

By Dwight Macdonald

# SPARKS IN THE NEWS

## Information, Please

For some time now we have been told by the press of the Socialist Workers Party that the fate of the workers of the world turns to a large extent on how the crucial situation in France develops. I agree entirely. But I have been, to put it mildly, disappointed with the way the S.W.P. press has covered the French front. The recent developments in the P.S.O.P. and the relation of the P.O.I., the London Bureau and the Fourth International, to them—this most central of all themes has been touched on only in the most gingerly way. The cut-and-dried account of the P.S.O.P. congress which was printed in the *Appeal* of June 23—the entire story being told, in the most unlightening and perfunctory way, in about 500 words—this is a recent case in point. I don't see why the *Appeal* can't find a Paris correspondent who will send in regular articles interpreting such things as the Stalinists' attitude toward the Daladier regime, the latest tendencies in the P.S.O.P., the rumored right-wing split in the French C.P., and so on. I realize that the French situation, from the standpoint of the Fourth International, is at present both delicate and complex. But that seems to me all the more reason why it should be fully discussed in the *Appeal*. Ostriches, not revolutionists, hide their heads in the sand.

## Add: Kremlin Kultur

There have been objections to my inclusion of Eisenstein, Shostakovich and Meyerhold in last week's "agony column" on the grounds that, since the date of the news stories I quoted, all three of these artists have been taken back into official favor. As for the first two, the price they have paid for reinstatement in the Kremlin's good graces is the abandonment of their experimental techniques in order to turn out the most banal and conservative work (Eisenstein's *Alexander Nevsky*; Shostakovich's latest symphony), utterly lacking in the qualities that made them world-famous. As for Meyerhold, I quote from today's *N. Y. Times*: "MOSCOW, June 23—Vsevolod Meyerhold . . . was taken from his Moscow home by secret police night before last and locked in a cell at Lubyanka prison. . . . His arrest surprised Soviet stage and literary circles because recently he seemed to be coming back gradually into favor."

## "Egyptian Socialism"

In the May issue of *Jewish Frontier* there is an extremely interesting article by Salomon Schwartz on "Social Legislation in the Soviet Union". Schwartz begins with a point which fits neatly into the thesis of Trotsky's recent article in the *New Internationalist*: namely, that the Soviet bureaucracy which used to masquerade as part of the working class, in the last year has openly asserted its differentiation from the workers. They don't, of course, call themselves "bureaucrats". No, the term the press now uses for these gentlemen is—"the intelligentsia"! "Under the banner of the 'intelligentsia'," writes Schwartz, "there is be-

ing consummated a process which has practically nothing to do with that name. That process is the social self-assertion of the upper stratum of the Party and Soviet bureaucracy and its 'liberation' from the intimate ties of the proletarian ideology."

Early last December the press began printing scores of letters from Stakhonovites, Udarniks, straw bosses, and, of course, "intelligentsia", "exposing" lax discipline and low production in the factories and "demanding" strict laws be passed to remedy this. In the Ural machine plant, for instance, where this "spontaneous" movement of protest began, *Pravda* indignantly reported that in the eleven months up to last December, there had been no less than 7,978 cases of unexcused absences from work. Schwartz points out, however, that actually this represents only an average absence per worker of one-half day a year.

These letters got action at once. (The pen is mightier than the sword!) Without consulting the much-publicized Soviet parliament, a flat violation of the much-publicized Soviet constitution, the Kremlin in quick succession put through a series of labor regulations of unprecedented severity. On December 20 it decreed the introduction of the "work passport", that ultimate in control of the working class, first introduced by Napoleon III in 1854 as the "livret ouvrier", and the very same sort of "fink book" as the New Deal's Maritime Commission, backed up by the Kremlin's American agents, is now trying to impose on American seamen. Hitler re-introduced it into Germany in 1935. During the whole campaign of letters-to-the-editor, by the way, no one dared suggest this work-book idea, and it was only after the Kremlin had issued its decree that its "innumerable spokesmen began to vie with each other in glorifying the new regulation."

