



## The Indianapolis Times

(A SCRIPPS-HOWARD NEWSPAPER)  
Owned and published daily (except Sunday) by The Indianapolis Times Publishing Co., 214-220 West Maryland Street, Indianapolis, Ind. Price in Marion County, 2 cents a copy; elsewhere, 3 cents—delivered by carrier, 12 cents a week.  
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PHONE—Riley 5651 THURSDAY, MARCH 26, 1931  
Member of United Press Scripps-Howard Newspaper Alliance, Newspaper Enterprise Association. Newspaper Information Service and Audit Bureau of Circulations.

"Give Light and the People Will Find Their Own Way."

### The Unforgiving Hoover

National discipline is indispensable in war time. The ordinary liberties of the citizen in time of peace are likely to be curtailed severely. We may not like this turn of events, but it is almost inevitable. But such unity of mob opinion need not be demanded ears after the danger is over.

Now must we preserve a vindictive attitude toward those who have had the nerve to differ from us over international relations.

Therefore, the failure after thirteen years to restore citizenship to our political prisoners of the World War period may be branded a public scandal. During the war we convicted some 1,500 men and women under the espionage act. They were guilty of expressing unpopular opinion.

Some said that they doubted that the kaiser was a gorilla. Others expressed skepticism about the sainthood of Lord Grey and British naval officers. Others held that there might be some slight and indirect relationship between profits and patriotism in the case of certain great international bankers and munition manufacturers.

Not one of the 1,500 political prisoners now alive and denied restoration of citizenship was guilty of violence or convicted of being a spy. Almost to a man, they were pacifists or Socialists of decent repute.

Being barred from citizenship is no mere matter of sentiment. Such persons legally can not vote, they can not serve on juries, they can not hold public office, they can not get licenses for many important occupations and professions. Their status involves very serious economic, social and public handicaps.

Attorney-General Harry Daugherty had obvious reasons for wanting to appear a 300 per cent patriot. So he refused to recommend restoration of citizenship. His statesmanlike and liberal successor, Harlan F. Stone, favored restoration, but was translated to the supreme court chambers before he could act. His assistant, Colonel William J. Donovan, prepared a memorandum for the President recommending such action.

Neither Coolidge nor Hoover acted. Hoover had been waited upon by eminent members of the Society of Friends. In March, 1929, more than a score of most distinguished Americans petitioned Hoover for a proclamation restoring citizenship to these men. But the great humanitarian has remained adamant.

There is no abler American student of the labor movement than Leo Wolman. His appointment is a tribute both to the sound judgment of the economics department and to the liberality of the administration at Columbia.

The New Air Express

Good news is the announcement that a "straight-through," day and night, coast-to-coast air passenger service will be started April 1 by National Air Transport and Boeing Air Transport.

Passengers then can fly, with stops only for fuel, from San Francisco to New York, via Chicago, in twenty-eight hours, and in the opposite direction in thirty-one hours.

Heretofore, transcontinental air passengers either have taken a train at night, or stopped over at a hotel. On the new service they will spend the night in reclining chairs, high in the air. The next step must be to all with one stroke of the pen.

Every other civilized state in the world already has restored citizenship to all members of this class of political prisoners. Will this country, which was in the least danger in the late conflict, be the one to remain the most vindictive and unforgiving toward those who may have taken the Sermon on the Mount or Wilson's neutrality proclamations more seriously than their neighbors?

### Porto Rican Home Rule

Being a polite and hospitable people, the Porto Ricans did not embarrass President Hoover with demonstrations of a "Give us liberty or give us death" character. Therefore, some of the President's party made the mistake of assuming that the islanders are satisfied with their political status.

It is true that the sentiment toward the United States has improved since the Porto Rican legislature gave the Patrick Henry message to Lindbergh to carry to President Coolidge. For that improved relationship, the enlightened policy of President Hoover and Governor Roosevelt is largely responsible.

But the Porto Ricans would be less than human if they suddenly had ceased to want self-government. That they still want it was told to Hoover the moment he set foot on the island, by the mayor of Ponce, who welcomed him.

Self-government to them does not mean absolute independence. They want to remain American citizens. But they want the state, the power to elect their own governor, and all the other privileges that go with home rule.

That desire is not unreasonable. Nor is it impracticable.

In his speeches, the President quite properly stressed the economic rather than the political problems of the island. The economic issues are more important to the well-being of the people.

But it would be poor statesmanship to overlook the psychological factors inherent in the political issue. Because of the basic problem of over-population, Porto Rico probably never will attain a high level of material prosperity. Therefore, the problem of morale always will be crucial.

Considered as a matter of morale, the question is not whether the demanded free-state status would be a more efficient method of government technically than the present method, but whether the Porto Ricans would be happier with more freedom and responsibility.

As long as the morale of the Porto Ricans remains as low as at present, their political institutions can not be evaluated solely or even chiefly by mechanical efficiency.

Certainly no American can argue logically against the inalienable right of the Porto Ricans to home rule if they want it. And why should any American want to deny them that right? Should we not rather want them to share as much as possible in the attempted solution of their own problems?

### Surplus and Famine

Republican politicians are having a hard time trying to explain away the federal farm board failure, advertised by the board's decision to stop speculation in wheat. In fact, the explanation makes matters worse.

The farm board at least had the courage to reverse its bankrupt policy and publish the fact. Now the politicians explain that the 275,000,000,000 bushels of surplus wheat bought by the board will not be dumped on the market until that operation can be undertaken without harm to the farmer.

