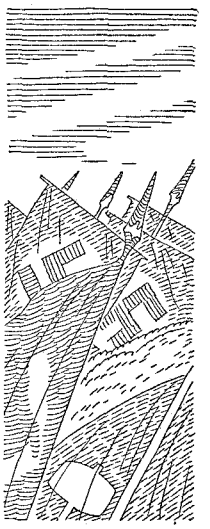
is next. The greater popularity of the group plan in the western sections of the country is due, no doubt, to the fact that there are fewer very large cities in those sections than in the East. For some reason, only 4 per cent of all the groups in the country are in cities of 500,000 or more.

Perhaps, the most significant—and certainly the broadest scale—experiment that has thus far been undertaken in actual practice with the group plan is that of the county medical society of Wayne County, Michigan, which embraces Detroit, Dearborn, and other important industrial centers. There, group medicine is practised by the society as a whole, the organization's headquarters being used as the main offices of the groups and the offices of individual members as laboratory and clinical facilities. Upon applying for treatment, a patient becomes, in a sense, the responsibility of the entire membership of the society. His family physician, as a member of the group, feels free to refer the patient to whatever specialists may seem needed, without fear of losing contact with his patient by being excluded from the case. A particularly interesting feature of this plan is the arrangement that has been worked out for taking care of patients who are unable to pay the full amount of the normal medical fees. Together with his family physician, the patient agrees upon what percentage of the fee he can reasonably expect to pay and that percentage holds good with any other doctors to whom he may be referred.

Well, what is the answer? Is Wayne County pointing the way? Will group medicine in any form fill the bill? On one point every one seems to be agreed: the necessity of working out some plan for placing the full benefits of modern medicine within the reach of every person of every class. No one disputes the fact that there is at present a maladjustment in the application of medical care to the needs of the people. No one disputes the fact that in our modern complex civilization medicine has far-reaching social obligations that cannot be ignored. Group medicine may, or may not, be the final answer. But, at least, it represents a groping toward a solution of a problem that is of vital concern to all of us. And for this reason, if no other, it deserves the open-minded and sympathetic consideration of every one.

"A Plague on Both Your Houses!"

By John Cournos



Born of the proletariat, the author condemns Communism and Fascism. With no love for Capitalism, he expresses his belief in men of character rather than economic dogma

Very early in life I learned what it was to be a member of the so-called "exploited classes." At the age of ten I was already in the streets earning the meagerest of livelihoods for myself and the too numerous progeny begotten by a feckless stepfather—a man of great inventive genius, feckless only because he lived in an age which, for all its exploitive tendencies, did not know how to utilize all its potentially useful men. Awakened at two in the morning by a brazen alarm clock, placed at my very head, I was already, after a cup of coffee and a crust of bread, in the streets before three, with a bundle of newspapers under my arm, crying my wares in the nocturnal haunts of the City of Brotherly Love.

By eight I was home, and after a hurried snack and a hasty look at my lessons was at my place in school, where, I am afraid, I was too often roughly awakened at my desk by an irate teacher who, unheard by me, had called upon me to recite some piece I was supposed to learn by heart, such as "Life is real, life is earnest . . ." or some similar classic nonsense.

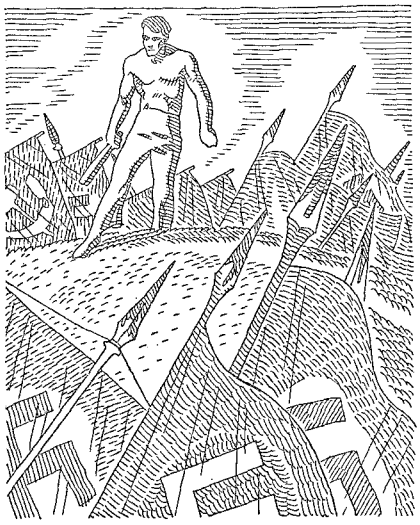
At the same time my two elder sisters spent long days in working with their fingers at artificial flowers for hats, paid at piece rates. They often brought "home work" and sat up late into the night.

