was used to the police. Daoud Bey, a wealthy young Turk to whom he had a letter of introduction, led him through the European section and the crowded square to the bridge across the Bosphorus. The drawbridge was up and Daoud Bey hired a boat to take them to Stamboul. On the other side, they pressed through the crowd of peddlers, pilgrims, merchants, porters and soldiers. Daoud Bey showed him the bazaars and in one of the booths, with the air strong with scent of drugs, perfumes, herbs and love philters, they had coffee and cigarettes. They wandered through intricate, winding streets, across the quiet courtyards of the great mosques, in and out of bazaars. They dined in a garden in Pera, watching the German and Austrian officers, civilian officials, merchants and American sailors as they strolled by. At night they returned to Stamboul and saw an open-air vaudeville show. It was almost impossible to remember that, just out of hearing, were the guns of Gallipoli, but that night, on his way back to his hotel, Reed caught a glimpse of ambulances bringing the wounded from a Red Crescent ship to the hospital.

He had hoped to be allowed to go to the front, but after waiting day after day at the war department, the department of foreign affairs, the press bureau and the police department, after being told on one day to get an identification card from the American embassy and on the next to present a photograph, after being sent from bureau to consulate and from consulate to bureau and after finally learning that the documents he had so arduously collected had been mislaid, he gave up the attempt and contented himself with interviewing Achmet Effendi, a prince of the imperial blood, seventh in line for the Sultanate. In an abandoned English villa, after much preliminary exchange of courtesies, Reed met a dumpy, bloated little man in a gray cutaway suit, who asked him questions about New York and told him nothing.

Once more Reed had been disappointed. After two weeks' delay, Enver Pasha told him that he could not go to the front and he



was unofficially notified that he had better leave Turkey. At the Bulgarian frontier he was halted and told to return to Constantinople because his passport was not properly made out. Instead, Reed waited until the train was leaving the station and then jumped aboard. He spent the night in toilets, on tops of cars, in the tender and on the rods. Several times the train was halted and searched, but he managed to slip off and hide, thanks to the darkness, and to catch the train as it resumed its journey. The train crew, given a little money, helped him and in the morning he slipped into a toilet with his bag and changed his clothes. At Sofia he emerged in a linen suit and panama hat and passed without difficulty through the police cordon. He immediately went to police headquarters and told the whole story, to the chief's amusement.

In Sofia Reed and Robinson met again. They had hoped to get out to the British fleet and Reed had even had some idea of disguising himself as a melon-seller, but once more their plans were blocked. They were not sorry, however, that they had come to Sofia, for they soon realized that Reed's postcard prophecy was about to be fulfilled. Reed liked the Bulgarians, friendly, honest people, and he liked Sofia, so different in its simple practicality from the pretentiousness of Bucharest. There seemed to be no rich people, and the peasants, farming their land communally, appeared prosperous and contented. And because he liked Bulgaria and the Bulgarians, he hated to see the country drawn, against the expressed will of the people, into the war. Seven out of the thirteen political parties, representing a majority of the population, registered their disapproval of an alliance with Germany and demanded the calling of parliament, but the king, his ministers and the military authorities delayed until they were ready to decree mobilization and suppress opposition. Both the Allies and the Central Powers had offered territory and loans, but the Germans had offered more.

Well-informed correspondents warned Reed and Robinson that they had better leave Sofia. They went to Nish in Serbia, where everyone doubted their statement that Bulgaria was on the verge of mobilization and war, but two days later the decree was issued. They had expected a warm welcome in Serbia, but Reed's account of their observations of five months before had already appeared and the sensitive Serbs detected a note of mockery. Reed was informed that he would probably be expelled when hostilities commenced and in any case he was weary of the Balkans. He and Robinson went to Salonika, where there were no more rumors than usual and they decided to take a ship for Italy and home.

