

BATTLELINES IN TENNESSEE

By HAROLD PREECE

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Memphis, Tenn.

Boss Ed Crump of Memphis, Tennessee, didn't attend the Democratic national convention in Chicago. Corporal Arthur Hollins, from the same town, wasn't there either. But his reasons for staying away were different from Boss Ed's.

Boss Ed was dodging a process server who would have descended upon him, in the impartial course of "damyankee" justice, had he parked his twelve-dollar brogans on Michigan Boulevard. One of Crump's victims—a Negro ex-citizen of Memphis now living in Chicago—has a damage suit in Illinois federal court against the man who's turned Tennessee into his political plantation by letting a string of local bosses like Ducktown Sheriff Burch Biggs share-crop it for him. So the Big Boss stayed home and listened to the returns of the convention balloting over the same radio which brings him the latest flashes on the Hot Springs horse races.

Corporal Arthur Hollins wasn't dodging constables when the "Southern revolt" fizzled and popped in Chicago like the toy balloons Arthur used to buy his girl at the carnivals on Beale Street. The young Negro soldier was dodging bullets in this war. Right after the convention, Corporal Hollins wrote me a letter which reflects the mind of Tennessee.

"I listened with some buddies from Memphis to the convention broadcasts," wrote Corporal Hollins. "We got a part of the broadcasts over the shortwave radio while we rested between battles.

"How we wished we might have been there when the Tennessee delegates made their big threats to bolt our President. Us boys from Memphis would have told those Crump men that you don't walk out on your commander when there's a war going on. How we wished that we could have been there when Crump disgraced what we're fighting for by putting up his straw boss, Governor Prentice Cooper, for Vice-President. Ed Crump and Prentice

Cooper are keeping most of us Tennessee boys from voting this year. . . .

"Some things I can say, and some things I can't. But I know if Ed Crump had slept in a hole for weeks, if he had been eating the same thing every day, he would know that we have a war to win, and that we can't view politics as he and some other people do."

As I wander over the 400-mile length and 100-mile width of our state, I find Tennesseans in village post-offices and crossroads stores talking pretty much the same language as this Tennessean in a foxhole. Whether we went across to man cannon for victory or whether we stayed home to raise turnips for victory, we feel that the present political leadership of our state is inadequate for the new experiences that we face in this new epoch of history which began for all of Dixie with the coming of Franklin D. Roosevelt. That epoch began with tent colonies of ragged, hungry people on the outskirts of our four major cities—Memphis, Chattanooga, Knoxville, and Nashville. It is closing with thousands of our people—honest, good folk from the mountain ranges of the Cumberlands and Great Smokies, from the sultry villages of the Mississippi Delta—drawing good wages from the great new factories

that have come our way as a result of the government-owned Tennessee Valley Authority. We feel now that we are entering another epoch—the second epoch of Roosevelt—forecast by a white Tennessee soldier, Pfc. Carey Scraggs, when he wrote back to the weekly paper in his Cumberland Mountain home community:

"Why worry over the political situation—the 'Old Man' will come back for the fourth term without a doubt. He gave the GI Joe and his dependents what no other President did. What objection would they have to voting for him again?

"I am particularly interested in the various little affairs and group meetings that are being held there. [Meaning the rallies for Roosevelt and Truman in his home community.] I wish that I were there to participate, even though I don't carry much weight. The war will soon be over, you may rest assured. We have plenty to come back to."

Then Pfc. Scraggs throws out this challenge to those northern Republicans and southern Democrats who would stop the assembly lines to bring about post-war depression and turmoil: "This is a land of plenty, isn't it?"

There are minutes when we catch

Prescriptions for Liberation

AN INTERESTING item which came to the attention of a doctor-reader of NM concerned the way in which many French physicians helped prevent the deportation of Frenchmen to German factories. The doctors used every means available to give artificial mild illnesses to workers before they were rounded up for slave labor. Jaundice was induced by injection. The illness did not last long but looked serious. Not everyone in France could fall victim to jaundice, however, so the doctors next tried injections of oil which caused inflammation of the knee. This worked too well—with many unfortunately not recovering full use of their joints. Bismuth, which caused spots on the lungs, was very useful because it created the impression of tuberculosis which the Germans really feared. Another trick was the injection of extract of arsenic, which caused temporary uremia. Thus doctors contributed their share of work in the resistance movement. Throughout the Nazi occupation they published their own underground paper, *Le Medecin Francais*. But in addition to that physicians worked closely with the liberation forces and had three central objectives: (1) to protect the health of the civilian population; (2) to organize medical units to serve in action at the time of the national uprising; and (3) to defend the medical profession.

ourselves wondering why it was that we never thought of Tennessee as a land of plenty before Roosevelt took over in 1933. For it *was* a land of plenty—its forests filled with deer and wild turkey—when our fathers crossed the mountains with Daniel Boone, when the civilization of the Eastern Seaboard moved westward to follow the curling smoke from cabins built by my old grandad, Captain John Phillips, and others like him.

