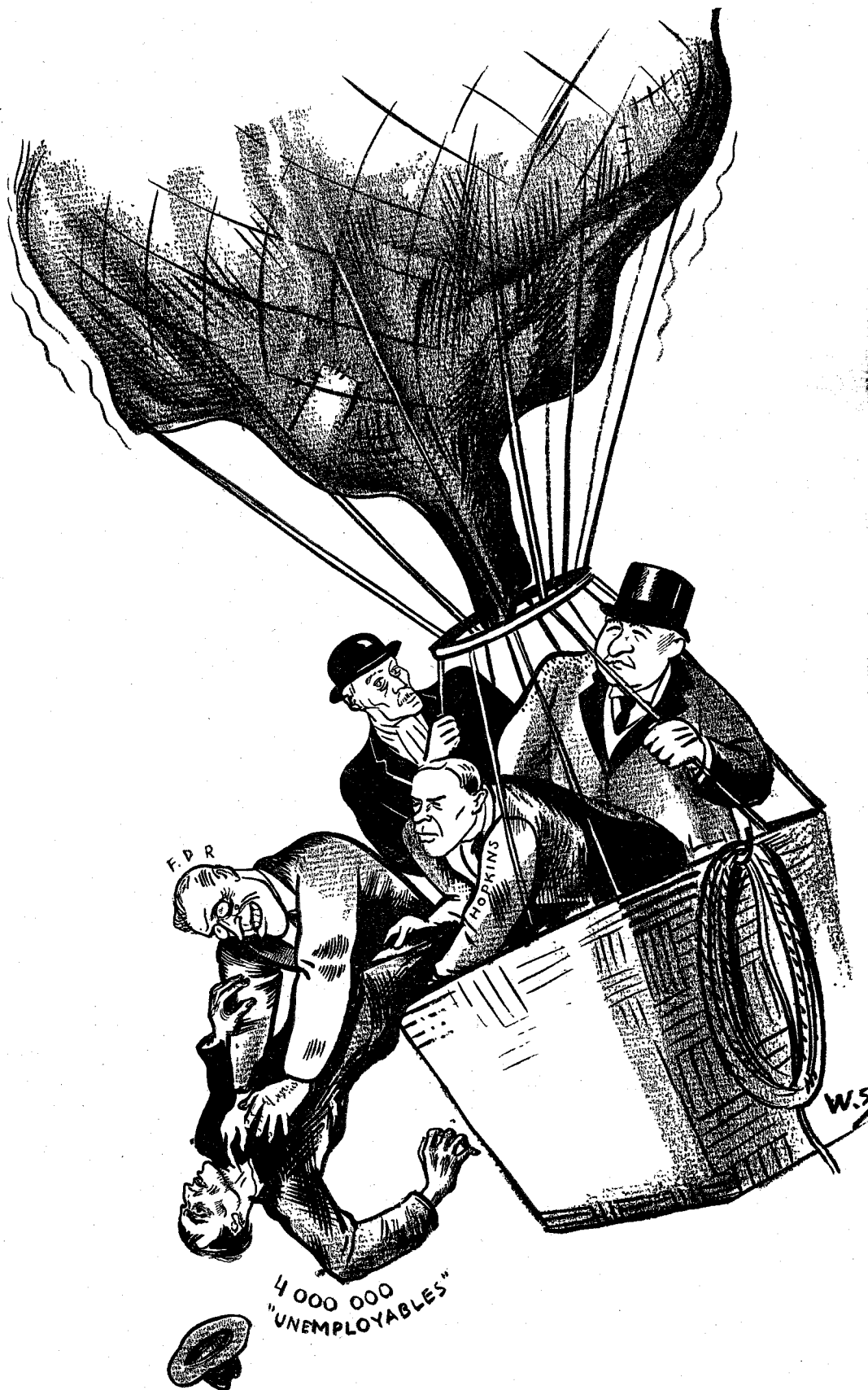


new Masses

JANUARY 8, 1935

THE answer of American jingoism to Japan's ambitions in the Pacific is to fling the "greatest armada in history" over the western waters. Surface warships to the number of 177 and 554 airplanes will swing out in a field of 5,000,000 square miles of Pacific Ocean. The huge sea force is to concentrate in late April in the three strategic centers of the west coast: the San Pedro-San Diego area, San Francisco Bay and Puget Sound. From there the main body will proceed to Pearl Harbor, the gigantic naval base at Honolulu, from which the so-called "war games" will be directed as far as Midway Island, 1,160 miles west of Hawaii. The maneuvers were ordered before Hiroshi Saito delivered Japan's denunciation of the three-power naval treaty, but their announcement was timed to share the front page with that event. More than fifty thousand men will go with the ships, men like the "Sailors of Cattaro" in the fine play given by the Theater Union, indifferently fed and miserably paid. These men come from thousands of working-class homes, most of them on relief or on the ragged edge of it. The ships were built by American workers. The cost of the maneuvers will mount into a staggering sum per day. This bill also will be paid by the American masses. What does the jingo naval president Roosevelt, what does Wall Street, care about all this, so long as they can back up their fight with Japan to gobble up Chinese and Latin American markets? The scrapping of the three-power naval ratio means the scrapping of practically the last of the arms "limitation" pacts entered into by the powers in recent years. The four-power pact and nine-power pact, as former Secretary of State Stimson declared, are unworkable without the naval treaty. Japan's withdrawal from the League of Nations will take effect in a few months. The tense war situation of 1931, when the fleet was last in the Pacific, will be repeated.

WITHIN a week, two items appeared in the daily press which shed considerable light, first, on the parlous nature of the business "recovery" of the past year, second, the degree of involvement of the government credit



DROPPING THE BALLAST

William Sanderson

in that of private industry. Under the date of Dec. 29, a Washington dispatch to The New York Times reports that during the year 1934 the P.W.A. advanced \$193,276,500 to 30 railroads. These moneys provided, according to the dispatch, 150,000,000 man-hours of work. They made possible the purchase of the 15,000 new freight cars during the year, the modernization of equipment, the manufacture of the new

streamlined trains, as well as the electrification of the Pennsylvania Railroad for nearly its entire route between New York and Washington. These moneys are, of course, an addition to the nearly 500 million dollars which have been advanced to the railroads by the R.F.C. and which have gone not into direct production and employment, but to pay interest and principle on their funded debt to the banks. The other news item is

dated Denver, Dec. 21, and announced that the R.F.C. had taken over and will run the Denver & Salt Lake R.R., "to protect federal loans to the Denver & Rio Grande Western R.R." of which the Denver & Salt Lake is a part.

