

By Dwight Macdonald

# SPARKS IN THE NEWS

## Where is Walter Duranty?

Those who have been struggling with Walter Duranty's recent dispatches in the N.Y. Times are beginning to ask themselves where these remarkable productions are coming from. Myself, I should not be surprised if Walter is writing from a small room in the Bronx, with a bottle of whiskey within easy reach. Certainly, there is no need for him to be in Moscow to turn out these garrulous and banal "think pieces" on what he conceives to be the state of mind of the 170,000,000 inhabitants of the Soviet Union. The density of facts per page-line, never very high in Duranty's stuff these days, is now the thinnest in journalistic history. This sort of reporting used to come from Riga, in the days before the Soviets became respectable. But the Bronx would do just as well.

## Social Justice, a la Scab

In the New Leader for March 11 a bit of information appeared which should be useful to all who come up against Coughlinites in the trade union movement. I give it in full: "DETROIT—Father Coughlin's Social Justice, anti-Semitic, anti-labor publication of the fascist priest, has been put on the unfair list by the Michigan Federation of Labor because it is printed in a scab shop."

## Spontaneity Again

Comrade John Travis writes in from Lynn, Mass., to clarify the question of spontaneity in revolutionary tactics, which was raised by a Luxemburgite in this column several weeks ago. I quote part of his interesting letter: "Real social revolutionary action may involve spontaneous over-boiling of the masses. Nevertheless, the revolutionary vanguard that will lead the social revolution (we hope) will have long been preparing for just such an explosion of the masses. They will at that time strive to direct the angry explosions of the masses into a powerful and effective revolutionary attack upon the class enemy and the capitalist system. Thus real social revolutionary action involves both spontaneity and preparation: the spontaneous explosion of the masses brought into control, and led by a revolutionary vanguard with a prepared revolutionary program, strategy and tactic."

## Mr. Mumford Sees the Light

The N. Y. Times had occasion recently to rebuke the Hollywood producers, of all people, for lack of patriotism. The Times pointed out indignantly that in such recent films as Jesse James and Stagecoach, the "bad men" of Western history are shown to have been Robin

Hoods waging heroic war against the wicked bankers and land-grabbing railroad builders. "The thing makes good melodrama," conceded the Times, "but it is not very effective propaganda for democracy. If the American people today are to have their hearts set aglow for Americanism and the American Way, it does not help matters to show that America's great West was built up by pirates and assassins operating under railway charters from the government."

The Times then devotes several lengthy paragraphs, which I omit, to demonstrating that the railroad builders were not pirates and assassins because where would we be without railroads? "Democracy and Americanism," it concludes, "have won many new converts in recent years, one might almost say recent months. But not all of them have succeeded in ridding themselves of old ideas and old phrases from the time when they were much less certain about the virtues of American democracy. . . Much more consistent is a writer like Lewis Mumford. Having rallied to the cause of democracy against the fascist menace, Mr. Mumford has the courage to discard the doctrine that America was taken into the World War by the Morgans and the munitions-makers. Mr. Mumford now calls this version a fable." The Times doesn't have the face to add the courageous Mr. Mumford's final conclusion on the last war: "What was wrong was not that we sought to preserve democracy; what alone was wrong was that we failed."

Time was when intellectuals like Mumford were applying their talents to debunking American history. But when New Republic liberals go star-spangled, they do a thorough job of it. It is to Hollywood, apparently, that in future we must look for a realistic interpretation of our national past.

## Add: Defense of Reimann

Last week I printed Guether Reimann's protest that I had misinterpreted his article, "Doing Business in Nazi Germany." And now Peter Tor writes in, also to protest that "Reimann is not unaware of the intimate relationship between the Nazi bureaucracy and the capitalist class. . . His bitter attack, a few months ago, on the People's Front as a method of fighting fascism is an indication of his opinion. . . On the whole, his book, Germany: World Empire or World Revolution, is not only one of the most stimulating analyses of Nazism, but one that can take its place beside Guerin's, as a worthy addition to a revolutionist's library."