More edicts were issued on December 28 last, again without consulting any one—parliament, trade unions, even the Party—outside the top ranks of the Kremlin bureaucracy. These greatly extended the time a worker must be employed in a plant before he becomes eligible for sick benefits, cut down the period expectant mothers were given time off with pay from eight weeks before and eight weeks after the birth to five weeks before and four weeks after, required workers to give one month's (instead of one day's) notice before quitting a job, and ordered heads of factories, on pain of severe punishment, to discharge at once any worker who, without valid excuse, is either absent from work or over twenty-minutes late at any time. Finally, all workers who give up their jobs, whether they are fired or whether they leave of their own free will, are to be automatically dispossessed from their homes within ten days, regardless of whether the Housing Bureau has provided another dwelling for them. Thus the Soviet worker is shackled hand and foot to his job, a cog in the apparatus of Soviet production. The "socialism" Stalin is building in one country is coming to have an increasingly Egyptian flavor to it.

# Focus of War Situation Shifts From Far East to Danzig Arena

(Continued from Page 1)

**Danzig Coup Awaited**  
Meanwhile all the now-familiar stages of a Nazi offensive are unfolding around the issue of Danzig. An effort is apparently being made to put on a "cold" coup in the so-called Free City, which voted the usual 99.4 percent Nazi in its last elections. The city is being filled with storm troopers and the Poles are being worn down by a slow process of cutting away their authority, piece by piece.

The idea is that one fine day soon Danzig will proclaim itself part of the Reich. Poland will hesitate just a little too long and its fine friends in London and Paris will ditch it just as they did Czechoslovakia. That appears to be the general trend of the calculations in Berlin.

## Grist to Nazi Mill

Fine grist, of course, to the Nazi mill is the bog-down of the negotiations in Moscow for Russia's entry into what the *New York Times* likes to call the "peace front"—i.e., the Anglo-French side of this monster gang war. If there was any doubt about the bog-down and the wishful character of the optimistic predictions of a week ago in London and Paris, it was dispelled on Thursday by a blistering editorial in *Pravda*, Joe Stalin's own organ.

The editorial was signed by Andrei Zhdanov, Stalin's latest copy boy, who said it expressed his "own" opinion—but we all know what happens to *Pravda* writers whose opinions do not happen to agree with Stalin's. The *Pravda* editorial, of course, represents the official view of the Stalin government.

The parleys, said Zhdanov, have "entered a blind alley" because the British and French still want "an agreement under which the U.S.S.R. would play the role of a hired man, carrying on its shoulders the entire load of the engagement. No self-respecting country would accept such an agreement if it does not want to be a plaything in the hands of people who want someone to pull a hot coal out of the fire for them." Zhdanov charged that the French and British are deliberately sabotaging the negotiations in order to "exploit the imaginary stubbornness of the U.S.S.R. before the eyes of public opinion in their own countries" in order to "help them to strike a bargain with the aggressors."

## Both Sides Stall

What Zhdanov says about the British and French may be quite true. What he does not say is that it can be said with equal truth about the Soviet government itself. There has been plenty of stalling on both

sides but the main stall has been on Russia's part.

The present "blind alley" of the negotiations is exactly where Stalin has wanted to drive them in order to show Hitler that he remains ready to come to an understanding—even a tacit one—that will leave Hitler free to engage his rivals in the West without fear of embroilment with Russia.

No doubt the British and French would like to sic Germany onto Russia and keep the strategic sideline berth for themselves. The Russians would like to do just the opposite. This is all perfectly natural. That's how things go in gang warfare and the Russians are forced in this situation to play according to the rules of such warfare.

## Life and Death for Poland

It is this situation, almost more than anything else, that is encouraging Hitler to make a stab for Danzig and the Polish Corridor in the hope that the British and French, seeing no help from Russia, will back down again.

Whether they will be able to back down however, is precisely the question. Danzig may be just a minor note in the terrible disharmony that screeches around the heads of Chamberlain and Daladier. But to Poland it is a matter of life and death.

The British and French have given explicit and solemn and off-repeated pledges of immediate assistance to Poland should the Poles fight in de-

fense of what they deem their vital interests.

## Pledges Worthless

To be sure, pledges don't mean anything to the bloody-handed boss politicians in London and Paris. They're worth about as much as Roosevelt's "new deal" election pledges. But this time if the French and British do not call Hitler's hand they'll have to throw in their own. The bloc of alliances hastily fashioned in the last few months will fall to pieces. Bloodlessly victorious once more in Europe, Hitler and his bus-boy Mussolini will turn with a will to the French and British empires overseas. Britain will be less able than ever to cope with the Japanese in China and will render still more difficult Roosevelt's job in swindling the American people into a new war.

These are the headaches these days in London while actually Britain and all the other governments concerned are proceeding to call up reserves and distribute their armies, navies and air forces, and giving every indication that they expect the final payoff soon.

