

By Dwight Macdonald

# SPARKS IN THE NEWS

In discussing Guerin's book in this column two weeks ago, I made some remarks on an article in Harper's by Gunther Reimann, "Doing Business in Germany." This article seemed to me to be trying to prove the well-worn thesis of bourgeois journalism: the business man as well as the workers gets it in the neck under Hitler. Mr. Reimann, however, writes in and protests that I "misunderstood and misinterpreted" his article. "In general, you indicate that I do not think fascism is a class phenomenon," he writes. "I want to state that I regard fascism as the deepest stage of capitalist decay and a class phenomenon, and that I did not say anything contrary to this opinion in that article. The decay of capitalism produces new features which have to be studied and one of these features is the destruction of the sanctity of private property and private property rights by fascism."

I am glad Mr. Reimann is not deceived as to the nature of fascism, and I agree that its violation of private property rights is something worth much attention. But I must still maintain that an article devoted only to this point and printed in a magazine like Harper's gives the reader who is not familiar with Mr. Reimann's political stand in general (as I was) the impression that he is trying to demonstrate the anti-capitalist nature of fascism. Especially when its concluding sentence is: "To Germany's business men, harassed by the Party, dogged by State Commissars at every move, insecure, worried about present and future, the Nazi 'economists' can only toss the slogan 'Live Dangerously!'"

I am glad to be able to clear up Mr. Reimann's position on fascism. I only wish he had made it equally clear in the pages of Harper's.

## France and the Refugees

The best news account I have read on one of the most shocking and scandalous horror stories of all time, is the recent story in Time on France's treatment of the 450,000 Spanish refugees who fled over the Catalan border a month ago. After pointing out that the United States has offered to take in just 352 of the 450,000 and the Soviet Union has opened its gates to "only a few big Loyalist leaders"—the story gets down to the meat—and very maggoty meat it is, too. I think the details are worth quoting:

"Stuck with the refugees, French authorities adopted methods calculated to help 'persuade' them that they would be better off almost anywhere else. Typical rations were one loaf of bread for six men, a sack of rice for 400 men. Sanitation has been non-existent. Open latrines have been dug in the camp sand and all modesty about nature's functions has long ago disappeared.

"The largest camps are situated on a treeless sandy beach just North of the Spanish border near Argeles-sur-Mer and St. Cyprien. They are enclosed by barbed wire, guarded every 20 feet by a Senegalese soldier. Inside the wire the camps are like some fantastically huge hobo jungle. Only a few refugees have roofs over their heads; the great majority dig holes in the sand and cover themselves with

dirty sheets, blankets or coats. Many sleep in the open, rain or shine. Icy sea winds blow the sands continually. Most of the refugees have developed conjunctivitis. Fuel in the large camps is scarce. Cooking is done exclusively in tin cans. At one camp men and women at first stood in line all day waiting to get a little water from a small faucet. At another the only water available—and it is brackish—is obtained from pumps driven into the sand. All the water is bad and it is estimated that 60% of the refugees—or 250,000—have dysentery.

The refugees have been classified as 220,000 militiamen, 40,000 able-bodied civilian men, 10,000 wounded, 180,000 women and children. Hospital facilities are limited and primitive. Many men with weeks-old wounds covered by filthy dressings are still unattended. . . The refugees have become a danger to the general health of adjacent communities. . . Marseilles gangsters, always in need of women for the white-slave traffic which supplies Africa and South American countries with prostitutes, were reported circulating in the camps looking for new personnel."

Time adds (1) "Although amply warned of the huge human tide approaching, the French Government made few advance arrangements to receive the refugees." (2) "The chances are that France in the end will not be out one sou. The daily \$185,000 bill can be met for a long time by expropriating the treasures the Loyalists deposited and shipped to France months ago."

## R.S.V.P.

But let it not be thought the refugees huddled in their holes on the beaches of St. Cyprien are altogether friendless. The North American Committee to Aid Spanish Democracy still exists, and the other day I received tangible proof of this: a large formal invitation, in the most elegant type faces, requesting the pleasure of my company at a dinner at the Hotel Commodore "to welcome Vincent Sheehan, who has just returned from Spain."