THE R.F.C., the report went on to state, holds \$10,763,150 of the \$13,500,000 bonds and other obligations of the road. With this move, it also became known that the R.F.C. holds "as collateral for loans, stock giving full or part control of more than 5,000 miles of line." It is now admitted that some 75 railroads operating 16 percent of the total mileage of the country are in receivership or in the hands of coordinators, and that railroad insolvencies would now be greater if it were not for the P.W.A. and R.F.C. loans. Furthermore, during the coming year, millions of dollars of railroad obligations fall due which cannot possibly be met from current income. The R.F.C. will either have to advance these new millions to save them from bankruptcy as well as the banks and insurance companies that hold large portions of these maturing bonds, or take them over for operation, as it did in the case of the Denver & Salt Lake R.R.

THESE revelations give added point to our remarks in the preceding issue of THE NEW MASSES bearing on the solvency of the banks and other fiduciary institutions upon which the government debt is being unloaded. The greater part of the investments of our insurance companies in 1934 were in federal bonds. These holdings, amounting to nearly 1.5 billion dollars, are now double what they were two years ago. Together with municipal and state obligations—all among the most non-liquid securities on the market—they comprise about 30 percent of the assets of our insurance companies. Similarly with respect to the banks. As of June 30, 1934, the commercial banks of the country together with the twelve Federal Reserve Banks held nearly 14 billion dollars of the federal obligations. This was more than half of the total federal debt at that time. By now this sum is of course still larger, while the federal debt is rapidly rising to a sum nearly three-quarters the size of the total national income. No wonder then the government has had to pour billions of dollars into the banks to keep them in operation while most of their assets are becoming frozen. Thus, nearly 40 percent of the

6½ billion dollars advanced by the R.F.C. since its establishment in February, 1932, has been advanced to the banks. Banks received over \$2,600,000,000 from the R.F.C. of which 1¾ billion dollars were loans to *going* institutions, or to closed banks for the purpose of reorganization or liquidation, and 920 million dollars went to the purchase of bank shares to build up their capital structure. According to Jesse Jones, director of the R.F.C., some 500 million dollars more will be required to keep the banks going. In this fashion, to keep the credit and business structure of the country from disintegrating, the government lends the "nation's leaders" its billions of credit, but to raise this credit it must borrow from the banks on the security of bonds which become tethers on the banking structure. At this time, according to no less an authority than Professor James W. Angell of Columbia University, the assets of the commercial banks of the country are less liquid than they were at the beginning of the crisis.

