

NEW MASSES

ESTABLISHED 1911

Editors

A. B. MAGIL, RUTH MCKENNEY, JOSEPH NORTH,
SAMUEL SILLEN.

Associate Editors

JAMES DUGAN, BARBARA GILES.

Business Manager

CARL BRISTEL.

West Coast Representative

GEORGE WILLNER.

★

What's That, Mr. Jackson?

How many liberal lances will be broken this week upholding Attorney General Jackson's defense of J. Edgar Hoover remains to be seen. The *Nation* and *New Republic* are at this writing also penning pieces about their champion, who, they assured us, would put an end to all this nonsense of Mr. Hoover's. Plain people the country over feel considerable alarm at Mr. Jackson's baldfaced defense of the FBI warm-up in Detroit. Mr. Hoover's raiders, trusty ax in hand, did their duty under orders, the attorney general says in reply to Senator Norris' letter of inquiry. Mr. Norris felt he could not help "but reach the conclusion that there is some well grounded fear that the activities of this bureau are overstepping and overreaching the legitimate objects for which it was created."

Not Mr. Jackson; he has no such fears! "I have reviewed the facts," he retorted, "... and I find nothing to justify any charge of misconduct against the Federal Bureau of Investigation." That declaration raises some interesting points. Does Mr. Jackson believe it was entirely proper to raid homes at 5:00 a.m.? To shackle defendants? Citizens who have not even been tried in court, at that? Does he believe that show of force is entirely within the province of his department? Or of any governmental agency?

It is hard for us to believe that Mr. Jackson really thinks the way he talks. After all, Mr. Hoover has written his record; we are not the only ones aghast at his abuse of power. The "Stork Club detective" has many outstanding Americans cocking a wary eye his way. In addition to Congressmen Marcantonio, Coffee, and Senator Norris, numerous public spirited bodies, labor groupings, have talked up.

Mr. Jackson and Mr. Murphy—who ordered the Detroit raids—have evident differences, chiefly in tactics. One stumbled because of haste: the other says let's move with surer tread, a bit slower, more shrewdly, and we will not arouse the public against us. Both are behind Mr. Roosevelt who—as Ludwell Denny pointed out in the Scripps-Howard service last week—himself gave the signal for the "Red drive." As *NEW MASSES* editors, we know that has not let up. The grand jury in Washington is still sitting, laboriously working up indictments against those who don't see eye to eye with FDR's plans for a nice, profitable Wall Street war.

La Guardia and the Bankers

MONDAY, March 4, opened in Manhattan with a dreary rain but the sun shone through the windows of the Bankers Club. There was a headline in the *Herald Tribune*: "Mayor Bans Strikes after Transit Unity."

"No employee's status will depend upon his affiliation with any labor organization," said Mayor LaGuardia, discussing the transport workers' position under the city's new "transit unification" plan. And: "The right, therefore, to strike against the government is not and cannot be recognized."

Trade unionists are accustomed to such pronouncements from bankrupt financial fakers, Louis XIV Republicans, and fellow riders of the (royal) purple sage, John Nance Garner. But this labor-baiting declaration coming from Fiorello LaGuardia, American Labor Party candidate, the liberal who was regarded as a possible running mate of the great FDR, is one more indication of the sellout of the New Deal by its former supporters. LaGuardia's open shop, yellow dog statement has aroused indignation among the million-odd trade unionists in New York City, their families and friends. The bankers' papers have front-paged their new friend's blow at labor, applauded the trick of "transit unification" which they hope will turn a track walker's or conductor's strike for better wages into a "revolt against the government." It's a shabby dodge that fools no workingman.

So Blue the Rose

THE fate of the American Labor Party is dear to all progressives, not only in New York, but nationally. Dear, not so much because of its performance, but because of its promise. Its leadership under Alex Rose has inspired little confidence; it has been weak, vacillating, lacking political foresight or initiative—in short, downright ruinous.

For that reason most genuine progressives rejoiced at the victory of the anti-Rose membership in the recent New York County meeting. That was a victory of the rank and file. Mr. Rose and his pro-war cohorts took a resounding trimming when Eugene Connolly was elected chairman. The actual vote was more than two to one against the Rose program. But typical of the anti-democratic attitude of the previous New York County leadership, the Rose supporters challenged the authority of Herman Hoffman, election supervisor, who had declared Connolly elected. Mr. Hoffman replied that his function for the session had been decided by Supreme Court Justice Wasservogel in a decision several days previously.

