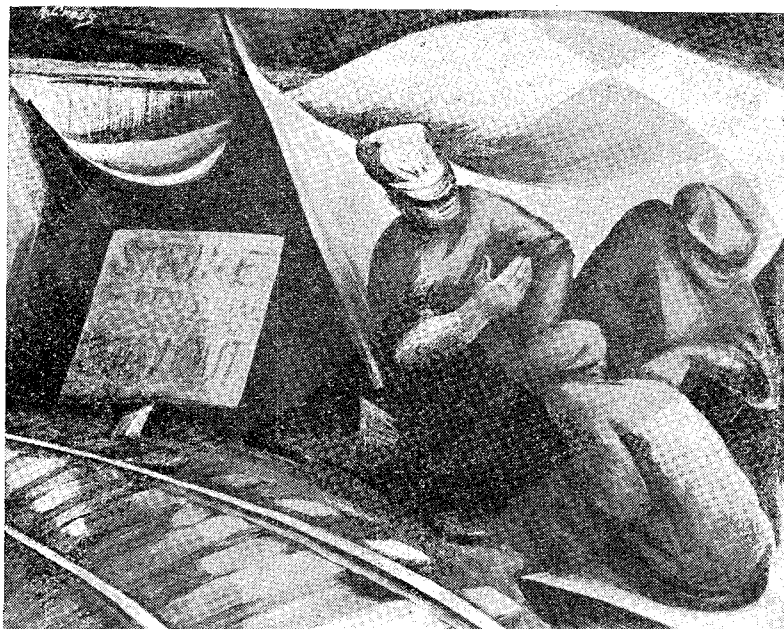




"Bowery Hotel" (oil) Carl B. Nyquist (Washington, D. C.)



"C.I.O. at Inland" (tempera) Adelyne Cross (Chicago)

Living Art in a Museum

ART MUSEUMS, for the average man and the aspiring artist, are cool, dim places where one may go in proper reverence upon a Sunday afternoon to scan the visible relics of great men. The bronze doors of museums have remained closed while the artist is alive. You die and the tomb gets you and the museum gets your work. You can't eat these rewards and you can't buy baby shoes.

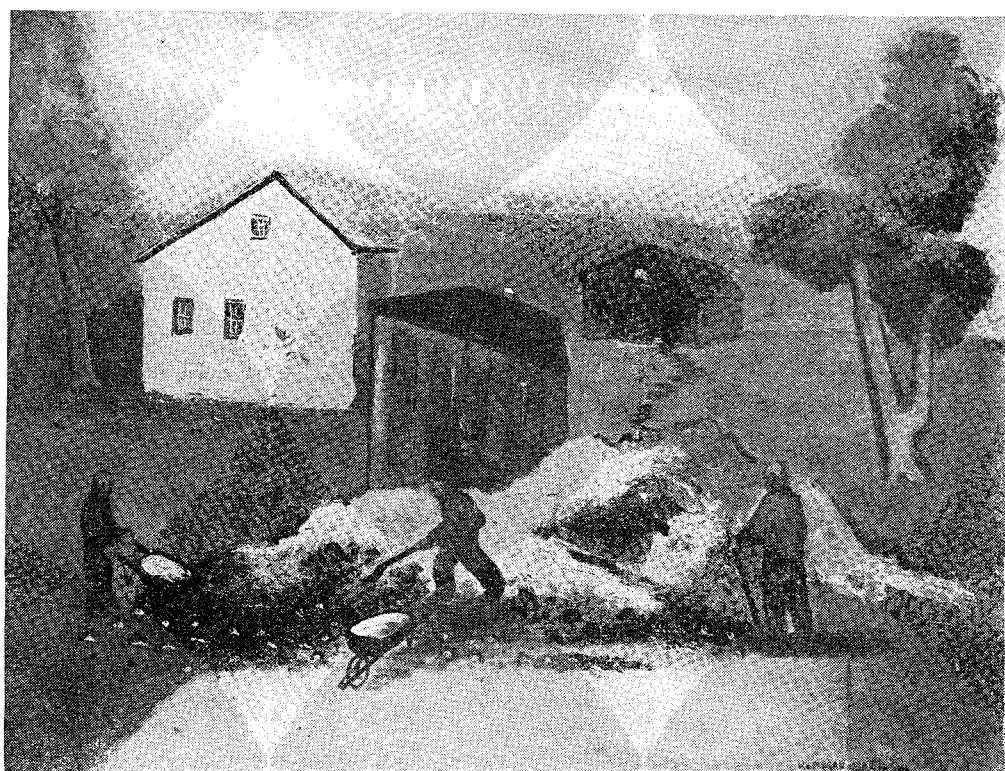
An up-and-at-em museum in Springfield, Mass.—the Springfield Museum of Fine Arts—has recognized this fact. With an announcement that reads like a manifesto, the museum is holding an exhibition of the work of members of the various Artists Unions of America—those of the District of Columbia, Baltimore, New York City, Ulster County, N. Y., New Jersey, Sante Fe, Cleveland, Chicago, Philadelphia, and Boston. They are young men, average age twenty-seven, painting and carving away with the material of contemporary life—the artists whose residue will duly adorn the museums of tomorrow. That this museum recognizes that they are working now, that they are reflecting life in our tortured time, and that their unions have contributed to the value and direction of their work, is a most laudable event in the art world.



