

armed vigilantes spotted themselves behind trees surrounding the home. One of our men walked up to the back door with Green and knocked and aroused the occupants.

Nitzberg came to the door in his underwear, lighting a back-porch light. Jack Green identified himself and Nitzberg asked, "What's the matter?" Our man answered that he was a cab driver and had brought Green out with the understanding Nitzberg would pay for the call. As he was talking the lone vigilante carelessly opened the back screen door, but just as he was about to grab Nitzberg and haul him out to the waiting crowd outside—Green "double-crossed" his captors. With a shout, he lunged wildly into the house, dragging Nitzberg with him.

A cry arose from our crowd as we realized what had happened. Just as we all charged toward the back stairs, Nitzberg reappeared on the back porch with a shotgun and fired one barrel of the gun high as a warning. Naturally we all ducked for a place behind the trees. Inside the house, Nitzberg's family was hysterical.

"Shoot to kill, Papa, shoot to kill," screamed Nitzberg's wife.

"I shoot 'em. I shoot 'em!" he answered wildly, carrying out his words with volley after volley of gunfire.

"Come on out, Sol, or we'll drop you," a leader declared. "We have plenty of us and can riddle your house with bullets." But still Nitzberg's only answer was more shots and he called to his wife to bring more shells. Several of the vigilantes wanted to return the fire, but others called out against it. "Don't take a chance on the woman and kids," someone yelled in the darkness, as children could be heard crying and screaming.

Nitzberg took his stand near a window with the gun-barrel protruding outward, but kept his family around him constantly. He was in plain sight of the vigilante gunmen but they wouldn't shoot because of fear they would hit the wife or children. It became a strange siege, almost like war days. . . .

Two of the gas shells ripped through windows into the house but failed to explode. A third struck on the window sill and burst outside, sending a great wave of the painful searing tear gas back upon all of us. It was awful! After gagging and choking a while our gang, looking all the wilder with tear-stained faces, finally shot a successful shell into the house.

A cry arose as the gas went through every room in the structure. The woman shouted "We'll come out, we'll come out." A cheer went up from the boys outside and Nitzberg was ordered to walk out of the door with hands up in the air. At first he stalled sending his wife out in advance. In the glare of the spotlight she stood on the porch and pleaded for her husband's life, asking what the crowd wanted him for.

"We just want to talk to him, lady, and want him fast. Any more delay and in goes

another gas bomb!" one of our boys replied.

"No, no, don't," she screamed. "He's coming! He must dress!"

In a few moments out walked Nitzberg—sullen, bitter, refusing to say a word. With him was Green, terror stricken and gasping at the thought of going back into the hands of the wild mob. Our boys surged down onto the pair, seizing them roughly and dragging them down the road to the cars. . . .

The wild ride back to Santa Rosa was one of almost hysterical jubilation on the part of the vigilantes. The tension once broken as the battle ended, we began to realize for the first time how close we had come to death—many deaths, perhaps. Although Nitzberg had done the shooting, most of the wrath during the ride back was vented upon Green—the man who had pleaded for leniency and then "double crossed" the group.

When we got back to the warehouse, the story of the shooting and Green's attempt to escape spread like wildfire. The pair was dragged into the hall—stupefied from fright and beatings. By that time another man, C. Meyer of Cotati, had also been brought in and a short time later Ed Wolff of Healdsburg was added to the four victims. It was a sight that few who saw it will ever forget. Dimmed lights added to the ghastly scene caused by the milling crowds of vigilantes in varied masks and other disguises.

It had been an all night task, but at last the climax was near and everyone was on edge. Our leader addressed us and the radicals we caught, declaring, "Sonoma County is not large enough for such men as you who are attempting to overthrow the government under which you live!"

Each man was questioned and given a chance to explain his actions, with charge after charge being shouted at Green and Nitzberg from the milling throng. An American flag was produced and the pair asked to drop to the floor on bended knees and kiss it. Both refused sullenly, but not for long. After a count of three, fists swung through the air. Both men dropped to the floor, semi-conscious. They were shaken back to sensibility enough to obey the order and kiss the stars and stripes. The other trio

willingly and after seeing the treatment given the others almost gladly, kissed the flag without resistance. Wolff pleaded that he was not a Communist, speaking hurriedly and impassionately as the crowd jeered at him. Several Healdsburg vigilantes voiced charges against him that he had difficulty explaining.