All of which is rather naive.

It is not only the dumping of that huge surplus on the market which will drive down the price of wheat and ruin the farmer trying to sell his own wheat. The very existence of that surplus, whether it put on the market or not, depresses prices and will continue to do so.

That surplus can not be laughed off. To hold it for future dumping may be even worse than dumping it now and having done with the painful operation.

The suggestion has been made that the surplus

must be destroyed. Worse things could happen. For it must be gotten rid of somehow.

But if this surplus is going to be a great financial loss in any event—either to the government or to the competing farmer, or to both—it might better be fed to the starving than destroyed.

If the government and the farmers are unwilling that it go for flour to feed the hungry unemployed in this country, is it not time to reconsider the old proposal to send it to the Chinese famine victims? Or to some of our own hungry citizens?

Of course it is easy enough to point out objections to this or any other plan, but that does not dispose of the surplus.

### A Splendid Opportunity

During the World War the reputation of Columbia University for academic freedom went into eclipse. The discharge of Cattell, Dana and Fraser and the resignation of Robinson and Beard contrasted sharply with President Lowell's defense of Munsterberg, Laski and others.

In the last decade, however, President Butler has encouraged at least a mild liberalism and himself frequently has spoken in behalf of this position. No single act is more convincing in this matter than the recent appointment of Dr. Leo Wolman as professor of economics to succeed the late Henry Rogers Seager.

Dr. Wolman is committed thoroughly to the cause of organized labor, though as a scientist he does not approve of all foolish policies of labor leaders, not those of Matt Woll. More, he is something beyond a friend in theory.

He has been actively identified with one of the most aggressive, successful and statesmanlike of the unions, the Amalgamated Clothing Workers. He has been their chief economic expert, devised their unemployment program, and is a director of the Amalgamated banks. He was a "founding father" of the New School for Social Research.

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### Reason by FREDERICK LANDIS

READING of this former Governor of Idaho who took money for endorsing a book about Lincoln, reminds us of the time an author took a book to the White House and asked Mr. Lincoln to read it and give him a testimonial.

Capital punishment, however, is reserved for the normal killer, never for the hopelessly insane.

The conclusion is inescapable that we are for inflicting death only when it hurts, only when the victim realizes what it means, but can't bear the thought of inflicting it to death.

We admit that environment plays a big part in molding character, yet we throw youthful offenders among a lot of hard criminals, with the idea that they can be reformed by it.

The time for reform is before we have scarred their souls with the branding iron of social contempt.

Where is the justice of locking up a petty thief and making it impossible for him to work, when justice could be satisfied by the restoration of what he stole?

A hopelessly insane murderer obviously is a greater menace than the normal man who kills because of some overpowering emotion.

Also, there is no possibility that he ever will be any good to himself, or society.

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The time to find out whether they can be made useful citizens is before we have made the task harder both for them and for us.

That is the way it is with the string of us.

Some hotels rate high, says the office sage, and others have high rates.

Then there's the bootlegger who has been in business so long he calls himself a bottle-scared veteran.

The speed of a new submarine is seventeen knots an hour. Tie that.

By going on a vacation while his city is making important investigations, New York's mayor is said to have made a risky step. A. J. Walker, as it were,

A man was found in Pennsylvania who sang while he robbed a store. Just a snatch of song, as it were.

Some hotels rate high, says the office sage, and others have high rates.

That is the way it is with the string of us.

Then the official string puller went around to the homes of the other kids and pulled the strings until all the kids' arose.

There have been so many articles along the same line in the papers the last week that one suspects that somebody has started the old propaganda mill again.

And, if so, it's very contemptible.

Of course, some ex-service men will blow their money, not because they are ex-service men, but because they are Americans and the average American is a blower from Blowout.

But to try to differentiate the folly of all of us, to try to present the soldier as the inventor of wild life in America, that's really wonderful!

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## M. E. Tracy SAYS:

Our Administration of Justice  
Is About as Vague and Ca-  
pricious as a Roulette  
Wheel.

COLUMBUS, O., March 26.—Like many other states, Ohio faces the problem of prison congestion. The necessity of providing relief, either through a costly program of construction, or revision of the penal code, can not be sidestepped much longer.

The state prison at Columbus now contains 4,759 convicts. That is only a few less than it contained at the time of the great fire in which 320 lost their lives.

But for that fire, the prison's population would show an increase of 6 or 7 per cent in the last eleven months.

A policy of imposing longer sentences for the same offense largely accounts for this condition.

Some ten years ago, Ohio decided to severity as a crime cure. The only result any one seems sure of is a greater number of convicts for the taxpayers to house, feed and clothe.

If crime has diminished, the people have yet to be convinced of it.

England Does It Better  
OHIO'S prison situation is typical of that prevailing throughout the country.

Where the average prison sentence in England is four months, the average here is five years.

Other things being equal, that one item alone would produce a prison population for the United States fifteen times as great as for England, in proportion to their size.

That one item alone is sufficient to explain why England finds it possible to scrap three of her once important prisons, while we face the necessity of expanding ours faster than architects can draw plans.

The general effect on crime, however, shows that that one item doesn't amount to very much.

England has been able to do more than we have in discouraging crime of all descriptions, though exerting only one-fifteenth as much prison pressure.

The difference is that England catches the majority of her offenders, while we are rough on a few.

As every peace officer, or prison guard, will tell you, the would-be criminal is much more likely to be deterred by the certainty of punishment than by its uncertainty.

At no time have we done a very good job of checking them up, either before, or afterward.