The full background and present status of the ALP and its great implications for all American labor merit detailed treatment and *NEW MASSES* will publish an appropriate article shortly. But this much is obvious to all who have even cursorily scanned the situation within the ALP: the Rose-Dubinsky-Greenberg setup, though making a furious

fanfare about the Red issue, has diligently kept bona-fide CIO representation from positions of leadership. They want a Labor Party without labor. Consider their knifing of the Quill campaign, for one instance. Furthermore, to press their pro-war, pro-Roosevelt stand, they are more than willing to split the party. They are ready to destroy it entirely, rather than to permit the rank-and-file the kind of party they want. The entire commercial press acclaimed Mr. Rose's statement after the election that he is summoning thirty of his "one-man club" leaders to fight the decision of the majority. As Mr. Connolly put it, "When a minority loses in convention the American way is for that group to abide by the decision of the majority." Not, however, Mr. Rose. And he is the tribune who sounds off regularly about totalitarianism. Labor and progressives know what the "rule or ruin" slogan means and they see that legend inscribed on the banners of the Rose grouping.

Dollars and Rubles

GREAT BRITAIN this week notified forty American oil companies that "navicert" authorizations for the shipment of lubricating oils would not be granted for Belgium, Holland, and Denmark. Presumably American goods are being trans-shipped by neutrals to Germany; or perhaps the Allies are alarmed at the terrific bid which American capitalists are making for trade hegemony among the neutrals. Sir Ashton Gwatkin, adviser to the British Ministry of Economic Warfare, and Prof. Charles Rist, ace French economist, have arrived for discussions on trade irritations. One report says that the Allies wish to prevent the flow of gasoline, copper, and metals to the Soviet Union; they're trying to persuade Americans to intensify the moral embargo against the USSR and are themselves thinking of interfering with Soviet transports on the Pacific. On the other hand, the Soviet Union is buying heavily in the American market and paying with the yellow metal. Undoubtedly, British displeasure with American trade was one of the items in that three-hour luncheon between Ambassador Laurence Steinhardt and premier of the USSR, Molotov. American policy coincides fully with the Allied anti-Soviet orientation; but it remains to be seen whether pressure from London and Paris can persuade American business men to deny themselves lucrative trade.

Congress and Finmarks

TO USE a military metaphor, Mr. Welles is being supported by an excellent artillery. As he infiltrates into Europe, silk top hat and all, he's being covered from behind by a wonderful barrage of bullets: gold bullets. Congress has given the Export-Import Bank increased loan authorization. The President hurried back from a survey of the Panama Canal (he asks for doubling the defenses there) to sign the order for Mannerheim's millions. Perhaps even more important

are the sums for Sweden and Norway and the projected loan to Denmark. Trader Hull is doing big business: buying up the neutrals, financing big trade with them, all of which improves Mr. Welles' hand in the big poker game with the Allies. Whether China gets any of this money remains to be seen; and if she does it'll be a quarter of what she asked for.

Fireworks in India

CIVIL disobedience is scheduled to begin in India on March 17. Interestingly enough, that's also St. Patrick's Day when the Irish everywhere will wash some empire linen in public. The All-India National Congress, under whose orders native ministries resigned in the Indian provinces last November, has just elected a Moslem, Abul Kalan Azad, its president. This is a direct reply to the charge that Indian insistence upon a constituent assembly and complete freedom would work against the interests of the Moslem minority. Disobedience is, of course, only a negative weapon in the fight against British imperialism. But it has deep roots in the popular tradition. It may, in view of the growing acerbity of relations with London, provide the occasion for revolutionary developments; but not if Gandhi can help it. From the very beginning of the dispute over Britain's high-handed action in declaring India at war against its consent, Gandhi has insisted upon the go-slow policy. Clearly, he is employing the threat of civil disobedience to bring the British around to concessions; he fears, as much as they, any forthright assertions by the Indian people. Left elements in the Congress are increasingly disturbed by his tactics. In a recent trip through Bengal, Gandhi is reported to have been heckled. On one occasion, he was greeted by a black-flagged procession, a sign of popular criticism and impatience.