"Man Reading" (oil) Adelaide Fogg (Boston)



"Figure" (plaster) Louis Wilkes (New York)



"On the Road" (oil) Herman Maril (Baltimore)

A New Deal on the Campus

Departmental Democracy in New York's Colleges

HOWARD SELSAM

LAST week the teachers in New York City's great system of public higher education had the privilege and the pleasure of balloting for their department chairmen and for other officers to represent them for the next three years. At City College, Hunter College, and Brooklyn College, all teachers on the permanent staffs went figuratively to the polls to select their more immediate superiors, their delegates to the higher governing bodies, and their committees on appointments and budget. Thus was inaugurated the most widespread and sweeping reform in the history of American colleges and universities, in accordance with new by-laws enacted by the New York City Board of Higher Education in June and effective since October 1. And thus was brought one step nearer the realization of President Roosevelt's plea, addressed to the American Student Union last December, to make "our schools and colleges a genuine fortress of democracy."

The democratization program provides for the admission into the faculty of all instructors who have given three or more years of service, the election of all department chairmen by the faculty members of their respective departments, the establishment of a faculty council consisting of three elected delegates from each department, including the department chairman, and the setting up of departmental committees on appointments and budget, consisting of an equal number of elected representatives of each rank included in the faculty. Together with a tenure program enacted by the board at the same time, which is integrally related to the reorganization, this represents a tremendous forward step in American higher education. The significance of this progressive victory is better appreciated if one realizes that the regular full-time teaching staffs of these three colleges embrace some 1,200 men and women and that they have a combined student body of approximately twenty thousand.

The typical department in the city colleges, prior to the present changes, was, like most departments, perhaps, throughout the country, ruled by one man, its chairman. He alone had the authority of making recommendations for appointments, for promotions, and dismissals. He determined, within the limits set down by the board, the salaries of his staff. He promoted whom he would, appointed needed committees which were responsible to him alone. His job was, short of presidential displeasure, held for life or until his retirement. He could determine the textbooks used and the contents of courses.

To incur his displeasure might well be to commit academic suicide. The new program not only makes the chairman an elected officer but changes radically his position in the department. The elected committee on appointments, composed of one representative from each faculty rank plus the department chairman, will now vote on appointments, promotions, dismissals, and salary increases. It will prepare the budget, both for personnel and equipment. Educational policies, texts, curricula, and the organization of courses will now be determined by the department as a whole, excepting the probationers. Since the probationary period cannot be more than three years, these provisions exclude a relatively few. But even they are allowed a consultative voice in department policies. Some departments, it is true, have functioned democratically in the past, but if they did so, it was in virtue of the will of the chairman. It was understood that his recommendations to higher authorities were to be his own. This gives in brief a picture of the changes wrought by the new plan on a departmental level. The new faculty organization embodies these changes, in large part, on the level of the whole college.

Foreign observers have frequently commented on the contrast in America between our political democracy and the autocratic organization of our colleges and universities. This contrast is not difficult to understand when viewed in the light of three important historical considerations. First is the fact that our earliest institutions were established by church bodies for the training of a professional clergy and the inculcation of religious orthodoxy. Of the nine institutions established before the American Revolution, only one, that of Philadelphia, which is now the University of Pennsylvania, was not a church institution. Further, of the twenty-seven colleges in the country by 1800 (a few of these existed only on paper) at least sixteen had clergymen as presidents. Obviously, in virtue of both their origin and their purpose these institutions can scarcely be expected to be dominated by the democratic ideal. Secondly, the period of great university expansion in the decades following the Civil War was marked by the encroachment of the men of great new fortunes. When Rockefeller, Huntington, Armour, and others gave fabulous endowments or bequests to institutions of higher learning they and their heirs or the corporations they represented also secured a fair measure of control over univer-

sity policies and organization. Hence it is not surprising that many of our greatest institutions reflect in their internal setup the organization of the great corporations which financed them. Thirdly, municipal and state institutions were ripe plums for the corrupt political machines which have so characterized American public life and they became only too often centers of patronage and plunder.

The Tammany machine in New York City found our colleges an easily manageable adjunct of Tammany Hall. As the mayor appointed the trustees (the Board of Higher Education), and they the presidents and department chairmen, who in turn appointed all members of the teaching and clerical staffs, there was a relatively rich field for rewarding political friends. And since further, these institutions expanded rapidly with the growth of the city, there was also, as in the case of the public schools, opportunity for graft in the purchase of sites, the erection of buildings, and the purchase of supplies. While the picture of the internal organization must not be painted too darkly—for these institutions did perform a significant public service, perform it moderately well, and attain a reasonable reputation for scholarship and educational achievement—there was always the threat of a presidential political appointee being forced into a department over a chairman's head, of budgetary pressure against a resisting chairman, and in many cases a disastrous demoralization of members of the staff. "Yes-men" were produced in the ranks, and higher up a set of "teeny-weeny Mussolinis," to use the happy phrase of John T. Flynn of the Board of Higher Education. The faculties, consisting only of those of professorial ranks, were domineered over by the presidents, while the instructors and tutors, who came especially during the depression to comprise a majority of the teaching staffs, and who frequently possessed the qualifications for the higher ranks, had no voice in the determination of college policies. All of these conditions were especially flagrant in the City College, ruled over in a semi-feudal manner by Dr. Frederick B. Robinson, its president.

During the past few years two major developments, moving in a progressive direction, came increasingly into conflict with the old order. One of these was the LaGuardia triumph over Tammany in New York politics. The other was the growth of the unionization of college teachers in the city, first as part of the Teachers Union, Local 5 of the American Federation of Teachers, and since January of this year as a separate local, number 537, known as the New York College Teachers Union. With more and more LaGuardia appointments to the board, and especially with the LaGuardia-American Labor Party triumph at the polls last November, the Board of Higher Education took on an increasingly progressive complexion. Agitation for increased democracy had been growing among the staffs, especially among the