

(Heywood Brown is on vacation.)

IF any one is fearful lest there be Fascism in the United States, one practical way of lessening the danger is to give firm assistance to all movements designed to frustrate the attacks now being made on our civil liberties by reactionary groups and irresponsible publishers.

The American Civil Liberties Union has, therefore, done a smart thing in sending out to its members and friends a list of the more important Federal measures which touch closely upon civil liberties. Some are designed to curb liberties and others to protect us in our constitutional rights.

First among those which threaten our liberties are the proposed gag bills. The Kramer sedition bill would punish the advocacy of the overthrow of government by force and violence. Under it, most of the men who sat in our Federal Constitutional Convention in 1787 would be liable to punishment.

Then there is the Tydings-McDuffie military dissection bill, modeled after the gag law that England passed a couple of years back. This would punish severely anybody who, by word or publication, said anything which might possibly incite a soldier or sailor to disobey orders. How serious this might be is seen by the effect in England. There, a very important publishing firm refused to print a children's Christmas book which recommended peace on earth and good will among men. Senator Tydings and Secretary of War Dern have withdrawn their support from the bill.

These, Too, Threaten

OTHER bills which threaten the traditional American liberties are one which would increase the power of postoffice censorship, and another which would prohibit the use of the mails to give or obtain information relative to foreign divorces. A number of savage bills, relative to the deportation of aliens, have been introduced in both the House and the Senate, but none has as yet been reported out of the committee. Bills have been introduced to prohibit Federal aid to schools where they teach the overthrow of government by force, and to put Federal pressure on states to require teachers' loyalty oaths.

On the other hand, there are a number of bills which would safeguard or extend our liberties. One would prohibit contempt proceedings in Federal courts in order to force editors and reporters to reveal secret sources of information.

Several bills contemplate the assurance of greater freedom in radio service. They would require radio stations to allow uncensored discussions of major public issues, according the same treatment to both sides of controversial topics; would instruct radio stations to keep a full record of all programs accepted and rejected; would free radio stations of liability for libel or slander in programs devoted to public issues; and would create a special commission to investigate the present condition as to free speech over the air.

More popular control of postoffice censorship would be insured by providing jury trials in all cases involving exclusion of materials from the mails. Lynching is attacked through the proposal to institute Federal prosecution of lynchers and to create a commission to investigate current facts as to lynching.

Labor's Interests Involved

MORE humane control of deportation is hoped for through the Kerr-Coolidge bill to give discretion in cases which would involve hardship or disaster, such as breaking up families or sending radicals back to Fascist states.

The interests of labor are involved in bills to prohibit the interstate shipment of strike breakers; to prohibit the use of Federal equipment by state troops engaged in strike duty, except with specific approval of the Secretary of War; and to make a thorough investigation of the condition of share-croppers in the South.

Friends of civil liberty will do well to write their Senators and Congressmen to support these bills which safeguard civil liberties and to oppose those which head us further toward Fascism.

U. S. Can Not Stay Neutral, Many Think

BY RAYMOND CLAPPER

NEW YORK, April 4.—This week-end is the anniversary of our entrance into the World War. Nineteen years ago today, the Senate adopted the war resolution. On April 5, 1917, the House adopted it and the following day President Wilson affixed his signature.

That was a long time ago. Col. Lindbergh was a kid in short pants, attending public school in Washington, where his father, a Minnesota congressman, was fighting against our entrance into the war. Of the six Senators who 19 years ago today voted against war, only Senator George Norris remains.

Of the 50 House members who voted nay, only Knutson and Lindgren are left.

It was a different world—in some respects. Instead of radio as we know it, there was only the primitive wireless which had ticked out frantic code letters from the sinking *Titanic*, and which the military was experimenting with for short-range field communication. There were no talking pictures, no telephotographs flashing pictures of world events across the ocean into your next day's newspaper.

Mussolini was a young Socialist journalist. Nazis and the Soviets and their complete subjugation of the individual were still shrouded behind the veil of time. The world did not live as close together. Space had not been so completely telescoped. Aircraft had not crossed the oceans. Yet, even in that world, we lived close enough to other nations to be drawn into their war.

NOW, 19 years later, European nations seem headed for another war, if not today, then tomorrow. Many, remembering our former experience, believe that in the present world our chances of remaining out of war are even less. This belief underlies the agitation, which is growing, for abandoning any attempt at isolation and for joining European powers in some way or another.

Some want to join the League of Nations.

Others want an alliance with Great Britain. Mostly the details are glossed over with the general statement that we should participate in a movement for "collective security."

Meetings are being held daily, women's study clubs are discussing the question, and lecturers from Europe are telling us how impossible it is for the United States to stay out. Sir Arthur Salter, the noted British economist, tells the League for Political Education here that isolation is not the reverse of entanglement, but the precursor of it. His view is echoed among the experts in our State Department in that trying to keep our isolation we are likely to lose it.

The short of all this is that our public sentiment for neutrality—meaning noninvolvement—which became so strong a year ago, is being rapidly sapped and in place of it is growing up a pressure for again taking a hand in the European poker game. Involved in this is an appeal to our missionary spirit, an appeal to us to join in another crusade to help the good powers put down the bad ones. The argument is that Europe can not keep from fighting unless we go over and stop them.

When Americans think over the disillusionment that followed our previous venture in doing good, they are not likely to be much moved by this appeal.

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THE FIGHT ON THE DUST DEMON

U. S. Battles Nature and Old-Time Ideas in War on Marching Soil

After a grueling 1500-mile trip through the Dust Bowl of the Southwest, Reporter Frank Houston and Cameraman Ennis Helm tell their story of the grim fight against the desert-creating dust demon. This is the last of three stories.

