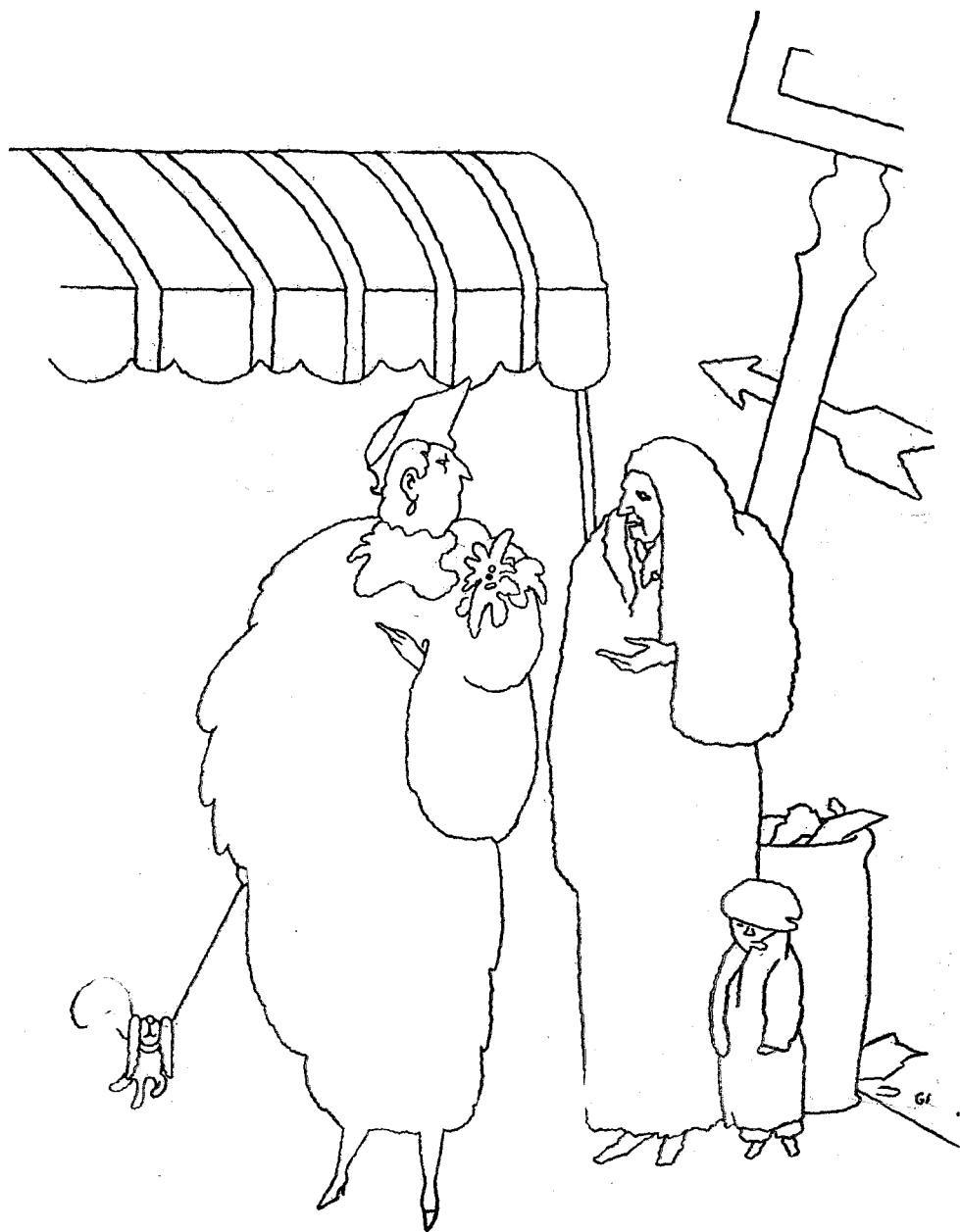


JANUARY 28, 1936

The Silicosis Investigation

JUST a year ago THE NEW MASSES published two articles by Philippa Allen on the ravages of silicosis and the negligence of companies who refuse to protect workers from this incurable occupational disease. The House Labor sub-committee is finally investigating this crime. Miss Allen has testified before the committee, giving substantially the same account that she gave in THE NEW MASSES. The present hearing is an attempt to force the Department of Labor to appoint a board to investigate health conditions among public-utility workers throughout the country. In West Virginia, 476 workers have already died, their lungs destroyed, and fifteen hundred others face slow strangulation from working at Gauley's Bridge. The company responsible for this wholesale slaughter of workingmen has been able to settle the suits of destitute families with the most inadequate compensation. The Gauley's Bridge Committee composed of a broad United Front of labor, liberal and medical groups, has been set up to aid the victims of the disaster in West Virginia, to throw light on the conditions that led to this almost unbelievable industrial tragedy and to fight against the possibility of similar disasters in the future. As matters now stand, the victims of silicosis can obtain neither public relief, compensation nor employment. The Committee, 245 Seventh Avenue, New York City, welcomes funds to make the last days of the doomed men as comfortable as possible and to save their families from actual starvation.

THE West Virginia law purporting to make silicosis a compensatory disease, in Representative Marcantonio's words, "needs plenty of amending to make it effective." Indeed, the House committee must not only assure adequate compensation laws; it must force employers to provide protection for their workers against the fine dust that causes silicosis; it must prevent the deliberate murder of hundreds of men every year by companies who, because safeguards cost money, deliberately and needlessly expose men to working con-



"But I thought The New York Times had taken care of all you people!"

Gardn

ditions that mean, in almost every case, certain death.

Hearst Pages Hathaway

AFTER last year's May Day demonstration, Tammany Hall transferred Assistant District Attorney James Neary from the Homicide Bureau to the Bureau of Special Investigation, with instructions to "get the Reds." Mr. Neary started his campaign by reading various volumes and pamphlets purchased at the Workers Bookshop. Now, for some mysterious reason he has requested Clarence Hathaway, James Casey, both of The Daily Worker, and M. J. Olgin and W. E. Douglas of the Workers Library Publishing Company to appear before him this week on the complaint of unnamed persons. Despite Neary's secrecy as to the source of the complaint, there is reason to believe Hathaway when he says that it emanates from Hearst headquarters. To begin with, the legislature in Albany

