

Syndicate of the smear

By Bernie Asbel

AL CAPONE, despite all the smutty things said about him, was an upstanding patriot in the best contemporary traditions.

Sure he was. Take, for example, a public statement he once made on Communism. It went something like this:

"All I did in my life I did to fight Communism from taking over America."

He saw to it that one of his Chicago henchmen was elected to a seat in the Congress of the United States.

He spent his time and energy to elect five of the best lawmakers

at his money could buy to the Illinois state legislature.

Capone was vulnerable. He had a weak gut and couldn't afford to get kicked in it. He trained his statesmen well, so that they gathered in a protective ring around him and cried "Red" every time a gangbusting law was up for passage.

And so now, State Sen. Roland T. Libonati, who used to shout "Kill the un-ri-...", with Al Capone at White Sox Park in the '30s, sits in the Illinois Seditious Activities Commission.

Rep. J. Parnell Thomas, Washington's "Red" specialist, was scheduled to go on trial this week, charged with fraud in his Congressional payroll. He was vulnerable. He had a curse to cast from himself on to another. He sought his safety and security, too, with the red-baiters and labor-haters.

Senator Glen Taylor displays a clipping from a paper in Twin Falls, Idaho, his home state. The headline reads, "Council Defeats Tax on Slot Machines; Calls Proposal 'Red.'" There's the same twist again.

But the same pattern moves

into other fields. The bug bites fine church-going men, too, whose vulnerable spots have no connection with racketeering.

For example when the Taft-Hartley bill was up for a vote in Congress in 1947, thousands of militant union men piled into cars and descended on Washington in a great motorcade. But Philip Murray and William Green feared that kind of mass action. They preferred the method of high level "persuasion" with the White House, rather than the "irritating" influence of a lobby. So they privately requested Congressmen to boycott the mass rally, calling their own unionists "Reds."

As speed-ups get speedier and pay-scales lag in steel and auto, the Murray-Reuther cry of "Communist" increases in uncanny proportion. There is a vulnerability strangely akin to that of Parnell Thomas.

In a southern city where I covered the news, the CIO regional director greeted visitors with a sticker on his door, "Member, Chamber of Commerce."

For relaxation, he lunched frequently with the local chief of the FBI. This was a vulnerable spot, but it gave the CIO man a community prestige which he enjoyed.

A small group of unions privately questioned these social habits and tied them up with an inevitable laxness in union militancy. He found his protection in red-baiting.

The smear is the same for the high-type, refined elements as for the thugs.

It is an uncomfortable alliance, which some wish were not there. But the choice for those who squirm is to break the alliance by forming a new one with mass action of the people.

But it begins to appear they would feel this even more degrading.

OUR TOWN

By Peter Williams

YOU didn't hear it in Gov. Stevenson's inaugural speech Monday, but the original script referred to one Dwight H. Green, of late unemployed, as "my distinguished predecessor."

After the speech was mimeographed, a top level huddle was called to reconsider. Payoff was Green's reduction in the reading to merely "my predecessor."

At last reports, Green may become a man of distinction by switching to Calvert's.

A contradictory report says the ex-Guv will heed the admonition of Carl Sandburg at the inaugural ceremony. Sandburg held aloft a quote from Lincoln. He lengthily explained that this was the final sentence of a letter. Lincoln wrote in 1862, at a dramatic point in the Civil War. The build-up built up, and 5,500 breaths were held till Sandburg broke it:

"Let us be," came the quote in a protracted Sandburgian drawl, "quite sober."

BOOKING AGENTS PLEASE NOTE: You left a loophole when you refused to book Larry Adler and Paul Draper into Chicago as reprisal for their support of the Progressive Party during election. They're walking through the loophole and on to the stage of the Civic Opera in a few weeks. Sponsor: Guess. Right. The Progressive Party.

MORE UPCOMING: Dem-chief Jake Arvey and Rep-probate Bunny East may get mild feelings of inadequacy when they hear who's going to emcee Progressive Party's Cabaret '49 on Jan. 30. . . . People's Songs hot to hold another Hoot—short for one of their variety shows and folk song jam sessions. Western Union making money while arrangements go on to bring in Betty Sanders from New York Feb. 19. . . . Lincoln Day (Feb. 12) dinner-dance skedded by 10th Ward P.P. for St. George's Hall, 96th and Ewing.

Gil Tedder, seen around with Actors for Wallace, and Jack Barthel, hitting the racks with their newest published song, "I Can't Find a Word." Bob Morris, WJJD vocalist, introducing it Friday (15th), 11:30 a.m.

Looking at LABOR

By Rod Holmgren

DESPITE the optimistic notes struck by President Truman's messages last week, we stick to our warning that growing unemployment — and other danger signals — show the time left before the Big Bump is shorter than has been figured.



From Dayton, O., comes word a city work relief program has been set up for the first time since before the war. It's to take care of persons made jobless by factory and construction layoffs. They expect the program to be doubled this month!

