

## XI

## MARK GOES TO WASHINGTON

While we were in Germany Mark received<sup>✓</sup> fairly regularly the Macon Telegraph and he gan to see editorials that questioned the actions of President Roosevelt. Though he was doing what he had promised to do during the campaign and W.T. had supported him vigorously, the editorials sounded as if he had switched his allegiance.

We had been hearing during our travels that a great many industrialist and businessmen were vehemently opposing the President's New Deal program, complaining that he was hamstringing their operations and ruing<sup>i</sup> them financially, but Mark/ didn't ex<sup>7</sup>pet<sup>c</sup> W.T. to be in their group. Yet/ evidently the Telegraph was suffering sufficiently to give/ P.T. enough leverage to swing W.T. to his conservative side.

The final boom dropped when Mark saw the editorial, ranting about the "<sup>Demands</sup>~~Demands~~ of the Unemployed," that appeared in <sup>18th</sup> the March, 1933, Telegraph. He couldn't stomach it or what it portended for the Telegraph. He wrote W.T. a letter dated March 30th

W.T. Ethridge

Keeping carbon not unusual?

W.T. Ethridge

letter and kept the carbon, for he was not only his job putting his job on the line but the prospect of inheriting a half interest in the Telegraph at Mr. W.T.'s death. Here is the heart of <sup>that letter</sup> it:

"The Telegraph is more than just a newspaper to me. It is an institution in which I have a keen personal interest and of which I am glad to feel that I am in some small way a part. I am really interested in its welfare and it has my unqualified loyalty. This is by way of preface to an adverse criticism ~~that~~ I am about to make and that, I am sure, knowing you as I do, you will welcome and receive in the same fine spirit you always show when the opinions of others differ from your own.

"I was shocked and distressed by your editorial published last Saturday entitled, 'Demands <sup>of the</sup> Un-~~employed~~.' If this editorial means what I think it does from several critical readings of it, it is, I think, totally at variance with the Telegraph's editorial policy for some years past and with your personal views as I have understood them both from your writing and from conversations with you. I can't believe that the ideas expressed in the editorial about the unemployed workers in this country today are the real view of yourself or

At the time?

W.T. Ethridge

the Telegraph. They are not in character with you or the paper. Surely somewhere there is a mistake. I thought the Telegraph was liberal. This editorial, as I understand it, turns its back on enlightened liberalism. Let me explain what I mean.

"There are 14,000,000 unemployed persons in the country today. These and their dependents constitute, all told, a group of 30,000,000 people, about 25 percent of the entire population of the United States, most of whom have been on the verge of starvation this winter. Their unemployment and consequent distress exist through no fault of their own. They are not loafers or beggars. They are willing and anxious to work, but there is no work for them to do... ~~And there is no work for them to do~~ because our economic system has broken down. Yet you say they have no right to make 'demands.' They must go to work, notwithstanding there is no work for them to do, being fed the meanwhile, like Lazarus, with crumbs from the tables of the rich, if perchance the rich, out of their 'humanitarian and human sympathy,' are of a mind to let fall a few crumbs from their abundance. Society, you seem to say, owes these people no

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duty or feeling or consideration. If wealth has been preempted by the superior mentality and initiative of captains of industry, it is just too bad for the workers of the world; it is their hard luck and nobody can do anything about it.

"The 'demands' of these unemployed that arouse your ire are not excessive. They want to work and make a living, but lacking the opportunity to do that, because under foolish and futile leadership the economic system has collapsed, they ask, to keep them from starvation and death, \$18.50 a week for each family of five. This is surely a modest demand just about enough to keep soul and body together. Their letter is a pitiful cry of distress from hopeless victims of the greatest economic disaster in our history.

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"And your answer, as I understand it, is 'rugged individualism'. Get work and earn a living. And if you can't get work, starve. Let each man have his 'catch and kill.' Let only the financially fit survive. The workers are not entitled to comfort and security. They must serve their superior masters, but shift for themselves. God help them in a predatory world.

The good old rule

Sufficeth them, the simple plan,  
That they should take who have the power  
And they should keep who can.