is at this moment considering bills signed to throttle democratic rights. Hearst reporters in the capital are actively lobbying for this fascist legislation. Presumably this first move of the labor press is intended to stir a Red scare which will stampede the legislature into passing the bills. Perhaps the Board of Aldermen, to whom similar bills are pending, will wisely be scared into voting them.

THE most important aspect of the case, however, is national. There can no longer be any question that the Tories are rapidly organizing the country for war. Already the statutes of the country contain laws enabling reaction to crush all popular expression of opinion. The question is, how and how soon can these be applied? The Daily Worker case is a test in that direction. If the Tories can away with it, they will go further. A criminal anarchy act, first tried on

be applied to liberals of opinion who oppose fascism. Whether or not they fail in this sinister attempt depends entirely on how powerful a liberal-minded Americans resist this new assault on the of the press.

Whalen Letters from Brazil?

CAIN MIRANDO CORREA, chief of the political section of the Janeiro police, apparently has to be another Grover Whalen. He says he is submitting to the government documents "with grave concern on the relations of the United States and the U.S.S.R." This is his way of coming to the rescue of disgraced Uruguay, which has severed diplomatic relations with the United States on the grounds that Moscow financed the Brazilian uprising of November. Uruguay was unable to produce any substantiating documents—naturally, because, as Pravda pointed out at the time, Moscow did not finance the uprising. The Uruguayan government was at least wise enough not to raid the Soviet trade bureau. The British Tory government severed trade relations with the Soviet Union in 1926 when it was about to be forced to make the embarrassing admission that the documents the police had been looking for were here. But Captain Mirando Correa thinks he can find a way to put the United States in wrong even if Uruguay can't. He awaits his "documents" with breathless attention, meanwhile reminding the United States that Grover Whalen, who exposed some unusually clumsy anti-Semitic forgeries when he was Chief of New York's police force, has long since died to private life.