## SLUM DWELLERS PROTEST BOSTON CLEARANCE PLAN

(Special to the Socialist Appeal)  
BOSTON, Mass.—The inadequacy of present slum clearance plans was dramatically demonstrated in the Charlestown area of this city a week ago Friday. More than 400 angry residents of the area selected for a low cost housing project shouted their disapproval of the project at the first of twenty-two meetings called by the city council and threatened to barricade their homes against eviction unless they were offered dwellings at equal rent levels.

Mrs. Lillian Lyman, mother of three children, rising to state the case of the tenants, told the eight councilmen that she would refuse to move unless a dwelling similar to her present one and at the same rent was found for her. From every part of the audience came shouts of accord: "Same here," "Where do you expect us to move to?" "We can't afford to move any place else."

Mrs. Lyman told the committee that she now has a five-room house for which she pays \$17. "The best I can get is a four-room back-alley place and then they ask me to pay \$15 rent." Again there were shouts from the audience: "They won't let us rent places if we've got too many children." "They want us to put up deposits for rent, and we haven't got any money."

The people of this and other areas in Boston are badly in need of dwellings better than the ones in which they are at present living. But here, as has been proved in other cities, the slum clearance project works only as a hardship on those who are compelled to move. It is up to the city administration to provide these people with suitable dwellings at low rent while the houses are being built—and then to scale the rents in the newly built houses at levels within the means of the slum dwellers. But the city administration is not likely to do either of these things unless the residents compel the politicians to heed their needs and wants by forceful action.

**DEFINITION**  
"An Indian Stalinist is a brave who has buried the hammer and sickle!" From the "Congress Socialist" of India.

**Join the Socialist Workers Party**

**Wanted!**  
Anti-Fascist Salesmen to sell in  
**ROCHESTER, N. Y.**  
"FATHER COUGHLIN—Fascist Demagogue" pamphlet  
Liberal Commission  
Call Genesee 1479 M

**WANTED**  
Anti-Fascist Salesmen to sell  
"FATHER COUGHLIN—Fascist Demagogue" pamphlet  
Big Sales  
Liberal Commission  
See Miller, Labor Bookshop,  
116 University Place

# Upon Whom Shall We Rely to Fight Coughlin?

(Continued from Page 1)

## Can the Trade Unions Alone Stop Fascism?

The trade unions, bogged down with the bureaucracies headed by John L. Lewis and William Green, stand helpless before the terrible problems now facing the working class, the half-ruined farmers, the small business men, and the destitute unemployed.

The trade unions as fighting organizations of the working class won huge successes in the past, conquering many of the rights of labor and defending them during the upswing of capitalism. Today under the domination of Lewis and Green the trade unions if left alone and without help face disaster.

Father Coughlin understands the limitless strength of America's laboring people far better than do Lewis and Green with their corner grocery outlook.

That is why he attempts to turn the unemployed, tooth and nail, upon those organized in trade unions.

That is why he denounces the C.I.O. and the A. F. of L. over his radio network. That is why he calls strikers "idlers," and speaks of the "jobs they have left."

That is why he calls every militant trade unionist a "communist," a "socialist," a "Jew."

That is why he exerts every ounce of his voice and his pen to build up a terrible hate for the words: *communist, socialist, Jew.*

The trade unions alone, especially as they have been caught in the death grip which democratic capitalism has clamped upon Lewis and Green, cannot meet the situation. A new force is needed and needed badly.

A new weapon of the working class must be forged. An Independent Labor Party, a fighting militant political party of the working class charged with vision, with daring, with invincible boldness must be organized as the battering ram that will smash this entire trashy structure of New Deal politics and the poisonous fascist growths that swell upward from its rotting foundation.

## Fascism in America Must Be Stopped!

We must not repeat the mistakes of the labor movement in Italy and in Germany which permitted forgers, sidewalk spicers, and sideshow adventurers like Mussolini and Hitler to take over power.

The first lesson to learn is not difficult: **LABOR MUST DEPEND ON ITS OWN STRENGTH.**

Labor must have its own independent political party. Labor must have its own defense guards.

The greatest danger of all is to depend on the Roosevelts, the LaGuardias, the police, and the boot lickers of these former bosom friends of Coughlin and his ilk.

The first task that labor must perform in stopping the fascist movement in America is the organization of a *workers' defense guard.*

Every union local should begin the immediate organization of a guard to protect itself from the certain onslaught of the fascists in the near future.