Farm Disaster

AN increasingly acute farm crisis hovers over the nation. The European war has slashed agricultural exports; the British are buying in their own sterling area to conserve foreign exchange for munitions. American exports jumped 75 percent in January 1940 over those of a year ago; but only cotton shares this rise, all other farm products have fallen. While prices fluctuate slightly, the cost of industrial commodities has increased and the Department of Agriculture admits that domestic demand for farm produce is unfavorable in 1940. Farm cash income fell to \$8,500,000,000 in 1939; two years earlier, it was \$9,700,000,000. Foreclosure sales were the highest in five years during the first six months of 1939. While farm mortgage debt has decreased in the past decade, 20 percent of all farm values represent mortgages—the reduction can be accounted for by forced sales rather than debt liquidation.

Obviously, therefore, the farmers are restive. The Washington Commonwealth Fed-

eration recently scored the administration; the National Farmers Union is pushing a six-point program for direct farm aid. A new hegira of dispossessed "Okies and Arkies" is moving westward to monopoly-bound California where the United Cannery, Agricultural, Packing and Allied Workers, CIO, has just opened a college to train migrants in union organization. The Farmer-Labor Party of Minnesota has coined the cry: "End Stassenism!" in battle with the Republican administration. Increasingly, the farmers understand their relation to the city workers. Their plight can be relieved by political alliance with the labor movement; by compelling the monopolies, munitions trusts, etc. to "shell out" of their war-inspired profits.

For Civil Liberties

NOT easily will Americans give up their civil liberties. Four million members of 250 trade union, civic, fraternal, and church organizations were represented in Washington last week to fight the anti-alien legislation now before Congress. This was the fourth annual conference of the American Committee for the Protection of the Foreign Born. It adopted a declaration of principles which warns that an intolerant attitude toward aliens is the precursor of a general attack upon the rights of citizens. Growing discrimination against German-Americans was attacked as part of the drive toward American participation in war on the side of the Allies. An appeal to all organizations to fight the pending Dempsey, Hobbs, Smith, Hicks, and other bills was issued.

On the Pacific Coast, Theodore Dreiser, Carey McWilliams, and many state legislators, educators, authors, and public men signed a declaration against the administration's persecution of Earl Browder, William Wiener, Sam Adams Darcy, and William Schneiderman.

In New York, Dr. Harry F. Ward, for twenty years chairman of the American Civil Liberties Union, resigned from that organization in protest against the expulsion of Communist members from its executive board. Dr. Ward characterized this action as a surrender of "positions vital to the defense of civil liberties, positions whose constant defense under attack is the honorable record of the Union. I cannot go with them in this surrender."

Unholy Land

ONE week after newspapers cheered the arrival of a Jewish corps in France to fight for all the good things, the British government decreed the restriction of land purchases in three zones of Palestine. The pressure of landless Arabs provides the excuse; the fear that Jewish immigration will offset the Arab majority is the presumable reason. Reading between the lines, it's clear that things go poorly in the desert countries. Perhaps the Arabs are unwilling to fight for the glories of a greater Turkish empire; per-

haps they resent virtual conscription in British colonial armies. Once again, Albion is revealed as something more than perfidious. But a further moral must be drawn: not only has London betrayed the Jews (presumably allies in the war against Germany) but the full bankruptcy of the Zionist leadership is disclosed. In May 1939 the White Paper finally nullified the Balfour Declaration; plans were made for the dismemberment of the Holy Land. Four months later, the war broke, and the Zionist leadership, without blinking an eye-lash, jumped into Chamberlain's pocket. We wonder what Father Coughlin will have to say: all the shrewd bargaining in this deal came from the British. Once the Jews in Palestine and elsewhere were safe for the Union Jack, they were betrayed. The imperialist boot is kicking those who cringed to lick it.

Profits vs. Jobs

TWO contrasting items tell the story of what's wrong with our social order. A survey of 476 representative American corporations reveals that in 1939 their profits rose by 77 percent over the year before, on the basis of a 22 percent increase in production. That is, these corporations made *almost \$4 in profit on \$1 of business improvement*. Among the leaders were the steel companies, jumping profits by more than \$140,000,000; auto parts rose by 525 percent; railway equipment by 336 percent; chemicals, rubber, machine tool industries were in the van. Compare such information with the Department of Labor admission that 1,160,000 American workers were laid off in January 1940, among them 600,000 retail employees, over 15 percent of the total retail employees in the country! Consider the suffering these folk will endure when the Roosevelt budget slashes WPA relief further. Remember the fact that 87.5 percent of those fired from WPA last summer did not get jobs by November: here is the crisis of American life, the condemnation of war economy.

