

girl, a combine operator from the Saratov Region, appeared on the platform.

I see the whole thing vividly before me. Petrova is announced as the next speaker. Applause. She rises in the back of the hall and, all flustered, almost runs to the speaker's stand. When she arrives, she can scarcely utter a sound. Breathing heavily, swallowing her words, she blurts out a few sentences about the 544 hectares she's harvested, the 2,250 rubles she's earned, the motorcycle she's received from Comrade Chernov (People's Commissar of Agriculture) and the phonograph she received from the county Soviet. While the audience cheers, she suddenly stops, looks distractedly at the Presidium, and mutters: "I'm nervous. . . I can't speak. . ."

Stalin leans over to her and says: "Speak. Speak. Don't be nervous! You're among your own people."

Petrova gathers her last strength and shouts desperately: "Next year I promise to harvest 700 hectares. I challenge to Socialist competition all the girls in the Soviet Union."

Applause. Laughter. Cheering.

Molotov, all smiles, "It sounds fine. Keep it up!"

But Petrova is all spent. She wipes her forehead, licks her lips, clutches at the edge of the stand.

Stalin: "Speak up. Speak up. It sounds fine. A little more nerve!"

Voroshilov: "You can take cities with nerve."

Stalin: "We are all one family here."

The girl, instead of speaking, rushes up to the Presidium. Stalin and all the others rise to receive her. She clasps the hands of one leader after another, while the audience cheers. Voroshilov, winking at Stalin, embraces the girl's shoulders and squeezes her.

One really felt that one was present at an intimate family reunion.

IT SEEMS I have started something. The tourists in the compartment clamor for more stories, especially my little perfervid Russian - Polish - French - Portuguese - Algerian-Jewish friend. The "authoress" has her nose buried in her notebook, trying to keep up with me. She seizes on my casually uttered phrase "Soviet Humanism" as a possible title for her "forthcoming" book.

They all ask questions about Stalin and they are greatly amused when I tell them how flabbergasted I was when I first saw Stalin get up and applaud when the Stakhanovites were giving him an ovation. What the devil! Does he know what he is doing? It looks ridiculous, absurd. The man is actually applauding himself. It's a good thing the bourgeois correspondents aren't here. He would become the world's laughing-stock.

I first grasped the meaning of all this when Kosirev, head of the Young Commu-

nist League, on being applauded after his quotation from one of Stalin's speeches, turned toward the Presidium and, stretching his arms way out toward Stalin, began to clap. But Stalin, smiling mischievously and shaking his head in amused disapproval, was right on the spot. He rose, leaned over toward Kosirev, and also stretching his arms as far as he could toward the Young Communist, began to clap even more vigorously.

The audience got the point. There was hilarious laughter. Indeed, the whole apparently absurd performance suddenly became so natural and inevitable that it would have been difficult to imagine it otherwise.

The point is that Stalin does not think of himself as detached from the Party, the collective, the working class. By the will of that class, he is at present the exponent of the Communist Party. What he says and does are expressions of the will, the mind, the policy of the organization he represents. Hence, when he or his utterances are applauded, instead of accepting such marks of approval as personal tributes, he turns round and places them at the feet of the movement whose ideas and policies he articulates. By applauding with the others Stalin seems to say: But why honor only me, when you and you and you and all of us are really involved in this?—a fine symbolical gesture defining the place of the individual, however exalted his position in a socialist society.

"Hands Across the Tracks"

PAUL VILLARD

JUST plain Bill is dead and so there's a union in the candy factory back in my home town. If he stayed alive the chances are that there still wouldn't be a union. Anyway he died and there was a big funeral and the boys from the factory waited a few months out of respect to him and then they sent for an organization charter. All this goes back to the time when just plain Bill busted the revolution.

When I was a kid I lived in a small standard-equipped town over in Jersey. It had its churches, chain stores, schools, hotel and railroad station. I used to think it was the biggest and best town in the country but I found out soon enough what a short sneeze it was between New York and Atlantic City. The population in those days was about fifteen thousand. It was split in two by the fat shiny tracks of the Pennsy that cleaved through the center of town separating the rich from the poor. On our side there stood the big candy factory that employed about two hundred people. Everybody lived in small pretty shacks that stood row by row in an even pattern around a little church square. From the windows of the workers' shacks there were hung clothes-

lines that shot out in every direction. They were almost always weighted down with wash, and I suppose that was the main picture the people in the trains caught when they passed through and looked our way. It must have been a pretty picture; the big drawers blowing in the wind, the sheets glistening their whiteness in the sun, and all kinds of colored dresses in between.