But slavery left the indelible marks of cotton, sharecropping, and color line on the lives of every generation, down to this one of three million people. Not all of Tennessee is cotton country. But it is no accident that Memphis, one of the South's great cotton cities and seat of the all-powerful National Cotton Council, should dominate not only Tennessee but large sections of adjoining Arkansas and Mississippi. Nor is it any accident that the children of Daniel Boone and Andrew Jackson, seeing the rape of their heritage, should still hope for a land of milk and honey—but one to be found after death in the theologies of brush-arbor religious sects like the Last Days Church of God, the Original Church of God, the New Testament Church of God, the Reformation Movement Church of God, the Non-Progressive Church of Christ, and the Two Seed in the Spirit Predestinarian Baptist Church.

Maybe we prosecuted the famous Dayton, Tennessee, evolution case so fiercely in 1925 because we hated to be told that we were descended from monkeys when we had been made to look like monkeys. Maybe, it's a sign of changing times, too, that the prosecuting attorney in that case has dropped zoology for something of more immediate benefit to his people. He is now US Sen. Tom Stewart, who has shown enough courage to break with his greedy, senile seventy-five-year-old colleague, Kenneth D. McKellar, and support many of President Roosevelt's measures. He is sponsoring a bill to give our state, with its pig-trails and rocky country roads, a network of highways which would enable our farmers to move their produce to market. That means a lot to a state where two-thirds of the population is rural.

Tennessee will stay in the Union by voting for President Roosevelt on November 7. Even though Colonel McCormick of the Chicago *Tribune* is reported to be spending a sizable sum to promote the fortunes of Dewey in this state, which normally casts the heaviest Republican vote in the South, Tennes-

see will vote for Roosevelt because the President has made Tennessee and every other southern state feel as though it belongs in the Union.

For the South has been taking shortcuts across centuries in these eleven years of Roosevelt. Tennessee has become a microcosm of the changing South, with its busy aluminum and textile plants, with its husky young labor movement, the expression of a sturdy young class just beginning to make itself felt in our coves and cities.

The Roosevelt administration gave us Tennessee Valley Authority. TVA has brought us lights for our homes, fertilizer for our farms, the feeling that the South can grow. Three-fourths of the electrical power for the South's tremendous war production comes from TVA units distributed over seven states. The rough outlines of a southern people's coalition were apparent in the fight which we put up last year to keep Tennessee Senator Kenneth McKellar from annexing TVA and turning it into his private patronage dispensary. Labor unions and chambers of commerce, farmers' cooperatives and city councils, joined in a spontaneous and united campaign to save the giant project.

THE TVA brought us industry. Industry has brought us the modern labor movement; a movement which will grow as industry grows. The labor movement is the force which will unite workers, farmers, industrialists, and retailers along that road of Teheran which is the road to the South's future. Tennessee labor is taking steps to set up a permanent people's political organization which will function between now and November for the reelection of President Roosevelt. It will function in the years to come for the election of those who can speak for the age of the schoolhouse and the dynamo instead of this dying age of the whip and the bull tongue plow.

Originally, the AFL, CIO, and Railroad Brotherhoods set up a joint state political action committee, the outgrowth of joint action of their different legislative committees during the 1943 session of the Tennessee legislature. By working together, these committees had defeated all of the anti-labor legislation which Texas Senator "Pappy" O'Daniel's "Christian Americans" later railroaded through the legislatures of Alabama, Florida, and seven other states. But the grand prize of united action had been a bill, passed by the legislature and reluctantly signed by Gov-

ernor Cooper, abolishing the poll tax as a qualification for voting in Tennessee.