"This is the law of the claw and tooth. It

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is the philosophy of the jungle. I can't subscribe to it. There must be a new deal, the first essential of which is a social conscience, sadly lacking heretofore in the capitalistic system under which we have lived. Greed must give way to humanitarian considerations. Men must be more than money. Human life must be more than profit. Civilization must be based upon some nobler principle than that the strong may prey upon the weak. Society must become cooperative or all of us will perish together. There must be a new social and economic order in which human values must prevail over property values.

"It is incredible to me that this editorial can express your real views. You wrote one not so long ago directly to the contrary, if my memory is not grievously at fault, which so moved me that I went to your office as soon as I could get there and congratulated you upon it and had a long talk with you in which I found, as I thought, that your views along these lines were the same as mine. Surely I didn't dream all this, did I? And I couldn't have so misunderstood you as to think that you had said in print and were saying to me in person things that meant diametrically the opposite of what they seemed to mean.

~~See p. 137~~

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"Maybe I have misunderstood your editorial. But if I have, others have also.... If we have misunderstood you, can't you write another editorial clarifying and restating your position and setting the Telegraph right before the world? The Telegraph has come to be known, not only locally, but nationally, as a great exponent of liberalism and progressivism and as a champion of the rights of man. It has been a veritable oasis in a desert of Bourbonism and conservatism. It has taken years to build such a reputation. In my opinion this editorial, if it means what I take it to mean, is sufficient to destroy that reputation overnight, which, I think, would be nothing short of a calamity.

"I hope and believe that you will not misunderstand this letter...."

~~Mr~~ W.T. Anderson didn't misunderstand the letter; he understood it perfectly and it gave him the pro- vocation to write Mark that he could leave the paper anytime he wanted to. Mark resigned immediately, however, soon after we ~~reached home~~ returned to Macon. Fortunately, he ~~soon~~ had several offers, some of which caused at least a few agonizing moments.

One was from Ivy Lee, the superstar of public

the remainder of our stay in Germany the cloud of his being one of the unemployed hung over his head.

relations, who had been hired to polish John D. Rockefeller's tarnished image. At Mr. Lee's behest, Mark went to New York and spent ten days there

"Mr. Lee took me up on the mountain," ~~he~~ <sup>Mark</sup> reported when he returned home, "and showed me stacks of gold." And with fourteen million workers unemployed, the security Mr. Lee offered loomed larger than it should have. It was perhaps the most tempting chance Mark ever had to strike a deal with the devil.

But when the moment of truth came, he couldn't do it. "I didn't want to spend my life perfuming skunks," he ~~said~~ said.

Kent Cooper, the managing editor of the Associated Press, offered him a job and held out the enticement that it would be a complete departure from AP style. In that it would require an editorial mind to do what he wanted done. Instead of writing a hard news story about some happening in one department of the government such as labor or agriculture, Mark was to write interpretive and analytical pieces, showing how what was happening across department lines reflected FDR's New Deal scheme of things. Mark accepted, but there was a pack of communications between Mr. Cooper and Byron Price, Mark's immediate superior. Mr. Price did not understand what Mark <sup>had been</sup> hired to do, and, being

Back →  
Mark actually worked for Cooper? How long?  
Did he like Mark?

AP trained, let hard copy take precedence over Mark's interpretative pieces.

This was enough to make Mark listen when Eugene Meyer, who had just bought the Washington Post for \$825,000, offered him a job as associate editor. ~~Mr. Meyer said he had been looking for an editorial writer and Mark suited him.~~ He had already hired Felix Morley as editor and Mark was to work under him. <sup>Mr. Meyer</sup> He offered ~~Mark~~ such a munificent <sup>salary</sup> ~~sum~~ of \$10,000 a year <sup>Mark</sup> ~~he~~ couldn't turn it down.

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Every week Mr. Meyer met with his top people, Mark among them, to discuss how the paper was doing. After one of those sessions, the general manager, Eugene MacLean, suggested to ~~Mr. Meyer~~ that Mark be promoted from editorial writer to assistant general manager, in charge of the news, editorial, and mechanical departments, reporting to McLean. It was a strange combination, but it worked, <sup>continued to write</sup> And in his spare time Mark ~~wrote~~ editorials and news stories.

Why strange?

One of the most significant stories he wrote, helped along by luck and the big Ethridge family, came in his first days on the Post. Cordell Hull of Tennessee was Secretary of State, and the congress<sup>f</sup> man who represented Mr. Hull's district was Emerson



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Etheridge, a great uncle. Capitalizing on the family tie, Mark introduced himself to Mr. Hull and they became close friends.