At the age of twelve I was taken from school. We moved to a suburb, where my sisters and I found work in a woolen mill. They labored at looms. I began as bobbin-boy, then became piecer at a spinning mule, and ultimately, two years later, the man directing the mechanism itself, with piecers under me. If I remember aright, the nominal wage of a mule runner at the time was seven dollars and fifty cents a week. Being but a mere boy doing a man's work I received but three, only fifty cents more than a piecer. We lived in a small house on the slope of a hill, rented from the company owning the mills. The features of the chief owner, an Anglo-Saxon of good name, with his bright red hair, tooth-brush moustache, and small mean eyes, are engraved upon my memory to this day.

The two years spent here were wasted years but for the fact that they left in me a loathing for machines and for that form of exploitation which came in with machines and is called capitalism.

I might have gone on wasting my life at this underpaid sterile labor—the mill manufactured blankets and cloth for the army—were it not for the providential commission on the part of my stepfather and myself of a "crime" against property, the supreme crime in our capitalist society. In the proximity of our house was a small forest, unfenced-in, open to the world; picnickers made free use of it. Who the owners were, if it had any owners, no one seemed to know. At all events, one fine morning, when work at the mill was slack, my stepfather, taking a long saw with him, invited me into the forest. He picked out a hefty tree, and together we sawed it down, then into short logs, which we fetched home, one by one, and placed between our house and the shed next to it, for firewood.

I cannot say I was conscious of hav-



ing committed one of the most heinous crimes against the capitalistic order. We were found out. The mill-owners, as it proved, also owned the forest. Promptly the little Cournos tribe was discharged and ordered to vacate the house. Apparently they did not think it worth the trouble to fling us into jail. Perhaps they feared it might bring about an exposé of child labor.

There could be no object in dwelling on my further adventures as an exploitee of capitalist society in Philadelphia. My present purpose is merely to demonstrate that I am a proletarian and would seem indeed to be a shining example of how Communists are made. Nevertheless—and this is the burden of my essay—I find myself today, though I am at least as poor as when I came into the world, in the unhappy position of being unable to accept Communism, or its alternative—Fascism. Because I have rejected Capitalism, which in any event is doomed, must I accept one of the two other alternatives offered me?

This is precisely what I am asked to do. Both one side and the other shout as in one voice: "If you are not with us, you are against us!" And I have no way out but to give the same answer to both: "I am not with you!" This satisfies neither side. I am assured by Communist friends that one or the other side is certain ultimately to get in, and that in either case I shall have to recant or take my place against the wall. Since my one desire is "to cultivate my little garden"—in short, to be let alone—this would seem a damnably unreasonable choice. But then I may as well admit that reason does not enter into it. The age of unreason, of brute force, is upon us; this unpleasant fact must be squarely faced. . . . I do not like sitting on fences any better than most people. But suppose Mr. Wolf sits on one side of the fence, and Mr. Bear on the other—what then?

Let us look at Mr. Wolf, who calls himself a Fascist. He has nice white teeth and a lean hungry look. There is a mad gleam in his eyes, a snarl around his mouth. I don't like the look of him. He doesn't like me either. I don't happen to be a Nordic, a wolf like himself hunting with the pack. He would not accept me in his pack even if I could and were willing to turn myself into a wolf. Seriously, can any reasonable, civilized, humane man consider joining a mass movement which combines the worst aspects of nationalism, primitivism, medievalism, and Communism? Italy has fathered Fascist movements which have "bettered the instruction"; they exhibit degenerative, atavistic tendencies; hatred, lust for power, sadism, motivate their energies. And I have heard "nice people" even here speak approvingly of the Nazis. To me the idea is wholly intolerable and untenable. It does not even enter the choices. If there were any real danger of its adoption there would be nothing left even for a man of peace like myself but to fight to the last ditch or cut my throat. In this country, with its tendency to gangsterism and racketeering, this Shirt business would be apt to develop into a ghastly spectacle of fantastic absurdity. Already the most ludicrous canards are being broadcast by native Shirt organizations, which are but another form of the Ku Klux Klan. There is no need to recapitulate them here. Are they any more absurd than the childish lies which ultimately won Germany for Hitler? All mass-movements today are movements of mass-ignorance, and sheer absurdity wins where reason and truth fail. We live in an age in which no absurdity is impossible.