## MEN AND WOMEN OF LABOR

# OUT OF THE PAST

By EMANUEL GARRETT

### GRACCHUS BABEUF

(Nov. 23, 1760—Guillotined April 27, 1797)  
That great day in 1789 came. The aroused masses stormed the gates of the Bastille, and French feudalism, the hereditary right to exploit, was delivered the first of a series of deadly blows. The oppressed took heart; freedom was ahead. The French Revolution had begun.

Francois Noel Babeuf (the later changed his name to Gracchus after the ancient Roman rebel) turned to the revolution with all his energy. He had been employed up to then by nobles in asserting their feudal rights against the peasants from whom it had become increasingly difficult to exact feudal payments and obligations. And, "in the dust of the material archives I discovered the horrible secrets of the usurpations of the nobility."

The Revolution spoiled him, he wrote, and made him "unfit for any kind of employment" except politics. Holding various posts, he worked feverishly among the poor, championing their interests, and developing his own program for social emancipation.

### For "Equality without Illusions"

The large property owners found him meddlesome; they tried to discredit him. Because throwing off "all hypocritical tactics," he demanded "equality without illusions," and not satisfied with the limited gains of the Revolution he hoped for "the socialization of all the resources which can be infinitely multiplied and increased by means of a planned organization and by the wisely directed labor of all."

Arrested in 1790 for his communist agitation, he was released through the intervention of Marat. Out of jail he continued to be "meddlesome," and more so as the idea of the class struggle matured in his mind. There were two classes, he said: first, the "bloodsuckers of the twenty-four million . . . who for centuries have been enjoying their laziness at the expense of our sweat and toil"; and second, the worker who must "toil much and eat little or you won't have any work and you won't eat at all. That is the barbarous law of capital." So great was his hatred of oppression that he was momentarily blinded to the great accomplishments of the Revolution, and of Robespierre, its leader, because the oppressors had not all been vanquished. That is why when on the ninth of Thermidor, revolutionary calendar month, the reaction sent Robespierre to the guillotine so that it might put an end to social upheaval and sit back and enjoy its bourgeois victories, Babeuf approved. But not for long. He saw his mistake in the black reaction that Thermidor brought.

The "good folk" wine and dined, and drank in the luxuries of economic conquest. The poor lived on bread rations, starved, and drank in the full misery of poverty under the new despotism. Babeuf's daughter, aged seven, died of starvation. His two sons were so pinched with hunger that he could scarcely recognize them when he returned from work in the provinces.

In 1795, Babeuf merged his group of comrades, organized around a journal he had founded, "The Tribune of the People," with a group of advanced Republicans to form the Pantheon Club. The Club read newspapers (which were expensive in those days), handled member's correspondence, and collected funds for poverty stricken radicals and to free

political prisoners. Men like Darthe and Buonarroti (to whose great book on the "Society of the Equals" we are indebted for much of this information) were far to the left; others were merely bourgeois humanitarians. As workers joined the Club, the bourgeois elements were submerged, the Club became more militant.

With laws and lies the Directory (which ruled France until Napoleon was crowned Emperor) sought to suppress the Babouvists. Like every group of despots before and since they accused the revolutionary opposition with being in the pay of the enemy—in this case, the monarchists.

### Insurrection by Force

Meanwhile Babeuf perfected his program. Believing at first that power could be won peacefully, he gradually discarded that illusion, realized that the oppressed must effect their insurrection by force.

In the streets, the masses were restive. Sporadic outbreaks occurred here and there. In the cafes, they sang Babeuf's song "Dying of Hunger." They listened to his tirades against the bloodsuckers, "Conquer or Die," he told them, in an open war between patrician and plebeian. His bourgeois friends quaked at his frenzy; they chided him with being "indiscreet."

Napoleon sent out a warrant for his arrest. Babeuf went into hiding. Those close to Babeuf banded together and published a new paper, The Society of Equals was organized. "The destitute," he told them, "are the power on earth. They have the right to speak as masters to the governments that neglect them."

The rebels armed. The Secret Directory of the Society met. Finally, Babeuf read the Act of Insurrection; the day for the rising was set in May 1796. They were to seize power and institute a "revolutionary and transitional power, constituted in such a way as to free the people from the natural enemies of equality and to endow it with the unity of will necessary for the adoption of republican institutions."