THE reactionary Vargas government is in as tight a place as any it assumed power in Brazil five years ago, not excepting the time of the Paulo revolt of 1932. In his five years in power Getulio Vargas has signally failed to produce anything like a balanced budget. Without money he cannot continue to pay the army, and creditors abroad (especially, at the moment, his American creditors) are threatening to crack down on him if he does not make good on at least some of his numerous promises to pay debts and to enable Brazilian importers of foreign (American) goods to pay theirs. The November revolt,



it now appears, was precipitated by the Vargas government's aggressive weeding out of soldiers who had fraternized with railroad strikers in Rio Grande do Norte. Since the revolt, the government has gone still further than it had previously dared in the direction of establishing a naked dictatorship based on force and on the terrorism of fascist bands (known in Brazil as Integralists). At the same time, in a last desperate effort to stay in the good graces of the American capitalists, Vargas is talking of abrogating all Brazil's trade treaties with other foreign nations and extending certain tariff concessions to the United States alone. This is a language that Wall Street can understand and it will carry Vargas further, while his discredited régime continues to exist, than the furnishing to Washington of anti-Soviet "documents of grave import"!

Who Is Raising Prices?

THE hoary device of a purse-snatcher himself raising the cry of "Stop Thief!" is being tinkered up with 1936 trimmings by the Liberty League, which hopes to fasten the whole blame for the increased cost of living on Roosevelt. The silk-hatted banditti of the Liberty League are virtuously chasing those petty larceny thieves who somewhere along the line can be safely exposed as lifting the final few pennies from the consumer's pocket—such as the "artichoke king," for instance, exorcized by LaGuardia with bugles at sunrise. The Right opposition to Roosevelt does not confine itself, of course, to fooling with "artichoke kings." It says to the city worker, the farmer is boosting the price of pork and beans, that's why you eat less. It

says to the farmer, Roosevelt won't keep his hands off business, there's unemployment, people can't buy, vote for us. It fails to say to either farmer or worker that the New Deal program of 1933, then ardently supported by the top strata of American capitalism which now compose the Liberty League, based its hope of effectiveness on raising prices and keeping them up, that it succeeded in squeezing countless thousands of small businessmen to the wall and left the monopolists with a whole continent to exploit and a free hand to do it.

WORKERS, whether employed or unemployed, do not need to study charts to know that their standard of living has declined and is declining. They are eating less meat, drinking less milk, enjoying fewer mechanical conveniences in the home, seeing fewer shows, wearing fewer new clothes. (The Christmas retail turnover was larger in 1935 than in 1934, but the rise in prices far overtopped that increase, revealing a smaller total number of purchases.) One estimate of real wages—the actual purchasing power of money—for employed workers gives an increase of not quite two percent from 1932 to 1935. That is for employed workers. Average this figure with the precipitous drop in the money-income of the unemployed—and what workers' family is without its unemployed members or connections, with whom it must share?—and the picture is one of a calamitous diminution in all the comforts and necessities of life. Against this nightmare phantasy of the world's most technically advanced country tied by capitalist economy to a poor-house scale of life, stands the illuminating summary of corporation profits. The Federal Reserve Board reports that 166 corporations made the following profits, in the first nine months of each of the past three years:

1933	\$364,700,000
1934	569,000,000
1935	741,300,000

These are figures to burn into the consciousness of American workers. All the labor-hating, strike-breaking, shoot-to-kill corporations are there, Standard Oil, du Pont, General Motors, Bethlehem, Chrysler. They are all in the more-than-a-million-dollar-a-year-net-profit column, and they are all in the Liberty League too, howling about the high cost of living.

Lenin and Leadership

MICHAEL GOLD

THE fascists have set up a decadent cult of leadership in which a Mussolini or Hitler is ballyhooed like some new brand of corn flakes, given the divine attributes of a barbaric Roman emperor and credited with the miraculous conception of fascism.

Outside of terrorized Italy and Germany, ordinary people laugh in movie houses when either of these burlesque demi-gods is flashed on the screen. The common sense of humanity is democratic; deep in his core, every man knows himself as human or divine as any other man born of woman. Every non-fascist historian too, knows the sordid inner story of Hitler and Mussolini. Fascism was not their creation, but the work of the big bankers and industrialists, who needed strike insurance against the hungry and outraged people. Strip the show medals off a fascist leader, the gas and ballyhoo away from him, and he is revealed as a miserable office boy of the great financiers.

