

By Dwight Macdonald

# SPARKS IN THE NEWS

## Inventory of an Armory

Two weeks ago I wrote the editors of *Time* a letter asking why they took so seriously the New Masses "exposure" of General Krivitsky and pointing out that the *Socialist Appeal* had revealed that General Krivitsky, when he broke from the Communist Party a year and a half ago, stated that his name was Samuel Ginsberg.

A few days later, I received the following letter, signed "I. Van Meter, for the Editors of *Time*": "Thank you for your critical note in regard to *Time*'s report on the New Masses' recent exposure of General Krivitsky. What you say is quite true—as far as it goes. But there are a couple of big 'guns' that N.M. is still sticking to. We are planning to publish your letter in the forthcoming issue, together with an Editor's Note giving an inventory of the N.M. armory."

In *Time* for June 5, my letter was printed, followed by this Editor's Note: "Says the New Masses: Krivitsky-Ginsberg never was in Russia, never was a Soviet official, is a fake. To these guns it sticks. *Time* sticks to no guns but its own." Obviously, when *Time* called the New Masses, it found that the "armory" of data about Krivitsky-Ginsberg was a myth. The one new allegation is that the General "never was a Soviet official." This is definite and important, unlike the New Masses' previous 'charges.'

But the editors of the *New Masses* apparently have already forgotten—Stalinists must needs have short memories these days—that in their original 'exposure' they wrote: "You are just the kind of adventurer the infamous Yagoda would pick for his anti-Soviet dirty work." They must now deny—and probably will do so without turning a hair—that the infamous Yagoda was ever a Soviet official. I can imagine Joseph Freeman scratching his head: Yagoda? Name sounds familiar. Who was that fellow anyway?

## Indiana Harbor Episode

Comrade Herbert Martin writes from East Chicago, Indiana, about the Memorial Day parade in nearby Indiana Harbor, where Inland Steel and Youngstown Sheet & Tube have major plants. "The parade," he writes, "was organized and managed by the local post of the American Legion and was composed of all the local patriotic and chauvinistic organizations of the community. An added and most unexpected feature of this year's parade was the inclusion of the Indiana Harbor section of the (Stalinist-controlled) International Workers Order. After all these years, the local Stalinists have finally achieved respectability enough to march in a patriotic, jingoistic Memorial Day parade along with the American Legion, the Boy Scouts, Veterans of Foreign Wars, and the National Guard. . . . The Stalinists, carrying American flags, marched right behind a contingent of Polish Legion-

## MEN AND WOMEN OF LABOR

# OUT OF THE PAST

By EMANUEL GARRETT

### GIACOMO MATTEOTTI

(1885—Murdered, June 10, 1924)

Giacomo Matteotti, son of a well-to-do farmer and expert in criminal law, rose to speak in the Italian Chamber of Deputies on May 30, 1924. Leader of the small, and dwindling, parliamentary opposition, he rose to present an indictment of the fascist regime, to read a list of its crimes, to denounce its electoral frauds.

## The Fascist Dogs Strike

Mussolini sat in the chair writhing. Several times he interrupted, and growled ominously as Matteotti sent thrusts of irony and wit in reply. Matteotti charged Mussolini with using public funds for the benefit of big business—to refloat a near-bankrupt enterprise, to buy 18,000 shares of Mineral Oil Refinery, etc. Matteotti charged that Mussolini had used armed militiamen in the elections.

The session over, a few of Matteotti's friends collected around him to congratulate him on his speech. (There weren't many of these. A good part of the "socialists" had long since turned tail.) Matteotti told them: "And now my colleagues, you may prepare my funeral oration for the chamber."

Mussolini made it clear that he was going to take some kind of action. One of his close henchmen remarked that "if they (the socialists) knew what was going on in Mussolini's head at such times, they would lay low." On June 1, "Popolo d'Italia," edited by Mussolini's brother, referred to the "monstrously provocative" speech made the day before which deserved "something concrete" in reply.

On June 10, Matteotti, leaving his home, was whisked into a waiting car by a band of men. One of these men later reported Matteotti's last words: "You will not kill the ideal. My children will be proud of their father. The workers will bless my dead body."

Three months later that body which workers have truly come to revere as the embodiment of unrelenting anti-fascism, was found in a woods near Rome. There were thirty-six stab wounds in the chest. The rasp was still embedded in the body.