Bruin — Communism — sits on the other side of the fence, smiling. He knows that the untenability of his wolfish neighbor has put a trump card in his hand. If you'll only jump he is ready to hug you, and what a hug it is! A real love embrace: that possession which says there's not a nook in you which I don't own. Of my worldly goods you can have your share, little enough, but all your thoughts are mine. You must work hard, do what you like within reason; only one thing you can't have in any circumstances: liberty of opinion, of thought, freedom for your mind to play as it will.

But that happens to be the thing I value most. Without it, life would be savorless. In any case, how can I stop thinking the thoughts I happen to think? Is thought repression easier to bear than any other form of repression? Little wonder that communist doctrinaires look askance at Freudism, which rather upsets their applecart by insisting on "the beast lurking in man," on the fact that sooner or later man's repressed inner nature will betray the outer.

All in all, a pretty dilemma for the man of today, not to be pooh-poohed by our armchair communists. As an individual, I have long wrestled with it. I have seen writer after writer in this country and abroad "go over" to Communism—Romain Rolland, Bernard Shaw, Barbusse, Renn, Toller, Dreiser, Dos Passos—an impressive procession. There has been something like a stampede to Communism by serious writers, including some of my own colleagues and friends. It left one wondering. One doesn't like being alone. It's been like running to a fire, and it's human nature to run with others. It was hard not to run with them. Yes, I too might have run along with the *tovaristchi,* shouting, "Death to the bourgeoisie!"

That was some time ago. I paused to think, to consider.

Who, what, precisely, are the bourgeoisie that I should hate them with such an implacable hatred? No one, as far as I know, has supplied a satisfactory definition. At what point, precisely, does the bourgeoisie stop and the proletariat begin? Am I a bourgeois or a proletarian? I have an idea that the rigid distinction as applied by Communism is one of the great illusions of history, a bugbear devised by Marx to incite workers to religious class wars. (Indeed, I remember the early days of the Revolution in Petrograd, when men talked of a St. Bartholomew night, in which the workers would make the rounds of Petrograd apartments and slay the bourgeoisie in their beds.) I mean, Marx has given the labor problem a slant which artificially divided

the mass of human beings into classes no more essentially divergent—except in the matter of dogma—than Catholics and Huguenots. I do not think I am mistaken in saying that so-called "middle-class instincts" have existed in human beings since time began; these the future may modify but never wholly eradicate. Read Isaiah, Aristophanes, the Gospels, and other works of the past for corroboration. Bourgeois instincts are inherent in the peasant, as the Bolsheviks have found to their cost; and the proletarian is not without them. Indeed, Soviet Russia is in the process of creating a bourgeois class, if in a modified form, on a larger scale than any known in capitalist society: a class seeking middle-class comfort, middle-class amusement, middle-class security (organized, if you will), basing their lives on a materialist doctrine, and, consequently, creatively sterile.

Men have been moved to create through the agency of intangible things: religion, mysticism, romance, philosophy, quest of perfect form, of abstract beauty: all rejected by the doctrinaires. Economic communism I can understand and accept. A proper dosage applied judiciously would go a long way toward eradicating the more flagrant evils due to capitalism. But Communism is not content with clearing the tree of the bugs which cover the foliage with a blight and consume the fruit. It frankly aims at pulling up the tree by the roots. And I cannot accept that Communism which forbids the play of the imagination, the natural expression of the lyrical spirit, stimulated by man's eternal dream.

We are asked to recant objective truth in the name of an economic creed. Shamelessly Communism demands a bias of the thinker, the scientist, the writer, the artist. "He (Halper)," says a writer in *The New Masses*, "is sincere, honest and struggling. The trouble with him is that he tries to be too objective and detached. . . . Every writer should have a bias. . . ." Because a Soviet school teacher had used the phrase, "Beauty is truth; truth, beauty," a charge was brought against her for "romantic" leanings. The fact that it was a quotation from a great poet did not avail: "It's opposed to correct Marxist thinking, and is not allowed."

