

I saw him this morning and he borrowed ferry fare to go over to Camden and see if there's anything doin' over at RCA or Campbells. Beerbelly laid him off. Didn't he tell you?"

"No, he didn't tell me," said Paul angrily. "Beerbelly just said he didn't show up."

"Well, that's so," said Jim.

"Yeh," said Paul, "that's so."

He went outside and smoked the cigarette slowly.

When it was down to the last half-inch, he went inside again.

"Hey, Jim," he called, "can I use the phone?"

"The Keystone," said Jim. "It's unlimited." Paul called Beerbelly's number.

"Hello," said Beerbelly.

"Where's my helper?" demanded Paul.

"I couldn't get anybody," said Beerbelly and hung up.

Paul hung up.

Jim came over to him, looking at his watch. "Listen, kid," he said, "if that ninety bales don't make that boat I'll go out on my ear. My boss is just itchin' for me to fall down on him like that."

"Two men can't load ninety bales in an

hour," said Paul. "You want to die young?"

"That's just it, I ain't so young," said Jim.

Paul scratched his head. "I got a good mind to leave the truck here and go up to the union and report Beerbelly. Not only for this. He's got a record longer than Al Capone's."

"Listen, kid," said Jim, "not here, not today."

Somebody was calling into the place: "Need a loader here?"

"Sure," said Jim. "Sure. Come in, boy."

The tall, strong-looking Negro took his hook out of his belt. Jim put the two wooden horses out and the smooth board over them and he and the big man took turns running the bales up on the truck and helping Paul pile them.

"I think we'll make it in one load," he said in a quiet tone.

The tall, strong Negro was steaming sweat, and smiling.

Jim gave Paul the bills of lading and started to pay the helper.

"I'll pay half," said Paul. He started to fumble in his pockets.

"No," said Jim. "It's my funeral. The boss would fire me if he heard of this. I'll pay."

"Don't tell me you is payin' for your boss," said the Negro. "Is your boss broke? Ain't these bales of wool worth nothin'?"

Paul and Jim didn't say anything. Jim handed seventy-five cents to the Negro.

"Somehow I ain't that hungry," said the Negro. He wouldn't take the money.

At that moment the three men couldn't say anything. Jim shook hands with the Negro and Paul took his left hand.

"How about a cigarette?" asked the Negro.

★

THAT FAMOUS "BLACKLIST"

BEHIND those roaring headlines about "Lewis' Blacklist" (New York Times) and those dramatic reports that the CIO leader last week plumped himself into the House and "used Speaker Bankhead's office as a conference room in which to apply pressure to a group of House members" (Washington Post) stand two simple questions:

1. Shall *Uncle Sam* cease passing out dizzying sums to law-breakers now getting them and now cutting wages and now refusing even to discuss it with unions—or shall *Uncle Sam* go on subsidizing wage-cutters with one hand while using the other to hold a floor under wages during this depression?

2. Shall the above issue, or any other important issue, be decided by fourteen out of 435 congressmen—fourteen who do not even tell how each lines up in a secret vote?

What Lewis is after, what the local spokesmen for literally millions of union men have asked for in wires and letters to Congress since last February, is an amendment to the Walsh-Healey act. The amendment would refuse the right to bid on government contracts to employers whom the National Labor Relations Board finds guilty of breaking the collective-bargaining law.

Since February, an undercover struggle, loaded with the excitement and suspense of a mystery thriller, had been going on. On one side, Republican and Democratic reactionaries headed by Senator King of Utah and a couple of congressmen—backed by employers. On the other, CIO General Counsel Lee Pressman and Gardner Jackson of Labor's Non-Partisan League—backed by Lewis, a reluctantly acquiescent Bill Green, and the whole labor movement, as shown by hundreds of wires and letters from locals. The Senate passed the amendment. The House Rules Committee stopped it. Lewis' blood began to boil. He asked, openly, for a conference. It was Speaker Bankhead, not Lewis, who set the time and place. It was Bankhead, not Lewis, who suggested calling in the Rules Committee members. We are informed that President Roosevelt twice had telephoned a House leader asking for action. Nevertheless, the fourteen, next day, by secret vote again blocked the amendment. That's why the two questions given above stand near the top of progressive labor's campaign agenda.



"Poor Fenningsworth—snatched from us in his prime
by the cruel hand of the SEC."

