

By Dwight Macdonald

SPARKS IN THE NEWS

A Short History of American Liberalism

"Mr. Walter Lippmann has temporarily severed his connection with the editorial board of the New Republic to enter the service of the War Department."—Editorial announcement in the New Republic for June 9, 1917.

"Unpardonable! . . . Amazing!"

I don't want to waste much more space on The New Leader, but I had no room last week to make one interesting point, namely, that journal's current success in getting unattached leftist writers to adorn its pages. Its list of contributors sounds like a roll-call of the Trotsky Defense Committee: Sidney Hook, James Rorty, Suzanne LaFollette, Benjamin Stolberg, Charles Yale Harrison, Max Nomad, Ferdinand Lundberg. The odd thing is that, from what I can gather, most of these writers object, with varying degrees of violence, to the Leader's basic editorial program: its support of the war drive, and its shameless prostration before the New Deal. (A classic in its way was the headline on a recent memorial tribute to Morris Hillquit: "HILLQUIT'S LIFELONG STRUGGLE BEARS FRUIT IN NEW DEAL LAWS". But I still prefer Trotsky's characterization of Hillquit as "a socialist leader for dentists".)

There are many and complex reasons for this curious state of affairs, but right now I want to do no more than remark on two fresh and peculiarly dramatic examples.

In the July 29 issue, Charles Yale Harrison devoted his regular department, which is the main feature of the editorial page, to a denunciation of the President for his recent WPA actions. Of the Woodrum relief bill he writes: "To place the blame for this iniquitous act solely upon the shoulders of the Tories is sheer intellectual dishonesty. Mr. Roosevelt, as any Washington correspondent will tell you, never lifted a finger to halt its passage." After some fine sneering at the miserable squirmings of the liberal and Stalinist journals, Mr. Harrison has to add: "And even the publication which is graced by this column lapsed into an unpardonable editorial silence." If the silence was unpardonable, then it would seem logical to expect Mr. Harrison not to pardon it. But it was hardly a surprise to find him, in the next issue, back at the same old stand.

In the August 5 issue, James Rorty writes a letter beginning: "In your July 8 issue I read with amazement the resolution on peace, war and fascism adopted at the annual convention of the Social Democratic Federation of New York City." (The Leader's contributors seem to live in a state of perpetual surprise that

Social Democrats behave like—Social Democrats.) Mr. Rorty's letter is answered by Algonon Lee with a blast headed, "SOCIALIST MOVEMENT NEVER PACIFIST; FREEDOM WORTH FIGHTING FOR". Lee doesn't yield an inch, of course; the editors know quite clearly just what they want and where they are going, even if their contributors don't.

The Leader's contributors view its scandalous editorial policy from a height of magnificent personal aloofness. They do their stuff in one column, while the editors go to town across the page. It's like a very pure and high-minded young man who, with the utmost detachment from all that goes on about him, comes in every night to play the bawdy house piano for the customers.

How's-That-Again Department

"Since the first of the year, the outlook for the New Deal has undergone a startling transformation. . . . Politically, what has happened to revive the New Deal fortunes is that the anti-New Deal Democrats have come to realize it would be suicide for them and their party to repudiate the New Deal. . . . The expected assault on the New Deal by an obviously conservative Congress did not materialize."—from an article, "The New Deal Has a Future" by Alfred M. Bingham in the current issue of Common Sense. Mr. Bingham's article bears the sub-head: "An Editorial Observer Finds the Washington Atmosphere Tense with a New Confidence and Sense of Direction."

Sweet-Land-of-Liberty Department

A friend sends in the following exhortation printed on the menu of a New York restaurant:

"Americans are bad people to cross when their simple pleasures are threatened. Think what happened over tea in 1776. (NOTE BY D. M. (Just to show that Earl Browder isn't the only one who knows about such matters): The Boston Tea Party took place December 16, 1773.) Or what might happen if 'Pie a la Mode' were denied us today.

"Think it over. Ice cream on pie stands for the American Way. A truly Yankee Doodle dish. Americans eat Pie a la Mode only for the fun of it. Not for duty. Not because they're told they must.

"Ice cream on pie is an American heritage—a symbol of a free land, where one can say, do, and eat as he pleases. On our menu it appeals to the robust, free-thinking, free-eating, free-spending type of American who has built this great country of yours. Let him have it."

The pie a la mode, my friend adds, was lousy.

Coughlin Challenge Met by Workers

(Continued from Page 1)

Jews, came out in force this Wednesday night.

The Coughlin speaker was lashing out at the "queer people with the strange noses," reading quotations from the fake "Protocols of Zion" and referring to the "Russian Jewish Revolution of October 1917," as anti-fascists arrived. They booed him effectively.