A battery of "Distinguished Foreign Correspondents and Writers," including Dorothy Parker, would lead a discussion on "THE SPANISH CONFLICT AND ITS INTERNATIONAL SIGNIFICANCE." The roster of Patrons and Patronesses took four impressive columns. Let the refugees take heart! They have some very high-class friends—so powerful and respectable, indeed, that it seems hardly possible, with such support, that the Spanish Republic is now at its last gasp. But let the refugees not be downcast so long as their cause is the cause of Mr. Franklin P. Adams and Miss Ika Chase and Mr. Malcolm Cowley and Mrs. Muriel Draper and the Hon. and Mrs. Stanley M. Isaacs and Mr. Rockwell Kent and Miss Freda Kirchwey and Mr. and Mrs. Henry Goddard Leach and Dr. Max Lerner and Bishop Francis J. McConnell and Dr. Thomas Mann and Mr. Frederick March and Col. William Jay Schieffelin and Miss Sylvia Sidney and Mr. George Soule and Mr. Franchot Tone and Mr. Oswald Garrison Villard. "R.S.V.P." read the invitation but I didn't.

# Wall St. Cracks Whip At 'Democracy' Meet

## Yankee Imperialism Rides High As Lickspittles Work Zealously for Roosevelt Policy

(Special to the Socialist Appeal)  
BUENOS AIRES, Mar. 28.—With the most distinguished "left wing" prima-donnas of Latin-America attending,—including the Chief of the Nazi Party of Chile, Gonzalez von Marees!—a reunion pompously styled "Congress of American Democracies" was held recently in the city of Montevideo.

What was the purpose of this much-publicized gathering? Apparently to fight for the preservation of "democracy" in the Western Hemisphere. In fact, however, it was to proclaim the unconditional surrender of Latin America to Yankee imperialism, the "good" imperialism which is going to defend our countries from Nazi imperialism, that "bad" imperialism which threatens us and seeks to devour us—according to these spokesmen of Wall Street.

There is nothing to marvel at, then, that gathered together under these auspices, the Congress of Montevideo should have resulted in a fiesta of high-sounding phrases, of praises to the "democracy" of our countries, of cheers for the New Deal, of cries of admiration for great President Roosevelt—of shameless prostration before Wall Street.

## A Packed Affair

Not one word was uttered against these liberal and "left-wing" lies and almost all the resolutions were passed by acclamation by the crowd of delegates, intoxicated with "democracy" and "good neighborliness."

Little did it matter to them that the masses of workers looked at this Congress with evident indifference and suspicion; little did it matter that the Uruguayan President Baldomir, answered the telegrams of support that came to him from the United States (proclaiming him the Protector of liberty of speech) and demonstrated what kind of "democracy" exists in Latin America, by placing the Congress under the gag of laws that limited and made fictitious all liberty of speech; little did it matter that while the delegates were burning incense to President Roosevelt, the working masses of Latin America continued groaning under the yoke of the Yankee exploiters and that Puerto Rico continued shedding its blood in the search for independence.

## "Confederation" . . . for Dictators

The vile Stalinist betrayers, "socialists," Apristas and "revolutionaries" accomplished their mission with zeal and in closing the Congress voted by a great majority the creation of the "Confederation of American Democracies" under the shelter of Roosevelt and with the connivance of all the great "democrats" of Latin America, the bloody dictators: Getulio Vargas, Benavides, Batista, Ibanez, etc.

It is true that the Apristas made their "reservations" concerning Yankee imperialism, but not only did they fail to raise their voices against that imperialism and against the "Confederation," but they also paid tribute to Roosevelt and his "Good Neighbor" policy, as did the Mexican delegates, members of the Party of President Cardenas.

The resolutions of the Congress were shameless collaborations with the Wall Street bankers, encouraging their loans, urging the tightening of commercial relations with the United States and loyal consideration for its investments, all of which made one wonder what it all had to do with the defense of "democracy." The Congress of Montevideo, according to its sponsors, aspired to outdo the Lima Congress, as an expression of support to the United States. And in reality it outdid it as an expression of shameless submission, and blind servility.

# Where Will the C.L.U. Draw a Line on "Freedom to Speak"?

There is no doubt that the Civil Liberties Union of America believes in freedom of speech. And that's a good thing. We, too, are all for free speech, and more of it. Unfortunately for the C.L.U., however, it is just a bit too indiscriminate in its belief for working class tastes. Its defense of the Nazi's right to spread their poisonous filth is, for example, notorious. It might just as well defend the rights of a scab—the two are on the same plane.