Moribund and reactionary capitalism has spawned in every land these grotesque carpetbaggers, these Coughlins, Hearsts, De La Rocques, Hitlers and Mussolinis. But the working people of the world, fresh in a sense of new-born dignity and strength, hungry for culture, joy and an expanding life, have given us leaders like Lenin.

Lenin was as much abused by the capitalists in his time as Stalin is today; he was called a "dictator," a man without a heart. But the slaveholders of our own South brought the same charges against Lincoln. Was Lincoln a despotic dictator? It is true that any leader fighting a war for freedom must make dangerous and arbitrary decisions. But Lincoln was controlled by a congress and cabinet that often outvoted him. Neither could he have conducted the war for a day had he not had the unwavering approval of the northern farmers, mechanics and middle classes.

Lenin's power in the Russian civil war was never any more absolute than that of Lincoln. Lenin did not rule by personal fiat; the very nature of Communism precluded that. He had to fight for his opinions, democratically, with his fellow-commissars and before great congresses of peasants, workers and soldiers. On occasions he was outvoted; he

was subject to free criticisms; he was a leader but it was because he had asserted a moral superiority. As one of his fellow-leaders said, "the old man grew upon us, for he was always right."

True greatness somehow finds its place in a true democracy; it needs no wealth or hereditary rights, or ballyhoo or privilege. Like sunlight, Lenin pervaded the heart and mind of revolutionary Russia with the supremacy of his insight. He needed no organized claque to cheer him, as do fascist demagogues. Love for Lenin grew in the Russian heart as for a father; he was revered in life, as he is revered now, in death.

How modest this great man was! He never wore a uniform or a medal in his life; he dressed like a mechanic and ate the simplest food. Nobody ever called him, "Your Excellency," but by the common and beautiful word "Comrade." He was one of the great theoreticians; a great organizer and general, too, laden with a thousand daily decisions, yet never did this philosopher and general forget to listen to the workers and farmers who came to him in Moscow, and to study their needs and thoughts as closely as he had studied Marx.

Lenin was a genius; but his bearing was as simple and democratic as that of a rank-and-file leader of a labor union. Stalin, his disciple, has the same simplicity. A real working-class movement creates such leaders; it shapes them in this mould.

One of the major problems of democracy has always been that of leadership. Because of years of monotonous betrayal by leaders whom it had elevated, a section of the working class, such as the I.W.W. and anarchist movements, came to distrust all leadership. The rise of Hitler and Mussolini has undoubtedly deepened this suspicion. Yet no movement can function without leaders. They are the coordinators of the great army of liberation, as necessary as dispatchers to a railroad.

A well-disciplined Labor Party will always know how to exercise a democratic control over its leaders. When Trotsky, now Hearst's latest star among Red-baiters, resisted the deepest needs of the Russian masses, Trotsky was eliminated.

Lenin was a profound democrat ruled, because in a proletarian democracy, the best man must inevitably rise to the top. Nobody, except the enemies, fears such leaders; but instead, the people love them and are grateful to them. Genius is like electricity; it can be created, in contact with the masses. The genius of Lenin belonged to the people; he never felt it as his own; and a great man loves the people as deeply and simply as he, history is made.

The Napoleons are stranded on the rock of Elba. The Machados are driven out like filthy rats. The Hitlers and Mussolinis will be hanged. Sooner or later, the people come to their own, know their enemies and friends. In the heart of the workers of the world, there will forever shine the image of this heroic, witty, large-brained man, the savior of the oppressed and heavy-laden, their friend and father, Lenin the leader.

"When Lenin died, many of us experienced a painful feeling of taint," once wrote Leon Kagan, the remarkable Soviet organizer, who directed the peasant collectivization.

"Some of us thought; how shall we finish Lenin's work without Lenin? Thinking thus, many of the comrades did not suspect that actually they were criticizing Lenin himself." For Lenin, he goes on to say, had not built a party around any one leader; it was a party, combining discipline, a democratic centralism, strong leaders and the development of new leaders among the people, who themselves terminated and shaped the policies.