But shortly the cops arrived, closed all traffic on Valentine Avenue, proceeded to segregate the anti-fascists and push them toward Fordham Road, away from the fascist meeting which then numbered about 75 persons. To further protect the fascists, the cops roped off their meeting place.

The anti-fascists continued, however, to picket the meeting, shouting anti-Coughlin slogans up and down the street.

At the end of the meeting the police covered the retreat of the fascists from the neighborhood, escorting them away from the surrounding anti-fascists.

The anti-fascists gathered afterward and arranged to return to the same spot next Wednesday.

MAP NATIONAL DRIVE TO AID GUILD STRIKERS

(Special to the Socialist Appeal)

CHICAGO, Aug. 7—The American Newspaper Guild convention, which met in San Francisco last week, mapped out a nation-wide campaign to aid the Chicago Guild's strike against William Randolph Hearst's two newspapers, the Evening American and the Herald & Examiner, which is now in its ninth month.

The Evening American, special target of the strikers, reveals the effect of the intensified campaign. Afternoon circulation, long a Hearst bulwark in Chicago, has suffered a tremendous drop recently.

Advertising Drops

Advertising, too, continues to fall at a rapid rate. During the month of July the Herald and Examiner has lost more than 51 percent of its advertising and the Evening American slightly more than 22 percent. This tremendous loss shows the sympathy of the Chicago workers towards the Guild strike.

Violence broke out again this week when Bill Huht, a big 210 pound Herald and Examiner scab reporter, attacked Joe Ingrassia, slender 135 pound copy boy who had been selling copies of the Guild Hearst Strike News on the picket line in front of the Hearst plant. The attack was witnessed by Merrill C. Meigs, publisher of the Evening American.

7,392 Copies of Anti-War Pamphlets Are Ordered in One Week

During the first week of the War Referendum Campaign the branches of the Party and Y.P.S.L. have sent in orders for the pamphlet "Let the People Vote on War" to the tune of 7,392.

With the national quota on the pamphlet, to be fulfilled by September 15, set at 15,000, this means that near half of the total has already been taken by the branches in one week.

Nine branches have already ordered the whole amount of their assigned quotas. These are Reading, Fresno, Allentown, Hartford, Washington, Toledo, Rochester, Quakertown, and St. Paul. The first three mentioned have overshot their quotas.

The largest single order went to Minneapolis, which took 1,000 on its quota of 2,000. The National Office of the Y.P.S.L. has also taken 1,000.

Election Campaign news was forced out of the paper by the threatened Coughlin invasion of Union Square. In the next issue we will print the latest details of the campaign.

Workers of New York! Rally Against the Coughlin Bands At Union Square August 19!

This is what the War meant to the Bosses

COPPER companies	Investment	PROFIT on war	
Kennecott	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	70% PROFIT
Utah	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	200% PROFIT
Calumet & Hecla Co.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	800% PROFIT

"The big business men are going to help the country, and they are going to do it as a patriotic duty, not to make money."—Bernard M. Baruch, March 1917, after conference with copper industrialists.

UNION LEADER ADDRESSES OPEN LETTER TO F.D.R. ON WPA CUTS

Dear Mr. President:

In the midst of the current attempt on the part of reactionary political forces in America to undermine the union wage rates which many years of suffering by labor has built up, you have said that the workers on WPA have no right to strike against wage cuts and lengthening of working hours, because such a strike is a strike against the government.

If it is true that workers on government projects have no right to strike, then it is also true that the government has certain obligations to these workers, particularly that the government shall not be used as a strike-breaking agency. In the present instance the government is locking-out thousands of workers from the only jobs which the collapse of the economic system has left them. Further, the government is undermining union wage standards by forcing upon trade unionists the alternative of scab rates of pay or starvation.

It is obvious that if workers engaged on WPA are denied economic action to protect themselves, then their only reliance can be upon the platforms of the political parties for which they are permitted to vote. The program of your Democratic Party in 1936, Mr. President, stated:

"Where business fails to supply employment, we believe that work at prevailing wages should be provided in cooperation with state and local governments on useful public projects, to the end that the national wealth may be increased, the skill and energy of the worker may be utilized, his morale maintained, and the unemployed assured the opportunity to earn the necessities of life."

The action of the present Congress, with its Democratic Party majority, in its vote upon the 1940 Relief Bill, ratified by your signature, makes of this platform pledge a broken promise. On what, then, can these workers rely? They have been thrown out of work through no fault of their own and are left completely without resources.

While Congress and your administration proceeds to cut WPA wages and undermine union wage scales, you nevertheless have passed the largest sums of money for the army, navy and air force in the peace-time history of this nation. You have justified this in the name of national defense. To the workers real national defense means measures to protect our people from the ravages of ten years of mass unemployment. The largest military machine in the world is an ironic luxury for the protection of a nation if one third of its citizens are living in idleness, want and disease.

