THE CHARLOTTE NEWS

And Evening Chronicle

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SATURDAY, JUNE 21, 1941

Log In Justice

Superior Court Criminal Cases Keep Piling Up

The progress of Superior Court in Mecklenburg in hearing criminal cases and convicting or acquitting the accused is about like that of the frog in the well. Every time it hopped a foot upward, it fell back two feet.

When a week of court began on June 2, there were 280 cases on the docket. When court convenes again next Monday, there will be 314 cases on the docket.

Fortunately, court will be in session for four weeks this time. At the rate of hearing 75 cases a week it could almost wipe this docket clean and bring justice up to date. But the trouble is that while the court is disposing of cases, old and current, new cases are continually arising out of crimes committed at the rate of 40-50 a week.

The frog, as we remember, ultimately got out of the well by turning around, hopping downward one foot and falling upward two feet. Superior Court, criminal division, might try something of the kind.

Easy Terms

Defense Boom Wages Won't Free Family From Debt

Because of the war boom the American consumer, who is all of us in general and none of us in particular, is developing a lusty demand for clothes, cars, recreation and everything else attainable—provided it is in the low-price brackets.

This is the conclusion of B. H. McCormack after a survey of consumer studies for the Wall Street Journal. Mr. McCormack points out that the laboring man's pay check is rising from $18 and $20 a week to $25, $30, or $35. Meanwhile, he adds, white collar workers and those in the medium income brackets face sharply rising taxes and higher costs of living.

Therefore, Mr. McCormack predicts a tremendous increase in demand for:

Men's suits, especially those in the $18-$25 range and all other cheap clothing.

Women's dresses in the "under $10 range."

Automobiles — new and used — unless credit buying is strictly regulated;

The cheaper liquors, including American ryes and bourbons;

Bowling alleys, pool rooms, baseball games, and other inexpensive recreation facilities;

Low-priced houses and apartments.

Consumer credit—money owed on automobiles, refrigerators, and other goods bought "on time"—currently is estimated at between four and five billion dollars. Most of this debt is owed by those in the lower brackets.

We note that neither Mr. McCormack nor anyone else we can name has been bold enough to predict that a substantial number of persons will use their increased wages to get out of debt and stay out.

As long as terms are easy most of us will mortgage our future salaries to get what we want right now. Call it human nature if you want to—that's how it is. The predicted Government crackdown on "easy terms" in order to curtail consumer goods sales and divert more factories to defense production would be a rude awakening, the responsibility for which would be payable immediately—in cash. Most of us, no matter how well-to-do, couldn't afford anything so drastic as that.

Ford Signs

But Are His Union Troubles All Over?

Henry Ford has signed on the dotted line of a union contract. Hereafter, according to this instrument, all Ford Motor Company workers must be CIO members, with dues "checked off" their pay slips. Otherwise they may not work for Mr. Ford.

Philip Murray, the CIO chief who refused to purge reds from his labor societies, praises Mr. Ford for giving in to the CIO. Other manufacturers, he says, might do well to emulate Mr. Ford. He insinuates that the way to save yourself a pack of trouble with the CIO is to give in quickly.

Oh, yeah? How about Chrysler? He gave in with a lot less fight than Ford. And General Motors, and Allis Chalmers, and North Aviation, and many, many others. They gave in. But that was only the beginning — after giving in gracefully they had wrangle after wrangle, strike after strike, slowdown after slowdown as the union increased its demands.

Mr. Ford may find that instead of having settled his labor troubles they are only beginning.

Whereabouts

Dave Lasser, Relief Agitator, Pops Up in Unexpected Place

Back in 1937 a couple of "marches on Washington" were staged by relief clients, mostly of the Eastern industrial states. Imitating the tactics of the Bonus Army, they sought to influence (or intimidate) Congress into handing out WPA funds on a larger scale.

Instigator of the demonstrations was the Workers Alliance, an organization of reliefers. Founder and head of the stuff was David Lasser.

Lasser was pretty well looked into at the time for Communist affiliations. Best anybody established, he was more of an opportunist and an ordinary radical than the agent of any foreign power, although the vice-president of Workers Alliance was Herbert Benjamin, a Communist Party man and organizer of previous "hunger marches" on Washington.

Lasser dropped from our sight about that time, only recently came into the news again. Where do you suppose he has been in the meantime? You'd never guess.

He has been employed by WPA, not as a client but as a supervisor. An "inspector," they call him. His salary is $4,600 a year.

* * *

When the House passed the latest WPA appropriation of some $900,000,000 (unemployment, where art thou?), it tacked on a provision that Lasser was to be fired. The bill was taken up in the Senate yesterday, and Senator Murray of Montana protested that this was unfair discrimination against an individual.