By chance, the license number of the kidnap car had been noted by passers-by. A cry went up for the apprehension of the criminals. Testimony piled up pointing the finger of responsibility directly at Mussolini. It was learned that the car had been used by one Dumini, a despicable criminal and hanger-on of the fascist who had been hired for the job. Finzi, Under-Secretary for the Home Office, afraid he was to be made the scape-goat for the murder, composed a testament, and sent copies to several people. One of these was

aires. These Legionnaires were in wartime uniforms and wore decorations from Pilsudski himself for having served in the army which fought with the White Guards, and particularly for having fought against the Red Army at the famous battle of Warsaw. . . . I am bringing this item to your attention for whatever interest it may be."

The item has plenty of interest, I should say. And—speaking of the socialist movement in Poland—the Soviet press a year ago carried a number of articles slandering the memory of Rosa Luxemburg and her companion-in-arms, Leo Jogiches, actually going so far as to charge them with organizing the Social Democratic Party of Poland under instructions from the Czarist police. The general reason, of course, was that Luxemburg and Jogiches enjoy a prestige, most uncomfortable for the self-termed "heirs of Marx, Engels and Lenin," as internationalists and revolutionists. The specific reason, I am told, was that at the time the Kremlin was preparing to rid itself, via the concentration camp and the firing squad, of a sizable group of Polish militants and revolutionists who many years ago had found sanctuary in the Soviet Union from the White Terror of Pilsudski.

## The Axe Falls

In my column in this month's *New Internationalist* I described the preparations of the 'reactionary' N. Y. State Legislature and the 'progressive' LaGuardia city administration to slash over \$8,000,000 from New York City's school budget. The Legislature has now done its dirty work, slashing an arbitrary 10% off the educational budget of every city and town in the entire state. What this will mean in New York City is clear from the statement of the local Board of Education: "The elementary schools will suffer a cut of about \$3,000,000 in services. In addition to the elimination of 200 supervisory teachers, 600 anticipated vacancies will not be filled and approximately 984 teachers will be dismissed. Kindergartens will be abolished. . . . Evening high schools and evening trade schools will be eliminated. . . . The day classes for adults in English and citizenship and the evening elementary schools will also be eliminated. Here we are terminating a long and honorable tradition of the school system in the Americanization of immigrants and the removal of adult illiteracy. The community and recreational centers and afternoon athletic centers which play such an important part in the fight against delinquency must also be abandoned. . . . Summer play schools and nature education will also be eliminated." According to the *N. Y. Times*, members of the Board of Education have stated that these cuts "will turn the educational clock back nearly 100 years." Thus our capitalist society, its advance blocked by insoluble economic contradictions, begins to retrace its steps. When this sort of regression reaches a certain velocity, we call it 'fascism.'

Adding to the reaction sweeping the United States, the newly elected James administration immediately began to carry out the mandate of its real supporters—the mine owners and large industrialists who control the Republican Party. Most of the legislation passed had one object: to depress further the social standards of labor and those on relief. The Work or No-Relief Bill (otherwise known as the Chain Gang Bill) was passed over the protest of James' own Department of Welfare Head. It forces all able-bodied relief recipients to work for their relief, and enables private interests to draft employees from relief rolls, with the aim of lowering general wage scales. Lists of relief clients are to be published, and the administration is to be decentralized and placed in the hands of local boards composed of James' henchmen. The relief appropriation itself was cut from \$209 million for the two year period, to \$120 million.

The State Little Wagner Act was smashed to pieces. The check-off system for union dues was prohibited (this was aimed at the principle of unionism rather than at any particular union leaders' salaries); agitation on the part of one worker to another to join a union is punishable as an unfair labor practice; the sit-down strike is outlawed; employers are allowed to petition for arbitration of labor disputes; and grounds for anti-union injunctions are widened.

As a prelude to this union-busting campaign a \$7,500,000 verdict was rendered in Philadelphia against the Apex sit-down strikers under the Sherman Act.

Anti-Alien Bill. The Workmen's Compensation Act was revised at the behest of the large mine owners, whose premiums are reduced, and so are the benefits. With the new set-up little exists in the way of workmen's compensation for the worker, except the name. The legislation was written by a representative who is admittedly a lawyer for the coal companies. Teachers' wages were cut and their pension and tenure rights made insecure. Not to discriminate between the sexes, woman was given her rights by lengthening her working day by 2 hours.