An immediate remedy for this situation is in your hands. You can divert the funds from super armaments to the building of decent homes, reclamation of slum areas, flood control and other socially useful projects. This work, employing workers at union rates whom private industry cannot use would not only fulfill the 1936 platform pledge of the Democratic Party, but would also turn a work of destruction to a work of construction.

The refusal of the Congress and your administration to accept this obvious remedy leaves you to share the responsibility for a great part of the social unrest which is now sweeping the country.

Signed: EMIL MAZEY, President, LOCAL 212, UAW-CIO

(Reprinted from the August 2 issue of the United Automobile Worker, Local 212 edition. Local 212 is the Briggs local of the United Automobile Workers Union, CIO.)

Crowd Balks Coughlinite Move To Break S.W.P. Meeting

By JOHN TRAVIS

(Special to the Socialist Appeal) LYNN, Mass., Aug. 3—Three adult Coughlinite hecklers and their group of misguided youths tried the patience of a sympathetic audience at the regular weekly street meeting of the Lynn Branch of the Socialist Workers Party.

The youths appeared on the scene early in the meeting but did not make any serious efforts to disrupt till the three adults arrived and immediately set the boys into action.

"What About Coughlin?" The first speakers, comrades London, chairman, Stone and Cappella had been speaking on War and Roosevelt's relief program. The audience was very sympathetic—even those youth who later heckled the last speaker of the evening (comrade Parker who spoke on Coughlin) showed attentive interest, at times. However, when the adult Coughlinites ap-

peared they proceeded to disrupt by hollering "What about Coughlin?" The boys took up the chorus.

Comrade Parker took the stand to answer the question "What about Coughlin?" He proceeded to show up Coughlin as America's leading Fascist. When as proof of his argument, Parker quoted the priest as saying HE WOULD RESORT TO THE FRANCO METHOD, shouts of "LIAR, LIAR" were raised; plus demands to get off the stand—go back to Russia—LET'S BREAK IT UP! etc. From this point on there was no let up.

Resist Hecklers Many sympathizers, including several women, expressed their anger by demanding that the disrupters leave if they were not interested in debating the question. Their demands grew more firm and the crowd began to swell and a number of arguments ensued.

The climax came when it was learned from a member of the audience, that one of the leading hecklers, a Mr. Martin, local newspaper owner, was distributing scab issues of the Lynn Item against which the editorial staff is striking. The police arrived to find a crowd of about five hundred, with hecklers and sympathizers squaring off at each other. The crowd was dispersed, but the meeting began again just around the corner, finally closing with the announcement that the S.W.P. would be there next Thursday to hold its regular weekly meeting.

INFORMAL HOUSE

Box 245 Kerhonkson, N. Y. (Near Ellenville)

120 acres of greenland in the Catskills. 40 acres of pine for sunbathing; handball, ping pong, archery; swimming and horseback riding nearby; dancing.

UNUSUALLY LOW RATES

\$18 Weekly \$6 Weekend Busses met at station

Tel. Kerhonkson 118 R

At Your Service THE APPEAL POSTER SHOP

THE NEGRO QUESTION

"LABOR WITH A WHITE SKIN CANNOT EMANCIPATE ITSELF WHERE LABOR WITH A BLACK SKIN IS BRANDED"—KARL MARX.

By J. R. JOHNSON

The SWP Tackles Negro Work

News stories from branches about Negroes increase. Reuben Plaskett, a Negro comrade, recently spoke to a meeting predominantly Negro. The Chicago party participated in a Negro demonstration on housing. The party discusses Negro work. All this shows that we did not merely adopt resolutions at the convention, but are seriously alive to the Negro question.

The convention said that our first task is the education of the party. But the discussions usually center around the question of "how to approach the Negroes." Comrades are aware of the difficulties created by the prevailing prejudices of American capitalist society. Most of them have had little contact, even of a social nature, with Negroes. It is obvious that Negro revolutionists are the best persons to approach Negro masses and of them we have very few. The hesitations and doubts of comrades are not without foundation. Still, the present concern with "the method of approach" is basically false. The Negro question for us is a political question. The main question for the party is the correct political approach. From that flows the "method of approaching Negroes" which is essentially a subordinate matter.

It is our political approach based on our political understanding which here as elsewhere will be decisive. The C.P. experience with Negro work gives indispensable lessons for us there, large and small, and must be carefully studied.

The Revolutionary C. P. and the Negro

The C. P. passed through three stages in its Negro work: (a) up to 1928 when the Negro work was neglected, (b) 1928-35 when it made a drive, the period of which coincided with the period of social-fascism, and (c) 1935-39, the open abandonment of the revolutionary line by the C. P. and the catastrophic loss of nearly all its Negro membership.