The sooner these guards are organized the more efficient they will become in protecting the labor movement.

Trained, disciplined, and bold *workers' defense guards* are the **ONLY FORCE** that can physically stop the fascists from overpowering the labor movement in America.

(Concluded in next issue)

Second Edition Going to Press!

## FATHER COUGHLIN

### Fascist Demagogue

By JOSEPH HANSEN

A new pamphlet exposing the "Radio Priests'" real program.

Read it. Get your shopmates to read it. Send it to your friends.

Give us names and addresses, accompanied by cash and we will mail direct.

Single copies, 5c; in bundles of 5 or more, 3c; in bundles of 100 or more, 2½c.

PIONEER PUBLISHERS

116 University Place, New York City

## Pocket Book Edition Sale

35c — Three for \$1.00

- The Basis of Modern Science . . . . . by J. W. N. Sullivan
- A History of the English People (4 vols.) . . . by Elie Halevy
- Mutual Aid . . . . . by P. Kropotkin
- I Was Hitler's Prisoner . . . . . by Stefan Lorant
- Lord Shaftesbury . . . . . by J. L. and Barbara Hammond
- The Jewish Problem . . . . . by Louis Golding
- Germany Puts the Clock Back . . . . . by Edgar Mowrer
- Practical Economics . . . . . by G. D. H. Cole
- Socialism in Evolution . . . . . by G. D. H. Cole
- Social Life in the Insect World . . . . . by J. H. Fabre
- Limitations of Science . . . . . by J. W. N. Sullivan
- The Century's Poetry (2 vols.) . . . . . Edited by K. K. Roberts
- A Short History of the World . . . . . by H. G. Wells
- Science and the Modern World . . . . . by A. N. Whitehead
- Art in England . . . . . by R. S. Lambert
- The Psychopathology of Everyday Life by Sigmund Freud
- The Economics of Inheritance . . . . . by Josiah Wedgwood

LABOR BOOKSHOP

116 UNIVERSITY PLACE (2nd Floor) NEW YORK CITY  
Add 2c per book for postage

## MEN AND WOMEN OF LABOR

# OUT OF THE PAST

By EMANUEL GARRETT

WENDELL PHILLIPS

(Nov. 29, 1811-Feb. 2, 1884)

In a small mid-western town a mob of respectable people invaded the printshop of Elijah Lovejoy. They dragged him out, did these good northerners, and lynched him. Lovejoy had infuriated them with abolitionist agitation. The year was 1837—the Civil War was some twenty-odd years off.

Wendell Phillips, well-to-do Harvard man, went to a meeting in Faneuil Hall, Boston, called to discuss the murder of Lovejoy. Social problems hadn't agitated him much before. True, he had attended one or two abolitionist meetings, but that was the extent of his social protest. In fact, he went that evening to Faneuil Hall not so much out of aroused indignation as out of liberal interest. But Wendell Phillips that night changed the course of his life.

## A Champion of Truth

The Assistant Attorney General of Massachusetts took the platform to speak his approval of the lynching. Hardly had the Attorney General sat down when, burning with fury, Phillips jumped on the platform and delivered an impassioned denunciation of the slave system. The murder and those who would condone both. Several unsuccessful attempts were made to stop him. When he finished, the placid Bostonians cheered themselves hoarse. Of a sudden, Phillips had become a leading spokesman of the cause against slavery—along with Lloyd Garrison.

His friends thought him insane. It was alright to show some sympathy for the slaves, to contribute money to the abolitionist movement, even to attend a meeting. But to plunge wholeheartedly into freedom's cause, to submerge oneself in the fight against chattel slavery, to devote one's life to an ideal—that was something altogether different.

Phillips, however, did precisely that. A "Knight-Errent of Unfriendly Truth" he spent one night in a valley speaking to a few people, the next in a large city addressing a huge crowd. Often he had to leave the meeting-hall under protection. For the respectable people who had lynched Lovejoy and beaten Garrison, would have been glad to do as much to him. At one meeting the town's "respectables" roared so loud Phillips could not be heard; he nevertheless continued speaking, addressing himself to the newspapermen: "While I speak to these pencils I speak to a million men. We have got the press of the country in our hands; whether they like it or not, they know that our speeches sell their papers."

Because a lawyer had to swear fidelity to the Constitution, Phillips in 1842 gave up his

practice. "My curse be on the Constitution of the United States," . . . which defends slavery. He was as caustic with the scriptures which sanctified slavery.

