So This Is Free Speech!

News pictures taken during 1933-34 in labor and farm strikes, in unemployed demonstrations, showing violent attacks by police and troops in making arrests and in dispersing assemblages.

AMERICAN CIVIL LIBERTIES UNION
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New York City

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Why these Pictures?

The pictures shown here, taken by a commercial news photographic agency during 1933 and '34, are samples from a large collection showing the violence with which police and troops have broken up otherwise peaceful demonstrations of strikers and the unemployed.

We cannot guarantee, of course, that in every case the strikers or demonstrators did not themselves use some force in resisting the police or troops. Our experience over many years, however, proves conclusively that practically every so-called riot among strikers or demonstrators is provoked by the police or troops themselves.

Usually the demonstrations or picket lines were broken up by arbitrary action of police or troops. Conflict came when strikers or demonstrators insisted on picketing or holding meetings when police forbade them to do so. The position of the Civil Liberties Union is that when actual offenses are committed by demonstrators or strikers they should be arrested and proceeded against in the courts, not beaten up, attacked by nightsticks or tear gas.

So far as our records show, no police have been dismissed from the force for acts of brutality and lawlessness such as are shown here, although complaints were frequently made. Indeed such acts against strikers or radicals usually have the warm approval of the higher police officials. Only when very flagrant are they ever criticized in the press. Note the bias shown by the news agency in many captions under the pictures, reproduced precisely as given for press distribution.

American Civil Liberties Union
UNEMPLOYED RIOT IN WASHINGTON—Hundreds of unemployed men clashed with police of Washington, D. C., on March 6th, terminating a demonstration for aid and relief. This photo shows a rioter, carrying his child in his arms, being led from the scene by police during the demonstration.—March 6th, 1933—Acme.
AND OUT—Home Relief demonstrators and police came to blows at a demonstration held in front of the Department of Public Welfare Building in New York City. May 25th. Above is a picture of the scuffle between police and demonstrators with the police gaining the upper hand. The demonstration was called to protest against the administration of relief. —Mrs. W. A. S. N. W. A. R. O. N.
ALBANY HUNGER MARCHERS ON WAY TO SEE GOVERNOR ABOUT WINTER RELIEF MEET POLICE BILLIES
—Albany Evening News—October 30th, 1934.

One of the worst of all brutal police attacks on demonstrators since the bonus army was driven out of Washington in 1932 was the unprovoked attack of the Albany police on hunger-marchers from New York City and the western part of the state arriving in trucks. They were turned back at the entrance to the city, brutally beaten and left to shift for themselves. They spent the night in cold weather without blankets by a roadside.—Editor.
STRIKE RIOTING SPREADS—After forty hours of bloodshed and violence, martial law was declared in riot-torn Saylesville, R. I., as hundreds of additional National Guardsmen arrived to prevent further disturbances in the New England textile strike. Photo shows the troops driving back the pickets after receiving reinforcements. The troops were earlier compelled to retire.—September 12th, 1934—Acme.

Troops were called out in Rhode Island wholly without provocation by a Governor who lost his head. They ran riot in traditional lawless fashion.—Editor.
50 INJURED IN SEABROOK FARM STRIKE RIOT—60 persons, both police and pickets, were injured in rioting at Seabrook Farms, near Bridgeton, N. J., July 9th, following attempts of the strikers to unload trucks leaving the farm with produce. Photo shows an unruly striker in the hands of deputies to be placed under arrest.—July 19th, 1934—Acme.

The whole course of the strike of farm laborers in southern New Jersey was marked by assaults on picketers by private armed guards and by police—all of them unprovoked and all in an attempt to break up picketing.—Editor.
I some monster in a nightmare—wth his gas mask-equipped horse charges a mob of Communists at Portsmouth Square, San Francisco, Cal., when they held a demonstration, July 15th, the day previous to the calling of the general strike.—

July 16th, 1934—Acme.
ON THE MILK STRIKE FRONT—Searching for agitators, National Guardsmen, sworn in as deputies, round up a bunch of pickets for questioning after a raid on the striking mob at Durham Hill, near Milwaukee, Wisconsin.—May 19th, 1933—Acme.
AS CALIFORNIANS SMASHED "RED" DENs—Two Berkeley, California, self-appointed exterminators of asserted Communist headquarters, wrecking one of the clubs in a thorough manner.—July 21st, 1934—Acme.

An organization of unknown vigilantes wrecked radical meeting places and attacked radical leaders at the close of the San Francisco general strike, constituting one of the most flagrant of lawless exhibitions in years. Property to the amount of over $100,000 was damaged. Scores were arrested, most of whom were later released.—Editor.
COMMUNIST HOUSECLEANSING CONTINUES ON WEST COAST—Here is the interior of an asserted Communist headquarters in Berkeley, California, after police had raided the place, destroyed asserted “Red” literature, and wrecked furniture in a concerted clean-up drive in connection with the general strike in San Francisco.—July 21st, 1934—Acme.
A NEW YORK NIGHT CLUB—But there's no whoopee here! And, wielded by a brawny policeman, it is descending on a hapless Red, one of the large group that demonstrated in front of the New York home of President-elect Roosevelt on East 64th Street, January 5th. The arrival of ten Democratic senators and representatives for a conference with the President-elect was the signal for the demonstrators' disturbance which police and secret service men quelled in short order.—January 5th, 1933—Acme.
REDS BATTLE WORCESTER POLICE—Ten Communists were arrested in furious hand-to-hand battling when police broke up a Communist strike rally at Worcester, Mass., September 14th. Police revoked the permit for the rally after Ann Burlak, "The Red Flame," appeared unexpectedly on the scene. The above photo shows the police and plainclothesmen subduing irate reds who battled five policemen before he was placed under arrest.—September 15th, 1934—Acme.

This was in fact one of the ordinary clashes with police during the textile strike, not occasioned by radical utterances but by pressure to break up picket lines and strikers' meetings, common all over the country.—Editor.
COME ALONG, LITTLE LADY—Police and strikers came to blows during a recent strike riot outside the plant of the West Point Knitting Mills in Philadelphia, April 20th. Policemen are forcibly escorting Kate Stoner, one of the strikers, to a patrol wagon.—April 21st, 1934—Acme.

One of the ordinary incidents of a textile strike where police were determined to break up picket lines and strikers' meetings.—Editor.
FIRE HOSE USED TO DISPERSE BUFFALO RIOTERS—
Police used a fire hose and tear gas bombs to rout rioting aeronautical strikers in front of the Curtiss Airplane Plant at Buffalo, N. Y., May 14th. Eight men were arrested and several police and strikers were injured.—May 15th, 1934—Acme.

Newspaper accounts made plain the fact that the all day "rioting" was provoked and conducted by the police, determined to stop peaceful picketing.—Editor.
NORMAN THOMAS ARRESTED AS POLICE BREAK UP MEETING—An attempt by Norman Thomas, Socialist Party leader, to speak at Taylorville, Ill., on May 21st, brought him a brief detention by authorities after a barrage of tear gas bombs dispersed a crowd which gathered on Christian County's Courthouse lawn to hear him speak. Thomas was taken into custody and held incommunicado for an hour. The above photo shows the crowd dispersing as police hurled the tear gas.—May 22nd, 1934—Acme.

This picture does not look exciting, but the white around the corner of the courthouse is all tear gas. The sheriff, who ordered its use and who arrested Norman Thomas, was later defeated at the election.—Editor.