### "Last Episode" of the Revolution

Through secret agents the government learned of the plan. All the leading members of the Society of Equals were arrested. Riots occurred in demonstrations of solidarity with the arrested. Months later they were brought to trial. The prosecutor spun a vivid picture of atrocities committed by the defendants. The verdict had been decided on in advance. Babeuf and Darthe were sentenced to be executed; the others to exile. When the sentence was read, Darthe and Babeuf stabbed themselves. The knives were blunt; they lived through the night. The next day they were guillotined.

The "last episode" in the French Revolution had come to an end in the figure of the man who combined the aims of the French Revolution with the yet to be fulfilled aspirations of the modern proletariat. In his day, the proletariat was too young to put his ideas into victorious execution. But as it grew the proletariat absorbed his ideas; those of the first practical communist. Blanqui after him drew upon them, the Communards experimented with them, the Russian workers put them into actual operation.

"The French Revolution," Babeuf had written, "is only the precursor of another, far greater revolution, which will be the last."

# Big Battles Ahead For Auto Workers

## Top Membership for Martin Split-off Group Set At One-Fourth C.I.O. Union

(Continued from Page 1)

The alliance with the reactionary leadership of the A.F. of L. Council. Martin must have funds, if he is to survive. The whole character of his union and his present position forces him into attempted alliances and deals with the automobile manufacturers. It is fairly certain that he will formally join the A.F. of L. in the next weeks or months.

The C.I.O.-U.A.W., while representing the automobile workers, is headed by a Stalinist leadership, which will unquestionably continue to practice its suicidal, wrecking activities and will eventually destroy the U.A.W., if allowed to run the union, unchecked by the membership.

**Rank and File Bloc**  
The militancy and courage displayed by the rank and file delegates at the Cleveland convention has now got to be organized into a large bloc of all honest, progressive union men

to see that the tasks of the automobile union are carried out and that the Stalinist cancer is isolated and discredited in the ranks of the automobile workers. The fight that the west side, Chrysler, Briggs and Hudson locals started at the Cleveland convention around the question of the vice-presidents has now got to be deepened and extended around a genuine union building program, which will be able to mobilize the great majority of the automobile workers behind the program, launch the necessary measures to isolate the unscrupulous Stalinist politicians and then to go forward toward rebuilding the union into a powerful instrument to defend the interests of the automobile workers.

(A full analysis of the situation in the automobile industry will be printed in an early issue of the Socialist Appeal.)

# FOURTH INT'L BUREAU ISSUES STATEMENT ON DIEGO RIVERA

In a statement issued April 5 by the All-American Bureau, sub-secretariat of the Fourth International, it was declared that the present political attitude of Diego Rivera is incompatible with membership in or loyalty to the Fourth International. The statement declared that "if Rivera would not have resigned, it would have been necessary to expel him from our ranks."

The immediate occasion of the break of Rivera with the Fourth International was the creation of a new political party in Mexico, the "Revolutionary Party of Workers and Peasants," for the purpose of supporting one of the candidates for the Mexican presidency. Rivera is political secretary of the new party. With reference to this, the statement declares:

"We consider a proletarian party as the main instrument in the liberation of the working class. The base of such a party must include not empirical and conjunctural demands but a program of transitional slogans and, what is more important, the program of social revolution. The idea that one can create a party 'ad hoc' for a concrete conjuncture is absolutely incredible and opportunist in its essence. A workers party with a so-called minimal program is eo ipso a bourgeois party. It is a party which makes the workers support bourgeois politics or bourgeois politicians."

**Deep Divergences**  
"Imagine for a moment that our policy toward the (Mexican) elections is false; but it is an episodic question. Can one imagine that a Marxist puts the difference about this secondary or tertiary program above the program of the world revolution, breaks his international connections and

participates in a new party as political secretary?  
"This fact alone shows that the divergences are incomparably deeper than comrade Rivera, in his fantastic impulsiveness, believes."

