

By Dwight Macdonald

# SPARKS IN THE NEWS

## Stalinist Literary Front Cracks

From the Third American Writers Congress comes news of the resignations of Babette Deutsch, and of Frances Winwar, who was a member of the executive committee of the League of American Writers, which sponsors the Congress. Both resignations are protests against the increasingly obvious corruption and reaction of the Third International and against the Communist Party's behind-the-scenes domination of the Congress. From outside the Congress, not one but two opposition groups of writers and artists have appeared on the scene. One of these new groups is the Dewey-Hook Committee for Cultural Freedom, of which more later. The other is the League for Cultural Freedom and Socialism. Unlike the Hook Committee, the League has issued a militant and revolutionary manifesto.

It is too early to judge the response to the League's manifesto, which is only now being published. But already it is clear that the Hook-Dewey manifesto has the Stalinists worried. Its roster of names is incomparably more distinguished than that of the signers of the call to the Third Writers Congress. The liberal N. Y. Post reprinted the manifesto in full and commented favorably on it editorially. And so it is not surprising to find both the Nation and the New Republic this week devoting major editorials to polemics against the Committee. Whatever one's quarrels with the manifesto, and I have a good many, one can but welcome its aid in the struggle against Stalinist control of cultural activities. Once that heavy hand is lifted off our arts and letters, we can all breathe more freely.

## The Committee for Cultural Freedom, Again

The editors of the Appeal have turned over to me the following postcard: "Gentlemen: In one of your recent issues I am coupled with the Dies Committee. In another I am listed as a player on the Studs Lonigan team in a coming game with the Marxist Maulers. You are wrong about both items. I cannot prevent you or your Mr. MacDonald (correct spelling: Macdonald) from coupling the Committee for Cultural Freedom with the Dies Committee, since the Stalinists have already done so. But since I specifically refused to authorize the use of my name in connection with your coming game, I shall be obliged if you will stick to the facts. Yours, etc., Sidney Hook."

I don't know about the baseball game, although I might say that Professor Hook's complaint is the precise opposite of mine. He was put on the team against his will, while I, in my innocence, volunteered to play again for the Studs Lonigan A.C., only to be informed, indirectly, that I have crossed the Rubicon and am now a Trotskyist and so not eligible for the Studs Lonigan team. I don't at all object to being called a Trotskyist, but I suspect that Captain Farrell is taking this devious method to keep me off his team rather than come out with the real reason, which is my ineptness at the game. In any case, this seems to me a clear case of a writer's being discriminated against on political grounds, or worse, and as such I bring it to the attention of Professor Hook's committee. The whole

business badly needs to be aired in public. I am glad of the chance to explain more fully why I consider it legitimate to draw parallels, of course on a strictly limited basis, between the Dies and the Dewey Committees. All men of good will, of whom I hope and believe I am one, must agree with the Dewey Committee that "totalitarianism" is an evil to be fought against. But I must still insist that the Dies Committee—one of whose hearings I attended last week—is just as explicit, no doubt for the worst sort of political reasons, in its denunciation of all forms of "dictatorship" as is the Dewey Committee. In questioning the fascist Mr. Deatherage, Congressman Dies made it quite clear he conceives of himself as the great protector of the common man against all "extremists," whether of left or right, and that liberty and democracy to him were dearer than self or his very heart's blood. No, it all depends on the analysis one makes of the social roots and meaning of totalitarianism. And on this crucial point, the Hook-Dewey manifesto is inadequate to the point of scandal. Its basic idea is that "totalitarianism" is a foreign growth which is insinuating its tentacles into our fair American democracy: "Through subsidized propaganda, through energetic agents, through political pressure, the totalitarian states succeed in infecting other countries with their false doctrines. . . . I can see less difference than I should like to between this sort of red-and-black totalitarian-baiting, and the all-black totalitarian baiting of the New Deal and its Stalinist allies. In each case, the broad Atlantic stretches between the heroic defenders of democracy and the enemy."