Readers' Forum

More on the Shaw Controversy

Robert Forsythe was to have reviewed George Bernard Shaw's *On the Rocks* in this issue, but was unable to do so. His review will appear next week. Meanwhile we present below two letters addressed to Mr. Forsythe, bearing on his comment on Shaw in our issue of June 7. Both the writers are familiar with the text of *On the Rocks*, and one has witnessed the premiere.—THE EDITORS.

DEAR MR. FORSYTHE: In your June 7 column, you asked the question, "Is Shaw a fascist?" and you gave us an idea that he had too much brains to be one. Well, have you read *On the Rocks*, published in this country about four years ago, and now to be produced next week by the Federal Theatre Project, after having been kicked around for various reasons by one of the Shuberts and the Theatre Guild?

I reviewed that play in my "Books on Review" column appearing in the Durham (N. C.) *Herald-Sun* papers back in those days, and declared that Shaw was either so muddled he didn't know where his next idea was coming from or he was an out-and-out fascist. But even in those days I didn't throw the label of fascist out at the first provocation. I ran into the play again a few months ago when the Federal Theatre's department of information assigned me the task of publicizing the show. I worked on it for a month or so, preparing my production book, reading the play, studying the preface, etc. That was a few months ago. I was fired later for participating in a demonstration supervisors were not supposed to participate in, and being a supervisor—all was over. And I forgot all about *On the Rocks*. Now the Federal Theatre is definitely producing it, after changing its mind about it a half-dozen times, and you have written a piece about Mr. Shaw.

Read that play, Mr. Forsythe, and you'll change the tone of your magic profile. There's a striking character in *On the Rocks* by the name of Old Hipney, a veteran labor-leader, a thinly disguised Shaw. Both Hipney and Shaw have lost faith in the effectiveness of the democratic form of government. It simply doesn't get anything done. In the end, Hipney comes out and says that something has to be done for the depression, and if it will take a Mussolini or Hitler to do it, he's all for it. He explains it a little more vividly than that—what the country needs is for some Hitler or Mussolini to take both labor and capital, workers and employers, by "the scruffs of their necks" and get some cooperation out of them! I'm sorry I can't give you the exact quote at this time, but check it yourself. That's downright fascism if anything is, especially when he tags it Hitler and Mussolini. In the ending we have a pseudo-optimist line, "If England will arise . . ." hope when you review *On the Rocks*, you'll come right out and answer your own question.

ANTHONY BUTTITA.

New York City.

DEAR MR. FORSYTHE: Having just witnessed the American premiere of George Bernard Shaw's *On the Rocks*, I am compelled to write you this letter for two purposes: first, to protest against the English brand of National Socialism (Nazism pure and simple) dished out by Shaw; and second, to tell you that your denial of the fascist leanings of Mr. Shaw as contained in your recent article in *NEW MASSES*, is utterly refuted in this play.

In *Heartbreak House*, Shaw warned of the day when England's ship of state would crash "on the rocks." In this WPA production, we are shown the

eventuation of the catastrophe; and Shaw's description of the crisis and its solution runs so parallel to Hitler's Nazi ideologies that one ceases to wonder why, at one time, Shaw praised Hitler. That was not a slip of the tongue. It was the slip of Mr. Shaw himself which landed him on the rocks of fascism.

What are the elements of the "Socialist" program which Shaw offers through his theatrical mouthpiece, Prime Minister Chavender? (1) Condemnation of democracy; and specifically, a plan to abolish Parliament. (2) Substitution of the dictatorship of "a strong man," backed by the armed force of the police. (3) A program of "nationalization" of land, banks, industry (everything except women) irrespective of classes, by a government which would represent all classes.

It matters not that Shaw differentiates his "strong man" as one possessing a "conscience." Shaw's attack upon democracy is unmistakable. He ridicules the people, says they know nothing about governing and are so blind they will even run to "Jew-baiting."

Shaw's totalitarian concepts of relationships "above classes" are revealed not only in his ministerial program designed to fit all classes, of a benevolent dictator who will serve labor, capital, and the middle-classes; but in the marriage of the viscount to the Prime Minister's daughter and the marriage of the Marxist girl, Aloysia, to the Prime Minister's son. Thus, by a theatrical gesture, Mr. Shaw abolishes class interests. Thus, by waving the wand of dramaturgy, Communism succumbs to nature (sex), and liberalism weds nobility.

In the finale, we are treated to a piece of "revolutionary" hokum as the unemployed, marching, smashing windows, sing: "England arise!" Again, instead of a clearcut proletarian slogan of "workers arise," we get the Shavian brand of national socialism.