"Not allowed!" *"Am strengst verboten!"* How revolting these words when applied to human thought! Let us by all means avail ourselves of the best ideas of Communism for the salvaging of our economic situation. But hands off the human mind! Let us not fall into the error of getting rid of what good things we have with the bad. We have a heritage of many centuries' fight for liberty, a concept which men, as Croce pertinently points out, "had not attained . . . by chance or suddenly, had not reached . . . in one leap or one flight." Are we to give it up in the twinkling of an eye for willing enslavement, told what to think and what not to think by dogmatic overlords possessed by a fixed idea? It is the worst of betrayals to yield hard-won liberties to the tyranny of edict. Come to think of it, is there not something of the get-rich-quick method about improving human nature by edict? There is no short cut to Utopia.

What, then, must we do to put our house in order? Reasonable men will not spurn old-fashioned principles and old-fashioned remedies, even if they borrow a good idea or two from the Communists. They will perhaps take measures to limit material fortunes, to turn over to the State all social utilities and services, such as railways, telegraphs, insurance, banking, hospitals, mines, etc. They will take measures to assure educations for the educatable, and provide employment for all who want it, and security in old age. These ideas have existed long before Soviet Russia came into being; Communism has no monopoly on them. Honest self-reliant Americans should not hesitate to use them. There can be no objection to the right sort of collectivism, communal cooperation stimulated by spirit rather than materialist dogma, hence flexible in its workings, allowing the individual scope for self-expression —the sort of collectivism that in the middle ages enabled architects to project great cathedrals, yet allowed the individual craftsman to carve out his own particular little corner in his own particular way.

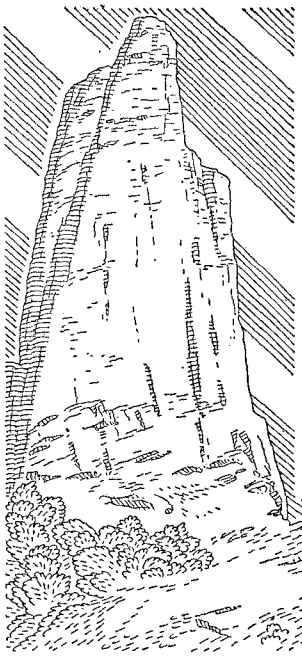
We employ legal measures against murderers of human life, and we should not hesitate to use measures against murderers of economic life. On the other hand, it has always been the American principle not to interfere with the individual in his home, nor with his opinions, moral convictions, ideas, and there is no reason to abrogate this principle. No coercion need be used outside the economic sphere. Let the individual voice be heard. Let those who worship God be allowed to worship; no one has anything to fear from God-fearing men. Let those who cannot worship God in an age not celebrated for faith put their trust in men of character. Character, if not religion itself, is the residue left to us of religion, and the best part of it. Character is integrity, courage; common good and duty are implicit in it—the kind of duty which Robert E. Lee must have meant when he said: "Duty is the sublimest word in the English language." As Americans we should resist all alien nostrums whether they come over the signature of a Lenin, a Mussolini, or a Hitler. Even Lenin, indubitably the best of them, taught such a detestable doctrine as this: "Today is not the time to stroke people's heads; today hands descend to split skulls, split them open ruthlessly." We must believe men to be utterly vile to believe this.

Above all, it seems to me, we need men, of faith, of vision, of character, of first principles, but with a knowledge of modern conditions and modern needs. I cannot help but believe with a passionate faith, undaunted by a life of disillusion, that the right man coming to us at the right time, moved by the right spirit and using the right words, could perform miracles among us undreamed of by alien purveyors of Odin-worship and of Five-Year plans. He may have his work cut out for him. It may be slow and arduous. A whole generation may have to be morally re-educated. It may sound absurd to our materialists, but what we stand badly in need of is not a man with a five-year plan, or even with two of them; but a man with at least a five-hundred-year plan, or even with a five-thousand-year plan; for eternal moral values are at stake, and we are now paying for their neglect. Men we want, always men, not dogmas!

I must risk being called a reactionary. Yet under Communism—or Fascism—I may find myself a revolutionary. Such things have lost their meaning.