The only specific reference to the internal forces that may bring about dictatorship is the single sentence: "Even in the United States, its [the totalitarian idea's] beginnings are all too evident in the emergence of local political dictators, the violation of civil rights, the alarming spread of phobias of hatred directed against racial, religious, and political minorities." I think that Professor Hook and many of his co-signers would agree, in private, that this is inadequate, to say the least, and that their manifesto's emphasis on the foreign-menace aspect of totalitarianism is distorting. I think they would agree that the great threat to freedom of any sort in this country comes not from sinister foreign plots but from the struggle of the American ruling class to maintain its rule in the face of a disintegrating economic system. Yet their manifesto is discreetly silent on this theme—the very heart of the whole business.

The only reference in the entire manifesto, and this is hardly believable when one reads some of the good left-wing names appended to it, to either the labor movement or the war issue, the single reference is this, smuggled in at the end of a paragraph: "Omnious shadows of war are gathering in our land. Behind them lurk dangers not only to a free labor movement but to a free culture." The virtue of such a formulation, and practically its only virtue, is that James Rorty and Dorothy Thompson can agree on it. (The first sentence is particularly impregnable.) But in my opinion the price was much too high to pay, even for so valuable an autograph as that of the Sibyl of the Herald-Tribune.



Fighting against "starvation relief" standards, thousands of Cleveland workers staged a sit-down strike in the City Hall. The alarmed city officials told the workers to "eat potatoes." Here we see them getting the potatoes on which they are expected to live.

# Millions Starve On U. S. Relief

Relief Millions "Are Refugees as Truly As the Victims of Old World Oppression" Is Finding of Social Workers' Report

(Continued from Page 1) There are no toilet facilities. Bed-bugs make sleep almost impossible, but there is no money for ridding the house of these and cracked plaster provides a good breeding place for them.

"Mr. Stinger, his wife and nine children, live in three rooms of an old butcher shop, so infested with rats that he and the two year old baby who have been bitten are taking rabies treatments. He sits up at night to guard the children from the rats, although he himself is ill and one of the medical recommendations is rest and freedom from worry."

**The Forgotten Man**

From Atlanta, Ga.: "Relief grants are low . . . in no sense are minimum needs met. Food allowances, set at an arbitrary amount determined by the number of persons in the family, amount to a little over 20% of what the average family actually needs. A minimum standard budget based on Atlanta prices for a family of four would come to \$31.61 a month. The amount that is actually being granted to such a family is \$6.70 a month."

In numerous cases, "there is no allowance being made to families in which there is an active able-bodied man no matter what the size of the family is."

In one instance adduced as typical of a widespread practice of "spreading thin" over as many families as possible, "the money allocated to the county from the state office has been and has sometimes reached a level as low as \$4 per family per month."

**Fireside Chat Material**

In St. Louis, Mo., "limited funds make it almost impossible for employable persons to get general relief. During the past year relief has been denied to any family containing one or more employable person."

The District of Columbia, administered by Congress itself, sets a foul example for the rest of the country: "General relief is confined to families in which there is no employable person, except for temporary aid in an emergency such as an eviction."

In Arkansas, "money available for public welfare is so limited that general relief is now being granted only to those who are 'either physically or mentally handicapped . . . or who have had such a hard life that they are feeble although they are not yet 65 years old.'"

In Taos, New Mexico, "general relief is limited to persons 'who are incapacitated or in urgent need of medical care.'"

**"Good Neighbor"**

The cold description of conditions in Puerto Rico defies underlining: "There is no general relief program in Puerto Rico nor are the provisions of the Social Security Act extended to the island. An investigation made in January, 1939 by the certification unit of the public works agency showed that 63% of the total population was in need of relief."

In Texas, "there is no general relief program except on a limited basis in a few counties. Aside from W.P.A. the only assistance available in the majority of Texas' 254 counties is federal surplus commodities." In Georgia, likewise, "the state makes no contribution toward the cost of direct relief. . . Twelve counties grant no direct relief at all."