Turkish Question Mark

IF THE American press had been believed ten days ago, fighting at the Caucasian frontier had already begun. If the premier of Turkey is to be believed, that is out of the question. In a special broadcast last week, Dr. Refik Saydam, Turkish premier, declared: "Nothing indicates to us that the Soviet Union wants to undertake action against us . . . it is difficult, at the present time, to give assurances, but I may say frankly that we do not intend to undertake any action against the Soviet Union."

This may mean what it says, or exactly the opposite. After all, the Kamutay, the Turkish parliament, has decreed mobilization, exchange control, has conserved currency and is building railroads to the Soviet and Iranian borders. \$340,000,000 was the price that Britain paid in loans and credits for the recent military pact. The Turkish foreign minister told

the Balkan conference early in February that Turkey was a belligerent whose soldiers were not yet fighting. On the other hand, can it be that the young Turks are losing faith in the mirage of a trans-Caspian empire? Have they suddenly remembered that British troops once grabbed Mosul from the Turkish rear?

More Nails in French Coffins

FORTY-FOUR Communist deputies will, like Dimitrov at Leipzig, soon face a court which may sentence them to mass execution for their opinions. Honored Sen. Marcel Cachin has just been expelled from his elected post.

Forced labor for women has been decreed. Bakers must now mix bean flour with wheat flour—away goes the long, slim, light loaf of French bread.

In the French boulevard cafes the consumption of aperitifs is restricted—money must not be spent on liquor, or on food—but on battleships, planes, guns. Havoc has been wrought in the budget by war expenditures: national income for 1939 was 64,000,000,000 francs, war costs have exceeded 188,000,000,000 francs in six months. How avoid depreciation in the rich man's gold? By tightening your belt, *mon ami* . . . by working harder, *mon cher* . . . by dying, *mon soldat*, for the France which once cherished liberty but now is organized only to defend the super-profits of Schneider-Creusot, Regnault, and the Comite des Forges.

More Twaddle, FDR?

FRANK RINALDI, 16, jumped from the window of a YMCA building in New York. He said he was to become the father of a child and saw no possibility of supporting a family. "I tried to get a job, but I was unable to do so," he wrote. "Life has become unbearable."

Life became unbearable to Edward W. Talbert, unemployed Negro youth of New York, who had studied electrical engineering. After two years' search for work, he rigged up an ingenious contrivance and electrocuted himself. In Kansas City, eleven-year-old Harry Larsen grew tired of a life in which mush was all his mother could afford for food. He refused a last meal and hanged himself. A rejection slip, last of a long series, drove Baxter Pickering, radio writer, to end his life. Death in prison faces two sixteen-year-old Massachusetts lads who were sentenced to life imprisonment for a 45-cent robbery.

These tragedies occurred during the past few days when jobless rolls were rapidly increasing, while the business index continued to tumble and life seemed less desirable than death to many.

Msgr. Fulton J. Sheen has offered a solution: "This country would have been better off in the depression," he said on March 3, "if our youth had been put in the army and navy. . . ." Mr. Roosevelt has not yet been quite so frank.

Readers' Forum

Ancient History

TO NEW MASSES: I have just received a notice from the *Atlantic Monthly*, offering me a special rate for a seven-month subscription, apparently because a story appears in the current issue written by a former student of mine in a short story course. I am glad her work is being published. But before subscribing, I thought I'd buy a copy of the current issue, and look it over—besides reading the story.