The statement concludes: "We all did everything in our power to restrain Diego Rivera from taking irreparable steps. We did not succeed. Driven by his temperament and his impulsive mind, he committed a series of errors; and every error was a further reason for him to look for some sort of miracle which could show people that he was right. In this way he tried to oppose the Casa del Pueblo (dissenting trade union group) to the Fourth International, to win the Confederacion General de Trabajadores ('anarchist'-led union center) and now he is leading the Revolutionary Party of Workers and Peasants. It is absolutely clear to every Marxist that the new enterprise will be an inevitable fiasco for which we cannot carry the slightest responsibility before the workers of Mexico and the world. We must state openly that not only has Rivera resigned from the Fourth International, but that by his political activity he puts himself fundamentally outside the Fourth International. Where principles are involved we cannot permit any concessions, even toward such an important figure as Diego Rivera."

**Only Way Out**  
Only the danger of internal revolution within the opposing nations can halt the new world war. Only the danger of a workers' revolution in the United States can save the American people from dying at Roosevelt's dictation on foreign battlefields for boss profits.

**"FORCE AGAINST FORCE" - THREAT BY PRESIDENT**

(Continued from Page 1)  
sure to which both have been subjected by Germany in its expansionist drive into what has been, since the end of the last World War, the private stamping ground of Anglo-French finance capital. The closeness of an outbreak of hostilities is further indicated by the increasing number of warships that are massing in and around the Mediterranean. Although Chamberlain is still doing his best to win Mussolini to the "Democratic" front, Italian, British, French and German battlefleets are being concentrated along England's "life-line to the East" or, as Mussolini calls it, "Our Sea."

# THERE IS ANOTHER CHOICE!

(Continued from Page 1)

The dark picture which Roosevelt draws for the future of the American people will be realized regardless of what Hitler and Mussolini do. That is, if the workers permit themselves to be fooled either by Roosevelt and the Democratic party or by the politicians of the Republican party. The choice which Roosevelt offers us is unavoidable unless the American workers step forth and take their destiny into their own hands.

The huge and wonderful economic machine of this country, a machine capable of producing more than enough to satisfy the needs of all the people, is not functioning. It cannot function so long as it is owned by capitalists who are interested only in making profits for themselves.

But the workers need not take any one of the choices presented by Roosevelt. They can make their own, an entirely different choice. They can take over the factories; they can put all the unemployed to work, they can produce all that is necessary for a high standard of living. If they do that, nothing that Hitler or Mussolini will do can possibly harm them. Fascism will make no headway in this country and it will be destroyed in other countries.

There are really only two basic choices for the American workers. One, to continue under the present system, which means to choose what Roosevelt and his Democratic and Republican colleagues offer us—lower wages, more hours of work and a lower standard of living, and war. The other is for the workers to take over the productive forces of this country and produce things for the use of the people, bringing higher wages, less hours, a high standard of living—and freedom!

# WAR BY FALL IS ROOSEVELT POLICY BASIS

(Continued from Page 1)

All personal plans, all future projects both of a personal nature as well as national are absolutely subordinate to the fact that war is coming and the United States will be in it, said the editorial.

**Defines "We"**  
It then defined the pronoun "we" which Roosevelt used. "By 'we' he undoubtedly meant Western civilization," stated the editorial. Western civilization includes the empires of Great Britain, France, the United States and their oppressed colonial possessions. The editorial whipped up the armaments race by declaring that only "serious resistance" can ease the "pressure" from the Berlin-Rome Axis. "Nothing less than the show of preponderant force will stop them, for force is the only language which they understand."

In using the pronoun "we," stated the editorial, the President told the Rome-Berlin Axis that any war plans they contemplate must take into consideration the tremendous force of the United States. ANY war forced by them would immediately involve the United States.

The editorial lauded the new British and French policy of stiffening their resistance to the Rome-Berlin Axis, and stated that it is only the application of this kind of reasoning which can stop war and that "President Roosevelt properly links the United States with the eleventh-hour effort to avert a shattering disaster."

Aside from the poppy-cock about saving peace at the eleventh hour, this is an absolutely unmistakable declaration of Roosevelt's intention to plunge the United States into the coming world war at the first possible moment. He intends to enter the war not to save "Western democracy"—but to save American capitalist profits. That is why he fears a popular referendum on war and why he wishes full personal power to declare war without any checks from the people or from "neutrality" legislation.

