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## Introduction

Sinclair Lewis enjoyed a brilliant career in the 1920s portraying and satirizing what he regarded as the mediocrity, materialism, corruption, and hypocrisy of middle-class life in the United States. His five major novels of the twenties—*Main Street* (1920), *Babbitt* (1922), *Arrow-smith* (1925), *Elmer Gantry* (1927), and *Dodsworth* (1929)—were all bestsellers that served to hold a mirror up to the parochialism and provincialism of that decade. A good many Americans winced at their own reflections in those novels, but they eagerly bought Lewis's iconoclastic books, because, however much they flinched at his representations of their middle-class lives, they were finally snugly, if not smugly, comfortable in the economic security that produced their prosperous confidence.

After the stock market crash of 1929, however, there wasn't much left of the middle class of the early 1930s. Many who were previously solid, respectable breadwinners found themselves on bread lines, soup lines, and relief rolls. "Normalcy," a twenties password synonymous with security, gave way to the "jitters" as profitless corporations laid off millions of workers who drifted across the country like Oklahoma farm dust. The popular song and exuberant theme of the twenties "Ain't We Got Fun" changed its tune to "Brother Can You Spare a Dime" during the Great Depression. Although Franklin Delano Roosevelt's first inaugural address in 1933 promised a New Deal, he also let his countrymen know what the score was in grim tones:

Values have shrunk to fantastic levels; taxes have risen; our ability to pay has fallen; government of all kinds is faced by serious curtailment of income; the means of exchange are frozen in the currents of trade; the withered



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leaves of industrial enterprise lie on every side; farmers find no markets for their produce; the savings of many years in thousands of families are gone.

Not surprisingly, the middle class was no longer interested in being discounted by bankers or by satirists. Lewis had to find new material.

Given the stormy economic and social climate of the early 1930s, Lewis had plenty of other topics to consider that were more relevant than middle-class predispositions to be foolish and venal. He found a ready-made plot in the nervous undercurrent that accompanied the volatile politics of the period. With the rise of Adolf Hitler and Benito Mussolini in Europe and the alarming popularity of a variety of demagogues from both the left and right in the United States, there was widespread concern that the country could be taken over by a fascist dictatorship. Lewis placed these fears at the center of *It Can't Happen Here*.

Published in October of 1935, the novel gave shape to the free-floating anxieties that had consumed worried citizens for several years as the country stumbled through economic turmoil desperately seeking solutions. Lewis was intimately familiar with these concerns because Dorothy Thompson, his second wife, had interviewed Hitler as a foreign correspondent in Berlin and had written a series of articles between 1931 and 1935 warning Americans about the Nazi propaganda machine that masked the vicious persecution of Jews and the growing number of concentration camps designed to annihilate them. In addition to what he heard at his breakfast table, Lewis was very much aware of the many debates swirling around him in newspapers, journals, and books. In September of 1934, for example, *The Modern Monthly* featured a symposium titled "Will Fascism Come to America?" that featured a number of leading intellectuals such as Theodore Dreiser, Norman Thomas, Charles A. Beard, and Waldo Frank debating the question, and in early 1935, the *Nation* ran a series of articles on "forerunners of American Fascism." Although Lewis is often credited with coining the phrase "it can't happen here," Herschel Brickell points out

in his review of the novel in *North American Review* (December 1935) that the book actually "takes its title from the typical American remark concerning the possibility of a dictatorship in this country" (a quick search of the Internet demonstrates that the phrase continues to be used by a wide range of political perspectives to evoke the various tyrannies Lewis describes). Echoing Brickell, another contemporary reviewer, Benjamin Stolberg, aptly notes that the novel "has successfully plagiarized our social atmosphere" (*Books*, October 1935). Lewis's take, however, is that it *can* happen here.

The threat of fascism in America captured his readers' attention. *It Can't Happen Here* quickly became a national bestseller (more than 320,000 copies were sold), and it has become by now part of the same thirties social and political fabric that Lewis wove into the novel. While Lewis's contemporaries were thirsty for the "successfully plagiarized" details about the 1930s that saturate the novel, twenty-first-century readers may sometimes feel as if they're in over their head owing to the book's deep topical nature. The novel is a kind of Sears, Roebuck catalogue of early 1930s American political figures, events, and movements both central and peripheral to the decade's issues. Scores of historical figures populate the book, such as Huey Long, Father Charles Coughlin, William Randolph Hearst, Upton Sinclair, William Allen White, Mike Gold, and for a remarkable example, thirteen actual working journalists whose names appear on page 219. Although lots of these names are perhaps unfamiliar to many readers today, Lewis's plot and characterizations are not wholly dependent upon historical knowledge for readers to understand and appreciate the novel's conflicts. The names, as well as political events and movements, certainly form the major portion of the book's highly detailed political scenery, but there's little, if any, doubt about how Lewis wants us to think about them.

Although Lewis's protagonist, Doremus Jessup, is "a mild, rather indolent and somewhat sentimental Liberal" (p. 46) who is slow to respond to the rise of an American version of a fascist dictatorship, Lewis responded quickly and intensely to the fascist threats he saw all around



him. He wrote and revised the entire novel in fewer than four months while he summered in Vermont in 1935. His preparation for the book took longer than its writing; he had been simmering with materials for several years as he recognized with increasing alarm the dangers that threatened democratic institutions. Unfortunately, his writing displays the haste in which he wrote—and so do the book's reviews. R. P. Blackmur laments that "there is hardly a literary question that it does not fail to raise and there is hardly a rule for the good conduct of novels that it does not break" (*Nation*, October 1935). Despite the many reviewers who complained about the novel's loose melodramatic plot, flat and even corny characters, weak clichéd dialogue, padded political discourse, awkward sentimentality, and heavy-handed satire and irony, many also judged the book to be a timely caveat and applauded its propagandistic value against fascism. Clifton Fadiman pronounced it to be "one of the most important books ever produced in this country" (*New Yorker*, October 1935), a book that all Americans should read to help save the country from impending political failures and potential tyrannies.

In March of 1935, two months before Sinclair Lewis began writing *It Can't Happen Here*, Walter Lippmann lamented in a popular magazine that the United States had "come to a period of discouragement. . . . Pollyanna is silenced and Cassandra is doing all the talking." There was much for Cassandra to talk about: the administration of the New Deal seemed hopelessly bogged down and the fierce strident polemics of popular leaders such as Huey Long and Father Coughlin seemed to speak more directly than the president to the poor, the dispossessed, the frustrated, and the angry. Neither the Louisiana Kingfish nor the populist radio priest freighted their remedies for the country's ills with feasible ideas or coherent programs. Immediate solutions were too important to be burdened with details and troublesome facts; it was enough for Long simply to announce the justice of a \$5,000 "homestead allowance" coupled with an annual income of at least \$2,000 for every American family. The Kingfish was long on proposals but short on perceiving potential problems: "Who cares," he said,

"what consequences may come following the mandates of the Lord, of the Pilgrims, of Jefferson, Webster and Lincoln? He who falls in this fight falls in the radiance of the future."