In The Communist of September 1929, Cyril Briggs reviews the early experiences of the C. P. on the Negro question. For years, the Negro membership of the C. P. could be counted "literally" on the fingers of one hand. In 1928, the drive was initiated directly by the Comintern which insisted at the 6th World Congress that the C. P. place the winning of the Negroes as one of its major tasks henceforth in America. The political line of the C. P. in those days was of course the line of Social-Fascism. Daily they went into action to make the revolution on every street corner. They formed their own red trade unions. They called Roosevelt and the New Dealers the worst enemies of the working class and the initiators of fascism in this country. They foamed at the mouth whenever they mentioned the N.A.A.C.P., and other petty-bourgeois Negro organizations.

That political line was false. It was nearly, though not quite as false as their present line of the Democratic Front; repudiating the revolution; making out Roosevelt and the New Deal to be the sole salvation of the American workers; grinning and smirking at Walter White and the N.A.A.C.P.

Furthermore in 1929, the C. P. had many blunders to live down. It had opposed the migration of Negroes from the South to the North on the grounds that these newcomers would affect the economic position of the white workers in the North and result in sharpening racial antagonism. The Negro comrades who opposed this "Gargantuan stupidity" were refused the five or six dollars they got weekly as postage for the news service they sent out to about 300 Negro newspapers. The C. P. had openly opposed social equality for Negroes at a convention in New York. This piece of stupidity was given wide publicity in the capitalist press and extensively quoted in the Negro press.

Even when the turn was made to the Negroes, the party was guilty of open acts of blatant chauvinism. In the unions under C. P. leadership, such as for instance the needle trades, there were scores of functionaries and departments for Greek, Italian, Jewish workers, etc. But there was not a single Negro functionary, despite the fact that there were several thousand Negro workers in the needle trades in New York City alone. The personal behavior of whites to Negro comrades was frequently such as to damn the party in the minds of all Negroes who heard of it. One Negro comrade, Nicolai Garcia, was in Baltimore six days before he was able to get a bed. "The white comrades with whom he came into contact just didn't know what to do with him." Yet two days later when a white comrade arrived from New York and talked about going to a hotel, there were protests and offers from white comrades to put him up. Such incidents always spread like wildfire among Negroes. Here then was a false political line and a party membership, many elements of which had not rid themselves of the crudest discriminations and prejudices practiced by capitalist society.

And yet, despite these handicaps, between 1929 and 1936 the party made progress. The Social-Fascist line at least summoned the masses to struggle. It differentiated sharply between the aims and methods of Communists on the one hand and of bourgeois politicians and vaguely "progressive" persons on the other. The C. P. made a revolutionary approach to the Negroes. And despite distortion of the revolutionary line, the demagoguery and corruption, the bureaucratic manipulation of the Negro leaders, the chauvinism open and inverted, the party gained thousands of members and won a sympathetic if critical interest from many sections of the Negro community.

The C. P. Becomes Respectable

Then the line changed from one that at least attempted to be revolutionary to one which is today openly tied to American imperialism and the Roosevelt war machine. The result was immediate and unmistakable. Of their 2,000 members in New York State, the C. P. has lost over 80% and the same thing happened all over the country. Here is a revealing example of the great revolutionary truth that it is the political line which is in the last analysis decisive.

Comrades, therefore, must put first things first. The general political line of the S.W.P. has proved its validity nationally and internationally. Today we know that our cadres would never be guilty of the crude discriminations in personal relationships with Negroes which disfigured the less select membership of the C. P. in its early days. If we have neglected the Negro question in the past, a great blunder, we have at least no specific errors to our credit. Our main preoccupation at the present time therefore must be the elaboration of our political approach to the Negro question. The rest will follow. There is no need to lose sleep at night on the "method of approaching the Negro." A correct political approach, however, is not at all an easy matter. During the next few weeks we shall interpret and amplify the convention resolution. Full and free discussion from members and non-party persons is invited and will be dealt with in this column.

YOU ARE INVITED to join the Labor Bookshop Circulating Library. Hundreds of titles. Latest novels, Marxian classics, books on Economics, History, etc. Lowest rates in the city! 15c per week. Join now! 116 University Place.

BOAT-RIDE, PICNIC AUG. 27 THE FRIENDS OF THE Russian Bulletin is to hold a boat-ride and picnic on Sunday, August 27. The boat will sail from the Battery at 10:15 a.m. going up Long Island Sound to Rye Beach. There will be dancing aboard to the music of a first-

rate orchestra. At Playland, in a section reserved for the Friends of the Russian Bulletin, we will picnic all afternoon, a full program of sports, games, music, swimming, and fun galore being arranged. The return trip will be made on an evening boat, with a Broadway show to be offered, followed by dancing. Tickets are available at the National Office at the nominal price of only one dollar. Make your reservations immediately before the limited number of tickets are exhausted.