



The Indianapolis Times

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

Muncie and Taxes

One more example of what can happen when self-government is taken away from cities and lodges in a despotic tax board is furnished by Muncie.

The state tax board, against whose orders the city of Indianapolis is appealing to the courts, has fixed a tax rate for that city which Mayor Dale says will not permit the departments to operate.

Of course Dale is not in good standing with politicians, even those of his own party.

For a number of years he made the path of the rulers of his city very unpleasant. In those days complacent tax boards did not interfere with the spending of as much money as might be needed to keep the machine well greased.

When Dale was placed in power through a political revolution, he began to cut down expenses and did a fairly good job of it. But the tax board now orders him to cut about 20 per cent of what he has fixed as a minimum of expense and his minimum is many thousands of dollars less than was spent by his predecessors in office.

The purpose is apparently plain. Dale will face an election a year or so hence. Rates will have to be raised to take care of deficits caused this year.

The case of Muncie is apparently even more flagrant than that of Indianapolis where the school board and Mayor Sullivan were the targets for tax board intrusion.

The matter is vital in principle. If cities do not have the power to regulate their own taxes, they have lost the power to rule themselves. Self-government in cities is essential to self-government in the state and the nation.

The activity in cutting taxes by this board is even more worthy of attention when compared with its inactivity in fixing valuations of corporations for taxation purposes.

The wide discrepancies between the valuation used by the public service commission for rate purposes and those of the tax board for tax purposes suggests that the members of these two commissions use entirely different systems of mathematics.

A very definite limitation of the powers of this board and an emphatic declaration against any interference with local government should be made by the next legislature.

A President Embarrassed—a Man Killed

A man ran out the back door of a grocery store. He was carrying a gunny sack with nineteen pints of liquor. He ran into the arms of dry agents. They were not anxious to arrest him. But what else could they do; he ran into them. They did not want to arrest him because he was the brother-in-law of President Hoover. One of the agents even advised him to give a false name to protect himself and the President.

All of that happened in Santa Monica, Cal. The country is excited about it. Friends of Hoover are spreading the story that this was a frameup by Hoover enemies to embarrass the President.

We see nothing unusual or exciting about this case. Since perhaps half or more of the American population drink liquor and occasionally carry it about, there is about an even chance that not only the brother-in-law, but sundry other relatives of the President and others violate the prohibition laws. The President in his inaugural address referred to persons of that type as "otherwise law-abiding citizens."

It is no disgrace to drink or carry liquor—at least it is not considered wrong by many of the "best citizens" and officials—so we fail to see why this episode should embarrass the President or his brother-in-law. Certainly the federal dry agents usually take particular care not to arrest the best citizens, or officials, or relatives of officials.

We are reserving our indignation for another case—which has caused less embarrassment in White House circles.

Another federal dry agent entered a small restaurant in Englewood, Colo. He found one of the best known and best liked boys of the village, Milford Smith, in possession of three ounces of wine.

The dry agent, Henry Diers, clubbed the boy's head with his gun. The boy's skull was fractured. The boy's fiancee begged that he be taken to a doctor. The agent refused and carried him off to the Denver jail. Seven hours later, as the boy was close to death, the turnkey called a doctor. Soon after the boy died.

The state attorney filed murder charges against the federal agent and the town council branded the killing as "an unwarranted and ruthless slaying."

But the federal government as usual is defending the case of the slayer. And the federal government is expected, as usual, to demand transfer of the case to a federal court where it can protect its lawless agent more easily.

Considering that Milford Smith was killed for three ounces of liquor, and that other citizens with no liquor at all have been killed by dry agents, perhaps the President's brother-in-law should consider himself lucky to get off with a mere arrest for nineteen pints.

It is not the relatives of the dead boy rather than the relatives of the President's brother-in-law who are in need of public sympathy as victims of a lawless law?

Sacco and Vanzetti Again

At the moment when new efforts are being made to get justice for Mooney and Billings, and when an excellent talkie of the Dreyfus case is being shown to the American public, it is timely to have the case of Sacco and Vanzetti set before us in highly impressive fashion.

