

eration with Russia. Those of us who survived would find a German empire from the North Sea to the Pacific coast of Siberia!"

His enthusiasm held him for a moment. "Think of us taking over Russia—uniting our German efficiency with Russian supplies of raw materials!"

"But the Russian Communists might object to any attempt of yours to 'take over Russia,'" I interrupted.

"The Russians are hopeless blunders," he said positively. "We have known them since the twelfth century. All through our history there have been portents that the future of Germany lay in the East. The capital of the new Soviet Union would be in Berlin, of course. One-fifth of the world's surface united—"

Hitler and Company have no monopoly on dreaming!

OUR SAILORS SLEEP IN THE PALACE OF THE CZAR

By Ben Robertson, Jr.

ONE night last August I stood the 8 to 12 watch with an able-bodied Montana seaman on the forecastle head of an American freighter *City of Fairbury*, then homeward-bound from Leningrad and Copenhagen with a cargo of Russian logs.

He was a strong man of twenty-eight, stood six feet to the dot; he shaved and bathed every evening and somehow managed to wash a pair of overalls before going to bed at night. Most of the time during his off watches, he would lie in his bunk in the forecastle and read the speeches of Stalin and the tales of Joseph Conrad.

His conversations with me prior to that evening had been almost monosyllabic in their sparseness. As we stood there on this particular night, however, with nothing before us but the darkness, the wind, and the sea, he began to talk about Montana and his home near Billings, and his mother. Times were too hard, he said, to be making trips to his home on a railroad; it took all the money he could save to enable his mother to keep on running the farm. He spoke of the damned futility of raising wheat; of the sound wolves made in winter. He had heard them in Saskatchewan; he had trapped mountain lions; for two years he had been a student at the University of California. Then troubles had come and he had gone to sea. He had seen the clouds gather over Table Mountain behind Cape Town; had sipped whiskies over the long bar in Shanghai; that French-

man at the South Sea Barber Shop at Papeete in Tahiti had cut his hair.

He had stood before the tomb of the Unknown Soldier in Berlin and had seen a wreath of red roses bound with a British, an American, and a German flag; he had considered it the profoundest, the most pathetic, indictment of war he had ever heard of. He said that the wife of an old Finn in the crew had turned pale and fainted when she boarded the ship in Helsingfors and had seen where her husband slept. He told how ironical he considered it to see American ships in Leningrad harbor dipping their American emblems to the flag of Soviet Russia.

He said how hard life was to-day; he quoted Goethe: "Speaking generally, there is something peculiar in national hatred. We always find it strongest and most vehement on the lowest stage of culture. But there is a stage where it totally disappears and where one stands, so to say, above the nations and feels the good fortune or distress of his neighbor people as if it had happened to his own." He told me: "I have found that stage in Russia."

He considered the sacrifice the Russian workers were making for the sake of their children's children to be the noblest deliberate thing any people ever attempted. "The Russians are free." He was silent for a while; the wind blew through the rigging. Then he added bitterly: "Whatever I once thought I was, I know, now that I have been to Russia, where I stand in the United States. I am

a worker and a worker is a slave. A worker has no more chance in our country than a turnip. I am for revolution."

He told me of the great responsibility resting upon us seamen. "We are the only American working men who have had contact with the Soviet and the Russian Revolution. We are the only ones who have been there—who have seen. We must tell the workers of our experience." I had not been to Russia with the ship; I had joined it at Copenhagen on its return; therefore he began telling me of what had happened during the fourteen days they had been docked in the Neva. "We were treated royally in Leningrad. We slept in the palace of the Czar."

Soon after the ship had tied up in the river, he said, a delegate from the Soviet workers' club came down, welcomed them to Russia, inquired what would they like to see or do. The seamen, he said, were greeted as comrades, as equals; they were taken to the House of Culture, were shown the atheist museum, the Soviet kitchens, and the homes of the workers and the workers' factories. At the club, men and women who spoke English told them of Russia's hopes and ambitions; they had met the daughter of the manager of one of the state farms; they had marched in a Communist demonstration and had been seated on the platform in the places of honor. The sailor had made a speech. A delegate inquired if he might come aboard the ship to see under what conditions Americans slept and ate. He came, looked around, then told them "Conditions are worse only on the ships of the Latvians and the Greeks." The next afternoon the Americans had boarded the U.S.S.R. *Embaneft*, a 12,000-ton tanker, lying then in the Neva. They had seen reading and writing rooms for sailors, there had been electric fans and a grand piano; they had seen shower baths and had had dinner with the captain. The captain explained that Russian seamen were given a full month's leave every summer with full pay.