Now, through the columns of the anarchist journal, *Man*, we learn of another instance of the vicious lengths to which the C.L.U. will go in according freedom of speech to labor's enemies, to the point where it utterly disregards working class sensibilities. By inviting Judge Yankwich to speak at a recent Los Angeles meeting it showed a signal disrespect for Marcus Graham, editor of *Man*, who for 19 years has been hounded because of his views, and who, most recently, was sentenced to 6 months imprisonment by the very same Judge Yankwich for refusing to present testimony against himself on a 19-year-old deportation order.

Insult Working Class  
Elementary decency would require any organization that presumes so much as by a whisper to stand for working class rights to show nothing but contempt for a Judge Yankwich. But not the C.L.U. For, though the judge has done a little free-speech suppressing himself, it turns out that he is otherwise and after all, a very fine, liberal man.

And so on March 7, the Los Angeles C.L.U. arranged a celebration to honor the 150th anniversary of the Bill of Rights with Judge Yankwich as one of the principal speakers. To cap the insult (to every labor militant as well as to Graham) the chairman of the meeting was A. L. Wirin, the attorney whom the C.L.U. has provided to defend Graham.

Graham protested the insult in a telegram to Roger Baldwin, national head of the C.L.U. Baldwin replied that discretion in such matters rests in the hands of the local committees. Far from shifting the responsibility of the national organization, Baldwin's telegram only sharpens it.

Marcus Graham was arrested in April, 1919 charged with possessing anarchist literature, and ordered deported to Canada which refused to admit him. Since 1919, Graham has been repeatedly arrested, and on one occasion brutally maltreated. Arrested again in 1937 he was charged with being the editor of *Man*. On January 14, 1938 Judge Yankwich sentenced Graham to 6 months for refusing to testify against himself. Yankwich's sentence was reversed by the Circuit Court of Appeals which remanded the case to the lower court to decide upon which questions are self-incriminating. Graham is scheduled to appear before Yankwich on May 8, and it is almost a forgone conclusion that the sentence will be renewed.

# Hunger, Fear, Misery -- That Is All Capitalism Has to Offer Us

A strikingly vivid disclosure of the fear and insecurity which haunt the different sections of the working class in America has been made public by the American Institute of Public Opinion, of which Dr. George Gallup is director.

President Roosevelt's power rests almost entirely on the fear, insecurity, and destitution which face all the lower income groups of America, according to the nation-wide survey just completed by the Institute. It is the menace of inadequate relief, of starvation which gives Roosevelt his influence over the voters despite the unpopularity of many measures sponsored by him.

The masses are stalemated in Roosevelt's blind alley and have not yet found another road to escape from the insecurity of the capitalist system.

Psychologically at least, states the survey in one of its most significant sections, the average American considers himself a member of the middle class. He feels this despite the ever-widening gap between the working class and the capitalist class, the razor-

edge closeness of the average American to the slow starvation of relief or charity, and the hopelessness of ever finding security under capitalism. No matter how great his poverty, psychologically the average American working man fails to recognize his membership in the class to which he belongs economically.

This psychological condition, we add, is a direct reflection of the lack of a large revolutionary party in the United States and a direct proof of the need to spread more widely the transitional program of the Socialist Workers Party in order to bridge the gap between the working man's mental outlook and his economic condition.

From a carefully selected cross-section of persons in all parts of the United States—excluding entirely farmers and persons actually on relief—the Institute determined that 35 per cent of those who do the work in America would be compelled to apply for relief within six months' time or sooner if they lost their present jobs. This group added to the 17 per cent now on relief constitutes more than half of what Dr. Gallup classifies as the "working population" of the United States.

## Insecurity Main Factor

It is this nation-wide insecurity of the workers which provides the impetus behind the movement for old-age pensions, for loans to home owners, for relief appropriations, and for large public works. The Institute states that it is this insecurity which will act as the decisive factor on the policies of candidates, platforms, and parties in the coming 1940 election.

