

# THE CHARLOTTE NEWS

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SATURDAY, MARCH 30, 1957

## Editorial Book Review

### The Twisting Road To The New Deal

THE AGE OF ROOSEVELT: THE CRISIS OF THE OLD ORDER. By Thurman M. Schlessinger Jr. Houghton Mifflin Co. 537 pp. 86c.

THERE has been some grumbling about this book, and there may be more. Oddly enough, one of the first bricks was tossed out of a glass house. This magazine thinks Mr. Schlessinger has been too quick and too slight in his judgments on a tumultuous 14-year period stretching from 1919 to 1933. Orthodox historians might agree that as a book of history the work lacks perspective. Schlessinger travels fast. To the "dist that hasn't settled," he kicks up some of his own with deft, stinging, sometimes uncharitable indictments of the Republican administrations between Wilson and Roosevelt. Nor does it soften the blow for confirmed economists that the author condemns Harding, Coolidge and Hoover out of their own mouths.

But if Mr. Schlessinger carries us fast and far, sometimes tantalizing more than he satisfies, he travels in wondrous, breathtaking style. The "old order" of government by business may have been static and unresourceful, but its effects were not. Between 1919 and 1933, the U. S. ranged from opulence to grinding poverty from soaring idealism to bleak, bitter cynicism, from smug contentment with the religion of business to fearful expectation of revolution.

analogies. He artfully suggests them and by so doing actively engages the reader's own knowledge of events in a discovery of perspective.

"The government is just a business," said Coolidge's secretary of the Treasury, Andrew Mellon, "and can and should be run on business principles. That sounds a good bit like the remark by Mr. Eisenhower's secretary of commerce some time before presentation of the \$74 billion budget.

In 1920 even as returning peace wrecked liberal hope for an active, interventionist federal government in domestic affairs, Wilson's attorney general suddenly discovered a gigantic "plot" against the republic.

"Like a prairie-fire," said Attorney General Palmer, "the blaze of revolution was sweeping over every American institution of law and order a year ago. It was eating its way into the homes of American workmen, its sharp tongues of revolutionary heat were licking the altars of the churches, leaping into the belly of the school bell, crawling into the sacred corners of American homes, seeking to replace marriage vows with libertine laws, burning up the foundations of society." Significantly, what fire there had been was out. What moved Mr. Palmer to such vivid terror and other attorneys general and senators since, was the political capital of the ashes. Palmer, incidentally, captured more than 6,000 "radicals" and five revolutionaries in a series of raids on New Year's Day, 1920.

AND to reflect those times adequately, a book needs to have more in it than dusty history. It needs life, compressed and reincarnated through creative art. Mr. Schlessinger has the art. He uses it brilliantly.

It was 1930, and as Elmer Davis put it, the second year of Mr. Hoover's promise of the "era of prosperity" needed creative art. Mr. Schlessinger brings it back.

In a Philadelphia settlement house a little boy of three cried constantly in the spring of 1930; the doctor examined him and found that he was slowly starving. One woman complained that when she had food for two small children could barely eat, but he had become accustomed to so little, she said, that their stomachs had shrunk. In November the apple peddlers began to appear on cloth-covered carts, their threadbare clothes brushed and neat, their forlorn pluckiness emphasizing the anguish of being out of work. . . . The shadows deepened in the dark cold rooms, with the father angry and helpless and ashamed, and the children too often hungry or sick, and the mother, so resolute by day, so often, when the room was finally still, lying awake in bed at night, softly crying.

No less moving is the dramatic vignette the author has drawn from the bloody textile strike in Gastonia when workers, in despair and poverty, became the tools of fatal manipulation by Communist organizers.

BUT what is the thesis of the book? It is not so much about Franklin D. Roosevelt (this first of four volumes ends on his first inauguration day) as about the main currents of thought and action which Mr. Schlessinger conceives as setting the stage for FDR's entry. Among Schlessinger's stage crew are the populists, middle class reformers, settlement house workers, muckrakers, progressives, and the leaders of Theodore Roosevelt's New Nationalism and Woodrow Wilson's New Freedom. There was the initiative, planning and thought, the spinning of the threads that finally came together in the fabric of the New Deal.

The author's argument that there was a tradition of liberal reform running from Populism to fruition in the New Deal, a tradition variously threadbare and full-some, alternately hopeful that the world had been saved for democracy and cynically decided that America had made its fortune and lost its soul, but a tradition nonetheless that finally was pulled together into thrusting vindication by the New Deal—this argument is good enough for a hundred historians to pick and chew.

But the book is so much more than an argument. Mr. Schlessinger has a remarkable talent for analogy. He does not draw



People's Platform

## Battle Of Ballot Roars On

Editors, The News: Charlotte  
 ALL THIS uncorrupt 18-year-olds voting is a lot of baloney. Kids of that age are only interested in auto mechanics and rock 'n' roll. They probably wouldn't vote the ballot if they had it. If they did use it they would vote in Elvis Presley's name for every other office.