A most ominous act, the first of its kind in the United States, is the Alien Registration Bill. All aliens in Pennsylvania with its large foreign-born population, over 18 must register and carry certificates to be produced at the request of any police officer. The foreigner is being officially branded. This is a beginning at national registration of alien and non-alien alike. It passed amid a conspiracy of silence, except for the formal negative vote of the Democrats.

Only one force can stay the hand of reaction—mass action. Even James had to bow to it in one instance. A measure proposed by the large coal corporations would have thrown on relief twenty to thirty thousand small producers and so-called bootleg miners who have sprung up since the depression, and dig their coal on unused land or land given up by the

Some, like Matteotti, continued their opposition with appeals to law, justice and humanity. But it didn't work. All these were on the side of the socialists. But they lacked the will to go out and rally the masses for revolutionary action to expropriate the factories, establish a workers government.

The masses looked up to Matteotti because he had stood his ground against fascism. His death came near to kindling the fire of revolution. There was however no revolutionary party to guide the flame.

# Anti-Labor Laws Enacted by Penn.

Anti-Alien Bill, First of Kind in the U. S., Typifies Reactionary Legislation

By S. FOSTER

PHILADELPHIA.—In session for twenty-one weeks the Pennsylvania Assembly has adjourned after enacting a program which may well become a pattern for American reaction.

The growing disillusionment of labor, W.P.A. and relief groups, farmers and those in the lower income brackets, showed itself last Fall in a march backward with the election of the Republican regime of Governor James. The Democrats, swept to power four years previously with Roosevelt's New Deal, were not able to withstand the growing disappointment of the masses at the failure of Governor Earle to abate the crisis in spite of enactment of Little New Deal measures for the State.

James, previously unknown politically, bawled his way to victory with promises to "humanize relief," "Take relief out of politics," "I am a miner, I know the miners' problems," etc. This apostle of honesty and virtue continued to draw an \$18,000 salary as judge of the Supreme Court while absent from the bench and actively carrying on an election campaign.

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## Vicious Syndicalism Bill Is Passed by House of Congress

(Special to the *Socialist Appeal*) WASHINGTON, June 5.—The House of Representatives passed today, in the form of an amendment to the Espionage Act, H.R. 6075, one of the most vicious criminal syndicalism bills that has ever been issued against the labor movement, by a vote of 142 to 4.

The amendment, introduced by Representative McCormick of Massachusetts, would make it illegal for any person to advocate the overthrow of the government by force, and would punish the offender by sending him to jail for 5 years as well as fine him \$5,000.

McCormick jammed through the amendment without debate in the opening minutes of today's session when only a handful of House members were present.

Explaining the amendment, Representative McCormick said: "Hitherto, we have been able to punish advocates of forcible overthrow of the government only by proving that a conspiracy existed between two or more persons, or by proving that an overt act had been committed. The burden of proof rested on the government. This amendment makes it punishable by \$5,000 fine and five years in jail for 'Whoever advocates overthrow of the United States government by force or violence, willfully or knowingly.'

Previously passed at this session is the Dempsey Bill, making it a criminal offense for an alien to advocate the overthrow of the government. The present McCormick amendment includes American-born as well as alien workers.

## BOARD GETS PETITION FOR BEAL PARDON

(By Staff Writer)

NEW YORK, June 8.—A petition signed by hundreds of prominent individuals was today presented to Commissioner Edwin Gill of the Board of Pardoners at Raleigh, North Carolina, asking for the pardon of Fred Beal, framed labor leader.

Fred Beal, leader of the famous Gastonia strike of 1929, is serving a sentence of from seventeen to twenty years for the alleged shooting of Chief of Police Aderholt who was killed in a shooting during an attack on the headquarters of the strikers on June 7, 1929. With no real evidence against him, Beal was railroaded to jail on the framed charge because of his part in the strike. After his conviction, Beal went to Soviet Russia, but, disillusioned with Stalinist practice, returned to face jail and seek vindication. The Stalinists have since joined with the mill owners and boss courts in seeking to keep him in jail.

Not Guilty. The petition which was released by the Non-Partisan Defense Committee for the Defense of Fred Beal, reads in part: "A large and steadily in-

# Before the Nat'l Party Convention

By JAMES P. CANNON

All attention of the revolutionary militants in the United States is now turned toward the anti-war convention of the Socialist Workers Party, which is to convene in New York City on July 1. Without doubt this assembly will mark an important stage in the development of the only serious, the only genuine opposition to the impending war.