The survey shows that out of every five persons interviewed, one would have to apply for relief within a month's time or even sooner if he should lose his job tomorrow. If all such persons lost their jobs, points out the Institute, it would mean doubling the nation's present relief load by May.

Another large group, according to the survey, could hold out for a period between one month and six months if they were to lose their jobs immediately.

These two groups plus those now on relief constitute 52 per cent of the working population in the United States.

The greatest relative insecurity exists among skilled and unskilled laborers. One third of those questioned stated that they would have to apply for relief within one month. But the insecurity line, shows the survey, is perilously close for many who belong to the white-collar class—clerks, office workers, etc.

## Class Listings

The political gap between the "haves" and the "have-nots" has been steadily widening states the Gallup poll, yet 9 out of 10 considered themselves upon questioning as belonging

to the middle class. Only one American in 16 thinks of himself as a member of the "lower" class (the Gallup poll should have read "working" class) while only another one in sixteen describes himself as belonging to the upper class.

## The Way Out

If it were written in fire it could not be plainer than the facts disclosed by this Gallup poll that American capitalism is staggering at the edge of its grave, that it can offer nothing but hunger, fear, desolation, misery, shameful death upon a foreign battlefield over some stockholder's income. American capitalism is shot with decay from top to bottom. It rests upon nothing but the misconception of the working man that he is a member of a class that has become almost non-existent.

The construction of socialism offers the only escape from fear, poverty, and insecurity. When the workers of America realize this fact, when they have completed the transition from believing they can make good as wolves in the fight for profits to the understanding that only collective action for socialism can win security, then they will swear loyalty to their own class, the great and powerful working class, and Roosevelt and the whole regime he represents will vanish like a horrible dream.

## New Courses Open In Y.P.S.L. School

The Karl Liebknecht School of the Young People's Socialist League, now at its half way point, plans to expand its program of activities.

A new course will be added next week to the two courses now running. It will consist of three lectures, on the Russian Revolution of 1917, the German Revolution of 1918-23, and the Chinese Revolution of 1925-27. Comrade Felix Morrow, associate editor of the *Socialist Appeal* will lead this course.

Ernest Erber, National Educational Director of the Y.P.S.L., is giving the course in the Elements of Marxism. Comrade M. S. Miller, Financial Director of the N. Y. Division, is leading the lectures on Organizational Problems.

Because of the demand of members of the Y.P.S.L. and friends of the League for a change of date, the Liebknecht School will hold sessions on Saturday, beginning with April 15. The following is the time schedule for the school:

- 1 P.M.-2 P.M.—Elements of Marxism.
- 1 P.M.-2 P.M.—Organizational Problems.
- 2 P.M.-3 P.M.—The Three Revolutions.

The classes are being held at 51 East 7th St. (basement), New York City, the headquarters of the Sedov Unit of the Y.P.S.L.

## MEN AND WOMEN OF LABOR

# OUT OF THE PAST

By EMANUEL GARRETT

URIAH S. STEPHENS  
(Aug. 3, 1821-Feb. 13, 1882)

Had it not been for the Panic of 1837, it is quite possible that Uriah S. Stephens would have completed his training for the ministry. As it was, he became a tailor instead; and, through being a tailor, a worker, he became a leader of American trade unionism; the founder of the Knights of Labor.

Like a good many trade unionists of his day, Stephens concerned himself with the general problems of working class welfare in addition to those of simple trade union interest. The trade union to Stephens was to be a lever for the execution of ideas which aimed at the revision of the social system along semi-socialistic lines. In fact, it has been claimed that Stephens was partly influenced by Marx, though there is no evidence to support the claim, either in facts or the specific nature of his ideas.

Dissatisfied with narrow craft organization, Stephens aimed at a brotherhood of all wage earners that would include all sexes, all creeds and all colors. This latter was of especial importance. Abolitionist sentiment was strong among the northern workers, but few unions were willing to accept Negroes as members—as is the case with many trade unions to this day.

## Secrecy a Cardinal Principle

Building on the basis of the Garment Cutter's Association of Philadelphia which he had helped organize in 1862, Stephens moved towards the construction of a labor organization modeled according to his aims. In 1869, the Noble Order of the Knights of Labor was formally founded.

Composed of only a few unions at its beginning, limited to the east, the Knights gradually extended over the continent, to the point where, the most powerful labor organization of its day, it numbered 3/4 million members in 1886.