**"Equality for All"**

Outside the pale altogether are the aliens, now barred from W.P.A., and non-residents, including many who have lost legal residence status in the search for work. One example: "In most of the southern counties (of Florida) a 'hobo express' is run. This plan consists of transporting vagrants (non-residents) to the county line and dumping them."

As one reads these awful details, the mind refuses to re-

ceive them, tiring of horror piled on horror.

And what is the program of the New Deal? No proposals whatsoever for direct relief. Wiping out entirely of the jobs formerly provided by the W.P.A. Reduction—as proposed by Roosevelt's W.P.A. message of April 27—of W.P.A. jobs to an average for the coming year of two million.

Every last dollar that the Roosevelt administration can segregate now goes to the war machine. The two billions now earmarked for that purpose come directly out of the hides of these twenty-three million people dependent on relief. The New Deal has become the War Deal, and nothing else. Twenty-three million people will save themselves from starvation only by the most irreconcilable assault upon the ruling class and its executive committee, the Roosevelt administration.

# Why Coughlin's Superiors Keep Silent On His Vicious Activities

(Continued from Page 1)

On December 4, 1886, Father McGlynn was ordered to Rome. Shortly thereafter he was expelled from the pastorate of St. Stephens. In July, 1887, he was excommunicated from the Church.

Father Coughlin has not been ordered to Rome. He has not been expelled from his Church. He has not been excommunicated. Again we ask, why? Why is one kind of treatment accorded a pro-labor priest, and an entirely different type of treatment accorded a pro-boss priest?

The conclusion is clear. Father McGlynn's activities sought to promote the welfare of the masses at the expense of the wealthy, particularly the land-owners. As a pro-labor priest, he was considered a menace to the Church and its extensive land-holdings. The strongest weapon in the hands of the Vatican was used against him: excommunication.

Father Coughlin, on the other hand, is the mouthpiece of American fascism. The Church sees no conflict between his activities and its own interests. He is permitted to retain his standing in the Church, to preach, to spread his influence by all the propagandistic methods known to the modern world.

Until a few weeks ago his rabidly anti-Semitic and pro-fascist magazine, "Social Justice," was printed "By permission of His Superior." When this permission was withdrawn, no criticism—either direct or implied—was made of Father Coughlin or his utterances. It was withdrawn merely because the "Detroit Archdiocese considers Social Justice a secular, not a Catholic organ."

The Church has given more substantial support than this to Father Coughlin. On the Sunday back in 1934 when the creation of his National League for Social Justice was announced, Coughlin was introduced to the radio audience by no less a personage than Bishop Michael Gallagher, of Detroit, Coughlin's own Bishop.

Today, Social Justice (May 29) reports that a "group of Catholic clergymen" are getting out a booklet defending Coughlin against those who have attacked him.

Occasionally, it is true, some Catholic dignitary denies that Coughlin speaks for the Church. Such statements must be considered as meaningless so long as his superiors refuse to take any effective action against him.

Continued toleration of the pro-fascist Father Coughlin within the ranks of the Catholic clergy can be interpreted in only one way. The Vatican is apparently convinced that democratic capitalism is doomed and that the choice for the future in the United States as elsewhere is one between reactionary fascism and liberating socialism.

**Vatican Chooses Fascists**

When it comes to a choice the Vatican invariably throws its lot with the brutal fascist dictatorships, even though in Italy and particularly in Germany, there has been a good deal of friction between the Church and fascist bureaucracies. If fascism in the Hitler style were to come to the United States, the Church could expect approximately the same treatment here as it has received in Germany.

To forestall this eventuality, the Church authorities have evidently decided that the Church itself must promote the fascist movement from the start and subordinate that movement entirely to the Catholic Church hierarchy, acting as high protector of capitalism. Their "ideal" is Catholic fascism, in which the Church and state are one and the power of the Church is safeguarded and even enhanced—as was the case in Dollfuss' Austria.

The ovations given by Rome and by Father Coughlin—to the victory of the fascist butcher, General Franco, in Spain, are a glaring confirmation that this is the real policy of the Catholic Church. Spain, we are told, is a "Christian corporative State"—that is, a fascist state in which the state and Church apparatus become fused—and that "it is a lovely thing to be a Catholic in Spain today."