The fact that these men are dead and past earthly justice puts us in danger of forgetting this blot upon American criminal jurisprudence. For a couple of years the anniversary of their execution was commemorated through dignified and effective protest by eminent Americans, but even this annual gesture now seems to have quieted down to mild local proportions.

Nothing which has happened since the Lowell committee report is of such significance as the long, careful, able, and dispassionate review of the case in the book by Osmond K. Fraenkel which Mr. Knopf just has published in his valuable series on "American Trials."

Fraenkel is a reputable member of the New York bar and his volume is a model of historical fairness and analytical keenness. This presentation of the relevant facts in the case is not likely to be surpassed or superseded.

Here we have the well established facts about the case: (1) the hysteria of the days of the Palmer raids; (2) the total absence of any criminal record on the part of the two accused men; (3) the introduction of the most irrelevant material by District Attorney Katzmann to inflame the jury against foreign radicals; (4) the inadequacy of Mr. Moore in managing the defense; (5) Judge Thayer's notorious bias.

and his support of Katzmann's procedure; (6) the complete bankruptcy of every single point relied upon by the prosecution to secure conviction; and (7) the gross unfairness and illogicality of having Judge Thayer pass on all motions for a new trial.

The major witnesses against Sacco and Vanzetti presented as sorry a spectacle as the Oxman, Estelle Smith, MacDonald, Edeau procession in the Mooney-Billings travesty. Their testimony was either altered, confused or contradictory, or incredible and impossible, according to the most elementary laws of psychology.

When one reviews in calm historical fashion the identification testimony, the testimony of the prosecution experts; the evidence regarding the revolts of Sacco and Vanzetti; and the identification of Sacco's cap, one wonders that any twelve same men could have accepted such flimsy and dubious trash as the basis of convicting a bum on a vagrancy charge.

That it was accepted to sustain a charge of first degree murder proves the emotional overtnote which Judge Thayer and Katzmann had created among the jury.

If so, what can be said for the Lowell committee, which was far removed from the fire and smoke of the courtroom? Nothing, except that this book—without a heated word—constitutes a colossal indictment of the invincible prejudice and myopia of the president of Harvard and his associates.

Fraenkel rightly recognizes that it is not his task to find the guilty parties, but the book is so much more effective because it is fairly well established that students of the case are agreed upon the actual murderers, who are still at large and are not Sacco and Vanzetti.

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Criminal Glands

The 6,000 pages and 1,400,000 words of the Wickersham report on crime might as well have been left unwritten, in the opinion of Dr. Louis Berman, New York authority on glands, who just has completed a three-year study of men confined at Sing Sing.

Dr. Berman is convinced as a result of his work that crime is caused by faulty functioning of different glands. Certain crimes correspond to certain glandular disorders, he finds.

If this theory is correct, elimination of crime, instead of being a thing for moralists to mouth over in campaigns, is a thing for scientists to eradicate. Instead of building prisons and still more prisons, we some day will build clinics where glandular defects in children can be corrected just as defects in teeth and tonsils are treated now.

But the gland theory does not apply to men confined for breaking laws only recently made a crime, nor to men who steal, in the midst of a blameless life, because they are starving.

Perhaps if we are able to overcome the ignorance and emotionalism which has characterized our treatment of actual criminals we will discover that these other problems also can be solved scientifically.

When we learn to divorce the liquor problem from politics and morals we may discover a way to assure temperance and personal liberty at the same time. We already have studied ways of revising economic practice so that starvation will not occur, and lack only the courage and diligence to apply them.

Impeaching Judge Lynch

A report by a group of southerners, organized as the southern commission on the study of lynching, reveals that out of the twenty-one victims of lynching in 1930 two were "certainly" innocent and eleven others were "possibly" so.

The report also found that fewer than one-fourth of the lynching victims in the last forty years have been accused of assaults upon white women; that lynchings are most frequent against Negroes and in sparsely settled regions; that there is a direct relationship between lynching danger and low educational and economic standards of the community; that claims that lynchings are necessary because the courts fail to convict are "fallacious."

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The third group insists that red-haired and freckled children are

M. E. Tracy SAYS:

European Nations Might Just as Well Begin Cleaning House, and We Might Just as Well Prepare to Pay Our Share of the Fiddler's Bill.