Secret ritual governed the activities of the organization at its inception. Names were never referred to publicly. Stephens for example signed his articles with five stars, and was so known in the organization. (The Knights were not the only labor organization which went in for secrecy during the 70's. Workers turned to secrecy as a reaction to the drive of the bosses against all unions, marked by lockouts, disruption of unions and various kinds of discrimination against union men.

When the first national assembly of the Knights met in 1878, Stephens was still sufficiently powerful in the organization to write the principle of secrecy into the preamble.

"Open and public association having failed after a struggle of centuries to advance or

protect the interest of labor," read the preamble. "We have lawfully constituted this assembly," and "in using this power of organized effort and cooperation, we but imitate the example of capital heretofore set in numberless instances." However, "We mean no conflict with legitimate enterprise, no antagonism to necessary capital." Those evils of the social order which were beyond correction by ordinary trade union effort were to be corrected by education and legislation, from which a cooperative commonwealth would eventually emerge.

## Anti-Secrecy Faction Wins

Though Stephens had carried the day on secrecy at the first national assembly, the reaction against it mounted constantly. First, the Catholics—who made up a powerful section of the organized workers in the United States opposed secrecy as being in conflict with their religion. Second, the defeat of the railroad strikes of 1877 and the crushing of the Molly Maguires after the great mine strike actions of the middle 70's turned the tide sharply against secrecy. A good many unionists feared they would be accused of criminal activities if they continued their secret organization.

In 1879, Stephens resigned as Grand Master Workman. He was succeeded to the leadership of the Knights by Terrence Powderly who as leader of the Catholic faction had been challenging Stephens' leadership. The oath and secrecy were expunged from the principles of the Knights. A new preamble was written. This new preamble pointed to the necessity of checking wealth, which, unchecked, would lead to the pauperization of the working class.

Under Powderly, the Knights reached its zenith of influence. But at the very time that it was already on the downgrade. Lack of militancy in the conduct of strikes, its failure to lead strikes when necessary, cut into the influence of the Knights. Workers turning to militant action, joined other and newer bodies. Then, with the organization of the American Federation of Labor, the Knights had to contend with a young and vigorous rival, and on a national scale.

Stephens completed his life almost entirely separated from the trade union movement. A pioneer in organizing American labor, he was nevertheless not the kind to catch the imagination as Powderly did after him. He didn't flash across the country with the brilliance of his oratory or his writing. But in the creation of the Knights of Labor and the introduction of a new phase in labor organization, he did leave behind him an important record—written across a large page of American labor history.

# WEST COAST SEAMEN FACE THREAT

(Continued from Page 1)  
fuse to accept the fink book in the first place.

The fink book was defeated by their determined resistance, although the defection of the Communist Party - controlled East Coast seamen resulted in a partial defeat for the seamen, when the government put through the system of making a "certificate of identification"—not a continuous discharge record, but including fingerprinting, etc.—the only alternative to carrying a fink book.

Even this momentary retreat by the government did not last. It soon returned to the attack, early in 1937, when it set up the United States Maritime Commission for the ostensible purpose of rehabilitating the American merchant marine.

In the calculations of the admirals, the American merchant marine is considered an important adjunct of the Navy. In a recent radio address, Admiral Land, chairman of the Maritime Commission, declared that "the backlog of the Merchant Marine Act under which our commission functions is that the merchant marine is an auxiliary of the Navy."

And in accord with this conception, the Maritime Commission announced its labor policy, the central point of which is: "No discrimination shall be made because of membership or non-membership in any organization" on ships controlled by the commission. The usual formula of all open-shop reactionaries!

In order to carry out this policy the commission opened its own hiring halls—fink halls the sailors call them—on the East Coast, to supply personnel for ships operated by the commission.

## Lessons of Last War

The outbreak of the last war found the American merchant marine in a deplorable state. The number of ships were inadequate to meet the requirements of the war machine and those in service were for the most part obsolete.

An emergency building program was initiated under the direction of the Emergency Fleet Corporation to meet the need for additional tonnage. Sea-service bureaus were established to facilitate government control of personnel and a training ship program was launched to train seamen to man the vessels. Thousands of raw youth were trained in these schools. The emergency character of this program resulted in a tremendous waste of men and materials and handicapped the war machine.