The liberals who worried about the possible consequences that attended this future brave new world were particularly wary because the Old World had already produced Hitler and Mussolini. Fascism was becoming fashionable, a fact manifested by the Brown Shirts, Black Shirts, Khaki Shirts, White Shirts, and Silver Shirts—complete with matching boots—that came out of closets all over Europe and the United States. In October of 1935, the month *It Can't Happen Here* was published, William Randolph Hearst encapsulated the problem with a statement that delighted shirt makers but terrified liberals. He counseled his fellow citizens: "Whenever you hear a prominent American called a 'Fascist,' you can usually make up your mind that the man is simply a LOYAL CITIZEN WHO STANDS FOR AMERICANISM."

Lewis transforms this advice into a warning in his novel by showing how Americans elect as their president Berzelius Windrip, a folksy New England version of the dictatorial Kingfish who ushers in a fascist regime of suppression, terror, and totalitarianism—all draped in red, white, and blue bunting. Invoking the highest patriotic principles, Windrip disguises his fascism in the historical trappings of the Republic; his Gestapo, for example, is called the Minute Men. Lewis projects a dire version of the immediate future—the story begins in 1936 and ends in 1939—by creating fictional equivalents of the trepidations liberals experienced in the mid-thirties. Although Lewis looks to the future for the actualization of what liberals feared might happen, he turns to the past for the antidote to a poisoned America. To combat Windrip's deceptive use of a past that is employed to corrupt the present, Lewis draws upon a national heritage of individualistic and democratic values in order to redeem the country from the fascism masquerading in a patriotic costume.

There is a distinct nostalgic quality to Lewis's hero, Doremus Jessup, born in 1876, an independent, liberal Vermont newspaper editor who stands up to Windrip's vicious regime. Lewis proudly presents



him as a nineteenth-century individualist rather than a twentieth-century automaton. He sports a beard, which his detractors say makes him "high-brow," "different," and "artistic" instead of one of the boys. His reading confirms their suspicions about his beard; he subscribes to, among other things, the *Congressional Record*, the *New Yorker*, *Time*, the *Nation*, the *New Republic*, and the *New Masses*. Although Jessup is more articulate and more liberal than most of Lewis's protagonists, he is confronted with essentially the same kind of phenomena, even if more extreme, that chronically thwart and deny the individual in Lewis's fiction. At various opportune moments in the novel, Lewis uses Jessup as a spokesman to denounce and satirize the DAR, the KKK, Aimee McPherson, Mary Baker Eddy, Billy Sunday, Father Coughlin, William Jennings Bryan, Huey Long, Tammany graft, Chicago gangsters, Prohibition, lynchings, anti-Semitism, racism, militarism, concentration camps, torture, and political assassinations. Jessup's announced values are not fundamentally different from some of Lewis's other famous characters. Whether the vague dissatisfactions festering in George F. Babbitt, the unrealistic impulses toward reform fluttering in Carol Kennicott, or the linear, though uncertain, determination of a Martin Arrowsmith, Lewis's most interesting characters want, as Carol Kennicott puts it in *Main Street*, "a more conscious life, we're tired of seeing just a few people able to be individualists." Lewis clearly admired and identified with Jessup—so much so that he played the role of Jessup in a dramatic adaptation by the South Shore Players in Cohasset, Massachusetts, one of many of the play's productions sponsored by the Federal Theater Project throughout the country in the wake of the novel's popularity.

Jessup is a nineteenth-century-styled individualist who has fallen into history; he's fallen into a world in which his allegiance to predominant American values such as self-reliance and independence mark him as a political subversive. Recalling the achievement of men such as Thaddeus Stevens and Stephen A. Douglas, he compares them to what he describes as "the wishy-washy young people today," and he wonders aloud:

if we're breeding up any paladins like those stout, grouchy old devils?—if we're producing 'em anywhere in New England?—anywhere in America?—anywhere in the world? They had guts. Independence. Did what they wanted to and thought what they liked, and everybody could go to hell.

(p. 13)

Jessup subscribes to these values, and though they are implicitly subversive in a politically repressive atmosphere, Lewis describes him as understanding himself too well to consider himself a left-wing radical; instead he is a tentative liberal who basically wants to be left alone to enjoy his small-town life and newspaper work.

One of the few calm and contented moments of the novel consists of a gathering of Jessup's family and friends for a country picnic where "there was nothing modern and neurotic," writes Lewis, "nothing savoring of Freud, Adler, Marx, Bertrand Russell, or any other divinity of the 1930's" (p. 38). From the perspective of the complex, mechanized, modernized, psychologized, and homogenized thirties, Jessup longs for an era now lost. There is no going back to the past, a fact that makes it doubly attractive and no less important to Jessup—or to Lewis. Yet Jessup's sense of "social duty" (p. 103) does not permit him to ignore the present, nor does he abandon the past because finally it will be a means by which he will attempt to reshape the present.

Jessup's sense of social duty is informed by his individualism. He does not believe in collective modes of reform because he views them as absolutist and dogmatic, and he objects to any group insisting that it has the final and perfect solution for society's ills. Neither "Fascists," "Communists," "American Constitutionalists," "Monarchists," nor "preachers" have the answer, because, according to Jessup, "There is no Solution! There never will be a state of society anything like perfect!" (p. 110). He reflects Lewis's own values when he insists that "All the Utopias—Brook Farm, Robert Owen's sanctuary of chatter, Upton Sinclair's Helicon Hall—and their regulation end in scandal, feuds, poverty, griminess, disillusion" (p. 113). And when they don't immedi-



ately end in failure such collective activities are perilous for individualists because they may turn fanatical and violent:

Blessed be they [thinks Jessup] who are not Patriots and Idealists, and who do not feel they must dash right in and Do Something About It, something so immediately important that all the doubters must be liquidated—tortured—slaughtered! Good old murder, that since the slaying of Abel by Cain has always been the new device by which all oligarchies and dictators have, for all future ages to come, removed opposition! (p. 113)

Jessup, like Lewis, shrinks from political activism and believes that a man minding his own business rather than insisting upon saving the masses is a true idealist.