Only the danger of internal revolution within the opposing nations can halt the new world war. Only the danger of a workers' revolution in the United States can save the American people from dying at Roosevelt's dictation on foreign battlefields for boss profits.

# "FORCE AGAINST FORCE" - THREAT BY PRESIDENT

(Continued from Page 1)  
The British imperialist camp—Conservatives and Liberals alike, to say nothing of the war-mongering Laborites—are also busy engaged in wooing the Soviet Union. Stalin, however, is acting coy. Despite the past few years of shouting about "collective security" and the "democratic front," Stalin is now playing a double game of trying to come to an agreement with Hitler on the one side and of squeezing whatever concessions he can out of the Anglo-French camp. His failure thus far to pronounce himself unequivocally for the Anglo-French imperialists is due to the feelers Moscow is secretly putting out to Berlin, and is concealed behind a high-sounding protestation that the British and French "guarantees to the small nations" are still "inadequate."

# N. Y. MEETING OF S.W.P., Y.P.S.L.

A membership meeting of Local New York will be held Tuesday, April 18, 8 p.m., at Beethoven Hall, 210 East 5th Street, N. Y. C.

Admission will be by S.W.P. or Y.P.S.L. membership card only.

Marion Pearce, in tune with the Easter spirit, wore a complete black ensemble, broken by the white of her small turban. The newest note was in her black patent leather shoes with nose-pieces of real valley lilies sprouting from each toe!—New York Journal and American.

# Mass Drive for Jobs Blocked by C.P.ers

## Resort to Hoodlumism Against Militants Who Gain Workers' Support

(Special to the Socialist Appeal)

TOLEDO, Ohio—Eight hundred workers turned out for a mass meeting, April 6, to prepare for action to stop the mass firings on the W.P.A. The meeting was called by the officers and job stewards of the W.P.A. Auxiliary of the local C.I.O., the W.P.A. Division of Local 29 of the United Office and Professional Workers Union, and the C.I.O. owner-driver truckers union.

The workers came prepared to carry through a real mass drive for jobs. Their campaign had already been launched a week previously at an overflow mass meeting, and by a militant picket-line and demonstration at the W.P.A. headquarters, Safety Building (city hall) and Lucas County Court House on April 1. The April 6 meeting and the previous actions had all been organized entirely by the W.P.A. organizations.

But the meeting was moved in on by the Stalinist leaders of the Toledo C.I.O. Council executive board who, here as everywhere, by virtue of their pro-Roosevelt line, oppose militant action against W.P.A. cuts.

When they called the meeting to order, not a single representative of the W.P.A. office workers was included in the list of speakers drawn up by the C.I.O. executive officials.

**Another Action Proposed**  
As speaker after speaker took the "mike" it became clear that a deliberate attempt was being made to prevent any real discussion on the W.P.A. issue.

Finally Kerineth Cole, C.I.O. executive secretary, told the history of the C.I.O., denounced the "Tories," lauded Roosevelt, skipped over the W.P.A. administration and ended with a resolution calling for "loyalty to President Roosevelt and the New Deal" and support of the President's request for an additional \$150,000,000 W.P.A. appropriation."

At this point Ted Selander, vice-president of Local 29 and a delegate to the C.I.O. Council, attempted to have the W.P.A. workers' own resolution—in the hands of the chairman to President Roosevelt—brought forward. He was ruled out of order, and Cole's resolution carried by a weak smattering of ayes.

**C. P. Goon Squads**  
When Selander asked to be permitted to present his local's resolution for a parade and 15-minute stoppage, a hoodlum squad, led by Kenneth Eggert, Communist Party organizer, began a tumult. But they were soon outshouted by the real workers present, who drowned the disrupters in a chorus of "Let's have the resolution!"

Finally Selander got the floor, read the resolution, and moved its adoption, which was quickly seconded from all over the hall. Cole then went to the "mike" and said he favored the resolution except for the section placing responsibility for the lay-offs on the Roosevelt administration and that he was

opposed to the march being directed at W.P.A. headquarters. Nelson Meagley, W.P.A. office workers' chairman, then took the platform for a militant talk about the role of the Roosevelt administration in paying the way for cuts, and called for support to the resolution.