It is utterly beyond the point that Prime Minister Chavender attempts to take a progressive position against the candidly fascist Foreign Secretary. So did Hitler and Mussolini in their arch demagoguery fool the people with progressive slogans of "Socialism" and "revolution." It does not matter that the Prime Minister declaims against the "shirts" of all colors. (Shaw does a little Red-baiting of his own by including "red shirts.") The fact remains, as Dimitrov pointed out, that fascism attempts to sneak in as anti-fascism when it cannot batter its way in.

Shaw's understanding of Socialism, democracy, dictatorship, and imperialism is utterly puerile at times in this play. What sort of solution does he present for imperialism? The Cingalese bourgeois, because he is called "nigger," denounces with feverish nationalism everything "white" and leaves, threatening to revolt from English imperialism and transform England into a colony of an imperialistic Indian empire. Here Shaw shows himself to be completely blind to the identity of interest and the growing unity of the English and Indian masses against their common oppressors, the bourgeoisie.

Shaw presents the picture of the British working class, hopelessly divided against itself, incapable of unified action, incapable of producing a collective political leadership. Old Hipney stigmatizes the "labor leader" as the most degenerate element of decadent politics, failing to distinguish between progressive and reactionary labor-leaders. So, too, did Mussolini and Hitler stigmatize the "labor leader" without differentiation. It is positively amazing on how many points (in *On the Rocks*) Shaw echoes Hitler-Mussolini viewpoints.

In the finale, there is a gag-line when the Prime Minister's secretary, witnessing the brutal dispersion

of the unemployed, cries, "Oh God, I must join them," and she runs out and joins them. The audience laughs. This is neither bad acting nor poor direction; it flows logically from the consistent vein of contempt for the proletariat which runs through the play. Even the most magnificent ideas of the working class are put into the schoolgirl mouth of Aloysia so that they convey naive politics rather than the profound ideas born of a hundred years of class struggle throughout the world.

It is a sad spectacle to behold this great master of the social drama floundering on the rocks and grabbing hold of fascist straws to save himself.

EUGENE KONECKY.

New York City.

Cedillo's Allies

TO NEW MASSES: The following excerpts from a letter from a friend may interest you. He warns us not to magnify the legend that Cedillo is of any importance, or that his revolt represents any real danger to the government. He adds:

"The revolt was over before it really got started, chiefly because Cárdenas acted with admirable decision to nip the business in the bud. It is fairly clear that Cedillo would not of his own volition have picked this precise moment for his coup; Cárdenas forced him out into the open where the whole country could plainly see how ridiculously unimpressive he was and where his movement could be promptly disbanded and destroyed. There has been practically no bloodshed, nor was it necessary. And the fascists have been given an excellent lesson in how a democracy, determined to defend itself, can be capable of dealing with its enemies and their conspiracies.

"Cedillo himself is an ignorant militarist who made his reputation and gained his rank during the revolution by blowing up trains. He started as an agrarian leader in San Luis Potosi and was allowed possession of the state in return for his support of the Obregon revolt against Carranza in 1920. Since that time, he has had eighteen years in which to grow fat and rich and to maintain his curious title of "agrarista" by accumulating *haciendas* of his own and keeping his immediate followers contented with small land distributions while the majority of the peasants of the state were left as landless as before the revolution. As he was one of the last of the old-style revolutionary 'warlords,' even he was bright enough to see that the new lease on life of the popular revolution during the past three years would sooner or later overtake him in San Luis Potosi and bring his feudal domination of the state to an end. The only way to maintain his own position was to control the federal government before he was crushed by the onward march of Mexican progress. For that purpose he allied himself, first, with the feudal land barons of the state and the Catholic Church and, later, with the fascist emissaries of Germany and Italy and the foreign imperialists, chiefly the oil companies. But he never had a real chance to win out and even his employers considered him a pretty comic figure. His only importance was as a symbol of a Mexico that is rapidly passing and of which he was one of the last representatives. The revolt itself, although Cedillo has not yet been captured, was over more than a week ago. [The letter is dated June 11.]

"This should not be taken to mean that all danger of reactionary revolt has been removed with the easy defeat of Cedillo. The main fire of anything done in defense of Mexico in the States should be concentrated on the oil companies, as it is their boycott of Mexican oil and their attempt to suffocate the country's economic life that are chiefly responsible for creating the conditions in which the weed of revolt can flourish. And give the newspaper correspondents hell, particularly the gentleman who represents the lofty *New York Times*. If they are not actually in the pay of the oil companies, then they are the most enthusiastic crowd of volunteers I have ever seen."

JOSEPH FREEMAN.

Accord, N. Y.