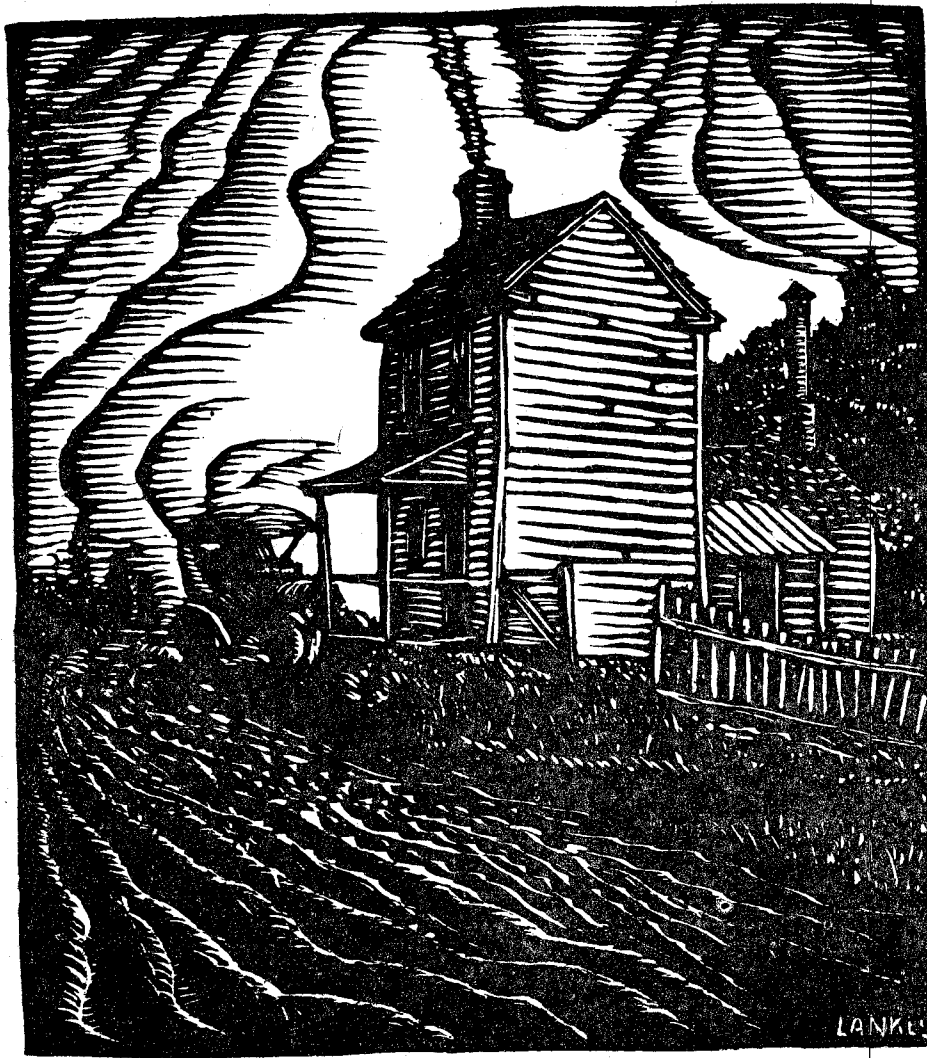
A few months later, the Crump-controlled state Supreme Court declared the poll tax repeal law "unconstitutional" in a suit brought by Crump's Middle Tennessee gauleiter, Sheriff Birch Biggs. Some of you may remember Birch Biggs as the man who was slapped down by the United States Supreme Court after he secured third-degree "confessions" from eight Ducktown miners, who have since been acquitted on charges of dynamiting power lines.

Unfortunately for Tennessee, AFL President William Green forced the State Federation of Labor to withdraw from the united political front. One of the Brotherhoods also pulled out, leaving the CIO to carry the burden of progressive political action by itself.

Let it be said that the CIO has proved equal to the task of initiating a broad people's movement in Tennessee, as it has in other parts of the South. A few weeks ago, I attended an emergency session of the Tennessee CIO Industrial Union Council held at Highlander Folk School near Monteagle. The delegates from all parts of the state knew that they faced serious business, that Boss Crump certainly would put on no more than a half-hearted campaign for the reelection of President Roosevelt. They knew that labor still had a big job to face in this campaign. For Tennessee's common people are pretty much like Pfc. Scraggs—they take it for granted that a good man like President Roosevelt will be elected anyhow. "People are saying to us that President Roosevelt is sure to carry Tennessee since both the CIO and Boss Crump have endorsed him," explained regional CIO director Paul R. Christopher.

Those delegates, representing Tennessee's 70,000 white and Negro CIO members, realize that Crump and the other Dixie bosses have jumped on the Roosevelt bandwagon only in the hopes of steering it back down the path of yesterday. They were determined that the people's victory should not be whittled down to the size of a minority poll tax vote.

They made plans for an all-out campaign to get poll taxes paid and voters registered in time. They set up a five-man board, with Christopher as chairman, to organize a Tennessee Citizens Political Action Committee, affiliated with the National Citizens Political Action Committee. This state committee will set up local branches, to be serviced by area representatives, in the four sec-



"Virginia Landscape," woodcut by J. J. Lankes

tions dependent on the four cities of Memphis, Chattanooga, Knoxville, and Nashville. We are laying a solid basis that will give Corporal Hollins and Pfc. Scraggs something "to come back to."