Leaders, even the greatest, could be mourned; but the principle he had fought for was incarnated in the lions of eager hearts and minds. Twelve years this week since Lenin, incandescent flame of human courage and intelligence, died of an illness brought on by the bullets of a freckled girl who could not understand the Economic Policy and believed in Lenin's surrender to capitalism. Twelve years and another leader appeared in Stalin. The great work has gone on, and today all tell us there is joy and hope in the Union. Lenin still lives and leads the Party!

"Guarantees of Protection"

DAY in New York City 21,000 working-class families and individuals are waiting to be told whether they are to get home relief or jobs. Whether or not they eat in the meantime does not seem to worry the administration. Appalled by the latest broadside of lay-offs in the Emergency Relief Bureau, over-worked staffs of the district offices will not get around to some of the "pending cases" for five or six weeks to come. In the face of a rising rest from her own workers against a drive on the unemployed, Miss Lotte Carr, executive director of E.R.B., recently gave out a carefully-worded statement to the press:

While the Bureau cannot offer vested job-rights to its employes, it can and does guarantee them protection against discrimination and unfairness.

Simultaneously with this announcement, the wholesale dismissals of foreign-born workers whose final citizenship has not been granted, punitive transfers of workers active in the A.W.P.U., the employes' union, and the firing of several organization leaders, headed by the announcement of a new, smashing personnel policy. At the same time Victor Ridder, local Works Progress Administrator, threatened to double the already hopeless load of the bureau employes by firing 20,000 of workers. Frustrated by orders from

his chief, Harry Hopkins and reminded by a picket line of 4,000 white-collar workers thrown around his office, Ridder rescinded his order. In the course of this exchange it was revealed that Ridder had set up within his office a "reemployment bureau" which, backed by coercive regulations of the familiar "work or starve" type, was to become a scab labor exchange for private industry.

GROWING in the organizations both of relief-bureau workers and of workers on work relief is the consciousness that the present drive against the living standards of the unemployed can only be met by a solid front of the working class. Meeting in convention from Jan. 16 to Jan. 19, delegates of the A.W.P.R.A. sent back to their locals a strong resolution urging affiliation with the A. F. of L. They also endorsed a Labor Party and condemned District Attorney Dodge for the beginning of a drive to muzzle the labor press. Meanwhile, 21,000 applicants for relief are waiting. More important to them than the politics of the administration is the vital issue of how they will live for four, five or six mid-winter weeks without relief.

The Neutrality Bill

IT IS undoubtedly valuable to quiz J. P. Morgan and to prove that he and other finance capitalists dragged

this country into the World War. It is undoubtedly valuable to show that Woodrow Wilson, despite his solemn phrases of "formal" neutrality, was pro-Ally three years before the United States sent armed troops into France to help the cause of the Entente. Certainly it is not surprising that Wilson sided with Britain and France when the Morgan interests gave the cue. For it was made clear to Wilson that American finance capitalists could amass greater profits by extending credits to the Allies and acting as central purchasing agents for both England and France. These facts are obvious enough now; but such knowledge is *useless* if the American people walk into the trap again. As Joseph Freeman says in his article on the Nye investigation in the present issue: "The preparations [for war] are now more quiet, more efficient, more intensive, vastly larger in scale."

TWENTY years have not lessened Wall Street's power. And Roosevelt is following Wilson's lead—prior resolutions which on analysis mean nothing. The present neutrality measure before Congress—does it differ from Wilson's promises of "keeping us out of war," can it better withstand the pressure of the finance capitalists and fascists of today who strain for war? Already in its present form, the Administration Bill is the target of big business. The Senate Foreign Relations Committee has surrendered to Wall Street by including in the draft of the neutrality bill the principle of "freedom of the seas," as it existed prior to August, 1914. The meaning of such an inclusion is clear: if American ships loaded with munitions are sunk by belligerents, the American government is placed in the position of defending death cargoes. Neutrality legislation that has any validity cannot possibly be dictated by finance capitalism. Neutrality legislation must be rooted in reality, ironclad, enunciating the principle insisted upon by the Soviet Union that peace is indivisible, that peace can be maintained only through collective action of nations against a declared aggressor, that an embargo on both war materials and credit must be declared against the aggressor. Such legislation alone embodies the will of the American people, the will that insists that the profits of the few must not be placed above the safety, health and the determined wishes of the overwhelming majority.

new Masses

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