STEALING turpentine; not "dipping his mule"; writing a letter to a white girl; hitting back when attacked by a white man—these were some of the acts for which Negro workers were lynched last year. In six cases "no charge" was reported. In only three cases was rape charged; in three other lynchings the accusation was "attempted assault." These facts are made public by the International Labor Defense, which lists a total of twenty-five lynchings in 1934. One was committed in New York State. Mississippi heads the list with eight. Louisiana had four. "In the present compilation," says the I. L. D. report, "no murder was counted a lynching unless three or more persons, more or less organized for the purpose, participated." It points out that the addition to the list of Negroes murdered by individuals or by police confident that no punishment would follow "would bring it up into the hundreds." The National Association for the Advancement of Colored People lists only sixteen lynchings for the year. Dr. Moton, Negro educator and close friend of white leaders, admits fifteen. He gives his own state of Alabama only one, although the cases of Early Cook at Georgianna and of George Taylor at Birmingham, both shot to death by gangs, are well known. The policy of Dr. Moton and the N.A.A.C.P. is to minimize the responsibility of the upper

class for the systematic subjection and killing of Negro workers. They strike off the list all lynchings in which they find that police or state officers participated. They have no wish to emphasize the fact that the Negro question has its roots deep in the evils of the profit system and southern feudal landlordism, on which they thrive. The I.L.D. statement points out that the Federal enforcement of the death penalty for lynchings is the only weapon against it, but that this is not to be expected without increased mass pressure. The Department of Justice has consistently refused to use the legal powers it already has to prevent lynchings. President Roosevelt's statement in a speech before the Crime Commission was widely construed as a tacit acceptance of lynching so long as it was confined to the South. The Bill for Negro Rights and Suppression of Lynching proposed by the League of Struggle for Negro Rights has the necessary teeth. The bill can be forced on Congress by persistent organized demands.

THE drive upon the Negro takes varied form in various sections of the land. The descendants of Jefferson Davis and Simon Legree prefer the simple and time-honored Dixie form—outright lynching. The technique is more subtle, more scientific, in the North. A fair example is the order of a Chicago court, that Jane Newton be examined at Psychopathic Hospital for marrying a Negro. The judge and the Chicago Hearst editorial writers took a leaf out of the Nazi book: like the Hitlerites who declared "Frenchmen are not human beings," the Americans tried to exclude Negroes from that category. The Northern adherents of Nordic supremacy encountered a setback when the psychiatrists pronounced Jane Newton "not only sane but an exceptionally brilliant woman." But the judge's action and its reception by the local newspapers prove to what lengths the ruling class will go to suppress the fight for Negro rights. Herbert Newton is a well known Communist leader who has fought openly and valiantly for the rights of all workers. Therefore it was he and his family who were singled out for so malicious an attack. The entire incident grew out of an effort to evict the Newtons from a jimcrow apartment house. The attempt was frustrated by the other tenants and an organized delegation of a hundred workers. Newton was arrested on charges of "disorderly conduct." As attempts increase to intro-

duce Fascism into America the victimization of the Negro people increases. In Germany the Nazis used the Jew as the most convenient scapegoat. All indications here point to the inevitability that the Negro as well as the Jew (and all national minorities) will be the pretext for a general drive upon the masses.