Lewis's attraction to this kind of individualism is evident in a 1937 review he wrote for *Newsweek* of an edition of Henry Thoreau's *Walden*, another Yankee who minded his own business (mostly). Lewis entitled the review "One-Man Revolution," a title particularly aimed at the collectivist reforms of that decade. This is the first sentence of the piece:

Once upon a time in America there was a scholar who conducted a one-man revolution and won it.

There is hardly anything in all of Lewis's fiction as direct and as happy as that—not in forty years of writing. For Lewis, Thoreau's success has almost a fabulous quality to it ("Once upon a time") and Lewis is grateful for the story while implicitly identifying with him. In the context of the late thirties, when America was menaced by Italy, Germany, and Japan, Lewis suggests making Thoreau the "supreme Duce" as an answer to those imposing forms of oppression. Jessup shares this supremely independent perspective but discovers that as conditions grow worse, as individuals become more frequent targets of Windrip's goons and bullies, he must take a stand.

Although Jessup's family and friends urge him to keep a low profile and not publish an editorial condemning the outrages of Windrip's regime, his mistress, Lorinda Pike, an activist, supports him. Once the editorial appears, Jessup is immediately hauled off to jail, where he reconsiders his earlier negative attitudes toward violence and wonders if his own conscientious respectability—that is, minding his own business—hasn't been one of the primary reasons why fascism has succeeded in America. It is, he thinks, the Jessups "who have let the demagogues wriggle in, without fierce enough protest" (p. 185).

Despite these reflections Jessup is extraordinarily wary of taking any extreme action. He had been brought up to revere Abolitionists such as Wendell Phillips and Harriet Beecher Stowe, but "his father had considered John Brown insane and a menace" (p. 116). Jessup's liberal roots firmly place him in a relatively passive and pacifistic political tradition. Even after his son-in-law is taken out to be shot and Jessup hears of grotesque atrocities including mass executions and concentration camp horrors, he only reluctantly agrees to light out for the territory ahead—Canada is once again the goal of a new "underground railroad" where Americans seek refuge from slavery. But his effort to escape with his family is unsuccessful and he returns enraged, muttering, "Now I know why men like John Brown became crazy killers" (p. 234). On the heels of his failure to escape, he returns home to find his son justifying book burnings and the violent suppression of dissenters. Jessup is outraged by his son's bland rationale that "you can't make an omelet without breaking eggs" (p. 237), and he promptly throws him out. After much chronic indecisiveness and resolutions undercut by irresolution—precisely the strategies Lewis uses in the plots and characterizations of *Main Street*, *Babbitt*, and *Arrowsmith*—Jessup is moved to action and works to publish the *Vermont Vigilance*, a seditious underground paper that exposes the villainy and corruption of the American Corporate State and Patriotic Party. Jessup's widowed daughter enthusiastically tucks these pamphlets inside copies of the *Reader's Digest* at the drugstore, while his younger daughter serves as a secret agent in the enemy camp and fends off lewd advances.



On July 4, 1938, with a terrible thunderstorm as the background, the Minute Men descend upon Jessup's house, wreck it, and take him away to a concentration camp, where he is nearly beaten to death. As a result of enduring the horrible conditions of the camp, Jessup feels a sense of camaraderie with the other prisoners and what Lewis describes as a "murderous hatred of their oppressors so that they, men of peace all of them, would gladly have hanged every Corpo, mild or vicious. Doremus understood John Brown much better" (p. 311). But that camaraderie does not mean that he is prepared to become a communist and abandon his individualism. "What I want," says Jessup, "is mass action by just one member, alone on a hilltop. I'm a great optimist. . . . I still hope America may some day rise to the standards of Kit Carson" (p. 310). Eventually, Jessup escapes from the camp and he works for the underground again, this time as a secret agent in Minnesota coordinating raids against the Minute Men posts. Although he is engaged in an organized response to fascism, he remains ideologically aloof, conducting what is essentially a one-man revolution. Jessup, writes Lewis, "saw now that he must remain alone, a 'liberal,' scorned by all the noisier prophets for refusing to be a willing cat for the busy monkeys of either" fascism or communism (p. 358). He participates in the popular rebellion against the Corpo regime but the values he fights for are associated with the individual rather than with collective action: "I am convinced," he insists, "that everything that is worth while in the world has been accomplished by the free, inquiring, critical spirit, and that the preservation of this spirit is more important than any social system whatsoever" (p. 359).

To many readers in the 1930s, this essentially nineteenth-century evocation of self-reliant virtues was attractive, but it provided only the vaguest kind of political solutions to pressing political issues. Lewis's response to a potential fascist dictatorship offered no specific remedy; this was, however, not a fault but a strategy, because he was writ-

that though his answers to contemporary political issues might have been provisional, the questions he raised about liberty and justice remain perennial. He believed that dissent—even a cranky, erratic, eccentric, old-fashioned version of it—was not disloyalty but at the heart of an American democratic identity. Engulfed in the complexities and vulnerabilities of our post-September 11 world, Americans of nearly all political persuasions are likely to find that *It Can't Happen Here*, though firmly anchored in the politics of the 1930s, surfaces as a revealing and disturbing read.

—Michael Meyer



## EIGHT

I don't pretend to be a very educated man, except maybe educated in the heart, and in being able to feel for the sorrows and fears of every ornery fellow human being. Still and all, I've read the Bible through, from kiver to kiver, like my wife's folks say down in Arkansas, some eleven times; I've read all the law books they've printed; and as to contemporaries, I don't guess I've missed much of all the grand literature produced by Bruce Barton, Edgar Guest, Arthur Brisbane, Elizabeth Dilling, Walter Pitkin, and William Dudley Pelley.

This last gentleman I honor not only for his rattling good yarns, and his serious work in investigating life beyond the grave and absolutely proving that only a blind fool could fail to believe in Personal Immortality, but, finally, for his public-spirited and self-sacrificing work in founding the Silver Shirts. These true knights, even if they did not attain quite all the success they deserved, were one of our most noble and Galahad-like attempts to combat the sneaking, snaky, sinister, surreptitious, seditious plots of the Red Radicals and other sour brands of Bolsheviks that incessantly threaten the American standards of Liberty, High Wages, and Universal Security.

These fellows have Messages, and we haven't got time for anything in literature except a straight, hard-hitting, heart-throbbing Message!