LABOR must beware attempted use of layoff reports to fight off fourth round wage hikes. One New York Times financial editor says "word has been passed along that it would be a good thing for chambers of commerce and others to publicize such information."

Fact is, of course, layoffs have not been reflected by cuts in prices paid by the workers still on the job. Living costs are still at postwar peak. In most cases, Layoff has a twin brother — Speedup, which means the guy still in the shop is turning out even more labor—and profit—for the boss.

NEW answer to phony argument that wage hikes mean price hikes comes from V. L. Bassie, Economic and Business Research director at the University of Illinois. Speaking on the Fourth Round at Illinois Bankers Association confab, Bassie said: "There is a widespread acceptance of the idea that wage increases are automatically reflected in higher prices which eliminate any gain to their recipients. The fact is that an inflationary boom cannot sustain itself in this way. Part of the increased income (from higher prices) leaks out into taxes, savings, retained profits and business reserves. They amount at present to perhaps 40 percent of the increment."

WORTH noting that Governor Stevenson's choice for new Illinois mine director is a management man, James Starks, of Peabody Coal Co., despite repeated labor demands that a union leader be named to the post.

My candidate for assistant director is Driscoll Scanlan, a real friend of Illinois miners, who was "just too damned honest" for the Green administration. St. Louis Post Dispatch also plugging Scanlan, who's a really liberal guy, by the way.

REMEMBER Phil Murray's snide comments on the "small size" of left-wing unions at the Portland convention? Previously it had been the practice not to publish membership figures on CIO unions. But since Murray raised it, here are some facts (based on U. S. Department of Labor figures):

- Of 197 national and international unions in the nation — 39 of them CIO,
 - 46 had fewer than 5,000 members.
 - 50 had from 5,000 to 25,000
 - 29 had from 25,000 to 50,000
 - 35 had from 50,000 to 100,000
 - 31 had from 100,000 to 500,000
 - 6 had 500,000 or more
- CIO Farm Equipment Workers union is about 11th in size among CIO unions, and is in the third highest group.

SUPREME Court's ruling which says it's okay for states to ban closed shop sharpens urgency of Taft-Hartley repeal. Labor lawyers believe decision makes it possible for states to enact laws barring not only the closed shop, but all forms of union security, including union shop and maintenance of membership.

and its closed shop prohibition, that will automatically mean the federal government has "taken over" an area of jurisdiction, which automatically cancels out state laws on the subject.

Labor's position would be further strengthened by a section specifically legalizing union security contracts, in re-enacted Wagner Act which fills the vacuum caused by TH repeal.

If Congress now repeals TH

Cartel book ducks the key issue—Political tie-ups

Reviewed by Lew Brooks

WHEN the cartel story is properly told, it startles even those who already know about them. This is not a startling book.

As a purely academic description of cartels, the book might serve. But cartels are neither pure nor academic. They are highly political.

If the cartelists themselves, recognizing popular resentment, had set out to "give leadership" down avenues leading nowhere, they could not have done a better job than these authors.

The book's failure begins on the cover: "Cartels or Competition." This, to put it kindly, is naive. Competition in an era of monopoly capital inevitably leads to monopoly expansion. Fifty years of history should be proof enough of this even for the professor-authors.

To continue to argue for a return to "competition" is like exhorting molten lava to flow back into the volcano.

CARTELS OR COMPETITION? by George Stocking and Myron Watkins. Twentieth Century Fund. \$4.00.

After two world wars, brought on by the cartelists, the political nature of cartels should be apparent to the professors. They speak of "government controls." So long as cartels control governments how can governments control cartels?

These are things with which the book does not deal. It reiterates, rather, the "purism" of America. America must take the lead in controlling cartels. But who is today the leading cartel power—Liberia? Who re-established the cartels in the Ruhr and Germany, against even the wishes of France and Britain — Finland?

This is the core of the fiction of "American interests" which rots our whole foreign policy—the assumption that since what the American people want is right, therefore what our State Department does is right. There is an ocean of difference between what the American people need and what the American monopolists who control our foreign policy want and get.

Introduce bill to block mergers

WASHINGTON (FP)—Senators Joseph C. O'Mahoney (D., Wyo.) and Estes Kefauver (D., Tenn.) filed a bill this week to plug loopholes in the Clayton anti-trust act. Both are long-time opponents of monopolistic mergers.

THE ILLINOIS STANDARD

is owned and published weekly by The Illinois Progressive Publishing Co., Inc., 187 N. LaSalle St., Chicago 1, Ill. Phone: RAndolph 6-9270.

METZ P. LOCHARD.....Editor
 ROD HOLMGREN.....Managing Editor
 JOSEPH PERSILY.....General Manager

SUBSCRIPTION RATES

1 year.....\$2.00
 (Add \$1 for Canada and Foreign)

Entered as second class matter October 5, 1948, at the post office at Chicago, Illinois, under the Act of March 3, 1879.