THE deluge of abuse which has descended upon the Soviet Union for executing a group of terrorists who were seeking to overthrow the workers' government has come from almost every quarter. Liberals like Oswald Garrison Villard and the editors of The New Republic have vied with Isaac Don Levine and other Hearst writers in their denunciation of what they are pleased to call the "Soviet purge." No one can be amazed by the attitude of the Hearst papers. Hearst, just back from Hitler's Germany which he defends in his papers, chants exultantly in the New York American, "Stalin's bridge is falling down," while his chief editorial writer, the eminent pen-prostitute Brisbane, predicts the restoration of the monarchy in Russia. But the wails of grief uttered by the liberal press have been even more violent than the yellow editorials of Hearst. One can easily understand the liberals' "sympathy" for a "going concern"—with a nation which alone in this period of dismal economics, can build Dnieperstroys, improve living standards,

raise wages and abolish unemployment. How can anybody passing as liberal deny the epochal achievements of the dictatorship of the proletariat? But the proletariat cannot achieve its successes without endless effort and ceaseless vigilance. Revolutions don't come plush-lined "with all conveniences." The enemies of the Soviet Union are still masters of five-sixths of the globe and they are determined to conquer that recalcitrant one-sixth. Hence the assassinations. Hence the executions. Events like these turn up the color of men's politics. True class allegiances come to the top. One must never forget that, after all, the liberal mind, for all its precious qualities, is fundamentally bourgeois.

THE creators and defenders of the Soviet are profound students of history. They know that a principal reason for the failure of the Paris Commune was a too great leniency toward the enemy. Marx wrote concerning the Communards of 1871: "If they are defeated only their 'good nature' will be to blame." He attributed a number of fatal errors to the "too honorable scruples" of the Parisian workingmen. That "monstrous gnome" Thiers, leader of the reaction, proved that counter-revolution is always insanely vengeful. After the Commune 40,000 men, women and children were mowed down—the Seine flowed red for days. But the

Communards of 1935—the Soviets—have profited by history. They know the enemies of the U.S.S.R. will stop at nothing, sabotage, arson, murder, to achieve their goal: the utter demolition of the Soviet system. Today's Communards saw intervention in the years following the Revolution. They defeated it. Today they see assassination. The White Guardists succeeded in murdering Kirov. Leonid Nicolaev and thirteen other spies, arrested in Leningrad after the Kirov assassination, have, in a two-day trial before the Military Collegium of the Soviet Supreme Court, been proven guilty and executed. Nicolaev at first declared his motives were personal—discontent because of his family's poverty. He was given the lie by his own family's testimony. His confession revealed a number of alarming facts: first, the existence of the "Leningrad center," a group of terrorists pledged to the overthrow of the Soviet system; and second, the relationship between this group and a representative of an unnamed power who "offered to put them in touch with Leon Trotsky." As the Military Collegium stated, "The session established that this secret terroristic counter-revolutionary group, having no hope of realizing its criminal purposes except by terroristic actions inside the country, was aiming at armed intervention by foreign States." Many of the agents were recruited from among the former Zinoviev-Kamenev-Trotsky opposition. Zinoviev and Kamenev, now in custody, will be tried by a special commission of the Commissariat of Internal Affairs.

A PLOT to "invade the White House and kidnap the President and his cabinet" is the latest fantastic accusation levelled at Communists by the Dickstein "un-American Committee." The charge was made by Walter S. Steele, of Washington, D. C., representing the American Coalition of Patriotic, Civil and Paternal Societies. The sole "evidence" is that the "kidnap plan" was discovered in a raid on the Minneapolis Workers' School during the teamsters' general strike last year. On the same day that Mr. Steele appeared, real and damaging evidence was presented of embryo fascist moves backed by American millionaires with a longing to dictate. Albert G. Christmas, secretary to Robert Sterling Clark, stated that he turned over \$154,000 of Mr. Clark's money to Gerald C. MacGuire, Wall Street bond salesman. All

new Masses

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but \$33,000 was unaccounted for, but it was testified that Mr. MacGuire had \$64,000 at the 1933 convention of the American Legion in Chicago, with which to swing the Legion's support of a "return to the gold standard." Also Samuel Glazier, an army captain of Baltimore, told the committee that Jackson Martindell approached him with the proposal to launch the "American Vigilantes" 500,000 strong with a backing of \$700,000,000.