Whereupon Eddie Cheyfitz, official Communist Party "Whip" in the C.I.O., delivered a slanderous attack on the militants, labelling them as "scabs," "stool pigeons," and "Franco's fifth column." He said he would bring charges against Selander.

**McCormick Protests**  
Tim McCormick, C.I.O. executive board member and one of the most popular figures in the Toledo labor movement, an unimpeachable militant leader for years, demanded for Selander the right to answer these vicious lies.

Selander answered by pointing to his record of six years on Toledo's picket lines, his numerous arrests in strikes and demonstrations; he pointed out that the attack was launched against him to divert the discussion from the question of action against the lay-offs. He challenged Cheyfitz to bring charges against him.

As Selander returned to his seat, with many workers going up to him to assure him of their support, Cheyfitz gave a signal, and Eggert's goon squads attempted to evict from the meeting Clayton Rusch, an officer of Local 29. A group of workers intervened and prevented this hoodlumism. In the disturbance Eggert sneaked up behind one of the Local 29 executive board members, Alex Feldstein, and gave him a blow on the head.

Inflamed by these scandalous actions, Tim McCormick strode across the platform to Cheyfitz, seized him by the collar and said: "You're going to pay for this dirty business." When Cheyfitz attempted to kick him in the groin, McCormick countered with a right to the jaw that finished Cheyfitz for the evening.

After the meeting, hundreds of rank and file workers surrounded Selander and McCormick and pledged their support to "drive out this crew who are holding us down every time we need action."

The Stalinist-controlled executive board of the C.I.O. Council met the following night and took no action to organize the fight against lay-offs. But they did work out a scheme to victimize Selander and other militants without permitting open hearings on any charges. They are going to call upon the Stalinist-controlled international office of the office workers to "reorganize Local 29" as that crew has already done in San Francisco, the New York insurance agents, etc.

The Stalinists may attempt in this fight to send their goon squads against the leading progressives. In that event, the progressive trade unions are determined that they will not be passive victims of assault.

# SOCIETY NOTES

## Stockholders Enjoy Lovely Easter

"Every year we say firmly THIS is the most elaborate Easter Parade of all time—it couldn't possibly ever be more impressive!" And every year we prove ourselves wrong, for the Easter Parade steadily gets bigger and bigger, lovelier and lovelier. What it will be in 1940—we tremble to think!

"You'd have thought the cold weather would, in some measure, have chilled the thought of wearing Spring attire—but no! Even the ladies who encased themselves in mink had on their Springiest frocks and their brightest new hats. Many were in suits; many wore dark frocks with accents of flamboyant color in their accessories.

"The men looked important in their top hats and cutaways and the children (there were millions!) swaggered proudly along in their new dresses, coats and spanking white gloves.

"Marion Pearce, in tune with the Easter spirit, wore a complete black ensemble, broken by the white of her small turban. The newest note was in her black patent leather shoes with nose-pieces of real valley lilies sprouting from each toe!"—New York Journal and American.

## Authorities Thrilled By Sharecropper Girl

MEMPHIS, Tenn.—Juvenile Court authorities found thrills in commonplace conveniences today as they demonstrated them to a sixteen-year-old Mississippi girl who said she had never seen an electric light, never talked over a telephone and didn't know Franklin D. Roosevelt was President.

Alma Mardis swung an axe and cut two cords of wood to earn \$8 so that she could visit Memphis from her farm home in northwest Mississippi. She arrived in Memphis nearly penniless and was taken by police to the Juvenile Court for temporary shelter.

Alma claimed that she was an expert cotton picker, although only sixteen years old and could pick as much as 150 pounds a day. But she hadn't had much chance to go to school or learn what the world was like.

She'd never heard a radio; never been higher than the second floor of a building and never even heard of an elevator; never seen a Christmas tree, didn't know the significance of Easter, never eaten an ice cream cone; never seen a motion picture; never owned a silk dress—and never heard of Hitler and Mussolini.—From an Associated Press dispatch.