The Church has not silenced Father Coughlin, has not unfrocked him, nor excommunicated him, precisely because it hopes to use him and his propaganda as the nucleus for creating in the United States a repressive, anti-labor govern-

ment on the Franco order.

**Against All Workers**

The Catholic worker and the Catholic anti-fascist must understand that whatever type of fascist state emerges in this country, their rights will be sacrificed along with the rights of all other workers and all other anti-fascists.

Under fascism in the United States, whether it be "Christian fascism" or Hitlerism, workers of all denominations and nationalities have nothing to gain and everything to lose. Their standards of living will be depressed to bare existence levels; they will be forced to work ten, twelve, fourteen hours a day at the lowest possible salaries; those who protest will be promptly imprisoned in concentration camps; forced labor will become an accepted fact; every male in the country will be compelled to spend years of his life in the army; women will lose all the freedom and equality they have thus far gained. The worker, his wife and his children will become the virtual slaves of the capitalist state.

This is the "ideal" which Hitler has foisted upon the German workers; it is the "ideal" which Franco is now imposing on the Spanish workers with the aid of the firing squad. It is the "ideal" of the Rockefeller, the Morgans, the Duponts—America's sixty families—and it is the "ideal" of the Catholic priest, Father Coughlin.

**United against Fascism**

The Catholic Church shields Coughlin. His "ideal" must also be considered the real aim of the Church.

With or without the blessing of the Catholic Church, Coughlinism must be fought. The Catholic worker—as well as the Jew, the Negro, or the Protestant—must be in the forefront of that struggle.

The Socialist Workers Party calls upon all workers, regardless of race or creed, to join hands against the common enemy—fascism. Protection of workers' rights by workers' defense guards against fascist onslaughts from whatever quarter they come—this is the key to the successful struggle against Coughlinism and every other brand of American fascism.

## MEN AND WOMEN OF LABOR

# OUT OF THE PAST

By EMANUEL GARRETT

THOMAS PAINE (Jan. 27, 1737—June 8, 1809)

Only six people followed Tom Paine to his grave. For years he had been living the life of a social outcast, shunned by all respectable people, feeding on bread and rum.

The Revolution of 1776 was, you see, long past. The set, comfortable merchants, who had earned dollars as well as freedom as a result of the Revolution, no longer had any use for the fiery propagandist of rebellion, the revolutionary journalist whose writings fell like a whip lash across the body of English tyranny. If the truth be known, some had indeed never quite approved of the man.

## Speaks a Rebel's Cry

Tom Paine hadn't come to the American colonies until 1774, a man of thirty-seven years. The son of a small English farmer and corset maker, he hadn't had much schooling. What learning he had, and it was enough to make him one of the most enlightened men of his day, he had picked up by reading in the hours after work—as corset maker, tax collector, teacher. He came here with an introduction from Benjamin Franklin, himself by no means a "respectable" man, who had been impressed by the vigor and merit of Paine's views.

A show-down was fast approaching between English rule and the American need to expand industrially and commercially independent of artificial restraints. The spirit of rebellion was in the air. Paine took hold of that spirit and fanned it into a burning flame, above all in a simple pamphlet, "Common Sense," published in January, 1776.

"A King is a political superfluity," he wrote. Men must be loyal only to a society of their own creation, and not a government forced on them. The colonists must rise. "We have it in our power to begin the world over again."

Within three months 120,000 copies of this pamphlet were sold, an extraordinary publishing feat for those days.

Paine wasn't content to be only an agitator. Continuing his role as propagandist of the Revolution, he joined the army and plunged into the fighting. His tracts were required reading in all troop barracks. And in the barracks, the day's fighting done, he put his pen to the service of the Revolution. "These are times that try men's souls. The summer soldier and the sunshine patriot will, in this crisis, shrink from the service of his country. Tyranny, like hell, is not easily conquered."