*Zero Hour, Berzelius Windrip.*

**D**uring the very first week of his campaign, Senator Windrip clarified his philosophy by issuing his distinguished proclamation: "The Fifteen Points of Victory for the Forgotten Men." The fifteen planks, in

his own words (or maybe in Lee Sarason's words, or Dewey Haik's words), were these:

(1) All finance in the country, including banking, insurance, stocks and bonds and mortgages, shall be under the absolute control of a Federal Central Bank, owned by the government and conducted by a Board appointed by the President, which Board shall, without need of recourse to Congress for legislative authorization, be empowered to make all regulations governing finance. Thereafter, as soon as may be practicable, this said Board shall consider the nationalization and government-ownership, for the Profit of the Whole People, of all mines, oilfields, water power, public utilities, transportation, and communication.

(2) The President shall appoint a commission, equally divided between manual workers, employers, and representatives of the Public, to determine which Labor Unions are qualified to represent the Workers; and report to the Executive, for legal action, all pretended labor organizations, whether "Company Unions," or "Red Unions," controlled by Communists and the so-called "Third International." The duly recognized Unions shall be constituted Bureaus of the Government, with power of decision in all labor disputes. Later, the same investigation and official recognition shall be extended to farm organizations. In this elevation of the position of the Worker, it shall be emphasized that the League of Forgotten Men is the chief bulwark against the menace of destructive and un-American Radicalism.

(3) In contradistinction to the doctrines of Red Radicals, with their felonious expropriation of the arduously acquired possessions which insure to aged persons their security, this League and Party will guarantee Private Initiative and the Right to Private Property for all time.

(4) Believing that only under God Almighty, to Whom we render all homage, do we Americans hold our vast Power, we shall guarantee to all persons absolute freedom of religious worship, provided, however, that no atheist, agnostic, believer in Black Magic, nor any Jew who shall refuse to swear allegiance to the New Testament, nor any person of any faith who refuses to take the Pledge to the Flag, shall be permit-



ted to hold any public office or to practice as a teacher, professor, lawyer, judge, or as a physician, except in the category of Obstetrics.

(5) Annual net income per person shall be limited to \$500,000. No accumulated fortune may at any one time exceed \$3,000,000 per person. No one person shall, during his entire lifetime, be permitted to retain an inheritance or various inheritances in total exceeding \$2,000,000. All incomes or estates in excess of the sums named shall be seized by the Federal Government for use in Relief and in Administrative expenses.

(6) Profit shall be taken out of War by seizing all dividends over and above 6 per cent that shall be received from the manufacture, distribution, or sale, during Wartime, of all arms, munitions, aircraft, ships, tanks, and all other things directly applicable to warfare, as well as from food, textiles, and all other supplies furnished to the American or to any allied army.

(7) Our armaments and the size of our military and naval establishments shall be consistently enlarged until they shall equal, but—since this country has no desire for foreign conquest of any kind—not surpass, in every branch of the forces of defense, the martial strength of any other single country or empire in the world. Upon inauguration, this League and Party shall make this its first obligation, together with the issuance of a firm proclamation to all nations of the world that our armed forces are to be maintained solely for the purpose of insuring world peace and amity.

(8) Congress shall have the sole right to issue money and immediately upon our inauguration it shall at least double the present supply of money, in order to facilitate the fluidity of credit.

(9) We cannot too strongly condemn the un-Christian attitude of certain otherwise progressive nations in their discriminations against the Jews, who have been among the strongest supporters of the League, and who will continue to prosper and to be recognized as fully Americanized, though only so long as they continue to support our ideals.

(10) All Negroes shall be prohibited from voting, holding public office, practicing law, medicine, or teaching in any class above the grade

of grammar school, and they shall be taxed 100 per cent of all sums in excess of \$10,000 per family per year which they may earn or in any other manner receive. In order, however, to give the most sympathetic aid possible to all Negroes who comprehend their proper and valuable place in society, all such colored persons, male or female, as can prove that they have devoted not less than forty-five years to such suitable tasks as domestic service, agricultural labor, and common labor in industries, shall at the age of sixty-five be permitted to appear before a special Board, composed entirely of white persons, and upon proof that while employed they have never been idle except through sickness, they shall be recommended for pensions not to exceed the sum of \$500.00 per person per year, nor to exceed \$700.00 per family. Negroes shall, by definition, be persons with at least one-sixteenth colored blood.

(11) Far from opposing such high-minded and economically sound methods of the relief of poverty, unemployment, and old age as the EPIC plan of the Hon. Upton Sinclair, the "Share the Wealth" and "Every Man a King" proposals of the late Hon. Huey Long to assure every family \$5000 a year, the Townsend plan, the Utopian plan, Technocracy, and all competent schemes of unemployment insurance, a Commission shall immediately be appointed by the New Administration to study, reconcile, and recommend for immediate adoption the best features in these several plans for Social Security, and the Hon. Messrs. Sinclair, Townsend, Eugene Reed, and Howard Scott are herewith invited to in every way advise and collaborate with that Commission.

(12) All women now employed shall, as rapidly as possible, except in such peculiarly feminine spheres of activity as nursing and beauty parlors, be assisted to return to their incomparably sacred duties as home-makers and as mothers of strong, honorable future Citizens of the Commonwealth.

(13) Any person advocating Communism, Socialism, or Anarchism, advocating refusal to enlist in case of war, or advocating alliance with Russia in any war whatsoever, shall be subject to trial for high



treason, with a minimum penalty of twenty years at hard labor in prison, and a maximum of death on the gallows, or other form of execution which the judges may find convenient.

(14) All bonuses promised to former soldiers of any war in which America has ever engaged shall be immediately paid in full, in cash, and in all cases of veterans with incomes of less than \$5,000.00 a year, the formerly promised sums shall be doubled.

(15) Congress shall, immediately upon our inauguration, initiate amendments to the Constitution providing (a), that the President shall have the authority to institute and execute all necessary measures for the conduct of the government during this critical epoch; (b), that Congress shall serve only in an advisory capacity, calling to the attention of the President and his aides and Cabinet any needed legislation, but not acting upon same until authorized by the President so to act; and (c), that the Supreme Court shall immediately have removed from its jurisdiction the power to negate, by ruling them to be unconstitutional or by any other judicial action, any or all acts of the President, his duly appointed aides, or Congress.

*Addendum:* It shall be strictly understood that, as the League of Forgotten Men and the Democratic Party, as now constituted, have no purpose nor desire to carry out any measure that shall not unqualifiedly meet with the desire of the majority of voters in these United States, the League and Party regard none of the above fifteen points as obligatory and unmodifiable except No. 15, and upon the others they will act or refrain from acting in accordance with the general desire of the Public, who shall under the new régime be again granted an individual freedom of which they have been deprived by the harsh and restrictive economic measures of former administrations, both Republican and Democratic.

