

David Lasser Didn't Know It Was Loaded

With his big blue eyes slightly misty and a tear or two rolling down every once and so often on his typewriter, little David Lasser is telling his sad story (at so much per article) in the New York Post and other newspapers.

He was only an innocent boy away from home and he didn't see the man with the black moustache putting that powder in the beer.

Anyway, little David swears he hadn't the faintest idea what was happening. He looked out on the doorstep and there was a wee little lamb called the Communist Party. It looked so forlorn. So he gently picked it up and took it into the Workers Alliance, back in 1936. And do you know what? He discovered—after only four years, but he's quick that way—that the wee little lamb wasn't a lamb at all. It was a viper, and it stung little David in such an embarrassing place!

... Now it all becomes clear to him, says little David. Things that he passed by before now fit in place just like a jig-saw puzzle.

"Looking back over the last few years," writes the disillusioned little David in the New York Post of August 7, "it seems to me that the Communist leaders always treated the Alliance as a vehicle for propaganda rather than as a mass movement of the unemployed and that, though they insisted on and obtained control, they furnished little organizational support."

"I had wanted to resign in January (from the national presidency) but delayed action because of promises that things would be different and that sincere efforts would be made to develop a leadership representative of the unemployed as a whole. The promises proved empty."

And now that little David has seen the light, he wants to make it up to the unemployed for all the time he missed out. He wants to build "a new unemployed movement which will be 100 per cent American and free of isms."

Some Gaps in Lasser's Story

Little David's story would be very touching; if it were true.

Lasser is one of those intellectuals who, when the depression made it impossible to find a place in the capitalist world, found his way quickly enough onto a payroll in the labor movement. In connection with her foray into the unemployed movement, Mary Fox of the (Norman Thomas) League for Industrial Democracy put him on salary to do unemployed work. It was Mary who saw to it that he became head of the Socialist Party-controlled Workers Alliance; a drab mediocrity, he would have been elbowed aside by any number of bona-fide workers, except for Mary's control of the purse-strings.

Then the Stalinists began their *thrust toward* the "Peoples Front," and hastened to get rid of the Unemployed Councils. They took Lasser up on a mountain top and showed him the glittering world he could have for a small price. Lasser was more than willing.

Lasser Changes Paymasters

By the time the formal unification of the unemployed movement took place in Washington early in 1936, Lasser was hand-in-glove with the Stalinists. The Socialist Party's delegates had no voice in any of the decisions; Lasser didn't trouble to consult them. And the Socialist Party leadership prevented their delegates from taking any steps to stop Lasser. Unity of the S. P. delegation was preserved by letting Lasser do as he pleased.

Already at that convention Lasser showed that he understood exactly what was required of him. He fronted for the Stalinists in the main task preoccupying them: to prevent the hated Trotskyists from securing their rightful place in the united unemployed organization. The National Unemployed League, Trotskyist led, was the third organization in the fusion; it was far more a real organization than the S. P.'s Workers Alliance. It had excellent leaders of proven ability who were ready to go to work in the united organization. Lasser went the limit on behalf of his Stalinist bosses in edging out the Trotskyists.

The Stalinists were much better paymasters than Mary Fox had ever been. They let Lasser stand in the spotlight, and he loved it. He threw overboard—and it didn't make a splash—such "socialism" as he had picked up in the S. P. He became a Peoples Frontier and therefore a New Dealer, whooping it up for Roosevelt along the lines dictated by the Daily Worker. He became personal friends with many of the New Dealers around the White House. It was all very pleasant, and to pay for it by obeying Herbert Benjamin's orders to the letter was no burden at all.

Came the Stalin-Hitler pact, and everything changed. The going got tough. The Stalinists broke with the New Deal. Friends of yesterday began to cut David on the street. Invitations to the right houses dropped off. David began to yell. Herbert Benjamin soothed him: this is only a temporary situation, the line will change, we'll be friends of the democracies once again, and the sun will shine again. David waited a few months, but the sun didn't come through the clouds.