NEW YORK, Nov. 12.—The Manchurian muddle, with all its alarming possibilities, appears to center around that good old practice of colonization, exploitation, peaceful penetration, and other curious methods by which "white folks" have sought to save and civilize a benighted world during the last 400 years.

Do you know that more than 600,000,000 people, or more than one-third of all those on earth, now are dwelling under some form of colonial government—a government that was set up by outsiders, that is maintained by outsiders and that fails to reflect the wishes, or desires of the governed, except as outsiders permit?

Do you know that there are nine times as many people in English colonies as in England, and one and one-half as many people in French colonies as in France?

U. S. Fairly Decent

THE United States has not been particularly offensive when it comes to conquest and colonization, though she still retains the Philippines, which were bought from Spain, without so much as "by your leave" from the people most concerned, and though a third of her territory was taken from Mexico, without too great travail of the spirit.

The practice should be stopped, of course, for the sake of peace, if not justice, but wouldn't it look a little better if certain Christian governments were to liberate their colonies, or, at least, grant them autonomy, before laying down too many rules for the less enlightened brethren?

We might just as well face the music, since we are going to dance to it if this movement for peace, low tariffs, and better markets through mass uplift means anything.

If European nations, particularly France and England, are so well sold on the right of self-determination as they said they were when formulating the treaty of Versailles, it might just as well begin cleaning house, and we might just as well begin getting ready to pay our share of the fiddler's bill.

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Age-old habits of thought are not going to be changed with a little poetry, or even a little eloquence.

President Hoover speaks truly when he says one of our greatest difficulties is lack of faith. That lack goes far not only in accounting for the present depression, but in explaining why we are not making faster progress with disarmament.

And Now for Action

THE fact that most great governments have signed on the dotted line is good as far as it goes, but it doesn't go very far. Most of the treaties, pacts and agreements are academic, binding us to an ideal, rather than definite obligation.

Wait until the League of Nations asks for armed support in some case, as it surely will, if it endures, or until the Kellogg pact brings us face to face with war, or a back-down, which is equally inevitable.

You know how easy it is to organize a club, especially if the dues are light, or to get a petition signed, if it doesn't cost anything. Well, that spirit goes right up the line. It's human and affects every human activity, no matter how high and mighty.

It's interesting is the commission's denunciations of "legal lynchings." These are hasty trials or those conducted under pressure of popular passion. These "foredoomed convictions," we are told, are often the result of a bargain struck between local officials and mob leaders, the former promising conviction in return for promise of mob withdrawal.

One might add that legal lynchings are cited as common American malpractices in the Wickersham commission report on legal lawlessness. The Sacco-Vanzetti and Mooney-Billings trials prove that such legal lynchings are not confined to the south.

The picture is not all dark. While there were twice as many lynchings last year as the ten in 1929, the rate has decreased from 225 in 1892 to an average of seventeen annually during the last six years.

The fact that this commission is composed of prominent southerners, and that religious bodies, newspapers and educators are aroused, is encouraging.

"Bottles" Capone was called the "champagne king." But he sort of bubbled over.

Just Every Day Sense

BY MRS. WALTER FERGUSON

THE average housewife never values her time in terms of money.

The ceaseless activities of clubs, society groups, and church organizations to raise funds is a case in point. The members will think nothing of giving entire days to a project, but the thought of contributing a dollar will throw them into a panic.

Investigate, for instance, the methods of certain feminine groups who work in cities or towns for a new carpet for the church or repairs on the roof or a kitchen range for the parsonage. They will cook and carry chairs and set up tables and wash dishes or rehearse for hours, and sew costumes and make prizes.

In the end, they may collect the required sum or they may not, according to how dutifully their families turn out.

THEY consider that they are doing noble work. And, measured by their efforts and their intentions, they are. But looking at these activities from the point of view of good sense, they lack reason.

What, for example, is the sense in a woman working several hours to prepare a public meal which her husband will buy for \$2, instead of giving the \$2 option to begin with?

The really sad thing about this is that the husbands seem unconcerned over such wasted energy. The men themselves no more would work like that than they would stroll down Main street in their underwear. Just to them domestic tasks never have been thought of in terms of money.

Thus, when father makes a contribution, he uses cash while mother generally works hrs out. And this speaks volumes on the rewards of home-making.

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