"But what does it mean?" marveled Mrs. Jessup, when her husband had read the platform to her. "It's so inconsistent. Sounds like a combination of Norman Thomas and Calvin Coolidge. I don't seem to understand it. I wonder if Mr. Windrip understands it himself?"

"Sure. You bet he does. It mustn't be supposed that because Windrip gets that intellectual dressmaker Sarason to prettify his ideas up for him he doesn't recognize 'em and clasp 'em to his bosom when they're dolled up in two-dollar words. I'll tell you just what it all means: Articles One and Five mean that if the financiers and transportation kings and so on don't come through heavily with support for Buzz they may be threatened with bigger income taxes and some control of their businesses. But they are coming through, I hear, handsomely—they're paying for Buzz's radio and his parades. Two, that by controlling their unions directly, Buzz's gang can kidnap all Labor into slavery. Three backs up the security for Big Capital and Four brings the preachers into line as scared and unpaid press-agents for Buzz.

"Six doesn't mean anything at all—munition firms with vertical trusts will be able to wangle one 6 per cent on manufacture, one on transportation, and one on sales—at least. Seven means we'll get ready to follow all the European nations in trying to hog the whole world. Eight means that by inflation, big industrial companies will be able to buy their outstanding bonds back at a cent on the dollar, and Nine that all Jews who don't cough up plenty of money for the robber baron will be punished, even including the Jews who haven't much to cough up. Ten, that all well-paying jobs and businesses held by Negroes will be grabbed by the Poor White Trash among Buzz's worshipers—and that instead of being denounced they'll be universally praised as patriotic protectors of Racial Purity. Eleven, that Buzz'll be able to pass the buck for not creating any real relief for poverty. Twelve, that women will later lose the vote and the right to higher education and be foxed out of all decent jobs and urged to rear soldiers to be killed in foreign wars. Thirteen, that anybody who opposes Buzz in any way at all can be called a Communist and scragged for it. Why, under this clause, Hoover and Al Smith and Ogden Mills—yes, and you and me—will all be Communists.

"Fourteen, that Buzz thinks enough of the support of the veterans' vote to be willing to pay high for it—in other people's money. And



Fifteen—well, that's the one lone clause that really does mean something; and it means that Windrip and Lee Sarason and Bishop Prang and I guess maybe this Colonel Dewey Haik and this Dr. Hector Macgoblin—you know, this doctor that helps write the high-minded hymns for Buzz—they've realized that this country has gone so flabby that any gang daring enough and unscrupulous enough, and smart enough not to *seem* illegal, can grab hold of the entire government and have all the power and applause and salutes, all the money and palaces and willin' women they want.

"They're only a handful, but just think how small Lenin's gang was at first, and Mussolini's and Hitler's and Kemal Pasha's, and Napoleon's! You'll see all the liberal preachers and modernist educators and discontented newspapermen and farm agitators—maybe they'll worry at first, but they'll get caught up in the web of propaganda, like we all were in the Great War, and they'll all be convinced that, even if our Buzzy maybe *has* got a few faults, he's on the side of the plain people, and against all the tight old political machines, and they'll rouse the country for him as the Great Liberator (and meanwhile Big Business will just wink and sit tight!), and then, by God, this crook—oh, I don't know whether he's more of a crook or an hysterical religious fanatic—along with Sarason and Haik and Prang and Macgoblin—these five men will be able to set up a régime that'll remind you of Henry Morgan the pirate capturing a merchant ship."

"But will Americans stand for it long?" whimpered Emma. "Oh, no, not people like us—the descendants of the pioneers!"

"Dunno. I'm going to try help see that they don't. . . . Of course you understand that you and I and Sissy and Fowler and Mary will probably be shot if I do try to do anything. . . . Hm! I sound brave enough now, but probably I'll be scared to death when I hear Buzz's private troops go marching by!"

"Oh, you will be careful, won't you?" begged Emma. "Oh, Before I forget it. How many times must I tell you, Dormouse, not to give Foolish chicken bones—they'll stick in his poor throat and choke him to death. And you just *never* remember to take the keys out of the car

when you put it in the garage at night! I'm perfectly *sure* Shad Ledue or somebody will steal it one of these nights!"

Father Stephen Prefixe, when he read the Fifteen Points, was considerably angrier than Doremus.

He snorted, "What? Negroes, Jews, women—they all banned and they leave us Catholics out, this time? Hitler didn't neglect us. *He's* persecuted us. Must be that Charley Coughlin. He's made us too respectable!"

Sissy, who was eager to go to a school of architecture and become a creator of new styles in houses of glass and steel; Lorinda Pike, who had plans for a Carlsbad-Vichy-Saratoga in Vermont; Mrs. Candy, who aspired to a home bakery of her own when she should be too old for domestic labor—they were all of them angrier than either Doremus or Father Prefixe.

Sissy sounded not like a flirtatious girl but like a battling woman as she snarled, "So the League of Forgotten Men is going to make us a League of Forgotten Women! Send us back to washing diapers and leaching out ashes for soap! Let us read Louisa May Alcott and Barrie—except on the Sabbath, of course! Let us sleep in humble gratitude with men——"

"Sissy!" wailed her mother.

"—like Shad Ledue! Well, Dad, you can sit right down and write Busy Berselius for me that I'm going to England on the next boat!"

Mrs. Candy stopped drying the water glasses (with the soft dish-towels which she scrupulously washed out daily) long enough to croak, "What nasty men! I do hope they get shot soon," which for Mrs. Candy was a startlingly long and humanitarian statement.

"Yes. Nasty enough. But what I've got to keep remembering is that Windrip is only the lightest cork on the whirlpool. He didn't plot all this thing. With all the justified discontent there is against the smart politicians and the Plush Horses of Plutocracy—oh, if it hadn't been one Windrip, it'd been another. . . . We had it coming, we Respectables. . . . But that isn't going to make us like it!" thought Doremus.



## TWELVE

I shall not be content till this country can produce every single thing we need, even coffee, cocoa, and rubber, and so keep all our dollars at home. If we can do this and at the same time work up tourist traffic so that foreigners will come from every part of the world to see such remarkable wonders as the Grand Canyon, Glacier and Yellowstone etc. parks, the fine hotels of Chicago, & etc., thus leaving their money here, we shall have such a balance of trade as will go far to carry out my often-criticized yet completely sound idea of from \$3000 to \$5000 per year for every single family—that is, I mean every real American family. Such an aspiring Vision is what we want, and not all this nonsense of wasting our time at Geneva and talky-talk at Lugano, wherever that is.