The nearest thing to the tracks from our part of town was Moe's lunch wagon which stood boldly but not too erectly about fifty feet away. It was the most necessary place in our part of town. The boys had plenty of wind to let out and they let it out plenty between hamburgers, westerns and coffee. Politics, murders, rapes, county elections and local scandal was the talk. Dates with the girls were made through Moe, and the secrets he held in that little round head of his could have taken him around the world in hush money. In all that big broad talk about nothing that went on in Moe's, the boys never directed any of that wind and energy towards the problems of their own lives and their own jobs. They seemed well satisfied with themselves, their jobs and their security. Everybody in our

part of town seemed happy. The wives washed and cooked and hummed in their rockers on the front porch. The kids ran around dirty-faced and full of fun. Nobody minded those glistening Pennsy tracks that shone in everybody's face telling the whole town who was who.

One of the big reasons for the nice contentment on our part was William Charon Carpenter, president of the First National Bank over on the other side of the tracks, who on Sundays after church took off his wing collar and black tail coat and came over to our side not as William Charon Carpenter but as just plain Bill with a toothpick in his mouth and an old felt hat on his head. He was just plain Bill to the mothers, to the kids and to the boys, telling us all between spits of plug that we were living in the best town in the state. He mingled with every last one of us. He fished with us, ate with us, and gabbed with us . . . on Sundays. He rarely missed getting in his piece about when he lived in that first house there next to the church that wasn't even built yet and how tough it was in his day when there wasn't a store for miles

around. . . . It was hands across the tracks on Sundays, and that one day a week every week in the year for many years was enough to hold inside of us the spirit of American Democracy, the saga of rags to riches. If ever there popped up any rebellious motion it was smothered on Sundays when just plain Bill came over the tracks with a hello and a handshake for everyone, with the whole American Democracy in that one little toothpick in his mouth. He seemed happy with us. He was a homespun sort. If his vanity was tickled on these visits it didn't take away from his wholeheartedness or his sociability. I liked him. He was jovial, portly and plain. I remember seeing him in Moe's place one Sunday running a hamburger contest for the boys. He looked the simplest, heartiest fellow in the crowd. Moe cleaned up that day and Doctor Newton was kept busy for a week. That one hamburger contest did more to hold back a revolution than anything I know, because our whole side of town talked and laughed gratefully about it for years and in that way I'm sure we compromised ourselves spiritually with bank presidents and the whole bourgeois society.

One day a few years after the hamburger contest, there came to our town a young wiry-looking fellow who took a room on our side of the tracks and began mixing with the boys over at Moe's. He listened to all their chatter for a few nights and then he got Moe and a few of the boys to pass the word around that there would be a meeting on a certain night for all the workers of the candy factory. It got around soon enough that he was a union organizer sent over to start a union in the factory. There was a lot of buzzing and before this fellow had a chance to open his mouth our whole side of town was for throwing him out. Well, he held the meeting in the dance hall right outside of town and all the boys went over. He told the boys plenty. He started easy telling about the trade union; its strength as one collective operating force in developing and adjusting better conditions for the worker. When the boys answered him that they had no kick, that there was no unemployment in town, he warmed up and let them have it. Did they know there was such a thing as a minimum scale not fixed by the bosses but by the workers? Did they know that they were plain coolie labor? Sure there was no unemployment. Why should there be when men could be had for sixteen dollars a week dipping chocolate ten hours a day. Did they want that to go on forever? Didn't they want a forty-hour week like the boys in Passaic? Didn't they want a minimum of twenty-two dollars a week like the boys in Passaic? How did the boys in Passaic get it? They *organized*. They felt their power as a solid unit and they made demands for better wages, for less working hours. And the bosses listened. *They had to listen.* . . .



William Sanderson

After that Moe's lunch wagon rocked with rebellion. All hours of the day and night the boys talked minimum wage, closed shop and less working hours. They read mimeographed sheets that harangued the bosses and told the workers how they were exploited. . . . The girls were neglected and Moe had one hell of a time trying to clear the place for other customers. He had to have turnover even if there was going to be a revolution. The place turned from a quiet country lunch wagon into a seething den for Bolsheviki. And only fifty short feet away lay the shiny steel tracks of the Pennsy, mighty line of bourgeois resistance.

The little wiry union organizer was busy as a bee. He felt the impact and response. He was used to it. He went about his work coolly, answering questions, distributing leaflets, arranging the next meeting and generally sustaining the bedlam out of which he figured would surely come a union. But he didn't figure on just plain Bill in our town; just plain Bill the great American opiate. Here's what happened.