One afternoon Mr. Hull said to Mark, "I think if I were a reporter I would speculate on the United States recognizing Russia." Mark took that to mean the United States would recognize Russia and wrote a story to that effect. It caused a sensation. We

hadn't recognized Russia since it had become Communist, but within a month ~~for Thanksgiving Day, 1933~~ <sup>America 11/16</sup> recognition came about. <sup>on November 16, 1933, recognition came about</sup>

Nov. 16<sup>th</sup> 1933

This was a most momentous and stimulating time in Washington, especially for a newspaperman. In a few short months Roosevelt <sup>(had)</sup> changed the character of the United States. In what became known as The First Hundred Days, he pushed through Congress <sup>thirteen</sup> major pieces of legislation. Nothing like ~~it~~ <sup>this</sup> had ever happened before in the United States.

The legislation created the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC), the Agricultural <sup>2</sup> adjustment Administration (AAA), the Tennessee Valley Authority (TVA), insurance for all bank deposits, financing of home mortgages, an authorization for approximately \$4 billion in federal relief, Wall Street reforms, and the legalization of beer

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The Civilian Conservation Corps skyrocketed. More than two and a half million young men were put to work, planting two hundred million trees in a shelter belt that stretched from Texas to Canada. The President had tried the scheme out on a small scale in Georgia many months before he became president.

On the <sup>seventy-ninth</sup> ~~79th~~ day of the First Hundred Days, Mr. Roosevelt brought <sup>Harry</sup> Henry Hopkins to Washington as Federal Emergency Relief Administrator. Hopkins believed in direct relief to the needy instead of relief administered through private agencies. He also believed, as did Roosevelt, that this relief was a federal obligation, <sup>that</sup> ~~the~~ aid shouldn't be considered alms to cushion the hardships of the poor, but ~~it~~ should be regarded as <sup>a</sup> the citizen's due.

Is it Henry, or Harry L. (Brit?)

direct from the Federal Government?

And from the start Hopkins advocated that <sup>relief</sup> payments to ~~those on relief~~ should be in money instead of grocery slips and that ~~relief~~ should include not only the cost of food, but <sup>(also of)</sup> clothing, shelter, and medical care, <sup>should be included</sup> ~~should be~~

During Mark's first weeks in Washington, in the fall of 1933, Hopkins, realizing <sup>that</sup> ~~that~~ the jobless were desperate and cold weather was coming, decided the F.E.R.A. had to do more than hand out relief. It

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The jobs were life savers that winter. The temperature dropped to 6 below zero in Washington and was much more severe in other parts of the country. Twenty million people were on relief by the middle of January and the \$400 millions the C.W.A. had had in October was just about gone.

With the President's backing, Harry Hopkins, Federal Relief Administrator, asked Congress for \$950 million more and got it. Roosevelt still had Congress in the palm of his hand. He could do no wrong. But when summer came, the tide began to turn. The conservatives spoke out more vociferously. They were scandalized over what they claimed were billions being "thrown away" for relief and "made" jobs of every description. "Raking leaves" and "boondoogling" were terms that tripped angrily off indignant tongues. The country was turning "socialist." Some even said it was being "Russianized."

During these exciting months Mark grew more articulate, more assured, more extraverted. He welcomed gatherings of all kinds and we entertained rather frequently at small dinners where words flowed more freely than the newly leagalized wine.

Indeed, there was talk, talk, talk, pro Roosevelt as well as non-Roosevelt, ~~which~~ which was not left at the office. Guests could scarcely wait to arrive at their hosts' homes to begin expounding their opinions. How long could the United States States continue pouring millions down ratholes before it collapsed? Of the two evils, which was preferable in the dole or made jobs? Could the country spend its way out of the depression? What would "mad-man" Hopkins propose next? Did Roosevelt envision himself a dictator like Hitler?

Small groups of men locked themselves into bathrooms after dinner so they could continue <sup>u</sup> uninterrupted arguments that had begun during the meal. Mark was in there with them.