*Zero Hour, Berzelius Windrip.*

**E**lection day would fall on Tuesday, November third, and on Sunday evening of the first, Senator Windrip played the finale of his campaign at a mass meeting in Madison Square Garden, in New York. The Garden would hold, with seats and standing room, about 19,000, and a week before the meeting every ticket had been sold—at from fifty cents to five dollars, and then by speculators resold and resold, at from one dollar to twenty.

Doremus had been able to get one single ticket from an acquaintance on one of the Hearst dailies—which, alone among the New York papers, were supporting Windrip—and on the afternoon of November first he traveled the three hundred miles to New York for his first visit in three years.

## IT CAN'T HAPPEN HERE

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lay to the earth so quietly, in unstained air, that the world seemed a silver-painted carnival, left to silence. Even on a moonless night, a pale radiance came from the snow, from the earth itself, and the stars were drops of quicksilver.

But, following the redcap carrying his shabby Gladstone bag, Doremus came out of the Grand Central, at six o'clock, into a gray trickle of cold dishwater from heaven's kitchen sink. The renowned towers which he expected to see on Forty-second Street were dead in their mummy cloths of ragged fog. And as to the mob that, with cruel disinterest, galloped past him, a new and heedless smear of faces every second, the man from Fort Beulah could think only that New York must be holding its county fair in this clammy drizzle, or else that there was a big fire somewhere.

He had sensibly planned to save money by using the subway—the substantial village burgher is so poor in the city of the Babylonian gardens!—and he even remembered that there were still to be found in Manhattan five-cent trolley cars, in which a rustic might divert himself by looking at sailors and poets and shawled women from the steppes of Kazakstan. To the redcap he had piped with what he conceived to be traveled urbanity, "Guess'll take a trolley—jus' few blocks." But deafened and dizzied and elbow-jabbed by the crowd, soaked and depressed, he took refuge in a taxi, then wished he hadn't, as he saw the slippery rubber-colored pavement, and as his taxi got wedged among other cars stinking of carbon-monoxide and frenziedly tooting for release from the jam—a huddle of robot sheep bleating their terror with mechanical lungs of a hundred horsepower.

He painfully hesitated before going out again from his small hotel in the West Forties, and when he did, when he muddily crept among the shrill shopgirls, the weary chorus girls, the hard cigar-clamping gamblers, and the pretty young men on Broadway, he felt himself, with the rubbers and umbrella which Emma had forced upon him, a very Caspar Milquetoast.



man in 1870: slant-topped blue forage caps, dark blue tunics, light blue trousers, with yellow stripes at the seam, tucked into leggings of black rubberoid for what appeared to be the privates, and boots of sleek black leather for officers. Each of them had on the right side of his collar the letters "M.M." and on the left, a five-pointed star. There were so many of them; they swaggered so brazenly, shouldering civilians out of the way; and upon insignificances like Doremus they looked with frigid insolence.

He suddenly understood.

These young condottieri were the "Minute Men": the private troops of Berzelius Windrip, about which Doremus had been publishing uneasy news reports. He was thrilled and a little dismayed to see them now—the printed words made brutal flesh.

Three weeks ago Windrip had announced that Colonel Dewey Haik had founded, just for the campaign, a nationwide league of Windrip marching-clubs, to be called the Minute Men. It was probable that they had been in formation for months, since already they had three or four hundred thousand members. Doremus was afraid the M.M.'s might become a permanent organization, more menacing than the Kuklux Klan.

Their uniform suggested the pioneer America of Cold Harbor and of the Indian fighters under Miles and Custer. Their emblem, their swastika (here Doremus saw the cunning and mysticism of Lee Sarason), was a five-pointed star, because the star on the American flag was five-pointed, whereas the stars of both the Soviet banner and the Jews—the shield of David—were six-pointed.

The fact that the Soviet star, actually, was also five-pointed, no one noticed, during these excited days of regeneration. Anyway, it was a nice idea to have this star simultaneously challenge the Jews and the Bolsheviks—the M.M.'s had good intentions, even if their symbolism did slip a little.

Yet the craftiest thing about the M.M.'s was that they wore no colored shirts, but only plain white when on parade, and light khaki when on outpost duty, so that Buzz Windrip could thunder, and frequently,

"Black shirts? Brown shirts? Red shirts? Yes, and maybe cow-brindle shirts! All these degenerate European uniforms of tyranny! No sir! The Minute Men are not Fascist or Communist or anything at all but plain Democratic—the knight-champions of the rights of the Forgotten Men—the shock troops of Freedom!"

Doremus dined on Chinese food, his invariable self-indulgence when he was in a large city without Emma, who stated that chow mein was nothing but fried excelsior with flour-taste gravy. He forgot the leering M.M. troopers a little; he was happy in glancing at the gilded wood-carvings, at the octagonal lanterns painted with doll-like Chinese peasants crossing arched bridges, at a quartette of guests, two male and two female, who looked like Public Enemies and who all through dinner quarreled with restrained viciousness.

When he headed toward Madison Square Garden and the culminating Windrip rally, he was plunged into a maelstrom. A whole nation seemed querulously to be headed the same way. He could not get a taxicab, and walking through the dreary storm some fourteen blocks to Madison Square Garden he was aware of the murderous temper of the crowd.

Eighth Avenue, lined with cheapjack shops, was packed with drab, discouraged people who yet, tonight, were tipsy with the hashish of hope. They filled the sidewalks, nearly filled the pavement, while irritable motors squeezed tediously through them, and angry policemen were pushed and whirled about and, if they tried to be haughty, got jeered at by lively shopgirls.

Through the welter, before Doremus's eyes, jabbed a flying wedge of Minute Men, led by what he was later to recognize as a cornet of M.M.'s. They were not on duty, and they were not belligerent; they were cheering, and singing "Berzelius Windrip went to Wash.," reminding Doremus of a slightly drunken knot of students from an inferior college after a football victory. He was to remember them so afterward, months afterward, when the enemies of the M.M.'s all through the country derisively called them "Mickey Mouses" and "Minnies."



An old man, shabbily neat, stood blocking them and yelled, "To hell with Buzz! Three cheers for F.D.R.!"