One man pushed his way through the crowd to face Wolff, grasping him around the throat in powerful hands. A hush came over the crowd as the vigilante cursed and berated Wolff with Communist activity and finally ending with a dramatic shout:

"Ed, my hands are on your throat—and the only thing that keeps me from crushing the life out of your cursed body is that I believe in an Almighty God!"

After pleading that he would gladly get out of the county at once and stay out the crowd agreed to release Wolff. Meyer and Ford were given the same warning and also escaped the tar and feathers. But the impatient mob waited no longer with Green and Nitzberg. Clippers were produced and hair hacked from their heads. Shirts were ripped from the backs. Buckets of tar paint were hurled over them. Pillows were broken and feathers hailed down upon the sticky black substance. From two men they had been transformed into fantastic, ghostlike creatures of some other world.

Communism in Sonoma County was getting its due—and the vigilantes, restrained through most of the night, came near going wild. Kicked, beaten, dragged and shoved the two staggering tar victims—their eyes glazed from torture and terror—were taken out into the street. Then came a procession that Santa Rosa has never seen the like before. Down Fourth Street they walked, clear past the courthouse and on out of the city limits—while behind them followed the wildly shouting and triumphant vigilantes.

It was a long night, a wild night. But the vigilantes are just as determined that there will be other such nights as long as Communists continue attempts at radical agitation in Sonoma County. The ultimatum has been issued. The vigilantes have proven they are ready and willing to back it up with violence. It's up to the Communists to get out now, or suffer the consequences.

The Cops Were On the Job

GEORGE MARTIN

CHICAGO.

ON AUGUST 31 a group of Chicagoans attempted to exercise their constitutionally-guaranteed rights of assembly and free speech, to show their opposition to the conquest of Ethiopia in particular and to war in general. A number of organizations participated. The meeting was held—very appropriately, considering the nature of the protest—at 47 Street and Prairie Avenue, a Negro neighborhood.

The meeting was called for 2 p. m.

Shortly before three I got off the Forty-seventh Street car two blocks west of Prairie and started walking east on 47. I noticed a number of policemen on the street and near the middle of the block I noticed them loading several men into a patrol wagon, which was already badly overloaded. I decided that I had better catch a westbound car at the next corner and get out of that part of town. Of course I knew that an officer cannot arrest you for walking up the street, but why take a chance?

At the next corner a couple of newspapermen had trained their cameras on the rear of a police wagon, waiting for a picture. I paused a moment to watch. One of the officers, seeing me, yelled, "Move on." I "moved," but in vain. The same officer yelled, "Another smart guy, huh?" and grabbed me, tearing my shirt. Another shouted, "Resisting are you? Resisting an officer!" whacked me a couple of times with his club and pushed me toward the next man, who whacked, shouted and pushed me toward the next; and so I went, back and forth, down the line and into the wagon. The officers had gotten their man, the newspapermen had gotten their picture.

Resisting arrest? With seventy-five or one hundred police on that one corner? I didn't even resist "resisting." I just covered my face with my hands and took the pounding. Luckily I am tall and so took the blows on my shoulders and back. The shorter men caught it on the head and neck.

At first I blamed my luck for being on the scene just when the newspapermen were all set for a picture, but I learned later that it made little difference. The police picked up nearly every white man in the neighborhood within five or six blocks of the scheduled meeting place. They took men and women out of drug stores, soda fountains and even from 5 & 10 cent stores and department stores. Many of those taken knew nothing about the demonstration, but were in the neighborhood on business, or because they worked or lived nearby.

Once in the wagon, one of the officers started informing me that he "enlisted in the army at seventeen and was fighting for my country when you were in short pants, you wise —— you." He repeated the same,

with variations, to each new arrival. On the way to the station, when a woman, who had been picked up while waiting on a corner for a bus, asked why they were being held, he answered, "I enlisted when I was seventeen and fought for my country." One of the other officers gave a truer answer when he said, "Because you're white, a white man has no business in this neighborhood." I have often known of them arresting a man because he was black but this was the first time I ever heard of them arresting a man because he was white. The police merely assumed that all white men in the district had some connection with the demonstration.