So, just as he dropped Mary Fox for a new paymaster, now he dropped Herbert Benjamin for a better paymaster. He climbed on the bandwagon of the "democracies". Now he is carrying out one of the assignments for the "democracies"—explore of the Communist Party. To make it plausible he opens his blue eyes like an innocent little doll.

But some thousands of workers, who were sold down the river by the Stalinist-Lasser gang, will understand what has happened. This is no case of a worker turning away from the corrupt Communist Party out of loyalty to the working class. This is just a case of a rat leaving a sinking ship.

Batista, Aided By His Stalinist Lackeys Gets Himself "Elected" Cuba's President

HAVANA, Cuba, July 29 (by mail)—In many years there have not been elections more scandalous, more fraudulent and violent than those of July 14 for president, vice-president, senators, representatives, governors and mayors.

The elections of January, 1936, when Miguel M. Gomez was elected president, and the Congressional elections of March, 1938, were purely masquerades of the dictator Batista, which the public did not participate in because the opposition parties had decided on a boycott. On the other hand, in the July 14 elections, as in those of last November for the Constituent Assembly, the public came out en masse to the polls.

The difference between the two candidates—Batista for the government parties and Ramon Grau San Martin for the opposition parties—so far as imperialist politics goes, is not very deep, for if Batista is the tool of finance capital, Grau is not more than a reformist democrat, severely respectful of the status quo.

COMPOSITION OF THE BATISTA BLOC

Batista the dictator launched his presidential candidacy as the "champion of democracy," the poetic title conferred on him by his Stalinist lackeys; and the coalition of parties, more accurately political gangs, that supported his candidacy, adopted the pompous name of "Democratic Socialist Coalition." One must examine the composition of this coalition in order to understand its true significance.

It is composed, first of all, of the Liberal Party, the old party of the dictator Machado and headed by the same accomplices of his dictatorship who had to flee from Cuba in August, 1933.

The Democratic Party of ex-president Menocal was in the opposition until the elections for the Constituent Assembly, when it joined Batista because he offered Menocal the vice-presidency and a large number of senatorships. It represents the interests of the sugar industry and the landlords; it is a new form of the old Conservative Party. One of its chief leaders, Eliecio Arguelles, has been personal representative of Franco in Cuba and organizer of the "Spanish Falange" in Havana.

The other parties in the Batista bloc—National Union, United National Democratic, Popular Cuban and National Revolutionary—represent nothing more than their leaders, simple lackeys in Batista's service.

As for the Communist Party, its collaboration with Batista began during the "Popular Front" period, and although since then has come its turn to attacking the "democratic" imperialists, its Cuban politics has not changed.

The program of this "Democratic Socialist Coalition" is the usual stuff of those bourgeois parties everywhere: "democracy," "social justice," "distribution of land," etc.

The Opposition Bloc consists of Grau San Martin's Cuban Revolutionary Party; Republican Action Party, headed by ex-president Gomez; and the A.B.C. Party of Martinez Saenz and others.

The Cuban Revolutionary Party is without doubt the largest party in Cuba, for the mass section of the workers and peasants support it. Despite the workers' element, however, it is a very heterogeneous party. Its leadership is typically petty-bourgeois and demagogic. Its "program" is a mixture of pseudo-anti-imperialist reforms, with chauvinistic nationalism concretized in its "Cuba for the Cubans" slogan. Its popularity is due to the fact that the people identify the gains made in the revolutionary period with Grau San Martin's government after Machado's fall.

Gomez's party represents no more than his personal political influence. The A.B.C. has been the party of most definite fascist tendency in Cuba, but in the last years has made a turn toward democracy. In reality it has always represented the interests of the reactionary petty bourgeoisie and of the Spanish business men in commerce.

Programmatically the Opposition Bloc presents nothing worthy of mention: the same demagogic promises as its opponents. Nevertheless the triumph of this Bloc would have signified a rise in the level of the struggle of the masses, bringing the government into conflict with them and obliging it to grant new concessions. It would have served to liquidate the myth of Grau San Martin when he would have to prove with deeds his real political position.