It is not to be expected, however, that the convention will produce any new prescription or panacea. Those who look for miracles will be disappointed. We do not conceive of the struggle against war as some sort of special task separated from the struggle against the capitalism which breeds it. Anti-war sentiments, as such and in themselves, mean nothing; everybody, more or less, is against war. Opposition to war that aims at social revolution—that alone is significant. And that, in turn, is totally merged with the struggle to build a revolutionary party which points the way and to connect it with the masses of workers who have the power.

A convention—any convention—is not an all-saving instrument; its potentialities are strictly limited. It can sum up the past but it cannot assure the future. It cannot change anything in the status of the party which exists on the day it convenes. It can at best only estimate what is valuable in the work of the past, what has been achieved and must be firmly retained as well as what must be rejected. The future tasks can be indicated by the convention, but their accomplishment—or their default—will rest with the party after the convention adjourns its sessions. Even so, conventions are large and irreplaceable experiences in the life of every democratic, that is every real, party.

## ESTIMATING OUR PAST

The forthcoming anti-war convention of the American section of the Fourth International will enable us to pause and look collectively in two directions—at the past and at the future. Our survey of the past can only assure us that our preliminary work is done, and for the most part, not badly. We have built firmly, our achievements have a mighty historic significance. This we know and nobody can tell us differently. Our program has withstood all the tests of theory and experience and stands unassailable. We have assembled the forces of the vanguard in a single organization. We no longer have any rivals in this field and no problems of "unity" require a second thought. The ten-years' task of clearing the air of confusion and programmatic disorientation, of regrouping the scattered forces of the revolutionary fighters under a new, clean banner; the same work which occupied so many of the years of the time of Marx, and after him of Lenin, is already behind us. Indeed, the hour for our full concentration on broader tasks struck some time ago.

## THE ROOT OF ALL OUR EVIL

Our sluggishness in making the abrupt turn to mass work with all force and energy; the persistence of old habits of our days of isolation as a propaganda circle; our failure to reach new, fresh strata of workers; our hesitation, half-hearted, at the brink of the great stream represented by the workers' mass movement—herein is the root of all our evil. The convention must take sober account of these facts and say something decisive about them. With the tasks of yesterday accomplished and those of today only half understood and approached in a gingerly way, we are marking time while the forces of reaction, which already outline the features of an authentic American fascism, grow by leaps and bounds. The position is becoming dangerous. The convention, true enough, cannot rectify matters, but it can and must sound the alarm and summon the party to rigorous measures for a speedy rectification in the coming months. Time, as the legal maxim has it, is of the essence of the contract. There is not too much time, even in America.

We can make up for lost time and begin to forge ahead if we turn our faces in the right direction. That means, first of all, to turn our backs on the pessimists and calamity-howlers, the soul-sick intellectuals and tired radicals who whine and dawdle around the fringes of the movement and even, to a certain extent, infect its ranks. These gentry, whose gaze is concentrated on their own navels, do not see what is going on about them. It is a simple fact that American capitalism, the most powerful of all, is already seized by paralyzing senility. It writhes in an ever-deepening social crisis which its most perspicacious politicians no longer hope to cure but only to alleviate, and that only by the desperate gamble of war. It is a fact that the furious onslaughts against the workers, employed and unemployed, signalize in essence the acknowledgement that over-rich American capitalism can no longer pretend to assure a living to the slave within his slavery. It is a fact that the sum total of all these circumstances—is rapidly preparing all the pre-conditions of a social revolution. And confronting it is a working class that has not known defeat, that has invincible numbers and boundless power.

creasing number of persons, as they become familiar with the circumstances in this case, are convinced that Beal was in no real sense guilty of the crime for which he was convicted. I hold with a significant body of considered opinion throughout the country that the circumstances surrounding the trial were unhappily not devoid of passion and prejudice emanating from the bitter labor controversy that sharply divided the community in which the trial took place. . . . Among those who have signed the petition are the following: John Dewey, John Dos Passos, Will Durant, Professor Paul F. Brissenden, H. M. Kallen, Marc Connolly, Suzanne LaFollette, Alexander Melkijohn, Eugene Lyons, H. L. Mencken, Benjamin Stolberg, Burton Rascoe, Meyer Shapiro, Professor Robert Morss Lovett, and William Green.

All this is a sealed book to these skeptics who, in general, have thought very little about the scientific analysis of capitalism upon which revolutionary calculations are predicted, and still less about the laboring masses as the all-powerful makers of the revolution. Their melancholy sentiments have no relation to the actual situation in this country. They attempt to record the status and the prospects of the revolutionary movement by the fluctuating fever chart of their own unstable moods. They are mistaken; and doubly mistaken are those militants who even for a moment heed these counsels of petty bourgeois impotence and despair.