Not only were the issues discussed late into the night, but ~~so~~ <sup>so</sup> were New Deal personalities. The subject of Mrs. Roosevelt's ~~New Deal~~ activities could take up a whole ~~of~~ evenings. There were also other figures: Raymond Moley, Harold Ickes, Hugh ("Ironside") Johnson of NRA, Adolph Berle, Rexford Tugwell, Frances Perkins, Henry Wallace....

That fall, as the first popular test of ~~President~~ Mr. Roosevelt's <sup>New Deal</sup> ~~administration~~ <sup>(1934 <sup>1</sup>/<sub>m</sub>)</sup> approached <sup>1</sup>/<sub>m</sub> the Congressional elections of ~~1934~~ criticism of the President were strident, especially from business.

and banking circles. In vitriolic outbursts, the influential leaders in those fields damned the continuing extravagant expenditures for relief and the crippling interference of government in their operations.

In many ways, from the relentlessness of the Roosevelt programs to the relentlessness of his critics, the situation seemed to mark almost a replay of the social revolution in England twenty-five years earlier, which had led, he felt, to "a code of social legislation that is not matched in the world."

A detailed, backward look, he thought, might open the eyes and minds of Post readers. It appeared under an eight-column headline and filled a page

in the October 7, 1934 edition. Familiar with that period of English history, for he had been a history buff since high school, the article, an exhaustive piece of research, traced the development in England of social legislation from the first tentative beginnings in 1802 to Lloyd George's budget speech of 1909.

The first piece of legislation rose out of an epidemic in the Manchester cotton mills, which had taken a heavy toll of the low-paid apprentices.

It provided for cleaning and ventilating the mills.

And fifteen years later, England passed the Ten-Hour Act, which social historians say first "recognized the principle that regulation of public

Better link to this long quote?

vs the actual editorial?

Note Year 1934  
see 1939 p. 137  
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see p. 140  
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labor is the concern of the state."

~~Finally~~ Mark ~~got to~~ <sup>then reached</sup> ~~those proposals that~~ <sup>Lloyd George</sup> ~~Lloyd~~ George ~~made in~~ that historic budget speech, <sup>(made</sup> 107 years along the path of England's social revolution.)

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<sup>Lloyd George</sup> In it, ~~he~~ announced that the government intended to institute schools of forestry, procure land for reforestation and experimentation with livestock, extend government participation in cooperatives, and try schemes to attract labor back to the farms. He proposed to meet all the costs of the social programs, Mark wrote, "by a radical application of the principles of direct taxation, <sup>1</sup> a graduated income tax, supertax, tax on unearned increment, and tax on undeveloped property.

"The speech provoked the most violent storm in recent political life in Britain. Sir Frederick Banbury called it 'the maddest budget ever introduced in the House of Commons' and embracing 'every radical fad.' Freddy Smith, later Lord Birkenhead, said it was such a program as might have been put forward by a Socialist prime minister in his first year in office. The Earl of Rosebery spoke of the 'awful gravity of the situation, by far the gravest that has occurred in my lifetime

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or in the lifetime of any man who has been born since 1833.' He said also, 'The budget threatens to poison the very sources of our National supremacy.'

"The Lords defeated the budget and precipitated the fight that finally stripped them of all final power over financial legislation, but the government moved on deeper and deeper into the field of social legislation. The whole program was capped by the vast social insurance system inaugurated in 1911....Under that the English people were insured against old age, ill health, and <sup>un</sup>employment."

At the end Mark asked the question that was so pertinent that fall: "Does President Roosevelt, mapping a program of social legislation for the coming Congress, intend to follow the lead of England? To what extent is he prepared to lend the force of his authority and the moral <sup>e</sup>wight of his office to a program of socialism <sup>such</sup> as that which England has already embrace<sup>d</sup>?"

The next morning Louis <sup>H</sup> Howe, the President's political adviser and intimate friend, telephoned ~~Mark~~ to tell <sup>Mark</sup> ~~him~~ the President had read and liked the article. Would he come to the White House so Mr. Roosevelt could extend his congratulations?

Mark went, of course, and <sup>was told that he</sup> had the President

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~~tell him that Mark~~ had understood perfectly what <sup>the President</sup> he was trying to do.

The November election turned out to be more of a rout than a test. The Democrats won over-whelmingly.)

<sup>Mark's</sup> And <sup>e</sup>President Roosevelt remembered ~~the~~ article and the man who had written it.

any evidence of that "remembrance" later in this book? yes?