BATISTA'S STRONG-ARM METHODS DESCRIBED

From the results of the Constituent Assembly elections last November, Batista understood that he could now win only by strong-arm methods. Last November he was defeated by a slight margin—and that with nothing like the popular interest that the present elections had. Consequently his preparatory campaign of violence, compulsion and fraud commenced months before the July elections.

Although Batista ostensibly retired from the army, he continued to be its real chief. The army continues to be "the armed party" that above all obeys its chief. In the countryside, the little villages, the sugar centers, days before the election the soldiers, with threats, took away from the workers and peasants the personal identification cards issued to each voter, without which it was impossible for them to vote. Election day the same soldiers prevented a large part of oppositionists from voting. In some places they forced oppositionist members of the polling boards to sign the election lists in blank and then to leave the polling places. In addition Batista used a great number of forged election-identification cards for his agents to vote many times.

The Opposition Bloc expected these things, but in place of adopting an attitude of resistance, the only thing they did was to ask guarantees of Col. Pedraza, nominal chief of the army, showering him with flattering entreaties—Pedraza, assassin of hundreds of workers, students and revolutionaries! The orders of the Superior Electoral Tribunal, asking the chief of the army to take into

custody various officials accused of compulsion, did not receive the least respect.

In the face of this crude masquerade, Grau San Martin and his associates have behaved cowardly and miserably. They have done practically nothing. On the other hand, among the people is to be noted a deep discontent, and we can predict that Batista will not govern "a happy and contented people", in the words of Blas Roca, Stalinist leader.

ROLE OF THE COMMUNIST PARTY

In this tragedy of the Cuban people, the Stalinist party has a prominent role as Batista's agent within the working class. With the financial aid of Batista, of the big magnates of the manufacturing industries, and the many thousands of pesos drawn from the Cuban people during the Spanish civil war, the Stalinists have paid the costs of the most elaborate and extraordinary propaganda in order to deceive the people. Airplanes, radio broadcasts, periodicals, pamphlets, leaflets, etc.—all the media of modern propaganda have been used by the Stalinists to convince the people that Batista is the champion of democracy.

Despite all these services, they have not been treated very well by Batista. When he made his pact with Menocal, the latter successfully demanded that no senatorships be given to the Stalinists, who wanted at least one for their leader, Professor Marinello. Then the Stalinists decided to run Marinello as their mayoralty candidate in Havana City, against Menocal's son and ex-president Gomez, the respective candidates of the government and opposition tickets. Menocal won by fraud, employing it also against the Stalinists.

In spite of all the violence, even the opposition parties increased their vote in relation to that obtained in November. But the Communist Party lost 25% of the votes it had gotten in November. This is a symptom that indicates the beginning of its decline. In Havana Province the Stalinists supported for governor Guas Inchan, intimate adviser of Machado, who won the election. And in Santiago de Cuba they supported for mayor Justo Salas, a known Machado pistolero (gangster), who had to flee from Cuba in 1932. There are typical examples of the disastrous gambles of Stalinist politics.

Notwithstanding the fact that, in spite of their loyalty to Batista, they themselves were defrauded of votes in many places, the Stalinists' paper, *Hoja*, proclaims every day that "never has there been in Cuba elections more honorable than those of July 14."

Profit Demand Holds Up Arms Program

Our so-called "liberal" press has apparently placed a taboo on an attempt to explain and understand what happened in France.

The revelation of widespread corruption and sabotage and treason in high places in that country is passed off as something peculiarly French and, as such, not fit for close examination or, God forbid, for comparison with the situation here in the United States.

Except, of course, for the stories that the French workers were so greedily intent on their fight for a better standard of living that the morale of the country was undermined. This is the kind of bunk that is being passed off as an "explanation" of the unprecedentedly swift collapse of France as a continental power.

We have been getting some of the same kind of talk about conditions here. When workers struck at the Kearny (New Jersey) shipyards some weeks ago demanding wage increases corresponding in some small measure to the new super-profits of the ship-builders, they were howled down as traitors, saboteurs and fifth-columnists. Roosevelt has openly declared that workers shall not be allowed to strike in their own behalf in industries working for the rearmament program.