Just because a kid is old enough to shoulder a rifle it doesn't mean his brain is well enough developed to decide the destiny of the nation. Deliver us from the blue jean set. We've got troubles enough already. — GERRY SCHEICHTER

Army-Age Youth Are Old Enough To Vote  
 R. L. Hamlet  
 EDITORS, THE NEWS: I THINK that if you are old enough to go to the draft at the age of 18 that you are old enough to vote.

MR. Schlessinger has launched a tremendous venture with a fascinating, compelling portrait of an America searching through luxury and bankruptcy, high hope and despair, for a new road, the one it is now traveling. Whether one likes this road or not, it is worth finding out how and why a distinguished historian thinks the nation took it.

Time, incidentally, also criticizes Mr. Schlessinger's fondness for splicing his narrative with quotes. It may be a dangerous technique. But, then, who would want to be cheated of this picture of Warren Harding:

"When living in Washington, watched Harding with supreme contempt. It was reported that the former President had coined the phrase 'the bungalo mind' to describe his successor. And indeed, it was not inappropriate that the year in which Sinclair Lewis published his famous novel saw Main Street take over 1600 Pennsylvania Avenue. For Harding exuded the atmosphere of a sleepy Ohio town—the shady streets, the weekly lotteries, the smoking room, sterner self on Sunday morning, followed by a fried chicken dinner and an afternoon nap. Alice Roosevelt Longworth, the daughter of another Republican President and the wife of the speaker of the House, could never forget a typical White House scene—the President's study filled with cronies; cards and poker chips on the table; whisky and tall glasses on the tray; the air thick with cigar smoke; a general atmosphere of unbuttoned vests, feet on the desk, and spittle in the cuspidor. 'Harding was not a bad man,' observed Alice Longworth. He was just a slob."—P.M.



"I don't even think they're old enough to fight..."

Drew Pearson's Merry-Go-Round  
 WASHINGTON  
 U. S. officials were greatly interested to learn that Soviet dictator Khrushchev, son-in-law, Alexander Startsev, was walked unannounced into the offices of the National Agricultural Workers Union in Washington, D. C. The other day and started asking questions about American farm workers.

Evasive Manner  
 Startsev, whose official title is first secretary of the Soviet Embassy, was accompanied by another Russian diplomat identified as Victor Kompletov. They explained that they represented "one of the embassies in Washington." When NAWU president H. L. Mitchell asked a question, Startsev hesitated, then replied: "The Soviet Embassy."

## 'Who—Me?'



McClellan Probe Could Cost Democrats Control Of House

WASHINGTON  
 THE TEAMSTERS Union hearings on Capitol Hill have been everything—surprise, emotion, witty revelations, comic relief, and above all a superb cast of characters.

Teamsters' boss, has been brilliantly cast in the central role. His pink pale posture, slightly altered with right indignation and injured innocence as he lunged arrogantly back at the senatorial tormentors, like a snarling badger, was a terrific performance. Sen. McClellan's dry monologue had precisely the proper "dramatic" intonation as he forced the infuriated Beck again and again to take refuge in the Fifth Amendment.

The supporting players were equally well cast. Committee counsel Robert Kennedy, for example, has been fine as the indolgent young crusader. Even Sen. McCarthy has done a reasonably convincing imitation of a party, although the old, familiar growl sounds somehow, like a voice from the grave.

MAJOR CONSEQUENCES  
 But, although a political reporter, the boys' own finds nothing to be gained from the preserve of the drama critic, the Beck hearings have been more than good theater. They have been comparable in some ways to the Peoria investigations in the last year of Hoover's Provoost's presidency, which exposed the arrogance and irresponsibility of an important segment of big business and set the backdrop of the New Deal.

One possible consequence was suggested by Sen. Irving Union of New York, who he warned Beck that the open shop for labor might be "the upshot of what you are doing today."

Already some 18 states have passed the so-called "right-to-work laws," which gravely weaken labor's traditional position of outlawing the union shop. Until now, despite a concerted drive by conservative interests (spearheaded by former Congressman Fred Hartley of Taft-Hartley fame) the unions have been able to head off right-to-work legislation in most of the important industrial states.

ANTILABOR MOOD  
 But after Beck's amazingly arrogant performance, it will be a fair bet that legislation will dare to go against right-to-work laws. There is also a real chance that federal right-to-work legislation will be put in the form of an amendment to the Civil Rights Bill, if the bill reaches the floor.

Bonuses For Proficiency  
 Give The Cop A Break  
 By ROBERT C. RUARK  
 PALAMOS, Spain  
 SOMETHING which has never been explained to me, at least, is why the gentleman in the suit, the police and the FBI should not be cut into the rewards offered for the heads of public enemies, such as your Willie Suttons, Dillingers, Lepke Buchalters, and more lately, the elfin George Metesky, the following number.

You can say that the cop or the G-Man is only doing his job when he blows over a wanted killer, snags the cuffs on a murderer, or smokes out a bank robber.