On Saturday, five days after the organizer arrived, a notice was posted that there was going to be a meeting on the following Monday night at which time application would be drawn for a charter affiliating the workers with the A.F. of L. Also at that meeting concrete demands would be set up regarding better wages and less working hours at the factory. Well, Saturday night in our part of town was like Moscow in October, 1917. The Bolsheviki were the young militant workers and the opposing factions were the housewives, the mothers and the old-timers. Excited groups were huddled here and there; in the square, in the pool parlor, in the barber shop. Moe's place was the "palace headquarters." It was a magnificent tribute to the little wiry organizer. He must have had a good deal of power in his talk, his personality. He must have known just where, when and how to strike the match.

Sunday came and everybody got up and went to church. The preacher tried to stop the revolution with something from the Old Testament. He didn't have to bother be-

cause just plain Bill was taking off his frock coat and putting on an old pair of pants getting fixed up to come over.

It was about two o'clock when just plain Bill strode across the tracks. He came over the same way he always did, with his hands in his pockets, a toothpick in his mouth and the old felt hat tilted back of his head. He walked past Moe's and on down the road towards the square, all the kids following him and calling to him affectionately. When he got to the square he propped himself up by the post in front of the barber shop and the hellos and handshakes were passed around as usual. He began to talk fish to the boys but they were in no mood for fish talk that day what with the revolution coming on. He must have known what went on all week because right afterwards he chucked the toothpick from his mouth and sunk his teeth into the gist of the whole works. Listen, boys, he said, I understand that you fellows are figuring on organizing down at the factory and I'm here like one of you to tell you that it's a pretty poor idea (spat). . . . I can't figure out how you can let a stranger come into town, sent here by a gang of them Reds from New York and make you think that you're stepped on. *We've* been pretty happy here. The kids got their schools, all you boys got your homes and there isn't a single fellow in town who can't get a job. Lord. Do you know what's going on in the cities? There's a depression, boys, a *depression*. Mr. Larson over at the factory is fighting it. There's tooth-and-nail competition he's got to contend with to keep the output going, to keep the factory going, to keep you boys working. *We've* got to stick with him, bcys, through this depression and when conditions get better sure there'll be more money and less hours. Larson's got *our* interests, the *whole town's* interest in his heart, and *we've* got to feel the same way and not let some agitatin' Red come in to collect dues for some gang in New York and give *us* all kinds of promises and bust up the patriotic spirit of this town (spat). . . . Think it over, boys. *We've* all grown up together and this is *our* town. Let's hold hands and keep it *our* town. . . . And now

while I'm on the subject of holding hands let me tell you boys what I've been wanting to say right along. . . . You all know my daughter Amy. . . . Well, she was engaged last night to Jess Evans who works with you boys over at the factory. . . . Didn't surprise me. He's a fine boy, Jess (spat). . . . I'll be throwing a big party next Saturday night and I want every one of you fellows over to the house. We're goin' to celebrate their engagement and at the same time we'll make it a patriotic party. We'll have Mr. Larson over and Judge Peterson and we'll get the High School band to play for the dancing (spat). . . . And now, boys . . . it's a swell day for fishing and if any of you got a spare tackle I'd be obliged. . . .

That's how just plain Bill busted the revolution in my home town. It was as simple as that; no shots fired, no bloodshed. Of course, it wasn't the speech alone that

did it. It was the hundreds of Sundays behind it. It was the spits between it. I hate to think that he deliberately held us down, kept us exploited, even to the extent of sacrificing his daughter Amy at the strategic moment. I hate to think that he was delegated from his side of town to hold us peaceful for so many years. I hate to think these things because I liked him. But then I liked Moe, too, who himself may have been a part of Mr. Larson's tactics. For years he allowed the boys to bury themselves in small talk and petty intrigues. He seemed to have had much more stuff in his head than to have fostered such a nothingness of spirit and mind. It would have been easy to have pictured him a kind of a Lenin with that little round head of his and his deep, sunken eyes. That little lunch wagon could have been a vital social force, a hotbed of revolutionary activity. It could even have been an arsenal in some sanguineous hour.

It had a key position, being only fifty short feet away from the Pennsy tracks. *Over the tracks* little Moe might have cried, with a gun waving in his hand. And over the tracks might have followed the two hundred workers from the candy factory and all the other workers with their mothers, their wives and their kids. . . . But I'm afraid they might have been stopped dead in those tracks; not by the boom of cannons or the staccato crackling of machine guns, but by just plain Bill who would be facing them with a toothpick in his mouth and that old felt hat tilted back on his head. . . .