The M.M.'s burst into hoodlum wrath. The cornet in command, a bruiser uglier even than Shad Ledue, hit the old man on the jaw, and he sloped down, sickeningly. Then, from nowhere, facing the cornet, there was a chief petty officer of the navy, big, smiling, reckless. The C.P.O. bellowed, in a voice tuned to hurricanes, "Swell bunch o' tin soldiers! Nine o' yuh to one grandpappy! Just about even——"

The cornet socked him; he laid out the cornet with one foul to the belly; instantly the other eight M.M.'s were on the C.P.O., like sparrows after a hawk, and he crashed, his face, suddenly veal-white, laced with rivulets of blood. The eight kicked him in the head with their thick marching-shoes. They were still kicking him when Doremus wriggled away, very sick, altogether helpless.

He had not turned away quickly enough to avoid seeing an M.M. trooper, girlish-faced, crimson-lipped, fawn-eyed, throw himself on the fallen cornet and, whimpering, stroke that roustabout's roast-beef cheeks with shy gardenia-petal fingers.

There were many arguments, a few private fist fights, and one more battle, before Doremus reached the auditorium.

A block from it some thirty M.M.'s, headed by a battalion-leader—something between a captain and a major—started raiding a street meeting of Communists. A Jewish girl in khaki, her bare head soaked with rain, was beseeching from the elevation of a wheelbarrow, "Fellow travelers! Don't just chew the rag and 'sympathize'! Join us! Now! It's life and death!" Twenty feet from the Communists, a middle-aged man who looked like a social worker was explaining the Jeffersonian Party, recalling the record of President Roosevelt, and reviling the Communists next door as word-drunk un-American cranks. Half his audience were people who might be competent voters; half of them—like half of any group on this evening of tragic fiesta—were cigarette-sniping boys in hand-me-downs.

The thirty M.M.'s cheerfully smashed into the Communists. The battalion leader reached up, slapped the girl speaker, dragged her down

from the wheelbarrow. His followers casually waded in with fists and blackjacks. Doremus, more nauseated, feeling more helpless than ever, heard the smack of a blackjack on the temple of a scrawny Jewish intellectual.

Amazingly, then, the voice of the rival Jeffersonian leader spiraled up into a scream: "Come on, *you*! Going to let those hellhounds attack our Communist friends—friends *now*, by God!" With which the mild bookworm leaped into the air, came down squarely upon a fat Mickey Mouse, capsized him, seized his blackjack, took time to kick another M.M.'s shins before arising from the wreck, sprang up, and waded into the raiders as, Doremus guessed, he would have waded into a table of statistics on the proportion of butter fat in loose milk in 97.7 per cent of shops on Avenue B.

Till then, only half-a-dozen Communist Party members had been facing the M.M.'s, their backs to a garage wall. Fifty of their own, fifty Jeffersonians besides, now joined them, and with bricks and umbrellas and deadly volumes of sociology they drove off the enraged M.M.'s—partisans of Bela Kun side by side with the partisans of Professor John Dewey—until a riot squad of policemen battered their way in to protect the M.M.'s by arresting the girl Communist speaker and the Jeffersonian.

Doremus had often "headed up" sports stories about "Madison Square Garden Prize Fights," but he did know that the place had nothing to do with Madison Square, from which it was a day's journey by bus, that it was decidedly not a garden, that the fighters there did not fight for "prizes" but for fixed partnership shares in the business, and that a good many of them did not fight at all.

The mammoth building, as in exhaustion Doremus crawled up to it, was entirely ringed with M.M.'s, elbow to elbow, all carrying heavy canes, and at every entrance, along every aisle, the M.M.'s were rigidly in line, with their officers galloping about, whispering orders, and bearing uneasy rumors like scared calves in a dipping-pen.

These past weeks hungry miners, dispossessed farmers, Carolina



mill hands had greeted Senator Windrip with a flutter of worn hands beneath gasoline torches. Now he was to face, not the unemployed, for they could not afford fifty-cent tickets, but the small, scared side-street traders of New York, who considered themselves altogether superior to clodhoppers and mine-creepers, yet were as desperate as they. The swelling mass that Doremus saw, proud in seats or standing chin-to-nape in the aisles, in a reek of dampened clothes, was not romantic; they were people concerned with the tailor's goose, the tray of potato salad, the card of hooks-and-eyes, the leech-like mortgage on the owner-driven taxi, with, at home, the baby's diapers, the dull safety-razor blade, the awful rise in the cost of rump steak and kosher chicken. And a few, and very proud, civil-service clerks and letter carriers and superintendents of small apartment houses, curiously fashionable in seventeen-dollar ready-made suits and feebly stitched foulard ties, who boasted, "I don't know why all these bums go on relief. I may not be such a wiz, but let me tell you, even since 1929, I've never made less than *two thousand dollars a year!*"

Manhattan peasants. Kind people, industrious people, generous to their aged, eager to find any desperate cure for the sickness of worry over losing the job.

Most facile material for any rabble-rouser.

The historic rally opened with extreme dullness. A regimental band played the *Tales from Hoffman* barcarole with no apparent significance and not much more liveliness. The Reverend Dr. Hendrik Van Lollop of St. Apologue's Lutheran Church offered prayer, but one felt that probably it had not been accepted. Senator Porkwood provided a dissertation on Senator Windrip which was composed in equal parts of apostolic adoration of Buzz and of the uh-uh-uh's with which Hon. Porkwood always interspersed his words.

And Windrip wasn't yet even in sight.

Colonel Dewey Haik, nominator of Buzz at the Cleveland convention, was considerably better. He told three jokes, and an anecdote about a faithful carrier pigeon in the Great War which had seemed to

understand, really better than many of the human soldiers, just why it was that the Americans were over there fighting for France against Germany. The connection of this ornithological hero with the virtues of Senator Windrip did not seem evident, but, after having sat under Senator Porkwood, the audience enjoyed the note of military gallantry.

Doremus felt that Colonel Haik was not merely rambling but pounding on toward something definite. His voice became more insistent. He began to talk about Windrip: "my friend—the one man who dares beard the monetary lion—the man who in his great and simple heart cherishes the woe of every common man as once did the brooding tenderness of Abraham Lincoln." Then, wildly waving toward a side entrance, he shrieked, "And here he comes! My friends—Buzz Windrip!"

The band hammered out "The Campbells Are Coming." A squadron of Minute Men, smart as Horse Guards, carrying long lances with starred pennants, clicked into the gigantic bowl of the auditorium, and after them, shabby in an old blue-serge suit, nervously twisting a sweat-stained slouch hat, stooped and tired, limped Berzelius Windrip. The audience leaped up, thrusting one another aside to have a look at the deliverer, cheering like artillery at dawn.