I happened upon a "Diary of Captivity" by a Polish nurse. I read here and there, assuming that the nurse was functioning in the present disturbances (or rather, the disturbances of a few months ago). I found that, despite her hatred of the Bolsheviks, she tried to dissuade one of the "brutes" from drinking off a beaker of ether, which would have killed him. So eager was he for intoxication! He seemed moved by her solicitude, and offered to shake hands, but she refused, and he, diluting the poison, drank, and lay for twenty-four hours on the floor, dead drunk, but got up quite well. A very sturdy race, the Bolsheviks. I felt impressed, but also a little confused, for the behavior of this Bolshevik didn't fit in with my personal impressions of Red Army soldiers. I looked up the contributors, and found that the events recorded in the "Diary" took place twenty-two years ago, but this "in no way detracts from its enduring emotion." "The translation, which was made in Poland," remarks the Contributors Column, "is somewhat reminiscent of Conrad's English." What a lot of other things it is reminiscent of. . . .!

The effect is to dissuade me from becoming one of "the *Atlantic's* family" (I don't mind being an occasional guest), and to hasten my contribution (swollen by the special subscription offer amount) to the NEW MASSES Sustaining Fund. Good luck.

DOROTHY BREWSTER.

New York City.

Frank Murphy

TO NEW MASSES: During the agonizing days between the last postponement and the execution of Sacco and Vanzetti in 1927, I visited Frank Murphy in his Recorder's courtroom. As a representative of the International Labor Defense and the Detroit Federation of Labor Sacco and Vanzetti Defense Committee, I asked him to speak or issue a statement on the case. He admitted the gravity of the situation, but said he had spoken on the issue some months before and that sufficed for the record. He was distinguishing with a fine judicious sense between the effort to save the victims of a frameup, and the record of Frank Murphy, political climber. Mr. Murphy turned quickly to other matters; he told me he was currently studying the lives of four outstanding American political figures—none of them Jefferson, Lincoln, Paine, or Jackson. He inquired if I knew Maurice Sugar and remarked (rather wistfully, I thought) that Maurice was the one person he knew who acted always on principle and never on expediency. Maurice had gone to jail in World War I. Murphy had become a captain.

Some four years later I represented the Unemployed Councils of Detroit as secretary and accompanied a delegation from Fisher Lodge Single

Men's Shelter to Mayor Murphy to present grievances. Mayor Murphy pushed aside the issues at hand and devoted himself to a brazen attack on the unemployed movement as Communist-led, warning the men against me and others. I cut in with a sharp attack on his apple-selling campaign and his general substitution of demagoguery for effective relief. When the interview ended he called me aside and, with an air of injured innocence, asked me why we always "cut into him so sharply." I answered (no doubt too frankly) that the path to the solution of our working class problems lay, politically speaking, over his dead body. He smiled and said he understood. The newsmen hovering near caught only part of the exchange, and the noon papers came out with headlines saying I had threatened the mayor. In the afternoon Murphy called in the press and stated that no threat whatsoever was involved. But he must have had a second thought, or further advice, about the situation's possibilities for political capital; he stated next morning that "Reynolds may have intended a personal threat."

The other time that I met Frank Murphy I was able to secure seats for him and a lady friend at a crowded radical meeting.

With these experiences as a touchstone, it hasn't been difficult for me to understand the shifts of Murphy from liberal phrases to repressive action. At the beginning of the period, Murphy and Hoover offered the unemployed apples to sell; today they join in offering the American people a war. Michigan's man of destiny has shown fast footwork over the broken political ground of the last decade. He is still on his way places, and he doesn't care whom he steps on to get there.

WILLIAM REYNOLDS.

Berkeley, Calif.

Epitaph

TO NEW MASSES: We were making verses the other night and I got this one out. The citizens thought you might be interested in it.

REQUIESCAT IN PAX BRITANNICA

A moment, friends, for Sheean, Fischer, Bates—
The rather less than least heroic dead—
To breathe the epitaph that seals their fates:
These fools rushed in where Engels feared to tread.

Incidentally, the work you're doing these days will be judged in its true light in the sequel; posterity will say you did a monumental job.

"OVID."

Hollywood, Calif.

"Oh, Stay at Home"

TO NEW MASSES: I ran across a poem by A. E. Housman that seems very appropriate and supplementary to the current slogan "The Yanks Are Not Coming!"

"Oh stay at home, my lad, and plough
The land and not the sea,
And leave the soldiers at their drill,
And all about the idle hill
Shepherd your sheep with me.
Oh stay with company and mirth
And daylight and the air;
Too full already is the grave
Of fellows that were good and brave
And died because they were."

J. R.

Philadelphia.