And then they had been invited to the palace of the Czar. With a group of Russian workers, they and the crews of a British and German ship had gone to the palace on a Saturday afternoon and had remained there until Monday morning. The sailor told of the fine

rugs, of paintings "as big as No. 2 hatch," of china and marble floors and stairways and of the magnificent bedroom suites. He and a seaman from New Orleans had slept in a room once occupied by an American ambassador and on Sunday afternoon they had had tea in a room formerly used by an aunt of the King of England. The seaman told of this trip with minute detail, and there lingered about his word that same republican disdain which I have noted when other Americans have told of presentations before their Majesties at the Court in London. "Yes, sir, boy," the seaman said, "I have slept in the palace of the Czar."

Some weeks after we returned to

New York I went down to South Street, Manhattan, one day to see a man I know, a tailor. He wanted to know if I had heard about the American sailors. "They all of them are turning Red; all of them want to go to Russia. They say the Russians are a good people; they are kind to lonely seamen." He said they had been inviting American sailors to sleep in the palace of the Czar.

"What do you think of that?"

"Think? I think that perhaps the Russians are clever."

"Sure," the tailor replied. "That palace tale has spread like magic. A fellow in here the other day from the *President Hoover* told me he had heard it on the Dollar docks in San Francisco."

subject of million-dollar bonuses for individual brilliance and resourcefulness. They are feeling that these men must have been entirely bereft of any foresight whatever, judging by the thin capital structures they set up and into which they invited the public, often staking their reputations on their predictions. Unfortunately, there is a sinister tinge to this disappointment. Men in contact with large affairs, and with good statistical departments behind them, may have known more than they told, in the private opinion of many small-town investors.

The small-town public is very bitter on the matter of passed dividends in those instances wherein earnings may be disappointing at the moment but reserves are large. Stocks of some corporations have been held with confidence by many families into the third generation. It is possible that numerous corporations will automatically regain investment confidence with better times and the resumption of dividends, and that meanwhile the American public will have saved itself. But it does not look like it from where I am sitting. It looks more as if they have thrown away a priceless prestige, and have undermined public confidence, for the sake of a questionable economy, or to set the stage for manipulation.

Of course, the small-town public readily admits that it cannot, and does not know the inside conditions which lead directors to drastic action. If the saving has been absolutely necessary, however, it is impossible to escape the conviction that conditions are not only bad but are likely to continue so for an indefinite period, possibly for several years. The effect of that less attractive conviction is devastating to spending morale, and is bound to bring about widespread curtailment and thrift. There can be only the slowest return to prosperity with that timidity created in our souls.

How silly, in the face of this fact, to start campaigns which urge the small-town people of America to spend freely! How utterly useless to set them the example of hoarding corporation funds, and at the same time urge them not to hoard what little they have or can get hold of.

On the subject of banking, the small-town people have grown eloquent. Their conception of a community bank

THE SMALL TOWN REVIVES

By Will Rose

IF a man were to visit the small towns of America, he would see the usual numbers of people on the streets, all of them acting as if they were bent on definite deeds. He would find difficulty in parking his automobile within several blocks of any desired stop. He would look in vain for penniless people loafing—and waiting—in the parks.

He would notice, also, that small-town business appealing to local markets is doing very well, if judged on the basis of immediate operation. Small commercial individualists have weathered other storms, and have been weathering this one. They are resourceful in effecting profitable operation almost regardless of volume. In addition, a few of them in every community have doubled their efforts as if answering the challenge of stiffer conditions, and are actually making more progress and more money than in ordinary times.

What is wrong, then?

This is wrong.

As soon as the observer starts talking to small-town people, he will find them feeling very poor, and intending to be very thrifty. That, of course, does not sound like an immediate wave of buying. And he will find a great deal of criticism directed against the policies of the government, of large corporations, and of the banks.

As far as the stock market inflation enters into the picture, the small-town man knows that he is just as much responsible as any other agency. Everybody had a part in that, literally everybody. The small-town, however, were not dealing on margin, for the reason that they are too far away from brokerage offices, spiritually and geographically. They buy. They rarely sell, more's the pity. Sometimes they dig out a certificate and let it get away from them. But, even then, they immediately buy something else. The unfortunate aftermath of the crash is that millions of small-town resolutions not to be caught that way again have been made. Not all of these resolutions will be carried out; stock-market money-making is too attractive to be resisted even by the altruistic, sinless, delightful sheep of the country pastures. But the resolutions will have their effect for a long time. When the sheep do come back in, they will have a weather eye open to business trends, and political and financial manipulations, constantly.

Here is a fact little realized in large cities. Small-town people are not as exercised over the shrinkage in their market worth as they are about their loss of confidence in the men of America to whom they had looked for financial and business leadership. Their most ironical conversation at present is on the