The revolution ended victoriously. In 1807 Paine sailed for England, partly to market a bridge he had invented, more to spread his revolutionary labors. There he hurled a defense of the French Revolution, "The Rights of Man," at the smug heads of British conservatism. The British censors howled in bitter agony. They sued him for libel. They threatened him with jail. Chased out of the country, he went to France where the revolutionists greeted him with welcome arms, elected him to the National Convention.

Here however Paine failed to perceive the full depth and needs of the revolution. Friendly with the moderate elements, he found himself at loggerheads with the left, which was pushing the revolution ahead relentlessly, uncompromisingly. For protesting the execution of the King, Paine was for a time kept in prison. Released, he lived several years in France, at odds with the growing reaction.

## Unmasked Hypocrisy of Religion

Finally, in 1802, and much to the disgust of the American conservatives, Paine returned to America. He had meanwhile written his denunciation and expose of organized religion. Paine's "Age of Reason" ripped the hypocrisy and falsehood off the church, and its instrument, "the bible of a thousand and one contradictions." The hypocrites and conservatives, satisfied with the freedom they (not the masses) had won, bellowed furiously, asked for his hide, spread the vilest slanders against him.

Denied even the privilege of voting in the nation he had helped create by the fire of his arguments, Paine lived a retired and hounded life in New Rochelle and New York City. He who had turned the proceeds of his writings over to the Revolution, was denied a small pittance by the product of the Revolution and condemned to poverty.

Though limited by the understanding and knowledge of his time, Paine had struck a rebel's blow at social despotism. Not even his adoption, by the Communist Party along with the other and less revolutionary heroes of American history, can dim the glory of this social rebel.

Paine was buried in a corner of his New Rochelle farm—consecrated cemetery ground being denied. Twenty years after, William Cobbett dug up the remains and carried them to England to give them impressive burial. Something happened to the scheme. His bones disappeared. Paine had no nation; he was buried in none.

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tempt, speaking as he pleased, shooting back stiff answers to the committeemen, who took it humbly, and reaching the climax of his oratorical bursts with an open call that Army rule be established immediately in the United States.

"It ought to be handled in five minutes from the White House," he said. The method he proposed was that the President should use the army, under a law passed in 1929, which made it the duty of the President, he declared, to take such action if the "lives and property of citizens were threatened."

He was full of praise for the German-American Bund, declaring its meeting in Madison Square Garden on February 20 as "impressively patriotic." (The Socialist Workers Party led the demonstration of anti-fascists which protested this meeting.)

The General was accompanied by a retinue of attorneys, and one member of the House, Representative Thorkelson of Montana, who has lately gained notoriety in the fascist press, being described by William Dudley Pelley, head of the Silver Shirts, as a "new statesman rearing high above this miasma of skullduggery."

It was brought out during the questioning of the General that he had met Fritz Kuhn, leader of the German-American Bund, at the home of Mrs. Rudyard Uzzel, 85-12 165th Street, Jamaica, Queens. Moseley described Mrs. Uzzel as a "fine patriot, very much interested in the critical situation in New York City."

Moseley had apparently arranged to have the committee room packed with sympathizers. Whenever they thought he had made a particularly good point they laughed or applauded.

When Moseley made his statement that the "communist" danger could be handled in "five minutes," a committee member asked: "In what way?"

**Wants Dictatorship**

"If I were in the White House," he responded, "I would issue an order immediately to discharge every Communist in the Government and everyone giving aid and comfort to the Communists."

"I would release the army from its present position. It can make plans for attacking Germany, Japan, and Italy, but it can't do a damn thing to defend itself against the enemy within our gates. They have been told not to investigate anything."

Last week Army officials announced that they would investigate Moseley's connections with fascist organizations. Whether they will continue with such an investigation has not yet been announced. It is well known that many army officers harbor fascist sympathies.

During the entire hearing, Moseley attempted to utilize the proceedings as a sounding board for his fascist program. He brought in a great sheaf of papers containing his analysis of the national situation and the remedies he as a fascist proposes for their solution.