

A Little May Day Experience

By ARNE SWABECK.

DOWN in Franklin County the Ku Klux Klan is flourishing like toad stools. The Invisible Empire has full sway. It is a league of petty bourgeois storekeepers, reinforced by the appointed henchmen of the coal operators and the well-known steam roller of the United Mine Workers Union. They are the servile tools of the masters. Of course, any expression of solidarity by the workers is both detested and feared by this gang.

THIS county is bordering on the south to Williamson County, made famous two years ago when the striking coal miners taught a bloody lesson to professional scabbing, and made notorious recently thru the hard boiled exploits of "Grand Kleagle" (or something like that) Glenn Young. It is located right in the heart of the Illinois coal fields. Thousands of miners have been compelled to accept a status of more or less permanent idleness. At present over half of the mines are shut down tight. However, most of these coal miners own a little shack, and the storekeepers, in the hope of some day taking over the deed to such property, are quite willing to grant credit for the most essential necessities, while meanwhile nothing will be left over for clothing. It seems like the coal barons cherish the hope that some day these valiant miners will be starved into submission.

LAST year the little city of Christopher, in Franklin County, put on a grand May Day Celebration. Under the auspices of the two mine workers' local unions a great parade thru the town was staged, winding up in a mass meeting over which the Mayor presided while Comrades Earl Browder and Mother Bloor spoke. Now matters have changed somewhat. The Ku Kluxers, the local operators, and I suppose, also the lieutenants of Frank Farrington, have had an opportunity to inform the Mayor that he made a mistake. This year nothing like that was going to happen.

ON Thursday morning, May First, after having been pulled thru the muddy road from Benton by a horse team, I arrived in Christopher for the scheduled May Day celebration. A mass meeting had been advertised at the tiny city park. Some of us boarded a Ford and came to the park at the appointed hour. Several hundred coal miners lined the streets. None had been permitted to enter the park. Immediately the Mayor stepped up and told us curtly that "no bolshevik speeches or May Day celebrations would be allowed anywhere in Christopher," and "no arguments about it," echoed the sheriffs and deputy sheriffs while a gang of the Ku Klu Klan sent us some rather hostile looks.

"What were you going to speak about," one little storekeeper asked me. "Well, give me a chance to get it off my chest," I replied, "and you may listen." But, nothing doing. We were pushed back into the Ford and compelled to leave.

WE next made for the miners' hall, followed by part of the audience, determined to use our "constitutional right" to free assemblage. Comrade Barney Mass, organizer of the Young Workers League, opened the meeting with a few appropriate remarks on the "rights and guarantees" set forth in the United States Constitution. However, the sheriffs, deputies and Ku Kluxers thought otherwise. No sooner had Comrade Mass started than in rushed a big organized gang of this tribe, again laying down the law: "No May Day celebration anywhere in Christopher." Arguments availed nothing. Comrade Mass was placed under arrest and the meeting broke up.

THE excitement became transferred to the streets; the crowd increased expecting something to happen. While we paced the walk on the one side, awaiting an opportunity to place bonds for Comrade Mass, the Ku Kluxers, growing in numbers, watched our moves from the other side.

I HAD a meeting scheduled at Ziegler, for that same afternoon, and the comrades reminded me that we had better start to reach it in time, leav-

ing others to take care of Barney Mass. Of course, it could hardly be expected that I should be permitted to get away that easy, at least such were not the intentions of those watching us from the other side. When about ready to go, I was also placed under arrest and taken to a place they called the City Hall. "You dirty little rat, did you write that article?" I heard the captain of the Ku Klux Klan shout to Barney Mass, when I arrived there, as he tried to fit his fist to Barney's jaw. He referred to an article on the American Legion which he discovered in an old copy of the Young Worker, confiscated from our belongings. But no reply was needed, the sheriff intervened, saying

that he could not stand for anyone taking the law into their own hands, as we were going to have a fair and "partial" trial (he meant impartial).

THIS particular part of the country has witnessed many bitter fights between the "upholders of the law" and those who want to administer speedy "justice" with the help of a gun or a piece of rope, in line with the traditions of the "good old days." So, while the city authorities, evidently moved by the fact that a couple of dangerous reds had been caught, decided that we were to be transferred to the county seat, Benton, Ill., the Ku Kluxers made ready for a "Necktie Party." They filled two big Buick cars with gun totters and set out at

a speed of about 60 miles an hour determined to catch up with us while we were yet on the hard road to Benton and where they would have a better chance to overpower our sheriff guardians.

HEAVILY guarded by a total of eight sheriffs and deputy sheriffs, Comrade Mass and myself traveled along, our party divided into two Fords, with Benton as our goal. Just before the entrance to that city travelers were compelled to switch off from the hard road, which is not quite completed there, and take another road, muddy, about two feet deep. We got stuck and sheriffs had to pull the cars out. Just then the two cars loaded with Ku Kluxers arrived on the scene and got stuck too; they failed to reach us on the hard road. Up came the Klan captain, owner of a little hardware store in Christopher, armed with a gun in one hand and a nice slender rope in the other, ready to administer "justice." Furious that we had slipped away, he commanded, "stick 'em up," and continued, "these are my prisoners, I claim these men and we'll fix 'em." One deputy sheriff, daunted at the gall, stuck 'em up. A minute's hesitation, at which many thoughts ran rapidly thru our minds. Was this a frame-up? Were the sheriffs going to turn us over to that mob? But no—the fellow had overreached himself. The sheriff in command, noting that only one man had come forward while pointing his gun at him, retorted, "these are my prisoners, they are going to have a fair and 'partial' trial (again meaning impartial) and if you make another move this gun is going to come off." One sheriff quickly snatched the gun out of the hand of the Klan leader. He turned around and found himself staring into the gaps of seven other guns. Like a whipped cur, the would-be hero waded back thru the mud to his followers, and we felt perfectly at ease in the care of our brave sheriffs, who stepped on the gas and we soon arrived at Benton.