Undoubtedly it was, and undoubtedly personal prejudice such as this has no place in an act of Congress.

But the Senate shouted Murray down, countersigned the pink slip for Lasser. And we don't know that we blame the boys. After all, when the Executive Department of the Government starts taking in birds like Lasser, it is time for Congress to assert itself.

Ignoble Romans

What Do Italian Agents Over Here Use for Bait?

From one F. H. Peter Cusick, whose name suggests immediately that he is the spokesman for some kind of propaganda committee, comes another mimeographed hand-out, this one announcing that the Fight For Freedom, Inc., has requested the President to close immediately all of the 49 Italian consulates still operating in the United States.

Our somewhat unenthusiastic reaction to this request is yeah, sure, all right, close 'em up; it's o.k. by us.

We are fully aware that our lack of steam is neither conventional nor fashionable; the accepted editorial attitude of the hour demands that we concoct a thunderous second to Mr. Cusick's request, demanding instant if not violent seizure of the foul Fascisti in our midst.

Instead we are mildly curious to know just what sweet words Fascist agents are using to bait their traps for the traditionally German-hating Italo-Americans. It might be possible to inspire a little pity for the grovelling creature once hailed as Duce—but no more.

As for the agents themselves, homecoming to Rome might be decidedly inconvenient unless they speak German fluently.

Another American phenomenon, in time of crisis, is the springing up of a thousand "committees," all dedicated to the proposition so ably set forth by a character in a Fred Allen show, "Dopes is the Backbone of the Nation."

It is right here that the scrub athlete realizes he has nothing to show for his four years at college but an education.

Fly vs. Networks

By Dorothy Thompson

I confess that I cannot see exactly how the issue of "public interest or convenience" is involved in the efforts of James L. Fly, the head of the Federal Communications Commission, to change the present system of network broadcasting.

I am not discussing here whether the present system of private corporate organization and financing by advertising is the best possible system. I believe that question is open to discussion. It is possible that a public corporation such as the British Broadcasting Corporation could do it better. I am not sure.

But nothing like this is at issue. What is at issue is whether Mr. Fly is not overstepping the powers given him by the radio act, and whether what is presently being proposed will or will not improve matters in any way from the standpoint of the public. I think it will not.

The public listens to the radio about five hours a day, but the public has little knowledge of how the remarkable broadcasting systems are run.

AXE LAID ON MAIN BROADCASTING SYSTEMS

The regulations proposed by Mr. Fly contain two clauses that lay an axe at the base of the main structures of broadcasting. One point says that no network may have any option on affiliated stations' time, and another that no network may have an exclusive contract with a station. This knocks the CBS and NBC systems right between the eyes. These companies do have affiliated stations held by contracts which give the companies exclusive options on the stations' time and give the stations exclusive call upon the networks' extra program service.

This system makes it possible to assure advertisers nation-wide hookups on a definite number of stations, to make advertising contracts in advance, to insure certain outlets, and to build up sufficient capital to permit such grandiose non-commercial programs as the Town Hall of the Air, the Church of the Air, the Toscanini orchestra, and an immense amount of free distribution of time for educational programs, such as the one on music appreciation.

Without such order and certainty, no network would have the incentive to build up such non-commercial "prestige" programs. Last year, for instance, CBS spent five million dollars on such programs, and NBC's outlay must have been as great. CBS over ten years has made an investment of some twenty-five million dollars in good will. Fixed costs, such as wires, union wages for talent, etc., are so high that the network must have a high level of advertising revenue if the quality of programs is to be maintained.

WHO PROFITS BY CHANGE IN RULES

In matters like this one, it is well to ask one's self "Who stands to profit by the changed rules?" Because if any one system stands to profit at the expense of the others, objectivity is out of the question.

Mutual stands to profit. For Mutual is not a corporation in the sense that CBS and NBC are, but instead of holding contracts with the stations is owned by the stations. They have no sustaining services, bit pick up local programs and make them nation-wide. Mutual is Macy in New York, and the Chicago Tribune in the Middle West. Each owns 25 per cent of the stock, and for all purposes together control the system.

Now, if Mr. Fly's new regulations go through, Mutual will be able to sell programs on what CBS and NBC have built up, with no effort on Mutual's part. Mutual will be placed on a basis of absolute equality and get for nothing what CBS and NBC have created at enormous investment, over more than a decade.

Are there any political interests at stake?

I should guess there are. The new regulations would enormously increase the strength of Colonel McCormick's station. Colonel McCormick, incidentally, is not a man to complain about monopoly. His Chicago Tribune has exercised a monopoly in the morning paper field all over the Middle West, and his competitors, if any lifted their heads, have felt a ruthlessness exercised against them.