BY FRANK HOUSTON
NEA Service Special Correspondent

DALHART, Tex., April 4.

The front-line trenches in the war against the dust demon are on a 40,000-acre tract northeast of here. This is the chief of a dozen such plots where government experts are trying out ways of fighting dust storms and warding off the ruin they leave behind them.

On a 50-mile tour of this project, you can actually see the results. The farm of a "co-operator" lies on one side of the road, with the soil holding tight, protected by terracing and contour plowing.

On the other side of the road, not 100 feet away, you can see where the terrific Panhandle winds have scooped away the top soil and piled it in huge hummocks only a step from the sand dunes of a worthless desert.

The government soil experts have to fight not only the negligence of a past generation and the ruthless force of nature, but the set minds of the "old-timers."

These men declare, "We've always plowed straight rows and we always got good crops until a couple of years ago. All we need is a little rain."

They don't like to be told how to run their farms by the young college graduates of the United States Soil Conservation Service.

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BUT gradually they are coming around to it. And those who won't be persuaded by Federal experts to try scientific means to preserve their own and others' land may meet more stringent measures from the state of Texas.

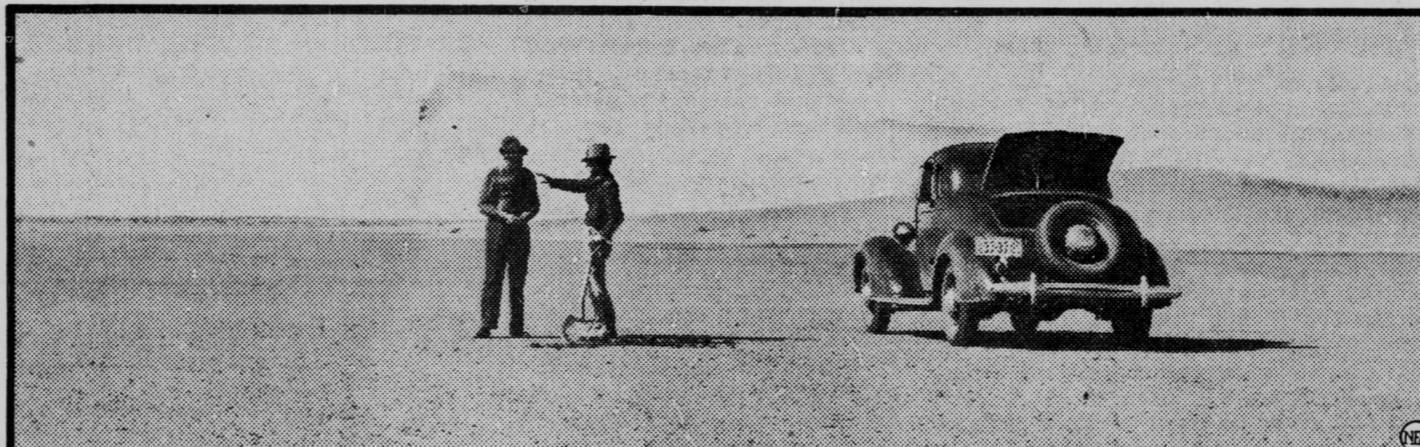
By a new law passed this year, Texas has given power to county judges and county commissioners of nine Panhandle counties to move in and protect land against wind erosion, and to charge the expense to the landowner.

This law is aimed mainly at the nonresident landowner who doesn't realize what is happening to his land. Judge Wilson Cowen, of Dallam County, estimates that 30 per cent of the 800 farms are owned by nonresidents.

We have sent letters to 20 of these owners," Judge Cowen said, "explaining that their land is not being farmed and that it is suffering from wind erosion. That means simply that, instead of plowing straight furrows east and west or north and south, the



The debris of defeat. The farmyard of an abandoned wheat ranch near Dalhart, Tex., with tumbleweed and dust filling the sagging skeleton of an auto, and the gaunt remains of a barn gradually merging into the rising drifts of sand.



United States soil erosion experts dig into the fine silt near Dalhart, Tex., to measure the depth of a recent dust blow. Note the sweep of the flat country, without a hill, a tree, or a blade of grass to halt the havoc of the March winds.

the dust from their fields is blowing over on adjoining farms, causing damage to land and crops there.

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WE are advising such owners to take immediate steps themselves after getting information from the county agent. If they do not follow our advice, we will do the work and charge the expense to them. It will run from 25 to 50 cents an acre."

More than 500 Texas farmers are getting that kind of notice this year. But, of course, most of the work is done by co-operation with owner-farmers on the ground.

J. C. Wilcox, young Federal soil engineer, showed us the methods being used here. Chief among them is contour plowing.

That means simply that, instead of plowing straight furrows east and west or north and south, the

furrow is run across the slopes, following the contour of the earth in such a way that the entire length of each furrow is at the same level.

Thus, each furrow is a sort of miniature dam, and runoff water from a sudden rain has to fill and stop over each of the furrows in turn. Each furrow, accordingly, absorbs the maximum of moisture, but runoff is checked. When it does rain here, it usually is a downpour.

Between the ridges, the ground is scraped clean by the wind, hard and brittle as a china plate. In spots the wind has eaten away the ground to the third soul.

It is as wild and desolate-looking as any place we have ever seen in the Dust Bowl. But the Soil Conservation Service hopes that by its scientific methods this can be turned back into productive farm land within a few years.

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