WHEN brought to the States Attorney's office, the frozen attitude of the sheriffs melted away and they discussed the incident with us in a jolly, good humored manner. "One more move by that fellow and I would have let loose," said the head sheriff. "They have tried that stunt on me before but never succeeded. Once in a while, however, they have their necktie parties, that seems to be a sort of costume here."

THE States Attorney delved into our literature supply without finding anything of an incriminating nature. He informed us that we would be held until further notice, rather as a matter of protection against any possible snipers. When we asked what specific charges had been submitted, he replied: "Well, if all those guns you saw had been discharged you wouldn't have asked for any charges. He was quite a jovial fellow, did not know that this state had a criminal syndicalist law, he had heard some rumblings about a Third Party and a Labor Party, and wished them all kinds of success, but was rather keenly interested in local politics and the candidacy of Governor Small. He agreed that the attempts of the Klan to hold up the sheriffs was a "grave offense." A little later, in a phone conversation with the Mayor of Christopher, he informed him that it would be of no use trying to make a case against us unless he, the Mayor, had some specific evidence to the effect that we had been advocating the overthrow of the government by force and violence, and he added, "these fellows seem to be advocating a Labor Party."

At 6:30 the same evening we were released, and made our way to Ziegler, Ill. There we were informed that the Klan were organizing to get some speakers who had arrived in town. Twice they came to the hall where the miners had a dance. But it was late for any May Day celebration.

This incident with the Klan is helping to clear the class lines. It is gradually hammering the mine workers into one solid front against their enemies.

A Voice From Prison.

(Clip this out. When you feel like becoming a "Tired Radical" read it over and remember that Vanzetti was in prison four years when he wrote it. Then put it away till you need it again.)

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"Go, thought, upon the Golden wing."

Fly, my thought thru the living, flaming atmosphere of this spring morning. Fly to the hearts of my comrades, and voice to them my message which can be felt tho it cannot be said.

What if I have loved Freedom too much? What if the world has revolved four times around the Fatherly Sun since I was put behind prison bars, and deprived of all that makes the travail of life worth living? No reflection of blue sky nor heavenly flame reach the prison built for men, by men. The People are prostrate under the ferocious folly of the Tyrants, Lords of the Land, and the violence of their ruffian soldiers, children of the poor. Is then all in vain? Is all vanity?

No, not all is in vain, not all is vanity. The sacrifice of women is not in vain if they give birth to real men. And the real, the immense generosity of the universe is in us if the love of freedom still warms the human heart.

Spring approaches, Resurrection is at hand! All the living creatures freed from the yoke of the criminal authority, renew themselves, rejoice and sing. This is the force that will free the souls from darkness and cowardly captivity and lead the human family to the shores and summits of infinite freedom.

Resurrection! Vain were the chains and the gallows, vain the pyres, the crosses and the arenas where martyrs have been flung to wild beasts. Vain are the ukases of those who rule the earth. There is a cosmic virtue that transcends the power of all tyrants. For this I bear manly my cross, I know not to have suffered in vain, Oh, my friends.

BARTOLOMEO VANZETTI.

IN THE LAND OF GLOOM

(Continued from page one)

Fascisti.

FACT number four is the growing militancy and the growing number of the extreme Right which in Germany is called the "Voelkischer" and which we may name with the old familiar Fascisti. The program of the Right is very simple: abolition of the constitution, establishment of a monarchy, dissolution of all Socialist parties, annihilation of the Communists, a ten or twelve hour labor day, organization of a strong national army under a great national dictator, fight to the finish against the French. The Fascisti are militant not only in words but also in action. They make riots. They appear in workers' quarters and attack workers' gatherings. They do scab work in strikes. They organize anti-Jewish pogroms. For a radical or a person with an intellectual or a semitic appearance to come to a meeting of the Voelkische is to risk a couple of ribs. I was told by an eyewitness that at one of their meetings the younger members formed a line near the door asking the comers for donations and thereby singing a song which had the refrain:

"Give, give, give,
That we may kill off
The Messopotamian flatfoots."

It is quite obvious that a movement of this kind, appealing to the patriotism of the German philistine, appealing to the class interests of the German industrialist, appealing to the group interests of the military caste, appealing to the consciousness of power and supremacy which is inherent in the German bourgeoisie, appearing to offer a quick and glorious solution of

the present crisis, must attract a great number of disgruntled elements in the unhappy German empire. The weakness of the movement is in its inability to offer any real solution. It is childish to imagine that the Germans could wage a successful war against the French in the near future.

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Among these forces the Communist party of Germany must steer its way and lead the masses towards a revolution. When I was in Berlin the Communist national congress was still in progress. It ended on the eve of my departure from Germany. The story of my meetings and conversations with the German comrades must be postponed to a later correspondence.

Moscow, April 29.

Walsh Wants Senate Consideration Of Child Labor Bill

(By The Federated Press)

WASHINGTON, May 23.—Senator Walsh of Montana, has served notice that he will move within a few days that the Senate take up the child-labor resolution already passed by the House. Unanimous consent that the resolution be considered on May 22 was blocked by Sen. King of Utah.

Sen. Norris served notice, at the same time, that he would take similar action to secure consideration of the McNary-Haugen and Norris-Sinclair farmer relief bills. He said he had waited long enough, and would not hesitate to seek to set aside current business in order that farmer relief might get a hearing before adjournment.