COLONEL McCORMICK AGREES WITH SENATOR WHEELER

Colonel McCormick's views on the present emergency and international situation are those of Senator Wheeler. And, as it happens, Senator Wheeler is the chairman of the Senate Committee that holds the club over the White Resolution which would throw the whole issue back into Congress for legal regulation instead of by the ukases of Mr. Fly.

Waiting To Hear From Joe

—By Herblock

Letters to the Editor:

Case For CIO Opportunism

Dear Sir:

Because of some misunderstanding by the public as to the reasons for much so-called labor trouble, which might just as appropriately be labeled "employer trouble," I herewith present a few facts.

As far as the CIO is concerned it should be remembered that our plans to organize industrial America were announced long before much of the world was plunged into war. Enemies of labor would have you believe we jumped in after the defense program started. Go to the records for the truth. Don't depend too much on politicians, congressmen and a biased press for information which is likely to be misleading if not actually untruthful.

In the field of organized labor, as elsewhere, there is a "timeliness" which must be given utmost consideration. So these fundamental truth should be kept in mind when pondering reasons for intense activity of labor, and strikes and strife between unions and employers:

1. Unions can best be organized only when employment is at a high level—as now.

2. That when organized, they can push negotiations for wage increases and improved working conditions only when labor is in demand—as now.

3. That if forced to take strike action, such action can be effective only when there is a demand for the product of their service—as now.

4. That in order to safeguard its gains, strong organization must be perfected and maintained when conditions are favorable—as now.

5. That, following the present war, there will inevitably be a great let-down, or a depression, attended layoffs, shutdowns and wage cuts if labor is not in position to defend itself.

The time for labor to act is now. Of course we should and must do so without endangering the defense program. We must prepare to defend our wage structures, our conditions, and our homes as well as our country.

—E. L. SANDEFUR.

Winston-Salem.

(E. L. "Sandy" Sandefur doesn't mention it but he is qualified to speak for the CIO since he heads that organization in North Carolina. We thought you'd like to know.—Editors, The News.)

Good Advice For a Young Man

Wall Street Journal

While holding revival services in Cardiff, the Rev. John McNeil threw open the meeting to questions from the audience; whereupon a presumptuous young man sought to confound the good clergyman by sending up the following question:

"Dear Mr. McNeil: If you are seeking to enlighten young men, kindly tell me who was Cain's wife."

McNeil read the question, gazed out over the waiting audience, and then replied, "I am extremely fond of young men—particularly those who are seeking truth—and I would like to offer this young man a bit of advice. It is this: Don't spend your time inquiring after other men's wives."

Financial Statements From the Unions

New York Herald Tribune

One of the largest and best-managed labor unions—the International Ladies Garment Workers AFL)—has made public a most interesting annual financial report.

In a year this union of 270,000 members took in $5,237,171. It paid $3,013,352 in salaries to officers, organizers and employees and charged $799,419 to organizing expenses. Unemployed and needy members got $331,696 in relief payments. The cost of operating strikes was $21,085, and benefits to strikers totaled $131,250.

The union contributed $145,603 to organizations working for the re-election of President Roosevelt and in behalf of New Deal candidates, none of this, however, through the Democratic Party. It donated $212,352 to charitable and labor organizations, and helped other unions, both AFL and CIO, to finance strikes, though it refused to support jurisdictional strikes or those which it believed to be the product of Communist intrigues.

In short, the ILGWU is a big business institution, with large financial power which it exerts in the fields of economics and politics. By thus reporting to its members and the public, it displays an enlightened sense of its great responsibility. And its president, David Dubinsky, urges all unions to issue similar financial statements.

Advice more than ever wise—before Government regulation means compulsion.

Judge Alley's Slot Machine Injunction

Raleigh News and Observer.

On its face, the action of Judge Felix E. Alley in restraining law enforcement officers in Charlotte from stopping the operation of "pin ball" slot machines is a queer business. To laymen, at least, it appears to overrule the Supreme Court, which has passed directly on similar injunctions.

Perhaps there is some adequate explanation of the action of Judge Alley. Certainly some apparent in news dispatches relating that action. According to the dispatches, the chief of police gave the slot machine operators a period of grace which expired last Saturday, but even this lenient law enforcement was halted by a restraining order which automatically gave the operators another period of grace because the order was not made returnable until June 28, nearly three weeks after its issuance.

If the Supreme Court of North Carolina has ever decided any point of law definitely, it would seem that it has placed beyond question the fact that operation of these machines is illegal. Yet Judge Alley steps in and not only halts the machinery of law enforcement for a period of nineteen days, but signs an order which until dissolved will halt permanently the machinery of law enforcement.