The time is ripe in Tennessee, as ripe as it was in the days when the frontiersmen who were our fathers sent Andy Jackson up to Washington as our Senator and then as our President. The way our people voted in the August primaries proves it.

Two of our three definitely pro-Roosevelt Congressmen won hands down in the face of strong opposition from the Crump forces. Congressman Albert Gore, of Carthage, representing the Fourth District, polled a handsome majority after a slander campaign against him; Congressman J. Percy Priest, of the Sixth (Nashville) District, once represented by Jackson, carried the field even though Crump's state highway police, commanded by Safety Director Lynn Bomar, marshalled themselves with guns at the polls and tried to bully citizens into voting for Priest's "states' rights" opponent.

Congressman Estes Kefauver of the Third (Chattanooga) District, who won renomination without opposition in a district where the Democratic designation is equivalent to election told me emphatically: "President Roosevelt represents the best hope of the southern people for continued progress—for industrialization, for bringing our educational and economic standards up to par, for bringing about a reduction of the discriminatory freight rates which prevent our industrialists and farmers from selling their goods on a fair market.

"The South has many problems that it's going to have to think about very seriously," the Congressman continued. "One of them is the problem of our relation to the Negro. We are going to have to give the Negro a chance to become a better citizen by giving him better education, health, and housing; by giving him a chance to vote. It's to the interests of the South and of our country to make the best possible citizens of all of the people."

To expand industries, to organize all of our people into the new people's

movement—that is the combined job to which we have committed ourselves in this, the sixth generation since Andrew Jackson. It's a job that is hampered by the traditionally Republican majority of East Tennessee. It's made doubly difficult by the fact that Boss Crump has been able to swing every state Democratic primary election through the simple expedient of holding back the returns from Memphis and Shelby County until he saw how the rest of the state was going.

It's a job as hard as the one faced by our fathers when they felled the thickets and cleared the brush to plow the first fields from the resisting, uncultivated soil. But it's a job that's made easier because the Tennessee labor movement is different from agrarian movements of the past. Those movements were built upon farmers who distrusted the city and the city's ways, who were individualists in their thinking because they were individualists in their manner of making a living. The ever-expanding Tennessee labor movement is based upon wage workers who have not lost contact with the soil because they, themselves, were born on the soil. It is highly significant that both the Tennessee AFL and CIO have interested themselves in organizing the National Farmers Union in this state. Another example of the broad base that we are building for our people's movement is the Southern Conference for Human Welfare in Nashville. The Southern Conference, supported by labor generally, speaks for the progressive element of the middle class, not only in Tennessee but throughout Dixie.

Today, there are some mighty sick politicians among the Dixie Old Guard. There's nobody any sicker among them than that arch foe of everything the New Deal and the New South represent—Senator McKellar of Tennessee.

Two years from now, most of the three hundred thousand young Tennesseans in the armed forces will be back with their families. They will be remembering how their senior Senator robbed the majority of them of their ballots when he railroaded through his "states' rights" substitute for the original Green-Lucas Soldier Vote Bill. Fifty thousand of them managed to qualify for the franchise under a state "soldier vote act," passed by the Crump-McKellar-Crump trinity of the poll tax to keep the boys and girls from casting their ballots.

Two years from now most of the boys and girls will be home. And two years from now, Senator Kenneth D. McKellar comes up for reelection.

IN THE WHITE WHALE'S DOMAIN

By S/SGT. LAWRENCE EMERY

We are glad to publish the following excerpts from a journal by Sergeant Emery sent in by his wife in response to NEW MASSES' request for letters from soldiers. —The Editors.

WHEN I woke up we were at sea, running into a good blow and some heavy seas. The ship pitched and rocked creditably and seasickness became quite widespread. The boys are being sorted out. . . .