The pessimistic brotherhood comprises several categories, loosely united by a common bond of despair, who carry on like keeners at a wake. Some of them, the well-known tired radicals, are like "gymnasium fighters" who exhaust all their strength in training and enter the real battle in the ring beaten and ready to quit before they start. Others have looked so often for the revolution before it was due and were so often disappointed that they can't recognize it when it finally approaches. Others, and they are not numerically the least, are simply afraid of the shadow of war and fascism and flee the battle before it really begins.

Most contemptible of all are those who seek to cover their desertion and retreat by hurling newly-invented "ideological" disagreements with Marxism over their shoulders. Taken all together they are an unattractive and uninspiring aggregation. It is nothing less than a monstrous travesty to consider them as in any way reflecting the movement of workers' emancipation which, by its very nature, is alien to all pessimism and defeatist sentiments. It is criminal folly to waste time or even to argue the question with these runaway-boys and heralds of defeat before the battle.

## TURN TO THE SOURCE OF POWER

Our convention must let the dead bury the dead and turn the face of the party to the workers who are the real source of power and of inspiration and well-grounded optimism. We had said this before. More than once we have incorporated it in resolutions. But we have not made the turn in forthright fashion. That is why we are lagging behind. That is the main reason we are suffering a certain stagnation. That is why we are even flirting with the danger of a degeneration of the party along the lines of conservative passivity, introspection and futility.

The proletariat of the United States is the source of unlimited power, it can raise the whole world on its shoulders—that is the unshakeable premise of all our calculations and all our work. "But what," say the croakers—pointing to the heavy defeats in Europe—"what if France and all Europe goes down before fascism?" We answer: The issue in France is not decided yet, but even in the worst case, the workers of America have power enough to topple over the structure of capitalism at home and to lift the whole world with them when they rise!

The foundation convention of the party a year and a half ago gave us pretty clear directives regarding orientation to the workers' mass movement. The revolutionary transition program has equipped us with the necessary slogans and proposals for effective agitation on the realities of the day. We made some progress, but all too little when we consider the breath-taking speed at which the social crisis is developing. The fault for that is not in the objective circumstances—they are favorable enough—nor in our stars, but in ourselves. We have not yet grown up to the level of our gigantic tasks.

We made some headway while other parties making pretensions to radicalism were slipping backward. We held our cadres intact while others suffered disintegration. We sloughed off quite a few crack-pots, and that is an advantage not to be discounted. By dint of considerable effort and sacrifice we established the twice-a-week *Appeal*. But all this weighs too little in the scale against the mushroom emergence of fascist movements and the sweeping growth in influence of fascist demagoguery. There are our rivals in the struggle for power. Comparison with them is the real criterion by which we must estimate our own achievements. And that criterion tells us warningly: Slow, modest, steady growth will not avail; we must leap ahead.

For us there is no way but forward at an accelerated pace. Can we solve the financial crisis of our twice-a-week *Appeal* by means of expansion? Can we strengthen and improve our responsibility, our discipline and our morale? Can we blast a path to fresh circles of undefeated and undisciplined workers, and make our party in truth a party of the proletariat in its composition and in all of its activities?

Affirmative answers to these questions and concrete, practical plans to implement them, are what the party needs from the convention.

## Social Patriotism, Ernst Toller Discussed in Coming New Int'l

A critical appraisal of the war position taken by a group of militants in Palestine is made in an article entitled "A Step Towards Social Patriotism" by the editors of the *Russian Bulletin*, featured in the July issue of the *New Internationalist*, which is to come off the press shortly.

Other articles to appear in the July issue include: Ernst Toller's Suicide, by Oskar Fischer.

An analysis of Thomas Mann's record and his position, by L. Johre, a well-known revolutionary German militant.

Roosevelt and the War Mobilization Plan, by Hal Draper.

Martovism, between S. Albert of South Africa and Albert Goldman, who recently reviewed Martov's posthumous criticism of the Bolsheviks.

Rosa Luxemburg on the crisis in French socialism, which deals with problems of the labor movement startlingly similar to those confronting it today. Dwight Macdonald has written a number of explanatory notes to this essay, helping to bring it up to date.

Numerous other features complete what is sure to be a popular number.

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