In his ironic preface to the collection of his Metropolitan articles, "The War in Eastern Europe," Reed recorded the disappointments of the expedition. They had planned to spend three months and they were gone nearly seven. They missed Italy's entrance into the

war and they saw no fighting in the Dardanelles. They arrived in Serbia just after one Austrian drive and left just before another. They had expected to see a great Russian advance and instead they were in Russia at the time of, but were not permitted to see, a great Russian retreat. But, though Reed liked the personal excitement of active warfare and knew that his reputation as a war correspondent depended on his reporting of battles, their experience had not been unenlightening. "It was our luck everywhere," he wrote, "to arrive during a comparative lull in the hostilities. And for that very reason, perhaps, we were better able to observe the more normal life of the eastern nations, under the steady strain of long drawn-out warfare. In the excitement of sudden invasion, desperate resistance, capture and destruction of cities, men seem to lose their distinctive personal or racial flavor, and become alike in the mad democracy of battle. As we saw them, they had settled down to war as a business, had begun to adjust themselves to

this new way of life and to talk and think of other things."

"War is a business!" It was that, above all else, that Reed could not tolerate. It was bad enough for men to kill each other, but that murder should become a habit made one despair for civilization. John Reed liked people. He enjoyed meeting the men and women of all nations and all classes. He thought well, by and large, of the human race. And war, despite individual instances of courage or generosity, systematically crushed the finer human qualities. For the sake of the profits of a few—and that view of the war was not a dogma from a book but a simple fact verified again and again—millions of men were not merely sacrificing their own lives and taking the lives of others but surrendering everything that gave life value. He came back from the Eastern Front, as he had come back from the Western, saying, "This is not our war."

Another section of Granville Hicks' book on John Reed will appear in an early issue.

Have You an

UNCLE
AUNT

SISTER
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W H O

Has delusions of grandeur?

Thinks it can't happen here?

Believes the "reds" a dull lot?

Is just too stuffy for words?

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By REDFIELD

with an introduction by

ROBERT FORSYTHE

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Correspondence

Political and Labor Bail Fund

TO THE NEW MASSES:

With the lines of reaction tightening against champions of organized labor and oppressed minorities, and against opponents of war and fascism, the sponsors of the political and Labor Bail Fund began a campaign today to obtain loan deposits totaling \$100,000. This money is needed to make sure that the Fund can take care of all calls for services in the critical times which loom ahead.

"Since the Fund was established in March," said Miss Schulkind, the secretary, "it has advanced as bail sums totaling \$9,275 on behalf of 19 prisoners upon application of nine political organizations and labor unions. Not a single default has occurred.

"We provide bail for persons arrested because of their participation in a political, economic or social struggle, because of their efforts in behalf of down-trodden minorities; because of their beliefs; or because of their efforts in behalf of the working class and against war and fascism.

"In almost every case the prisoners were freed without having to serve a jail sentence. If it had not been for the Fund, most of them would have been held in jail awaiting trial."

Three types of contributions are asked by the sponsors: (1) Money lent to the Bail fund, repayable on 60 days' notice. These sums are invested in Liberty Bonds or U. S. Securities. (2) Loans or gifts to the reserve fund, which is kept as a safeguard in the event of forfeiture of bail in any single case; the reserve fund must always amount to at least 5 percent of the bail in use. (3) Gifts to the administrative fund, because no part of the other two funds can be used for this purpose.

POLITICAL AND LABOR BAIL FUND.

104 Fifth Avenue, N. Y. C.

Lawyers in U. S. S. R.

TO THE NEW MASSES:

Having recently returned from the U.S.S.R. and looking over the Summer's issues of THE NEW MASSES, I was surprised to find a column headed "The Lawyers Are Doomed." Earl Browder states: "Certainly there will be no use for lawyers, as such, under Socialism. . . . For the lawyers, we can only promise the opportunity of re-education to become useful citizens in some other capacity. . . . It is a doomed profession."

In Moscow this fall I learned that workers are nominated and elected from the factories to serve as assistants to judges in the courts. They spend three to six months studying the Soviet laws, etc. Others further qualify themselves by study at the university under the law faculty. Those who qualify, after having served as lawyers and assistants, are nominated by the factories to function as judges. After such service, workers who wish to return to their former occupations are at liberty to do so. Others who wish to continue in the courts, if they are qualified, are permitted to continue as jurists.