All defendants should be protected in their rights, but the people of the State also have rights which deserve equal protection. One of these rights is the impartial enforcement of all criminal laws.

TODAY'S BIBLE THOUGHT

Son of man stand upon thy feet, and I will speak unto thee,
—Ezekiel 2:1.

Purging The Reds

By Raymond Clapper

WASHINGTON. — Sidney Hillman, one of the founders of the CIO, had to fight Communists twenty years ago when they were behind him in the needle trades, and he may soon have to take the lead in a far broader campaign to weed the party-line boys out of influential spots in the labor movement.

The issue is whether organized labor is to co-operate wholeheartedly in defense, as undoubtedly the vast majority want to do, or whether small groups of Communists and sympathizers, strategically placed, are to carry on their obstructive tactics, placing the Moscow party line above this country's needs and above trade unionism.

Sidney Hillman, as co-director of OPM, is in an excellent position to know the effect of disruptive labor trouble upon the defense program. However, as a Government official on leave from his trade-union office, he is not in an ideal position to carry on this campaign to clean up Communist-infested unions. But if John L. Lewis, still the mighty power behind the CIO, and Philip Murray, CIO president and ally of Mr. Lewis, do not make this fight — and they show no signs of doing so now — then the unpleasant task must fall to Mr. Hillman. He is understood to be ready to undertake it if the other two will not.

NUMBER OF COMMUNISTS IN LABOR "CELLS" PROBABLY SMALL

The number of Communists in the labor movement probably is relatively small. But they are effective far beyond their numbers. They always maneuver to get into strategic spots. One of the favorite key places is on the negotiating committee. On these negotiating committees a Communist, while seeming to be fighting for higher wages, can obstruct and delay a settlement. In the Vultee strike distorted reports of the negotiating were going from some members of the negotiating committee back to the rank and file, and these interfered with reaching a settlement. Communists also try to get control of publicity committees and of union publications, where material going out to the membership may be slanted. A third spot of obvious desirability is the organization treasury.

PARTY MEMBERSHIP KEPT SECRET

Communists do not as a rule parade their party membership. It is safer to have no membership and to pose as a trade unionist interested in obtaining higher wages and better working conditions. With these activities are mingled other issues of a political nature that play toward the party line. When the Communists are involved in a situation you are likely to notice remarks and resolutions referring to this as an "imperialist" war, for instance.

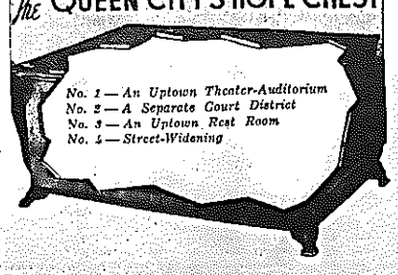
The party line is deftly woven into the regular trade union campaign, and the rank and file, interested in wages and hours, takes the tail with the hide. Besides, legitimate labor leaders have been denounced as Communists so often that the membership is hardened to the cry and is apt to be indifferent to it, if not suspicious of it — a situation made to order for the Communist insiders. Philip Murray, president of the CIO, has warned all of his organizations against intolerance and against those who would create dissension by casting suspicion upon their fellows.

IT TAKES EXPERIENCE TO SPOT THE REDS

The rank-and-file membership is somewhat at a disadvantage, especially as the Communist activity is directed chiefly to the new industrial unions and to a membership of young, green men, inexperienced in trade unionism, and often unable to detect the Communist line. But experienced labor leaders can spot the inside workers. John Lewis, who has accepted Communists in the CIO, has kept them out of his own United Mine Workers. Philip Murray fired them out of his Steel Workers Organizing Committee. Only that kind of purging from the inside can be really effective. It takes leaders who have a will to clean out the troublemakers and who work with local union officers and influential members in spotting and ousting those of Communist leanings.

The necessity of such a campaign is considered so great by Mr. Hillman that unless others undertake it, he, with his many connections in the labor movement, may be expected to attempt to draw the line between those who put the United States and trade unionism first and those who put the Communist movement first.

The QUEEN CITY'S HOPE CHEST



No. 1 — An Uptown Theater-Auditorium
No. 2 — A Separate Court District
No. 3 — An Uptown Rest Room
No. 4 — Street-Widening

Side Glances

"I was wrong—it's just an old married couple having a nice quiet quarrel."

Visitin' Around

They Just Sit Around and Listen to Ze Pure

(Blythedale Item, Bethany (Mo.) News-Clipper)

An electric refrigerator bought last week is making these days pass more pleasantly for the Fred Allman family.