At the station we had to run a gauntlet. One officer stood just outside the door and punched each man in the spine with the end of his club as he passed through. If the man tried to dodge, an officer inside the door socked him. They seemed to be enjoying themselves.

Once inside the station I found at least four hundred there ahead of me, not counting the police; and a bloody bunch they were. The short men, especially, had been beaten on the head. Bloodiest of all was an elderly man who stood several inches under five feet tall.

We were lined up and questioned as to our names and addresses, height, weight, nationality, etc. I was placed in a small cell with forty-eight others. The cell was about ten feet square with a bench on each side. Seats were "rotated" every fifteen minutes, but most of the time were occupied by men who obviously could not stand. We were so crowded that there was no room to sit on the floor. We stood from about 3:30 P. M. until after 10:30 when they started to sort us out. During all of this time we

had even been denied the use of the telephone.

At about five o'clock, an officer led a plainclothesman in front of our cell and recited: "Look at the Jewish bastards, look at the faces on those Jewish sons of bitches. They won't look at a colored man usually, but today they come down here and pat him on the back. The Jewish bastards!" Then he walked around the corner and repeated the same formula before the next cell. This was no accident; the majority of the men in the cell were not Jewish. This officer wanted us to feel that we were being led astray by the Jews, and the Negro to feel that the white man was really his enemy.

Before releasing me two of the officers gave me a heart-to-heart talk, which ran something like this. "You should never fight an officer—You can't fight a thousand police. Yes you did resist, or tried to—You can't fight a thousand police. Nobody struck you—you can't fight a thousand police.—You go back up to your part of town, where you can look out over the park and the lagoon (I had given an address in a more well-to-do section of town.) There's nothing for you to see down here. You go back up to your part of town and stop worrying about these people.—You can't fight a thousand police.—Who tore your shirt?—Oh no—You tore your own shirt, you and nobody else tore your shirt.—You can't fight a thousand police."

Once outside the station I asked an officer where I could catch an "L." He answered. "The 'L'? How in hell did you get down here, on a street car? You grab the nearest transportation and get to hell out of this neighborhood or I will run you right back in. We'll make good Americans out of you."

Two Years of Drought, One of Rust

MICHAEL BLANKFORT

ROBERTS COUNTY, S. D.

"IF YOU farmers can't make enough for seed next spring, you ought to quit farming." The speaker was a medium-sized man with serious eyes and a moustache; the County Agent. A laugh went up in the court room. The wooden seats were filled with farmers and business men. They had come together to discuss what was going to be done with the seed and feed loans. The laugh came from the farmers who were sitting uneasily. It was a sharp, unfunny laugh; bitter and angry. One of them got up. He had farmed in South Dakota for forty years. He walked to a window, spat out a quid of snuff turned his blue, angry eyes on the County Agent.

"We got to stop farming, eh? It's our fault, eh? We made the drought. We made the black rust that ate up this year's wheat.

We sold ourselves seed wheat at a \$1.65 a bushel when we could've bought it for 35 cents. We're the dumb ones that thought up the idea of plowing under, of slaughtering our stock. You bet, we're the ones. Is that what you're saying, eh?" There wasn't a peep from the County Agent the rest of the night. And almost every business man in the room spoke up and pledged his support to the farmers.

What's the situation?

Roberts County, South Dakota: good grain land, good prairie land that once upon a time had acres and acres of No. 1 wheat, barley, oats and rye growing on them. Roberts County: the prairie soil broken for the first time by the homesteading Norwegian, Swedish and Yankee farmers from Ohio, New England and Pennsylvania.

Two years of drought when there wasn't

enough green stuff to keep crickets alive; when farmers had to go sixty miles into Minnesota to feed their stock. Drought and the A.A.A. took care that there wasn't too much stock to worry about. Drought and the A.A.A. saw to it that when the spring of 1935 rolled around there wasn't a peck of seed in the bins. And the benevolent government saw to it that farmers had just enough to keep from starving, only by working in the gravel pits at 40 below. (Breaking gravel, grading, scraping, hauling, loading and unloading all by hand when there were enough machines for that purpose in the county sheds. But hand work was the order lest the farmers work less than eight to nine hours a day.)

Spring of 1935. Where is the seed for the sowing? Again the fond parent, the Department of Agriculture. We will lend