His enemies called him "nigger-friend". And a friend of the Negro he was; looking beyond formal emancipation to real equality. When, the Civil War over, Garrison and other abolitionists were content to give up the fight, he insisted upon the continued existence of the Anti-Slavery Society until full suffrage rights were granted.

## With the Labor Movement

His great distinction, however, was that unlike most of the abolitionist leaders he was an active supporter of the labor movement. Standing for the "abolition of chattel slavery and wage slavery", Phillips attacked the profit system and all forms of social oppression. He supported women's suffrage when that was far from being a popular cause. He defended the Russian nihilists, attacked the suppression of the Irish people by the British tyrants, and honored John Brown for his courageous stroke against slavery. And in the fight for liberty and against tyranny, he sought to rouse the working class to action.

As a candidate of the Labor Party, he ran in 1870 for the Massachusetts governorship. His platform said that "Labor is entitled to all it creates." Attacking corruption and the profit system he stumped the state. In the election he polled 20,000 votes.

Phillips kept on the go. Speaking, writing, agitating. When he was 70, the Phi Beta Kappa association graced him with an invitation to speak. Phillips who had been Phi Beta Kappa in school had never before in all the years of his activity been invited to address the well-fed sons of Harvard or the smug conservatives of Phi Beta Kappa. Now an old man (they thought), and the issue for which he had principally fought largely settled, they considered it safe to hear him. Phillips saw the humor of the situation, but he spoke. He spoke to them about the duties of a "Scholar in a Republic" . . . to probe, to criticize, to fight exploitation of man by man, to stand on the side of social justice.

Says the Chicago "labor" paper, the *Wrecker*, alias the *Midwest Daily Record*: "It is not too late to drum the fascist General Moseley out of the army he has discredited" (for his vicious blasts against workers and his general all around rathness.) Once upon a time the Communist Party, whose paper this is, would have told us that the general is but the rotten ripe fruit of militarism, the watch dog of capitalism.

# Minn. Farmer-Labor Confab Skirts Basic Problems

(Special to the Socialist Appeal)

**MINNEAPOLIS**—On Saturday, June 17, the Minnesota Farmer Labor Association held its first state-wide conference since the catastrophic defeat of November. This conference was called to discuss the important problems which confront the workers and farmers of Minnesota and the U. S.

It met at a time when the world is on the brink of another world war, when fascism is raising its head in every corner, when the unemployment problem is becoming more and more acute in every section of the state. It met within a few days of a most significant election in the city of Minneapolis when the forces of labor rallying from the November Farmer Labor defeats united under a trade union committee to make a surprisingly strong bid for power.

## No Progressive Program

One might reasonably assume that a Farmer-Labor Party which has held power would be realistic enough to give these problems serious consideration and to draw the necessary conclusions of the need for independent political activity under trade union leadership, free from entanglements with the war-mongering New Deal. There should have been sufficient time in the ten-hour meeting to lay out a bold program of progressive action.

This the Farmer-Labor Association failed to do.

Handicapped by the reactionary Stalinist forces and the New Deal politicians, both intent on hamstringing any progressive program of independent political action, the meeting failed to give the positive

answers which alone could rally the newly stirring political forces of labor. True enough, they talked about these things, but whenever the question centered critically on basic problems, they were steered away. Thomas Amle, former Wisconsin liberal and new job-holder in the Department of Justice, played his role in discouraging an independent program and trying to sell the New Deal.

## Behind Roosevelt

In reply to a proposal to open the idle factories under workers' control, Amle the New Dealer, declared that this was a step toward socialism and would provoke employers to resort to fascism. Fascism, said Amle, is only a "bastard socialism". However, he did not overly oppose it, as he pointed out that it has put men to work in Germany. In fact, we "should take leaves out of the totalitarian" notebooks. Another F.-L. progressive arose to protest that no real Farmer-Labor Party could align itself with the War Deal of Roosevelt. To this embarrassing point Amle replied that he was 100 per cent behind Roosevelt's international policy.

Many good people from the rural sections of the state had come a long way to this conference on the basic problems of the workers and farmers only to become disgusted and leave early. It must be concluded that, to date, the Farmer-Labor Association has not faced the present sharp problems and recognized the need for throwing off the hampering ties of the New Deal and the pro-war Stalinists, and forging a program of independent working class action which alone can solve these problems.