For our part, we have never ceased to hammer away at the fact that for the bosses this business of war and patriotism is business measured solely and exclusively in dollars and cents. All the rest about "national unity" and "defense of the homeland" is so much eyewash. It took years after the last war for the public finally to learn how the country had been taken for a whole of a ride by Morgan, Dupont, and Co.

French Events Repeated Here

Now, with the rearmament drive only just beginning and billions already voted out of the people's pockets by Congress, we are getting a glimmer of the tremendous push and pull going on among the industrialists and financiers for slices of this gigantic melon, for good places at the sumptuous table set at the expense of the people.

In an unusually bold article in the New York Post on August 6, Edward P. Flynn, noted newspaper reporter, declared flatly that: "Strike of capital is blocking the national defense program." Flynn went into some of the recent testimony before Congressional committees which did not get much notice in the press. He also took a look at the actual performance as compared to some of the recent talk emitting from various rearmament bodies in Washington. He concluded: "The market in patriotism is extremely active, and the sale price is shooting up every day."

According to the Flynn article, the big patriotic industrialists are taking as their text these days the famous 1917 statement of Pierre du Pont, who then wrote: "we cannot assent to allowing our own patriotism to interfere with our duties as trustees (of stockholders)."

"Washington" reported Flynn, "is crowded with lobbyists and high pressure salesmen and top executives of corporations trying to find out what they can do for their country, at what price, and at what profit."

The rearmament orders all require considerable plant expansion. Our patriotic capitalists want the people's money plunked down now in single big chunks to cover the entire cost of that expansion and to leave them free afterward to dispose as they wish of the new facilities thus presented to them on silver platters.

Holding out for this, the big companies, like U. S. Steel, are deliberately sabotaging on army and navy orders or else refuse to accept contracts. "The steel companies (writes Flynn) refuse to contract to deliver armor plate. The aviation companies refuse to contract to deliver planes." Flynn goes on to give instances, cited by official navy spokesmen before a House subcommittee, where money appropriated to pay for some of these orders was poured into the coffers of the contracting companies as pure, unadulterated gravy in order to hasten production.

In one case, Admiral W. R. Furlong told a Senate group he had to pay \$1,700,000—the full cost of new tools—to the Bethlehem Steel Co. because that company had quit negotiations with the Treasury for armor plate orders. "Two companies which refused to do business on armor plate under the terms of the Vinson-Trammell Act limiting their profits to 8 percent," adds Flynn, "were U. S. Steel and Midvale."

These are just glimpses of the real picture behind the present preparations for war. The result is going to be a swift drive toward totalitarianism, especially as the war peril draws steadily closer. The individual capitalist is going to be put in time with the goose step for the great good of the capitalist class as a whole. Under that set-up the biggest of the capitalists in a tight, small group, will reap greater super-profits than ever while the workers and the people generally will be hammered down to lower and lower living levels.

This is what we're in for unless the workers take it all over. Then there will really be something for every man and woman to defend and there will be the possibility of doing without the inner corruption which accompanies capitalism as inevitably as does war itself.

Delete simile, "Strong as the Rock of Gibraltar": The arrival in England of approximately 1000 women and children from Gibraltar and Malta was announced by a London AP dispatch.

Appeasement Likely Until U. S. War Machine Is Ready

The call for "cooperation" between the United States and Nazi Germany sounded by Charles Lindbergh, is the culmination of a series of rapidly accumulating under-cover signs that a small but growing and powerful section of American finance capitalism is tending in the direction of "armed appeasement" of Nazi Germany.

The call by Lindbergh, comes upon the heels of a sensational revelation by the New York *Herald Tribune*, that the residence of Gerhard Westrick, Hitler's commercial emissary to American capitalists, was being converted into a "busy roadhouse" by a constant stream of American capitalists. The *Tribune* reports that the Nazi emissary is residing at the beautiful Scarsdale estate of Harold A. Callan and that among the frequent visitors is Thorheld Rieber. Callan is attorney for the National City Bank, second largest bank in America, Rieber is chairman of the Texas Company, a satellite in the vast oil empire of the Rockefeller. The Rockefellers are also among the largest stockholders in the National City Bank.