A beautiful night. The wind is down to a fresh breeze, cooling and pleasant. A huge full moon, still high at four o'clock, has paled all the stars, leaving visible only those of the brightest magnitude. Its soft and gentle glow brightens the horizon all the way round, and dapples the sea with dancing lights. "God, it's wonderful out tonight," said the man I relieved as I climbed into the tub. "If you've got any beautiful thoughts in your head, tonight's the night to think them. I've had a swell time up here. Been home most of the night. Don't even feel like going to sleep." And I wondered what kind of a home he had that it could seem so pleasant from this distance, in the middle of the vast Pacific, bound for an uncertain fate. It is the old trickery of the mind, I decided, which tends to reject and conceal all the bad and the unpleasant, admitting to recall only the rare and the good. The human brain hides its own scars, for otherwise it would be an intolerable instrument of torture. This man is no exceptional being whose life has been all pleasure and no pain. But tonight, rummaging around in his memories, he found only the joy he's known. Under the bright moon, swaying to the gentle rocking of the ship, he forgot all the old dissatisfactions, all the petty frustrations of daily life, all the aches and fears and disappointments that were his lot at home, as they are the lot of all men—all but the tiny few who have learned, somehow, to live. Maybe it is better that the mind buries the ugly, displays only the good. Yet how much harder for this man when he does get home to find that his moon-bathed dreams were lop-sided, that the picture was incomplete and distorted, that all the worries and all the pain were left out. What then will be his reaction? Will he yearn again for the moon-dappled sea on

a calm cool night far away? And I wondered if this might not be one of the attractions of the sea that has such a hold over some men. Or is it something deeper, like the exhilaration of the never-ending struggle of man against an element not his own? The ability of man, in a frail and tiny craft upon limitless seas, to go where he chooses upon this earth, and to get there despite wind and wave and storm and lightning. And added to this the simplicity and the mystery of the sea, at once so readily grasped and yet forever incomprehensible in its magnitude and its final meaning. For the sea is simple and clean and uncomplicated. Life on its surface is reduced to elementals. The sun, the moon, the stars, the clouds, and the winds are its ingredients, and absent are the crowds of cities and the web of entanglements in which city men are coiled. For the men who consciously and deliberately follow the sea for a lifetime, and who come ashore for brief periods to nibble a bit at the pleasures and comforts of land and then go back to their wind and spray, I guess the sea is essentially an escape. . . .

LAST night the Southern Cross was clear and sharp. It is something we cannot see at home. We're in the regions now where the dawn comes up, not exactly like Kipling's thunder, but with a sweep and a rush, floodlike. The sun goes down the same way; there is a sudden engulfing darkness and night is here. I prefer our own slow, lingering twilight, often the best part of the day. This is too sharp and abrupt. . . .

There was a high bright moon this morning, a gentle cool breeze, a softly rolling sea. Some day E and I must take a pleasure cruise to sea. . . . I sent my partner below this morning, stayed in the tub most of the watch alone. Found myself ranging far back in time, remembering the old popular songs and the associations that go with them. The old phonograph in 1920 in the Valmae apartments in San Francisco, and grandpa and grandma and Ethiel and Winton, and me with a whole fresh world to discover. Such tunes as "Blue" and "Tomorrow" and "Dardanella" and some of the war songs still being sung. And "Three O'clock In The Morning" which will forever remind me

vaguely of a dance I went to and where I sat unacquainted and lonely. And later the songs like "Hot Lips" and "Aggravatin' Mama" and "Lovin' Sam." And then the Larkin Street days, when I bought a portable phonograph and such records as "All Alone" and "Somebody Loves Me," "I Cried For You." And the days downtown and the poolrooms, the cheap hotels, the gambling joints, the nights spent roaming the streets, the strange characters who sleep in the day and live during the dark. I was learning then, and still discovering the fresh new world, and the tunes were "Sweet Lovin' Mama, Won't You Please Come Back To Me," and "Oh How I Miss You Tonight," and "Sleep," and "Crying For You." And then I remembered "Beautiful Ohio," and that took me back to a matchless spring in the country, up in the foothills of the Sierras. I was ten or eleven and there never was and never will be a springtime like that one, all fresh and green, with bright sunny days when we went picking wild flowers, and the streams were running clear and full and this was the finest of all worlds and I was hopelessly and thrillingly in love for the first time in my life. And all that early year we sang "The Beautiful Ohio." . . . Then I remembered "Valencia" and "Barcelona" and "The Red, Red Robin," and these took me way back to the winter that I ran between Seattle and Honolulu and I stayed in the trowse in Kaimuki and charged around town in a big, red, noisy Stutz roadster. Those were the "go for broke" days, and I was still learning. There were more old songs I remembered, many, many more, and they all helped to date and punctuate the crazy, hectic past. . . . And then my watch was over, and I thought, what song would be tied most intimately between the immediate past and the immediate future, and I thought and thought, and decided I'd like most to sit together with E and listen to *Ma Mie*. . . .

Today I slept during King Neptune's ceremony, but from reports I've heard it was pretty rough.

And this afternoon we had a gun drill and abandon-ship drill. We fired at smoke pots we dropped into the sea and it was very satisfying to see projectiles from all the ship's guns hitting dead center. . . .