The then leaders of the seamen's unions collaborated with the government in promoting the war. It was their proud boast that not one word stoppage or strike interfered with the conduct of the war. They were rewarded for this faithfulness to the American capitalist class by having their unions smashed in 1921 by the very machine they had helped to build, namely the sea-service bureaus, training ships, etc. of the Emergency Fleet Corporation.

Profiting by their experience in the last war, the American capitalist class under the guidance of Roosevelt is determined to be fully prepared for the coming war. The Emergency Fleet Corporation, sea-service bureaus, training ships, etc., are now being duplicated in advance of the actual outbreak of armed conflict. An extensive building program is

underway. The sea-service bureaus of 1917—hiring halls—have been established anew together with training ships, and a labor policy is being advanced which is designed to reduce the seamen to the status of servile automatons under Navy discipline and to destroy the militant organizations which the seamen have built by heroic struggle.

At first the Maritime Commission pursued a cautious policy. A few fink-halls were opened on the east coast. The east coast seamen were divided. They did not have the militant tradition of struggle which characterized the growth and development of the Pacific Coast seamen. The Stalinists were in the leadership of the largest union, the National Maritime Union, and by this time (1938-'39) the People's Front had broadened out into the Democratic Front. There were now no more ardent supporters of Roosevelt and all of his works than the firm of Browder and Co. And one of Roosevelt's prize creations was the United States Maritime Commission.

Stalinists Aid Government  
While giving lip-service to the fight against the Commission's fink-halls, the Stalinists proceeded to "fight" the fink-halls—by ordering the membership of the N.M.U. to "pack the fink-halls"! Thus the admirals were assured of a plentiful supply of personnel to man their ships. So diligent were the lackeys of the Kremlin in the application of their policy, that when West Coast seamen in New York and Baltimore threw a picket line around the Commission halls, the Stalinists ordered their men through the line, contend-

ing that it "was all a plot." In addition to "fighting" the fink-hall by helping it to function, the Stalinist stalwarts in the leadership of the N.M.U. endorsed the training-ship program, much to the gratification of the admirals in charge who complimented them on their "statesmanship."

## But Seamen Fight

In the meantime, however, the seamen on the Pacific Coast carried on an unremitting struggle against the Commission's open-shop drive and gave notice that any attempt to establish non-union hiring halls on the West Coast would result in a tie-up of the entire coast.

Since their success on the East Coast was achieved with such ease, the admirals grew bolder. Early in March of this year, the Commission announced that vessels owned and operated by the Maritime Commission would sail out of the port of Seattle on the Seattle-Orient run, and that the "usual" labor policy of the Maritime Commission would prevail. Which meant that the admirals were preparing to invade the West Coast.

The reaction of the West Coast seamen was immediate. The Sailors Union of the Pacific membership meeting at headquarters (San Francisco) adopted a unanimous resolution calling for a secret referendum strike vote in the event the Maritime Commission opened up fink halls on the west coast.

In the face of this militant response of the Sailors, the Stalinists in control of the once powerful Pacific Coast Maritime Federation—which now includes neither the sailors nor the firemen—were seized with

panic. They had the impudence to address a communication to the S.U.P. stating that "only those picket lines approved by the Maritime Federation of the Pacific on this government hiring hall issue will be recognized."

In effect, the ultimatum meant that only those picket lines approved by the Communist Party would be recognized. The Sailors Union gave the Browder wrecking crew the answer they deserved and in a thorough exposure of the role of the Stalinists as unofficial hangers on the Roosevelt administration, told them to go plumb to hell!

## A Fight to Finish

The West Coast seamen are fully alive to the threat of the open-shop, union-smashing program of the Maritime Commission and will fight to the end to maintain the integrity of their organizations. The Stalinists who so recently hoisted the white flag of surrender over Madrid after stabbing the back with the treacherous dagger of People's Frontism will not succeed in placing the hangman's noose of Democratic Frontism around the necks of the West Coast seamen. The majority of the seamen are aware of who their enemies are both without and within, and are thus doubly armed for a fight to the finish.

LIVE! FIGHT! CONQUER!  
and have a swell time  
with the  
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SATURDAY, NITE, APRIL 8  
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