The National City Bank is not just another big bank. Its importance lies in the fact that it has more than 66 branches all over the globe; no American bank has even more than five branches. By virtue of the fact that its business is so deeply intertwined with the export and import trade of the entire country, it exercises a wide influence in every section of the U. S. State department. It is often the direct factor in the adoption of foreign policies. The National City Bank is also important for another reason: It is controlled by the very biggest of America's Sixty Families; its biggest stockholders are A. P. Giannini, J. P. Morgan and Co., and the Rockefellers. When, on one of those rare occasions, the National City, permits its spokesmen to make a statement, the statement is sure to reflect the opinion of some of America's biggest multi-millionaires.

June 18th was one of those rare occasions. Joseph H. Durrell, head of the bank's overseas division and its senior vice-president, gave an exclusive interview to the N. Y. *World Telegram*, which was discreetly relegated to the financial page.

FOR BUSINESS AS USUAL IN EUROPE

During the course of the interview, Mr. Durrell is reported to have said:

"No matter who runs Europe the need for American banking service will continue to exist there, and National City's overseas division will be there supplying that service... (our) business will go on whatever the regime."

The same attitude is indicated in such powerful organs of high finance as the *Wall Street Journal* and the *Commercial and Financial Chronicle*. On the day that

the terms of a renewal of the agreement had been completed and the American committee was returning to the U. S. The bankers are therefore looking forward toward the payment of \$40,000,000 that the Nazi Government has promised to pay to the Wall Street bankers.

Actual signing of the renewal agreement, if not already signed, is probably awaiting the death knell of the British Empire.

WHY HITLER NEEDS THE BRITISH FLEET

What is the fundamental strategy of the American bourgeoisie—vis-a-vis Nazi imperialism? The American bourgeoisie knows very well that the wealth of the British Empire lies not on the continent of Europe but in the overseas colonies and possessions, i. e., in Asia, Africa and South America; that this colonial booty is now the main objective of Nazi imperialism. Hitler's victory on the European continent merely broadens German imperialism's base in the struggle for world markets and colonies. These can be secured only if he controls the seven seas to the same extent that British imperialism did.

If in the coming Battle of Britain, Hitler destroys the British fleet or the British scuttle it, Nazi imperialism will not be able to cash in on Britain's vast colonial Empire; that requires a fleet at least equal in strength to the present combined British and German naval forces. Merely operating from its own European base at its present naval strength must inevitably result in Germany's seeing at least half of British colonial loot falling into the hands of Yankee imperialism.

Hitler must know, as U. S. imperialism well knows, that in the Western Hemisphere alone combined Allied investments and colonial possessions, gold excluded, amount to about fifteen billions of dollars. These investments are beyond the reach of Hitler. American investments in Europe do not amount to more than three billions.

U. S. STRATEGY TOWARD GERMANY

The great danger to American imperialism rises out of the loss of markets which would come in the wake of a Nazi-dominated Europe; both in Europe itself and in South America. This is so because Germany is a highly industrialized country producing the same finished products and requiring the same raw materials as U. S. imperialism. Therein lies the basis for sharp economic warfare leading to imperialism war.

The weapons in the hands of a Nazi-dominated Europe in the struggle for markets will be a tremendous lowering of labor standards and hourly increases in the working day. Already Amer-

ican capitalists are raising the demand for lower labor costs here to meet Nazi economic competition.

American finance capitalism, therefore, intends first of all to attempt an economic war with Germany so far as the overseas countries go—and to cooperate with Nazi Germany as far as trade with the European continent is concerned until it meets Germany in war. At the same time American imperialism is unloading upon the backs of the American workers the most stupendous armament expenditures in order to build a gigantic two-ocean navy capable of meeting Nazi imperialism. This constitutes the strategy of American finance capitalism in the present international situation.

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