LIFE IN THE UNITED STATES

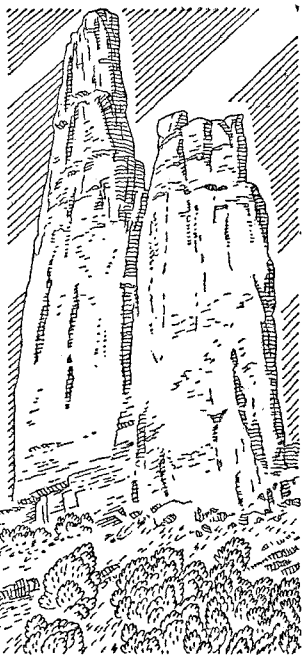
TRUE TALES OF LIFE AROUND US

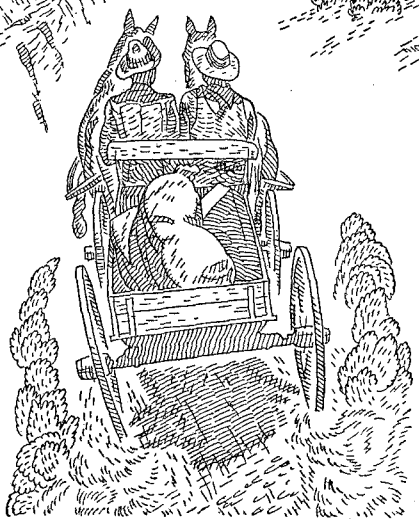


Hell and High Water

By William P. Lawson

The adventure of a tenderfoot going to the Southwest to take a job in the Forest Service. His romantic notions were quickly deflated by the hard-bitten stage driver and the bewhiskered major, but he found considerable excitement before he'd been in the country forty-eight hours





NEARLY twenty-five years ago, in August of 1910 to be exact, I left New York bound for Arizona, a young man with a job safely landed in the recently established U. S. Forest Service and a heart set on adventure.

Like most Easterners of that time my ignorance of the West and things Western was profound; my preconceptions of what went on in the great open spaces were lurid and fantastic. Hollywood, it is true, had not as yet glorified the American cowpuncher, but Bret Harte, Owen Wister, and various anonymous dime novelists had done a fairly good job of press-agenting their version of the wild and woolly. In consequence partly of this fact, partly of a congenital innocence of outlook, my mind was filled with a strange medley as I rode West: blue-eyed, two-gun range riders; fleet, one-man broncs; pallid gamblers; rip-roaring desperados; Indians; cowgirls; gold and red licker—a glamorous jumble that outshone the sunset and made the painted hills seem pale. This, of course, was before I had travelled very far along the iron road that led, I was convinced, to realms of pure romance.

At a little after ten one cloudless morning I climbed down from the train onto a warped wooden platform, blinking in the glare of sunlight that blazed from the white-hot sky. The conductor highballed, the train pulled out, and at once stillness descended like a shroud on the station, on the nondescript collection of shacks that was the town of Holbrook, on the brown plain that stretched away in all directions from that unlovely nucleus. Silence, accentuated by the receding rumble of the train, became profound.

Presently, as my eyes grew accustomed to the glare I was aware of a pair of ponies, dust-covered and gaunt, hitched to a ramshackle buckboard on whose plank seat sat a thin man in overalls and denim shirt, with a wide-brimmed shapeless hat of black felt pulled down over his ears. I walked toward this personage promptly, glad of the presence of a fellow mortal in the silence, the somnolent unreality of the scene.

As I drew nearer I noticed that the thin man's lantern jaw was working slowly and that his light-colored eyes, startlingly apparent in a face burned black by the sun, were fixed thoughtfully on me. I noticed more—in the dark and leathery skin of nose and cheeks were many spots like freckles, but of a bright blue color.

"Where can I find the stage for Springerville?" I asked.

I spoke rather curtly, being worried. Art Dixon, a former classmate of mine who was now District Forester at Albuquerque and through whom I had secured my ranger appointment, had wired ahead so that I would be sure of connecting with the sole conveyance that went south from Holbrook and I dreaded a possible flaw in the arrangement.

But the man on the buckboard