Windrip started prosaically enough. You felt rather sorry for him, so awkwardly did he lumber up the steps to the platform, across to the center of the stage. He stopped; stared owlishly. Then he quacked monotonously:

"The first time I ever came to New York I was a greenhorn—no, don't laugh, mebbe I still am! But I had already been elected a United States Senator, and back home, the way they'd serenaded me, I thought I was some punkins. I thought my name was just about as familiar to everybody as Al Capone's or Camel Cigarettes or Castoria—Babies Cry For It. But I come to New York on my way to Washington, and say, I sat in my hotel lobby here for three days, and the only fellow ever spoke to me was the hotel detective! And when he did come up and address me, I was tickled to death—I thought he was going to tell me the whole burg was pleased by my condescending to visit 'em. But all he wanted



to know was, was I a guest of the hotel and did I have any right to be holding down a lobby chair permanently that way! And tonight, friends, I'm pretty near as scared of Old Gotham as I was then!"

The laughter, the hand-clapping, were fair enough, but the proud electors were disappointed by his drawl, his weary humility.

Doremus quivered hopefully, "Maybe he isn't going to get elected!"

Windrip outlined his too-familiar platform—Doremus was interested only in observing that Windrip misquoted his own figures regarding the limitation of fortunes, in Point Five.

He slid into a rhapsody of general ideas—a mishmash of polite regards to Justice, Freedom, Equality, Order, Prosperity, Patriotism, and any number of other noble but slippery abstractions.

Doremus thought he was being bored, until he discovered that, at some moment which he had not noticed, he had become absorbed and excited.

Something in the intensity with which Windrip looked at his audience, looked at all of them, his glance slowly taking them in from the highest-perched seat to the nearest, convinced them that he was talking to each individual, directly and solely; that he wanted to take each of them into his heart; that he was telling them the truths, the imperious and dangerous facts, that had been hidden from them.

"They say I want money—power! Say, I've turned down offers from law firms right here in New York of three times the money I'll get as President! And power—why, the President is the servant of every citizen in the country, and not just of the considerate folks, but also of every crank that comes pestering him by telegram and phone and letter. And yet, it's true, it's absolutely true I do want power, great, big, imperial power—but not for myself—no—for *you!*—the power of your permission to smash the Jew financiers who've enslaved you, who're working you to death to pay the interest on their bonds; the grasping bankers—and not all of 'em Jews by a darn sight!—the crooked labor-leaders just as much as the crooked bosses, and, most of all, the sneaking spies of Moscow that want you to lick the boots of their self-appointed tyrants that rule not by love and loyalty, like I want to,

but by the horrible power of the whip, the dark cell, the automatic pistol!"

He pictured, then, a Paradise of democracy in which, with the old political machines destroyed, every humblest worker would be king and ruler, dominating representatives elected from among his own kind of people, and these representatives not growing indifferent, as hitherto they had done, once they were far off in Washington, but kept alert to the public interest by the supervision of a strengthened Executive.

It sounded almost reasonable, for a while.

The supreme actor, Buzz Windrip, was passionate yet never grotesquely wild. He did not gesture too extravagantly; only, like Gene Debs of old, he reached out a bony forefinger which seemed to jab into each of them and hook out each heart. It was his mad eyes, big staring tragic eyes, that startled them, and his voice, now thundering, now humbly pleading, that soothed them.

He was so obviously an honest and merciful leader; a man of sorrows and acquaint with woe.

Doremus marveled, "I'll be hanged! Why, he's a darn good sort when you come to meet him! And warm-hearted. He makes me feel as if I'd been having a good evening with Buck and Steve Prefelix. What if Buzz is right? What if—in spite of all the demagogic pap that, I suppose, he has got to feed out to the boobs—he's right in claiming that it's only he, and not Trowbridge or Roosevelt, that can break the hold of the absentee owners? And these Minute Men, his followers—oh, they were pretty nasty, what I saw out on the street, but still, most of 'em are mighty nice, clean-cut young fellows. Seeing Buzz and then listening to what he actually says does kind of surprise you—kind of make you think!"

But what Mr. Windrip actually *had* said, Doremus could not remember an hour later, when he had come out of the trance.

He was so convinced then that Windrip would win that, on Tuesday evening, he did not remain at the *Informer* office until the returns were



all in. But if he did not stay for the evidences of the election, they came to him.

Past his house, after midnight, through muddy snow tramped a triumphant and reasonably drunken parade, carrying torches and bellying to the air of "Yankee Doodle" new words revealed just that week by Mrs. Adelaide Tarr Gimmitch:

*The snakes disloyal to our Buzz  
We're riding on a rail,  
They'll wish to God they never was,  
When we get them in jail!*

*Chorus:  
Buzz and buzz and keep it up  
To victory he's floated.  
You were a most ungrateful pup,  
Unless for Buzz you voted.*

*Every M.M. gets a whip  
To use upon some traitor,  
And every Antibuzz we skip  
Today, we'll tend to later.*

"Antibuzz," a word credited to Mrs. Gimmitch but more probably invented by Dr. Hector Macgoblin, was to be extensively used by lady patriots as a term expressing such vicious disloyalty to the State as might call for the firing squad. Yet, like Mrs. Gimmitch's splendid synthesis "Unkies," for soldiers of the A.E.F., it never really caught on.

Among the winter-coated paraders Doremus and Sissy thought they could make out Shad Ledue, Aras Dilley, that philoprogenitive squatter from Mount Terror, Charley Betts, the furniture dealer, and Tony Mogliani, the fruit-seller, most ardent expounder of Italian Fascism in central Vermont.

And, though he could not be sure of it in the dimness behind the torches, Doremus rather thought that the lone large motorcar following the procession was that of his neighbor, Francis Tasbrough.

Next morning, at the *Informer* office, Doremus did not learn of so very much damage wrought by the triumphant Nordics—they had merely upset a couple of privies, torn down and burned the tailor-shop sign of Louis Rotenstern, and somewhat badly beaten Clifford Little, the jeweler, a slight, curly-headed young man whom Shad Ledue despised because he organized theatricals and played the organ in Mr. Falck's church.

That night Doremus found, on his front porch, a notice in red chalk upon butcher's paper:

*You will get yrs Dorey sweetheart unles you get rite down on yr  
belly and crawl in front of the MM and the League and the Chief  
and I*

A friend

It was the first time that Doremus had heard of "the Chief," a sound American variant of "the Leader" or "the Head of the Government," as a popular title for Mr. Windrip. It was soon to be made official.

Doremus burned the red warning without telling his family. But he often woke to remember it, not very laughingly.