You can say that the apprehension of this criminal is the end result of police work with all its departmental ramifications, from the individual promotion which sometimes results in sufficient reward to the smart officer.

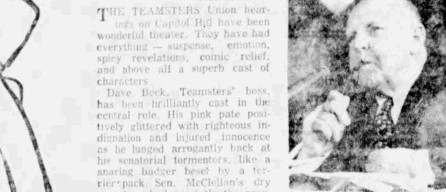
DANGEROUS INCENTIVE?  
 I suppose, too, if you put a dollar sign on the apprehension of criminals, some cops might go a little gun-happy when they smell a reward and deprive the state of the job of proving the suspect guilty in a court of law. This happens occasionally, even without a bonus as incentive, but avoid seldom.

The business of being a cop is a really underpaid, considering that every time the head of the family strays on his gun he walks out the door as a candidate for the immediate funeral. However, heard of any rich police widows.

They pay a salesman a salary to sell their wares, and if he sells things very well, they often hit

## McClellan Probe Could Cost Democrats Control Of House

By STEWART ALSOP



TEAMSTER BECK A Badger At Bay

In the Beck-prodded atmosphere such an amendment might well pass. Again, if the "clean elections" bill reaches the floor, amendments sharply restricting all labor's political activities will certainly be introduced, probably by Sen. Harry Goldwater of Arizona. And again, such an amendment would have an excellent chance of passing, thanks to Beck. This suggests why the northern Democrats are almost as worried by the Beck performance as Beck's fellow labor chieftains.

Notwithstanding this, despite the fact that Beck and most of his cohorts have supported the Republican cause, it is to be expected that the northern Democrats are supported by an immense slush fund provided by the unions. Actually, under-standable money from labor for Democratic candidates is a small fraction of the political contributions of business, most of which goes to Republicans.

DEMOCRATS TO SUFFER  
 But it is true that Democratic candidates in many northern industrial states, notably Michigan, Wisconsin, and western Pennsylvania, are greatly, and in some cases wholly, dependent on labor money and often help from labor's political activities.

They will be hurt because labor will be very cautious in the political atmosphere created by the Teamsters' investigation about taking an active political role. The northern Democrats will also be hurt simply because they are identified in the public mind with union labor, just as the Republicans are identified with business.

Predictions are even being heard on Capitol Hill that the McClellan investigation, especially if it continues to put on a good show for months to come, will cost the Democrats control of the House. It is almost certain to have far-reaching political after-effects.

Health Center Belongs In Independence Park  
 Charlotte  
 I DISH out the money for the Health Center state very plainly that there must be not less than three acres. The proper place for the City Council to settle on is that mosquito-breeding ditch in the upper end of Independence Park containing 6 1/2 acres.

People who argue that there are no parking spaces in the surrounding area, are completely wrong. There will be room for the health building and parking space for the next 50 years. No one is permitted to park on Hawthorne Lane now. The big acreage would leave plenty of room for all the workers' cars, and more room for the people who visit the Health Department than will be needed for years to come.

There can be made a half dozen more entrances to the grounds, leaving Hawthorne Lane out of the question.

This filthy, stinking place in the hollow at Memorial Hospital is not fit for a dog pound. That Sugar Creek stinks in hot weather worse than this.

Head Red's Son-In-Law Goes Snooping  
 They explained that they would like to know about the problems of agriculture. Mitchell gave them some background on his small union which was started by southern sharecroppers in 1934.

"What," asked Kompletov, "is the composition of agricultural workers?" "What do you mean by composition?" asked Mitchell.

Racial Breakdown  
 He means race or nationalities," explained Startsev. Mitchell said most agricultural workers were Negroes in the South and Mexicans in the southwest. The dictator's son-in-law then wanted to know about the membership requirements. Mitchell explained that 16 years old or over could join the union.

Just 'Interested'  
 The two Russians asked a few more routine questions. Mitchell answered literature and started to leave. Mitchell inquired, as they started out the door, whether they were agricultural specialists.

Hard Worker  
 Since Khrushchev took charge of the Kremlin, he has personally dealt with the exchange of Russian and American farmers in 1955. His son-in-law in Washington has the reputation of being a studious, hard-working diplomat. American air officials who have negotiated with him are a straightfoward, tough negotiator.

## J. Luther Snyder: A Loss Deeply Felt

THE week's most deeply felt loss for a community that is profoundly conscious of the contributions of its early builders came on Monday when J. Luther Snyder died at 83.

As manager of the first Coca-Cola bottling company in the Carolinas, Mr. Snyder enjoyed remarkable success as a businessman. In time, he extended his operations to include a chain of ten plants located in Charlotte, Gastonia, Monroe, Concord, Lincolnton, Shelby, Statesville, Lexington, Salisbury and Albemarle, and was known as the "Coca-Cola King of the Carolinas."

But Mr. Snyder was first of all a citizen of Charlotte with rather pronounced ideas about the responsibilities of citizenship. For decades he worked tirelessly for the common good of the community and its progress. His contributions in the field of civic, religious and philanthropic affairs were many and varied.

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