From the Chief Judge of the Moscow City Court of Appeals I learned that seventy percent of the jurists today in the Soviet Union were jurists before 1917.

So that, while under Communism very likely there will be no need for lawyers, in the Building of Communism the lawyers have an important task in consolidating the gains of the Dictatorship of the Proletariat.

A. R. R.

The Case of Anna Lyons

TO THE NEW MASSES:

The following brief facts will give the general background which existed in the Emergency Relief Bureau, and will throw a clearer light on the facts of Miss Anna Lyons' dismissal.

About one hundred and twenty-five thousand

heads of home-relief families were transferred to W.P.A. projects during the past ten weeks. Because of the reduction in the case load resulting from this transfer, the E.R.B. administration reduced the size of the staff by 1,300 workers. Thus jeopardizing the adequate, efficient and humane administration of relief.

Thirty thousand applications for relief were held up for two weeks because of lack of personnel and funds. This bears witness to the justice of the

A.W.P.R.A. position that a full and adequate staff be retained and that the administration's policy was unwarranted and unjustified.

Following the campaign of the Association against dismissals the administration instituted a series of intimidatory acts, such as removal of bulletin boards, limiting staff meetings, "gag memo" and now the dismissal of Miss Lyons, a leader of the A.W.P.R.A.

EXECUTIVE BOARD A. W. P. R. A.

New York City.

Letters in Brief

To answer the conspiracy charge brought against strikers at May's Department Store and to gain support for the strikers, we are informed, the Department Store Employees Union, Local 1250, will hold a mass meeting at Odd Fellows Hall, 301 Schermerhorn St., Brooklyn, on Monday, Dec. 16, at 8:30 P.M. Speakers will include Heywood Broun; Ted Poston, city editor of The Amsterdam News, now on strike; Rabbi Ben Goldstein; Clarina Michelson; the Rev. David M. Cory and Sidney E. Cohn.

Paula Kapler writes, "As a musician I would like to know where are the proletarian musicians and composers?" She feels that the organization of musicians has been neglected and urges that a periodical for revolutionary musicians and music lovers be published.

Two full-time training schools, in Marxist-Leninist theory, two evening training schools and regional and sectional schools are being planned. The fund raising is in charge of A. Markoff, treasurer, Training School Commission, 35 East 12th Street, New York.

The I.L.D. writes that Edward Drolette, young American seaman who participated in the anti-Nazi demonstration on the Bremen last August, will be tried on violation of the Sullivan Law and assault on December 23. They ask that all interested in the fight against fascism and the defense of Drolette get in touch with the defense committee, 22 East 17th Street, New York.

The National Student League informs us that it has been banished from the University of Chicago campus. America's so-called most "liberal" major university withdrew recognition of the N.S.L. on grounds of "lack of cooperation"; the N.S.L. attributes the action to the administration's resentment against the N.S.L.'s recent fight for academic freedom.

Pioneer Youth, 219 West 29th Street, N. Y. C., appeals for toys, books, dolls, games and serviceable clothing for the miners' children in West Virginia.

"We no longer give away presents indiscriminately," they write. "A few days before Christmas we run a toy sale for townspeople. Nothing costs over 25 cents. Many things are cheaper. It's more self-respecting and the clubs make a little money."

The Philadelphia Workers School writes that it must move to larger and better quarters. They have launched a drive to enroll contributing members. Those interested should communicate with H. Dieter, 62 North 8th Street, Philadelphia.

The League of Women Shoppers, 258 Fifth Avenue, New York, invites support in its attempt to use its "purchasing power, collectively, to improve working conditions." The League investigates strike situations thoroughly and then, if the situation justifies it, they give their support in every possible way — by protests, meetings, speakers, picket lines, etc.

The Amsterdam News strikers in Harlem inform us that they will conduct a mass picket line this coming week. They ask for sympathizers to join in the demonstration.

Walter Ufer writes from Taos, N. M., "Every cartoon, every drawing in your December 3 number is well chosen. Gropper has more art sense, art feeling in his left-hand vest pocket than most artists get in a lifetime. . . . And Stephen Alexander is no slouch as an art critic. I consider him the best in the country."



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