Well, just plain Bill is dead and the boys have their union. The glistening tracks of the Pennsy still shine on, but now that just plain Bill isn't around everybody's beginning to blink a little. Moe still has the lunch wagon and Jess Evans, Amy's husband, is second vice-president of the First National Bank.

Elephant into Fox

MARGUERITE YOUNG

CLEVELAND.

IT WAS only Friday, June 5, but already the Hollenden Hotel was jammed from *porte cochère* to second floor. There, amidst the sunflowers and wall posters blazoning the simple, hard face of Alfred Mossman Landon, stood young John Hamilton, quipping brightly with the reporters. Front man of the Landon camp, Hamilton is the biggest news source of the convention. Forty-two and looking even younger with his alert, angular face, red-brown curls and slight stature, he is indeed a new physical type in bossdom. Perched on a chair, he handled the press with an improved Roosevelt technique: not only were they George or Jim or Harry to him, but he was John to them.

At the edge of the crowd, journalists just arriving were putting themselves down as tardy; the convention would be over before they got a story out from the scene.

"And so," I greeted a veteran of one of the American Liberty League's staunchest supporting newspapers, "your man, Landon, is going to town." He smiled pleasantly, saying, "Yeah, when a man has made a touchdown, what does it matter whether he kicks a goal? Of course, it's nice if he does, but even if he doesn't—"

Beside Hamilton stood Joe Martin of Massachusetts, Congressman and small-town newspaper publisher, the Landon floor-manager. That choice was another indication of the expectation of putting the Kansan over without a convention struggle—Martin is a gentle, slow-spoken little fellow who suspended press conferences rather than even try to fill Hamilton's role when the latter was too busy.

In the same Hollenden Hotel, close by the Landon bandwagon quarters, a suite of rooms was set aside for the use of twenty-five of the most active newspapermen in town—the William Randolph Hearst group, not only writers, but also executives.

Over in the Builders' Exchange, slightly removed from Superior Avenue's convention hotels, sat the Republican National Committee, headed by Henry P. Fletcher, a Hoover ambassador in the Big Businessman-statesman tradition, himself a large financier. Quietly, the committee busied itself with such routine procedure as seating lily-white delegations over the protests of Negro Republicans from Dixie. Not the least member of the committee was Ernest T. Weir, the elegant open-shopper of Weirton Steel and the Liberty League.

In these men and circumstances are epitomized the forces in control of the convention and the technique by which they hope to revive the G.O.P. as the No. 1 political instrument of reaction in America. Their central slogan is: Elephant into Fox. Their tactic is remote control. What is worth the notice of labor and liberal as well as radical forces is that they are not without resources for out-demagoging the Democrats. That is the news this week in Cleveland.

For example, take John Hamilton himself. The National Committee relieved him of his duties, freed him to manage the Landon campaign. He was the committee's lawyer, and it is as lawyer and soldier that you hear him mentioned. He is the "upstart" typifying the "new regime" in the conversation of the press and delegates who will tell you, in all earnestness, that the G.O.P. is "dethroning" the Old

Guard. Who would guess, in all this and the undeniable surface differences between him and the ponderous old swashbuckler, Jim Watson of Indiana, that Hamilton himself is the creature of the same Old Guard? It was Dave Mulvane, Kansas' late national committeeman of odorous memory, who made him. Mulvane, whom he served as secretary for years, and the American Legion, whose departmental commander was Hamilton and whose intimate connections with Kansas utilities in Morgan's network is accepted.

Or take the off-stage actor, wealthy advertising-man Bruce Barton. Since he offered his services to the National Committee months ago, he has been looked upon as an old fuddy-duddy, making one blunder after another. One story told around the hotel corridors is that Chairman Fletcher called him and asked for suggestions. He took two weeks to think, then made two proposals. One, that they stage a national beauty contest and bring the forty-eight state winners to Cleveland as a special convention attraction; the other, that they bring the oldest Republican and present him to the delegates. Fletcher asked him whether he knew who the oldest Republican was. He did not. "Probably," Fletcher observed, "it is John D. Rockefeller." Yet the same Barton, or a very canny mentor using him, was a factor in the one strategic move decided upon here, the minimum-wage "amendment" trick. The day after William Allen White, the incurable liberal camp-follower of Landon, called for a plank meeting the Supreme Court veto issue, Barton stepped in. He telegraphed a well-known writer, asking him to relay to a Landon strategist his approval of a *state* minimum-