AN element of the grotesque appears in all of these schemes, but they nevertheless represent the desperate determination of capitalists to pre-

serve themselves at all costs. That the woods are full of rich men ready to spend lavishly to bolster up any likely candidate—a Smedley Butler, Lawrence Dennis or William Pelley—is no surprise to those who know the financial backing given to Mussolini and Hitler before they reached power. But in order for fascist plans to succeed it is necessary to silence Communism, to smash the working class, beginning with the Communist leadership, to attack and distort Lenin's teachings, to raise the red scare. The Dickstein committee, originally set up to investigate Nazi propaganda in America, is carrying out this anti-working class role with the

cheers of Hearst and the whole national machinery of radio and press. When a committee of New York workers visited Mr. Dickstein's home to protest, they were waylaid by police in the hallways and blackjacked. . . . In Chicago Hearst's papers are inciting an American Legion march "against the reds," called for Jan. 4. . . . Powerful protests should pour in to the members of the "un-American Committee." Mr. Hearst must be faced with a boycott by masses of readers. A beginning has been made in this direction in Chicago. A city-wide rally there on Jan. 8, will be the signal for launching an anti-Hearst movement through the country.

Betrayal by the N.A.A.C.P.

ELSEWHERE in this issue we publish an article by Martha Gruening on the Crawford case, a case widely known because it posed the question of the right of Negroes to serve on juries in the South—a fundamental question in the struggle of twelve million Negroes for civil rights. Miss Gruening, who is frankly a liberal and retains faith in the court structure of this country, has compiled an indictment against the policy of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, which "defended" Crawford.

The N.A.A.C.P. and its supporters, *The Nation* and the *Pittsburgh Courier*, have belabored the International Labor Defense in season and out for its tactics. Few editions of these publications appear without an attack upon the I. L. D.'s position: that there can be no compromise in the fight for the rights of the Negro people, in the struggle for civil liberties of the working class.

Many persons ignorant of the issues involved have often asked—Who is right, the I.L.D. or the N.A.A.C.P.? The I.L.D. contends that legal defense must be bolstered by the concerted pressure of the masses of the people. The N.A.A.C.P. insists that courts are "fair," that "gentlemanly conduct" will get you further than "rowdy" demonstration.

The first sensation in the Crawford case was Judge James A. Lowell's refusal in Massachusetts to extradite the defendant to Virginia, on the ground that there the defendant would be denied his

"constitutional rights." The judge's wish, however, to re-establish the conception of "impartiality" was promptly repudiated by the higher courts—the Federal Court of Appeals and the Virginia court. Nevertheless the N.A.A.C.P. refused to change its stand and reiterated its faith in the courts.

The jury question, fundamental in the struggle for Negro rights, towered over every other issue here. The N.A.A.C.P. collected funds on this basis. It declared this case to be "more important" than *Scottsboro*. It loudly avowed its faith in Crawford's innocence. At the trial, however, representatives of the N.A.A.C.P. failed to produce Negroes qualified to sit on the jury to prove the violation of their constitutional rights. The jury commissioner, a Southerner with all a Southern Bourbon's prejudices, said they had not found "any colored man of the County who seemed qualified for the service." Dr. Charles H. Houston, counsel for defense, "in a gentlemanly way" accepted the word of these "honorable gentlemen."

Crawford, of course, was found guilty, by an all-white jury, composed chiefly of farmers who require docile Negro help for their plantations. They honored Dr. Houston's wish to spare the defendant the gallows so that Crawford could help convict a Negro whom, in his forced confession, he had implicated in the murder. Crawford got life. And this the N.A.A.C.P. hailed as a great victory!

Despite the fact that the jury rights

of the twelve million Negroes in this country were involved, Houston told the press that "under no circumstances did he plan to press for a reversal by a higher court."

These facts are readily ascertainable by examination of the records. They have been compiled for us by one who has worked with the N.A.A.C.P. in the past and who is puzzled and repelled by their conduct of this case. The N.A.A.C.P. cannot insist that this is "Red slander." Honest individuals from their own class can no longer keep silent at such betrayal.

This is not the first time the N.A.A.C.P. has abandoned the field. In 1931 it retained Steven Roddy, a K. K. K. lawyer, who left the *Scottsboro* boys to face the electric chair, without filing an appeal. In 1933 Dr. Houston "defended" Crawford into a life term.

The upshot of the question is this: the I.L.D., composed chiefly of workers, understands that there are two classes, and that the courts belong to the ruling class. The N.A.A.C.P. under the dominance of white and Negro bourgeois reformers, attempts to deny the conflict of class interests. The I.L.D., based on class struggle, knows that mass pressure upon the courts fundamentally affects the court's decision—in the same sense that mass pressure by strikers fundamentally affects the employers' position on wages, hours, living conditions. The N.A.A.C.P. is an instrument to conceal these class truths, and the Crawford case is incontrovertible evidence of its real role.